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The Response to a Daily, Structured Literacy Intervention and its Effect on Struggling Readers" Comprehension

Amanda Bradshaw
St. John Fisher University, alb04068@sjf.edu

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The Response to a Daily, Structured Literacy Intervention and its Effect on Struggling Readers'
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By

Amanda Bradshaw

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Supervised by

Dr. Joellen Maples

School of Arts and Sciences
St. John Fisher College

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THE RESPONSE TO A DAILY, STRUCTURED LITERACY

Abstract

This action research investigates how a daily, structured literacy intervention effects struggling readers' comprehension. Struggling readers lack the literacy foundations needed to be successful readers and make meaning from text. A variety of data was collected including the following: teacher interviews, student questionnaires, Running Reading Records and field observation notes. The data show three emerging themes: developing mastery in literacy learning, belonging to a community of learners and building positive self-esteem: the link between literacy learning and behavior. The results showed that struggling readers benefit from a daily, structured literacy intervention that focuses on the key literacy foundations needed for comprehension.

The Response to a Daily, Structured Literacy Intervention and its Effect on Struggling

Readers' Comprehension

Literacy is essential to our daily life. Early childhood experiences at home and in school will shape how one will enter the literate world. Students who are struggling readers will often find difficulty learning how to read and comprehend text within a large classroom setting. Many schools have responded to this concern and adopted many new literacy interventions. Literacy interventions are taught by either the classroom teacher or a literacy specialist within the school. Interventions often break reading down into parts such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, writing, and ultimately comprehension. During a literacy intervention, a teacher can go in depth within these areas so the child can become a successful reader. Most of these literacy interventions are facilitated within a small group setting, giving children who are behind in reading the chance for one-on-one or small group instruction. The topic of this study is "The Response to a Daily, Structured literacy intervention, and its Effects on Struggling Readers' Comprehension." This topic is very important because as teachers, we must pull and use from every resource available and utilize every program schools have to offer in order to find the best way to teach children who are behind in their reading. Comprehension is making meaning. It includes making connections with text, self, and the world, utilizing both background knowledge and text-based knowledge. Comprehension is one of the five components that are needed for reading success. There are students who may know how to "read" words, but if they cannot make meaning from what they read, they are truly not reading. They are merely word calling; getting the words off the page. Nation, Frazier, and Norbury (2005) state, "To extract meaning

from text demands a number of cognitive processes, from recognizing letters and words to interpreting the message with respect to world knowledge" (p. 21).   Building on student's vocabulary, helping students accurately decode what they read, and making connections from what they read to what they know will help students build comprehension. Helping struggling readers increase their comprehension will give them a better chance for success in the higher grades. Teachers need to make the time to observe their students within their classroom carefully and guide students learning based on the childs need (Applegate, Quinn, & A. Applegate, 2006). Struggling reader's need extra guidance or reading interventions to give them the chance to make the connections and develop their comprehension skills that they can use in the stories they read. Based on the Common Core State Standards for Reading Comprehension, and in the outside world, "To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts" ("Common Core State Standards," 2012, p.16). Providing early interventions, when students are younger, and behind in reading, gives them more strategies for meaning making and leads them closer to grade-level work and independence.

Exploring how interventions impact struggling readers and their reading comprehension will facilitate how schools accommodate those children that are behind in their reading. Many literacy interventions that are being used in school districts around the country are very expensive. With limited budgets in most districts, schools need to rely on research conducted by professionals to find the intervention that would best suit their students' needs in the most economical way. If no research was conducted about strategic literacy interventions and struggling readers' comprehension, it could result in another brick added to the wall that

prevents this child from learning how to read. Improving the reading success and giving

struggling readers the opportunity to learn how to comprehend text will generalize into the other

subject areas such as writing, math, science and social studies. Literacy is built into every

subject area within school. Students who are struggling readers will ultimately find difficulty not

just in reading class but in every subject area. Students' need fiction and non-fiction text that are

at their reading level (Allington, 2007). When students' are made to read textbooks that are far

above their reading level, they will simply become word callers and not grasp the information

needed from the text. Comprehension is one of the keys to students' success.

Students learn best when there are predictable routines and lots of structure within the

classroom. Interventions work best when they are consistently applied every day and with the

same routine (McIntyre et. al., 2005). Struggling readers especially benefit from this structure

because they are trying to grasp on to new and challenging concepts and unfamiliar strategies.

This is all the more difficult after years of not "breaking the code" and feeling like a failure.

From my own experience, I have seen and been involved in many different literacy approaches

for struggling readers. These different literacy interventions include RTI (Response to

Intervention), Reading Recovery, Wilson, and leveled literacy intervention. From these

interventions, I have witnessed both student success and struggle within particular programs and

where and when comprehension growth was achieved. Heinemann, one of the leading

publishing companies for professional development books and research, has initiated an

intensive amount of research on one particular literacy intervention; "The Fountas and Pinnell

leveled literacy intervention." Fountas and Pinnell designed an intervention that was made for

students reading below grade level. Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention is a

supplementary, short-term program designed for students reading below grade level. It is an 18-

20 week program that involves direct reading instruction in a small group setting for 30 minutes a day (Fountas & Pinnell, 2008). During each reading group, students will begin by rereading books from the previous days, review high-frequency words, participate in word study and end the lesson with reading a new book at the student's instructional level (Fountas & Pinnell, 2008). Leveled literacy intervention benchmarks student's growth every 10 lessons and conducts a running record every other day. It examines student's comprehension both during and at the end of each story and builds a variety of comprehension strategies for students to acquire and use throughout their day. This generalization into other content areas extends the efficacy of the program.

The main question for my study was how the response to a daily, structured literacy intervention and its effect on struggling readers comprehension? Struggling readers have a difficult time comprehending text because they lack the literacy foundations needed to make meaning from text. The theoretical framework that guided my study focused on how culture has the ability to disable someone because they do not fit within societies norms. Students who fit outside society's norms will not have the literacy experiences or events needed to develop the literacy skills other children have learned and will enter school with. Another theory that also guided this study is the socio-cultural historical theory. The socio-cultural historical theory provides a culturally focused examination of input from students in a variety of learning settings (Larson & Marsh, 2005). My findings and implications provide insight on the importance of a daily, structured literacy intervention on struggling readers comprehension. The Fountas and Pinnells leveled literacy intervention and its daily, structured lesson plans implemented the literacy skills needed to make a struggling reader make gains with their reading and comprehension of text. Giving students specific, guided direction in a small group setting, allows

students to well safer and can lead to more risk-taking. Students will begin to develop their

metacognition and will generalize into other content areas.

Theoretical Framework

Literacy is multidimensional in nature (Kucer, 2009). It is dynamic, malleable, and a

multifaceted social and cultural practice (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Gee, 2001; Kucer, 2009).

Literacy encompasses the ability to speak, listen, read, write, and solve problems within text.

Evolution in literacy will happen in response to cultural, social and economic changes in our

society.

Society embraces literacy and its social practices. These abilities are essential to

actualizing a full, productive life. The path to a literate life begins with primary discourse. Gee

(2001) defines discourse as, "a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of

thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful

group or "social network" (p. 1). Primary discourse consists of what you know first. Immediate

family, extended family, environment, and early childhood experiences in the home define this

phenomenon. However, it is challenging to generalize and apply to secondary discourse. Gee

refers to secondary discourses as extending the use of language to our own primary discourse.

Secondary discourses generally occur in places such as schools, workplaces, stores, churches etc.

These places may be unfamiliar to children and will require them to go beyond their primary

discourse and build onto their secondary discourses.

Primary and secondary discourses would not be developed or mastered by children without acquisition (Gee, 2001). Acquisition is a process of obtaining something by exposure to models without formal teaching. The process occurs in natural settings where it is meaningful for the child. Children that are exposed to many literacy events in their early years will come to school with a more literate background because literacy acquisition was established within the home. Some of these literacy events may include: building a home library, reading aloud, and taking family field trips, followed by talking/reading about them. The process of acquisition is developed without formal teaching whereas the process of learning is acquired through explicit teaching. Children that were not exposed to different literacy events, such as being read bed time stories (shared reading), parental modeling of how and why to read, visiting libraries and exposure to a variety of books, will enter school without the background knowledge and concepts of print that other children may have acquired. Those children or as Gee states, "non-mainstream" children will fall behind because literacy is mainly developed through acquisition, not learning. Gee states, "…it requires exposure to models in natural meaningful, and functional settings, and teaching is not liable to be very successful-it may even initially get in the way" (p. 5). The lack of literacy events during childhood could "disable" a child and put them outside society norms. McDermott and Varenne's (1995) culture as a disability theory will guide this study and show how norms within society can impact childrens' learning.

Society has constructed cultural norms that are in place for people to follow. When individuals are viewed as different from society's norms, they are considered "disabled" because they do not conform to the dominant cultural norms (McDermott & Varenne, 1995). Culture can

be defined as a group a person belongs to. Within our society, there are many different cultures

or groups of people that participate in what their group is doing. The problem is in our society, if

groups of people are not participating in what the 'norm' group is doing, they are looked at as

different and society looks at them as disabled.   White, middle class families who enrich their

children's lives with literacy events during their childhood are the norm within our society.

These literacy events include parents reading to their children every night, providing a rich

collection of stories for their children to read, exposing children to libraries and museums,

positive role-modeling and encouragement from parents, and parents creating an environment

where their children can learn how to make meaning and create text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-

to-world connections. Children who are struggling readers may not have had these advantages

during their childhood and fall short of being the norm within schools; reading on grade level

and participating in classroom discussions. Without being exposed to these literacy experiences

when growing up, children could fall behind in school and find difficulty when entering the

world. The challenges would come from the difficulty in reading everyday print (functional

literacy). Some examples of everyday print may include different kinds of signs and other

environmental print, filling out forms, applications, other documentation for school and jobs, and

reading required of everyday living (recipes, menus, directions, etc.). McDermott and Varenne

(1995) state, "cultural analysis shows that disability refers most precisely to inadequate

performances only on tasks that are arbitrarily circumscribed from daily life" (p. 324). Without

given the opportunity to explore literacy, children will continue to lack the foundations needed to

prepare them for the literate world. Fountas and Pinnell created a program to aid in the learning

of literacy for those children who struggle. Leveled literacy intervention is a program that will build on childrens' vocabulary, fluency, writing and ultimately comprehension using specially designed lessons and stories (Fountas & Pinnell, 2008). Part of this intervention includes school-home connections. Students bring what they read that day home with them. The reading that day will reinforce the learning. Comprehension will be established with continuous exposure to a variety of fiction and non-fiction stories, word work, and rereading of previous stories that leveled literacy intervention can provide daily, in and out of school.

The way to fill the gap between struggling readers and successful readers is driven around the socio-cultural historical theory. The socio-cultural historical theory provides a culturally focused examination of input from students in a variety of learning settings (Larson & Marsh, 2005). Teachers use the technique of analyzing culturally-diverse learning settings to prepare lessons and think through how they communicate to their students. Implementing the socio-cultural historical theory within the classroom will organize literacy learning through the way children are situated within their classroom and how teachers and students communicate with each other. Students will have the ability to use their own cultural tools when in small groups to aid in their learning and the learning of others. Fountas and Pinnell leveled literacy intervention is designed for small group instruction and encourages students to interpret of the stories through comprehension conversations (Fountas and Pinnell, 2008). The stories are designed to inspire students' engagement and make them want to read. The stories within this program are diverse, funny and include interesting, real-life topics that keep students immersed in reading and thinking, speaking and listening, throughout the complete lesson. Struggling

readers will bring different literacy experiences to school in comparison to students who were

involved in many literacy events during their childhood. Using small group instruction, students

will be given the opportunity to come together, read, and voice their own views and

interpretations of stories.

Research Question

Building meaning and relating it to ourselves and our world is the ultimate goal when

reading. Struggling readers will find difficulty understanding and connecting stories to their

background knowledge because of a lack of literacy experiences that should occur during

childhood. Many schools have implemented a variety of intense and supplementary reading

interventions that provide extra support for students who are reading below grade level.

Incorporating these intense supplementary literacy interventions leads to the question:

How can Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention build comprehension for struggling

readers?

Literature Review

Reading is having the ability to understand the meaning of letters, words and symbols.

In order to be a successful reader, one must be able to decode words, possess strong

vocabularies, read fluently and create text-to-text, text-to-self and text-to-world connections.

Comprehension is the ultimate goal when reading. Students who can make meaning from text will be able to transfer this competence to other subject areas and use this skill throughout their lives. Struggling readers may find difficulty making meaning from text due to a lack of skills learned throughout their childhood. Schools may apply additional services such as literacy interventions, during school, that will provide more individualized attention to specific skills struggling readers will need for them to become successful readers. The synthesis of up-to-date research on literacy interventions and their effects on struggling readers' comprehension will be found within the following literature review. The three themes that follow will identify how different literacy interventions impact struggling readers' comprehension. The first theme will identify comprehension and its importance during reading. Throughout the first theme, different literacy elements will be reviewed as they contribute to the learning of comprehension as well as strategies that are used to improve students' comprehension. The next theme will identify who a struggling reader is and examine multiple reasons why struggling readers have difficulty with reading achievement. Reviewing early literacy events during childhood, students' home literacy experiences, and students motivation towards reading could account for the lack of acquisition and confidence within themselves as readers. Finally, the last theme will identify what a literacy intervention is and its association with at-risk readers' achievement. Throughout the last theme, different types of literacy interventions will be analyzed and critiqued based on struggling readers achievement in making meaning from text. Analyzing a multitude of research on literacy interventions and their effects on struggling readers' comprehension, through a critical lens will bring awareness to guardians and educators around the topic of reading comprehension.

The Relationship between Comprehension and Literacy Acquisition

Creating meaning from text is the ultimate goal when reading. Making meaning begins with the early literacy events children experience when growing up in and out of the home. Although comprehension is the ultimate goal when reading, it is a complex process that some students struggle with on a daily basis. Researchers such as Nation and Angell (2006) state, "To understand text, words need to be recognized and their meanings accessed, relevant background knowledge needs to be activated, and inferences must be generated as information is integrated during the course of reading" (p.77). Comprehension is understanding vocabulary, using background knowledge to create a connection, and building inferences from the reading. Students must also grasp control processes that aid in the continuous monitoring of comprehension. Students who are able to monitor for meaning on an ongoing basis will be able to detect when the reading is no longer making sense and allow themselves to initiate repair strategies such as rereading, self-questioning ("does this make sense?"), or use of context. In addition to activating background knowledge and inferring, Rapp et al. (2007) states that basic skills such as phonological awareness, decoding, and vocabulary play a significant role in children's comprehension development. Phonological awareness, decoding, fluency and vocabulary are basic skills that require breaking up words into sounds or parts, understanding the meaning of a variety of complex words and reading them with ease, without constant stopping. Developing these basic skills will allow comprehension to occur. Automaticity with these word recognition strategies allows for fluency to occur. Fluency will promote deeper and richer comprehension. Giving students the tools for success in reading comprehension will allow them

to expand their understanding into other content areas such as science, social studies and math (Guthrie et al., 2009). Comprehension can spread through all subject, as well as allow the skills needed for children to be able to communicate and make meaning from conversations they encounter throughout their lives. As students grow older, comprehension will not only be required within school, but out of school as well. Examples of comprehension in the real world include understanding conversations with other people, making meaning from newspapers or different environmental signs, directions to games, putting items together etc.

