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Helping Primary Age Struggling Readers Find Success to Improve Reading

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## **Abstract**

This action research study combined qualitative and quantitative research methods. Three itinerant learning support students participated in the study. The students participated in intervention for approximately 45 minutes daily. The main focus of the study was to provide the students with meaningful interventions in order for the students to increase their reading skills and become successful readers.

A direct instruction program was utilized as well as other intervention methods such as, repeated readings, word building, as well as other literacy activities. Student progress in reading was examined, as well as student engagement during the intervention time period where various interventions were implemented. The students participated in baseline assessments, pre/post interviews, district wide benchmark assessments, called STAR, and progress monitoring using STAR. A field log was also kept and played a vital role in documenting student progress and areas of weakness that needed to be further addressed. The study concluded that, in order for students to make progress in reading, interventions should consist of a balance of direct instruction and other engaging literacy activities. In order to help foster a joy of reading, reading material that interests the students should also be employed.

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### **Researcher Stance**

I wanted to become a special education teacher to make a difference in children's lives for as long as I can remember. I was interested in special education because I knew that some students needed a lot of extra support and specialized instruction, and I wanted to challenge myself to try to help those students who had the most difficulty learning. I also wanted to challenge myself to be the best teacher I could be and help each student reach his or her fullest potential.

As I approach my fifth year as a special education teacher, my interest in helping struggling readers continues to grow, as my caseload of students with reading difficulty seems to grow each year. Each year, I also continue to hear teachers talk about struggling readers. In my school district we have had Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) meetings to discuss data, to examine how many students were truly struggling with reading, and to explore why the general education reading classroom was not meeting these students' needs. This has made me want to learn more about how to teach struggling readers and how to help them find success.

I have also wondered why there are so many children struggling with reading and what we can do to help them and keep them from falling farther behind with each passing year. Knowing how to read well is a lifelong skill students will carry with them for years to come. I believe reading is one of the

most important, if not the most important, academic area in primary grades. It is not something that you stop doing once you leave school grounds. To be able to help plant the seed to teach students how to become successful readers is simply imperative. To help foster a child's reading skills, and to try to foster a love of reading is what I envision myself engaging in.

I'm passionate about teaching special education students how to read because it is a gift they will carry with them for a lifetime. Knowing how to read is a vital aspect of one's life, and I want to be able to be a part of that for students. To be able to work with students and see the growth and progress they make throughout the year and how far they come is incredibly valuable.

In my career of working with special education students across varying grades, I have observed that most students I have worked with share commonalities, the largest being difficulty with reading. But one thing that remains intriguing to me is that each child brings his or her own unique set of academic strengths and deficits that need to be addressed. These are not always the same, and if by chance they happen to be, it does not mean that they can all be addressed in the same particular manner.

My goal is always to assess each student to try to gain insights as to what his or her particular strengths and needs are and provide appropriate reading interventions and instruction based on each child's individualized needs. It is almost as if I am providing a prescription to help with the process of reading.

Some students I have worked with have made main gains from explicit phonics instruction; some have made gains from whole word strategies, while others have made gains from interventions that target fluency. One of the most critical things I have learned from working with struggling readers is that you need to take time to implement various interventions to see which is most beneficial. There is no one “magic” program or method that will help students become better readers.

I have found that many students I work with tend to need additional phonics instruction and application of these skills. While I know that they often need reinforcement of these key skills, I also think it’s important to provide students with authentic reading experiences. I feel it is beneficial to use non-fiction to help build background knowledge, because often times the students I work with do not possess the background knowledge they need to make meaning of text, for the topics we are reading. This is not to say they don’t bring interesting perspectives or good questions.

I have noticed that most students have basic phonics skills, but cannot always apply these skills in reading. I have also noticed that most students are unfamiliar with more complex phonics skills, such as digraphs and blends. Therefore they require additional practice and application of these skills. I believe in order to help most second grade learning support students make progress and be successful in reading they need to participate in additional

phonics practice, along with application of the skills being taught by actually participating in reading activities.

I can remember when I first started teaching and the reliance I had on direct instruction reading programs, because that is what I was told to use. It didn't provoke much thought from me. It was just what I needed to use to instruct each reading group accordingly. As I continued my teaching career and reflected upon the first year of "survival" and learning the ropes, I quickly learned of all the downfalls of these direct instruction reading programs.

On the other hand, I also did see the majority of my students showing progress in reading. Although, they may have made progress in reading, I knew these programs lacked a comprehension component that is vital to becoming a successful reader. The few comprehension questions through the text and the worksheets that accompanied the stories did nothing to promote higher level thinking or understanding. Sadly, I realized these students were deprived of many meaningful reading experiences. Just because these students are below level in reading doesn't mean that they should not be afforded the opportunity to engage in meaningful opportunities to learn how to read. I wondered if I could really say that my students were developing a love of reading from these stories.

This experience brings to mind a quote from John Dewey, when he states, "How many came to associate books with dull drudgery, so that they were "conditioned" to all but flashy reading matter?" (Dewey, 1938, p. 27). He

describes students acquiring skills by drill and therefore, their ability to act intelligently in new situations is limited. Dewey also states students associate the learning process with boredom. I can relate. I find that often times struggling readers are provided with reading material that lacks quality.

The instruction is focused on skill and drill, or direct instruction and the engagement piece tends to be missing. We need focus on providing struggling readers with quality reading experiences to continue to motivate them to try their best and continue reading. The goal of my study is to provide struggling readers with the skills they need, but also provide meaningful reading experiences, not only so students can apply these reading skills across various settings, but also to foster a love of reading.

Through my time teaching I have established some core beliefs I have about how struggling readers, especially those who are identified with disabilities should be taught to learn to read. They include providing supplemental instruction or intervention. It is important that this instruction or intervention takes place in addition to reading class, so that struggling readers do not miss core academic instruction. I also believe it's important to provide small group instruction during this time. This fosters interaction among the students and teacher. It also allows several opportunities for repetition, practice reading, modeling, and additional reinforcement of classroom concepts and skills. Lastly, I believe it is important to assess students' reading to target skills and deficits in

order to understand each child's needs and provide appropriate instruction or interventions to help them be successful readers.

I want to learn how to best reach struggling readers and help them find success, while also fostering a joy and love of reading. Some of the core beliefs I have is that all students' strengths need to be recognized and capitalized on. I believe students' progress and achievements need to be celebrated and praised. I especially find this true for special education students, or students that are labeled as below basic. Most often these students have to work extra hard to meet the expectations required of them. I believe students need to know that their teacher believes in them and is proud of the effort and accomplishments they make.

I also believe students need to be provided authentic reading opportunities to grow and become better readers. While direct explicit instruction may allow them to gain a reading foundation, they need to be able to make meaning of what they read. What we take away from reading, or the meaning we make from what we read, is the entire purpose of reading. We cannot forget this vital idea when teaching struggling readers.

I always try to keep my students in the regular education reading class. I understand that it may not always be suitable in every situation. However, working with itinerant learning support students, these students receive the lowest level of special education services, I feel it is beneficial to provide additional, supplemental reading instruction in the general education classroom in order to

help those students become successful readers. As there became a bigger push for inclusion, I felt hopeful that I could provide supplemental reading instruction to not only help students become better readers, but to help students understand what they read, provide quality stories and foster the love of reading.

Through my teacher action research, I want to provide interventions and instruction to best meet these students' needs in order to help them to become successful readers. At this primary level, that requires providing phonics instruction in order to allow students to apply phonics skills when reading. It also requires trying to continuously build fluency and comprehension by providing students with opportunities to practice reading skills.

I also hope to foster a positive attitude and a love of reading by engaging students to be successful now and in their future education. My research question was established: What are the observed and reported experiences when struggling/below level readers participate in small group intervention to address phonics and fluency?

## **Literature Review**

It is essential for teachers to consider that not all primary students will respond to core reading programs. These students often identified as struggling readers need further instruction or intervention to make meaningful progress within the reading curriculum and to become successful readers. There are several factors to consider when providing struggling readers with instruction or interventions to meet their individual needs. The process involves assessment (that will drive instruction/interventions), flexible grouping targeting deficit reading skills (in the areas of phonics and fluency), progress monitoring, and meetings to discuss data/modify students' programs as needed. With the appropriate supports in place, struggling readers can make meaningful progress towards improving their reading skills.

**Research Question:** What are the observed and reported experiences when struggling readers participate in small group intervention to address phonics and fluency?

**Thesis Statement:** If struggling readers receive supplemental reading intervention/instruction, then they will increase their reading skills.

In order to completely and comprehensively research the components of the stated research question, I utilized the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) database. The key terms I employed in my searches included: struggling readers, reading intervention, phonics intervention, fluency

intervention, fluency instruction, small group instruction for struggling readers, supplemental instruction, and reading interventions. I also engaged with peers and professors to guide my research. This led to further my research searches to World Cat, a library catalog where I could access books from other libraries throughout the state.

### **Struggling Readers**

The Alabama State Department of Education (ASDE, 2001) reported that, there are estimates that 60-90 percent of the students in school will learn to read regardless of how they are taught. However, 10-40 percent will have difficulties learning to read and will need specialized instruction. President Clinton utilized data from the 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress, stating that the magnitude of the problem this way: “Forty percent of our eight-year-olds cannot read on their own” (Clinton, 1997). Currently, The Nation’s Report Card states, in 2011 the grade four national results are as follows, 33% of students are below basic, 67% are at or above basic, and 34% are at or above proficient, these results are not significantly different from the 2009 results (NAEP).

Struggling readers are described as students who do not read grade-level material with fluency and understanding (ASDE, 2001). Kuhn indicated that struggling readers are those learners whose reading development does not keep pace with their peers (2005). Struggling readers are students that every school has. These students typically show little response or make minimal progress

within the regular education reading curriculum, therefore needing additional support.

It is critical to take into consideration the unique and individual needs of struggling readers. Woodward & Talbert-Johnson (2009) discuss the teacher's responsibility to ensure the individualized needs of struggling readers are addressed. Research supports that some students need intensive intervention if they are to attain and maintain on-level reading proficiencies (Woodward & Talbert-Johnson, 2009). Struggling readers may have limited background knowledge, an inability to decode words, a lack of fluency, difficulty monitoring their comprehension, and a limited amount of strategies that they use. Assessing each individual struggling reader gives insight into his or her strengths and weaknesses, which in turn, allows appropriate interventions to be selected and implemented.

Struggling readers may have low self-esteem, due to lack of success with reading or other unrelated factors. When working with struggling readers, it is crucial to provide opportunities for students to be successful. If students can feel some success with reading, then reading will become a more attainable goal for students. If students continuously struggle and find no success in reading, this may cause the students' self-esteem to become permanently damaged. According to Vlach & Burcie (2010), teachers have the opportunity to intervene in the

narrative of struggling readers, the key component is for the teacher to believe that every child can learn and can contribute to the learning community.

The self-esteem of struggling readers is impacted by home and parental support as an important contributor. Crawford and Torgesen stated that there is a noticeable difference in children's performance when they had familial support and/or after school support. Making parents feel welcome and that they are a vital part of their child's education is essential to establish this connection. If struggling readers receive home support to help address reading difficulties, students are typically more successful. It is essential to stress to parents the importance of reading to their children and also for their children to read to them. It is also imperative to provide parents with activities to help support their child in reading; examples may include reading aloud to children, reviewing sight words, and building words (Crawford & Torgesen, 2007).

### **Small Group Reading Intervention**

The ASDE (2001) stated that reading intervention is special reading instruction for struggling readers, designed to make them effective readers of grade-level material. Intervention efforts may include programs and practices to provide struggling readers what they need, for example, lower pupil-teacher ratios, more instructional time, and more specialized methodology (ASDE, 2001).

Struggling readers in the primary grades should receive interventions at least 3 times a week, however, ideally these students should be receiving

interventions daily. Crawford and Torgesen (2007) report that, specific times must be set aside during the school day for interventions to be provided; otherwise they are much less likely to happen on a regular basis (Crawford & Torgesen, 2007). This can be implemented by creating a schedule that allows an intervention time block. The major benefit of this model is that students who need interventions can receive these interventions without being pulled out of the core reading curriculum. For students who are gifted, during this time period these students can receive enrichment activities. All other students who are left can be grouped flexibly by needs and skills that are being implemented. It is critical to recognize that having a schedule with an intervention time period allows for students to be grouped appropriately and receive interventions in small group settings, without missing core instruction. Engaging students in small group settings will allow highly-meaningful interaction between teachers and students.

The Response to Intervention framework screens students and looks at scores to indicate potential difficulties with learning to read (Gersten, Compton, Connor, Dimino, Santoro, Linan-Thompson, & Tilly, 2008). The students identified by the screeners, are provided with more intensive and evidence-based reading interventions. Student responses to the interventions are then measured to determine whether students have made adequate progress and either no longer need the intervention, continue to need some intervention, or need even more

intensive intervention. The RTI framework urges schools to provide intensive services only to students who fail to benefit from well designed, evidence based intervention. This helps to accurately determine which students may have learning disabilities in reading. As part of the Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTII) model implemented in Pennsylvania's public schools, students who are at risk for reading problems and/or disabilities may require extensive interventions. Scammacca, Vaughn, Roberts, Wanzek, and Torgesen, question the required duration or intensity of preventive interventions for young students (2007). Currently, there is insufficient research to provide clear guidelines about the duration and intensity of interventions that might be required for individual students (Scammacca et al., 2007). However, according to Vogt & Nagano (2003) research suggests that effective reading intervention may be provided one-on-one or with small groups, and depending on the particular intervention model, lessons may range from 30 minutes to two hours.

Cartwright and Blacklock (2003) reported a positive impact of a modified version of the teacher work samples on performance of struggling K-12 readers and on the dispositions of the interns who worked with them. The interns were university students in a yearlong senior level internship. Their role was to design the interventions by using a variety of classroom reading assessments to diagnose areas of weakness. The study documented struggling reader progress by comparing pre and post test scores. The interns who worked with the struggling

readers completed a questionnaire measuring dispositions before and after. There were 55 elementary students identified as struggling readers who would participate in intervention over 12 weeks as part of a reading methods class, 55 university students in a yearlong, senior-level internship designed and provided interventions based on using classroom reading assessments to diagnose the areas in which the struggling readers needed help. The struggling readers' progress was measured by comparing posttest and pretest scores. The impact of intervention on student learning was positive for all K-6 subjects in almost all of the literacy goals areas that were addressed by the candidates. The largest gains were made in sight word recognition, phonological awareness and phonics. The smallest gains were made in comprehension.

Bonfiglio, Daly, Persampieri, and Andersen (2006) conducted an experimental analysis of the effects of reading intervention in a small group reading instruction context. The study examined the effects of several combinations of instructional and motivational interventions on oral reading fluency. The intervention took place in small groups of four students, as part of small group reading instruction. Three students were males, one student was female. Of these four students, two were Caucasian one was African American, one was Hispanic. These students were labeled as poor readers by their classroom teacher; however, none of the students were receiving special education services.

A treatment package consisting of acquisition, fluency and motivation components was examined and then dismantled. First, a taped preview was utilized in order for students to listen to the story on tape while being required to follow along with the text. Secondly, choral reading, which involved the reading group, read a passage aloud in unison with the experimenter. Next, error correction, which entailed a word drill exercise students participated in. When a word was read incorrectly, the student was stopped from reading, and needed to read the word aloud correctly. This required all four students to read the error word correctly three times. Lastly, the reward was implemented, which utilized goal setting. If students matched or exceeded their previous number of correct read words (CRW) while matching or decreasing the number of errors, a small tangible reward could be chosen.

The results were evaluated individually for each participant using a multiple-probe design in order to identify the most effective, yet efficient reading intervention package for each member of the group. The findings indicated that, although all potential combinations of the treatment package were effective, the experimental analysis was identified as an effective yet more efficient package that produced substantial increases in performance across all students. In general, all participants increased CRW and decreased errors per minute in almost all treatment conditions. The taped preview, error correction and choral reading condition were deemed the most effective treatment. Implications from this study

included that, in a small group reading setting, it is valuable to identify a package that may not be the most effective package for every child but for most, in that positive effect may be obtained for every child.

In order to examine student progress, progress monitoring needs to occur. Progress monitoring is assessing student performance, or progress. Progress monitoring helps evaluate effectiveness of instruction and interventions in place. Progress monitoring involves assessing students' current level, setting goal(s), and measuring progress towards the established goal(s). Gersten et al. (2008), states for students who are at risk for reading difficulties, progress in reading and reading related-skills should be monitored on a monthly or even a weekly basis to determine whether students are making adequate progress or need additional support (Gersten et al., 2008).

Engaging in Response to Instruction and Intervention meetings allows teachers, specialists and other parties involved to discuss students' progress or student data. Classroom performance should also be addressed, and cross-referenced with what the data projects. According to Gersten et al. (2008), studies reflect that progress monitoring in reading increases teachers awareness of students' current level of reading proficiency and has a positive effect on the instructional decisions teachers make.

**Supplemental instruction.** Woodward and Talbert-Johnson (2009) suggest that, schools may participate in separate, or pull-out, reading intervention programs.

The rationale for these programs may include targeting specific groups of students and reading interventions programs that are designed for individualized instruction away from the classroom. Students participating in small group instruction may benefit from the individualized attention and quiet setting. Students may also develop an increase in reading confidence by practicing specific skills and reading aloud with peers who share similar reading levels (Woodward & Talbert-Johnson, 2009).

McIntyre, Petrosko, Jones, Powell, Powers, Newsome, and Bright (2005) conducted a research study regarding supplemental instruction in early reading for struggling readers, this study evaluated phonics and reading comprehension achievement of children who received daily supplemental reading instruction. The study examined thirty-nine first grade students and 20 second grade students' achievement who received supplemental instruction. These students were compared with of children who did not receive supplemental instruction. The supplemental instruction lasted at least thirty minutes in addition to regular instruction, each day. The study did not find that first grade students had more knowledge of phonics after they received phonics instruction. However, students achieved significantly higher scores on the reading comprehension measure than students in the models without supplemental instruction. It is thought that the inclusion of supplemental instruction as an option for schools attempting to reach all students is fundamental.

Separate instruction has been associated with a negative connotation, dating back to when students were sorted into ability groups and assigned to special reading groups who would drill until mastery (Bean, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Primeaux, 2000). Other concerns about supplemental instruction include children who have reading difficulties and are pulled from their classroom for specific reading instruction (Bean, 2004). Another concern is that separate instruction tends to lack integration with the regular classroom, which in turn, may result in lack of communication among the teachers and reading specialists (Bean, 2004).

Struggling readers need support in addition to the core reading program implemented in the general education classroom. In order for struggling readers to maximize their success, reading interventions need to be provided as part of the curriculum. Providing reading interventions, either individually or in small group settings, allows struggling readers' individual needs to be addressed and supported by honing various aspects of reading (Gersten et al., 2008).

**Phonics and whole word instruction.** Struggling readers may need additional instruction in the area of phonics. Phonics instruction teaches the sounds that correspond to letters. Phonics instruction also involves teaching students to use skills to decode words. When students are able to decode words successfully, it facilitates word recognition skills. As students begin to develop word recognition skills, fluency will begin to develop. Phonics is a central aspect in beginning reading. Early attainment of decoding is a vital skill, and it can accurately predict

later skill in reading comprehension. There is strong and convincing evidence that suggests that children who get off to a slow start rarely become strong readers (Stanovich, 1986). If struggling readers are missing the phonics component, or are experiencing a deficit in phonics instruction, it is crucial to assess their strengths and needs, and tailor a program or intervention to meet the students individualized needs (Beck & Juel, 1995).

The National Reading Panel is a national panel that assesses the effectiveness of different approaches used to teach children to read. According to the experts who comprise the National Reading Panel (2000), phonics instruction is a way of teaching reading that emphasizes the acquisition, or attainment of letter-sound correspondences and their use in reading and spelling. Phonics approaches include systematic or incidental. The systematic phonics approach is sequential, delineated and taught along an aspect of specificity. In opposition, incidental phonics does not follow a planned sequence of phonics elements to guide instruction; rather, elements are highlighted opportunistically when they appear in text (National Reading Panel, 2000). Skinner (1958, 1965) developed the science of human behavior, known as behaviorism which viewed learning as a stimulus-response interaction.

Fresch (2008) asserted that a single approach is not a valid approach for everyone and that phonics instruction is imperative, as are meaning and fluency. Decoding analogies, which involves the onset and rime, and rime

analogy which involve key rhyming words to decode unknown words, help provide powerful ways to teach phonics. There are multitudes of ways to teach phonics meaningfully and it is vital to take into account individual differences in learning to decode words in order to best meet students' needs.

The National Reading Panel examined the research literature pertaining to phonics instruction, "the meta-analysis indicated that systemic phonics instruction enhances children's success in learning to read and that systematic phonics instruction is significantly more effective than instruction that teaches little or no phonics" (National Reading Panel 2000, p. 9). Systematic, synthetic phonics instruction is defined as, "teaching students explicitly to convert letters into sounds (phonemes) and then blend the sounds to form recognizable words" (National Reading Panel, p. 8).

The National Reading Panel (2000) suggested this instruction had a positive, significant effect on disabled readers' reading skills. These children improved considerably in their ability to read words and showed significant, though small, gains in their ability to process text as a result of systematic synthetic phonics instruction. This type of phonics instruction benefits both students with learning disabilities and low-achieving students who are not disabled. Systematic phonics instruction is designed to increase accuracy in decoding and word recognition skills, which in turn facilitate comprehension. It is salient to note that fluent and automatic application of phonics skills to text is a

critical skill that must be taught and learned to maximize oral reading and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Chard, Vaughn and Tyler (2002), indicated that students with significant reading difficulties tend to struggle with decoding and word-level reading, which greatly impairs their ability to comprehend what they read. Decoding accuracy is necessary, but not enough for proficient reading. Readers need to increase decoding skills to a level of automaticity. It is thought that higher-level aspects cannot be acquired until lower-level aspects have become automatized; therefore, achieving automaticity is a necessary skill, and part of the larger components of reading (Bryan & Harter, 1899; Laberge & Samuels, 1774).

