INQUIRY FACILITATES READING 
AND COMPREHENSION OF 
INFORMATIONAL TEXT 

by 

Barbara E. McCready 

An Abstract 
of a research paper submitted in partial fulfillment 
of the requirements for the degree of 
Master of Science in Library Science and Information Services 
in the Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development 
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December, 2015
ABSTRACT

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Reading informational text can be difficult for students. Students are expected to read more informational text with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Providing students with the skills and strategies to make it easier to read and comprehend informational text is already being addressed in classrooms, but students do not always see the connection or relevance between what they are reading and what they are expected to learn. The inquiry process helps students to make connections and provide relevance with their own understandings, as well as applying the skills and strategies that address the difficulties of reading and comprehension of informational text. Inquiry also supports the Common Core State Standards, as well as the AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Common Core State Standards have placed emphasis on reading more informational text within the curriculum. Informational text can be difficult to read and comprehend. Vocabulary, structure of the content, and background knowledge are all factors that can prevent students from making connections with the text, which leads to a lack of comprehension. Students are taught to apply strategies while reading informational text, but many times do not see the relevance or purpose for completing the task. When students are not provided with opportunities to make connections with the text to help create relevance, through the help of the teacher, students can become disconnected from the learning process. This disconnect not only keeps the students from truly comprehending what they are reading, but leads to a lack of motivation and engagement, and to lower quality work (Moses 25).

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to review the literature to understand why informational text is difficult to read and comprehend for students, what inquiry is and how it supports student learning, and to show how reading strategies can be implemented through inquiry-based learning to facilitate reading and comprehension of informational text. The literature will also show that authentic inquiry engages students, creates relevance for them, and provides the opportunity to be active participants in the learning process.
Research Questions

The following research questions guided the research in Chapter 2. The answers to the questions are addressed in Chapter 3.

1. Why is informational text difficult for students to read and comprehend?
2. How does inquiry support students in reading and comprehending informational text?
3. How does inquiry-based learning support the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Standards for the 21st Century Learner?

Limitations of the Research

The limitations of the study included the limited timeframe available to collect and analyze the information in peer reviewed journals and books regarding inquiry and how it facilitates reading and comprehension of informational text. The scope of data collection included books and articles from the databases found at James C. Kirkpatrick library at the University of Central Missouri and the Mid-Continent Public Library. Finding quality information about inquiry-based learning and informational text separately was not difficult, but finding research linking the two concepts was more difficult. With this being said, there was high quality research available that supports the thesis that inquiry-based learning is an effective strategy to use when helping students read complex text.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this research paper.

AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner: The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) standards are as follows: “learners use skills, resources, and tools to”: “Inquire,
think critically, and gain knowledge”; “Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge”; “Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society”; and “Pursue personal and aesthetic growth” (AASL, Standards 3)

College and Career Readiness: Graduating high school students have the math and English skills necessary to be successfully in college and the workplace.

Common Core State Standards: CCSS or “Common Core” are learning standards or goals that students should be able to do by the end of each grade level. Common Core is not curriculum.

Curriculum: Standards and objectives designed into lessons that focus on specific knowledge and skills.

Database: A collection of information that is organized digitally to be easily accessed.

Dispositions: Tendencies or attitudes toward learning.

Fix-up strategies: Monitoring tools or strategies used during reading when there is a lack of understanding. Examples of fix-up strategies include; rereading, using dictionaries and text features, creating mental pictures, determining if the section is important, skipping ahead in the text, trying to make connections to self or text, predicting, and reading aloud slowly (Trinkle, “Reading for Meaning – Questioning” 48).

Inquiry: Acquiring knowledge or information usually through the means of asking questions.

K-W-L chart: A chart that organizes students’ thoughts about a specific topic about what they already know, what they want to know, and what they learned.

Lexile: A measure used to show how difficult the text is and at what level a student is reading.
Prior knowledge: Personal experiences through self, text, or world that is accessed when introduced to new concepts.

Reading Framework for the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): The NAEP “regularly collects achievement information on representative samples of students in grades 4, 8, and 12.” “This reports helps the public, educators, and policymakers understand strengths and weaknesses in student performance and make informed decisions about education” (U.S. Dept. of Ed. iii).

Reading Strategy: Learned skills that aid in reading more quickly and effectively.

Reading/Reading Comprehension: Reading involves the ability to comprehend text through developed decoding and vocabulary skills; be able to draw meaning from text through prior knowledge, other texts, and life experiences; and apply information, ideas, and meaning of text for further application for a specified scenario or problem through building of schema (U.S. Dept. of Ed. 2-3).

Smarter Balanced Assessment: An assessment that is designed to align with the Common Core State Standards.

Structural text features: Specific structural patterns found in informational text, such as description, sequence, causation, problem/solution, and comparison. Students use knowledge of structural features to organize thinking to help in comprehension of the text.

Text features: Text features aid the reader in comprehending informational text. Examples of text features: captions, glossary, graphics and charts, photographs, maps, index, and labels.
Literary text: Fiction, literary nonfiction (“essays, speeches, and autobiographies or biographies”), and poetry (U.S. Dept. of Ed. 8).

Skimming: Skimming requires the student to quickly look over the reading material for main ideas, keywords, headings and sub-headings, and they read the first sentence or two of each paragraph to determine meaning and importance.

Scanning: Students will skip large chunks of reading while they are looking for specific information about keywords.

**Design of the Study**

The research study collected published peer-reviewed articles from databases and books pertaining to inquiry and informational text. No research was conducted. Instead, existing literature, including case studies, were utilized to support the study. There was at no time an attempt to create new research or to apply existing data, privately or publicly held, that would necessitate any type of permission.

Articles were retrieved from the following databases: *Academic Search Complete, Library, Information Science, and Technology Abstracts with Full Text, ProQuest Educational Journals, and eBook Academic Collection*. Search terms included: “inquiry,” “informational text,” “reading,” “reading strategies,” “motivation and dispositions,” “engaged and inquiry,” and “reading and comprehension.”