There are many skills needed to comprehend text. A necessary skill needed is fluency. As students get older, they are able to read not only high frequency words, but also a vast amount of vocabulary. Many students have the ability to decode the words, but understanding what they read is difficult. Hitchcock, Prater and Dowrick (2004) conducted a study in Hawaii with four students with learning disabilities. The study examined students acquisition of extensive tutoring in comprehension and video self-modeling to see if it would increase their comprehension and fluency. The findings concluded that students who were receiving extensive tutoring increased their ability to comprehend fiction and non-fiction stories as well as increase their oral fluency. The video self-modeling gave students the opportunity to listen to themselves answer comprehension questions and talk about different stories while using a story map. The students doubled their fluency rate and teachers and parents have observed that the students are reading with more confidence. In addition, students are applying what they learned to graphic organizers to aid in their comprehension. In contrast, Therrien (2004) completed a meta-analysis on 18 different studies that focused on rereading and its effect on comprehension and fluency. The

finding proved that rereading is a strategy that increases the fluency and comprehension for students. Although Hitchcock, Prater and Dowrick (2004) study used extensive tutoring and video self-modeling, Therrien's (2004) study used the rereading strategy to examine the impact on fluency and comprehension. Even though both studies' findings were equally the same, with an increase in comprehension and fluency, they both used different ways to achieve an increase in both areas (one-to-one tutoring and a self-monitoring strategy). Fluency and comprehension can sometimes be compromised by students' focusing too much on the specific words, instead of the text as a whole. Diehl et al. (2011) states, "Typical instruction in primary grades, in which teachers focus on word-level skills, often results in strong word recognition skills at the expense of comprehension abilities" (p.150). Within the primary grades, students are explicitly taught word recognition strategies to aid in their reading ability. Although word recognition is very important for reading success, teachers should be introducing and integrating higher-order skills into the child's school day. Reading is the act of meaning-making. Without understanding text, students are merely word callers. Higher-order skills are the understanding of concepts and how ideas are brought together by the text (Rapp et al., 2007). Comprehension is identifying the meaning of the text as a whole versus a series of individual words and sentences. Word recognition is important, but learning just the words within the sentences will hinder comprehension because students are focusing on the word solely; not the text as a whole. If too much cognitive energy goes to getting words off the page, there is little left for active, constructive meaning-making.

Comprehension can not occur without metacognition. Metacognitive awareness is being

aware of how you think and how you learn (Hentner, 2012). The ability to self-monitor your learning and understand how you think will increase your ability to comprehend different texts. In Diehl et al. (2011) study of 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students in 5 classrooms in a rural school district, found that implementing an intervention called 3-RCI increased students' metacognition as well as their ability to comprehend a variety of text structures. The 3-RCI intervention included 3 different phases that explicitly taught students metacognitive strategies, provided students the tools needed to aid in their own thinking, and then encouraged them to participate in peer-led discussions. All students who participated gained on average of a little over a grade level in their abilities to read and comprehend text. Similarly, Allen and Hancock (2008) found in a study of 4th, 5th and 6th grade students within 15 classrooms, students improved their metacognitive awareness with metacognition inquiry sessions; twice a week for 10 weeks. The teachers led small group instruction and provided the students the strategies that they would need to self-monitor their own learning. The skills that were taught included having students make and check predictions based on their comprehension and background knowledge, use working memory, attend to processing speed and answer comprehension questions that were higher-level in nature. Improving how students self-monitor for meaning will allow them to become more independent with their reading and generalize those strategies to other content areas. Similar to the research found by Allen and Hancock (2008), researchers Gorsuch and Taguchi (2010) studied 30 college-level English Language Learners from Vietnam and found that rereading books and stories have increased metacognition among students, and also improved their fluency and comprehension. Students would read a 500-word segment and time themselves. The

students would then listen to an audiotape of the same story for a 2nd and 3rd time. The same story would be read again by the student and timed for the 4th and 5th time. At the end, students would write a short report on the story they read. The findings showed that rereading increased the students' metacognition as well as fluency and comprehension. In any grade level, introducing and continuous exposure to strategies for metacognition will help students self-monitor their own learning success. Diehl et al. (2011) states, "…many students who cannot comprehend text are generally unaware of the kind of thinking necessary for comprehension; that is, they lack the metacognitive skills necessary to think about what they are reading" (p.151). Without metacognitive awareness, students will struggle with making meaning and will only grow further behind in their comprehension, as well as their self-confidence.

Many tools and strategies are used to help students make meaning from text. Comprehension strategies are defined as "deliberate, goal-oriented attempts to control and modify the readers' efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings of text" (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008, p. 368). Many of these strategies include: making connections, questioning, making inferences, visualizing, synthesizing and determining importance. Many researchers have advocated that all subject-matter teachers should teach comprehension strategies within their classroom to aid in students' comprehension (Hall, 2012; Coiro & Dobler, 2007). Hall (2012) studied the effect students' comprehension and motivation had when involving comprehension strategies within social studies. The study involved 52, 6th grade students from two different middle schools who had failed to make adequate yearly progress in reading achievement in the last 4 years. The teachers were taught explicit

comprehension strategies and given lessons to teach to their students. The students were taught a new strategy at the beginning of the class. They then had to apply the new strategy after reading a section out of the textbook. Students then analyzed and wrote down how the strategy helped them in making meaning and report back to a small group of peers in a peer-led discussion. The findings showed that the use of comprehension strategies increased students' comprehension and motivation. Students who did not identify themselves as readers, were participating more in peer-led discussions and identifying and openly discussing how they knew the meaning of different texts. Similarly, Berkeley et al. (2011) study explicitly taught 57 students in 7th grade the self-questioning strategy to see if it would increase all students (grade-level students, learning disabled and English Language Learners) comprehension and metacognition. The study found that students who used the self-questioning strategy improved their comprehension significantly. Within this study, students expressed how self-questioning promoted self-monitoring of their own learning. In contrast, Hall (2012) examined multiple comprehension strategies and allowed students to choose which strategy they would use for each reading. Berkely et al. (2011) focused on one comprehension strategy; self-questioning.

All students learn differently. Providing multiple strategies for students to use and obtain will give access to students to take hold of their own learning and find which strategy is best for them. Another strategy that helps students visualize their thinking is the use of graphic organizers. A graphic organizer is a visual display that facilitates learning of text material through the use of spatial arrangements, arrows, lines and boxes (Kim et al., 2004). Kim et al. (2004) synthesized 21 studies that include 848 students with learning disabilities and the use of

graphic organizers and the effects it creates for students with learning disabilities

comprehension. Within this study, the use of 3 different graphic organizers were used; semantic

organizer, cognitive maps and framed outlines. The findings proved that the use of a semantic

organizer, cognitive maps or framed outlines improved students' comprehension and allowed

students with learning disabilities to organize their thinking as well as recall what others have

said. Graphic organizers are a tool that can be used across grade levels, especially elementary,

intermediate and high school. Visualization helps to envision characters, settings, and other

information from books. Park (2012) states "Visualizing, I suggest, can lead to learning—

learning defined as the process of grappling with difficult issues; making connections between

and among multiple texts; and cultivating a heightened awareness of the way we see the word

and world" (p. 637). Visualizing creates an image that can leave a lasting impact on how you

perceive a story. Students, especially ones with processing difficulties, may find the visualizing

strategy beneficial. Students can write everything down and it will be organized through the use

of either visualizing images or the use of graphic organizers. Similar to Kim et al.'s study, Park's

(2012) study investigated the use of visualizing and its effects on comprehension through the use

of book clubs. The findings showed the girls that participated within this study, used mental

imagery and visualized most characters within stories they were reading. The participants within

this study increased their comprehension and were able to make connections based on the visual

image they created. Teachers should encourage all students to visualize and create mental

images of characters or settings. Teachers should also create times throughout the day where

students can openly discuss different books or topics using visualization. The use of this strategy

can promote comprehension throughout the day and give students independence over their

learning.

The Relationship between Struggling Readers and Comprehension

Readers who lack the basic skills (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency,

comprehension) to read, will continue to fall behind in school and develop negative connotation

of themselves as readers (Margolis, 2004). There is more than a lack of basic skills that create

these barriers for struggling readers. There are many factors that contribute to continuous

reading failure for certain students. These contributing factors may include: low-socioeconomic

status, parent involvement, lack of motivation, learning disabilities and behavioral disorders.

Poverty and literacy are inextricably linked. Students from low-income families may

find difficulty transitioning into school because of the lack of educational resources and parent

involvement needed for the student to acquire readiness to learn. Evan (2004) states, "Low-

income children have fewer cognitive enrichment opportunities both at home and in their

neighborhoods. They read less, have fewer books at home, and infrequent library patrons, and

spend considerably more time watching TV than their middle-income counterparts" (p.88). The

effects of poverty on students' reading ability become more evident when students enter school,

having no concepts of print because of the lack of books and book experiences within their home

environment. Students of poverty lack, as well, the educational and literacy experiences that

students of a higher socio-economic class may experience. These educational and literacy

experiences include: trips to the local library and having the ability to read and take out books,

visiting a museum, and taking trips to local bookstores. Poverty can prevent students from acquiring tools that can aid them in their literacy development, but more specifically, their comprehension. One such tool is background knowledge. Noll and Watkins (2004) conducted a study involving 16 homeless children from the ages of 5 to 12 years. These students were picked up every day, dropped off at school where they would be integrated into classrooms appropriate for their age. A teacher would push-in to many different classrooms and work one-on-one with these students. She would create literature circles to increase discussion as well as encourage students to relate their own background knowledge to the story. The findings of the study showed that literature circles helped increase background knowledge for students from low-income settings because of the exposure and communication from other students. With background knowledge, students will be able to make text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. Creating these connections will improve comprehension as well as metacognitive awareness within books and in their everyday lives. In contrast, Vantassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2006) findings were similar in the sense that all students from low-socioeconomic status showed improvements in comprehension. The study investigated 2,113 students over a 3 year time in 3rd, 4th and 5th grade. The 24 lessons that were taught to the students were lessons for the gifted and talented. Teachers were taught explicitly how to teach it in a way that would best support students from lower socioeconomic status. Students achieved higher scores in comprehension and critical thinking, and integrated many new comprehension strategies to different contexts. Vantas del-Baska and Stambaugh (2006) state, "Together, such components can spell the difference between high levels of student challenge and excitement in learning

versus disengaged apathetic learners subjected to low-level skill sheets" (p.63). Even though the students within this study were from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, it does not always mean that these children will be behind academically. Presenting work to students that maybe significantly lower than their academic level could cause boredom or lack of motivation to complete the task at hand. It could lead to non-participation or incomplete work within the class. In comparison to Noll and Watkins (2004) study, most students from low-income families enter school with limited background knowledge and literacy experiences (shared reading, books at home, parental modeling of reading books etc.). Exceptions, like Vantas Del-Baska and Stambaugh study, evaluating students and finding out what they know and how they know it, will help to determine the skills a particular child needs. Teachers need to keep an open mind and keeps bias out of expectations for students learning because any child can be a gifted and talented child. What we believe, we create. Believing and expecting children (all children) to learn to read, providing the necessary instruction; tools and materials will facilitate this outcome.

Parents are the first teachers in childrens' lives. Children are born with a "clean slate" and will learn and adapt to that to which they are exposed. Most childhood literacy experiences at home include: shared reading, parents reading to the child, being read bed-time stories and watching parents modeling how to read (Allor & McCathren, 2003). Students who struggle with reading may not have been exposed to different types of literacy events by parents. With lack of literacy experiences, children will enter school with little knowledge on book handling skills, concepts of print and phonemic awareness. Smetana et al. (2005) states:

"When words can be recognized and understood, and connections between the text and

the reader are made, comprehension develops. Many students lack these skills because

they have not had opportunities to listen to or talk about stories, engage in word play or

read with family members or view literacy behaviors modeled in the home". (p.284)

Students will find difficulty making connections to stories, other texts and communicating with

their peers because they were not exposed to the opportunities of a literature-rich childhood.

Researchers, such as Smetana (2005), conducted studies that examined different programs and

how collaboration can occur between parents and their children at home. Smetana (2005)

studied the effect Collaborative Storybook Reading Program had among at-risk kindergarteners

and parent-volunteers. The finding proved that with parent-involvement (even if the parent was

not their parent), students were able to improve their ability to retell stories and mimic what

readers do (predict story events, understand story structure, and understand reading is a way the

author can communicate with the reader). Reading is an interactive event between a book, an

author, and the reader. The parents were able to learn and practice a new reading process and

watch how teachers modeled how the process should be completed. Using the collaborative

storybook process, parents learned new ways to interactively read with their child. Parents

learned new ways to ask their children questions about stories, make predictions and create

conversations about the text. A similar study analyzed how parents responded to their children's

miscues during shared reading. Mansell et al. (2005) studied a group of kindergartners and their

parents for 3 years. During the study, parents were observed at home listening to their child

read. Observations were made of the different types of miscues the children made and how the

parents responded to these miscues. Results show that as their children continued into 1st and

2nd grade from kindergarten, they miscued less frequently. Parents noticed they were not

correcting their children as much and they observed their children developing skills needed to

correct their own miscues. Those skills signal the beginning of independence and the

development of metacognitive awareness. Both studies recognize the support that is needed

from parents with their children's literacy development. Parents are their children's first teachers.

They must be equipped with the right amount of knowledge to help their children develop

necessary skills to begin their literate life.

Motivation can drive students' reading success. Motivating students, especially

struggling readers, can be difficult. There are many factors that can contribute to students' lack

of motivation in reading. These could include: low self-efficacy, parents modeling a lack of

motivation to read with or to them, and learned helplessness. Learned helplessness is the

perception of hopelessness and resignation learned when individuals gradually become less

willing to attempt tasks. Students with learned helplessness feel that they have no control over

their own success. Students who fail repeatedly will begin to give up on themselves and will

struggle with taking risks needed to develop their literacy growth (Margolis & McCabe, 2003).