In a small group decoding intervention for struggling readers conducted by Hudson, Isakson, Richman, Lane, and Arriaza-Allen (2011), they evaluated methods to improve decoding and reading fluency for struggling readers. The main purpose of the study was to test whether practice in lower-level skills (in the absence of text-level practice) would transfer to mid-level skills, such as decoding and the upper-level skills of oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. The study implemented small-group (2-4 students) decoding interventions for second grade struggling readers. Interventions targeted phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondences, and word families that compared accuracy and automaticity criteria. The students in the accuracy condition practiced each page until 98 percent accuracy was reached, while students in the accuracy +

automaticity conditions practiced until they reached a rate of 30-90 correct words per minute (cwpm) and accuracy criteria, of 98 percent. Two conditions were compared, repeated reading of a page of letter sounds and a page of words until an accuracy criterion of 98% was reached or repeated reading of the same materials until a rate and accuracy criterion of 30-90 cwpm was met. Both conditions used motivation through the use of goal setting, graphing progress and earning stars. Students in both practice conditions improved in overall levels of performance during the repeated reading intervention even though no connected text was used in the intervention. There was no difference between the two groups on decoding accuracy, reading comprehension, or text reading fluency at the end of the study. The students in the accuracy + automaticity practice condition improved more than the students in the accuracy condition on both measures of decoding automaticity. Results suggest the best instructional method may be a sequential combination of these approaches, beginning with a focus on accuracy and progressing to a focus on automaticity.

In another decoding study for poor readers conducted by McCandliss, Beck, Sandak, and Perfetti (2003), the focus of the intervention was on word building. The study was conducted in order to gain a better understanding of the cognitive reading skills of children who are poor decoders. The children demonstrated deficient decoding skills in the years following the first grade. The children demonstrated deficits in decoding, reading comprehension, and

phonemic awareness skills. Further examination of decoding revealed a pattern of accurate decoding of the first grapheme (letter of the alphabet) in a word, followed by relatively worse performance on subsequent vowels and consonants, suggesting that these children were not engaging in full alphabetic decoding. The children were randomly assigned to engage in intervention involving an after-school tutorial program that focused on decoding skills, specifically, word building. The intervention directed attention to each grapheme position within a word through a procedure of progressive minimal pairing of words that differed by one grapheme. The tutors were undergraduate students who participated in the study for credit or for an hourly wage; most tutor-student pairs remained constant during the intervention. Their progress was traced for twenty sessions, lasting approximately fifty minutes each, as frequently as three sessions per week. Results indicated significantly greater improvements in decoding attempts at all grapheme positions and also demonstrated significantly greater improvements in standardized measures of decoding, reading comprehension, and phonological awareness.

While there is much emphasis in teaching phonetics in reading, another approach to teaching reading is the whole word approach. Beck and Juel (1995) asserted the whole word approach (also known as sight word method or look-say approach) involves the idea that words are introduced to children as whole units without analysis of their sub-word parts. The concept is that with repeated

exposure to words, especially in meaningful contexts, it is expected that children will learn to read the words without any conscious attention to sub-word units (Beck & Juel, 1995). Gibson's work (1964, 1965) on word perception studied what students focused on when reading whole words. This research also supported the idea that there were sub-abilities, such as visual memory, that underlie reading, and therefore, researchers continued the search for underlying aspects of reading.

There has been much debate in regards to which way is best to teach reading. Some believed that the intensive, systematic, code-emphasis approach to phonics, in which children learned the sound-symbol relationship at the onset of first grade, is the best way to teach reading. Flesch (1955) held that the look-say method of reading instruction, prevalent at the time, was a contributor to reading difficulties for many students. He argued instead for the use of phonics-based instructional approaches. Others believed that by reading whole stories the children had dictated, students created their own system for learning words.

Levy and Lysynchuk (1997) compared the effectiveness of four different methods for acquiring initial reading vocabulary. The four training treatments were compared with a control group given only regular classroom instruction. The training emphasized phoneme segmentation and blending, simple repetition of whole words, similarity of word beginnings (onset plus vowel), or similarity of word endings (rimes). The results indicated that

beginning nonreaders acquired the trained words fastest in the onset and rime conditions, and most slowly in the whole word condition. Retention was excellent after one week and after four to six months, with no differences due to method of acquisition when only children who met the learning criterion were considered. The study also looked at generalization to reading new words and non-words to be 40% to 50% on the first encounter for all children who acquired the entire word set during learning. In the second experiment, the same pattern of results was obtained for delayed readers in grade two (Levy & Lysynchuk, 1997).

The First Grade Studies project was implemented to determine which method, phonics or whole word, was superior. Bond and Dykstra (1967/1997), who were the projects directors, found no “approach is so distinctly better in all situations and respects than the others that it should be considered the one best method and the one to be used exclusively” (p. 416). Carl Braun, who completed the statistical analysis of the studies, reiterated that there were no statistically different outcomes among the First Grade Studies. However, one interpretation that did influence the next decade was that a combination of approaches resulted in higher performance. Chall (1967) used her analysis of available studies and sustained that a code-emphasis approach or intense phonics was more effective than a meaning-emphasis approach or whole word approach.

Vellution and Scanlon (1986) trained poor and typical readers in second grade and sixth grade to read nonsense words composed from a novel, regular

alphabet. The groups were trained using a phonics method, a whole word method, or a combination of the two methods. They determined the best acquisition resulted from a combination of the two methods, but the best transfer to reading new items resulted from the phonics instruction. Vellution and Scanlon asserted that proficient readers required both whole word and phonics strategies, and that optimal early instruction might focus on whole word methods to start the reading process, with phonics added to improve analytic skills.

Once decoding of words is no longer the readers focus, because word reading has become automatic, readers can then change their attention or focus to becoming fluent readers.

**Fluency.** A generalized definition from the National Reading Panel defines fluent readers as those who are, “able to read orally with speed, accuracy, and proper expression” (National Reading Panel 2000, p. 11). In more detail, O’Connor, White, and Swanson found that fluency is comprised of several factors, including rate of reading, prosody, and attention to punctuation. More specifically, Kuhn established, reading fluency involves three components, which create a unified process: accuracy of decoding, automaticity of word recognition, and the appropriate use of prosodic features such as stress, pitch, and suitable phrasing (2005).

O’Connor, White & Swanson (2007) suggested that reading rate, automaticity of word recognition, prosody, and attention to punctuation are all

factors that bring words on a page to life. A fundamental component of fluency is automaticity. Automaticity involves quickly recognizing letters/words. When students have achieved automaticity, they are better able to focus on the meaning of what is being read. Similarly, the National Reading Panel determined if text is read in a laborious and ineffective manner, it will be difficult for the child to remember what has been read and to relate the ideas from the text to his or her background knowledge (2000).

Kuhn describes the process of fluent reading as more complex than reading words accurately and automatically; it incorporates expressive and meaningful rendering of text (2005). Fluency instruction is a vital component in reading, according to Kuhn (2004). Making certain that all students become fluent readers is one of the major goals of reading instruction; it is the combination of accuracy, automaticity, and prosody that makes oral reading sound like spoken language (Kuhn, 2004).

Essential components of reading fluency include reading practice, including guided repeated oral reading, which engages students in reading passages orally with systematic and explicit guidance and feedback from the teacher, and independent silent reading, in which students engage in reading silently on their own, with nominal guidance or feedback (National Reading Panel, 2000). On the foundation of a detailed analysis of the available research that met National Reading Panel methodological criteria, the Panel concluded that

guidance from teachers, parents, or peers, had a significant and positive impact on word recognition, fluency, and comprehension across a range of grade levels. These studies were conducted in a variety of classrooms in both regular and special education settings with teachers using widely available instructional materials (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Repeated reading has been studied as an intervention method to improve struggling reader's fluency. The following studies implemented repeated readings, as well as the implementation of other intervention methods, in order to best meet struggling readers' needs. Within the research, when reading interventions were implemented the results were greater than just hoping students will mature into better reading.

Kuhn (2004) implemented a small group study, in which a modified repeated-reading strategy, fluency-oriented oral reading (FOOR), and wide-reading approach. A wide-reading approach allows students to read equivalent amounts of non-repetitive text, (within a flexible group format, on their fluency development level). These strategies were thought to prompt both accurate and automatic word recognition, and prosody, among the students. The study also looked at growth in comprehension. The study participants included 24 second grade students who attended a low-to-middle socioeconomic status public school. Results found wide-reading and FOOR groups were able to identify a greater number of words in isolation, demonstrated greater growth in terms of number of

correct words per minute, and had more fluent reading according to assessment measures (TOWRE, QRI and NAEP) than did the listening-only or control groups. The students in the wide-reading group showed improved comprehension. Both methods were found to provide effective fluency-oriented instruction.

In a comparative research study done by Kuhn (2005), regarding small group fluency instruction, the study investigated the reading development of small groups of learners making the transition from intentional decoding to fluent reading. The students selected were chosen from three second grade classrooms that were randomly assigned, without replacement, to the various intervention strategies. The second grade students attended a low-to-middle-SES public school, where six struggling readers from each class participated as a cohort that made up four groups, for a total of twenty four students.

The intervention implementation took place over eighteen sessions during the course of a six-week period, excluding pre-and post-testing. Each group of students was instructed three times a week for 15-20 minutes sessions. The study implemented three intervention strategies: Repeated Reading, Wide Reading, and Listening Only. Findings indicate substantive differences in favor of the students in the Wide-Reading and Repeated Reading groups for word recognition in isolation, prosody, and correct words per minute and for the Wide Reading group in terms of comprehension.

O'Connor, White and Swanson (2007), evaluated two methods to improve struggling readers' fluency. The study's participants were poor readers in grades 2 and 4, with and without learning disabilities (of the 37 low-skilled students who completed the study, 16 were eligible for special education in the reading disabilities category). Students in the treatments practiced reading aloud under repeated reading or continuous reading. Repeated reading involves students reading a passage several times until achieving improvement in the rate of reading. Continuous reading consists of reading a range of materials that is thought to generate rate improvements rather than the repetition of text. The conditions involved an adult listener, to listen to students one-on-one, for 15 minute sessions, three days per week, for fourteen weeks. Students in the treatment conditions revealed significant differences in fluency and reading comprehension over students in the control (students in the control received no intervention from the research staff, however, five students received services through special education and two second graders participated in Title I supplemental group reading in their school). There were no significant differences between practice conditions. Although treated students outperformed the poor reader control, no significant differences were found between students who practiced repeated or continuous reading on their measure of reading rate.

Begeny and Silber (2006) suggested that reading fluency has been described as one of the essential ingredients for ensuring that students become

successful readers. Unfortunately, a large number of elementary-age students in this country do not fluently read age-appropriate materials. This study's authors did not feel it was practical or efficient to implement individualized programs; rather, small-group interventions were implemented. Also, very few small-group interventions have been developed to target students' reading fluency of connected text, or written materials with multiple words that structure thoughts. The study involved four participants who were in third grade, three students were male, three were African American and one was Hispanic. The major purpose of this study was to examine four group-based treatment packages containing two or more of the following reading interventions: repeated reading, listening passage preview, word list training, and practicing words in isolation. The data indicated the majority of the students made the strongest reading-fluency gains after receiving the full group-based intervention package (word list training, listening passage preview, and repeated reading) and all students made the most gains from this same intervention when measured approximately two days later.

There have been many research studies devoted to reading, and more specifically, reading fluency. When Kuhn and Stahl (2003), reviewed developmental and remedial fluency practices, they examined, or reviewed research findings and studies that dealt with improving the fluency of struggling readers. It was established that effective fluency instruction moves further than automatic word recognition, and includes expression or rhythm (what linguists

refer to as prosodic features of language). The idea that fluency instruction is generally effective was also discovered. However, the notion of why remains unclear, perhaps the specific instruction feature or because it involves children reading increased amounts of text. Also found was that assisted approaches appear more effective than non-assisted approaches. Assisted approaches build on independent learning, while non-assisted approaches provide the learner with a model of fluent reading behaviors. Last, repetitive approaches did not seem to hold an apparent benefit over non-repetitive approaches.

O'Connor et al. (2007) reported by improving speed and accuracy of reading words, students are then in turn able to dedicate their attention to understanding the meaning of text. This provides motivation for improving reading rate, due to the possibility that increased rate might enable improved reading comprehension (O'Connor et al., 2007). Similarly, Wright and Cleary (2006), assert that students with reading delays in the primary grades must first attain basic fluency in the decoding of text before they can efficiently comprehend the meaning of reading passages. The National Reading Panel (2000) recognized that fluent reading is an essential foundation skill of higher level comprehension. When decoding has become automatic, students are no longer forced to unlock meaning at the word level. Therefore, they can devote cognitive resources to understanding larger ideas conveyed through text (Wright & Cleary, 2006).

In contrast, O'Connor, White, and Swanson (2007), maintain that little evidence exists to support a causal connection between reading rate and comprehension. It is suggested that for rate improvement to influence comprehension, students need to be told to attend to the meaning of what they read. It is also suggested that it is difficult with the existing studies to explore a causal relationship between increased rate and reading comprehension because many experimental studies of reading rate are too short in duration to generate generalized improvements in fluency to new text.

**Comprehension.** The National Reading Panel (2000) indicated that comprehension is critical to the development of children's reading skills and therefore the ability to obtain an education. Durkin (1993) asserted, reading comprehension has come to be the "essence of reading, this includes academic learning and lifelong learning as well."

Walker (2003) suggested struggling readers need opportunities to read text and construct meaning in a social context that accounts for their individual differences. Recommendations include promoting social interaction so each teacher and student can serve as a more informed other, using individual differences, and focusing meaning, even when working on skills (Walker, 2003).

### **Summary**

To teach struggling readers, teachers need to implement varied instructional strategies and interventions. A significant amount of research has

been devoted to the area of reading. Begeny and Silber (2006) identified the essential components of reading instruction include: (a) understanding that the sounds of speech are associated with the letters of the alphabet, (b) having an appropriate vocabulary, (c) allowing sufficient practice in reading to promote fluency, and (d) teaching various reading-comprehension strategies.

In order to best meet struggling readers' diverse needs, interventions need to target areas that are deficits for students. Since reading is a complex process that gradually builds skills, it is crucial to assess and recognize struggling readers' skill levels, in order to provide the most beneficial reading instruction in the areas of need to help readers reach their potential and become successful readers.

## **Research Design and Methodology**

### **Introduction**

I conducted a 14-week study on providing reading interventions to help below level readers increase their reading skills. The students participated in interventions designed to strengthen their reading foundation. Interventions consisted of direct instruction to address phonics deficits and fluency interventions. Other methods and strategies were implemented based on students' needs, according to teacher observation and reflection. The main goal of my research study was to help students become better readers, or increase their reading skills.

### **Setting**

My research study took place within a rural Pennsylvania community where the socioeconomic status ranges from lower class to upper middle class. Within the district there are four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. The elementary school where my study took place is a kindergarten through fourth grade building, and there are about 288 students and 24 professional staff members. There are 97% white students, 2% Hispanic students, 1% Asian, 1% Black and 1% Other. There are 27% of students eligible for free lunch and 5% of students eligible for reduced lunch.

The school itself is an older building, dating back to the fifties. While the school building may be old, the main entrance glass doors are often painted by

students to welcome visitors. The halls are bursting with student artwork and class work. The technology continues to improve each year with the addition of a laptop cart housing 30 computers, classrooms with smart boards, and most recently classrooms with Epson boards.

This research study took place in a small group setting during the intervention/enrichment time period that lasts approximately 45 minutes, with second grade students. During this time period students are broken down into smaller groups. The groups are determined according to data, student need, and teacher input. This arrangement almost serves as a center type approach, within each grade level. I have observed most students excited to switch teachers, even for only a short 45 minutes.

The students in the study are special education students. You would not be able to tell these students apart from the other students. They appear to be treated just like any other student among their peers. The other students in the classroom do not seem to be able to distinguish that these students are special education students, or “different” from themselves. The students are integrated with their peers for all academic areas. I worked with them during the intervention time and they received small group testing. The students appeared happy and excited to be working with me, and working with each other.

### **Participants**

Two girls and one boy participated in this fourteen-week action research study. The study began with the two girls and, half way through, a boy joined our group. All three students were white. All the participants were in the second grade classroom and range from the ages of seven to eight years old. These students are identified utilizing the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) framework as being below level. Furthermore, they were all identified as students with learning disabilities, and received special education services. One student was identified with a learning disability, with the disability not being specified but her previous school and parents felt it was a disability in reading. One student was identified with a specific learning disability in written language. One student was identified with a specific learning disability in sight word recognition and fluency.

### **Procedures**

I carefully designed my data collection plan and submitted the proposal to the Human Subjects Internal Review Board (HSIRB) of Moravian College. Upon acceptance of the HSIRB, I then submitted my research consent form to my principal, who signed off and permitted me to begin my research study. The consent forms were distributed to the students, and all three sets of parents gave their consent for their children to participate.

The intervention consisted of a direct instruction program called, “SRA Reading Tutor” and a fluency intervention called “Read Naturally: One Minute

Reader.” The SRA “Reading Tutor” program was selected to be used because the district of my employment places an emphasis on using direct instruction programs with special education students. The Read Naturally “One Minute Reader” was selected to be implemented because I wanted to provide the students with high-interest, non-fiction reading passages. I felt these passages would be motivating and engaging to students. The other literacy activities such as, associating phonics sounds with words, “Pick-a-Word” game, read alouds, main idea mini-lesson, and phonics based stories with comprehension questions were selected based on the students’ needs. I was able to determine the needs of the students’ and provide these literacy activities by reviewing and reflecting on my field log. By utilizing these programs, as well as other literacy activities I was hoping to build the students foundation for learning how to read.

While these components of reading are critical in learning how to read, it is also important to read and be able to make meaning of what is read. Therefore, comprehension strategies were also addressed. While these two programs were essential in my intervention methods, it was also critical that I incorporated other strategies in order for students to gain the most comprehensive reading interventions, to have their needs met.

Implementation: The SRA “Reading Tutor” program was implemented during the intervention time period. This program builds on reading skills and addresses phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency. SRA reading tutor teaches

systematic, explicit phonics to teach students the relationship between letters of written language (graphemes) and the phonemes of spoken language. Irregular high frequency words are introduced and reviewed as part of the lesson. Fluency is practiced with short books and fluency passages that are practiced as part of the daily lesson. The program also has built in mastery tests to determine whether the student advances to the next master test, continues with the next lesson, or repeats the previous five lessons for remediation. Students are involved with the lesson within the small group context and given several opportunities for phonics practice, high-frequency words, and reading. (See Appendix D for a sample lesson)

In order to provide students with opportunities to apply phonics skills as well as authentic reading opportunities, a scientifically based program called, Read Naturally “One Minute Reader” was employed. This allowed me to continue to address fluency and begin to introduce the comprehension component, as well as comprehension strategies. The students made a prediction as to what we would be reading about. The teacher could have also built background knowledge, as necessary depending on the topic and students’ prior knowledge. The teacher timed each student for an initial read also referred to as a “cold” read. The scores were recorded on the board. After each student had done his or her cold read, the teacher conducted a mini-lesson on the miscued words. At the end of the story, the teacher would ask a few comprehension questions to check for

understanding. The teacher could also model comprehension strategies. Then, the students listened and read along with the story on CD three times, or until they learned all the words. During the repeated reading, the teacher had the students participate in choral or echo reading. The students practiced reading on their own. Goal setting was used to try to improve initial reading scores. Students were encouraged to try to “beat” their scores, while “reading like we talk,” also known as reading fluently. The teacher timed each student for a second time also known as a “hot” read. Then students took the quick quiz individually and we went over it together. The students were involved in a small group setting in order to be given an opportunity to read, learn miscued words, and to practice rereading the selection.

While these interventions were the essential components of the research study, other interventions were also employed in order to best meet each student’s needs. Other activities that students engaged in included word play activities, like making words and word reading games. The students were also engaged in listening to stories and other reading materials. The students would be working on the same skill, but for example, with word building, they would be building different words. If we were doing a game with word reading, they would each take turns picking different words, and reading them. Certain activities, for example, a read aloud, involved students listening to the story and being called on to answer different comprehension questions, as I modeled or scaffolded

comprehension strategies. These other various activities were implemented based on teacher observation of students during intervention times, and how deficits would be addressed in other ways.

The following is the time line of how the study was laid out:

I wrote my observations and reflections in my field log 3-5 times per week.

#### Week One

- Explained study to students, and handed out parent/guardian consent forms
- Collected parent/guardian consent forms
- Began baseline assessments: Dolch word lists, Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) and, Read Naturally One Minute Reader passage

#### Week Two

- Conducted reading interview
- Intervention began: the following would occur for every week of the study, and therefore, will not be listed every consecutive week.
- SRA Reading Tutor (direct instruction program)
- Read Naturally One Minute Reader (level 1)

#### Week Three

- Continued current intervention

#### Week Four

- Additional word play activities, including “What’s my Word” game

- Review of main idea
- Mini-story including sequencing and rhyming worksheet
- Mini-story & discussion of real and fantasy, sequencing and comprehension worksheet

#### Week Five

- Additional review of phonics sound combinations
- Making words activity
- Assessed study sight word vocabulary

#### Week Six

- Students read mini-book, “From Pumpkin to Jack-O-Lantern with comprehension questions
- Making words with “Happy Halloween” letters

#### Week Seven

- Extra review of all sound combinations/associated words
- New student joined us-review rules/procedures

#### Week 8

- “Pick-a-Word” game to help with application of phonics skills
- Sent/collected the new student’s consent form and assess for baseline data

#### Week 9

- “Pick-a-Word” game

- Word play/making
- Read aloud “Clifford’s First Thanksgiving” and story map

#### Week 10

- Additional Review of sounds and associated words
- Comprehension check, main idea
- “Pick-a-Word” game

#### Week 11

- Assess sight word vocabulary

#### Week 12

- “Pick-a-Word” game

#### Week 13

- Phonics quiz to assess skills
- Holiday read and color book

#### Week 14

- Additional review phonics/words skills
- Tried level 2 Read Naturally One Minute Reader story

### **Data Collection**

While gathering data over the course of my fourteen week study, I relied on several different methods in order “to lead to meaningful, accurate, and appropriate conclusions” (Hendricks, 2012, p. 71). I wanted to be sure that I collected a varied, appropriate amount of data to ensure I was able to represent

student progress and evaluate or reflect on my teaching practice properly. I also triangulated my data sources. This meant that I collected multiple sources of data to corroborate findings to increase the credibility of the findings (Hendricks, 2012). I collected data in forms of district bench mark assessment, field logs, interviews, sight words, reading assessment, checklists, and samples of student work.