**Conclusion**

This study includes three chapters addressing how inquiry-based learning facilitates reading and comprehension of informational text. Chapter two is the review of literature that shows how the difficulties of reading and comprehending informational text is addressed with
inquiry–based curriculum to facilitate student learning. Chapter three addresses the three questions posed in chapter one and are answered using the literature from chapter two.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The ability to read informational text has been brought to the forefront of education through the Common Core State Standards, which places a high level of importance on this type of reading. The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Standards for the 21st Century Learner promote reading across the content areas, as well as the need to be exposed to more complex text. Introducing inquiry-based learning facilitates reading and the comprehension of informational text. Through inquiry, students become readers who have developed the skills to comprehend and connect with the reading (AASL, Standards 2). The first section of chapter two will discuss the challenges of reading informational text; what it is, why there is more emphasis placed on reading it, and why students struggle read and comprehend it. Section two introduces the concept of inquiry and how it engages the learner. The last section of chapter two takes the challenges of reading informational text and explores how inquiry provides students with the skills to become independent learners who seek answers and create meaning through reading.

Informational Text

The Reading Framework for the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) defines reading by breaking it down into three parts. First, reading involves the ability to comprehend text through developed decoding and vocabulary skills. Second, the reader must be able to draw meaning from text through prior knowledge, other texts, and life experiences. Also, the student learns to apply information, ideas, and meaning of text for further application for a specified scenario or problem through building of schema (U.S. Dept. of Ed. 2-3).
Understanding the factors of how informational text is challenging to readers provides a foundation to show, in the following sections, how inquiry facilitates reading and comprehension. Common Core State Standards focuses on the need for more exposure to reading informational text, in order for students to be college and career ready (“Common Core” 3). Also, the CCSS addresses the problem that K-12 students have been reading less demanding text in the last half of the 20th Century (3). Students are also doing less independent reading of more difficult text, especially informational text; but at the same time informational text, such as expository text, is more widely used in college and the work place (3). Understanding the characteristics of informational text and the difficulties that students encounter when trying to read and gain understanding of the text is necessary for educators to teach effectively and prepare students for college and careers.

**Text Characteristics of Informational Text**

Informational text is structured differently from literary text and is read for different purposes (U.S. Dept. of Ed. 7-8). Informational text is presented through the use of different structural features (7). For example it might be sequenced chronologically; hierarchically, by a whole and its parts; by order of importance; or spatially (9). Another common way to structure informational text is to first present a problem, and then a solution (10). Presenting information by causation shows a cause and effect relationship between concepts (9). Description is a structural arrangement that provides details or features that helps to describe the topic (9). Comparison uses similarities and differences to show a relationship between concepts (10). Informational text is read for different purposes than literary text, and the manner in which text is read will change according to whether it is informational or literary. A book that has
informational text may not be read in its entirety, but informational text that is well written can be enjoyed just as much as literary text (8).

Informational text is arranged into three categories. Expository text contains “table of contents, indexes, and other navigational devices so readers may only read the portions of the books that interest them” (Young and Ward 32). Expository text is meant to inform the reader by presenting facts, comparing and contrasting, and including definitions and explanations (U.S. Dept. of Ed. 10). A few examples of where expository text can be found are in textbooks, trade books, or news stories. The second category of information text is persuasive and argumentative. These have many similarities to expository, but the purpose is to influence the reader to think or believe a certain way. Persuasive and argument text can be found in political speeches, editorials, and advertisements (10). The third type of information text is procedural or documentative. This type of text provides information in a way that will teach the reader how to complete a task. This is usually written in a step by step manner, with a specific goal to achieve in the end. Procedural texts are found in manuals, product specifications, and other forms of technical writing (10).

Increased Emphasis on Informational Text

One of the anchor standards of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS also referred to as the Common Core) is to make sure students are college and career ready in reading, which means that students can read and comprehend at a high level and develop the skills to become strong independent readers. The Common Core English Language Arts Reading Strands require introducing students to more complex text for all grades, K-12, as well as increasing comprehension of both literature and informational text and placing more emphasis on the latter
in the higher grades (National, “Common Core” 2). Teachers need to make sure that students have access to informational text that is of high interest and at an appropriate independent reading level (Horsey and Maloch 476). Also, early exposure to informational text and intentional instruction about informational text give students the knowledge necessary to help them to become confident and creative when seeking information (477-478).

There are four qualitative factors that the CCSS focuses on in determining text complexity: the purpose of text, its structure, language usage, and the background knowledge required to comprehend the text. Informational text that is explicit or straightforward is less difficult for students to interpret and comprehend. Structure becomes increasingly complex by exposing the reader to information, including complex graphics and subject-specific vocabulary that the author has implied or presumed is understood by the reader. A student’s background knowledge of informational text is assumed to be already existent (National, “Common Core” 5). If the language of the text contains vocabulary that is less familiar, readers are required to draw meaning and connections from the text, their prior knowledge, or learned problem-solving skills.

Common Core’s focus on increased text complexity has created some changes throughout education. One evident change has been the increase in the Lexile reading ranges. Lexile is a measure that shows how difficult the text is and at what level a student is reading. It is based on a measure of word and sentence lengths, not on the content of the text. Fourth grade texts as defined by the common core see a distinct increase in comparison to the old range. The old Lexile range was 645-845 and, with the Common Core, it is now 770-980. Eleventh grade through College and Career Readiness Lexile levels moved from 1070-1220 to 1215-1355. The amount of informational text that students are required to read has escalated due to the demands
of the Common Core. Students in fourth grade are now required to have 50% of their reading in school come from informational text. This moves up continually to 70% by the time students are in twelfth grade. Teachers across all content areas are required to provide students with curriculum related informational text (McCown, Averill, and Thomason 237).

Technology is another way in which students are exposed to reading more informational text (Gambrell 589). With easier accessibility to computers and the Internet at school and home, students are now using more online databases and Google for information searching (589). Many school libraries are opting to carry fewer nonfiction books in the library and purchasing more databases or linking to public library databases. More secondary schools are requiring students to access textbooks online, and are beginning to read eBooks more often for informational and independent reading. There has been an increase by book publishers to market high quality informational books for teachers, libraries, and students to both add to curriculum and for independent reading (Springen 17). Publishers are publishing more fiction/nonfiction pairs, reworking adult nonfiction books to meet Lexile levels for students, creating websites for teachers that have Common Core guides to go with nonfiction books, and many new nonfiction books have guides at the end of the book connecting concepts to the CCSS (15-17).

