

Improving Informational Text Skills with Relevant Content



Carl H Kumpf Middle School
Clark Township School District, Clark, New Jersey

AT A GLANCE


After noticing their students consistently struggled with informational text skills on state assessments, middle school teachers at Carl H Kumpf decided to implement The Juice to improve reading comprehension and engagement with informational texts.

CARL H KUMPF MIDDLE SCHOOL STATS

Carl H Kumpf is a suburban middle school located in the Clark Township Public School District.

 **557**
students

 **0%**
economically disadvantaged

 **59.9%**
met or exceeded Expectations on

<https://rc.doe.state.nj.us>

CHALLENGES

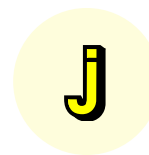
- Students consistently struggle with informational text standards on state assessments
- Lack of student engagement with informational and nonfiction texts

SOLUTION

- Using The Juice to engage students with relevant content
- Using The Juice to build reading comprehension with informational texts



Building
Informational Text
Skills



The Juice
Current Events

RESULTS

1 Improved Reading Comprehension

Students increased their informational text skills.

2 Increased Engagement

Students became more engaged with nonfiction content.



A DECLINE IN INFORMATIONAL TEXT SKILLS

Language Arts teachers at Carl H Kumpf noticed that their students were struggling the most with informational texts each year standardized testing rolled around.

“Our standardized test scores consistently reveal that our students struggle the most with informational texts, so we're always on the hunt for a way to enhance their comprehension and understanding of nonfiction,” said Suzanne Hamilton, 7th & 8th Grade Language Arts Teacher.

In fact, the teachers at Carl H Kumpf are not the only ones noticing these trends. The most recent NAEP report card for Reading found that 60% of US States saw a decrease in 8th grade informational text literacy in 2022, with only 22% of 8th graders across the US reading at or above the proficient level.

This trend in test scores may have also been due to the lack of engagement Hamilton was seeing in her class when she taught nonfiction texts each year.

“When I had talked to my kids about nonfiction earlier in the school year, I even asked them why they disliked nonfiction. They said that nonfiction was old, hard to understand and sometimes the teacher thought they knew things they didn't,” said Hamilton.

USING THE JUICE TO BUILD READING SKILLS

After speaking with her humanities supervisor, Hamilton decided to implement The Juice in her language arts class, along with her 7th grade ELA colleagues. She liked that the Extra Juice articles provided students with more background information on something they may not know and that the articles were more current. The assessment questions linked after each article would also allow students to practice the informational text skills they struggled with on state assessments.

Each week, Hamilton looked through the articles and assigned the ones she felt were the most engaging and relevant for students.

She often tied writing into the assignments by providing students with an open-ended writing prompt so that students could practice their analysis of the text, compare and contrast or cite evidence from the article or Extra Juice article.

I do notice the kids actually really like doing The Juice. So when I tell them that it's a day, we're doing it, they get excited

Suzanne Hamilton

Carl H Kumpf
Middle School

INCREASED ENGAGEMENT AND READING GROWTH

Based on her classroom observations, Hamilton noticed that her students grew in their informational text skills.

"I noticed that my students were able to extract information a bit better," said Hamilton. Hamilton also assigned 4 or 5 articles each week and gave students grades on the assignments, which she noted helped with student motivation and achievement.

"If they get all four, they get four out of four. If they get three, they get three out of four and that motivates them to read a little bit closer," said Hamilton. "For the most part, I get a lot of four out of four and three out of four. So, I'm getting a lot of those higher grades, and they're doing well."

Not only did Hamilton see an increase in achievement, she noticed increased engagement with nonfiction using The Juice as well.

"I did notice the kids actually really liked doing The Juice. So when I told them that it's a day, we're doing it, they got excited, " said Hamilton.

ABOUT THE JUICE

Designed for grades 5+, each academic day, The Juice delivers five timely current events articles at four reading levels to help students build literacy. Educators and students receive daily rigorous short-form content, vocabulary, infographics, videos, embedded scaffolds, formative assessment, progress monitoring, data-informed instruction, and more! Standards-aligned, The Juice provides educators with flexibility and can be used with core instruction, intervention, enrichment, credit recovery, and extended day/year programs.