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The impact of collaborative professional development between classroom teachers and reading recovery teachers

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THE IMPACT OF COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BETWEEN CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND READING RECOVERY TEACHERS

by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Education

Hamline University
Saint Paul, Minnesota
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

As a Reading Recovery teacher, I would like to use my extensive training in teaching striving readers to help other teachers improve their reading instruction and improve student outcomes. Through my research I would like the following question answered: *What impact does collaborative professional development between classroom teachers and reading recovery teachers have on first grade students’ reading acquisition and teacher understanding of reading instruction?*

In this chapter, I provide an overview of Reading Recovery, my personal background, a background on professional development and professional learning communities, and my rationale for this research question.

Through the process of becoming a Reading Recovery teacher, it has become evident that I cannot keep my Reading Recovery training to myself and I need to share the knowledge I have learned with other teachers to improve student learning. I want to make an impact on more than just the students I work with, but I want to help other students as well. Reading Recovery is a program that is taught outside of core instruction and is considered Tier 3 instruction. Through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports model, there are three tiers of instruction. Tier 1 is instruction all students receive. Tier 2 is additional research-based instruction that occurs in a small group setting. Tier 3 instruction is more intense and is usually conducted one-on-one.
Researcher Background

As an elementary teacher with a K-6 license, I have had a diverse teaching career in both classroom and intervention settings. My student teaching took place in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin in a second grade classroom. After student teaching, I moved to Minnesota and substitute taught, mostly in elementary, for one year. In 2008 and 2009, I was a Title 1 teacher, providing small group math and reading instruction to students ranging from Kindergarten to Third Grade. The following two years I taught as a classroom teacher in Fourth Grade and Kindergarten. The next two years I was a Reading Interventionist; and for the past three years I have been a Reading Recovery teacher paired with a halftime reading interventionist position. I have also taught reading to students in various grades during summer school. When reading my resume, it is evident that I have a passion for teaching reading to students who struggle. It is my hope to pass this passion on to other teachers so that students can continue to accelerate and grow in their reading abilities.

I have a passion for teaching reading to students who struggle because when they pick up new reading strategies and when their reading level accelerates because of my teaching, I know I am changing their lives. Reading is a vital skill in today’s world no matter what field you choose to study or learn. By teaching the hardest to teach children I have learned a lot about the reading and writing acquisition process. I am always problem solving with colleagues to figure out how to accelerate students. As a Reading Recovery teacher, I get to participate in ongoing professional development that allows me to watch other teachers engage in the reading and writing process through live lessons.
Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery was founded by Dr. Marie Clay in New Zealand in the 1970s. The Reading Recovery Council of North America explained the program:

Reading Recovery is a short-term intervention for first graders having extreme difficulty with early reading and writing. Specially trained teachers work individually with students in daily 30-minute lessons lasting 12 to 20 weeks. After a full series of lessons, about 75% of these formerly lowest students reach grade-level standard. (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2001-2016)

Teachers use kindergarten and first grade assessment data to assess approximately 20 percent of the neediest first grade students using the Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement. The six subtests of the Observation Survey are: Letter Identification, Ohio Word Test, Concepts About Print, Writing Vocabulary, Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words, and Text Level. The Observation Survey is then analyzed and the four lowest students are chosen to receive Reading Recovery based on the students with the lowest stanines from the assessment. “Stanines are a type of score based on the mean and standard deviation of scores on a task. They indicate how different from average any particular raw score is, with average scores belonging to stanine group 5” (D’Agostino, 2012, p. 3).

Reading Recovery is a reading and writing intervention that follows a general framework for instruction. A lesson framework typically is: rereading of familiar books, teacher taking a running record of the new book from the previous day, word work, writing, reassembling a cut apart sentence, and introduction and reading of a new book. The teacher carefully analyzes the running record each day and takes notes throughout
the lesson to look for strategic activity that the child is independently applying. The teacher then makes predictions of progress to decide where instruction needs to go: Is the child looking when reading? When the child makes an error, do they use meaning, structure, or visual cues to help solve the word? Is the child developing a self-extending system of strategic behavior? (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2001-2016).

A Reading Recovery teacher typically works with four students at a time, working with eight to twelve students total in a school year. Reading Recovery lessons occur five days a week for thirty minutes each day.

Typically a teacher who has trained or is in training for Reading Recovery works individually with four Grade 1 students each day and contributes to student learning and/or staff development in the school in a variety of ways during the other part of the day. On average, Reading Recovery teachers work with 8 Reading Recovery students and about 40 other students each year. (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2001-2016)

Highly trained Reading Recovery teachers can then be resources in other positions in a school or district including: Title I or small-group teacher, shared classroom teacher, Special Education teacher, English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, staff developer, literacy coach, or administrator.