One other noticeable change is that standardized testing is now done online. Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium is one of two standardized assessments for Common Core State Standards. Smarter Balance focuses on four objectives for literacy that support CCSS, objectives #1 and #4 support reading, including informational text. Objective number 1 requires students to be able to examine text that ranges from less to more complex, by applying reading strategies and logical reasoning (Smarter Balanced 4-5). Objective number 4 requires students to be able
to create an organized and coherent presentation of a research topic with provided resources, using investigative skills (7-8). Schools are where the actual teaching occurs, but as this section has shown, companies have joined the Common Core initiative to provide the best ways and means for the teachers and students to succeed.

The Challenges of Informational Text

Research shows that many students prefer to read informational text, but at the same time almost 70% of students struggle with the mechanics of reading it and do not comprehend the material (Conderman and Hedin 557). If students are not able to comprehend the text, for one reason or another, it is more difficult to make connections with what they already know (Conderman and Hedin 1; Moreillon, “Hand in Hand” E1). The Reading Framework definition of reading states that the student firsts reads for comprehension then draws meaning from the text, in which connections are made for further application. With step two missing, the connection may take longer to occur or may never happen for the student. Understanding how to help students with comprehending informational text, requires a closer look at the different challenges of reading informational text.

Informational text, in general, is more difficult to read than literary text. When students read textbooks, especially science, concepts are not always presented in an interesting manner and often only providing cursory details (McCown, Averill, and Thomason 238). Informational text is written to inform the reader and does not present concepts in the same manner as literary text, which is written to engage the reader (238). The content of informational text can be complex, containing information in which the reader is unfamiliar or unable to make personal connections (238). Also, informational text might present several concepts and ideas too quickly.
for the reader who struggles to create corollaries between each concept (238). Structural features can make informational text complex when the reader is unfamiliar in how these structures help to organize the content and contribute to its meaning (U.S. Dept. of Ed. 24).

The motivational aspect of wanting to read informational text helps students with literacy development. Making sure that students have access to a broad range of high quality informational texts will support students when reading and comprehending, as well as engage their interest in a specific topic (Horsey and Maloch 476). The next section will show the connections between reading and inquiry, and how inquiry can facilitate the reading and comprehension of informational text.

**Inquiry-Based Learning**

Inquiry requires students to do more than to find answers to questions; it involves “investigation, exploration, search, quest, research, pursuit, and study” (Kuhlthau, Maniotes, and Caspari 2). Knowledge grows out of curiosity (Harvey 15). Just as a toddler investigates and explores each new experience, a student challenges his or her own learning experience through the inquiry process. Inquiry requires the student to constantly question, seek answers, evaluate, and refine the search for answers, never fully creating a conclusive answer, but rather creates more questions to be answered. Inquiry makes it possible for the student to be an active participant in the learning process. Instead of the teacher being the decision maker, the teacher now guides the student throughout the learning process. The AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner posit that inquiry will produce a learner that has the knowledge and skills “to thrive in a complex learning environment” (AASL, *Standards* 2). When students are actively involved in inquiry-based learning, they are more engaged, and deeper learning occurs than with
teacher directed methods (Moses 24-25). Providing complex and deeper learning opportunities through inquiry helps students be more successful at reading and comprehending informational text.

**Creating New Experiences through Inquiry**

Newly acquired knowledge comes from connecting prior knowledge and personal experiences with new information. These experiences affect learning now and in the future as understandings are mentally organized for access (Stripling, “Inquiry-Based Learning” 5). Each new experience becomes part of the student’s world, and is used to help with understanding in other situations (Dewey 42). Dewey believed that there was a connection between education and how a student builds knowledge through experience (7). Dewey was clear that not all experiences are educational, and some experiences lead students to become disenchanted with learning (14-15). It is through maturity and experience that the teacher guides the student toward engaging experiences, as the teacher uses insight and his or her own personal experiences (16). Guccione, a second grade teacher, implemented an afternoon inquiry experience with her students to show a correlation between teaching the content and reading and writing, as well as developing listening and speaking skills (515). Guccione learned that even second grade students were able to create a new knowledge base without needing to depend on the teacher to tell them what to do and how to think (518). Guccione also noted that inquiry provided an opportunity for students to experience choice, a purpose for learning, reflection, and interactive learning (519).

According to Stripling, inquiry is a process where students make connections to their own understandings, whether through personal experiences or experiences in the classroom (Stripling,
“Inquiry-Based Learners” 11). The teacher can employ several strategies to activate prior knowledge in order to help students make personal connections with a topic, such as a K-W-L chart (what you Know, what you Want to know, and what you Learned graphic organizer), other types of graphic organizers, visual aids, and small and large group discussions. (Moreillon, “A Matrix for School Librarians” 30; Stripling, “Inquiry-Based Learning” 10-11). Once students make connections, they are prompted to ask questions that include “how”, “what”, and “why” (Stripling, “Inquiry-Based Learners” 12). This provides them with opportunities to dig deeper into the topic and to build new learning experiences and new questions (12). This goes beyond easy to answer questions. Questioning is a learned activity, in which practice moves the student from asking closed-end questions to opened-end questions (Trinkle, “Reading for Meaning: Questioning” 50).

Next, the student begins to seek information to answer a question or support a hypothesis. By collecting and evaluating information, the student assesses if the hypotheses is supported by the information collected. During the investigation, students practice reading strategies, such as paraphrasing, summarizing, utilizing text structures, determining main ideas, and checking for own understanding of the material (Stripling, “Inquiry-Based Learning” 13-14). Investigation leads to the construction of ideas based on the information collected. The student begins to organize information as connections are made to create new understandings about the topic (15). Then the student refines the hypotheses and begins to put all the parts together. The student takes notes and paraphrases the material to aid in organizing information and making connections that help answer the questions or support the hypotheses (15). Paraphrasing helps
the student to seek deeper understanding of the material, as well as being ethically responsible with information created by other authors.

Once the student has collected and organized the information, an opportunity to express new understandings expands the inquiry. Expression can be in the form of a paper, presentation, or some other form that fits the needs of the student and audience (16). The student may use a graphic organizer to help during the writing process, access a rubric for specific requirements, peer edit, or collaborate with other students to create a final expression of the outcome of the inquiry.