**District Bench-Mark Assessment.** All students participated in school-wide benchmark testing, first in the Fall and then again in the Winter. STAR is a computer based benchmark assessment used to identify students who are above level, at level, and below level. The assessment data helped drive instruction and interventions. The benchmark data helped identify student strengths and weaknesses and where intervention needed to focus. The students were also progress monitored using the STAR assessment. This meant that every other week the students would take a reading assessment to measure the progress they were making in the area of reading. At the end of the study, I used the Fall benchmark and Winter benchmark to analyze progress, and the participants' scores before and after the study.

**Field log.** According to Hendricks, “field notes are kept throughout the study and include detailed information about implementation of the intervention, participant responses, and surprising events” (Hendricks, 2012, p 83). During the intervention time period, as I conducted the lesson, it was important for me to also

record any observations made regarding student behavior and conversation, in my field log. After the lesson, I reviewed the observations made and wrote my reflections to what I had previously observed. In my field log I recorded my observations and then I utilized brackets to distinguish my interpretations and reflections. This allowed me to closely monitor the intervention lessons taking place and decide if any changes needed to be implemented. This also allowed me to reflect on what I felt was beneficial to the students and continue implementation.

**Interviews.** I conducted student interviews to gain some insights on how students felt about reading and their attitude towards reading. I wanted to discover what students like/dislike about reading, what types of books/stories they enjoy reading and, how often reading is done at home. I created my interview based on the relevant literature that I read and my teaching experience. Before I gave the interview to students, I also submitted it to education professors to receive feedback.

**Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI).** The students' reading level was assessed at the beginning of the study using the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI). The QRI was administered individually to each student. I began with the word lists, and then administered a non-fiction reading passage with the accompanying questions. This allowed me to obtain the students' reading level, in order to provide appropriate instructional interventions.

**Word Lists.** As we worked on reading skills, or reading various words, I kept a record of words the student read and did not read correctly. This allowed me to assess students by observing their performance. It also allowed me to keep track of a student's progress through the study. When using lists with words, I was able to determine whether students met the established criteria on a task and if they were able to apply phonics skills to read the words.

**Student work.** There was a variety of samples of student work that I collected throughout my study. I selected student reading passages where cold (initial reading) and hot (passage was listened to and practiced) reading scores would be recorded. This would allow students to see the gains made through echo, repeated, and choral reading. I also selected some "quick quiz" samples that students completed after reading passages. These displayed the students comprehension on the passage read. Through these samples I determine student growth, progress made and patterns indicating areas of strength or need.

### **Trustworthiness Statement**

I came to pursue my thesis line of inquiry because each year I noticed the students that I was assigned had difficulty reading. Many of these students would be included in the general education classroom, and while the curriculum exposed great skills and strategies, it simply was not enough for struggling readers. Instead of simply reading the story five more times, and coaching the students to do well on the test, I wanted to provide meaningful reading instruction to help students become successful readers.

As a teacher action researcher, I am committed to the concept of trustworthiness as a vital component of my study. In the beginning stages of planning, my academic advisor reviewed and approved my study. I also prepared my data collection instruments ahead of time. My study did not begin until I received approval from the Human Subjects Internal Review Board (HSIRB) of Moravian College. Upon acceptance of the HSIRB, I then submitted my research consent form to my principal (Appendix A), who signed off and permitted me to begin my research study. I then distributed a second consent form (Appendix B) for students to take home to be signed by parents or legal guardians. It is important for parents to be aware of the action research study, understand the purpose of my study, and provide informed consent for study participation.

Before consent forms were distributed the study was explained to the students. It was of the utmost importance that students were all treated equally

and that their parents or legal guardians understood that they were allowed to withdraw at any time without penalty. I did not include any non-participant information in my field log or in my final written thesis. All student information and documentation was kept in a secure location and to ensure anonymity, I assigned each student a pseudonym.

According to Hendricks (2012) it is imperative to make clear any researcher bias and identify how such biases relate to their observations and reflections. As a special education teacher and action researcher, I brought with me certain beliefs that may have impacted my study. I believe that special education students with reading difficulty need additional instruction or interventions in reading, in addition to their core regular education reading program. I feel these students need a strong foundation established to develop the skills they need to be successful readers. I also believe that, due to this additional support, the students should show growth or progress in reading. In my study, I included what I felt was needed in order for the students to be successful, which included direct instruction, phonics instruction, and high-interest non-fiction reading passages. It was my hope that these passages would engage the students and they would perform better. I expected these factors to have a positive impact on my study. I needed to remain open to the fact that my students may show growth or progress due to several different factors. I needed to accurately observe and record my researcher findings. I also needed to keep my students' needs first

and foremost, and make adjustments to my interventions as necessary, based on my observations and reflections.

I also engaged in various steps to increase validity. For example, I made sure to triangulate my data sources. I was able to engage in persistent and prolonged observations (Hendricks, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) due to the fact that my study lasted approximately fourteen weeks. I recorded my observations in a detailed field log, which enabled me to record my data accurately. I also engaged in continuous, ongoing reflective planning. According to Hendricks, a teacher researcher must continually reflect on what is occurring during the study and make changes to the research plan as necessary. Engaging in ongoing reflective planning allows teacher researchers to change collection data strategies based on experiences during the data collection phase (Hendricks, 2012). I also analyzed negative case studies, which was shared in my research reporting.

Additionally, I utilized peer debriefing in the form of a teacher researcher inquiry support group to discuss the study with other professionals who were not involved in the study. The inquiry support group met once a week, for approximately one and a half hours, for thirteen weeks. Peer debriefing allows colleagues to discuss alternative interpretations, help point out biases, and assist in formulating new directions for ongoing study (Hendricks, 2012). This allowed me to share insights and receive various feedback on my research study. In order to be ethical, I kept the participants' needs first and foremost, consistently

reflecting and making appropriate changes to the study to ensure each student was having his or her needs met.

### **My Story**

Another summer had come and gone, and here we were at the end of August. Ready or not, the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year was upon us. My small classroom was set up, calendar intact, posters hung and my desk was organized (at least for now). In the days before the school year officially started, for the students that is, I learned that I would have another second grade student on my caseload. Phew, that makes two second grade students, I felt some relief. At least now I have two possible students for my study. Thankfully my study involved small group instruction. Many thoughts flooded my head. “What if their parents didn’t sign the consent forms?” “What if their needs weren’t similar?” “Will I be able to collect enough data from only two students?” “Will people who read my study question the effectiveness due to the fact I only worked with two students?” I felt a lot of uncertainty. While my study is important, I needed to remember that my students are more important, they are why I’m here.

The first week or two were a bit hectic. The students were learning the rules, adjusting to new teachers, new classroom climates and trying to break free of the “summer time” mode, that we become all too familiar with. Within the first three weeks of the school year we are assessing students using our district wide benchmark assessment, STAR. This is a computer based assessment that measures students’ reading and mathematics skills. It also groups, or labels, students into a few categories: at/above benchmark, on watch, intervention or

urgent intervention. These groups determine the intervention/enrichment groups for the beginning of the year. While the assessment does provide useful information and data, it is somewhat disheartening to me because most of my students typically fall under the urgent intervention or intervention category. I particularly like the challenge of diagnosing the students' deficits and prescribing interventions to try to see if gains are made. My reservations set in when I see the students making progress, yet, they remain at the bottom of the list in the same categories.

### **Introduction**

When I brought Cara (pseudonym) and Katie (pseudonym) to my room to hand out my parent/guardian consent forms, I wanted to give them some information on what we would be working on this year. I had already worked with Cara for a few months last year, but Katie was a new student to the district. Her family had moved over the summer and I wanted to be sure to welcome her to our school. I told the students we would be working together every day, usually on some reading skills, but sometimes on other things too, like math. I was surprised by Katie's response. As innocent as could be she said, "I'm not good at reading. My dad says I'm not really that good. That's why I'm in second grade, I should be in third. I was already in second grade at my other school." I was aware of her parents' decision to hold her back and have her repeat second grade, I was just surprised by her knowledge and openness about the topic, sometimes in

the primary grades there are no reservations. I responded, “I’m sure you’re a good reader, and we are going to be practicing reading a lot this year to get even better!” I must confess it is very important to me to encourage a child, and raise them up when they seem down.

I needed to introduce my study and so I wanted to be open and honest with the students. I told them I would be giving them a paper to take home and have it signed. I then explained the paper by telling them I’m taking classes at a college to help me become a better teacher. The look on both girls faces were precious, “teachers go to school, too?” Cara said. I explained that all teachers need to go to college to become a teacher, and then once you’re a teacher, you can go back to school to keep learning new things, because it is always important to keep learning new things. Both girls seemed to want to be a part of this study and I was excited to be conducting such meaningful research. I explained to them that during our time together I would be writing things down to help me remember what we did for my class. I also wanted to be sure to tell them if their parent(s) did not want them to be a part of the study, they would still get to do everything. I just would not write about them. Both forms did come back that each student would participate, and now we were officially ready to begin.

### **Where do we begin?**

**Katie**

I always like to attempt to get an idea of the skills my students have, as well as the skills they don't have. Katie is new to the school, and she came to me with an evaluation report and active Individualized Education Program (IEP) which I already previewed. Some pertinent information I was able to take from these documents is that she qualified for special education services due to a specific learning disability. The disability category was not listed, but, the documents stated she qualifies for special education due to failing reading. At her previous school her benchmark scores indicated she was at risk/deficient/intensive support.

I wanted to assess Katie to find an approximate reading level, comprehension level and sight word level. I began with sight words and even if she was able to self-correct the word I circled it because I believe sight words need to be automatic. Therefore, if they are not read correctly on the first attempt, they should be practiced so the student can become stronger. The results were: she had read 38/40 pre-primer Dolch words correctly, 46/52 primer Dolch words correctly and on the first grade Dolch list she had 38/41. From this data, I made a word ring. I wrote each word the student read incorrectly, on an index card and punched a hole in the top corner. I then slid a ring around all the words. This would go home nightly for practice and each morning we would go over the word ring.

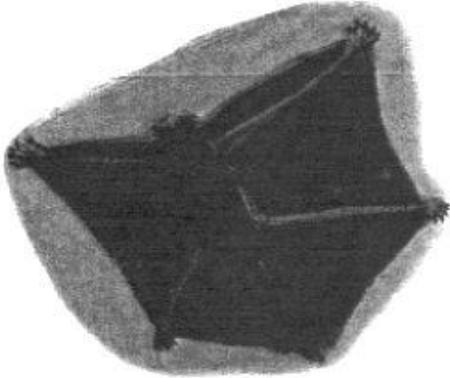
I also administered a Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI). I began with the word lists and found the first level to be instructional and the second level to be at frustration level. From this information I administered the level one non-fiction passage. She read 32 words per minute with 90% accuracy. I was surprised that her miscues were the maximum for the instructional level (i.e. one more miscue and she would have been at the frustration level). The instructional level is the ideal level that instruction would be provided, the frustration level was too difficult. Her comprehension was at the instructional level, she was able to answer 5 out of 6 questions correct, and she missed the implicit question. I always like to take some observational notes to include with the QRI. This allows me to record not only what I notice, but some areas to direct my future interventions. It is also helpful to compare beginning of the year and end of year progress. I documented: "Needs to focus on reading correct word (not first word that comes to mind), she lacks fluency skills (she had a very long passage time)." Some skills to address during intervention were as follows: more phonics/advanced phonics skills, strategies of what good readers do (i.e. look for parts of words, ask yourself if the word makes sense) and work on building fluency. I also observed that she needed prompting to state the main idea, and she did not sequence the story details in a logical sequential order. Rather, she listed them in random order.

I always like to make sure that the instructional level I found to be is accurate and I also like to have at least two samples to include in a student's IEP. Therefore, I decided to administer a level one Read Naturally One Minute Reader. This particular story was called, "Flying Lemurs." She was able to read 37 correct words per minute with 92% accuracy. She answered 4 out of 5 comprehension questions correctly, she answered 4 multiple choice questions correctly and the open-end question incorrectly, (see Figure 1a-b). I noticed the same type of characteristics present as when she had previously read for the QRI. My student profile of Katie is complete and we are almost ready to start the intervention.

Level 1

Track 8.18  
**38**

## Flying Lemurs



Prediction:  
Flying  
Lemurs  
how they  
fly.

13 It is a <sup>many</sup> mammal the size of a cat. But it is not  
 27 a cat. It <sup>leaves</sup> lives up in a tree. It can't fly. But it can  
 38 jump far. It jumps from <sup>far</sup> tree to tree. What is it?  
 43 It is a flying lemur. <sup>it</sup>

51 Where can you find flying lemurs? You can  
 60 find them in the rainforest. They would be fun  
 69 to see. <sup>then</sup>

77 You could see them eat. They love to eat.  
 79 They eat leaves. They like <sup>coconut</sup> coconut leaves best.  
 88 They <sup>then</sup> pull the leaves <sup>cover</sup> off the trees with their  
 97 teeth. It's a good thing their teeth are strong.

106 You could see them jump. It looks like <sup>then</sup> they  
 118 are flying!

words read \_\_\_\_\_  
 errors \_\_\_\_\_  
 score \_\_\_\_\_

107 words  
 9 errors  
 2:36 time

7

37 wpm  
 92% acc.

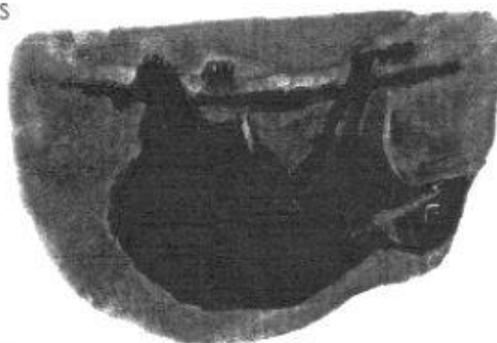
Figure 1a. Katie: Flying Lemurs Baseline Passage



## Quick Quiz

4/5 80%

9. What is most of *Flying Lemurs* about?  
 b. what to do in the rainforest  
 c. what coconut leaves taste like  
 d. mammals called flying lemurs
10. How big are flying lemurs?  
 f. the size of cats  
 g. the size of coconuts  
 h. the size of trees
11. What is a rainforest?  
 q. a thunderstorm  
 r. a jungle or hot, wet forest  
 s. a kind of pet store
12. Why does it look like flying lemurs are flying?  
 s. They jump far from tree to tree.  
 t. They have feathers and beaks.  
 u. They are birds.



- ✓ Talk about what you learned  
 Where can you find coconut trees? How do you know?  
 In Florida and sometimes in the jungle

Figure 1b. Katie: Flying Lemurs Baseline Questions

**Student Profile: Cara**

I worked with Cara for a short two months last year. We would typically spend our intervention time reviewing words from the reading series, reviewing spelling words, and trying to reinforce some phonics skills. Cara was identified as needing special education services due to a disability in written language. I found this to be true, but also found that she struggled academically with reading (benchmark testing also verified this to be true). Even before Cara and I started to work together she was being taken for reading tests on a one-on-one setting. One of the advantages of my position is, because it is kindergarten through fourth grade, in many or most cases I get to continue to work with the same students throughout their elementary experience.

I started with the Dolch word lists, once again, and even if she was able to self-correct the word, I circled it because, as stated earlier, I believe sight words need to be automatic. Therefore, if they are not read correctly on the first attempt, they should be practiced so the student can become stronger. The results were: she had had read 39/40 pre-primer Dolch words correctly, 48/52 primer Dolch words correctly and on the first grade list she had 36/41. I made a word ring, with these words, for her to practice nightly.

Next, we moved forward with the QRI word lists. Once again, I found the first level to be instructional and the second level to be at the frustration level. From this information I administered the level one non-fiction passage. She read

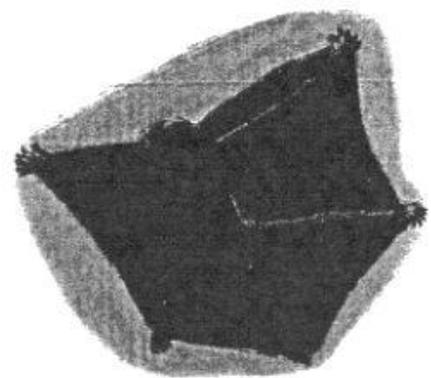
50 words per minute with 93% accuracy. She was able to answer 4 out of 6 comprehension questions correctly, which indicated an instructional level (she missed the explicit questions). The observations I made while Cara was reading were as follows, “Made guesses at words she didn’t know. She didn’t try to sound out most words she didn’t know. Rather she guessed the words, often times by the letter they began with.” I also observed she needs practice with explicit questions, main idea and details.

I have one more passage to go to provide you with an accurate profile. I also administered the “Flying Lemurs” passage to Cara. The results were as follows: 50 correct words per minute, 93% accuracy and comprehension questions were 4 out of 5, missing the open-ended question, (see Figure 1c-d).

Trace 8-10

38

# Flying Lemurs



Prediction it will be about flying lemurs - used picture \* title?

13 It is a mammal the size of a cat. But it is not  
 27 a cat. It lives up in a tree. It can't fly. But it can  
 36 jump far. It jumps from tree to tree. What is it?  
 43 It is a flying lemur.

43 Where can you find flying lemurs? You can  
 52 find them in the rainforest. They would be fun  
 60 to see.

62 You could see them eat. They love to eat.  
 71 They eat leaves. They like coconut leaves best.  
 74 They pull the leaves off the trees with their  
 88 teeth. It's a good thing their teeth are strong.

97 You could see them jump. It looks like they  
 106 are flying!

1.58

49x100 = 5:40  
118

Edwards 93% acc

106 words  
7 errors  
99

Figure 1c. Cara: Flying Lemurs Baseline Passage

### Quick Quiz

- 9. What is most of *Flying Lemurs* about?
  - b. what to do in the rainforest
  - c. what coconut leaves taste like
  - d. mammals called flying lemurs
  
- 10. How big are flying lemurs?
  - f. the size of cats
  - g. the size of coconuts
  - h. the size of trees
  
- 11. What is a rainforest?
  - q. a thunderstorm
  - r. a jungle or hot, wet forest
  - s. a kind of pet store
  
- 12. Why does it look like flying lemurs are flying?
  - s. They jump far from tree to tree.
  - t. They have feathers and beaks.
  - u. They are birds.



Did not go back use ✓ Talk about what you learned  
 Where can you find coconut trees? How do you know? Florida because they have seeds for coconuts. #  
 the story, just guessed.

Figure 1d. Cara: Flying Lemurs Baseline Questions

I must tell you I almost jumped for joy with how similar, and yet unique these students' profiles were. I felt confident that I could provide meaningful interventions in order to capitalize on each student's strength, and help address their areas of need. Now I still need to decide where exactly I'm going to start and how I'm going to build on each intervention. Not to mention I feel a little anxious. Can we get everything accomplished that I have set out, or need to get done? If there is one thing I have learned, it's that time is always of the essence.

### **It's Interview Time...**

I was ready to officially start the study. The first data gathering method I utilized, other than my baseline assessments, was my reading interview (see Appendix C). I decided an interview would be beneficial because it would foster interaction between me and the students. I pulled the students individually in the morning so I was able to conduct the interview one on one.

First let me begin by describing Katie's survey, which somewhat surprised me. She had been so candid earlier I thought she might describe more about repeating second grade or that some other insecurity might prevail. When I asked if reading was important she did say, "Yes, because if you don't read and you grow up, you won't know how to read and people might make fun of you." She expressed that the worst thing about reading is when "you get stuck on something" and that "sometimes it's easy to understand what is read when there is easy words but sometimes it is hard when there is really big words." She also

indicated that reading tests are hard because you have to read parts by yourself and figure out the answer. I was eager to hear that she enjoys reading with a teacher the best (rather than reading with a partner or alone), and her reasoning was because the teachers know all the words. She also expressed her favorite thing to do in reading class is to read out loud to the class because your friends get to know you better and everyone hears your voice. I found this to be surprising. I had thought, due to pure assumption, that struggling readers usually don't like to read to the class for fear their peers would make fun of them. The areas that made me feel hopeful that Katie would be engaged in the intervention time period were that she would get to read with me, which should be a positive reinforcement according to her survey and that, she would get to read aloud to her peer. I had hopes the girls would work well together. I also hope to build Katie's confidence and provide skills to help her figure out those "hard" words.

Next, I interviewed Cara. She indicated to me that reading is fun because you get to read and look at pictures. When I asked her the worst thing about reading, she simply stated, "nothing." I thought to myself, really? Are you just telling me what I want to hear? Perhaps that is how she truly feels. Only time would tell. She indicated that reading is important because, "You need to learn to read, it helps you be smart." One aspect that was somewhat confusing to me was when I asked her what the easiest thing for her is in reading class, and she told me "coloring." I had to prompt her to answer the question, and then she was able to

respond by telling me it was easy for her to read and understand the stories. I wondered if this was her true perception, does she really believe that she understands the stories. I wondered if she realized there are stories and things she doesn't understand or if she was one of those students' who *thinks* she understands things, but in reality does not. The interview went on and she indicated she liked to read with a teacher the best. However, she indicated in reading class she liked to read by herself because it is fun. I'm hoping she would enjoy reading aloud during intervention time.

