As a Kindergarten teacher, I feel that I have many strengths when providing effective instruction and a facilitating environment in my classroom. However, along with my strengths, I feel that I also have some weaknesses.   One strength is that my students have about 2 hours worth of reading time throughout the day. About a half hour to an hour of this reading time is from texts written solely for reading. I have an abundance of genres in my classroom ranging from fairy tales to nonfiction books and my students love to read all of them. Even if they can't read all of the words yet they have become very good at reading the pictures. Once a day, students get direct instruction of new vocabulary including sight words and content-area vocabulary.   My students are given substantial reading instruction in the accurate and automatic decoding of words 4 times per week in their guided reading groups. My students write every day and are expected to read their texts back to a teacher each day. Each day, I read several books to my students and we always talk at length about the books and strategies we could use to comprehend the books as they are being read. I teach my students to preview texts (including predictions before and during reading), activate relevant background knowledge, create visual representations to aid in comprehension and recall, summarize what is read, how to hand unfamiliar words during reading, and how to monitor their comprehension during reading. When I am instructing students about various strategies I give my students an explicit description, I model the strategy, give my students guided practice using the strategy, and have the students independently practice the strategy. I assess my students weekly through running records. Lastly, my students are motivated and excited about reading. Which is so important because "motivation and engagement in reading correlate highly with reading comprehension" (Guthrie, 2004 p. 14).

One weakness I have when providing effective instruction and a facilitating environment in my classroom is having my students identify their purpose for reading. My students know reading is important, but I highly doubt many of them can tell me why. While reading, I do not have my students think aloud while reading. I think this might have something to do with the fact that their guided reading texts are so short, that there are not a lot of pages for them to think aloud about while reading. Also, I have not taught my students how to generate questions for texts. My main focus is for them to comprehend what they just read, not think more deeply into the text. However, I feel that this is an important aspect I need to work on. "Simple comprehension strategies that require students to ask and answer questions about text while they are reading appear to have a profound influence on students who previously appeared to use no comprehension strategies," (Mastropieri, Scruggs & Graetz, 2003 p. 12). Since my students are new readers, they have not been taught to use multiple comprehension strategies when reading a text. Personally, I think it might be overwhelming for them to try to use too many at a time. However, I would like to try it out. Lastly, I could take more time in choosing texts more carefully to match the strategy and students being taught. This is especially true with my guided reading groups. I tend to just a pick a book from the particular level they are at and I do not have an exact reason for choosing that text.

In analyzing my student's comprehension needs, my students are required to read books from their particular guided reading level. These texts are differentiated to fit the levels that the students have been tested at. My students also read various texts throughout the classroom that may or may not be above their reading level. However, I have taught them how to 'read the pictures' if the text is too difficult for them to read. My students are not expected to read content-specific texts. I read these texts to them and then they have the opportunity to read through them after they have been read by me and discussed as a class. I expect students to learn from texts new sight words, new vocabulary and comprehension strategies.   One mismatch that I would like to improve upon is students use and knowledge of high frequency words. I expect my students to not only recognize sight words, but also use sight words appropriately in their writing. However, I have not explicitly taught them how to do this.

In reflecting, I plan to change my teaching and the environment to provide a better match for my students comprehension needs by doing several things. One thing I want to make sure I am doing is using Evidence Based Practices. It is important for my school and me that I am teaching comprehension skills that are evidenced based since we are a Title 1 school. "EBP centers around using empirical data, along with other clinical factors, in a decision-making process to inform practice with a given student or students," (Ehren, B. J. 2005, p. 1).

Another thing I plan to change is the books that I give to my students about a certain content area. I need to start not only giving students books that I have read to them about the content area, but also finding texts that are on their reading level that they could read with little assistance. "Guthrie and Cox (1998) explain how concept-oriented reading instruction targets developmental needs within content-area instruction by allowing students to choose from a range of books on a particular theme as opposed to reading from a common text, which might be too difficult or uninteresting to some students," (Ivey, G. 2002 p. 5).

Also, I would like to change how I instruct my students about decoding skills. I feel that I focus so much on high frequency word recognition that I do not give my students skills to decode words that are not high frequency. My students know the basic "look at the picture to help" strategy. However, after that strategy, my students seem a bit lost. Kozminksy and Kozminsky believe "improving automatic decoding skills will contribute to comprehension of a text, in that it would release more cognitive resources the process of understanding," (2001, p.14).

Lastly, I need to get my students to think more as they are reading (metacognition). They need to understand what and why they are reading throughout the text. This gives the text meaning and as a result makes the text more interesting. "Readers of all ages who do little metacognitive monitoring when faced with a particular text will have trouble understanding that text," (Cromley, 2005 p. 13).

In conclusion, I feel that I have many strengths as I teach comprehension. But, with anything there is always room for improvement. Therefore, I plan to slowly implement the above changes to my classroom in hopes that it will increase my students' comprehension skills before they move onto first grade in the fall.