In order for inquiry-based learning to be complete, the student needs to reflect on the process. Reflection offers the student an opportunity for self-feedback, as well as a time to integrate feedback from peers and teachers. Reflection should not just occur at the end of inquiry, but throughout the entire process. The teacher can do simple formative assessments at the end of each class to aid the student and teacher in reflection, or have the students keep a journal of questions and thoughts along the way (Moreillon, “A Matrix for School Librarians” 31; Stripling, “Inquiry-Based Learning” 17). Reflection allows the student to study how learning occurred and whether there were deficiencies in learning that still need work (Stripling, “Inquiry-Based Learners” 17). According to Stripling, inquiry is a cycle that looks similar to a spiral. As the student experiences each part of the inquiry process, another level of personal understanding is created, which leads to more questioning, and new levels of inquiry (7).
AASL Stance on Inquiry

The AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner were published in 2007. These four standards brought focus on inquiry and how it supports learning. The standards are built upon AASL’s statement of Common Beliefs, in which the second Common Belief directly states that “inquiry provides a framework for learning” (AASL, Standards 2). Students who have developed different learning skills and the knowledge of how and when to use these skills, as well as the ability to monitor strengths and weaknesses through self-assessment, are independent learners who will be able to sort through complex information more efficiently (2). Standard one, “inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge,” has students draw from their own background knowledge to make connections and develop new knowledge that makes the real world more relatable (AASL, Standards 4; Stripling, “Inquiry-Based” 8). Throughout inquiry, the student will gather information and determine relevance through research, which may also be done collaboratively. In the inquiry process, the steps ‘connect,’ ‘wonder,’ and ‘investigate’ match up with standard one. The second standard, “draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situation, and create new knowledge,” requires students to make personal connections with information and determine if information is relevant to their questions (AASL, Standards 5; Stripling, “Inquiry-Based” 8). In Stripling’s model of inquiry, the construction phase aligns with this. The third standard, “share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society,” recommends that the student express newly acquired knowledge by sharing with others through different forms of expression, as well as to reflect on the learning experience (AASL, Standards 6; Stripling, “Inquiry-Based” 8). Stripling’s express and reflect phases of inquiry share the same concepts that are found in
standard three. The fourth standard, “pursue personal and aesthetic growth,” supports inquiry at the most basic level (AASL, Standards 7). The standard supports personal growth by reading to learn and connecting new concepts with prior knowledge.

Each of the four AASL standards are broken into four strands of learning: ‘skills’, ‘dispositions in action’, ‘responsibilities,’ and ‘self-assessment strategies’ (AASL, Standards 8). Under the four strands are key inquiry processes. Skills are the tools that make it possible to do a specific task (8). Skills come from the innate ability to do something, are acquired through practice, or come from one’s own understanding of how to do a specific task. Standards one, two, and three specifically use the term inquiry under the strand ‘skills’. Sub standards 1.1.1 provide examples of this, “Follow an inquiry-based process in seeking knowledge (4); 2.1.1, “Continue an inquiry-based research process by applying critical-thinking skills…” (5); and 3.1.1, “Conclude an inquiry-based research process…” (6) are designed to include all the processes of inquiry. Keywords that align with learning through inquiry can be found under the ‘skills’ strand are: prior knowledge, connect, question, new understandings, and express (4-7).

Dispositions strands describe the tendencies or attitudes toward learning (8). According to Stripling, dispositions develop through structured learning experiences and practice, and are evaluated through actions described in the sub standards (“Dispositions” 48). Verbs that can be found under ‘dispositions in action’ include: question, investigate, demonstrate, and draw conclusions (AASL, Standards 4-7). Another disposition listed in the standards is motivation. Motivation is sought both extrinsically and intrinsically. Providing students direction, to be a part of decision making, and empowering them with the information and skills moves them to become more intrinsically motivated. Inquiry promotes motivation by allowing students to be
creative (Crow, “Researching” 35). Creativity is the use of original ideas (35). This is when students ask questions, share ideas, gather information, and then express new understandings through different mediums (35).

The ‘Responsibilities’ strand presents the expectations of the learner to engage ethically and legally throughout the learning experience (8). Responsible students follow guidelines for gathering information ethically; make connections with self, world, and text; create; and can be observed exchanging ideas with others either face to face or electronically (4-7). Self-assessment strategies allow the student to reflect on the learning process and to gain understanding of what new learning was acquired and where learning connections were not complete (8). Having strategies to self-monitor progress allows the student to know when connections are or are not made, as well as knowing when to seek assistance. Phrases that are used in strand four include: assess gaps, know when new knowledge is acquired, know strengths and weaknesses when working collaboratively, and understand one’s own learning deficiencies (4-7).

**Connecting the CCSS with Inquiry and the AASL Standards**

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) require students of all ages to conduct research with the purpose of answering questions or finding solutions to an issue, and to investigate information. Research is a part of inquiry. As students pose questions and predict, this will often lead to research. Paige Jaeger takes a deeper look at CCSS and points out that even though inquiry is not a mentioned specifically in the CCSS, it is a part of the curriculum that supports the Common Core (Jaeger 46-47). The CCSS are designed so that students build on what they have already learned from one year to the next, for an education that is built on a strong foundation. The standards are written using language that promotes research and writing.
skills (46). A few examples from the anchor standards for reading will show how inquiry-based learning is connected to the CCSS. Anchor standard CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1 challenges the student to be able to “draw logical inference” from the text (“English Language Arts”). Inquiry has students draw from prior knowledge to make connections with the text (Moreillon, “A Matrix” 30). CCSS.ELA.Literacy.CCRA.R.6 asks the student to “assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of text” (“English Language Arts”). The student is taught how to utilize reading strategies to make it easier to comprehend text, in order to choose text that supports their position (“English Language Learners”). This process helps the student to build new knowledge (Moreillon, “A Matrix” 31). CCSS.ELA.Literacy.CCRA.R.7 wants the student to “…express information and enhance understanding of presentations” (“English Language Arts”). Inquiry has students express new knowledge, in some presentation format, that addresses an original question or hypotheses after analyzing and synthesizing gathered information.

The AASL Learning Standards and Common Core State Standards Crosswalk was created to show how the AASL standards align with the CCSS. First, the AASL standards are broken down into each substandard and aligned with the CCSS for reading and writing in English Language Arts (ELA), History and Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects, and Mathematics. And, each grade level of the CCSS is broke down to show how they align with the AASL standards. For example, the first substandard of the AASL standards (1.1.1) is about applying the inquiry process and aligns with twenty-one different CCSS standards (AASL, “Learning Standards”). The next section will demonstrate how inquiry utilizes the different
reading comprehension strategies, as well as other strategies listed in this section and how they support students in reading and comprehending informational text.