More than anything else, students entrenched in thoughts and feelings of learned helplessness

need opportunities, teaching, and materials that ensure their success. Cole and Hilliard (2006)

studied 656 students in a public elementary school near the inner-city. The groups of students

were very diverse and 97% of them had free or reduced-price lunch. The study was conducted to

see if a reading program learned with the computer would motivate and set children up for

reading success. The findings showed great improvement in reading as well as high achievement

in motivation among students. Most students commented that they would like to play with this

program on their home computers as well as in school. Students commented that the music

genre and graphics were engaging and fun. They enjoyed being challenged and most students

skipped several levels if it was a skill they had already mastered. Making an intervention or

program fun and exciting, as well as giving it educational purposes, allow the students to engage

in their learning with a positive attitude. Similarly, Paige (2011) studied motivation among

struggling adolescent readers using a four-phased model of situational interest. Paige (2011)

states:

"In the area of reading, lack of desire can turn into too little time with text, eventually

leading to inadequate literacy acquisition and resulting in what Stanovich (1986) calls the

Matthew Effect, a literacy application of the biblical story of the rich becoming richer,

the poor getting poorer. Adolescents who struggle with the reading process often develop

motivational problems resulting from perceptions of low ability…". (p.396)

Students who lack the motivation to read, and learn in general, will perceive of themselves as

non-readers. There are two different kinds of motivations: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic

motivation is gained for incentives, rewards and factors such as social setting, whereas intrinsic

motivation is motivation from personal goals and achievement you would like to attain. The

findings of this article showed many correlations between the constructs of extrinsic motivation

for reading and oral fluency and comprehension proficiency. Students who are struggling

readers sometimes need something such as a reward or incentive to try harder, especially reading

texts that are difficult for them. When students begin to see their own achievement in reading,

they will be more motivated to try new things such as books, programs, games etc. Students will

begin to take bigger risks and make themselves vulnerable for new learning again. Extrinsic

motivation can segue to intrinsic motivation.   A study done by Knapp (2013) found that one-to-

one tutoring at a library was influential for reading achievement, as well as providing positive

motivation for struggling readers. Similarly, the study showed that with extrinsic motivation

(one-to-one time with an older child/adult) and an alternative location within the day (the

library), students developed enough confidence to succeed within the school day as well as with

the reading intervention. Finding students' interest will help them become motivated for new

learning. Introducing children, especially struggling readers, to a variety of literacy experiences

(they may have missed in childhood), will give them exposure to what is out there. And possibly

help them to find something that may intrigue or motivate them into continuous literacy learning.

Giving students' material that is far above their level will overtake any confidence they had for

themselves as readers. Too often, struggling learners are placed in frustration-level material,

compromising their ability to read competently and independently, curtailing their interest and

reducing their motivation.

Students' behaviors, positively or negatively, will shape their views on literacy. Students

who demonstrate a positive outlook in reading, will generally be reading grade-level text and

will be able to make connections and comprehend a variety of texts. Children who have a

negative outlook in reading will generally struggle with many concepts that aid in reading

success. These include: sustaining engagement, solving problems and self-monitoring. Other

factors (learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, family dynamic) may add to the lack of

literacy foundation needed to achieve literacy success. Students with behavioral disorders are

looked at as students with bad tempers and those who have no control over their mind and body.

The underlying problem is most students with behavioral disorders struggle with reading and

lack the foundations to continue growth in literacy acquisition as well as the motivation to

continue learning. The difficulty of learning to read often leads children with behavioral

disorders to act out verbally and physically towards peers, teachers, and other adults (Weaster,

2004). Teachers need to know their students to see what contributing factors lead to these types

of behaviors. McDaniel et al. (2010) studied 18 struggling readers with emotional behavioral

disorders and how Corrective Reading impacted their reading. Corrective Reading is a

systematic program that drives specific instruction towards areas of need. The program

specifically addresses decoding and comprehension instruction. The study revealed teachers

strongly felt the program was beneficial for their students with behavioral needs. Teachers also

felt the program really addressed students' weakness without making them feel like a

kindergartner. Students' motivation for reading increased and teachers weren't being asked "why

do we have to do this?" Students, especially with behavioral disorders, generally have chaos

within their everyday lives. Implementing a program that is structured and predictable, will give

students guidance and a parameter to help them stay focused and motivated to learn. In addition

to McDaniel et al. (2010) study, Allen-DeBoer et al. (2006) studied 4 struggling adolescent

readers with behavioral disorders that at tented a juvenile corrections facility. Both studies used

Corrective Reading Program to evaluate the effect this program had with students with behavioral disorders. Similarly, the results of the 4 students in the juvenile corrections facility increase dramatically in their oral fluency and comprehension. All students gained at least 1 grade level in their comprehension and some gained as much as 4 grade levels within the 9 week program. Significant gains from this program could be contributed to the predictability and the systematic instruction given to students. Even though the program is intense and systematic, it allows for flexibility for when behaviors do arise. In both studies, students gained decoding skills, fluency and comprehension within a short time span. In addition to both studies, students with behavioral disorders found motivation with the use of technology (Blankenship, Ayres & Langone, 2005). Students may not have any sort of technology at home, such as computers or Ipads. Opportunity to use technology within the classroom, to increase comprehension, will allow struggling readers with behavioral disorders to find success and be motivated to learn. Struggling readers with behavioral disorders hardly find success within school and gain minimally, in their literacy acquisition. Comprehension is one of the hardest, basic skills to learn in reading. Given comprehensions' complexity, struggling readers with behavioral disorders need a program that recognizes success as well as working on skills needed to develop comprehension on a deeper level. When students begin to see achievement, they begin to have motivation themselves and take bigger risks within their reading.

The Impact of Literacy Interventions on Students' Comprehension

Reading interventions are established, within schools, to assist struggling readers with specific skills needed for them to achieve reading success. There are many different kinds of reading interventions to support struggling readers. Consideration is given to the grade level, as well as the reading skill of the child. Within schools, reading is built into every subject area, from kindergarten to college level classes. Schools today give 30 to 60 minutes, each day, of appropriate supplemental reading instruction for students who are struggling readers (Allington, 2007). For the next 5 to 6 hours, struggling readers must endure through other subject areas, trying to make sense of textbooks that are meant for students on or above grade-level. Houge et al. (2008) states, "Currently, there exists a growing body of evidence that suggests adolescents' literacy deficiencies can be remedied if these individuals receive extra support in the form of direct, explicit, and systematic fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction" (p.640). During school, struggling readers may find themselves lost within text that they do not have the skills to decode or comprehend. Struggling readers cannot learn through text that is not on their independent or instructional reading level. It could lead to low self-efficacy and motivation to continue in reading and other subject areas (Allington, 2007). Schools are pushed to implement reading interventions that will aid the majority of students who are at-risk readers. Allington (2007) states, "Struggling readers need books they can read-accurately, fluently, and with strong comprehension-in their hands all day long in order to exhibit maximum educational growth" (p.8). Students, who are reading appropriate level books, will benefit more from a reading intervention because continuous reading and learning is happening throughout the school day. In addition, as the message (content or ease of reading) is familiar, the process (skills and

strategies) can be unfamiliar. Students will apply what they learned within their intervention to appropriate text in each subject area.

There are mainly 3 kinds of reading interventions that can occur during or after school. These include: small-group intervention, tutoring (one-to-one) intervention and technology-based intervention. These different types of interventions allow teachers to assess which intervention would be best for the struggling reader within their classroom.   Reading interventions focus on certain skills based on a student's grade and reading level. Struggling readers in the primary school may find problems in the way of decoding. Struggling readers in the elementary and middle school, may find difficulties with decoding but mostly with fluency and comprehension. When struggling readers reach high school, the skills they need to achieve reading success will mostly center around mostly comprehension, as well as motivation (Fisher & Ivey, 2006; Allington, 2007; Nelson & Manset-Williamson, 2006). Based on the resources and funding schools have, an appropriate program or programs will be implemented. These different types of reading interventions will all focus on improving one or all basic skills needed to become a successful reader.

A small-group intervention is one type of reading approach. During a small-group intervention, a small group of struggling readers will follow and learn from an intense, supplementary, reading approach that focuses on the basic skills struggling readers need. Cirino et al. (2010) study was conducted using struggling readers in sixth-grade from 3 schools in large urban districts. The study examined Tier 2 interventions from the Response to Intervention model and its effects on struggling readers. There were 10 to 15 students per group and lasted 50

minutes each day from September through May. Students who attended the intervention

outperformed students who did not participate in areas like spelling, comprehension and

decoding. Although the students who participated in the intervention outperformed students who

did not, gains were not as high as expected. Difficulties arose such as schedule changes and

attendance. The school is a high-poverty school and maintaining attendance is very difficult.

Comprehension could have been achieved on a deeper level if students were motivated to come

to school and participate in the intervention. A similar study conducted by Nelson and Manset-

Williamson (2006) examined students comprehension using two interventions. Both

interventions taught a comprehension strategy, but one intervention was more explicit than the

other. The results revealed that the students who received explicit instruction on a

comprehension strategy gained more in their meaning making. The other intervention (which

was more like a guided reading intervention) did not have students grow significantly. Students

within the study became more motivated to learn additional comprehension strategies and were

excited about the growth they had made. The motivation and success of the students within the

explicit comprehension strategy intervention could have been because teachers were giving

feedback if students were doing a good job or if they needed more guidance. Cirino et al. (2010)

study was a large-scale intervention used for all 6th graders within the building. Students were

not receiving as much one-to-one attention as the study conducted by Nelson and Manset-

Williamson(2006). Cirino et al. (2010) intervention involved 10-15 students, whereas Nelson

and Manset-Williamson (2006) intervention had more one-to-one attention for students to

receive from certified staff. Both studies related to the need for comprehension with struggling

readers and the increase in positive motivation on students' success within school. In addition to

motivation, comprehension and interventions, Guthrie et al. (2009) study investigates a 12-week

intervention called Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) and its effect on struggling

readers in comparison to traditional instruction. The study included 94, 5th graders who were

participating in the intervention and 62, 5th grade students who were continuing to participate in

traditional instruction. CORI, increased students' levels on multiple outcomes such as: word

recognition, content knowledge and overall reading comprehension. In contrast to the study

done by Cirino et al. (2010), there was less teacher-modeling for learning comprehension

strategies in comparison to the intervention conducted in Nelson and Manset-Williamson (2006).

In that study, there was an intense amount of teacher- modeling of comprehension strategies to

aid those who are at-risk readers. When teachers model a skill or strategy for a student, the child

may find it easier to retain because it is being verbally and physically explained. This model

supports the gradual transfer of responsibility for learning. CORI was a 6 week intervention that

included 30 lessons that the students would complete during a content class. Time management

was an issue for Guthrie et al. (2009) intervention because the intervention was being integrated

within a content course that has limited time to teach content-area material. Cirino et al. (2010)

stated that a large-scale, school-wide intervention would have been more successful with

comprehension gains if it received more time to conduct the intervention. Time management

within interventions becomes a difficulty when more and more is being added to students'

curriculum. Allington (2007) argues that students need more time with instructional texts versus

text that are meant for students' who are on grade-level. His argument states that not every

student is on grade-level and schools are forcing students to engage in textbooks that they cannot

read or comprehend. Students are spending more time trying to decipher what the words mean

than spending time learning new comprehension strategies and skills to help them deepen their

learning.

There are many studies that analyze students who are participating in the intervention at

that moment. Schmitt and Gregory (2005) studied students who had participated in Reading

Recovery when they were in 1st grade. Now the students are 2nd, 3rd, or 4th graders. The study

was created to investigate if Reading Recovery has a lasting impact on students and their

comprehension growth. Reading Recovery is a program that emphasizes rereading of familiar

text, administration of a running reading record/comprehension conversations, word

work/breaking words up, introduction to a new, instructional level text, and writing about

reading (Hubsbaum et al., 1996). There were 548 children that participated in the study. After

analyzing scores and past records, students that had participated in Reading Recovery in 1st grade

have remained on grade-level and very few have declined. The study has proven that students

who are struggling in the early years of their literacy development, should be provided with an

intervention that is structured, and teaches students a little of each basic literacy skill they will

need to know. Guthrie et al. (2009) states similar views about reading comprehension. They

state that explicit instruction improved comprehension strategies, which is very similar to the

structure in which Reading Recovery provides. Comprehension was tested and students were

achieving grade-level scores (Schmitt and Gregory, 2005).

There are many students who are currently in a small-group literacy interventions that

still need extra support in their basic literacy skills. Another type of intervention that can benefit

students who need that extra guidance is working with the student one-to-one in a tutoring-type

intervention. Tutoring is a program where an instructor or teacher is working with a student,

one-to-one on specific skills the student needs to know in order to be a successful reader. Knapp

(2013) conducted a study that examined how a Reading Apprenticeship intervention would help

increase struggling readers' literacy skills, especially comprehension. The Reading

Apprenticeship intervention would be taught by parents and volunteers, during school, at the

library. The student and volunteer would meet twice a week, for 20-30 minute sessions. During

this time, the adult "reading partner" would read different texts with the student and model

fluency. The student would take notice of different literacy elements within the book that can

improve their understanding, at the end of the story. The students who participated in this

intervention increased their comprehension by 9.1 months, according to the STAR Reading

Assessment. Not only did the students' comprehension increase, but students' attitude toward

reading changed as well. Teachers explained the positive impact the tutoring has had on their

students and their reading behavior. Students are more willing to go to the library and pick

books out. Some students are beginning to participate in read a-louds and are not afraid of

making a mistake. In contrast, Kourea, Cartledge and Musti-Rao (2007) conducted a study that

resulted similarly but instead of adult volunteers tutoring, this study investigates the effect of

whole-class, peer tutoring on comprehension achievement. The study included 148 students in

2nd and 3rd grade. Comprehension was measured using Cloze activities. Students were taught

how to be an affective peer-tutor and proceeded to demonstrate it during class. The students

increased their comprehension as well as their oral fluency. Giving students responsibility over

their own and others learning will most likely motivate students to continue their learning with a

positive attitude. Similarly, Hitchcock, Prater and Dowrick (2004) also examined a tutoring

intervention and its effect on struggling readers. Their findings were fairly close to each other in

the sense of motivation and comprehension. Students in both studies increased their

comprehension and have become more motivated to read and take on new challenges. In both

studies, the tutors used verbal praise and managed to maintain a positive rapport with each

student. In contrast, Knapp (2013) created her intervention based on reading behaviors within

the library. She noticed students not caring about reading. She rationalized this thought based

on parental role-modeling and lack of "shared reading" time. Within our society, most families

read to their children every night and each child experiences shared reading with their parents at

some point. Students who are not read to every night and do not experience those early literacy

events, are being disabled within our culture and viewed differently than society

norms(McDermott & Varenne, 1995). These specific children are entering school with limited

knowledge about literacy and will ultimately find difficulty keeping up with children whose

parents have included literacy in their everyday lives since they were young.