I was delighted with the information I was able to get from the students during these interviews. However, part of me still wanted to know more; part of me wanted to have these students figured out. Looking back, I wish I would have asked for the types of things they liked to read about rather than asking about their favorite books, because I think I could have used that as a motivator to help engage the students in reading. With that being said, now isn't a time I should be looking back, because we need to move forward, and so we continue.

### **It's Research Time...**

It was week two of the study. Finally, it was time to begin the intervention. I remember thinking, where should I start with this direct instruction SRA Reading Tutor program? This is usually a program that should be done one on one, but that isn't going to happen. One-on-one numbers aren't very realistic in schools these days; at least when it comes to providing reading interventions. I

decided to use some of the built in mastery tests to get an idea of where we should start. I decided to start a few lessons back in order to provide more of a review, and to help students start off with more success, in attempt to help build their confidence level. It was apparent that both students knew their letter sounds, or, in other words, they both had basic phonics skills. However, when it came to digraphs, two letters that make up a single sound, there was an apparent deficit. I could not allow myself to continue with the rest of the direct instruction lesson because I felt I needed to take this in another direction. These girls needed extra practice reading words with digraphs, and that is what we did. Now, I understand that they aren't going to have this skill mastered by the end of our lesson today, but they need more exposure and more opportunities to practice these words. I wrote some words on the board for the students to take turns reading (examples include: thin, chop, shop, chin, shell, chick, ship, chain, shelf, thread, throat, thrill, shake, three, watch). I quickly came to realize if the teacher just follows the "script" it may mean students are not going to get what they need. I found myself evaluating or assessing, to determine if I felt more practice was necessary before moving on.

The next day we completed our SRA Reading Tutor lesson and I introduced our Read Naturally "One Minute Reader." Our story was called "We Need Bees". I told the students they would read the story and any "tricky" words would go on the board so we can practice them. I also told the students we would

listen to the story on CD three times and then we would get a chance to read again. Our goal would be to get fewer words wrong, and beat our first scores—but we are not racing to read, we must read like we talk. Both students seemed to be excited to read. I gave the students a highlighter strip to help them keep their place when reading, and to assist them in following along as the other was reading. I had both students read the entire passage and I recorded the miscues. The reading didn't go very smoothly. I remember my concern with how many errors there were. Cara's miscues were: still, plants, fruit, need, nectar, flies, another, leaves. Her time was 1:49. Katie's miscues were: plants, new, grow, its body, flies, another, leaves, some, pollen. Her time was 2:10. The mini-lesson was on word attack skills, we studied the long vowels, focusing on two vowels together and looking for small words to help us read out words. I tried to contemplate why this didn't go as well as I would have hoped. Am I expecting too much? Are they nervous to read aloud? Perhaps it was simply due to this new "method" or procedure. Anytime something new is introduced to students there always comes a stage of acquisition. The students listened along with the CD, and they seemed to be able to the story, which sometimes is a very difficult task for students. They listened twice, on the third time I had them practice reading with the CD. I noticed that Katie was sometimes reading ahead of the CD and Cara wasn't always reading with the CD. I continued to prompt them to keep them on task. When it came time to reread the story (this would be referred to as

our “hot” read), Cara read it in 1:25 without any mistakes. I found this to be quite impressive, especially considering how many words she had wrong initially.

Katie read the story in 1:52 with one mistake, leaves. I was truly impressed! The progress made was wonderful to see. I did have some uncertainties, and I wondered how the repeated reading would help with their overall reading success. I would hope they would make gains since it was the same story and it was practiced, but would this progress transfer to help them become better readers? I guess only time would tell. We ran out of time for what I refer to as the quick quiz. This is five comprehension questions, four multiple choice and one open ended question that accompanies the stories.

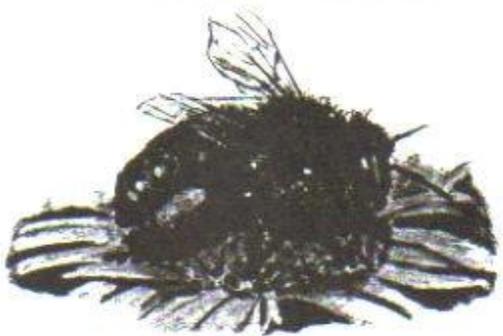
Today we began by reviewing the story, “We Need Bees” because we still have to complete our comprehension questions. Cara got 3 out of 4 questions correct, and Katie got 4 out of 4 questions correct. When it came time to the open ended question, I knew I needed to provide some scaffolding in order to help the students be able to answer the question. The question was, “What would happen if there weren’t any bees?” I encouraged the girls to go back in the passage and look for hints, and provided prompting questions orally. Both students did a nice job of answering the question, but, I did take off half a point from Katie’s response because she started her written response with “we would die”. Overall, I was pleased with the girls’ comprehension on the story. I also detected that while Cara seems to have better fluency, her comprehension is slightly lower. Katie on

the other hand, has slightly lower fluency but her comprehension is a little higher.

I thought this was interesting because from my understanding, being a fluent reader leads to better comprehension. This is something I want to continue to monitor (see Figure 2a-2d).



# We Need Bees



10 Do you like honey? If you do, you should  
like **bees**. Bees make honey.

14 Maybe you don't like honey. Should you still  
22 like bees? You should if you like **plants** and  
31 **trees**. You should if you like **fruit**.

38 We **need** bees. Bees **help** new plants to  
46 **grow**. Bees help plants make fruit. How do  
54 bees help?

56 A bee **lands** on a **flower**. It wants **pollen**  
65 from the flower. It wants **nectar** too. The  
73 pollen gets on its **body**. It flies to another  
82 flower. It **leaves** some pollen from the last  
90 flower on the new one. Now the flower can  
99 make fruit. It makes **seeds** to grow more  
108 plants.

Still  
Plant  
fruit  
need  
nectar  
flies  
149

51 wcpm

not read  
1.25  
no mistakes  
(76 wcpm)

Figure 2a. Cara: We Need Bees Passage

## Quick Quiz

4/5

1. What is most of *We Need Bees* about?
  - d. how most people do not like bees
  - e. how we need bees for plants, fruit, and honey
  - f. how bees make their homes and their honey
  
2. What do bees want from flowers?
  - r. honey and leaves
  - s. fruit and seeds
  - t. pollen and nectar
  
3. What does honey mean in this story?
  - m. a name for a sweet person
  - n. something bees make that people can eat
  - o. a kind of bee
  
- ✓ 4. How do bees help flowers make fruit?
  - u. Bees leave pollen on the flowers.
  - v. Bees give honey to the flowers.
  - w. Bees make their homes in the flowers.



**Talk about what you learned**

What would happen if there weren't any bees?

Figure 2b. Cara: We Need Bees Questions

---

I would find one and  
make honey!

We would not have  
money. We may not  
have plants and fruit.

*Figure 2b.* Cara: We Need Bees Questions continued

Tracks 2-4  
36

# We Need Bees



10 Do you like honey? If you do, you should  
like **bees**. Bees make honey.

14 Maybe you don't like honey. Should you still  
22 like bees? You should if you like **plants** and  
31 **trees**. You should if you like **fruit**.

38 We **need** bees. Bees **help** new plants to  
46 **grow**. Bees help plants make fruit. How do  
54 bees help?

56 A bee **lands** on a **flower**. It wants **pollen**  
65 from the flower. It wants **nectar** too. The  
73 pollen gets on its **body**. It flies to another  
82 flower. It **leaves** some pollen from the last  
90 flower on the new one. Now the flower can  
99 make fruit. It makes **seeds** to grow more  
108 plants.

Plants  
now  
grow  
its  
body  
flies  
another  
leaves some  
pollen 2.10

45 cwpm

hot read  
57  
1.52  
leaves

Figure 2c. Katie: We Need Bees Passage



## Quick Quiz

4.5/5

- ✓1. What is most of *We Need Bees* about?
- d. how most people do not like bees
- e. how we need bees for plants, fruit, and honey
- f. how bees make their homes and their honey
- ✓2. What do bees want from flowers?
- r. honey and leaves
- s. fruit and seeds
- t. pollen and nectar
- ✓3. What does honey mean in this story?
- m. a name for a sweet person
- n. something bees make that people can eat
- o. a kind of bee
- ✓4. How do bees help flowers make fruit?
- u. Bees leave pollen on the flowers.
- v. Bees give honey to the flowers.
- w. Bees make their homes in the flowers.



Talk about what you learned

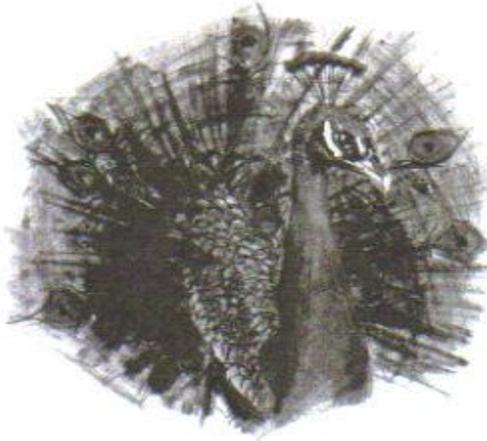
- What would happen if there weren't any bees? -1/2
- We will die and will not have fruit.
- We may not have plants. We would not have honey.

Figure 2d. Katie: We Need Bees Questions

To finish the second week of the study, our second story called, “Peacocks and Peahens” I decided to change the procedures slightly. Perhaps this was done prematurely, but I felt I needed to experiment with another method and then decide which would be more effective. This time I decided to time the students for one minute (rather than having them read the entire story, as we had previously done). Cara read 64 words correct (1 error: purple) and Katie read 69 words (1 error). I already felt the lesson going much smoother. It is hard to know if it’s because this method works a little more effectively, if the students learned the expectations, or perhaps this story was a little easier. Honestly, the reason didn’t matter much to me at that particular moment. I was just excited that things were going better and it set my mind at ease. After listening to the story and practicing, Cara read 100 words correct, no mistakes and Katie read 91 words correct with one mistake: her. I found that both students enjoyed the story, and they were on task and following along. They seemed very proud of their improvements and I tried to stress how well they did! I remember thinking how one of the major goals I wanted to accomplish is focusing on the girls’ improvement, and these improvements were something they could see with each lesson. When it came time for the quiz, Katie was unable to take it because she was going home early, but Cara answered 4 out of 5 questions correctly. It looks like we are off to a good start! (See Figure 3a-3c)

# Peacocks and Peahens

(31)



10 He is a bird. He has big feathers. They can  
 19 be lots of colors. Some are purple and green.  
 28 Some are blue and red. They have dots on  
 36 them. The dots shine in the sun. Who is this  
 pretty bird? He is a peacock.

44 He knows he is pretty. He walks tall. He  
 53 shows off his feathers. He opens them up. They  
 62 look like a fan.

66 Why does he show off? He sees a peahen.  
 75 He wants her to be his mate.

82 The peahen is not as pretty. Her feathers are  
 91 brown. They do not shine. But she is a proud  
 101 bird too.

103  
 words read  
 - correct  
 = score  
 65  
 (64) fine

not read  
 100  
 \* 1-3  
 m. (222)

Figure 3a. Cara: Peacocks and Peahens Passage



## Quick Quiz <sup>4/5</sup>

5. What is most of *Peacocks and Peahens* about?
- d. colors of peacock feathers
  - e. what peacocks and peahens are like
  - f. what a peahen looks like
6. Which bird is pretty?
- a. the peahen
  - b. the peacock
  - c. none of the birds
7. What does **pretty** mean in this story?
- t. nice to look at
  - u. mostly
  - v. opened up like a fan
8. What is pretty about the peacock?
- s. his eyes
  - t. his beak
  - u. his feathers



**Talk about what you learned**

How are peacocks and peahens the same? How are they different?

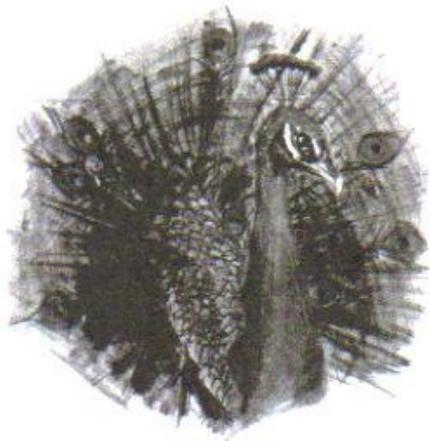
Figure 3b. Cara: Peacocks and Peahens Questions

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one is brown. Peahen one is  
purple and green. Peacock Thry bot  
brst.

*Figure 3b.* Cara: Peacocks and Peahens Questions Continued

# Peacocks and Peahens (31)



10 He is a bird. He has big feathers. They can  
 19 be lots of colors. Some are purple and green.  
 28 Some are blue and red. They have dots on  
 38 them. The dots shine in the sun. Who is this  
 44 pretty bird? He is a peacock.

53 He knows he is pretty. He walks tall. He  
 62 shows off his feathers. He opens them up. They  
 66 look like a fan.

75 Why does he show off? He sees a peahen.  
 82 He wants her to be his mate.

91 The peahen is not as pretty. Her feathers are  
 101 brown. They do not shine. But she is a proud  
 103 bird too. \*

words read: 71  
 correct score: 71  
 (69) them them 5 91 her

Figure 3c. Katie: Peacocks and Peahens Passage

**Here We Go...**

There we were, off and running on my research study. The intervention consisted of two major components to try to provide a strong foundation for reading, the direct instruction component and the fluency component. Understanding the multifaceted process of reading, it was critical that I consistently observed and reflected on the interventions.

During my constant observation and reflection of the students during our SRA Reading Tutor direct instruction lessons, I noticed I was worried the students weren't grasping the topics. Part of me thought, this intervention should be instructional, but, if they knew all the phonics skills already, it would most likely not be at their instructional level. I also thought about my experience working with special needs students, and how often an ample amount of practice is required for them to grasp what is being presented. I found myself reflecting and reviewing my field notes. Some insights that stood out were:

“I noticed some of the CVCe (consonant vowel consonant with a silent e on the end) words the students have trouble with (examples include wake, rule, tote). They need more repetition and practice getting familiar with the different vowels and silent e on the end.”

“Today's lesson introduced the ou blend, the students seem to have a difficult time with this blend.”

There was my key. In order for the students to make meaning of these phonics skills that were presented, they needed words to associate with them. For example, the ou alone was meaningless. However, if I could present ou as in the

word out, and write this on the board, the students could take meaning and see the connection. If they were stuck on the sound ou makes, they would hopefully remember the word out. I thought as they became familiar with the sound, and as they encounter words with ou, they would be better able to read them with automaticity and accuracy. What a perfect example that a teacher must not simply teach the script of the direct instruction lesson. There still needs to be thought and reflection in order for students' needs to be met.

Another aspect I was concerned with was the students', especially Cara's, word reading skills. She needed some prompting to be able to remember to apply the phonics skills when reading words. One reflection I had was, "I think as we continue to practice these more difficult words, the students will acquire the skills necessary to identify these words on their own. I can tell they are sounding out the words and thinking about it, but they don't always remember to apply the rule that applies to the words." The problem was I didn't feel the SRA reading tutor program provided enough opportunities for word reading practice. This meant my intervention needed intervention, or further varied interventions to meet the students' needs.

I managed to squeeze some additional word play activities in, as time allowed, and as I felt appropriate. I can remember one session where we had extra time, probably about five to seven minutes to be exact. I decided to turn some word reading into a game, "What's my Word?" I simply wrote a word on

the board. These words contained the phonics skills we had been practicing, and more importantly, the phonics skills the students needed more practice with. At one particular time the students were having trouble mixing up long and short vowels, so these were the words we practiced. Some examples included: game, tape, gate, lake, vase, man, cat, pan, cup, dive, bike, vine, pine, slide, drive, fish, give, line, pin, ride, crib, note, rose, robe, stove, and stone. Cara had some difficulty at first. The word was cap. “Does that have a long a?” she asked. “Is there an e on the end?” I responded. She then knew to read it correctly. When she read the word note, she read it with a short o. When I prompted her to look at the end, “look there’s an e, what does that tell us?” Then, she was able to read the word correctly. Towards the end of our game she seemed to catch on a little better. I remember feeling hopeful, “She just needs to continue with the repetition of the skills and practice applying the skills and she will catch on with the more exposure she gets to these words.”

An additional strategy I incorporated into our intervention time together was to provide additional review of phonics. Sometimes the students would not be strong with particular blends and I wanted to continue to practice these daily, even if it wasn’t printed in the manual. I thought it was important to incorporate consistent review because I felt the repetition would help the students.

### **Word Building**

As the study continued, my observation and reflections indicated that the students seemed to struggle in the area of phonics. I decided it would be best to shift instruction from the Read Naturally One Minute Reader, to making words. I wanted to provide the students with a hands-on activity that allowed them to manipulate with letters and sounds to make words, and read these words. I thought the students had some experience with making words, but I wanted to start by modeling. I started with –at and provided modeling and scaffolding, showing how to start with easy words and then go on to build more difficult words. I decided to assign Cara –ch and Katie –ar. They seemed to be two of the more difficult combinations for them, so I thought if they would have an opportunity to manipulate letters, perhaps they could make different words and more connections to these letter combinations. I passed out white boards, a marker, and magnetic letters. Katie seemed really excited with this activity; she dove right in and got to work. Cara, on the other hand had, a puzzled look on her face.

MRS. FISCHER: “Cara, are you ready to get started?”

CARA: “I don’t know any –ch words”

I thought perhaps she needed more scaffolding to help get her started. I guided her to start with ch at the beginning of the word.

MRS. FISCHER: “What can we add after the ch to make a word?”

She looked puzzled.

MRS. FISCHER: “Can I add the small word at?”

She nodded.

MRS. FISCHER: "What word will I make?"

CARA: "chat."

MRS. FISCHER: "Very good!" I tried to praise her efforts to help her get started and keep going.

MRS. FISCHER: "What if I keep the ch, and take away the -at. What other letter can I put her to make a word?"

She looked at me.

MRS. FISCHER: "Can you use another small word? Could you use -ip?"

CARA: "Yes, I would have chip."

MRS. FISCHER: "Very good work! Why don't you try one on your own? I will be here if you need help. I'm going to check to see how Katie's doing."

Katie was off to a good start. She was moving around the letters, writing the words on her board. She had tar, car, and part so far. She seemed so excited to be coming up with words. I went over to Cara and she had two more words written down. She had: cheet and cheef. I asked her what her words were. She replied cheat and chief. I explained to her the way those were tricky words that were spelled a little different. I could tell she wasn't thrilled with this activity.

CARA: "This is hard"

She had a discouraged look on her face.

MRS. FISCHER "It will get easier as we practice."

She seemed to want to make some difficult words, but wasn't sure where to start or how to spell them. I helped her with the rest of the activity. When we

had about five minutes left, each student took turns reading me their words. I recorded each word on a word list and we read these words together for additional practice.

The next day I thought it would be a good idea to continue to make words. This time, Katie had ai and Cara had oa. These combinations had been in our SRA reading tutor lesson, but I had noticed the students were still a little weak with these two combinations. So, I wanted to provide some more practice with these combinations. Katie looked excited to get to make words, while in contrast, Cara did not look too thrilled. Before even trying to make a word, Cara said, “this is hard.” I tried to prompt and encourage her. “This is what we worked on yesterday. Why don’t you try to start with our –oa word” I said. She was able to come up with oat. I praised her and told her to try some more, prompting her to think about what she can add to the front of oat to make another word. I went to check in with Katie, who was doing a great job making words. Cara seemed to be working a little better. When it was time for us to go over the words each student had, Katie had: snail, pail, nail, mail, jail, fail, rail, train, hail, tail, chair, chain, chaise. Cara had: oat, coat, boat, goat, foam, and float. I recorded these on a larger paper and then we read over all the words together. While this activity was a bit difficult for Cara, I think it just took her out of her comfort zone. It did go better than the previous day. It also taught me I shouldn’t assume students are

familiar with a particular activity. Perhaps with more practice, she would feel more success.

### **Getting Back into the Groove...**

Due to a storm, we had missed three days of school. Our schedule was quite disrupted, and Halloween was right around the corner. I decided to provide the students with a nonfiction read and color book, called “From Pumpkin to Jack-O-Lantern.” I knew there were some tricky words in here, but I wanted to challenge the students to see how they would do. I also wanted an opportunity to model some comprehension strategies and provide questions to aid comprehension. Cara had some difficulty reading sprouts, vine, blossoms, and fertile. Katie had some difficulty reading pollinated, earth, and goop. I questioned throughout the story, to aid comprehension and they were able to answer my questions. At the end of the story there were 6 multiple choice questions, Katie answered 5 questions correct, but Cara only answered 4 questions correct. This was worrisome to me, as she typically does better. There could have been many factors as to why she did poorly. Perhaps it’s because we have been out of school 3 days, maybe she wasn’t focused, and maybe she didn’t try as hard as she usually does, or perhaps she just didn’t understand the story as well as I thought she did. I wanted to be sure to keep an eye on her and how she was doing. Both girls seemed to really enjoy the story. Katie shared with us that

they roast pumpkin seeds. Both girls said they enjoy decorating pumpkins at Halloween time.