**Inquiry Facilitates Reading Informational Text**

This section will take a look at how inquiry is used by the teacher and student to make informational text less challenging to read and comprehend. The first part of this section looks at how traditional learning removes the student from the learning process by making him or her a passive learner. The first part also looks at how inquiry creates purpose for the student to learn and seek answers. Next, three stages of inquiry; questioning, making connections, and synthesizing, are described in relation to learning to read informational text. The stages will show how inquiry provides reading strategies that are implemented during inquiry-based learning. The last section describes how learning and enjoyment occur through the increased engagement that is experienced through inquiry.

**Traditional Learning versus Inquiry**

The traditional approach to teaching seeks to transfer the views of state mandated testing, Common Core State Standards, and district mandated teaching on to the student. This coincides with Dewey’s position on traditional learning, in which the student is prevented from being a major contributor to the educational process (Dewey 4). Students are capable of doing more than being passive learners and doers, but typical assignments do not allow students to move beyond being reporters of information (Gordon 3). There is no journey for the student, as the learning has already been determined and teachers know answers to questions in advance. According to Dewey, no matter the subject of study, teaching ideally begins with a connection to the individual student’s prior knowledge or previous experiences (87). When the teacher does not
help to activate prior knowledge, learning experiences that occur in the classroom have less connectedness for the student (Dewey 15). It is necessary that the teacher use strategies and material that activates this prior knowledge, as this will then lead to more deeply developed experiences (87). When instruction by the teacher is intentional and methodical in activating prior knowledge, the student makes connections to new understandings (88).

Often when K-12 students conduct research, they are passive participants in learning. The teacher tells the students what to do, how to do it, and when the assignment is due. The teacher is in charge of setting up a process, and students follow directions to produce or output information. This often results in shallow answers, with few personal learning experiences that allow students to create new understandings of the topic. This research method limits what a student can learn because the process is a predefined activity. Also, this style of research uses limited higher order thinking skills and focuses more on information retrieval to produce a predetermined answer (Kuhlthau, Maniotes, and Caspari 3). Traditional research rarely provides students with deeper understanding of what is being taught in the classroom, or teaches students how to search, gather, and apply information that is most effective to that subject (Gordon 2).

Kuhlthau, Maniotes, and Caspari cite a study of Swedish high school students in which one research assignment was completed in three different ways. The first approach involved students collecting facts for the research assignment. The result was that the research produced learning that was limited to knowledge building that included only those facts. The second approach had students searching for a right or wrong answer. The outcome was that students only retrieved an answer to a specific question. The third approach required the students to gather and then apply the information to present a new perspective of the topic. Students that
were a part of the third approach achieved deeper understanding of the research topic (Kuhlthau, Maniotes, and Caspari 20). Most of the time, students who read informational text are reading for the purpose of finding an answer. Duke recommends that students read as much informational text as possible and read for more intentional purposes (42-43). Duke states that teachers strive to be more creative when employing informational text in lessons so that the use of informational text has a more meaningful purpose (43). Creating scenarios or situations, connecting fiction with nonfiction to help students to wonder, setting up demonstrations, or bringing something into the class that draws the student’s attention in a way that leads them to ask questions are just a few examples to make reading informational text authentic (43).

Fisher and Frey in collaboration with teacher leaders in a high school in a small urban setting developed an English curriculum that focused on raising reading and writing achievement (Fisher and Frey 587; 596). After the curriculum had been implemented, Fisher and Frey wanted to know if the English curriculum also motivated students to read and write. The original study began after reviewing the reading logs of all ninth grade English students in the spring of the students’ ninth grade year (589). The reading logs showed that the 115 students (61 girls and 54 boys) had read about the same number of books (589). These results intrigued Fisher and Frey and spurred them to look into how these students read in middle school by asking each student how many books they read in eighth grade. The findings showed a dramatic increase in the number of books read from eighth to ninth grade. The girls jumped from reading 3.8 books in eighth grade to 11.7 books in ninth grade. The boys increased from reading 2.5 books to 11.2 books (589). After asking each student how many books that they read in eighth grade, Fisher and Frey decided to make sure that students were self-reporting accurately and decided to
interview all 115 students using a series of questions. These questions expanded to ask if the student was reading more or less in ninth grade and why, what was their favorite book, how the English teacher had encouraged or discouraged the student to read more, and what was their favorite part of English. To ensure that students were answering the questions honestly, Fisher and Frey contacted the eighth grade teachers and provided the students’ names to ask how many books these students read. The 8th grade middle school teachers were also asked how they selected books to read for the curriculum, and if students were assigned readings or had a choice what they read (589). As a result, the eighth grade teacher’s answers validated what the 115 students had told Fisher and Frey, which was that the ninth grade students were reading more than in eighth grade, and that book reading was assigned rather than selected by the students from a pre-defined reading list (589).

When Fisher and Frey reviewed the reading list from eighth grade, the reading lists were a mix of classic and contemporary reading materials that were written to engage teen readers and contained teenage main characters, of which many were male (589-590). Fisher and Frey felt that the reading lists that the teachers selected from and used were of high interest for eighth grade boys and girls (589). From these results, Fisher and Frey wondered if there were specific areas of the English curriculum that provided motivation for students to read more and raise reading scores (590). Fisher and Frey were most interested in how and why teenage boys that went from little reading in eighth grade dramatically increased the number of books read in ninth grade. As a result, Fisher and Frey chose three ninth grade male students (Nico, Eric, and Claudio) from differing backgrounds, both ethnically and academically, to learn more about what motivates boys to read.
One of the main contributing factors for an increase in reading was that the high school focused on an essential question that guided learning for each quarter. All teachers had to develop the curriculum around the essential question (Fisher and Frey 590). In the eighth grade all three boys, Claudio, Nico and Eric, did not see a need to read the books because there was no motivation. Claudio did not really read in middle school, because there was little, if any, correlation between the books assigned to read for eighth grade English and the purpose for reading the books (590). Nico said that he could just find the answers that correlated with the reading assignments on the computer, instead of reading the book (590). The essential question guiding ninth grade reading assignments provided a purpose for the boys that made them want to read. It was necessary to read the books in order to make connections with the question and the books. The essential question spurred students to find answers by using an inquiry approach to learning. The questions were intriguing to the students and the answers were not absolutes, as meaning was created by each student from the readings and each student created their own meaning based on their own understanding of the question (591).