Our world has evolved into a technology-based society. Technology has opened doors to

new ways of learning and acquiring knowledge. Although many literacy-based interventions

have followed a structured form with a teacher directing instruction within a small-group setting

or in a tutoring, one-to-one setting, technology has introduced new ways of intervening and

creating programs that can aid in children's' comprehension development. Kim (2013) studied

the assistance of a computer-assisted language learner (CALL) on peer-led tutoring, for struggling readers. There were 141, 4th and 5th grade students who participated in the intervention. Students would use the computer-assisted language learner to provide the intervention called Affable Reading Tutor (ART), to communicate with an instructor that would teach and model certain comprehension strategies through the computer. Overall, students benefitted from the Affable Reading Tutor. Students increased their comprehension as well as word decoding. The intervention is graphically designed to heighten interest within students as well as give a different perspective for students as they learn from a digitally-made teacher. As the students benefit from the new comprehension strategies learned from this intervention, students are also having technology integrated within their school day. Having exposure to a variety of technologies will prepare students for success in their everyday lives. Similarly, Higgins and Raskind (2005) investigated the Quicktionary Reading Pen II to see if it affected students with learning disabilities' comprehension of text. The study involved 30 students ranging from 4th grade to 12th grade. The pen is portable and allows students to scan unknown words into the computer to hear the pronunciation and definition of that word. Students within this study enjoyed using the pen and students' comprehension levels increased. The Quicktionary Reading Pen II, is a piece of technology that students can use independently or with one-to-one support. The pen is portable, so it can allow for continuous support in comprehension for students, wherever they are. In addition, Blankenship, Ayres, and Langone (2005) conducted a single-study with 3, 15 year old boys with behavioral disorders, to see if an intervention using a computer program named Inspiration would increase their comprehension.

The students would read a portion of a chapter, complete a concept map that was generated from the computer program, and complete a quiz. The students would do this until they completed the chapter. After analyzing the results, the students all increased their comprehension. Students were motivated to read the chapter and complete a graphic organizer on the computer because it was technology-based; something different. The teacher also commented that the students' negative behaviors had decreased and they were able to work independently without refusing to work. In contrast to the continuous gains in reading comprehension when using technology-based interventions, Kim (2013) states that because technology is very new, teachers and parents need to also assume that the increase in motivation from students could be activated because these interventions are new and exciting. It is possible that an increase in comprehension and motivation occurs because of the novelty effect. As society evolves, so does the technology. Preparing students to become literate in a technology-based society is exposing them to an array of digital literacies (Stetter and Hughes, 2010). Giving the opportunity to assist struggling readers with explicit instruction in comprehension strategies, using technology, will equip them with another tool that they can use for their literacy learning.

Conclusion

Comprehension is one of the basic skills in literacy acquisition, and a hard skill for struggling learners to achieve. Many researchers have studied multiple ways in which comprehension can be achieved and enhanced by struggling readers. Literacy interventions, and their effectiveness on struggling readers' literacy development, has been a popular topic with

researchers over the last 10 years. Ongoing studies evaluating the effectiveness of literacy interventions can provide school districts with insight on specific, effective, literacy interventions that could be integrated within the school domain.

Reading is the active, constructive process of making meaning. Inherent in this process-oriented work is a set of skills, strategies, oral reading behaviors and, finally, the metacognitive awareness with which to become independent. Phonic analysis, structured analysis, sight vocabulary and use of context cues are all decoding strategies that help the reader recognize and "get the words off the page." In reading jargon, this is known as "breaking the code." A student cannot read if he cannot get the words off the page, but just getting the words off the page is not reading. Reading is thinking. Reading is understanding. Reading is making meaning. The comprehension strategies of: making and checking predictions, visualizing, summarizing, inferring, synthesizing and determining importance enable the student to connect deeply and well with a variety of text. Making text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections enhances the depth and breadth of the reading experience. How we read is also a factor. Reading haltingly is the single biggest impediment to comprehension. The fluency piece, discussed in this paper, is essential to solid comprehension. Rate, phrasing and expression are the oral reading behaviors that also play a part. Importantly, only when a reader knows that he knows strategies, when and how to use them, will he develop metacognitive awareness. This awareness of strategies, and their application, has for-reaching implications for the struggling reader. He can now grow in competence, independence and the ability to generalize new learning to a variety of reading situations. Schools owe it to their students, all students, to provide the direct

explicit instruction, the high-interest, self-chosen books, and the opportunities to develop and live the literate life.

Method

Context

The research to be conducted for this study will take place within a special educational program housed within a regular school district. Pippin Elementary school, a pseudonym, is the special educational program that specializes in helping students' who are classified as emotionally disturbed. The school is made up of 24 surrounding school districts that bus their students' in each and every day. According to IEP Direct Centris Group data bank summary, 126 students attend the school during the 2013-2014 school year. Of this population, approximately 9% of students are Hispanic or Latino, 1% are American Indian or Alaska Native, 13% are black or African American, and 76% are white. Majority of the students who attend are free or reduced lunch. The school educates students in grades kindergarten through seventh grade. Each classroom is self-contained and can support up to 7 students. Every student that attends Pippin Elementary school has an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) as well as a BIP (Behavior Intervention Plan). Depending on the students IEP, a student may be supported by a 1:1 aide or a 1:2 aide. Each classroom is supported by a classroom aide. The school has three 'cool rooms,' where students go when they are having a problem or become violent.

The classroom where the study will take place, is very literacy rich with many different leveled texts in fiction and non-fiction. The classroom has 6 male students, from the ages of 9 to 11

years of age. Each student has an IEP. Two students in the class require a 1:1 aide and 1 student

requires a 1:2 aide. There is one classroom aide that supports the other students. The classroom

has four computers, a Smartboard, 6 bean bag chairs for independent reading time, a kidney

shaped table for Leveled Literacy Intervention and a large white board to support the day's word

work. The classroom has predictable routines and mains structure throughout the day by stating

expectations for each lesson taught.

Participants

The participants for this study will include three students who attend Pippin Elementary

school. There will be two Caucasian male students and one African-American male student.

One student is a fourth grader and the other two are fifth graders. Their age ranges between 9

and 11 years of age. All of the students have an IEP and have placement in a self-contained 1:6:1

classroom setting. Two of the students have the support of an individualized aide. One receives

1:1 support for academic and behavioral needs. The other student has a 1:2 classroom aide to

support learning and behavior. Each of the students is reading significantly below grade level

and has been since they started with this specific program. All of the participants in this study

come from low socio-economic environments. All receive free breakfast and lunch and are

supported financially by other outside agencies. Two students live at home with a single mom

and the third student lives in a 2-parent family.

Cheku (a pseudonym) is a 10 year old male student who is a 5th grade boy at Pippin Elementary

school. He is an African-American male and is raised in a single-parent household. He has a

younger sister, age 7, and an older brother, age 15. Cheku enjoys sports such as basketball,

baseball, and hockey. He also enjoys playing with toys and arts and craft items. Cheku lives in

the Western New York area and travels 35 minutes to attend Pippin Elementary school.

Academically, Cheku is reading below grade level and needs continuous work in word study,

fluency and comprehension. Cheku has an IEP (Individual Educational Plan) that classifieds him

with an Emotional Disorder. In the past, Cheku has struggled to stay in school and remain in the

classroom based on severe violent behavior caused by academics and home environment issues.

Currently, Cheku is remaining in the classroom and participating in all subject areas. He is

supported by an individualized aide and receives counseling one-on-one, once a week and

whole-group counseling twice a week. Cheku also receives speech services once a week.

Skeleton (a pseudonym) is an 11 year old male student who is a 5th grade boy at Pippin

Elementary school. He is a Caucasian male and is raised in a single-parent household. He has

no other siblings but his younger niece who lives within the household. Skeleton enjoys playing

with toys and engaging in computer activities. He is a very energetic and caring young man. He

shares with his classmates anything he possesses (toys, food, craft items etc.). Skeleton lives in

the Western New York area and travels 40 minutes to school each day. Academically, Skeleton

shows a lack of confidence within each subject and calls himself 'dumb'. In reading, he

experiences learned helplessness. He perseverates on how he can't read and how things are very

hard for him; even though he is capable of doing it. Skeleton is reading below grade-level and is

the furthest behind in the class. Skeleton has an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) that

classifieds him with an Emotional Disorder and Psychological exams determined his I.Q. as a 54.

Skeleton has struggled in the past with comprehending material in all subject areas. He is not motivated to learn and brings a poor attitude to each subject. He is supported by a 1:2 aide. She supports Skeleton academically and emotionally throughout the day. Skeleton receives one-to-one counseling once a week and group counseling, twice a week. Skeleton also receives speech services, twice a week and Occupational and Physical Therapy, once a week.

Optimus (a pseudonym) is a 10 year old male student who is a 4th grade boy at Pippin Elementary School. He is a Caucasian male and is raised in a two-parent household. His family includes his father and step-mother and a younger sister, age 7. Optimus enjoys playing with toys and drawing. He enjoys gym class and running around with his friends. Optimus lives in the Western New York area and travels 40 minutes to attend school each day. Academically, Optimus is reading below grade level and needs continuous work with fluency and focusing on the text itself. He becomes very distracted easily and tries to get out of school work any chance he gets. He is beginning to make connections with the new stories they are reading within class. Optimus has an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) that classifieds him with an Emotional Disorder. Optimus is a caring boy to friends and teachers but instigates a lot within the classroom which creates a lack of focus for the subject that they are currently working on. Optimus receives one-to-one counseling, once a week and group counseling, twice a week. Optimus also receives speech therapy, twice a week and Occupational therapy, once a week.

Research Stance

I am currently a graduate student at St. John Fisher College, completing my coursework for a Master's degree in Literacy Education, Birth through Grade 6. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Childhood Education and Special Education, Grades One through Grade Six. As I conduct my research, I will act as a Participant Observer, in which I will be observing and engaging within the lessons (Mills, 2014). I will be observing and taking notes on the two students during their small-group, Fountas and Pinnell leveled literacy intervention, as well as teaching a one-to-one lesson using the leveled literacy intervention for the other male student.

Method

Throughout this study, I collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data to determine the impact of Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention on struggling readers' comprehension. I specifically looked at how students' comprehension is affected by Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention. Comprehension conversations regarding reading within, about and beyond the text that occur during the intervention have been studied, and the perceptions that teachers and students have about the program and its effect on comprehension have been reviewed. Metacognitive awareness about the use of strategies has been explored. The study took place over the course of five consecutive days. I met with Skeleton for half-hour increments, Cheku for half-hour incremenets and Optimus for half-hour increments, on each of the five days. In a one-to-one setting, I taught a leveled literacy intervention lesson with Skeleton. I then observed the teacher as she taught another level of the intervention with Cheku

and another level with Optimus in a small-group setting.   I gathered field observation notes on

the comprehension strategies that are built within each lesson. Each lesson contained rereading

of the previous day's book, completing word work on the board, WAR (Writing about Reading),

introducing the new story (picture walk), reading of the new book, having comprehension

conversations about the story, and completing a fold sheet to support the learning that occurred

the day previous. I conducted and observed the implementation of a Running Reading Record,

and coded and analyzed the miscues for word accuracy (as they contribute to comprehension)

and comprehension responses to higher-level thinking questions. In addition, self-corrections

have been analyzed in this sample, yielding information on how each student monitors for

meaning as they read. Fluency (a major component in comprehension success) has also

represented on the Running Reading Record. This yielded an approximate guided reading level,

as well as specific information about word accuracy and comprehension. Each student's IEP has

been reviewed for specific and individual strengths, needs and reading goals, (including criteria

and methods). Present Levels of Performance have been read and compared with findings from

the action research.

Quality and Credibility of Research

Throughout the duration of my action research, it is essential to ensure the quality and

credibility of my study. To ensure the quality of my study, Mills (2014) cites the work of Guba

(1981), in emphasizing the importance of determining the credibility, transferability,

dependability, and confirmability.   Specifically addressing each of these four components within

my study will ensure the quality and credibility required.

The first criterion for ensuring quality in my research is credibility. Mills (2014) defines

credibility as "the researcher's ability to take into account the complexities that present

themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained" (p.115). A

researcher needs to understand that when collecting data, errors and problems can occur when

doing so in the real world. In order for my study to have credibility, I will be collecting audio

recordings of comprehension conversations as well as examining volumes of documentation

such as IEPs, Benchmark Assessments, and Running Reading Records. I will analyze these

documents to understand data, such as past reading scores, reading goals the teacher has given

the students, and the ongoing records of their reading progress within the leveled literacy

intervention. Collecting a vast amount of data will establish the credibility of my study.

The second criterion for ensuring quality in my research is transferability. Mills (2014) defined

transferability as "researchers' beliefs that everything they study is context bound and that the

goal of their work is not to develop "truth" statements that can be generalized to larger groups of

people" (p.116). Within my study, what is stated as a fact will only be applied to the participants

within this specific study. To ensure transferability during the study, I will collect detailed

descriptive data, which will allow comparisons to be made in classrooms and schools.

In order to ensure quality and trustworthiness in the study, dependability will be the third

component. Mills (2014) defines dependability as "the stability of the data" (p.116). Creating

dependability within the study will ensure that the data collected is reliable and true. I will use

many methods of collecting data to support my research. Having triangulation within the study

will ensure that the study will have stable data.

Finally, the last criterion to ensure quality and credibility in my research is confirmability. Mills (2014) defines confirmability as "the neutrality or objectivity of the data that has been collected" (p.116). Researchers want to refrain from using opinions and other biased statements within the study to ensure neutrality. Triangulation will ensure confirmability based on the research and data collected through this study. The data that will be collected to guarantee confirmability includes Running Reading Records, anecdotal notes through various lessons, documentation (students' IEPs, previous Benchmark Assessments etc.), and audio recordings of students' comprehension conversations during Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention. Constructing research using this data will ensure confirmability, within this study.

Informed Consent and Protecting the Rights of the Participants

Before conducting any research and gathering data, it was extremely important to let the students I will be working with, and their parents, know about the study I will be conducting and to receive permission to continue with the research. I created a child assent form for each student in my study and read it to them (Appendix A). Each child signed the form, stating that they were willing to be part of my study and at any time they could opt out of the study. After the students' gave permission, I sent a parent consent form to each of the boys' parents. The form stated that I will be conducting a study based on the Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention and I would like to study how your child's comprehension is affected by this intervention. Each form was sent home with the students and returned two days later with signed permission from their parents. All students and parents know that only pseudonyms would be

used in place of the child's name to protect their identity.

Data Collection

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the leveled literacy intervention on the comprehension of struggling learners, three forms of data have been used and analyzed. One form of data collection that I used in this study is the Fountas and Pinnell Running Reading Record. This is the research- based and accepted way of assessing word accuracy, fluency, comprehension and self-correction. All of those aspects of reading have a bearing on deep, rich understanding of text. A record is taken while a student reads a previously-read text. Coding is done for word accuracy, substitutions, omissions, insertions, repetitions, and mispronunciations. Self-corrections are noted as they occur. This data was analyzed for attention to the three cueing systems used: meaning, syntax and visual cues. This information yields insights into decoding abilities of the student and what forms of information they are using when they miscue and when they self-correct. Fluency was also analyzed on a scale of 1-3. (1 is dysfluent/robotic reading, 2 is reading with some phrasing, and 3 is smooth and connected reading). Comprehension was assessed through three types of questions: questions about the text, within, the text and beyond the text. This allowed the evaluator to determine the lower-level thinking and higher-level thinking abilities of the student being assessed. Finally, self-corrections were tallied as a way to determine if and how the student was monitoring for meaning. The assessment yielded an accuracy rate, fluency score, self-correction ratio and comprehension label of "excellent," "satisfactory", "limited" or "unsatisfactory." Running reading records were taken once a week

on each student, providing valuable data with which assessed the students' progress and shape

teacher instruction.