The next day we had a shortened schedule, due to Halloween festivities. I decided it would be a fun idea to take the making words skill we have been working on by taking the phrase Happy Halloween and breaking apart those letters to make all different words. I decided to give each student their own letters, but we would work together. I recorded the words on the board as they came up with them. I started by giving the girls some prompts to start out small, maybe two or three letter words and then build larger words. I was very pleased with how well this activity went! The words the students came up with were: a, no, he, we, new, hen, pan, pal, why, all, wall, well, pale, play, wheel, heal, honey. I gave them some prompts and assistance to come up with the larger word, Happy Halloween. The girls seemed to really enjoy working together to make words. I knew Cara had been struggling with this concept a little more than Katie but she seemed a little more confident working within the group to come up with some words. I thought they both worked hard moving the letters around to try to form new words. This made me realize perhaps I should start with this as an introductory activity to build students confidence to make words.

### **The Halfway Mark...Already**

As we approached week seven of the study, we were able to get back into our routine and begin a new SRA reading tutor lesson. I still noticed Cara needed

some prompts to read words. She struggled with *tore* and *stair*. Once I prompted her by pointing out the phonics rule, she was able to read both words. While I would like her to be able to apply these rules on her own, I do think she needs to continue to practice and with time she would keep improving. Since we hadn't had an SRA lesson for a while, I decided it would be a good idea to review all of our sounds and the words we associate with these sounds. We then transitioned to our Read Naturally One Minute Reader. I was impressed by Cara's score. She read 65 words correct per minute for her cold read and then with practice she read 86 words correct per minute for her hot read. Katie also did a nice job, reading 42 words correct per minute for her cold read and improving to 62 correct words per minute for her hot read. I found it interesting that Cara sometimes struggles to read the words and Katie doesn't, yet her fluency scores are usually always higher than Katie's. It really serves as a reminder how complex learning how to read is and the importance of providing students with a variety of interventions to help meet their needs.

I would like to display the students' progress towards the Read Naturally One Minute Readers, thus far (see Table 1 and Table 2). The initial read, also known as the cold read, is indicated as well as the hot read, also known as the second read. This is done after the students have listened to the story and had opportunities for practice. Both are indicated on the graphs. The students have read a total of seven stories thus far (see Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1

*Cara's Read Naturally Progress*

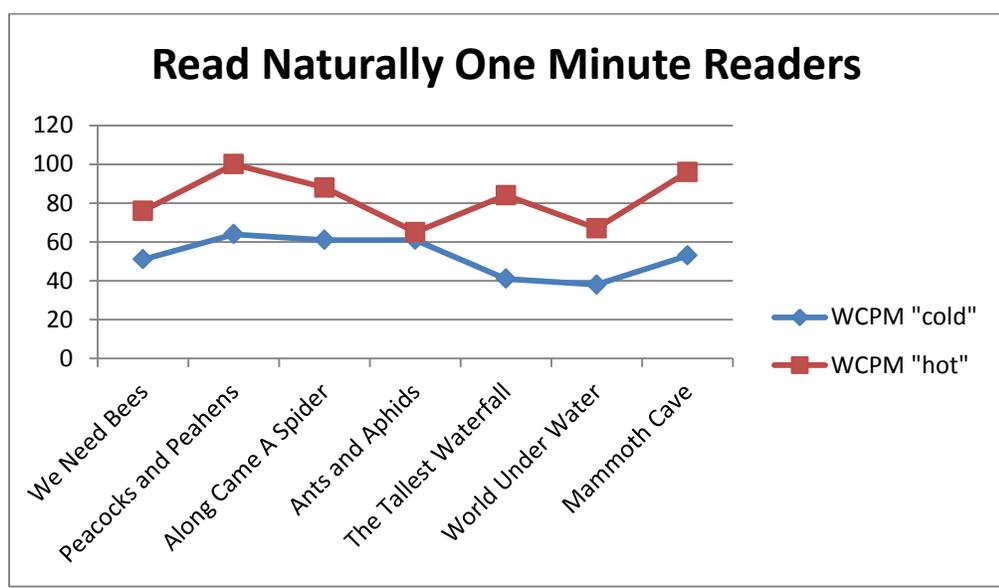
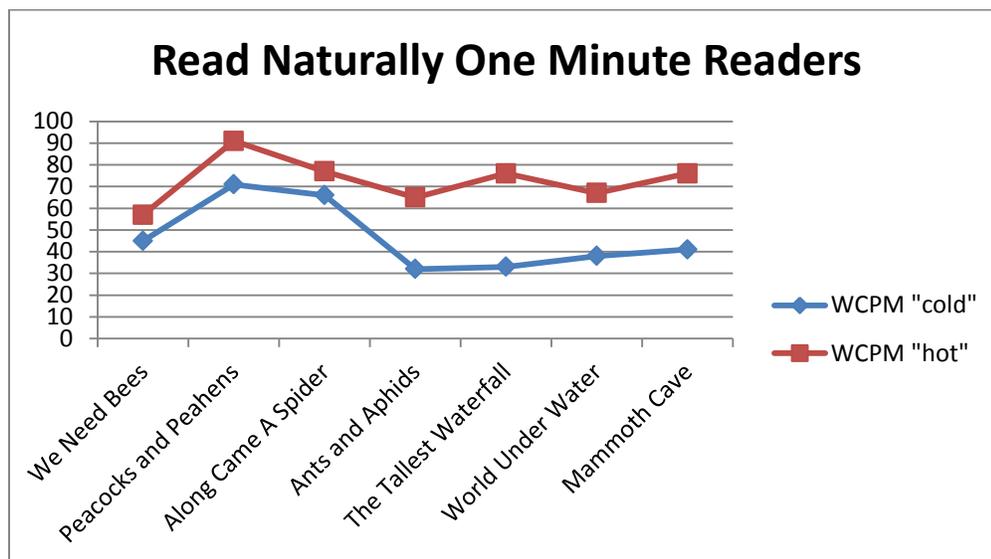


Table 2

*Katie's Read Naturally Progress***A New Student Joins In**

Just when you think you are into a routine and your procedures are established, things change. There was a new second grade student who just moved to our school who was recently evaluated and determined to need special education services. I will refer to him as Chris (pseudonym). Of course his paperwork had not made it to the school yet so we would play it by ear and see how things went. He joined our intervention group his first day, and it just so happened that Cara was absent. I decided we needed to take some time to go over our rules and procedures. I spent more time going over our SRA lesson, in order

to help Chris get acclimated to our group. This would also allow me to observe how he would do with the lesson. I noticed immediately his SRA fluency passage time was a lot longer than either of the other students. It took him 2 minutes and 47 seconds to read the passage, whereas Katie's first day it took her 1:47 and Cara's first day was 2 minutes. I noticed he seemed to have a hard time following along, even with using a highlighter strip. I wanted to finish our Read Naturally story from yesterday called "Sea of Sand" so I decided to have the students listen to the story on CD and follow along. I could notice Chris having a difficult time following along with the story once again. When we were done listening to the story, I decided we would choral read the story together. Once again, I noticed Chris having a difficult time following along and keeping his pace during the choral read. When it came time for the questions, Katie and Chris answered all four multiple choice comprehension questions correctly. I decided it would be a good idea to work through the open ended response question together. Katie was able to give me an excellent start to our sentence. I was very proud of her! I prompted both students to go back to the story to look for the keywords to answer the question. Katie was able to locate the answer and put it in her own words. Chris needed some additional help to find the answer and had a difficult time formulating a sentence (see Figure 4a-d). After the lesson, as I reflected over my observations, I wondered what type of interventions Chris was getting at his old school. It also made me wonder if Cara and Katie were progressing so nicely

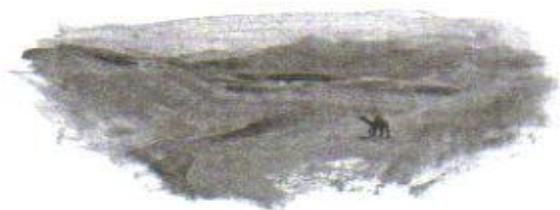
due to the fact that they have been receiving interventions based on their needs, in order to help them find some success in reading.

Intervention was cancelled for the day due to Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) meetings. That meant I needed to do two SRA reading tutor lessons. Cara was still absent, which was quite worrisome because she had been doing so well, but when she's not here it makes it difficult to stay on track. We spent a lot of time coming up with words for our sounds, we worked through this together. The students seem to be having a difficult time with oi, ol and oy so I wanted to focus on these sounds a little more. Chris's score did go up on the SRA fluency passage, Katie's didn't go up.

The next day after our SRA lesson and mastery test we started a new Read Naturally One Minute Reader, "Sea of Sand." It was only Katie and Chris, Cara was still absent. This would be Chris's first full Read Naturally lesson. I made sure to also include a choral read during this lesson because I felt Chris could really benefit from this. Once again I noticed him having a difficult time following along with the story and trying to read with Katie and myself. I thought this would be a skill he would need to continue to practice. He started by reading 40 correct words per minute, he had two errors, size and not. He was able to improve his score to 66 correct words per minute, with one error, sand. I was glad he was able to improve his score, and I'm anxious to see what his paperwork says.

# Sea of Sand

Page 11-15  
**24**



9 The United States is a big place. Can you  
16 imagine a **desert** of that **size**? Then you can  
26 imagine the Sahara desert. It is the world's  
largest hot desert.

29 The Sahara gets very little rain. In some  
37 places, it might not rain for **years**. **Few** plants  
46 can grow there. So **sand** and rocks cover the  
55 Sahara. Wind blows the sand into **dunes**. The  
63 dunes are big hills. They look like **waves**. They  
72 make the desert look like a brown **sea**. Dunes  
81 can be very **large**. Some are over 1,000 **feet**  
90 tall.

94 Sometimes a **storm** comes. The sand blows  
96 fast. It is **hard** to see. It is hard to get air. The  
105 sand can cover people. Some have died.

115 Life in the Sahara is not **easy**. **Still**, plants live  
120 there. Animals live there. People live there too.

*cold*  
*42*  
*ewpm*  
*United*  
*imagine*  
*Sahara, largest, might*

*71*  
*dunes*

Figure 4a. Katie: Sea of Sand Passage

## Quick Quiz

13. What is most of *Sea of Sand* about?  
 t. the world's largest hot desert  
 u. the size of the United States  
 v. how sand dunes are made
14. What covers the Sahara?  
 b. sand and rocks  
 c. many plants  
 d. lots of animals
15. What does **desert** mean in this story?  
 a. a very dry place  
 b. sweet food  
 c. to leave a place
16. Why is it hard to get air during a storm in the Sahara?  
 s. because the sand dunes are so tall  
 t. because there is so much blowing sand  
 u. because the desert looks like a brown sea



X Talk about what you learned

Why isn't life in the Sahara easy?

life in the Sahara isn't easy  
 because you can die there

Figure 4b. Katie: Sea of Sand Questions

Topic 11.1

24

# Sea of Sand



The United States is a big place. Can you imagine a desert of that size? Then you can imagine the Sahara desert. It is the world's largest hot desert.

The Sahara gets very little rain. In some places, it might not rain for years. Few plants can grow there. So sand and rocks cover the Sahara. Wind blows the sand into dunes. The dunes are big hills. They look like waves. They make the desert look like a brown sea. Dunes can be very large. Some are over 1,000 feet tall.

Sometimes a storm comes. The sand blows fast. It is hard to see. It is hard to get air. The sand can cover people. Some have died.

Life in the Sahara is not easy. Still, plants live there. Animals live there. People live there too.

Cold  
40  
Cwpm  
size  
not

40 66  
sand

Figure 4c. Chris: Sea of Sand Passage

## Quick Quiz

13. What is most of *Sea of Sand* about?  
 t. the world's largest hot desert  
 u. the size of the United States  
 v. how sand dunes are made
14. What covers the Sahara?  
 b. sand and rocks  
 c. many plants  
 d. lots of animals
15. What does **desert** mean in this story?  
 a. a very dry place  
 b. sweet food  
 c. to leave a place
16. Why is it hard to get air during a storm in the Sahara?  
 s. because the sand dunes are so tall  
 t. because there is so much blowing sand  
 u. because the desert looks like a brown sea



Talk about what you learned

Why isn't life in the Sahara easy?

Life in the Sahara is not easy because there is so much blowing sand.

Figure 4d. Chris: Sea of Sand Questions

**Student Profile: Chris**

I finally received an evaluation report on Chris. The report indicated that Chris has a specific learning disability in reading as it relates to sight word vocabulary and fluency. I felt as if I received a piece of the puzzle, this is why he is having a difficult time following along during choral reading and why his fluency scores are lower. The report also indicated Chris struggled through first grade and continued to struggle through the beginning of second grade. He received instruction in the remedial classroom for all academic areas. I wasn't quite sure what this meant, especially because he was just identified and did not have an IEP yet. I had also heard that Chris's parents felt they should have held him back in first grade instead of going to second grade because how greatly he struggled in reading. I knew it was my duty to provide him with interventions to help him find some success in reading.

When I began assessing Chris to receive a baseline, once again, I started with my Dolch sight word lists. Chris scored 36 out of 40, which is 85% accuracy on the pre-primer words. Next, I gave him the primer word list. He scored 39 out of 52, which is 75% accuracy. I decided to stop there for now. This gave me a nice amount of words for him to practice. Now it was time to try to QRI word lists. On the pre-primer list he read 80% of the words correctly. On the primer level he read 70% of the words correctly. After reading some of his paper work, I anticipated this because of his disability regarding sight word vocabulary. This

was somewhat worrisome to me because he was lower than the other students in our intervention group. I decided to try a level one story to see how he would do, and because this was the level of our current intervention stories. He was able to read 25 words correct per minute, with 87% accuracy. I was also pleased to see he answered 4 out of 5 comprehension questions correctly. The one question he missed was an explicit question. I did notice that his fluency was lacking, but yet, it didn't seem to impact his comprehension. It does appear that reading is a laborious task for him, due to lack of phonics, word attack skills, and sight word vocabulary. He does need additional instruction in stating the main idea and supporting details.

I also administered the Read Naturally One Minute Reader passage, "Flying Lemurs." I was pleasantly surprised; he was able to read the passage with 85% accuracy. He read 30 words correct per minute and answered 4 out of 5 comprehension questions correctly. He missed the open-ended question. This made me feel hopeful. I really felt he could handle the level one passages. While he may be a little lower than the other students, and he probably should have passages at the primer level, I thought he would fit into the group appropriately. I have the lowest level intervention group and that was where Chris was placed. In a perfect world he would have been at the same level of the other students but, unfortunately, it doesn't always work out that way. I would have to see how he

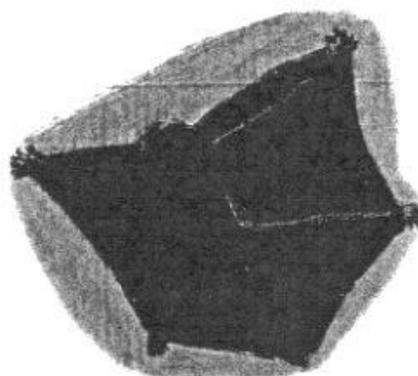
does with these interventions and adjust instruction accordingly (see Figure 5a-b).

Read Naturally - ONE Minute Readers - Level 1

Traces 8-10

38

# Flying Lemurs



Prediction  
it is  
a  
flying  
lemur

13 It is a mammal the size of a cat. But it is not  
27 a cat. It lives up in a tree. It can't fly. But it can  
38 jump far. It jumps from tree to tree. What is it?  
It is a flying lemur.

43 Where can you find flying lemurs? You can  
51 find them in the rainforest. They would be fun  
60 to see.

62 You could see them eat. They love to eat.  
71 They eat leaves. They like coconut leaves best.  
79 They pull the leaves off the trees with their  
88 teeth. It's a good thing their teeth are strong.

97 You could see them jump. It looks like they  
106 are flying!

107 words  
15  
92 85% acc

words read  
15  
107

3:06  
92x60 5520  
156  
30wepm

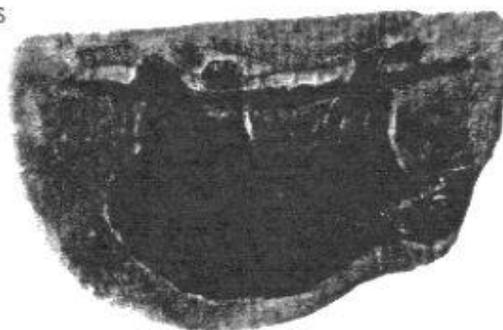
Figure 5a. Chris: Flying Lemurs Baseline Passage

## Quick Quiz

9. What is most of *Flying Lemurs* about?  
 b. what to do in the rainforest  
 c. what coconut leaves taste like  
 d. mammals called flying lemurs

4/5

10. How big are flying lemurs?  
 f. the size of cats  
 g. the size of coconuts  
 h. the size of trees



11. What is a rainforest?  
 q. a thunderstorm  
 r. a jungle or hot, wet forest  
 s. a kind of pet store

12. Why does it look like flying lemurs are flying?  
 s. They jump far from tree to tree.  
 t. They have feathers and beaks.  
 u. They are birds.

### Talk about what you learned

Where can you find coconut trees? How do you know? Where flying lemurs are if you go to them they might bite you

Figure 5b. Chris: Flying Lemurs Baseline Question

### **Our Small Group of Three**

It was a brand new week, and we were finally able to hold our intervention group with three students! I did take some time to review all of our sounds and the words we associate with each sound. I could tell Cara was a little rusty, but the other students were doing well. When we moved on to word reading, Cara and Chris needed some prompts to help them figure out the words.

Mid-week we had a fire drill right before our intervention time, therefore, some intervention time was lost. I reflected how the students had a difficult time with this transition. They seemed very unsettled and needed several redirections to keep them on task during our SRA reading tutor lesson. When it came time to listen to our new story, the students really seemed to settle and calm down. I made a side note in my field log that I wanted to include some read alouds especially during the holidays when our schedule becomes hectic.

The next day I made a side note that I wanted to make more of an effort to include more application of word reading during our intervention time. I really felt that the students needed more opportunities to practice the phonics skills we work on. I found that I still needed to provide prompts to help them figure out the words, I was hoping it would be more automatic by this time.

The next day, I decided to do our “pick-a-word” game. I chose the phonics sounds: oy, oi, o, oa, ow, ar, ur, ir and er. Boy was I impressed with the students effort! It is amazing what turning something into a game can do! The

students were trying so hard, and using their phonics skills to sound out the words. I had noticed sometimes during our lessons, when they see a word they don't know they would just guess. Well, that wasn't happening here. They seemed so engaged and so proud to keep the words they read correctly. At the end of the game the look on their faces was priceless. "Miss Amorim, I read 10 words!" exclaimed Chris. "Me too!" exclaimed Cara and Katie. The students read the following words correctly (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Pick-a-Word Game Words Read by Student*

Student	Words Read
Cara	coin, fur, mark, march, soil, toad, load, third, bow, boy
Chris	curl, car, boil, flow, part, grow, charm, dark, fern, Roy
Katie	coy, burn, shirt, flow, sharp, hurt, float, jar, barn, point

As we approached a new week, we had shortened intervention due to parent teacher conferences. After our SRA Reading tutor lesson, we finished our "pick-a-word" game (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Pick-a-Word Game Words Read by Student*

Student	Words Read
Cara	ABSENT
Chris	Park, dirt, boil, toy, yard (needed prompt), soak (needed prompt), low, toast, so, far, hard
Katie	Her, join, blow, croak (needed prompt), Troy, bird, slow, coat, throw (self-corrected-said through), blur, roast

I reflected that I believe an activity like this is more effective than the skill and drill worksheet method. The students were on task and engaged in this activity and even started to sort out their words by the phonics sounds! I believe that this kind of activity provides the students with more opportunities to practice the phonics skills we had been learning.

The next day we did some word play activities on the board. I did this with ay, oy, and igh because the students did not seem very strong with these sound combinations. We started with ay, I asked the students what would happen if I put s in front of ay. They were able to respond, say. I did the same for the following: ray, bay, day, jay. I repeated this process for oy: toy, boy, soy, joy and

igh: high, sight, height, fight, light, might. Then, we did “pick-a-word” with some new sounds and words (see Table 5).

Table 5

*Pick-a-Word Game Words Read by Student*

Student	Words Read
Cara	smart, turn, row, start, farm, perch (self-corrected, first said parch), broil, oak
Chris	no, burst, star, crow, herb, joy, coil, first
Katie	Herd, goat, soy, throat, soap, girl, skirt (she really tried and used her phonics skills for this word), join

The last day before Thanksgiving break had arrived. I anticipated that the students would be a bit more distractible. As I reviewed my field log, I remember reflecting upon how listening to a story really settled the students. I decided this would be a great activity to do before the break. This would also allow me to infuse some comprehension strategies. I decided to read, “Clifford’s First Thanksgiving.” The students seemed beyond excited when they saw the book! We started with a prediction. Each student did a nice job using the title and picture on the front of the book. Katie predicted that he would spend

Thanksgiving with his family. Cara predicted that he would have good things to eat. Chris predicted that Clifford would probably get in trouble because that is what he usually does.

I started to read the story and modeled some think-aloud skills, such as; I wonder what he will do next. I also added in some questioning strategies to make sure the students understood the story. When we were done with the story, I led the students through the story map. I wasn't sure that they had ever used a graphic organizer like this so I wanted to be sure to provide enough support. I called on each student for different questions and they really did a nice job reciting the answers. The most difficult part for them was what happened, it was a little difficult for them to tell me in a logical, sequential order so I made sure to provide scaffolding to help them stay on the right track. When we finished, the students were so proud of their work. Cara even said, "I can't wait to take this paper so I can show my mom." This was a truly joyous moment. Not only was she proud of her hard work, she was excited to share it. It was joyous for me as well. To see the look on the students' faces with true excitement in response to these reading activities was beyond words. I thought about how I have branched out and included a variety of different activities during our intervention time. Before, I used to think all interventions needed to be explicit instruction in order for the students to increase their reading skills. But this day, as well as many previous ones, proved me wrong. I felt more confident and could see the

engagement and enjoyment on the students faces with the variety of tasks we were completing (see Figure 6).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## My Story Map

<b>Who?</b> Clifford  Emily Clifford Mom	<b>Where?</b> In the yard,  then, the city.
<b>Problem or Goal:</b> Clifford missed his mom and he wanted to see her for Thanksgiving.	
finally got to his mom.	<b>What happened?</b> He decided to go to the city to see his mom. He bumped into cars on the highway. He fell drawbridge opened. He went into a tunnel and had to push a train. When he got to the city he ran into the parade. Then he
<b>How did it end?</b> He had Thanksgiving with his mom. Then he went back home to Emily.	