Another factor that helped the boys read more was seeing how the teachers modeled their own thinking process when applying reading and writing strategies (Fisher and Frey 592). Nico, Claudio, and Eric did not realize that teachers had to use the same thinking processes that were expected of the students. Claudio thought that teachers automatically understood what they read, so when Claudio did not understand the text he would give up instantly (592). Nico and Eric benefitted the most when the teacher verbalized the writing process. It helped Nico and Eric to watch the teacher think aloud while writing as well, because this helped the two boys understand that writing is not always easy to do, even for adults (593).
The third major factor that motivated the boys to read was the ability to have control over the reading choices. The English class had a large selection of reading that the students could choose from to address the essential questions (Fisher and Frey 594). Students self-selected books, instead of being assigned a specific book to read (594). Nico was very serious about choosing the best book in order to answer the essential question, and he would read more than one of the book choices because other students would be talking about how another book would have great information to use for the essay (594). Eric’s parents had a lot of trouble getting him to read in eighth grade, but in ninth grade Eric was constantly telling his parents about the books he chose to read (594). Fisher and Frey came to understand that providing a purpose to reading by means of an essential question, teachers modeling reading and writing strategies, and providing reading choices motivated students to want to read more.

When something is learned only for the sake of an assignment, it becomes disconnected from other experiences (Dewey 48). Creating, developing, and implementing authentic learning experiences require opportunities for students to be actively involved in learning. When students see the purpose for the direction in which learning is taking place, they become more active participants.

**Reading for Meaning through Inquiry-Based Learning**

Reading and writing are an integral part of inquiry. Students that utilize reading strategies participate in more independent and deep reading (Gordon Messenger 23). This is because students have developed skills to guide them to connect information in the reading for literal and deeper understanding. A way to do this is by having students locate keywords and skim and scan text (23). Skimming requires the student to quickly look over the reading material
for main ideas, keywords, headings, and sub-headings, and they read the first sentence or two of each paragraph to determine meaning and importance. Students will use background knowledge to determine if the material is necessary to use. In scanning, students will skip large chunks of reading, in which they are looking for specific information about keywords (Trinkle, “Reading for Meaning: Making Connections” 49-50). In addition, students have developed investigative skills that are applied during reading, such as compare and contrast, classify, match, and graph ideas. Any skill that helps students to delineate ideas and thoughts into a recognizable and understandable framework aids in reading informational text (Gordon Messenger 23). In order for inquiry to facilitate the reading and comprehension of informational text, Trinkle recommends learning how reading comprehension strategies can be applied within inquiry. Trinkle divides the inquiry process into three major areas: questioning, making connections, and synthesizing (Trinkle, “Reading for Meaning: Questioning” 50; Trinkle, “Reading for Meaning: Making Connections” 50).

Asking questions is a reading comprehension strategy that is to be used throughout the entire inquiry process (Trinkle, “Reading for Meaning – Questioning” 49). As students investigate information and construct new understandings, new questions grow from these experiences and continue to shape new ideas and connections. As with any reading comprehension strategy, it takes practice in order to produce questions that use higher order thinking. In the beginning, questioning will be of the “who, what, when, where” type of questions (50). But, with guidance, as students gain more experience asking questions, the type of questions become more thought provoking. Questions will then focus more on how and why (50). The skills used to help students become better readers are the same skills that are used
when students ask complex questions (50). These skills are to infer or draw conclusions based on context clues, visuals, or deciphering vocabulary; access existing knowledge by asking questions, brainstorming, using a K-W-L chart, or journaling; make connections to self, text, or world through graphic organizers, summarization, and asking questions; and to check for understanding and adjust as needed through fix-up strategies (48-49). Fix-up strategies include rereading, using dictionaries and text features, creating mental pictures, determining if the section is important, skipping ahead in the text, trying to make connections to self or text, predicting, and reading aloud slowly (48).

As students ask deeper questions, there is a growing understanding of their own thinking process. Convergent questions only require reading the material to find the answers; whereas divergent questions cannot be answered easily and questions are open-ended, suggesting more than one way to answer the question (50). Practicing inquiry will give students many opportunities to use questioning, as well as practice other reading comprehensions skills throughout the process.

Before students can ask questions, they need to activate prior knowledge, in order to make connections to self, text, or the world. When students make connections to their prior knowledge, they can better comprehend the text. Before a research project begins, students are presented with opportunities to make connections (Trinkle, “Reading for Meaning: Making Connections” 48). Making connections do not just take place before research, but also throughout the investigation and construction phases of inquiry (50). A K-W-L chart, graphic organizer, and teacher modeling are ways to help students to access background knowledge (49). As students begin to research and find information in order to answer questions, make
connections, and build new knowledge, specific fix-up strategies can be accessed to help students search more effectively. For example, when skimming and scanning students use text features like the table of contents and index, they read the beginning of paragraphs, and then decide when to read large chunks of text in order to decide if text is important. They also determine the main idea, so they can keep that in mind as they read (49). This helps students to weed out unnecessary information. As information is gathered and main ideas are determined, new connections are created that lead to new questions, which then employ higher thinking skills (50). Teachers both model and guide the students in how to use these and other strategies.

Maloch and Horsey described how Horsey’s second grade classroom created a living text feature chart that became a go-to reference. Students listened to Horsey read informational books to the class (482). Students added new text features that they found important during the search process to the chart. The chart was a shared component in the inquiry process (481). It had columns for visuals, descriptions, and “how it helps me” (480-481). The last column, “how it helps me,” helped students to learn how to decipher informational text as information was gathered for research (482). The students also learned to skim and scan, as they were exposed to a very large number of informational books. They shared what they learned at the end of the day, and Horsey intentionally modeled learning and supported her students so that they would be successful. She also and made sure that inquiry was connected to every unit so that students had a firm understanding of how the inquiry process worked by the end of the school year (479).

As students progress through the different stages of inquiry, they use different reading comprehension strategies to make information text easier to comprehend. This gives students the skills to pull all the information together to create new meanings. Note taking and summarizing
are two skills that require instruction, as well as a lot of practice so that students become proficient at supporting their questions (Trinkle, “Reading for Meaning: Synthesizing” 50). Note taking and summarization by the student is used to determine the importance or lack of importance of text and to reword or paraphrase text to show understanding (50). Note taking and summarization also aid the student in understanding when information does not connect with prior knowledge (50). These two strategies are part of the process of analyzing or pulling apart information and require higher order thinking.