The second form of data that was used in this study was formal interviews from four

classroom teachers. Each classroom teacher teaches a different grade level and all use the

Fountas and Pinnell leveled literacy intervention. I asked questions that specifically involved

comprehension within this intervention. For example, I asked if there were any comprehension

strategies that their students learned through the intervention and if the students are applying this

learning in their independent reading. I asked the teachers 8 questions surrounding the topic of

Fountas and Pinnell leveled literacy intervention and struggling readers comprehension. The

teachers that were chosen have been trained in this intervention and three of the teachers are the

trainers for the rest of the building in this intervention.

The third form of data that I collected to confirm triangulation within this study was field

notes and observations. I observed the teacher for one hour; half an hour with one leveled, small

group and another half an hour with another leveled, small group intervention. During that time,

I took anecdotal notes about the students' and the way they were responding to the questions and

how the program has affected their students' comprehension. The next half an hour, I taught a

leveled literacy intervention in a one-to-one setting. During that time, I wrote down my

observations about the students' responses to comprehension conversations. I also audio-

recorded comprehension conversations in each group to understand if Fountas and Pinnells

leveled literacy intervention have affected the comprehension of the students and in what ways.

Data Analysis

Throughout my action research study, many pieces of quantitative and qualitative

research were gathered to ensure triangulation. There were many steps taken to analyze the data

that had been collected. The four pieces of data that were collected include the following: four

teacher interviews, Running Reading Records, field observations including comprehension

conversations, and student questionnaires.

I analyzed the qualitative data from the four teacher interviews, field observations, and

student questionnaires for common themes among the discussions and observations. During the

teacher interviews (Appendix B), I audio-recorded each interview using a cell phone to ensure

the quality of the conversation. I transcribed, read each interview, and coded three times using

different colored sticky notes. These notes would allow me to also record other forms of data that

I found were similar, and connect it to my literature review. Using different colored sticky notes

also helps to separate emerging themes found in the variety of data. Field observation notes,

which included comprehension conversations from two different students, were audio-recorded

using a cell phone and transcribed and coded using sticky notes. Student questionnaires

(Appendix C) were reviewed and coded using the sticky notes. I used four different colored

sticky notes to organize and extract any common themes within the data collected. The fourth

colored sticky note was used for information that stood out and caught my attention. Once all

the data was read and coded at least two times, common themes began to emerge, and I was able

to look back at some of the data collected to make connections and inferences.

I analyzed the quantitative data which includes the Running Reading Records (Appendix D). I took the scores from these ongoing assessments and placed them into tables. I organized the scores from lowest to highest in each of the four categories (accuracy, self-corrections, fluency and comprehension) for each of the three students. I covered the names of the Running Reading Records to protect the students' identity. The quantitative data will be used to weave in data that supports common themes developed during the discussions and interviews in the qualitative data collection process.

Finding and Discussion

The collection of data from this action research study was organized into different categories. These categories included the following: formal interviews, Running Reading Records, field observations (including comprehension conversations), and student questionnaires. Using the data collected and analyzed, many recurring themes emerged. The first theme highlighted the way students were developing mastery in their literacy learning. They were becoming more confident and independent with their new-found success in reading. The second theme represented the feeling of belonging to a community of learners. As students began to find success in their reading and comprehension, the more willing they were to transfer their new-found knowledge to other content areas and develop social skills needed to live an

everyday life. The third theme showcased the development of positive self-esteem among students and the link between literacy learning and students' behaviors.

Developing Mastery in Literacy Learning

The development of mastery in any subject occurs when knowledge is acquired and retained.   Struggling readers find difficulty developing the skills needed to obtain mastery in their foundational literacy work, which ultimately leads to their comprehension.   Rapp et al. (2007) states that having the literacy skills such as phonological awareness, phonics, fluency and vocabulary are needed to develop students' comprehension. After reading and observing several lessons of the Fountas and Pinnells leveled literacy intervention and analyzing research on comprehension, I have concluded that the lesson plans (Appendix E) build in the necessary foundations needed for children to successfully develop their comprehension. McDaniel et al. (2010) study involved the Corrective Reading program and the success it had on students' fluency and comprehension growth. The Corrective Reading program was a systematic intervention teaching word work, fluency, writing, and comprehension through predictable routines and familiar rereads. The Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention lesson plans are similar to the Corrective Reading program because it incorporates the same teachings (word work, fluency, writing, comprehension) and having predictable routines that will aid in the teaching of the necessary literacy foundations needed for students reading success.   Each lesson contains the following: rereading of the previous day's book (building on fluency), a word study

portion (building on phonemic awareness, phonics and vocabulary), a book walk/talk through the

new story (tapping or building into background knowledge, drawing attention to conventions of

the text structure, vocabulary development and inviting the students to make predictions),

reading of the new story and comprehension questions that make the student think within,

beyond and about the text. Through observation of the Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy

intervention lesson, taught by the lead teacher, I noticed students' willingness to participate in all

parts of the lesson, take risks and demonstrate their motivation and enthusiasm for reading. For

example, Skeleton (pseudonym) read the book, *A Surprise for the Big Bad Wolf*. He was reading

with fluency and was extremely focused on the text. He used a lot of expression when reading

and was able to go into great detail during our comprehension conversations. His score for the

comprehension portion was excellent, which made him excited because he scored so high. Many

teachers that I interviewed (Appendix B) felt their students' success in reading had improved

their motivation for reading and allowed them to take the risks needed to develop their

comprehension. Ms. Maven, a 4th/5th grade special education teacher said, "This program has

been hugely successful. All students involved in the intervention have learned to read and have

continued to grow and deepen as readers. They have all made more than a year's growth in a

year" (Teacher Interview, February 2014). She has seen continuous growth since using Fountas

and Pinnells leveled literacy intervention with her students. The Fountas and Pinnell's leveled

literacy intervention has given students who could not read a chance to develop the necessary

literacy foundations and strategies to become successful readers. The intervention has given the

opportunity for students to increase their reading level by one year through emphasizing word

work, fluency, writing and comprehension during each lesson to give students the chance to be

closer to grade level.   Ms. Maven also states:

> The Fountas and Pinnell leveled literacy intervention is a balanced and integrated
>
> literacy approach. Students learn to read well and thoughtfully, think about their
>
> thinking, increase their vocabulary, improve their fluency, and write about their
>
> reading. All of these skills have a direct relationship to the reading requirements
>
> in all of the content areas (science, social studies, and mathematics). Most
>
> importantly, as the students are more successful and feel better about themselves
>
> as readers and writers, they are willing to take new risks and apply newly learned
>
> strategies to other reading/writing situations. (Teacher Interview)

Based on Ms. Maven's interview, the students are developing mastery in reading and are

applying their new skills and strategies to other content-areas. Once students begin to

increase their vocabulary, they are able to read smoother and comprehend text on a

deeper level. Fluency also increases students comprehension of text. Therrien (2004)

completed a meta-analysis that found that rereading text, which is also found in the

Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention, helps to improve students fluency and

comprehension growth.   Mrs. Frizzle, a $5^{th}/6^{th}$ grade special education teacher also has

found students' mastery in reading to increase students' comprehension. She states, "I

really do think it helps with comprehension, through the comprehension discussions and

talking to the kids about the books before, during and after their reading" (Teacher

Interview, February 2014). Based on this interview, Mrs. Frizzle has seen improvement

in comprehension based on the use of the leveled literacy intervention. It asks the reader to make meaning in multiple ways to gain a deeper understanding of the text. It is important for students' to learn higher-order thinking skills to establish the full meaning of they are reading. Having comprehension conversations with students will help teachers ask specific questions that will help students gain understanding of the text. The teacher will ask within, about, and beyond the text type comprehension questions that will help with students' growth in their comprehension.

Another way comprehension has been improved using the leveled literacy intervention is through the use of fold sheets (Figure 1); a type of graphic organizer that students use at the end of each lesson to build on their comprehension of previous stories. After reading the book, *Big Cats, Little Cats*, Skeleton was asked comprehension questions to create a comprehension conversation. Afterwards, he was asked to fill out a Venn diagram, where he would distinguish what traits cats had, what traits lions had and what traits they both had in common. Skeleton had teacher guidance while completing this Venn diagram because he has never completed a Venn diagram before.
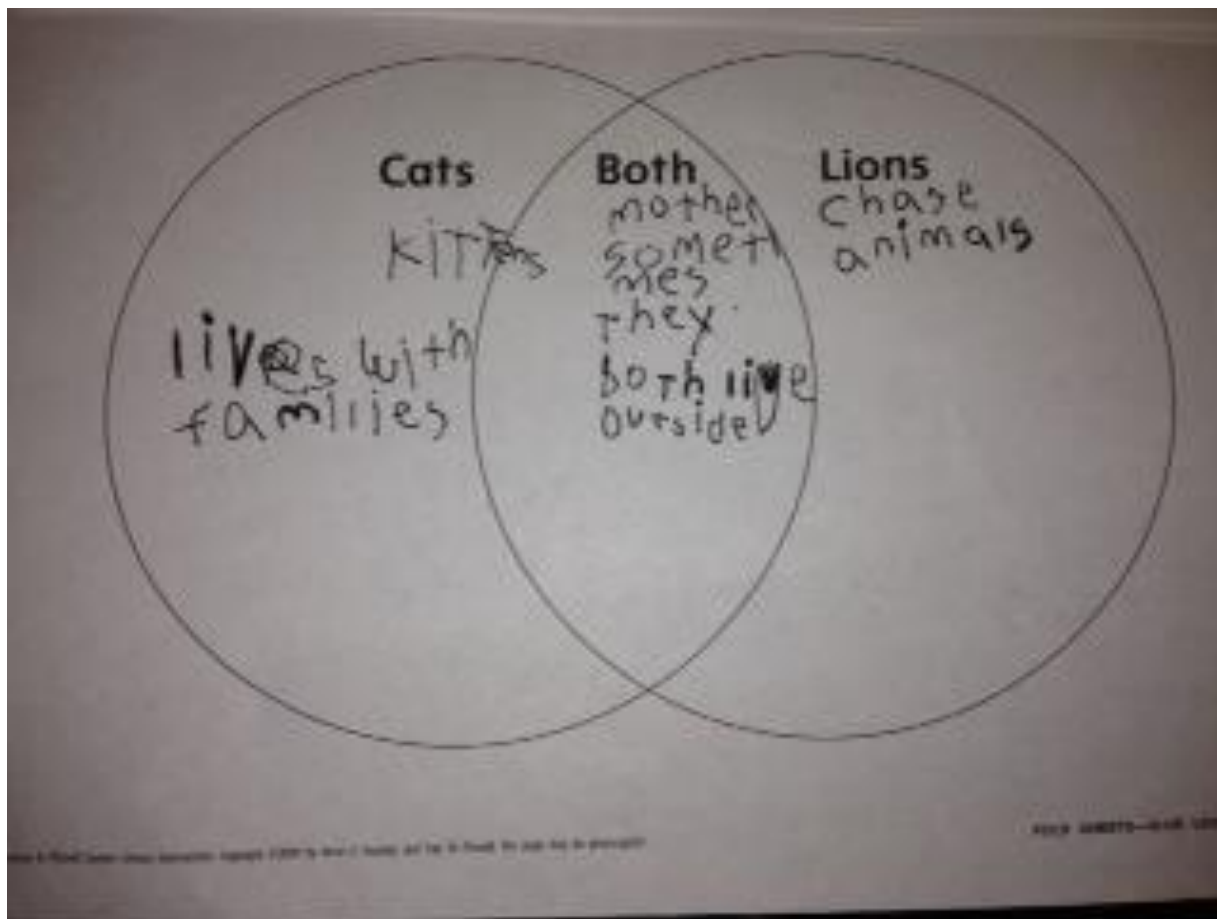
Figure 1: Venn Diagram

Figure 1. Venn Diagram. This figure shows a Venn diagram that Skeleton completed

after his reading of *Big Cats, Little Cats*.

I taught and observed Skeleton when he was completing his fold sheet on the leveled story, *Little Cat, Big Cat*. He was able to use a Venn diagram to determine what the differences between little cats and big cats were and what the same between them was. Skeleton has shown mastery in the use of graphic organizers based upon the fold sheets he's completed. Through observation, Skeleton has been able to apply more information into the fold sheets and use specific details from the text such as the cats live with their families, lions chase animals, and both animals live outside. That information was in the text but when he retold the information, he put it into his own words and paraphrased his new knowledge into the Venn diagram. Based on the Venn diagram and the way he has took information and paraphrase it into a graphic organizer, informs the teachers that he has begun to comprehends on a deeper level and has developed his metacognition. Kim et al. (2004) study of graphic organizers shown that comprehension growth was made with students with emotional needs because of the visualization graphic organizers could have and the way graphic organizers can be broken down into different segments. The fold sheet that contained a Venn diagram on it that Skeleton completed will help him to organize his thoughts, which will build his metacognitive awareness and help with his comprehension and writing success.

Reviewing and summarizing the quantitative data collected was compiled into Table 1, which shows the students mastery within the four areas tested in the completion of a Running Reading Record. The table below shows Optimus growth in reading based on his accuracy, self-corrections, fluency, and comprehension when reading 3 different books, increasing in difficulty.

THE RESPONSE TO A DAILY, STRUCTURED LITERACY

Table 1

Student Performance during Running Reading Records of different leveled text

Name	Title	Accuracy	Self-Corrections	Fluency	Comprehension
Optimus Blue Kit	The Big Snow (*Level L/ Fiction*)	97%	1:5	100%	70% Satisfactory
Red Kit	Phoebe and Mr. P (*Level L/ Fiction*)	98%	1:5	67%	80% Satisfactory
Red Kit	The Hen and the Dove (*Level L/Fiction*)	98%	1:3	67%	80% Satisfactory

Optimus began reading in the blue kit of the Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention. The blue kit incorporated levels C through N, which is a first grade to second grade level. When Optimus read *The Big Snow*, which is at a level N, he read with 97% accuracy, which shows that he has developed his sight word vocabulary to reach a third grade level. He has read with 100% fluency, which can be supported by continuous rereads of previous days book each day through the use of the Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention. Rereading is a powerful reading strategy that supports the growth of fluency and comprehension (Therrien, 2004). While Optimus was reading *The Big Snow,* I observed him reading for meaning (pointing at the pictures, speaking about the characters and about parts of the story that he felt were exciting) and reading fluently (smooth and connected; not robotic) throughout the story. Even though his

comprehension score was 70%, he was reading books that were more challenging and incorporated difficult content that he has tried to decipher and comprehend on his own.