Figure 6. Cara's Story Map

### **We Are Back**

Trying to get back into the groove can be challenging. Since we were coming back from a few days off, I thought it would be best to take some extra time to review previous SRA Reading Tutor lessons. We also reviewed the words we associate with our phonics sounds and I also decided to have the students read some sound rhyme books to reinforce phonics skills. The rhyme books reinforced the sounds ed, ay, ow, ight.

As the phonics skills continued to become harder, I continued to notice the students still needed prompting to see the combinations. As we reviewed some phonics combinations and the words associated with these combinations, I noticed Katie used our word cause to figure out the word because. I heard her said au as in cause, and I watched her look at the blackboard as she said it. Yay! I thought. I also called on Cara for the aw combination, because she usually has trouble with it, and she got it today. Yay again! We did our pick-a-word game to continue practice applying these skills (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Pick-a-Word Game Words Read by Student*

Student	Words Read
Cara	Mall, hall, foot, lay, wait, main, clay, crook, mail, say, walk, book, chalk, brain, spray. (She did miss a word, brook was upset she missed it)
Chris	ABSENT
Katie	Fall, all, wall, wool, soot, took, fail, hay, pay, play, tray, sail, laid, snail, raw, draw.

It was still somewhat amazing to me that I was concerned the students were not able to apply their phonics skills and then we played a game and they read all or most the words without any issues!

As we continued with our Read Naturally One Minute Readers, I noticed that the students seemed to struggle with the main idea. I knew this is a comprehension skill addressed in second grade and the students would benefit from more practice in our intervention time. I decided to provide some extra practice pages on the main idea to help the students with this skill (see Figure 7a-c).

ABCDEF GHIJKL

**Main Ideas About Meals** \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

◆ **Directions:** Read each story to find the main idea. Fill in the circle beside the phrase that tells the main idea.

**Open Wide!**  
 An anteater slowly walked up to a log. Many ants were inside the log. The anteater put on a bib. Then, she laid a plate and a big spoon down on the ground. She began to eat and eat. When she was finished, she had eaten 30,000 ants!

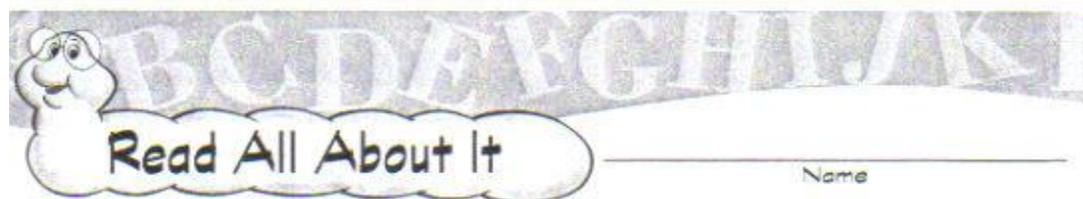
many ants  
 a log on the ground  
 a hungry anteater

**Bite Down!**  
 It's a good thing that Rollo Rabbit likes to chew. He nibbles on carrots, lettuce, and cabbage all day long. Every time he chews, he wears down his teeth. If Rollo did not chew so much, his front teeth could grow to be ten feet long!

good vegetables  
 wearing down teeth  
 a fluffy rabbit

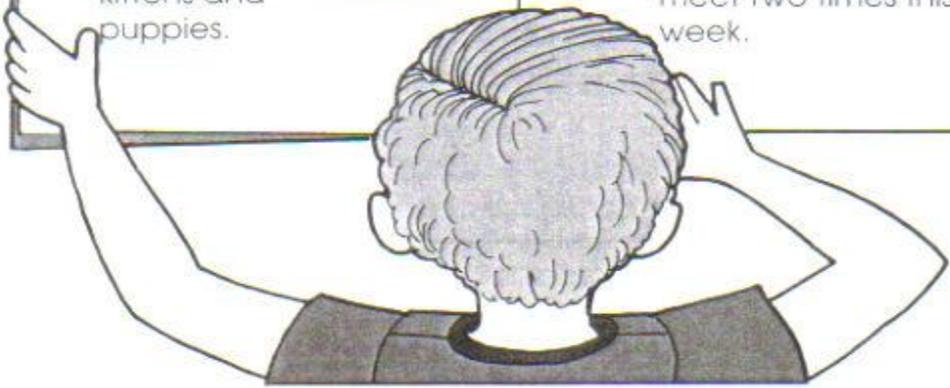
Main Idea  150 © 2001 McGraw Hill Education. All Rights Reserved

Figure 7a. Cara: Main Idea Paper



- ◆ **Directions:** Read each part of the paper. Fill in the circle beside the sentence that tells the main idea.

 <p><b>Hundreds Enjoy Town Carnival</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Many people had fun at the carnival.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> The carnival was not a success.</p>	<p><b>Bank Robbers Caught</b></p> 	<p><input type="radio"/> Five bank robbers got away.</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Two bank robbers were caught.</p>
<p><input type="radio"/> Someone wants to buy kittens and puppies.</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Someone wants to sell kittens and puppies.</p>	<p><b>CLASSIFIED'S</b></p> <p><b>For Sale</b></p> <p>3 black kittens 2 brown puppies</p> <p><b>Call 555-4109</b></p>	<p><b>Garden Club to Meet</b></p> <p>Wednesday and Thursday This Week</p> 	<p><input type="radio"/> The Garden Club will not meet this week.</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> The Garden Club will meet two times this week.</p>



Main Idea



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Figure 7b. Katie: Main Idea Paper

BCDEFGHIJKL

## What's the Idea?

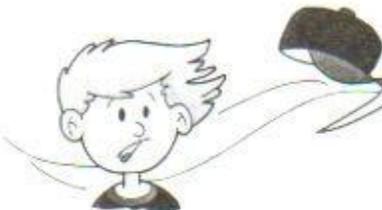
Name \_\_\_\_\_

◆ **Directions:** Look at the pictures. Read the sentences in the speech balloons. Fill in the circle beside the sentence that tells the main idea.



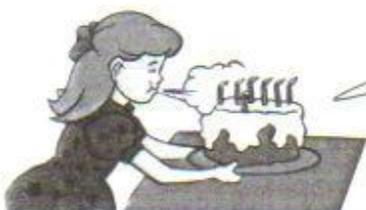
My tummy hurts.

The mouse wants more to eat.  
 The mouse ate too much cheese.



My hat is blowing away.

It is a very windy day.  
 He doesn't want a hat.



I am seven years old today.

The cake is very big.  
 Today is her birthday.



I can't find my home.

The cat is lost.  
 The cat has a new home.

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Main Idea

Figure 7c. Chris: Main Idea Paper

As the intervention continued, I decided to add a phonics reader from the SRA tutor program. I had not done these previously because I felt we could use our time better on other things. I decided to include these now because it would help the students further apply the phonics skills we practiced. The intervention had been going well. I could see the students really coming along with their reading skills. We incorporated another pick-a-word game with some new sounds we had been practicing which were oo, au, aw, all, al, ai and ay.

Table 7

*Pick-a-Word Game Words Read by Student*

Student	Words Read
Cara	cook, rain, crawl, law, jaw, chain, paid, call, may, drawn, lawn, faint, hoof, shook, launch, tall, nook
Chris	stay, train, wood, ball, claw, shawl, flaw, yawn, way, dawn, good, braid, stall, day, small, gray, aim
Katie	claim, salt, paint, fault, halt, talk, saw, hood, thaw, caught, malt, straw, bawl, paw, look, maid, stray

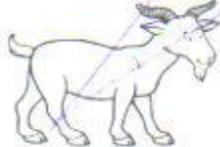
I decided to give the students a phonics quiz to see how they would do with the more difficult phonics skills we have been working on. Although I'm not particularly a fan of phonics worksheets, I wanted to assess how the students were doing with their phonics. I was pleased with how well they did. Cara and

Chris had 17 correct out of 18 and Katie had 18 correct out of 18 (see Figure 8a-c).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Missing Vowel Pairs

◆ **Directions:** Fill in the circle beside the missing vowel pair in each word.

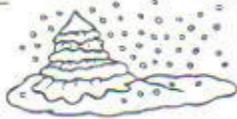
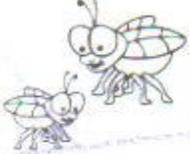
<p>hay </p> <p><input type="radio"/> ui  <input type="radio"/> ow  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ay</p>	<p>train </p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> oa  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ai  <input type="radio"/> ie</p>	<p>soap </p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> oa  <input type="radio"/> ai  <input type="radio"/> ui</p>
<p>juice </p> <p><input type="radio"/> ai  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ui  <input type="radio"/> ie</p>	<p>pie </p> <p><input type="radio"/> ui  <input type="radio"/> oa  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ie</p>	<p>crow </p> <p><input type="radio"/> ui  <input type="radio"/> ay  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ow</p>
<p>goat </p> <p><input type="radio"/> ai  <input checked="" type="radio"/> oa  <input type="radio"/> ui</p>	<p>fruit </p> <p><input type="radio"/> ai  <input type="radio"/> ow  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ui</p>	<p>snail </p> <p><input type="radio"/> ow  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ai  <input type="radio"/> ie</p>

Vowel Pair Review © 2001 McGraw Hill Education. All Rights Reserved

Figure 8c. Cara: Phonics Quiz

**Missing Vowel Pairs** \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

► **Directions:** Fill in the circle beside the missing vowel pair in each word.

 <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> ie  <input type="radio"/> ay  <input type="radio"/> oa</p>	 <p><input type="radio"/> ow  <input type="radio"/> ui  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ay</p>	 <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> ow  <input type="radio"/> ie  <input type="radio"/> ay</p>
 <p><input type="radio"/> ie  <input type="radio"/> ui  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ai</p>	 <p><input type="radio"/> oa  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ay  <input type="radio"/> ie</p>	 <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> oa  <input type="radio"/> ay  <input type="radio"/> ui</p>
 <p><input type="radio"/> ai  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ow  <input type="radio"/> ui</p>	 <p><input type="radio"/> ai  <input type="radio"/> oa  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ie</p>	 <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> ui  <input type="radio"/> ay  <input type="radio"/> ie</p>

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Figure 8b. Katie: Phonics Quiz

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Missing Digraphs

◆ **Directions:** Fill in the circle beside the missing digraph in each word.

<p>so__ </p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> ck  <input type="radio"/> ch  <input type="radio"/> kn</p>	<p>__ain </p> <p><input type="radio"/> th  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ch  <input type="radio"/> sh</p>	<p>__eath </p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> wr  <input type="radio"/> wh  <input type="radio"/> kn</p>
<p>__ip </p> <p><input type="radio"/> th  <input checked="" type="radio"/> sh  <input type="radio"/> ck</p>	<p>ben__ </p> <p><input type="radio"/> ck  <input type="radio"/> th  <input checked="" type="radio"/> ch</p>	<p>__eel </p> <p><input type="radio"/> sh  <input type="radio"/> th  <input checked="" type="radio"/> wh</p>
<p>__ight </p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> kn  <input type="radio"/> th  <input type="radio"/> wr</p>	<p>too__ </p> <p><input type="radio"/> ch  <input type="radio"/> ck  <input checked="" type="radio"/> th</p>	<p>__ench </p> <p><input type="radio"/> kn  <input checked="" type="radio"/> wr  <input type="radio"/> th</p>

Consonant Digraph Review

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Figure 8c. Chris: Phonics Quiz

As our holiday break was approaching, I thought it would be a good idea to give the students a holiday read-and-color book. The students took turns reading, and then we did a choral read of the story together. I asked questions along the way to check for understanding. The students really seemed to like this story. I encouraged them to take it home and share with a parent over the winter break. They all seemed very excited and said they were going to read it to their moms or moms and dads. They asked if they could color the book and since we had about 5 minutes left, I allowed them to. They were working so well together. Then, something dawned on me; the study would soon be over.

### **The Last Stages**

Coming back from winter recess can be difficult. I wanted to go back and review the skills we had previously been working on. We eased back into things with a review. I thought overall, the students did a nice job remembering their sounds. They needed some more assistance with the difficult ones, but after some review they did a nice job at the word reading in the SRA lesson.

### **Are They Ready?**

I could not believe the study was almost over. It felt like we were just getting started. All along the students had been working on Read Naturally One Minute Readers, level one. Now I thought it was time to try the level two. I thought they were ready. They had been working so hard and showing improvements with the level one passages. I was worried, though. What if they

weren't ready? I did not want to damage their self-esteem as successful readers, however, it was an appropriate time, and the study was just about over. They seemed to make remarkable gains. I thought to myself, I will never know until I try. As I went to select the new set of stories from the level two, I found a set called "Animal Hero's." I remember thinking to myself, how perfect, the students really seem to love animals, and I bet they will enjoy these. I was ready to give these students a challenge. While part of me felt worried, part of me also had faith that they could rise to the challenge I was giving them.

We started off by reviewing the title of the story. I thought I needed to give the students somewhat of a warning, so I told them to be extra careful when reading because there were some tricky words in this story. Cara was our first reader. She read 58 words correct per minute (mistakes were: heroes, what, Anthony, month). Katie was next, she read 74 words (mistake: read mom instead of mother). Chris read 74 words per minute (mistake: Anthony). WOW! These students really blew me away! I could not believe how awesome they did. We listened to the story three times. The students seemed so engaged, they were following along and at the end they were asking questions. They were very curious to know what the pet hall of fame was and if it was a real thing. They were also very eager to share stories about their pets. Chris shared that when he was little he fell in a pool and his dog saved him. Cara said that her dog helped her learn how to swim by teaching her the doggie paddle. Then, Cara asked me

for an extra copy of the story to take home to share with her family. I couldn't believe it. I really hit a home run with this story! I made sure to praise the students for trying their best and doing a nice job following and reading along with the story. I wondered if they did such a great job because it was such a high interest engaging story for them. They had done a nice job with their stories before, but this day was a day that really stood out. It was wonderful.

The next day, we listened to the story once and did a choral read once. When it was time for the students' hot reads, Cara read 120 words correct per minute with no errors. She read with really nice expression. Katie read 96 correct words per minute with no mistakes. I could tell her expression has improved. Chris read 88 words correct per minute, he had one error. He skipped over the word pound. He wasn't reading with expression, but he was reading much more smoothly than he previously had. When it was time for the comprehension quiz, I scaffolded the last question to help them get started. I asked them, what type of nice or fun things would you do on a special day for someone? When the students were finished, we went over the answers. All students had 5 out of 5 for their questions (see Figure 9a-f).

# Priscilla the Pig

23

Heroes come in  
 all shapes and sizes.  
 But would you think  
 a 22-pound piglet  
 could save a life?  
 That is just what  
 happened on a hot  
 day in Texas.



Anthony was 11  
 years old. He was  
 not like most kids. He could not understand a lot of  
 things. Priscilla was a two-month-old pig.

One day, Anthony, Anthony's mom, and Priscilla were at  
 the lake. Priscilla and Anthony's mom swam in the lake.  
 Anthony played on the shore. He could not swim. Soon  
 Anthony wanted to join the fun. He walked into the water.  
 His mother shouted for him to go back. Just then, Anthony  
 sank.

Priscilla swam to the boy. At first, he pulled her under  
 with him. Anthony weighed four times more than she did.  
 Then, the boy seemed to know Priscilla's plan. With  
 Anthony clinging, the little pig swam to shore.

The people of Texas honored the piglet with "Priscilla  
 the Pig" day. She was also entered into the Pet Hall of  
 Fame.

ad to

y for

Jew

s?

m

*cold*  
*58*  
*heros*  
*what*  
*Anthony*  
*month*

*hot*  
*130*  
*\**  
*no mistakes*

Figure 9a. Cara: Priscilla the Pig Passage

## Quick Quiz

9. What is the main idea of *Priscilla the Pig*?
- a. A piglet named Priscilla saved a boy from drowning.
  - b. People all around Texas knew about Priscilla the pig.
  - c. Priscilla the pig was put into the Pet Hall of Fame.
10. How much did Priscilla weigh?
- l. 11 pounds
  - m. 22 pounds
  - n. 33 pounds
11. What does **shore** mean in this story?
- o. the land by a body of water
  - p. to support something
  - q. took off by cutting
12. Why was Anthony able to pull Priscilla under with him so easily?
- k. She was so much lighter than him.
  - l. He didn't want her help.
  - m. She was not a good swimmer.

### Talk about what you learned

If you were planning "Priscilla the Pig" day, what things would you do to honor her?



I would give her a bed and a toy and a bag of threag to I would give her love.

Figure 9b. Cara: Priscilla the Pig Questions

## Priscilla the Pig

23

Heroes come in  
all shapes and sizes.  
But would you think  
a 22-pound piglet  
could save a life?  
That is just what  
happened on a hot  
day in Texas.



Anthony was 11  
years old. He was  
not like most kids. He could not **understand** a lot of  
things. Priscilla was a two-month-old pig.

One day, Anthony, Anthony's mom, and Priscilla were at  
the lake. Priscilla and Anthony's mom **swam** in the lake.  
Anthony played on the **shore**. He could not swim. Soon  
Anthony wanted to join the fun. He walked into the water.  
His mother shouted for him to go back. Just then, Anthony  
sank.

Priscilla swam to the boy. At first, he pulled her under  
with him. Anthony **weighed** four times more than she did.  
Then, the boy seemed to know Priscilla's **plan**. With  
Anthony **clinging**, the little pig swam to shore.

The people of Texas **honored** the piglet with "Priscilla  
the Pig" day. She was also **entered** into the Pet **Hall of  
Fame**.

held hot  
74 46  
mother \*

Figure 9c. Katie: Priscilla the Pig Passage

## Quick Quiz



9. What is the main idea of *Priscilla the Pig*?
- a. A piglet named Priscilla saved a boy from drowning.
  - b. People all around Texas knew about Priscilla the pig.
  - c. Priscilla the pig was put into the Pet Hall of Fame.
10. How much did Priscilla weigh?
- l. 11 pounds
  - m. 22 pounds
  - n. 33 pounds
11. What does **shore** mean in this story?
- o. the land by a body of water
  - p. to support something
  - q. took off by cutting
12. Why was Anthony able to pull Priscilla under with him so easily?
- k. She was so much lighter than him.
  - l. He didn't want her help.
  - m. She was not a good swimmer.

### Talk about what you learned

If you were planning "Priscilla the Pig" day, what things would you do to honor her?

Give her a crown.



Figure 9d. Katie: Priscilla the Pig Questions

## Priscilla the Pig

23

Heroes come in  
all shapes and sizes.  
But would you think  
a 22-pound piglet  
could save a life?  
That is just what  
happened on a hot  
day in Texas.



Anthony was 11  
years old. He was  
not like most kids. He could not **understand** a lot of  
things. Priscilla was a two-month-old pig.

One day, Anthony, Anthony's mom, and Priscilla were at  
the lake. Priscilla and Anthony's mom **swam** in the lake.  
Anthony played on the **shore**. He could not swim. Soon  
Anthony wanted to join the fun. He walked into the water.  
His mother shouted for him to go back. Just then, Anthony  
sank.

Priscilla swam to the boy. At first, he pulled her under  
with him. Anthony **weighed** four times more than she did.  
Then, the boy seemed to know Priscilla's **plan**. With  
Anthony **clinging**, the little pig swam to shore.

The people of Texas **honored** the piglet with "Priscilla  
the Pig" day. She was also **entered** into the Pet **Hall of  
Fame**.

7/1  
cold  
Anthony

88  
hot  
skipped  
22 pound

Figure 9e. Chris: Priscilla the Pig Passage

## Quick Quiz

9. What is the main idea of *Priscilla the Pig*?
- A piglet named Priscilla saved a boy from drowning.
  - People all around Texas knew about Priscilla the pig.
  - Priscilla the pig was put into the Pet Hall of Fame.
10. How much did Priscilla weigh?
- 11 pounds
  - 22 pounds
  - 33 pounds
11. What does **shore** mean in this story?
- the land by a body of water
  - to support something
  - took off by cutting
12. Why was Anthony able to pull Priscilla under with him so easily?
- She was so much lighter than him.
  - He didn't want her help.
  - She was not a good swimmer.

### Talk about what you learned

If you were planning "Priscilla the Pig" day, what things would you do to honor her?

I would give her a medal with the pet Hall of Fame and I would also give her a lot of presents.



Figure 9f. Chris: Priscilla the Pig Questions

The students were making progress in reading. They were on the track to becoming successful readers, or perhaps they already were successful readers. It depends on how you look at things. While the study may have officially ended, the reading success of these three students was just beginning.

The following student profiles compare individual student scores from the beginning to the end of the study.

**Student Profile: Cara**

The QRI passage and questions I administered at the beginning of the study, I administered again to Cara (see Table 8). It was a level one passage and there were 6 comprehension questions. This time she read 76 words correct per minute, with 98% accuracy. She answered 6 out of 6 comprehensions correctly.