Synthesizing is the process of putting the information back together, but in a new and interesting way that expresses how the student created new meaning from the information gathered. During synthesis students are still asking and answering higher order thinking questions, note taking and summarizing, making connections with content, applying fix-up strategies, and knowing what information is important to use (51) When students create original work this way, they are using higher level thinking skills (51). When students make connections, new knowledge is acquired from informational text that can be expressed through original work.

**Engagement Leads to More Learning and Enjoyment**

Inquiry provides students with a learning experience that allows them to learn by doing. Lindsey Moses describes a study designed with a fifth grade teacher that gave students who were English language learners the opportunity to apply the inquiry process using informational text, in which the topic was self-selected. Another focus of the study was helping Spanish speaking students build stronger English vocabulary skills (2)

A plan was implemented that broke six weeks into lessons that focused on specific concepts of informational text features and the inquiry process (Moses 12). Also, students
participated in a survey that was taken in the beginning, middle, and end of the experience. The results of the survey confirm that inquiry is an engaging and enjoyable experience. The survey had the students answer the same five questions three times throughout the inquiry experience (22):

1. What is your favorite subject and why?
2. What do you like the most about Language Arts?
3. What do you like the least about Language Arts?
4. Name 1 or 2 things that you do well in Language Arts.
5. Name 1 or 2 things that you have difficulty doing in Language Arts.

From the beginning of the survey to the end, the number of students who said that Language Arts was the subject liked the most, went from six to thirteen. What students liked most about Language Arts in the beginning was reading fast; and in the end, research was what students liked the most about Language Arts. Taking tests was the least liked part about Language Arts, both in the beginning and the ending survey (22). In the initial survey students listed reading fast as what they did well, but in the final survey students’ comments changed to research and presenting. Reading long books was what most students listed as something that they did not do well. In the final survey, most of the students stated that summarizing and synthesis was something that was difficult to do well (23). Some of the other comments that students listed as strengths at the end of the inquiry process were: being good at research, finding information and then putting into words, asking questions and finding answers, and summarizing and synthesis.

The teacher also noted that inquiry-based learning did make it easier for students to be engaged in reading and writing while at the same time it provided a foundation to help the students
understand and comprehend the informational text and any vocabulary that they encountered (24). As students took ownership for the work that they produced, a sense of pride was experienced. This ownership and pride in what they produced created motivation, engagement, and a higher quality of work (25).

“When learners follow an inquiry process they assess and use reading comprehension strategies” (AASL, Position Statement 2). During inquiry students activate background knowledge, question, determine main ideas, skim and scan, use fix-up strategies, make connections, summarize, take notes, synthesize, and reflect throughout the entire process. Early and often exposure to informational text, appropriate instruction and practice, and applying reading strategies within inquiry enables students to engage, read, and learn with purpose, as well as develop independent thinking skills that enable them to become lifelong learners.
CHAPTER 3
CONCLUSION

Introduction

Inquiry is the process where students make connections to their own understandings (Stripling, “Inquiry-Based Learners” 11). Many students struggle to read informational text, making it more difficult for students them to make connections with prior knowledge and then build new knowledge. Chapter three will look at the following questions: Why is informational text difficult for students to read and comprehend? How does inquiry-based learning support students in reading and comprehending informational text? How does inquiry-based learning support the Common Core State Standards and the American Association of School Librarians Standards for the 21st Century Learner?

Inquiry Makes Informational Text Less Challenging

Reading is a fundamental skill that is needed for all aspects of daily life. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have increased rigor for all students in grades K-12, in reading more informational text in order for students to become college and career ready. Understanding the factors of why informational text is challenging to readers provides a foundation to show how inquiry facilitates reading and comprehension.

The Reading Framework for the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) breaks down the definition of reading into three parts. The first part of the definition states that reading involves the ability to comprehend text through developed decoding and vocabulary skills (U.S. Dept. of Ed. 2). The second part of the definition states that the reader must be able to draw meaning from text through prior knowledge of other text and life
experiences. Last, the student learns to apply information, ideas, and meaning of text for further application at a later time (2-3). When students have not developed the ability to comprehend text with decoding and vocabulary skills, they do not possess the skills to address the second and third part of the definition of reading.

Informational text is structured differently from literary text and is read for different purposes (U.S. Dept. of Ed. 7-8). Students read informational text to gather information. This information has a purposeful organization that helps students to make connections in a logical order. Informational text is presented through the use of different structural features (7). Text might use sequencing to show order chronologically, hierarchically, or spatially (7). Informational text may also be structured to show the comparing and contrasting of concepts (7). Description is a structural feature that provides details or features that helps to describe the topic (9). Causation shows a cause and effect relationship between concepts (9). Lastly, problem and solution is the presentation of the main ideas in the form of a problem with a solution, or as a question that is accompanied with an answer (10). If a student does not understand the different structural features, and does not have the strategies and skills in place when reading informational text, it is more difficult to make connections during reading.

Another reason why informational text is more challenging for students is that it is more difficult to read than literary text (Averil, McCown, and Thomason 238). The content of informational text is usually more complex, containing information that students might be unfamiliar with or they might be unable to make personal connections. Often this is due to the vocabulary used (238). Research shows that many students prefer to read informational text, but 70 % of students struggle with the mechanics of reading (Conderman and Hedin 557).
Informational text tends to present several concepts and ideas too quickly for the reader and struggle to create corollaries between each concept (Averil, McCown, and Thomason 238). Also, when students read textbooks, especially in science, concepts might not be presented in an interesting manner or only cursory details are provided (238).

The first stage of inquiry is to make connections to self, text, and world. Students who have developed strategies and skills that address the challenges of reading informational text will find it less difficult to make connections while reading. As students learn to make connections with informational text, through the inquiry process and by applying reading strategies before, during, and after reading informational text, reading and comprehension becomes less difficult for students.

Inquiry Supports Reading and Comprehending Informational Text

Students who utilize reading strategies participate in more independent and deep reading (Gordon Messenger 23). This is because they have developed reading and comprehension skills that help them to make connections in the reading to more thoroughly understand the text. The following section will focus on reading comprehension strategies that can be applied within inquiry-based learning to help facilitate the reading and comprehension of informational text.