Optimus began reading in the red kit, which includes Levels L through Q. He is getting closer to grade level text through the use of the Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention. Optimus read the text, *Phoebe and Mr. P.,* he read with 98% accuracy and self-corrected himself 1 out of 5 times. The information shows that Optimus has begun to bring meaning to his reading and correcting himself without teacher direction. He was reading and understanding the words and the meaning they brought to the text. During the lesson, Optimus learned through the word work, the word 'curious' and its meaning. During his reading, he was able to transfer his new learning and apply it, such as when he saw the word 'curious', he was able to fluently read through the word and stated what it meant after he read it. He showed excitement when he knew the meaning of the word. When students are able to find success in their reading, it increases their motivation and excitement for reading (Paige, 2011). Optimus continued his comprehension growth when reading the next text in level L called, *The Hen and the Dove.* He made connections in the story to the new word work he learned in the lesson. For example, the word 'dreadful' was within the story and when he came across it, he stated, "I seen that word in our word work" (Field observations, 2014). He has also brought expression into his reading, which signifies his understanding for punctuation and the meaning of words.

In Table 2, Cheku's growth in reading is displayed and categorized based on his accuracy, self-corrections, fluency, and comprehension when reading 3 different books, increasing in difficulty.

Table 2

Student Performance during Running Reading Records of different leveled text

Name	Title	Accuracy	Self-Corrections	Fluency	Comprehension
Cheku Blue Kit	The Big Snow (*Level N/ Fiction*)	97%	1:4	100%	80% Satisfactory
Red Kit	More Than Meow: How Cats Communicate (*Level L/Non-Fiction*)	98%	No Self-Corrections	67%	40% Unsatisfactory

Cheku read *The Big Snow,* with 98% accuracy. He self-corrected himself 1 out of 4 times, which shows that he has brought meaning to his reading and understands when he says a word if it makes sense or not in the text. During his comprehension conversation, he was able to elaborate on ideas within the text and when he reads with 100% fluency, his ideas are more connected and he can give more details from the story. When Cheku read the text, *More Than Meow: How Cats Communicate,* he read with 98% accuracy, which informs the teacher that he has the vocabulary to read with accuracy within the text. He had made no self-corrections and his reading wasn't as smooth and connected, it was choppy and robotic. His comprehension was

poor and during our comprehension conversation, he stated "I don't know" for most questions.

He did not even give effort during the comprehension conversation because he instantly put his

head down. After giving Cheku time to cool off, I asked him what was wrong and why he did

not give more effort during the reading group. He stated that there was a boy in the class that

was annoying him and he was getting mad. He wanted to call him names but instead put his

head down. When working in a Social Skills Development program, the students are learning

new strategies to deal with problems they come across in their daily social lives. Problems such

as the one with Cheku can occur at anytime, but having an intervention that is predictable,

systematic, and structured gives the students with behavioral needs the perimeters to succeed and

gives them the allowance if they cannot perform one day due to the environment around them

(McDaniel et al., 2010).

Observing the data included in Table 3, will show the growth Skeleton had during his

readings of three different books within the same guided reading level based on his accuracy,

self-corrections, fluency and comprehension of each text.

Table 3

Student Performance during Running Reading Records of different books in the same leveled text

Name	Title	Accuracy	Self-Corrections	Fluency	Comprehension
Skeleton	Good Friends (*Level L/ Fiction*)	97%	1:1	67%	70% Satisfactory
	Little Cat, Big Cat (*Level L/Non- Fiction*)	96%	1:3	67%	80% Satisfactory
	A Surprise for the Big Bad Wolf (*Level L/Fiction*)	99%	1:1	100%	90% Excellent

Skeleton is reading far below grade level and has had a hard time grasping onto reading

strategies and having the confidence and motivation to continue reading. During his reading in

the Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention, he has developed a handful of reading

strategies that he has been able to use and master as well as building his sight word vocabulary

from kindergarten to mid-first grade. During his reading of level L, *Good Friends*, he read with

97% accuracy and his comprehension was 70%. It was a big accomplishment for Skeleton

because he used meaning when he read self-corrected himself, which he hasn't been able to do

when he was in a guided reading group. He hadn't read this book in a week because of a long

break but was able to read it very fluently with limited errors. The information is significant

because it shows that having an intervention that provides students with the literacy skills needed

to read and comprehend text on a daily basis will allow students to become successful readers. It

will in turn give students the motivation to read on their own and risk-take (Paige, 2011).

Analyzing Skeleton's reading of the books, *Little Cat, Big Cat* and *A Surprise for the Big Bad Wolf* shows that he is becoming more and more successful in his accuracy of the reading and comprehension of the stories. During his reading of *Little Cat, Big Cat*, he began with attitude and little confidence that he would be able to read the story. When he was mid-way through the story, he got stuck on a word and stated, "I remember the strategy you taught me about sounding out the word" (Field observation, 2014). The students response is significant because he is stating that he is learning new strategies and is able to apply his new learning during his stories.

The completion of the Running Reading Records shows that each student has successfully read with accuracy and fluency. The Running Reading Records helps track what skills the students are mastering and what skills they need more guidance on. Using these records on a daily basis, let's the teacher know where the student is in their literacy learning. It allows teachers to guide their instruction; either to continue on throughout the level or review past lessons to reinforce the learning from those lessons. The use of the leveled literacy intervention and the way it continuously assesses students has given opportunities to teachers to analyze data and understand if the student truly were having difficulty with their comprehension or if it was based on factors that can be out of our control.   The use of the Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention has given opportunities for struggling readers to develop mastery in their reading. The program also fosters student's independence with their future success in their comprehension development.

Belonging to a Community of Learners

Reading can be the gateway to learning and developing social skills needed to

communicate with peers. Reading develops our vocabulary, fluency and how we comprehend

when listening or speaking to our peers (Nation & Angell, 2006). Analyzing interviews

(Appendix B) that I conducted with the teachers at Pippin Elementary school show that students

were feeling a sense of belonging within the classroom when they began to develop their reading

skills and comprehend text. Mrs. Style states:

> The books start at such a level that they feel success without feeling immature. So, they
>
> find that success and they are willing to take a greater risk in the more challenging books.
>
> Because they are like "oh I know I can read that Meli book" and the next Meli book may
>
> be on a level D, but they be like "Well I already know Meli, so I can read it." So they
>
> feel comfortable trying those things and I think that's great. (Teacher interview, 2014)

Based on the Mrs. Style's statement, the students within her classroom are feeling a sense of

security because they are taking higher risks in their literacy acquisition based on the results

from the Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention. The students are also willing to

read stories at their level and higher levels without hesitation, to each other and staff. With

implementing a literacy intervention within the classroom, students can acquire the knowledge

they will need to know to learn how to read and comprehend text (Allington, 2007). Mrs.

Frizzle, when interviewed, reported similar findings with her blended class of 5th/6th graders.

She stated, "As they are growing, I now have no problem with participation because all

participate now. They WANT to read now" (Teacher interview, 2014). Students' motivation to

read is essential for new knowledge to be acquired. As students find success in their themselves

they will begin to view themselves as readers and can begin to apply their new knowledge in

other content areas and their social skills development. After analyzing the interviews between

the four teachers, the two educators found that their students' success has brought their classes

together as a community because they are able to acquire the skills to read as well as

communicate with each other. When struggling readers begin to want to read, they are

beginning to invest their time in their own learning (Smetana et al., 2005). Similarly, when

interviewing Ms. Maven about her 4th/5th grade blended class, she reported:

> Based on this intervention, I see students participating more in class council, which is
>
> facilitating a meeting each morning surrounded by their peers. They are involved in
>
> reading partners, which gives them a sense of entitlement and more will to keep learning
>
> how to read. (Teacher interview, 2014)

The teachers response identifies the risk taking students have when they are motivated to learn.

When a student has the literacy skills needed to read a text and understand its meaning, can give

them the drive to push harder with reading and writing skills that may be difficult for them to

complete or understand.   Based on field observations in Ms. Maven's class, I noticed the

students volunteering to read a-loud, try new words that were difficult for them to read and

accepting teacher support with reading and defining words to add to their vocabulary. Ms.

Maven also stated:

Each year, the school hosts a literacy celebration where students create their own writing

pieces and then they present it on stage in front of their peers, staff and parents. Most

years, the school has about 50 students that volunteer. Since the school has implemented

the Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention this year, the school had over 100

students participating from kindergarten to 7th grade. Students felt safe enough to take

the risk of creating their own pieces and reading them aloud to their peers. The students

are having faith in themselves and seeing success in their reading and comprehension.

(Teacher interview, 2014)

The teachers response identifies the high risk-taking students are making since the Fountas and

Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention has been adopted by the school. Students are acquiring the

knowledge and skills needed to become successful readers and the confidence to confront

challenges such as the literacy celebration. The spike in numbers for the school's participation in

the literacy celebration accounts to the success students have had in their reading based on the

Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention. Students understand that they are learners

and they can read and comprehend text. Once students can believe in themselves, they become

motivated to continue their learning and take bigger risks (Paige, 2011). The Fountas and

Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention has helped students feel a sense of belonging, in a very

literate world, by giving them the skills needed to comprehend the world around them.

Building Positive Self-Esteem: the Link between Literacy Learning and Behavior

Struggling readers may not only lack the skills needed to read but also communication

skills needed to express their frustration, which can lead to negative behaviors towards themselves and others (Weaster, 2004). Students who struggle with reading and comprehending text have low self-esteem and learned helplessness begins to set in. After conducting interviews with the teachers, most reported that they felt behavioral needs are connected to literacy needs. Ms. Frizzle stated:

> A lot of your literacy acquisition comes from when you're in Pre-K and kindergarten and that's when most of these kids went through all their problems. They were still in their home school district, having a really difficult time, which probably impeded their ability to participate in those lessons because they missed it, they are now behind. I think there is a huge connection in behaviors and emotional needs and reading and in the 6 years I've been teaching, I don't think I have seen anyone on grade level. (Teacher interview, 2014)

The teachers response identifies the difficulties these students can have within their life that could have hinder their literacy acquisition. The most crucial years for literacy acquisition for a child are when they are in kindergarten up to second grade. The teacher has identified that for some kids, this is when they are having problems and need a more inclusive setting. During the time that the sudents are within that general education classroom, they are struggling academically to understand the material being taught and struggling emotionally with the home environment they live in. Once the child is in an inclusive setting where they are given the environment more suitable for their learning, they will continue to struggle academically because

they are now behind in their learning and will only give more reasons for this child to see

themselves as a non-reader. Since Pippin Elementary School adopted the Fountas and Pinnell's

leveled literacy intervention, more students are learning how to read and comprehend text. They

are receiving the literacy skills and strategies needed to become an independent reader and get

onto grade level. Based on Table 4, shows the scaled scores of a questionnaire given to the three

students' and their perceptions of their own reading before and after using the Fountas and

Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention.

Table 4

Scaled Scores of Students' Perception of their own Reading

	Optimus	Cheku	Skeleton
Question 3: On a scale 1 to 10, 1 being not good and 10 being the best, how do you think your reading was before you started the leveled literacy intervention?	1	1	1
Question 4: On that same scale, how do you feel your reading is now, after using the leveled literacy intervention?	10	9	10

Based on student questionnaires, each of the three students felt that they could not read and when

placed on a 1 to 10 scale; 1 meaning they could not read and 10 meaning they could read

excellently, each student put themselves on a 1 before they started the Fountas and Pinnell's

leveled literacy intervention.   The students responded, on the same scale, that they feel they are

at a 10 now with their reading after using the leveled literacy intervention. After analyzing the data from the student questionnaires and teacher interviews I can conclude that the students are demonstrating less behaviors as they learn how to read. The students' responses identifies that they feel that they have increased in their reading ability and behavior after using the Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention. The scores show that each student felt that they were non-readers before starting the intervention and now after using it, they see themselves as readers. When students can self-monitor their own reading success, they are able to take bigger risks in their academics because they know they can succeed. Based on Benchmarks conducted at the beginning of the program, each student began on level B, which is the beginning of first grade. Learning to read is extremely difficult for those students who have already fallen behind and which can result in students acting out verbally and physically (Weaster, 2004). Struggling readers will lack the self-esteem to take bigger risks in their reading ability. Ms. Maven states, "As self-confidence and reading skill increase, students feel better about themselves and are willing to take more risks in all learning. Problem solving improves, behaviors improve, and students are more successful in all areas of their lives" (Teacher interview, 2014). The teachers interview response identifies that students success in reading can transpire into other content areas and improve their behavior in and out of school. It is significant because once a student feels success in themselves, they are more willing to challenge themselves in their academics. As I observed Ms. Maven's classroom, each of the three students showed risk-taking in the book selection they chose and answering higher level thinking questions during their leveled literacy intervention time. All students made dramatic gains, moving from a reading level A, B, and C to

reading levels L, M, or N. The reading levels reflected an approximate four year growth in a two year time span. Their new-found success in reading gives them the opportunities to acquire knowledge and communicate with their peers. When students feel confident with themselves, they are able to read more and have the drive to do better for themselves.

Implications and Conclusions

Students who struggle with reading, lack the literacy foundations needed to read and comprehend text. Struggling readers may not only lack the literacy skills required to read, but they can also lack the literacy resources (access to the public library, books at home, etc.) needed to continue to become a life-long reader (Evan, 2004). This action research study supported the breadth of research performed on Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention in many ways. Students improved in word recognition, word work, fluency and, ultimately, comprehension.

The first implication for teachers is the significance of word recognition and word work for students who are struggling readers. For teachers, word recognition and word work for struggling readers is crucial because it's the entry into learning to read. Without that, students will continue to struggle and not make the gains needed to become a successful reader. Students learned and practiced word recognition and word work through the use of Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention. The students worked on sight vocabulary, phonics, structural analysis and use of context cues to support decoding. Blends, digraphs, vowels, root words, prefixes/suffixes and compound words supported word recognition.

THE RESPONSE TO A DAILY, STRUCTURED LITERACY

The second implication for teachers is the importance of fluency in reading and its relationship to comprehension for struggling readers. Struggling readers' fluency during reading can be robotic and choppy. The lack of fluency is one of the biggest impediments to meaning-making. Using the Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention, students were learning how to read in smooth phrases and use expression during their reading. The intervention builds in time each day for students to reread stories from the previous day, to practice reading in a more connected and smooth manner. Hitchcock, Prater and Dowrick (2004) study provided similar results with struggling readers and their fluency. Given a small group intervention in which students consistently reread familiar stories provided the opportunity to read fluently and begin to comprehend text. Struggling readers cannot begin to comprehend text until they are equipped with the skills provided above (Guthrie et.al., 2009).   The Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention has shown with the data collected that it can teach struggling readers to decode accurately, read fluently and comprehend text by answering questions within, about and beyond the text. For teachers, the intervention provided a prompting guide to help aid in teaching comprehension. It gave the exact words needed to teach, reinforce, or prompt effective strategic actions which are needed for students who have been struggling with reading.

A third implication for teachers is the improvement in behavior. Students who could not read were often frustrated or angry. Their frustration often led to acting out behaviors, withdrawal, and/or reluctance to learn or take risks. Students were spending more time outside of the classroom than within.

The Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention and its effect on reading ability also had a dramatic impact on self-esteem. Students now felt good about themselves and were willing to take new risks as learners. Knapp (2013) study results were very similar because

students were taking bigger risks after learning how to read using an intervention. For teachers, providing students with the skills needed to learn to read such as the Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention, will not only give the reading skills needed for comprehension but will give them the confidence to take bigger risks in other reading as well as outside of reading. That would include the following: peer tutoring, reading to younger students while modeling good reading behavior, being a facilitator of a class council meeting and reading the agenda for the day (Field observations, 2014).

The best implication of all is the newfound metacognitive awareness. Metacognitive awareness is the mindfulness of how you think and learn best (Hentner, 2012). Students now knew that they knew strategies and had skills to make meaning from text. They were now generalizing improved reading and writing to content area work. As I observed and collected data, there were many incidents where students were generalizing their new learning in other content areas. One of those situations was during social studies class. The students were conducting research on the computer about New York State, writing notes about the pertinent information, then taking their notes and writing a paragraph summarizing their research. The students were taking huge risks, but surprisingly, all the students were trying and not saying they couldn't do it. Based on the student questionnaires, each student felt they had improved in their reading drastically and felt more confident in their reading ability. Having this confidence allowed them to take risks outside of reading and have the awareness that they can do this because they have the strategies with which to do it.

The main question for my study was what was the response to a daily, structured literacy intervention and its effect on struggling readers' comprehension? Struggling readers had a difficult time comprehending text because they lacked the literacy foundations needed to make

meaning from text. The theoretical framework that guided my study focused on how culture has the ability to disable someone because they do not fit within society's norms. Students who fit outside society's norms would not have the book experiences or events needed to develop the literacy skills other children have learned and integrated. Many of these students come to school knowing how to read or eager and ready to learn. They expect to be readers. Their families expect them to be readers.

Another theory that guided this study was the socio-cultural historical theory. The socio-cultural historical theory provided a culturally focused examination of input from students in a variety of learning settings (Larson & Marsh, 2005).   My findings and implications provided insight on the importance of a daily, structured literacy intervention on struggling readers' comprehension. The Fountas and Pinnells leveled literacy intervention and its daily, structured lesson plans implemented the strategies and skills needed to support a struggling reader making gains with their reading and comprehension of text. Giving students specific, guided direction in a small group setting allowed students to feel safer and led to more risk-taking. Students began to develop their metacognition and generalized this into other content areas.

If I were to do this study over again, I would choose students that were on the same guided reading level. It became a bit confusing with my data collection to continuously reference which group or level one student was on, versus another. Another change I would have made would be to interview the administration and why they chose the Fountas and Pinnell's leveled literacy intervention versus any of the other reading intervention programs on the market.

As I review my implications, a few questions come to mind for myself and teachers alike. First, I wondered about the long-term effectiveness of the program. Were readers still reading

deeply and well years after participating in the program? Longitudinal studies performed around Reading Recovery reflected that students maintained their gains through high school and beyond. It would be interesting to conduct this kind of a longitudinal study to determine if this would be the case with the Fountas and Pinnell leveled literacy intervention. In addition, I question the long-term effectiveness of this program on self-esteem, problem solving and risk taking. Do the students participating in the leveled literacy intervention continue to feel good about themselves, take new risks as learners, and learn to solve problems in and outside of reading situations? It is my hope and belief that this program continues to support struggling readers, helping them to achieve the important and precious skill of literacy learning. This in turn could allow students to become productive citizens, with a meaningful contribution to make, to their work and their world.

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Appendix A

St. John Fisher College
CHILD'S WRITTEN ASSENT
(for use with minors)

Title of study: ***Insert your title***

Name(s) of researcher(s): ***Insert your name***

Purpose of study: ***Insert here. Use age appropriate language***

This study has been approved by John Fisher College.

Place of study: ***Insert here*** Length of participation: ***Insert here***

Risks and benefits: This study presents no risks to you and it will help me become a better teacher.

Your name and the name of the school will be changed to keep your identity a secret. Only my professor and I will be able to see the data I collect. The findings from this study will be shared with other professionals at the St. John Fisher College Capstone Presentation conference.

Your rights: As a research participant, you have the right to:
1. You have the right to know what the study is, what the risks are and what the benefits are.
2. You can decide not to participate. It will not affect your grade or anything else in school.
3. You can decide not an answer any questions I ask.
4. You can ask to hear about what I learned.

I, _____, agree to participate in this study. I have received a copy of this form.

Print name (Participant)	Signature	Date

Print name (Investigator)	Signature	Date

If you have any questions, please let me know. If anything about this study makes you uncomfortable, let your parents know so they can contact people who can help you.

THE RESPONSE TO A DAILY, STRUCTURED LITERACY

St. John Fisher College
INFORMED CONSENT FORM (for use with adults)

Title of study: ***Insert your title***

Name(s) of researcher(s): ***Insert your name***

Faculty Supervisor: ***Select your first reader*** Dr. Joellen Maples, Assistant Professor

Phone for further information: ***Your phone number***

Purpose of study: ***Insert here***

This study has been approved by the John Fisher College Institutional Review Board.

Place of study: ***Insert here*** Length of participation: ***Insert here***

Risks and benefits: This study presents no risks to you. The benefits are the opportunity for improved teaching.

Your name and the location of the research will be changed in order to protect your anonymity. All data will be kept in a locked location and accessible only to the researcher. The findings from this study will be shared with other professionals at the St. John Fisher College Capstone Presentation conference.

Your rights: As a research participant, you have the right to:

1.   Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.
2.   Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3.   Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4.   Be informed of the results of the study.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study.

Print name (Participant)	Signature	Date

Print name (Investigator)	Signature	Date

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher listed above. If you experience emotional or physical discomfort due to participation in this study, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs at 385-8034 or the Wellness Center at 385-8280 for appropriate referrals. .

THE RESPONSE TO A DAILY, STRUCTURED LITERACY

Appendix B

Formal teacher interview questions

1. What Reading Interventions/programs have you used to support comprehension with struggling readers? Why have you chosen these and how have they been successful (unsuccessful)?

2. What strategies and skills are inherent in the intervention you use? How do they support increased comprehension? Please give specific examples.

3. What are the challenges you face daily in working to support growth with struggling readers?

4. What are the connections, for you, between behavioral needs and literacy needs? How do you support both?

5. Based upon the direct explicit instruction provided with the intervention you use, describe the capacity for generalizing new learning to other content areas and reading/writing situations?

Appendix C

1. Do you know what reading program you use?

Yes   No

If yes, do you know what it is called? _____

1. Does this reading program help you to read?

Yes   No

2. Does this program help you to comprehend (make meaning) books better?

Yes   No

If yes, please explain why?
_____
_____
_____

3. On a scale 1 to 10, 1 being not good and 10 being the best, how do you think your reading was before you started the leveled literacy intervention?

1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7_____8_____9____10

How was your comprehension before doing LLI?

1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7_____8_____9____10

4. On that same scale, how do you feel your reading is now, after using the leveled literacy intervention?

1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7_____8_____9____10

THE RESPONSE TO A DAILY, STRUCTURED LITERACY

How is your comprehension after using the leveled literacy intervention?

1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7_____8_____9____10

Appendix D

Teacher _____ Grade _____ Date _____

School _____

Recording Form
Part One: Oral Reading

Place the book in front of the student. Read the title and introduction.

Introduction: There are many kinds of trucks and they do important jobs. Read to find out about the different kinds of trucks and the jobs they do.

Summary of Scores:
Accuracy _____
Self-correction _____
Fluency _____
Comprehension _____
Writing _____

Sources of Information

Page	Text	*Trucks* Level H, RW: 188, E: 20	E	SC	E			S
					M	S	V	M
2	Big trucks are on the road. They are going to many different places. They are going to do many important jobs.							
4	This is a fire truck. Fire trucks help put out fires. This truck has a long hose that shoots water on the fire.							
6	This truck picks up trash. The trash goes in the back of the truck. The truck crushes the trash to make it smaller. Then the truck carries the trash away.							
		Subtotal						

Part One: Oral Reading *continued*

Page	Text	E	SC	E			
				M	S	V	M
8	This is a mail truck. It picks up mail from the post office. Then the truck carries the mail all over town.						
10	This big truck is a snowplow. It pushes the snow to the side of the road. Then big trucks come to carry the piles of snow away.						
12	This truck carries all kinds of food. The truck picks up corn at the farm. Then it takes the corn to the market.						
14	This is an ice cream truck. The ice cream truck plays a song.						

Part One: Oral Reading *continued*

LEVEL 11 • NONFICTION

Page	Text		E	SC	Sources of Information Used					
					E			SC		
					M	S	V	M	S	V
14 front	Children hear the song and run to get ice cream.									
16	All kinds of trucks are on the road. Some trucks are for work. And some trucks are for play.									
		Subtotal								
		Total								

Accuracy Rate	Errors	20 or more	18–19	16–17	15	13–14	11–12	9–10	7–8	5–6	3–4	1–2
	%	Below 90%	90%	91%	92%	93%	94%	95%	96%	97%	98%	99%

Self-Correction Ratio

$(E + SC) \div SC = 1:$ ___

Fluency Score   0 1 2 3

Fluency Scoring Key

0 Reads primarily word-by-word with occasional but infrequent or inappropriate ph
   no smooth or expressive interpretation, irregular pausing, and no attention to au
   meaning or punctuation; no stress or inappropriate stress, and slow rate.

1 Reads primarily in two-word phrases with some three- and four-word groups an
   word-by-word reading; almost no smooth, expressive interpretation or pausing
   by author's meaning and punctuation; almost no stress or inappropriate stress,
   rate most of the time.

2 Reads primarily in three- or four-word phrase groups; some smooth, expressiv
   interpretation and pausing guided by author's meaning and punctuation; most
   appropriate stress and rate with some slowdowns.

3 Reads primarily in larger, meaningful phrases or word groups; mostly smooth
   interpretation and pausing guided by author's meaning and punctuation; app

Comprehension Conversation

...ersation with the student, noting the key understandings
...nt expresses. Use prompts as needed to stimulate discussion of
...ndings the student does not express. It is not necessary to use
... prompt for each book. Score for evidence of all understandings
...essed—with or without a prompt. Circle the number in the score
...lumn that reflects the level of understanding demonstrated.

Teacher: Talk about what you learned in this book.

Comprehension Scoring Key

0   Reflects **unsatisfactory** understanding of the text. Either does not respond or talks off the topic.

1   Reflects **limited** understanding of the text. Mentions a few facts or ideas but does not express the important information or ideas.

2   Reflects **satisfactory** understanding of the text. Includes important information and ideas but neglects other key understandings.

3   Reflects **excellent** understanding of the text. Includes almost all important information and main ideas.

Key Understandings	Prompts	Score
Within the Text There are different kinds of trucks and they do different things. (Names 2–3 trucks such as fire truck, trash truck, mail truck, snowplow, food truck, ice cream truck.) Trucks do many different jobs. (Gives 1–3 examples such as: a fire truck has a long hose and puts out fires; a trash truck crushes trash; a mail truck picks up and carries mail; a snowplow carries snow away; some trucks carry food; an ice cream truck sells ice cream and plays a song; a toy truck is for play.) *Note any additional understandings:*	Tell what you learned about trucks from reading this book. Tell me more about different kinds of trucks and the jobs they do.	0 1 2 3
Beyond and About the Text People need trucks because (gives a plausible reason). The toy truck is different from all the other trucks because (gives 2–3 reasons such as it is little; it is used for play; it doesn't do jobs for people). In this book, the author shows trucks that do work and trucks you play with. *Note any additional understandings:*	Why are trucks important to us? How is the truck on the last page different from all the other trucks? Look at the truck on page 16. How is it different from the other trucks in the book?	0 1 2 3

Guide to Total Score

6–7 **Excellent** Comprehension

5   **Satisfactory** Comprehension

4   **Limited** Comprehension

0–3 **Unsatisfactory** Comprehension

Subtotal Score: _____

Add 1 for any additional understandings: _____

Total Score: _____

...rt Three: Writing About Reading (optional)

...d the writing/drawing prompt below to the student. You can also cut the prompt on the
...ted line and give it to the child. Specify the amount of time for the student to complete
...task on a separate sheet of paper. (See *Assessment Guide* for more information.)

Writing About Reading Scoring Ke...

0   Reflects **no** understanding of the text.

1   Reflects **very limited** understanding o...

2   Reflects **partial** understanding of the...

3   Reflects **excellent** understanding of ...

‾rite about three things you learned about trucks and the important job...

Appendix E

LESSON 100 LEVEL

SYSTEM **Blue**

NEW BOOK *The Ladybug and the Cricket*

GENRE **Fiction**

LEVEL L
LESSON 100

YOU WILL NEED

- Take-Home Book, *A Surprise for the Big Bad Wolf*
- My Writing Book
- magnetic letters
- word patterns chart from Lesson 99

From the CD:
- Recording Form for *A Surprise for the Big Bad Wolf*
- word cards: *bought, crawl, croak, special, delicious, wonderful, wonder, tomorrow, follow, tight, right, though, through, danger, outdoors, brush, wish, round, found, count, country*
- fold sheet
- Parent Letter

NEW BOOK
The Ladybug and the Cricket, Level J

REREADING
A Surprise for the Big Bad Wolf, Level L

Into the Sea, Level J

Goals

- Recognize and use phonogram patterns with the */aw/* sound in single syllable words.
- Realize that the short *o* sound can be represented by different letter patterns.
- Read dialogue with phrasing, intonation, and appropriate word stress.
- Use multiple sources of information to solve problems.
- Write sentences summarizing a story.
- Read high-frequency words fluently.
- Self-monitor and self-correct.
- Think about how vowels look to write them accurately.
- Recognize an animal fantasy story and connect it to other stories like it.
- Compare the characteristics of the two animals.
- Understand why the friends in the story were sad and how they helped each other.

Analysis of New Book Characteristics   *The Ladybug and the Cricket*, Level J

GENRE/FORM
- Fiction
- Animal fantasy

TEXT STRUCTURE
- Narrative
- One episode every page or page spread

CONTENT
- Animal characteristics

THEMES AND IDEAS
- Friends admiring each other
- Friends caring about each other

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES
- Literary language throughout
- Story problem and resolution
- Figurative language
- Satisfying ending

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY
- Third-person narrative
- Past tense
- Dialogue between characters
- Embedded dependent and independent clauses
- Compound sentences
- Sentence length varies, longest nineteen words

VOCABULARY
- Mostly familiar vocabulary
- Some more difficult verbs and adjectives

WORDS
- High-frequency words: mostly familiar words
- One-, two-, and three-syllable words
- See the Word Analysis Charts in the *Program Guide* for specific words in each category

ILLUSTRATIONS
- Color illustrations on every page
- Pictures add meaning and humor
- Character traits shown in illustrations

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES
- Two to ten lines of print on each page
- Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation point
- Print on color and white backgrounds
- Space to indicate paragraphs

▶ Rereading Books and Assessment

- A Surprise for the Big Bad Wolf, Level L
- Into the Sea, Level J

PROMPTING GUIDE 1
Refer to *Prompting Guide 1* as needed.

