



Apr 18th, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Teaching of Inference Making in the Adolescent Classroom

Meagan DeSalvo
Illinois Wesleyan University

Leah Nillas, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

DeSalvo, Meagan and Nillas, Faculty Advisor, Leah, "Teaching of Inference Making in the Adolescent Classroom" (2015). *John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference*. 3. <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2015/ESposters2/3>

This Event is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Teaching of Inference Making in the Adolescent Classroom

Meagan DeSalvo and Leah Nillas*

Educational Studies, Illinois Wesleyan University

Inference is making predictions, drawing conclusions, using context clues, activating background knowledge, filling gaps, creating interpretations, and visualizing meaning (Bintz, 2012).

Research Questions

- How do I encourage students to think critically about fiction texts in regards to making inferences?
- How can I use scaffolded strategies to help students infer implicit meanings from fiction texts?

Methodology

- **Participants:** 24, fifth grade students from a large school district
- **Data Sources:** Field notes and student assessments
- **Subject:** English Language Arts

Literature Review

- The use of nontraditional texts in the classroom allows for students to access their particular learning styles (Shannahan, 2013).
- According to Lucking (1976), teachers use scaffolded questioning techniques to encourage students to develop upon the explicit meanings of texts.
- Some students are not accessing their background knowledge (Nokes, 2008).
- Students are unable to access new information that can be linked to relevant background knowledge for comprehension (Elbro, 2013).
- According to Levine (2002), peer friendships and interactions are valued in the cognitive development stage of adolescence.

METHODS

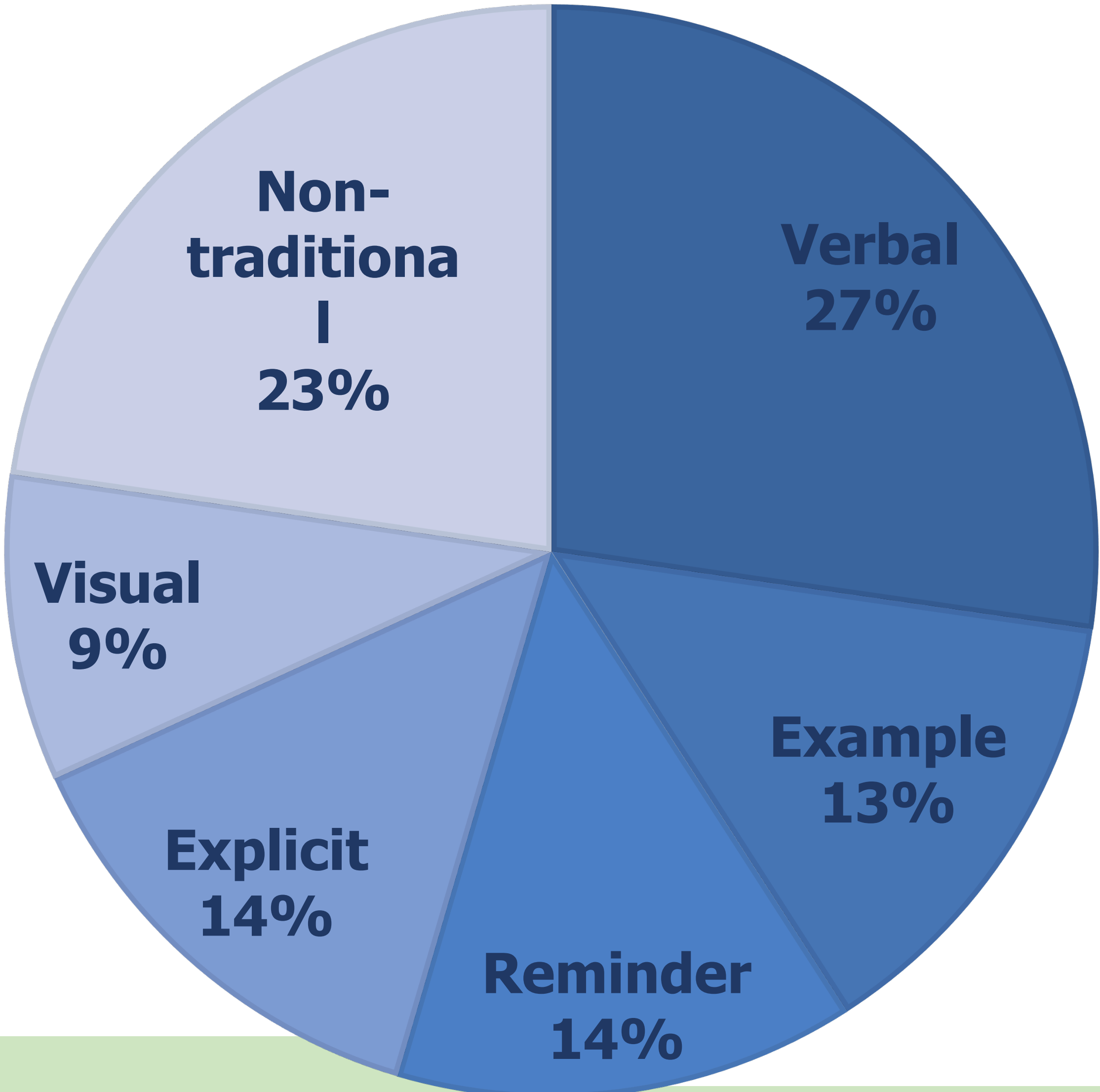


Figure 1. Techniques are not limited to paper assessments. Student understanding is improved with multiple methods.

Results and Data Analysis

- Positive student responses to scaffolded questioning techniques were supported through analysis of field notes.
- Field notes pointed towards effective group and peer collaboration in enhancing inference making abilities.
- The use of nontraditional texts increased student engagement and performance.
- Reminders of inference making techniques and strategies are necessary in helping students stray from the normal question and answer process.
- Scaffolded and additional questioning improved students' performance on assessments.
- Activating prior knowledge engages students in the text and hence involves higher order thinking skills.

Conclusion

- Findings suggest that students benefit from both verbal and written scaffolded questioning in response to assessment questions requiring inference making.
- An array of tools aids students in recognizing inference making in traditional texts.
- Further study is required in the development over time of students' ability to respond to inference making assessments.