Table 8

*Cara: QRI Pre/Post Scores*

Beginning of Year	End of Study
50 words correct per minute, 93% accuracy. 4 out of 6 comprehensions correct.	76 words correct per minute, 98% accuracy. 6 out of 6 comprehension questions correct.
Pre-primer words: 100%, Primer Words: 95%, First Words: 80%, Second Words: 55%	Pre-primer words: 100%, Primer Words: 100%, First Words: 95%, Second Words: 75%

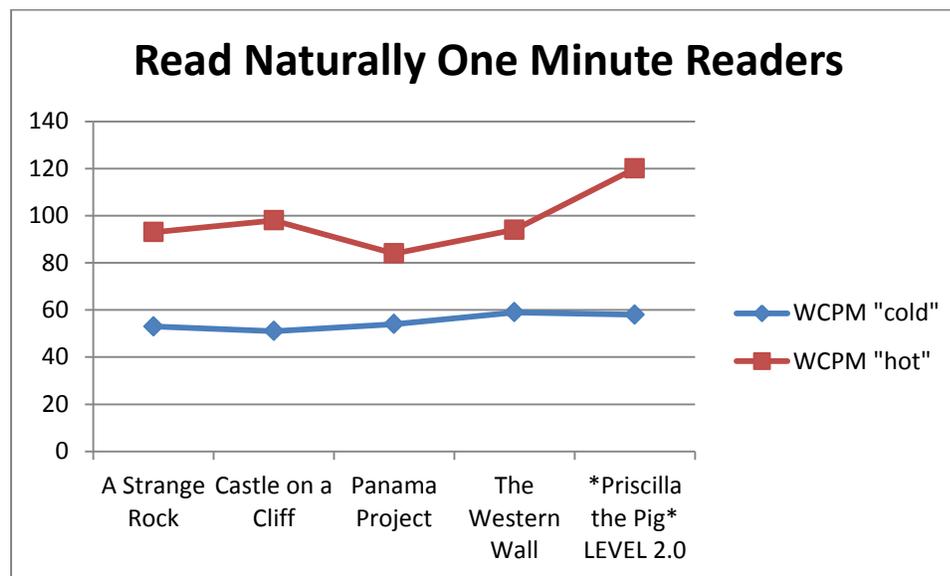
She also made progress with her sight words. She had mastered pre-primer, primer, and first words. She is currently working on mastering second grade words, she is currently reading these words with 80% accuracy.

I also conducted the same interview to see if her attitude or feelings towards reading changed. Her attitude remained very positive. She indicated, “It’s fun to get to read, it is good for you because you can learn from it.” She also indicated reading is important “because you can learn new things, it helps you become smart.” I couldn’t help but wonder if our non-fiction stories helped her to take more meaning away from reading because we are able to learn about a lot of new things.

Each Read Naturally One Minute Reader story scores for both cold and hot reads were recorded (see Table 9).

Table 9

*Cara: Read Naturally Progress*



Also, during the course of the study the three students participated in progress monitoring. This was done utilizing our computer based STAR assessment. This examined their progress in reading. In the beginning of the year, Cara was labeled as needing intervention. By the Winter benchmark, her score moved her up to the next category, on watch (see Table 10).

Table 10.

*Cara: STAR Benchmark and Progress Monitoring*



### **Student Profile: Katie**

I administered the same QRI passage and questions to Katie. It was a level one passage and there were 6 comprehension questions. This time she read 68 words correct per minute, with 98% accuracy. She answered 6 out of 6 comprehensions correctly (see Table 11).

Table 11

*Katie: QRI Pre/Post Scores*

Beginning of Year	End of Study
32 words correct per minute, 90% accuracy. 5 out of 6 comprehensions correct.	68 words correct per minute, 98% accuracy. 6 out of 6 comprehension questions correct.
Pre-primer words: 100%, Primer Words: 100%, First Words: 95%, Second Words: 65%	Pre-primer words: 100%, Primer Words: 100%, First Words: 100%, Second Words: 70%

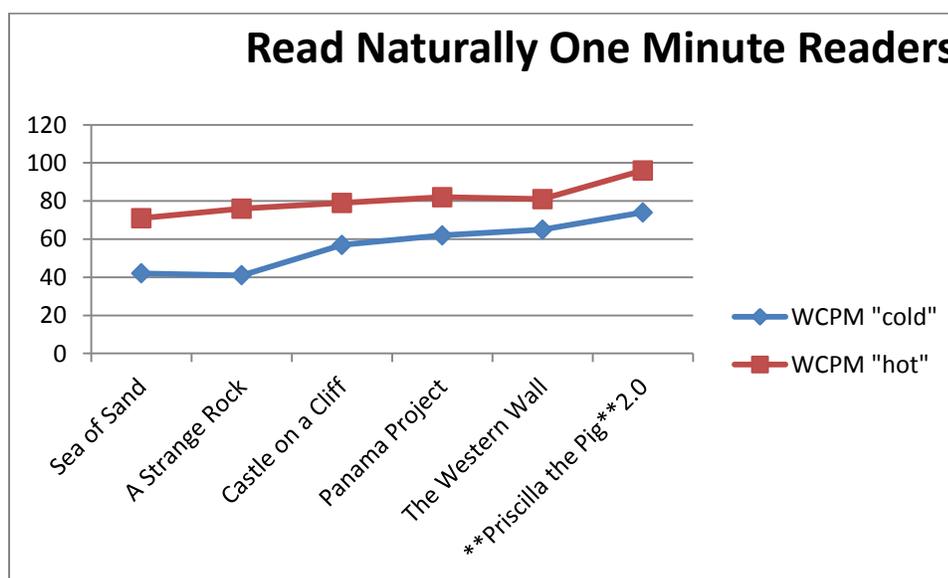
She also made progress with her sight words. She has mastered pre-primer, primer, and first words. She is currently working on mastering second grade words, she is currently reading these words with 85% accuracy.

During Katie's post interview, I am not sure if her attitude or feelings about reading changed. If you remember in the beginning she disclosed she wasn't good at reading so that is why she is in second grade again. However, her attitude during the first interview was positive. During our post interview she indicated, the best thing about reading is "learning more words" and to her, reading is important because "you learn more words and you can learn more stuff about animals and stuff." I was pleased to hear her make the connection that reading does help you learn new things.

Each Read Naturally One Minute Reader story scores for both cold and hot reads were recorded (see Table 12).

Table 12

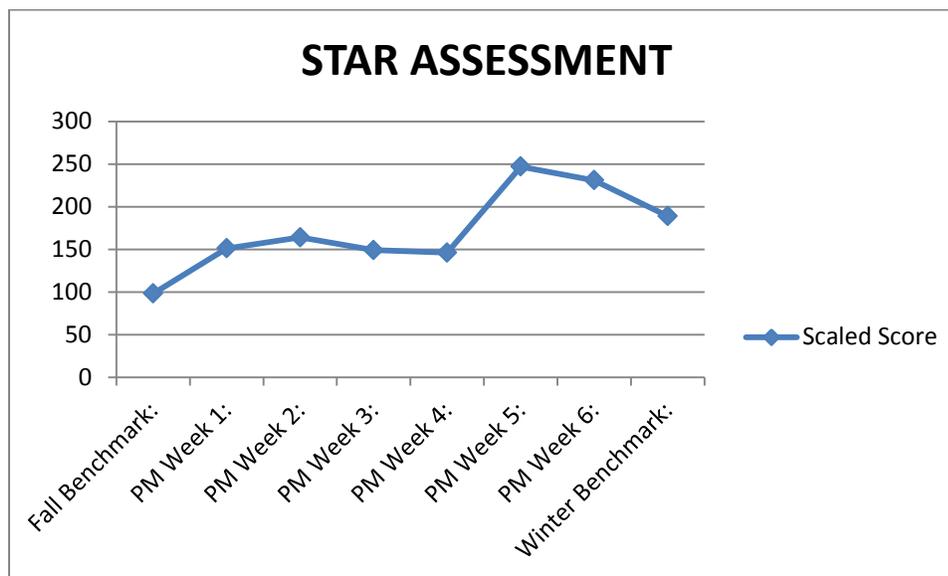
*Katie: Read Naturally Progress*



According to STAR assessments, in the beginning of the year Katie was identified as needing intervention. By the Winter benchmark she moved up to the next category, on watch (see Table 13).

Table 13

*Katie: STAR Benchmark and Progress Monitoring*



### **Student Profile: Chris**

I administered the same QRI passage and questions to Chris. It was a level one passage and there were 6 comprehension questions. This time he read 33 words correct per minute, with 90% accuracy. He answered 5 out of 6 comprehensions correctly (see Table 14).

Table 14

*Chris: QRI Pre/Post Scores*

Beginning of Year	End of Study
25 words correct per minute, 87% accuracy. 4 out of 6 comprehensions correct.	33 Words correct per minute, 96% accuracy. 5 out of 6 comprehension questions correct.
Pre-primer words: 80%, Primer Words: 70%, First Words: 50%, Second Words: Did not administer	Pre-primer words: 95%, Primer Words: 95%, First Words: 80%, Second Words: 60%

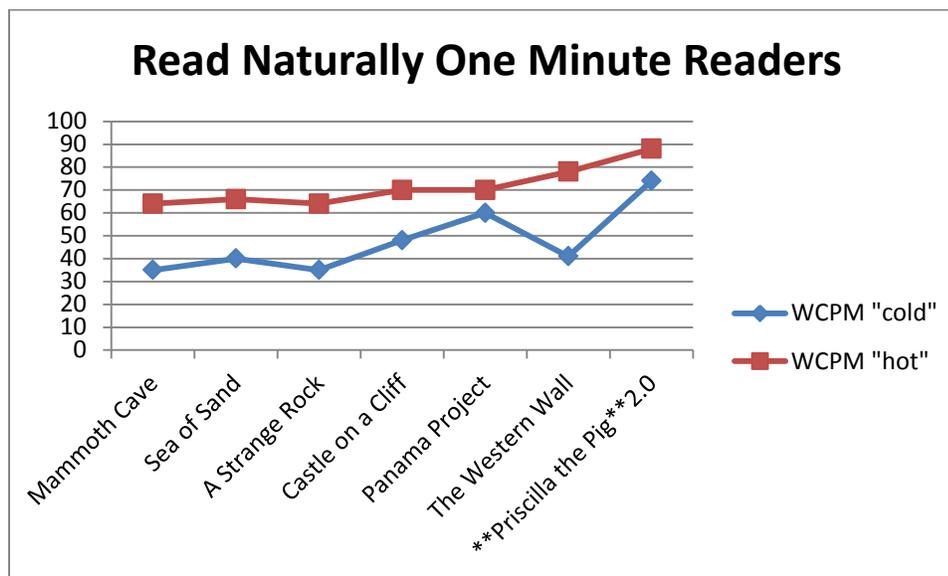
He also made progress with his sight words. He has mastered pre-primer and primer words. He is currently working on mastering first grade words, and he is currently reading these words with 85 % accuracy.

During Chris's post interview, he indicated that reading is important, "because you learn things, learning makes you smart." He also indicated that reading can be difficult if a word is too hard. Once again, I'm not sure that Chris's attitudes or feelings towards reading have changed. He always seemed to have a positive outlook on reading. I can only hope that the nonfiction passage brought some more meaning to reading for him.

Each Read Naturally One Minute Reader story scores for both cold and hot reads were recorded (see Table 15).

Table 15

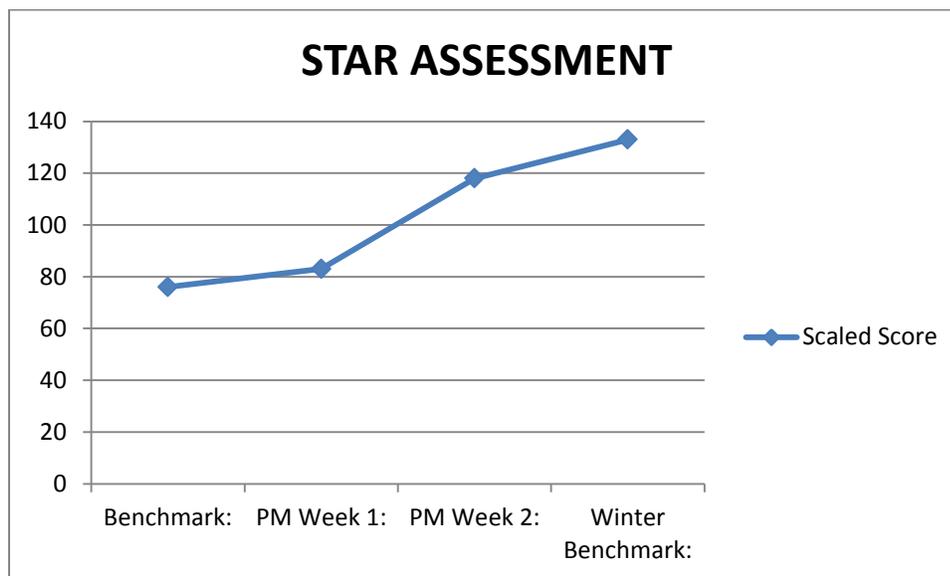
*Chris: Read Naturally Progress*



According to STAR assessments, in October when Chris joined the study he was identified as needing urgent intervention. By the Winter benchmark he moved up to the next category, needs intervention (see Table 16).

Table 16

*Chris: STAR Benchmark and Progress Monitoring*



## **Data Analysis**

### **Introduction**

The objective of my study was to provide my small group of students with the skills they needed to increase their reading abilities. I aimed to strengthen their reading foundation by addressing their deficits and providing interventions. I wanted students to make progress, in order to help them continue to improve their reading and find success in reading. The analysis of my data allowed me to continuously monitor student progress towards becoming better readers. Furthermore, it allowed me to constantly monitor and reflect on my practice, and how to move instruction forward to help students continue to increase their reading skills.

I needed to collect multiple pieces of data in order to ensure validity. Additionally, collecting multiple types of data aids in triangulation, which is essential when conducting action research. In order to analyze data and interpret data appropriately, multiple resources were utilized. According to Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul (1997), “interpretation means drawing meanings from the analyzed data and attempting to see these in some larger context” (p. 160). The data included in my analysis consisted of District benchmark testing including progress monitoring, observational data in my field log, student interviews, the Qualitative Reading Inventory, word lists, and student work samples.

### **District Benchmark Assessment (STAR)**

In the beginning of my study, the students participated in district wide benchmark testing. The benchmark test categorized students into at/above benchmark, on watch, need intervention, and need urgent intervention. Additionally, the students were progress monitored using the STAR assessment to track their progress in reading. The students participated in an initial benchmark and Winter benchmark. These scores were compared to determine gains or decreases in their progress.

### **Observational Data Analysis**

During the study, I kept a field log where I recorded all observation data and my reflections. My field log was approximately 40 pages, I included 3-5 entries per week. The field log was an indispensable aspect of my research study. It allowed me to engage in continuous reflective planning, in order to best meet my students' needs. By utilizing my field log, I could determine which direction I needed to take my interventions, and also record students' attitudes and feelings towards the various activities. It also allowed me to record conversations during our intervention.

### **Student Interviews**

I conducted an individual interview with each student at the beginning of the study and also at the end of the study (see Appendix C). The purpose of the interview was to provide me with some information on how the students felt about reading and their attitude towards reading. I asked questions such as: do

you think reading is important, why/why not? By conducting an interview at the beginning of the study and again at the end, I could analyze if the students feelings or attitudes toward reading changed.

### **Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)**

The QRI was used at the beginning and at the end of the study (see Appendix E). In the beginning of the study it helped me to establish a baseline for each student. It also helped me analyze where my intervention needed to begin. I administered word lists, a reading passage and six comprehension questions. Fourteen weeks later, at the end of the study I gave students the same word lists, reading passage and six comprehension questions. This allowed me to examine reading growth made.

### **Word Lists**

At the beginning of the study I assessed the students on sight words using Dolch word lists (see Appendixes F-I). This not only helped me establish a baseline, it helped me determine the sight words the students needed additional practice with. I assessed the students about mid-study and again at the end of the study. This allowed me to analyze the progress the students made on their sight word vocabulary.

### **Student Work**

In the beginning and throughout the study, the students participated in various reading activities. The majority of student work was the Read Naturally

One Minute Reader passages and quick quiz comprehension questions. The purpose of these was to assist in developing fluency by engaging the students in repeated readings. It also assessed the students comprehension on what was read. Throughout the study these passages were collected and graphed to display student progress. Also included with student work were various worksheets utilized to address student deficits or examine student knowledge.

### **Bins and Theme Statements**

I began the process of coding approximately half way through my study. Coding refers to reading and rereading data and providing labels, typically in the margins that will identify a meaning unit (Ely et. al., 1997). By reading through my field log and writing codes in the margin I was able to look for commonalities. According to Ely et. al. (1997), the coding and categorizing carry the analysis forward. By assigning codes I was then able to sort my codes into bins (figure 10). I then was able to determine preliminary theme statements from the bins (figure 11). This process assisted me in determining my findings for the study.

### **Bins and Theme Statements**

#### **1. Teacher's Role**

- ✓ Assessment
- ✓ Prompting/Cues
- ✓ Scaffolding
- ✓ Teaching Strategy

#### **2. Reading Strategies**

- ✓ Application of skills
- ✓ Choral Reading
- ✓ Comprehension
- ✓ Explicit Instruction
- ✓ Phonics
- ✓ Fluency
- ✓ Repeated Reading
- ✓ Word Building
- ✓ Word Reading

#### **Research Question:**

What are the observed and reported experiences when struggling/below level readers participate in small group intervention to address phonics and fluency?

#### **3. Engagement**

- ✓ Student progress/achievement
- ✓ Student Behavior

#### **4. Planning for Action**

- ✓ Ideas for future instruction

*Figure 10. Codes and Bins*

### **Preliminary Theme Statements**

1. Teachers need to take an active role in facilitating effective reading interventions. By assessing students, providing prompts and cues, scaffolding instruction and providing multiple strategies they are able to determine the direction the interventions need to be taken in order to best meet students' needs and help them become successful readers.
2. Reading strategies need to be multifaceted, as learning how to read is a multifaceted process. Reading strategies need to address phonics, fluency, and comprehension and build upon students' strengths and help meet their areas of need. By providing explicit instruction, opportunities to apply skills, choral reading, repeated reading, word building and word reading activities students' reading achievement will increase.
3. Providing a small group setting, with multiple opportunities for repetition and practice and engaging activities, such as word building, choral reading, hands-on activities involving word reading, and high interest non-fiction passage reading provides students the additional support needed to increase their progress in reading.
4. Planning for action based on students' instructional levels, and reflection on ideas during lessons is essential in order to capitalize on students' strengths and provide further instruction on deficits, or needs in order for students to become better readers. Ultimately, keeping a reflective journal with continued reflection allows me to enhance my practice, becoming a better practitioner by not only studying my practice, but studying and observing my students' actions and performance as a result of my practice.

*Figure 11.* Theme Statements

## Findings

**Teachers need to take an active role in facilitating effective reading interventions. By assessing students, providing prompts and cues, scaffolding instruction, and providing multiple strategies, they are able to determine the direction the interventions need to be taken in order to best meet students' needs and help them become successful readers.**

Throughout my study I needed to maintain an active role in providing effective reading interventions. I needed to constantly monitor students and assess their daily performance on the reading activities they were engaged in. If I noticed a consistent deficit, I could not simply go on with what I had planned to do. I needed to find another way to address this deficit, by providing different interventions.

It is important to remember that you are constantly assessing students. As you ask them questions, as you observe them, if you listen to what their response is, you will be able to gain a sense of the direction you need to take the intervention. It may be as simple as providing additional support, some prompts and cues or maybe scaffolding instruction, in order to help them find success.

If you are able to maintain an active role and listen to your students, you will be more effective in assisting students to meet their needs. This means you cannot fill out your plans months or weeks in advance because you need to engage yourself in each lesson in order to monitor what the students know, what

they do not know, and where you need to go next. By continuing to have this type of active role, I was able to provide effective reading interventions to the students.

**Reading strategies need to be multifaceted, as learning how to read is a multifaceted process. Reading strategies need to address phonics, fluency, and comprehension and build upon students' strengths and help meet their areas of need. By providing explicit instruction, opportunities to apply skills, choral reading, repeated reading, word building and word reading activities, students reading achievement will increase.**

As stated above, learning how to read is a multifaceted process. There is no one correct way to teach reading. There is no one correct way to provide interventions. The interventions provided to students did not strictly focus on one area of reading. In my professional opinion, that scope would have been too narrow to be effective. For example, I realized that students need to engage with high interest reading in order to help them find success in reading.

The students I worked with had deficits in phonics, fluency, and comprehension. Their reading foundation was not strong, as they did not know many more complex phonics skills. This did not mean I should only provide instruction in the area of phonics. After all, these students needed to also work towards becoming fluent readers. They also needed to work towards making

meaning of what was read. The only way to address these areas was to take a varied approach to provide reading interventions.

It was important for me to continue to build their areas of strength while addressing their areas of need. When I encountered days that the students were having difficulty with the reading tasks, I needed to think about how I could present more opportunities for practice or how I could present something in a different way.

I found that by providing a wealth of reading activities and strategies, such as explicit instruction, opportunities to apply skills, choral reading, repeated reading, word building and word reading activities, that the students were able to increase their reading achievement. This can be seen in the graphs representing their cold versus hot reads. It can also be seen in their STAR progress monitoring graph.

Looking back, I feel that in previous years when working with struggling readers, I relied heavily on the phonics approach to teach children how to read. Anytime someone would mention intervention, I would immediately equate that with remediation of skills. I always felt I needed to help students strengthen their reading foundation, and to meet that meant starting with phonics intervention. I didn't think I would be incorporating read alouds in my intervention time frame because I always thought we needed to spend our time building a foundation. This study has helped me appreciate that while phonics is important, so are other

aspects of reading and these other areas need to be addressed as well. These other areas are vital in helping students build their reading foundation and in fostering a love and enjoyment of reading.

This research study required me to read relevant literature to determine the best way to teach struggling readers. I also researched what interventions were considered to be most effective when working with struggling readers. These pertinent pieces of knowledge have not only helped me design and implement my study; they have changed the way I will teach struggling students how to read.