- Listen to one child read *A Surprise for the Big Bad Wolf* as you code the reading behavior on the Recording Form, have a brief comprehension conversation, and make a teaching point that you think will be most helpful to the reader. Score and analyze the Reading Record following the lesson.

- Have the other children reread *Into the Sea* and then *A Surprise for the Big Bad Wolf*.

- Prompt for integrated, fluent reading as appropriate, e.g., "Read it like you are telling a story."

Take a Reading Record
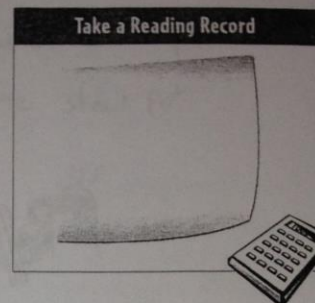
Phonics/Word Work

—aw	—ought	—ost	—ong	—aught
saw	fought	lost	long	caught
paw	bought	cost	song	taught
crawl	thought	frost	strong	

- **PRINCIPLE** Connecting and comparing word patterns that sound the same but look different: *said/bed*

"You can read words by remembering that some words have parts or patterns that sound the same but look different."

- Review short *o* word patterns that sound the same but look different. Suggested language: "You've been learning about word patterns that sound the same but look different. What vowel sound do you hear in all the words on the chart?"

- Use the four-column chart on the whiteboard from Lesson 99 with the headings *-aw, -ought, -ost, -ong*. Add a new column with the heading *-aught*.

- Write *caught* in the last column and have children read it. "What vowel sound do you hear in *caught*? Yes, the *o* in *lost* makes the /o/ sound."

- Repeat the activity with *taught*.

Whiteboard

- Have children write words that they know on the whiteboard. Prompt for quick and efficient writing.

> **Writing About Reading**
>
> **Dictated Writing**
>
> - MY WRITING BOOK
> - PROMPTING GUIDE 1
>
> Refer to *Prompting Guide 1* as needed.

Pete and Percy tried to make a surprise dinner but they made a mess.
Chef Lobo made vegetable stew.
Petunia tricked him when she put lots of hot stuff in the stew pot.

- If time allows, you may want to begin by having each child read recent pages from *My Writing Book*. Occasionally ask the child to locate a word in a sentence read.

- Discuss how Chef Lobo tricked the three pigs and how Petunia tricked Chef Lobo.

- Dictate the following sentences for children to write in *My Writing Book*.

  Pete and Percy tried to make a surprise dinner, but they made a mess.
  Chef Lobo made vegetable stew.
  Petunia tricked him when she put lots of hot stuff in the stew pot.

- Support the children's use of visual analysis, e.g., *tried, stew, tricked, when*. Clap words like *Petunia, Percy, dinner, surprise*. Prompt for children to say words like *make, but, made, mess, lots, hot*, and *stuff* slowly to write the letters in sequence.

- Have the children reread the sentences and illustrate them.

▶ New Book

The Ladybug and the Cricket,
Level J

PROMPTING GUIDE 1
Refer to *Prompting Guide 1*
as needed.

Introducing the Text

- Introduce the children to the book by talking about the characters. Suggested language: "This book is called *The Ladybug and the Cricket*. Here is the ladybug, and here is her friend the cricket. In this story, they each have one thing that the other wished for."

- "Turn to pages 2 and 3. What problem do the two friends have? Yes, it says, 'Each friend had one thing that the other wished for.' Say *each*. What letters do you expect to see first in *each*? Yes, it starts with *ea*."

- "Turn to pages 4 and 5. What does the ladybug wish she could do? Yes, she wishes she could make beautiful music like the cricket. Say *beautiful*. Clap *beautiful* with me."

- "Turn to pages 6 and 7. What does the cricket wish he looked like? Yes, he wishes he looked as beautiful as the ladybug."

- "Turn to pages 8 and 9. It says, 'The ladybug sighed because her friend was sad.' "Find sighed and run your finger under it while you say it. What do you think the two friends rushed off to do?"

- "Turn back to the beginning and read to find out how the two friends make each other's wish come true."

Reading the Text

- As the children read, prompt for or reinforce self-correction as needed, e.g., "Were you right?" or "Try that again."

Discussing and Revisiting the Text

Invite the children to talk about the ladybug and the cricket and their friendship. Some key understandings children may express are:

- The Ladybug and Cricket love each other but they each wish they had what the other one has. [Extend by asking for details and having them show pages.]

- Ladybug and Cricket each run home to make something special for each other. [Extend by asking for details.]

- Ladybug and Cricket are good friends because they care about each other's feelings and want to make each other happy. [Extend by asking how they know this.]

- This story reminds me of _____. [Extend by inviting children to compare this story to other books they have read about friendship.]

PROMPTING GUIDE 1
Refer to *Prompting Guide 1*
as needed.

Teaching Points

- Based on your observations, use *Prompting Guide 1* to select a teaching point that will be most helpful to the readers.

- Have children revisit page 11 and notice the language (*long after the sun went to bed; smiled a ladybug smile*). Do the same for page 13.

▶ **Optional Word Work**

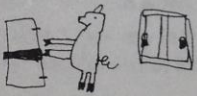|	
special	wonderful
croak	tomorrow
bought	delicious
crawl	
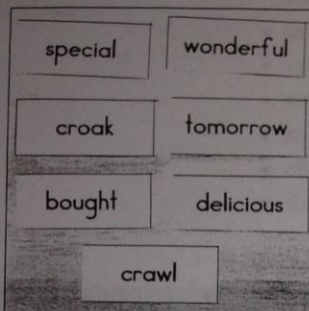
- Place word cards *bought, crawl, croak, special, delicious, wonderful, wonder, tomorrow, follow, tight, right, though, through, danger, outdoors, brush, wish, round, found, count,* and *country* randomly in the pocket chart and read them with the children.
- Have children take turns picking out two words that have the same beginning or ending parts, that have the same vowel sounds, or that are alike structurally, such as contractions or compound words, or that share some other characteristic. Have children read the words and tell how they are the same.

Classroom Connection

Blue #100   Name: Chris

The wolf tastes the hot stew.

The pigs push him outside.

They lock all the doors and windows.

The pigs enjoy their messy and delicious cake.

- Give the children the fold sheet with the four boxes.
- Have children tell what happened in the story by writing a sentence in each box in order, beginning with *The wolf tastes the hot stew.*
- Have them take their fold sheets back to the classroom to fill in the boxes and draw a picture for each.
- Give children the Take-Home Book *A Surprise for the Big Bad Wolf* to reread.

Home/School Connection

- Have the children take home their fold sheets to read to family members.
- Have them take the Take-Home Book *A Surprise for the Big Bad Wolf* to read to family members.

Assessing Reading and Writing Behaviors

Observe to find evidence that children can:

- recognize and use phonogram patterns with the sound of short o and realize it can be represented by different letter patterns.
- read dialogue with phrasing, intonation, and appropriate word stress.
- write sentences summarizing a story.
- self-monitor and self-correct consistently.
- recognize an animal fantasy that is related to a traditional tale.
- use prior knowledge to understand a new animal fantasy about familiar characters.
- discuss and compare attributes of characters.

Supporting English Language Learners

To support English language learners, you can:

- **use** each word bag word in a sentence to support the meaning.
- **demonstrate** describing how two words are connected. Support children in expressing the connections.
- **be sure** children understand *sweet, chirpy, shone, dull,* and *plain*.
- **listen** for pronunciation of word endings. Tell the pronunciation, if necessary.
- **use** the pictures to discuss the story.
- **make** wondering statements about how the characters felt at the end. Encourage children to share their thinking.
- **expand** children's language in a conversational way.
- **tell** children that clapping the syllables helps you write words part by part.
- **support** children in saying words slowly. Be sure they repeat after you.
- **understand** that children may vary in their pronunciation of words like *ought*, and help them notice how the words look.

Professional Development Links

When Readers Struggle: Teaching That Works
Chapter 12: Building and Using a Repertoire of Words. Use this chapter to understand the role of automaticity in word recognition.
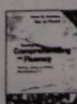
Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency: Thinking, Talking, and Writing about Reading, K–8
Chapter 4: Helping Students Develop Systems of Strategic Actions to Sustain Processing. Use this chapter to learn how to help readers expand thinking within the text.

LEVEL **Behaviors** and **Understandings** to **Notice, Teach,** and **Support**

Thinking Within the Text

Solving Words
- Notice new and interesting words, and actively add them to speaking or writing vocabulary
- Connect words that mean the same or almost the same to help in understanding a text and acquiring new vocabulary
- Demonstrate knowledge of flexible ways to solve words (noticing word parts, noticing endings and prefixes)
- Solve words of two or three syllables, many words with inflectional endings and complex letter-sound relationships
- Solve content-specific words, using graphics and definitions embedded in the text
- Use context to derive meaning of new words
- Understand longer descriptive words
- Demonstrate competent, active word solving while reading at a good pace

Monitoring and Correcting
- Self-correct when errors detract from the meaning of the text
- Self-correct intonation when it does not reflect the meaning when reading aloud
- Use multiple sources of information to monitor and self-correct (language structure, meaning, and letter-sound information)
- Realize when more information is needed to understand a text

Searching for and Using Information
- Use multiple sources of information together to solve new words
- Search for information in illustrations to support text interpretation
- Search for information in graphics (simple diagrams, illustrations with labels, maps, charts, captions under pictures)
- Use chapter titles to foreshadow content
- Use readers' tools (table of contents, headings, glossary, chapter titles, and author's notes) to gather information
- Process long sentences (fifteen or more words) with embedded clauses (prepositional phrases, introductory clauses)
- Process sentences with a series of nouns, verbs, or adverbs
- Process a wide range of dialogue, some unassigned

Summarizing
- Follow and remember a series of events over a longer text in order to understand the ending
- Summarize ideas from a text and tell how they are related
- Summarize a longer narrative text with multiple episodes, reporting events in the order they happened
- Identify important ideas in a text and report them in an organized way, either orally or in writing
- Understand the problem of a story and its solution

Maintaining Fluency
- Demonstrate phrased, fluent oral reading
- Read dialogue with phrasing and expression that reflects understanding of characters and events
- Demonstrate awareness of the function of the full range of punctuation
- Demonstrate appropriate stress on words, pausing and phrasing, intonation, and use of punctuation
- Use multiple sources of information (language structure, meaning, fast word recognition) to support fluency and phrasing
- Quickly and automatically solve most words in the text in a way that supports fluency
- Use multiple sources of information in a way that supports fluency
- Read silently and orally at an appropriate rate, not too fast and not too slow

Adjusting
- Slow down to search for information or think about ideas and resume normal pace of reading again
- Demonstrate different ways of reading fiction and nonfiction texts
- Demonstrate adjustment to process simple biographies
- Reread to solve words and resume normal rate of reading

Thinking Beyond the Text

Predicting
- Use text structure to predict the outcome of a narrative
- Make predictions about the solution to the problem in a story
- Make a wide range of predictions based on personal experiences, content knowledge, and knowledge of similar texts
- Search for and use information to confirm or disconfirm predictions
- Justify predictions using evidence
- Predict what characters will do based on the traits revealed by the writer

Making Connections
- Bring knowledge from personal experiences to the interpretation of characters and events
- Before, during, and after reading, bring background knowledge to the understanding of a text
- Make connections between the text and other texts that have been read or heard
- Specify the nature of connections (topic, content, type of story, writer)

Synthesizing
- Differentiate between what is known and new information
- Demonstrate learning new content from reading
- Expresses changes in ideas after reading a

Inferring
- Demonstrate understandings of characters, using evidence from text to support statements
- Infer characters' feelings and motivatio through reading their dialogue
- Show understanding of characters and their traits
- Infer cause and effect in influencing characters' feelings or underlying moti
- Infer the big ideas or message (theme a text
- Infer causes of problems or of outcom in fiction and nonfiction texts

LEVEL **Behaviors** and **Understandings** to Notice, Teach, and Support

Thinking About the Text

Analyzing
- Notice and discuss aspects of genres (fiction, nonfiction, realistic stories, and fantasy)
- Understand a writer's use of underlying organizational structures (description, compare/contrast, temporal sequence, problem/solution, cause/effect)
- Demonstrate the ability to identify how a text is organized (diagram or talk)
- Identify important aspects of illustrations (design related to the meaning of the text)
- Notice variety in layout (words in bold or larger font, or italics, variety in layout)
- Notice the way the writer assigns dialogue
- Notice aspects of a writer's style after reading several texts by the same author
- Notice specific writing techniques (for example, question and answer format)
- Notice and interpret figurative language and discuss how it adds to the meaning or enjoyment of a text
- Notice descriptive language and discuss how it adds to enjoyment or understanding
- Understand the relationship between the setting and the plot of a story
- Identify a point in the story when the problem is resolved

Critiquing
- State opinions about a text and provide evidence to support them
- Discuss the quality of illustrations or graphics
- Hypothesize how characters could have behaved differently
- Judge the text as to whether it is interesting, humorous, or exciting, and specify why

Additional Suggestions for Word Work

Use a chart or easel, whiteboard, magnetic letters, or pencil and paper to develop fluency and flexibility in visual processing, if needed.

- Recognize and take apart words with inflectional endings (*painting, skated*)
- Make and change words to add inflectional endings (*-ing, -ed; cry-crying-cried*)
- Change words to make a full range of plurals by adding *-s* and *-es* (*stoves, axes, toys, hobbies, echoes*)
- Work flexibly with base words, taking apart and making new words by changing letters and adding prefixes and suffixes (*tie/tied/untie*)
- Recognize word patterns that look the same but sound different (*dear, bear*) and that sound the same but look different (*said, bed*)
- Recognize and connect homophones (same pronunciation, different spellings and meanings) (*dear, deer*)
- Read homographs (same spelling, different meanings, and sometimes different pronunciations) (*bear, bear; bass, bass*)
- Recognize and pronounce vowel sounds in open (CV: *ho-tel*) and closed (CVC: *lem-on*) syllables
- Read words that have double vowel patterns (VVC: *feel*) as well as words that have vowel sounds with *r* (*march*)

- Take apart and make words using more complex phonograms and long vowel patterns (VVC (*paint*), VVCe (*raise*), VCCe (*large*), VCCC (*lunch*), VVCCC (*health*))
- Make and change words to create comparatives (*-er, -est*) (*light/lighter/lightest*)
- Take apart words with comparatives (*short-er, short-est*)
- Take apart compound words and discuss how the parts are related to meaning (*cook-book*)
- Take apart two- and three-syllable words (*sal-ad, cu-cum-ber*)
- Read words using letter-sound analysis from left to right (*s-l-i-pp-er*)
- Use what is known about words to read new words (*fan, fancy; ate, later*)
- Read words with silent consonants (*sight, knife*)
- Read, take apart, or write words with consonant blends and digraphs at the ends (*spend, splash*)
- Recognize and take apart the full range of contractions (*I'm, that's, he'll, won't, they're, you've*)
- Take apart words with open and closed syllables (*fe-ver, ped-al*)