Throughout inquiry, different reading strategies are implemented to assist students to build upon prior knowledge, form questions, investigate information to answer questions, construct new understandings from information, express new knowledge with others, and to reflect on personal learning throughout the inquiry process. First students need to make connections to prior knowledge. Students make connections throughout inquiry, not just in the beginning (Trinkle, “Reading for Meaning: Making Connections 50). Questioning is a critical
inquiry skill that deepens a student’s understanding of a topic. This skill requires practice to produce questions that use higher order thinking. Students are guided to move from questions that ask “who, what, where, and when” to higher-order thinking questions that ask how and why (Trinkle, “Reading for Meaning: Questioning 50). A Complex questions engage students to infer or draw conclusions, access existing knowledge, make connections to self, text, or world, and to check for understanding (48-49). Strategies employed during the questioning phase include using context clues, visuals, K-W-L charts, and other graphic organizers. Brainstorming, journaling, and using fix-up strategies also lead to increased skill in reading informational texts (48-49). A few examples of fix-up strategies are: rereading, using dictionaries and text features, creating mental pictures, skipping ahead in the text, reading aloud, predicting, and determining if the section is important (48). During the investigation or research stage of inquiry students can skim and scan text to determine importance and to search for keywords, main ideas, as well as important text features.

Throughout the investigation stage, students have been gathering information by note-taking, as well by summarizing to determine its importance in answering inquiry questions (Stripling, “Inquiry-Based Learning” 8). These two strategies also require students to paraphrase information so that it is rewritten into their own words. The practice of paraphrasing is another way for students to show understanding of the information.

Construction is the synthetization of gathered information that helps to further answers inquiry questions and create new understanding (8). Students continue to ask questions, use graphic organizers and fix-up strategies. At this stage students are making conclusions about inquiry questions or a hypothesis, making sure that information gathered is supported with
evidence (Moreillon, “A Matrix 31). Students are then ready to express the ideas they have created. Graphic organizers, rubrics, and peer and teacher conferencing are strategies employed during this stage (Stripling, “Inquiry-Based Learning 16-17). Presentations of ideas can be done through print, graphic, and digital presentations.

Students reflect both during and after inquiry-based learning to better understand what they learned, as well as uncover any questions that still exist. Reflection is also used throughout the inquiry process in order for students to monitor and self-assess their learning. This can be done through any type of assessment tool, such as journaling, exit tickets, or self-graded rubrics (Moreillon, “A Matrix 31).

Reading strategies are utilized throughout inquiry-based learning. Each stage of inquiry focuses on different strategies for different stages of reading. The inquiry process starts with making sure that students have connections in place before they read, then provides students with strategies to problem solve while reading, and lastly makes sure that students have the strategies to analyze and synthesize information. Applying and practicing these strategies during inquiry facilitates reading and comprehending informational text.

**Inquiry-Based Learning, the CCSS, and AASL Standards**

Most U.S. states support and implement the Common Core State Standards. Teachers need to show that their curriculum and instruction supports these standards. Even though inquiry is not mentioned specifically in the CCSS, it is built into the curriculum that supports them (Jaeger 46-47). The AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner are not required standards for teachers, but these standards are deeply rooted in inquiry and support the CCSS. This section will show how inquiry supports both the CCSS and AASL standards.
The CCSS are designed so that students build on what they have already learned from one year to the next, as long as there is a strong foundation already in place. The standards are written using language that promotes research and writing skills (Jaeger 46). Research is a part of inquiry. As students pose questions and predict, this will often lead to research. Questioning and prediction are the second stage of inquiry. This is where the student will connect prior and new knowledge to create new understanding that will then lead to questions and predictions. To answer these questions, the student will begin to investigate or research. Investigation is the third stage of inquiry. A few examples from the anchor standards for reading will show how inquiry-based learning supports to the CCSS. Anchor standard CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1 challenges the student to be able to “draw logical inference” from the text (“English Language Arts”). Inquiry begins by having students draw from prior knowledge to make connections to the text (Moreillon, “A Matrix” 30). CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.CCRA.R.6 asks the student to “assess how point of view or purpose shapes the context and style of text” (“English Language Learners”). The student is taught how to construct new knowledge by utilizing reading strategies to make it easier to comprehend text, in order to choose text that supports their position or hypothesis (Moreillon, “A Matrix” 31).

CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.CCRA.R.5 wants the student to “…express information and enhance understanding of presentations” (“English Language Arts”). Presentation is the next to last stage of inquiry, which shows the student’s understanding of acquired knowledge and how it addresses the questions or hypothesis in a new and interesting manner (Moreillon, A Matrix 31).

The AASL created the “Learning Standards and Common Core State Standards Crosswalk” to show how each AASL standard aligns with each CCSS. The AASL Crosswalk
shows how each sub-standard aligns with the CCSS for Mathematics, English Language Arts, Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Sciences, Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects, and Writing Standards for Literacy for History/Social Sciences, Science, and Technical Subjects. AASL Standard 1.1.1, “inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge,” aligns with twenty-one different CCSS English Language Arts standards (AASL, “Crosswalk” 1; AASL, Standards 4). The twenty-one different CCSS standards use verbiage such as: build knowledge, recall information, investigate, analyze ideas, introduce claims, and answer questions (1). Each of these terms can be found in the inquiry process. The AASL standards were published in 2007. Each of the four standards brought focus on inquiry and how it supports learning. One Common Belief of the AASL standards states that students become independent learners who are able to sort through complex information more efficiently through inquiry (AASL, Standards 2). This occurs when students have developed different learning skills and the knowledge of how and when to use these skills, as well as the ability to monitor strengths and weaknesses through self-assessment (2).

Inquiry facilitates reading and comprehension of informational text when students are provided the skills and strategies to decode, make connections, and create new understandings of text. The CCSS states that students need to read more informational text in order to become college and career ready. When inquiry is applied in conjunction with the CCSS, students will have more purposeful research experiences because connections are made through their own personal experiences. The AASL standards, through the Crosswalk, are shown to align with a large number of the CCSS. To aid teachers in creating lessons that insure that inquiry-based learning supports the CCSS, accessing the AASL Crosswalk will provide teachers with the
AASL standards that align with the CCSS. Also, teachers can see how inquiry fits within the CCSS and the AASL standards.
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