**Providing a small group setting, with multiple opportunities for repetition and practice and engaging activities, such as word building, choral reading, hands-on activities involving word reading, and high interest non-fiction passage reading allows students the additional support needed to increase their progress and achievement in reading.**

I think a key aspect of my study was the fact that it took place in a small group setting. This allowed me to really hone in on addressing these students' needs. Given that this was a small group setting, we were able to create a positive culture. The students remained respectful of each other and respectful towards me. They showed pride when they worked hard. They encouraged each other as they made progress with their repeated readings, or hot reads. I believe they felt comfortable to take risks. I considered why this might be, why this was different. I think it was because the students could immediately see the progress they made.

They could see their scores go up, they could see the gains and therefore, they felt successful.

Another positive aspect of providing interventions in the small group setting is that it provided all students multiple opportunities for repetition and practice. There were only three students and I needed to make sure I kept them working, kept them on their toes, and kept them engaged on the tasks at hand. Being that it was a small group no student could “fall through the cracks.” By having the students continuously respond and participate, I was also able to assess if they were truly grasping the content being presented multiple times throughout our intervention time together. I feel that keeping a reflective journal allowed me to adhere to more details and reflect upon these details. In turn, this made it easier for me to monitor their progress and keep record of it easier.

It is also important to remember that struggling readers need additional support in reading. These students were fully included in the regular education reading curriculum but came to me to receive intervention for 45 minutes per day. They were receiving additional instruction in the area of reading in order to increase their reading skills.

Another aspect of my study was that I attempted to provide the students with engaging interventions. While I did need to provide some direct instruction, explicit interventions with the SRA Reading Tutor program, I also acknowledged that the students needed more than this program to become successful readers.

Therefore, it was my duty to supplement this program with engaging activities for the students to increase their reading skills. Some activities I had the students participate in were word building, choral reading, hands-on activities involving word reading, and high interest non-fiction passages. It is important to remember that every single activity was not engaging for every student every time.

However, most often the students were very engaged by these various activities.

My observational data indicated that the students were most often engaged and also, that the students reading skills improved. I attribute this to the high interest reading materials and other high interest activities. If you refer to the Read Naturally One Minute Readers graphs, you can see that overall, the students' scores went up. Furthermore, if you look at the students' progress monitoring scores you can also see an increase in their scaled reading scores overall. I do indicate this progress is "overall" because there are increases and decreases present. This could be due to varying factors such as, lack of effort, lack of engagement, or even the student not feeling well. My teaching could have also influenced if the students did better or worse on a given day. If you look at the growth from the beginning of the study to the end of the study, you can see the students have made gains.

**Planning for action based on students' instructional level and reflection on ideas during lessons is essential in order to capitalize on students' strengths and provide further instruction on deficits, or needs in order for students to**

**become better readers. Ultimately, keeping a reflective journal with continued reflection allows me to enhance my practice, becoming a better practitioner by not only studying my practice, but studying and observing my students' actions and performance.**

In the beginning of the study it was important for me to establish a baseline. This information allowed me to begin interventions that were appropriate for the students. By administering the baseline, I had a starting point for my intervention. I was able to provide individualized interventions. I was also able to provide instruction that worked on appropriate skills for the students. I was able to begin interventions based on the information I gathered on the students; I wasn't going into our intervention time together "blindly." By conducting this research study I was able to look more deeply in to my practice to provide meaningful interventions.

During our intervention time my observations and reflections played a vital role in determining future intervention ideas. I had to carefully watch and listen to the students. I had to assess their progress and how they were doing with the skills presented. I needed to utilize these ideas in order to plan for future instruction. I can recall in the beginning of the study when we were going through our explicit phonics instruction. It seemed to me that it was meaningless to the students. They were having a difficult time remembering all the different phonics rules and what sounds the combinations made. That's when I began to

give students a word to associate with the sound we were learning. This seemed to click for them. I could see them looking on the board when they were trying to sound out a word but couldn't remember the sound. If I was not consistently monitoring and reflecting on my practice, I may have missed this.

By watching and listening to the students, I could also plan various activities that I thought would help strengthen their reading foundation. During our intervention I had noticed the students needed more practice applying the phonics skills we were working on. Application tends to be a difficult task for students. Therefore, I provided more word reading activities with the phonics skills we had been learning. I couldn't sit down at the beginning of the week and plan everything out weeks in advance. I needed to pay close attention to my students, as they were the ones directing which way our interventions would unfold.

My reflective journal allowed me to strengthen my practice. It allowed me to observe what was truly happening; it allowed me to watch and listen carefully to my students. It also required me to reflect on their performance, the intervention, my performance and where to take things to move forward. I believe because of this I have become a better practitioner and will take my new found knowledge forward and continue to learn with each new group of students I will work with. The most important knowledge I have taken away from this study is what my students have taught me, becoming the most effective teacher I can be.

### **Next Steps**

Throughout this action research study, I have gained a wealth of new knowledge to better my teaching practice in order to help struggling readers find success in reading. I look forward to applying this new knowledge in continuing to provide effective interventions in order to help students find success in reading. I also look forward to conducting more teacher action research to help new students be able to find success in reading.

My research study taught me how important student engagement and motivation are when implementing interventions. I feel it is critical to assess my students' interests. I would like to begin assessing students' interests at the beginning of the year or at whatever point in time they are assigned to my caseload. I intend to explore some published inventories to use with my students. This will allow me to provide high-interest, motivating reading materials for students. This is essential because I have learned how much better students perform when they are interested in what they are reading. When students are motivated and engaged in what they are reading, it becomes highly motivating, and most often they accomplish their best work.

I would also like to continue conducting reading interviews with my students. Some of the questions I plan to ask students are: What is the best thing about reading? What is the worst thing about reading? Do you think reading is important? Why/Why not? What is the easiest thing for you in reading class?

What is the hardest thing for you in reading class? (What you need help with the most) Which do you like best? To read by yourself, with a partner or with a teacher? Why? This not only helps me establish a relationship with my students, but it provides me with insights about their feelings and attitudes toward reading. Also, interviewing my students about reading allows me to see how self-aware my students are in regards to their reading strengths and needs.

Another component from my study I would like to incorporate is student choice. I can provide students with an opportunity to select the passages or books we will read. I can also offer choice for some of the literacy activities implemented. I believe student choice can play a positive role when trying to engage and motivate students.

I would like to continue to use the Read Naturally One Minute Readers next year. I would like to begin having the students graph their initial reading scores and their reading scores after listening to the story and practicing the passage. Through my study, I felt that it was highly motivating to the students to see their scores increase. This was extremely important to me because I feel that all students, especially struggling readers, need to feel successful. I believe encouraging my students to graph their scores will increase their motivation and allow them to take ownership of their progress.

While I would like to continue using Read Naturally One Minute Readers, as stated above, I would also like to incorporate some guided reading. Including

guided reading will assist me in meeting each students' unique needs. By incorporating guided reading I can continue to provide students with opportunities for reading, feedback, and skill development. Also, it will allow me to provide high interest material and I can include more specific comprehension skill instruction.

Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, I learned the importance of listening to my students and reflecting on instruction. I found that often times, if I listened to the students, they would guide me on what intervention I needed to hone in on, in order to help them find success. My field log helped me realized how much more I can document in order to showcase the students growth and progress made.

My field log required me to analyze my data further than I had ever in the past. I kept furthering my thinking as I reviewed my field log. I looked for different literacy activities to try, based on what the students' deficits were. This brought to my attention areas I needed to address, areas I needed to continue to work on, and activities that would benefit students reading skills.

Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, I learned the importance of listening to my students and reflecting on instruction. I found that often times, if I listened to the students, they would guide me on what intervention I needed to hone in on, in order to help them find success. My field log helped me realized how much

more I can document in order to showcase the students growth and progress made.

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## Appendix A: Principal Consent Form

September 21, 2012

Dear [REDACTED]

I am currently taking courses at Moravian College towards a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. A requirement for this program is for me to implement a systematic study on my teaching practice. I will be studying the effects of using a direct instruction program, along with additional phonics and guided reading to promote student achievement. I'm hoping this configuration of programming will create high student success in reading. I have been utilizing the direct instruction program with struggling readers; however I believe the benefits will be greater when including additional phonics and guided reading instruction. With your approval, the time period of the teacher action research I am conducting will span from September 24, 2012 to January 31, 2012.

Each child's participation in the study is completely voluntary, and he or she may withdraw at any time without penalty. I will ask parents for consent to use student work sample, observations, and interview responses as data for my self improvement study. While the results of my research may be included as the thesis study for my graduate thesis, any material related to the children's identity or our school will be kept strictly confidential. Student participants will be given a pseudonym for the purposes of my research. All paperwork will be kept in a secured file cabinet in my classroom. At the completion of my study, I will destroy all paperwork that references children's names.

If you have any questions for me throughout this process, please do not hesitate to email me at [REDACTED] or call me at [REDACTED]. You may also contact my advisor, [REDACTED], Education Department, Moravian College at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. Thank you for your consideration.

Thank you for your cooperation. Please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED] with any questions, concerns, or comments.

Sincerely,

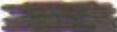
Felicia Amorim  
K-4 Itinerant Learning Support Teacher

Please see the attached paper for permission form.

Please check the appropriate line below and sign the form.

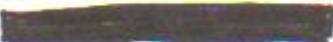
## Appendix A: Principal Consent Form Continued

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 I give permission for Ms. Amorim to distribute consent forms to parents/guardians to collect data to be used in this study. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my own records. I have read this form and understand it.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do NOT give permission for Ms. Amorim to distribute consent forms to parents/guardians to collect data to be used in this study.

  
Name (please print)

  
Signature

  
Date

## Appendix B: Parent/Guardian Consent Form

September 24, 2012

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am currently taking courses at Moravian College towards a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. A requirement for this program is for me to implement a systematic study on my teaching practice. I will be studying the effects of using a direct instruction program, along with additional phonics and guided reading have on student achievement. I'm hoping this configuration of programming will create high student success in reading. I have been utilizing the direct instruction program with struggling readers; however I believe the benefits will be greater when including additional phonics and guided reading instruction. The time period of the research I am conducting will span from September 27, 2012 to January 31, 2013.

Your child's participation in the study is completely voluntary, and he or she may withdraw at any time without penalty. If ever you wish to terminate the consent to participate in the study, please do so either orally or in writing to the principal or to me. The results of my research will be included as the pilot study for my graduate thesis but, all material related to your child's identity will be kept strictly confidential. He/she will be given a pseudonym for the purposes of research. All paperwork will be kept in a secured file cabinet in my classroom. At the completion of my study, I will destroy all paperwork that references your child's identity.

If you have any questions for me throughout this process, please do not hesitate to email me at [REDACTED] or call me at [REDACTED]. You may also contact my advisor, [REDACTED], Education Department, Moravian College at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. Finally, you may also contact the principal, [REDACTED], at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] if you have any further questions.

Thank you for your cooperation. Please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED] with any questions, concerns, or comments.

Sincerely,

Felicia Amorim  
K-4 Itinerant Learning Support Teacher

Please see the attached paper for permission form

## Appendix B: Parent/Guardian Consent Form Continued

Please check the appropriate line below and sign the form.

I give permission for my child's data to be used in this study. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my own records. I have read this form and understand it.

I do NOT give permission for my child's data to be included in this project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Appendix C: Pre/Post Interview**  
Pre/Post Interview

What is the best thing about reading?

What is the worst thing about reading?

Do you think reading is important? Why/Why not?

What is the easiest thing for you in reading class?

What is the hardest thing for you in reading class? (What you need help with the most)

Which do you like best? To read by yourself, with a partner or with a teacher?

Why?

Do you read a lot at home? Is it usually by yourself or with someone?

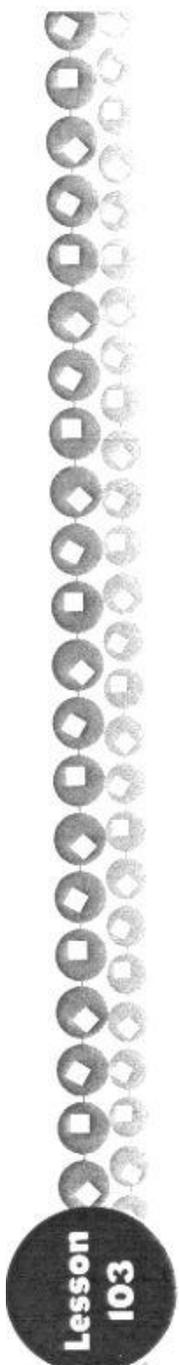
What are some of your favorite books? What makes them special?

**Appendix C: Pre/Post Interview Continued**

Is it usually easy or hard for you to understand what you have read?

What is your favorite thing to do in reading class? What makes it the best?

Appendix D: SRA "Reading Tutor" Lesson



.etter-Sound Correspondences

tion	sion		
age	dge	ice	
ph	wr	ace	kn
		ew	

## Appendix D: SRA “Reading Tutor” Lesson Continued



**Lesson  
103**

Blending Sounds into Words

**harness**

**reader**

**fantastic**

**started**

**acting**

## Appendix D: SRA “Reading Tutor” Lesson Continued

**Lesson  
103**

Review: Letter-Sound Correspondences

dge

age

ice

ace

Review: Blending Sounds into Words

stage

trace

edge

slice

## Appendix D: SRA “Reading Tutor” Lesson Continued

  
**Lesson  
103**

Review: Sentence Reading

The mice jumped off the  
floor onto the stack of hay  
in the barn.

## Appendix D: SRA “Reading Tutor” Lesson Continued

**My Home**

I live with my mom and my three sisters. My mom goes to her job every day, and when she comes home, she is sleepy. She does her best to take care of our home and keep it looking neat and clean. She tells us, “There is not enough time in the day.” (55 words)

My sisters and I want to help my mom so she can get some sleep. I told my mom, “We can help you clean our home. If all of us help, then you will not have to do so much when you get home from your job.” (102 words)

Mom said, “Thank you! Thank you! That would help me so much.” (114 words)

My little sister, Faith, feeds our fish. My sister, Carmen, picks up all our toys. My big sister, Ann, cleans with a broom. I take out the trash. I try not to catch a whiff of that smell. Yuck! (153 words)

I love to help take care of my home. It makes me feel good, and it makes my mom smile. (173 words)

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Student's Name _____					
Date	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Lesson Number	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
CWPM	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____



### Appendix E: Qualitative Reading Inventory Continued

#### Examiner Word Lists

First		Second			
	<i>Identified Automatically</i>	<i>Identified</i>		<i>Identified Automatically</i>	<i>Identified</i>
1. bear			1. morning		
2. father			2. tired		
3. find			3. shiny		
4. sound			4. old		
5. friend			5. trade		
6. song			6. promise		
7. thought			7. pieces		
8. there			8. picked		
9. run			9. push		
10. then			10. though		
11. move			11. begins		
12. knew			12. food		
13. eat			13. light		
14. air			14. ends		
15. bread			15. clue		
16. afraid			16. breathe		
17. wind			17. insects		
18. heard			18. weather		
19. put			19. noticed		
20. looked			20. money		

Level 1  
Level 2

Total Correct Automatic \_\_\_\_/20 = \_\_\_\_%  
 Total Correct Identified \_\_\_\_/20 = \_\_\_\_%  
 Total Number Correct \_\_\_\_/20 = \_\_\_\_%

Total Correct Automatic \_\_\_\_/20 = \_\_\_\_%  
 Total Correct Identified \_\_\_\_/20 = \_\_\_\_%  
 Total Number Correct \_\_\_\_/20 = \_\_\_\_%

LEVELS		
<b>Independent</b>	<b>Instructional</b>	<b>Frustration</b>
18-20	14-17	below 14
90-100%	70-85%	below 70%

**Appendix E: Qualitative Reading Inventory Continued****What You Eat**

People eat many kinds of foods.

The different kinds of foods are called food groups.

There are four food groups.

One food group is the cereal and bread group.

Cereals and breads are foods made of grain.

It is good to eat them three times a day.

Another food group is the dairy group.

Milk and cheese are part of the dairy group.

You should have milk three times a day, too.

Another food group is fruit and vegetables.

Did you know that tomatoes are a fruit?

The fourth group is the meat group.

Meat, eggs, and fish are part of this group.

You should eat some of these foods every day.

Eating the right foods makes you grow and keeps you healthy.

### Appendix E: Qualitative Reading Inventory Continued

Expository

Expository

**Concept Questions:**

What are foods made from milk?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (1-2-1-0)

What are foods made from grain?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (1-2-1-0)

What are different kinds of meat?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (1-2-1-0)

Score: \_\_\_\_\_ / 9 = \_\_\_\_\_ %

\_\_\_\_\_ FAM \_\_\_\_\_ LNFAM

Prediction:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Expository

People eat many kinds of food.

The different kinds of foods are called food groups.

There are four food groups.

One food group is the cereal and bread group.

Cereals and breads are foods made of grain.

It is good to eat them three times a day.

Another food group is the dairy group.

Milk and cheese are part of the dairy group.

You should have milk three times a day, too.

Another food group is fruit and vegetables.

Did you know that tomatoes are a fruit?

The fourth group is the meat group.

Meat, eggs, and fish are part of this group.

You should eat some of these foods every day.

Eating the right foods makes you grow and keeps you healthy. (123 words)

Number of Total Miscues

(Total Accuracy): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Meaning Change Miscues

(Total Acceptability): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Accuracy	Total Acceptability
0-3 miscues _____ Independent _____	0-3 miscues _____
4-12 miscues _____ Instructional _____	4-6 miscues _____
13+ miscues _____ Frustration _____	7+ miscues _____

0-3 miscues \_\_\_\_\_ Independent \_\_\_\_\_ 0-3 miscues \_\_\_\_\_

4-12 miscues \_\_\_\_\_ Instructional \_\_\_\_\_ 4-6 miscues \_\_\_\_\_

13+ miscues \_\_\_\_\_ Frustration \_\_\_\_\_ 7+ miscues \_\_\_\_\_

Rate:  $123 \div 60 = 7380$  seconds = \_\_\_\_\_ WPM

**Main Idea**

\_\_\_\_\_ Different kinds of food are called food groups.

\_\_\_\_\_ There are four food groups.

## Appendix E: Qualitative Reading Inventory Continued

### Level: One

#### Details

- One group is the cereal and bread group.
- Cereals and breads are foods made of grain.
- It is good to eat them three times a day.
- Another group is the dairy group. Milk and cheese are part of this group.
- You should have milk three times a day.
- Another group is fruits and vegetables. Tomatoes are a fruit.
- The fourth group is the meat group. Meat, eggs, and fish are part of this group.
- You should eat these every day.
- Eating foods the right foods makes you grow and keeps you healthy.

Other ideas recalled, including inferences:

#### Questions for What You Eat

1. What food group does butter belong to?  
*Implicit: dairy*

2. What are cereals and breads made of?  
*Explicit: grain*

3. What two food groups should you have three times a day?  
*Explicit: cereals and dairy*

4. What kind of food is a tomato?  
*Explicit: fruit*

5. Name one member of the meat group other than meat.  
*Explicit: eggs, fish*

6. To what food group does a chicken belong?  
*Implicit: meat*

Number Correct Explicit:     

Number Correct Implicit:     

**Total:**     

     Independent: 6 correct

     Instructional: 4-5 correct

     Frustration: 0-3 correct

## Appendix F Dolch Pre-primer Word List

### Pre-primer Dolch Sight Word List Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pre-test Date: \_\_\_\_\_ % correct: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Test Date: \_\_\_\_\_ % correct: \_\_\_\_\_

a	I	run
and	in	said
away	is	see
big	it	the
blue	jump	three
can	little	to
come	look	two
down	make	up
find	me	we
for	my	where
funny	not	yellow
go	one	you
help	play	
here	red	

How many words can your child identify? Circle each word that is read correctly.  
 Recommended testing times are September, November, January, March and May.  
 Aim for 100% correct by the last test date!

## Appendix G Dolch Primer Word List

---

### Primer Dolch Sight Word List Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pre-test Date: \_\_\_\_\_ % correct: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Test Date: \_\_\_\_\_ % correct: \_\_\_\_\_

all	into	that
am	like	there
are	must	they
at	new	this
ate	no	too
be	now	under
black	on	want
brown	our	was
but	out	well
came	please	went
did	pretty	what
do	ran	white
eat	ride	who
four	saw	will
get	say	with
good	she	yes
have	so	
he	soon	

How many words can your child identify? Circle each word that is read correctly.  
 Recommended testing times are September, November, January, March and May.  
 Aim for 100% correct by the last test date!

## Appendix H Dolch First Grade Word List

### First Grade Dolch Sight Word List Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-test Date: _____	% correct: _____
Test Date: _____	% correct: _____
Test Date: _____	% correct: _____
Test Date: _____	% correct: _____
Test Date: _____	% correct: _____

after	has	over
again	her	put
an	him	round
any	his	some
as	how	stop
ask	just	take
by	know	thank
could	let	them
every	live	then
fly	may	think
from	of	walk
give	old	were
giving	once	when
had	open	

How many words can your child identify? Circle each word that is read correctly.  
 Recommended testing times are September, November, January, March and May.  
 Aim for 100% correct by the last test date!

## Appendix I Dolch Second Grade Word List

### Second Grade Dolch Sight Word List Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pre-test Date: \_\_\_\_\_ % correct: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Test Date: \_\_\_\_\_ % correct: \_\_\_\_\_

always	gave	these
around	goes	those
because	green	upon
been	its	us
before	made	use
best	many	very
both	off	wash
buy	or	which
call	pull	why
cold	read	wish
does	right	work
don't	sing	would
fast	sit	write
first	sleep	your
five	tell	
found	their	

How many words can your child identify? Circle each word that is read correctly.  
 Recommended testing times are September, November, January, March and May.  
 Aim for 100% correct by the last test date!