

Abstract

This qualitative research study documents the observed behaviors and reported experiences of fourth grade struggling reading students and their teacher when developing metacognition to bridge phonics and comprehension while increasing their motivation to read. Twenty-three fourth grade students participated in the study in a rural intermediate school containing approximately 1,200 students in the Northeastern United States. In this study, the teacher examined the process of employing metacognitive phonetic and comprehension strategies within authentic literature by meeting students at their independent reading level, providing book choice, using multisensory activities, modeling think alouds, and providing opportunities for self-reflection. During the study, the teacher took anecdotal notes, adjusting and applying reading strategies as needed by the students. The students wrote weekly in a reflective journal about their experiences. Methods of gathering data included teacher observation, artifacts, surveys, informal interviews, and student reflective journals. Methods of analysis included field log analysis, student interview analysis, reading attitude survey analysis, running record analysis, CORE Phonics Survey analysis, Reading Inventory Analysis, and codes and bins analysis. Students were taught specific strategies for monitoring their reading at a deeper level including: decoding, fluency, and comprehension. Students practiced decoding and analyzing words within authentic literature when their meaning broke down. The teacher discovered that by meeting students where they are on the reading continuum, providing students with book choices, and guiding students to discover their own inner voice when they are reading positively influenced their reading experience. Findings suggest teachers must allow time for students to practice reading skills on their independent reading level with their book of choice. Independent practice builds

background knowledge, strengthens reading skills, builds interest and confidence, motivates and increases stamina in reading. The creation of a personalized tool box of "fix-it" strategies allows students to reflect upon what to do when meaning breaks down in the future.