**Reading recovery training.** To become a Reading Recovery teacher requires a year-long series of graduate level classes, where the trained teacher receives eight graduate level credits after coursework is completed. The graduate credits come from a nearby certified University Training Center, and not all universities offer this program. The teachers in training are either trained by a University Trainer or a certified Teacher
Leader who is qualified to train teachers. During this training year, the Reading Recovery teacher leader completes at least six visits to the trainee’s school to observe lessons and provide support. During the training year and at various times in the following years, Reading Recovery teachers are required to teach lessons behind-the-glass. This is where the Reading Recovery teacher brings a current student to a training school where they teach a lesson behind a large glass with speakers. When teaching the lesson, the student and teacher see a mirror. The teachers watching the lesson on the other side of the glass can see and hear the lesson occurring through the window. The purpose of a behind-the-glass lesson is to extend the learning of the teachers that are watching on the other side of the glass. The teacher leader engages the teachers in conversation during the lesson to improve their own learning. It is always beneficial getting advice on next steps for the child’s learning if you are the teacher doing the behind-the-glass.

I was trained as Reading Recovery teacher during the 2012-2013 school year. During that year, I attended class each Tuesday evening at an elementary school, earning graduate level credits. I brought four students at various times throughout the year to teach behind-the-glass and watched my colleagues teach behind-the-glass, as well. For the summer course, we met for a week with full day sessions, where we learned about the Observation Summary, which is the Reading Recovery assessment. We were able to also assess students at the end of the week for live practice. After the week-long summer training, once the school year began, we had Tuesday night classes from 4:30pm-7:30pm, where we were trained on the other aspects of Reading Recovery. There are currently no universities in Minnesota that affiliate with this program, so my graduate credits were from South Dakota State University, which is the University Training Center affiliated
with my training site. This yearlong training changed my teaching, not only as a Reading Recovery teacher, but as an interventionist and a teacher in general because it led me to reflect on my practices regularly and to make sure that I was meeting the needs of the students and changing my instruction if progress was not being made. These are practices I continue to do to this day and these are practices I want to pass on to other teachers.

Reading Recovery is different from other interventions because the training and ongoing professional development are required as a part of the Standards and Guidelines of Reading Recovery in the United States. “In order to make Reading Recovery teaching effective, it is important for teachers to continue to teach a minimum of four children per day and participate in ongoing professional development that includes observation and discussion of behind-the-glass lessons” (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2015). Through this annual required training, teachers are trained with a consistent approach based on a common syllabus and common standards across the nation. Then, teachers receive ongoing professional development that continually refines your thinking and deepens your understanding. The teacher leader visits the trained Reading Recovery teacher as needed in following years. Also during ongoing professional development, teachers take part in in-depth study, analysis, and reflections of their current teaching and current students.

Currently, I continue to go to an elementary school six times a year to receive ongoing professional development from my teacher leader. My reading recovery position requires me to work with four students at a time for 12-20 weeks, with a total of eight students throughout the school year. My teacher leader also comes and visits my school when a student is not making progress to problem solve how I can change my teaching to
improve the student learning. Each year, I have also taught one behind-the-glass lesson as well. Through this training, I learned that Reading Recovery can help all students, not just the students I work with personally. I have taken things I have learned in the training and implemented them in other areas I have taught such as summer school, extended day, and when working with small groups of students. I have also taken things I have learning in training and used them when providing trainings to other teachers.

I have been to the Reading Recovery National Conference twice and have also been to the Minnesota Reading Recovery Conference on three occasions. These conference experiences really got me excited about sharing information with others to improve instruction. The presenters at the conference are very experienced, highly trained Reading Recovery teachers or Teacher Leaders and so their passion really shows through in their presentations. It is also about networking with colleagues from across the country. It is a guideline in Reading Recovery Standards and Guidelines that teachers attend a professional Reading Recovery conference once a year.

**School-based professional development experiences.** For the past few years I have been involved in providing professional development to Title 1 teachers and paraprofessionals, and other licensed staff in the district. I currently serve on my school’s professional development team, where we decide what professional development would be beneficial for our staff on our district’s Professional Development Days. These are days where students do not come to school and teachers provide or receive professional development.

According to a study from the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, professional development should include:
Alignment with school goals, state and district standards and assessments, and other professional learning activities including formative teacher evaluation; focus on core content and modeling of teaching strategies for the content; inclusion of opportunities for active learning of new teaching strategies; provision of opportunities for collaboration among teachers; and inclusion of embedded follow-up and continuous feedback. (as cited in Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, & Goe, 2011, p. 3)

The professional development that I provide to the first grade teachers in my building will follow each of those criteria. It is not a requirement for the Reading Recovery teacher to provide professional development for teachers, but with such intense on-going training, it is highly recommended that Reading Recovery teachers work with other educators to improve their reading instruction.

**Professional Development and Professional Learning Communities**

My school district has really been working hard to make professional learning communities (PLC) something that is personally beneficial for the teachers that are in them. As a part of a first grade professional learning community last year, I noticed that the teachers at my school are really looking for ways to improve their instructional practices. Trained in Reading Recovery, I tried to share strategies at each PLC to help them with this goal. I found as the year went on, the effort really does not seem to be enough. That is one of the reasons why I chose to provide deeper professional development to the first grade teachers at my school.
**Action Research**

My action research question is: *What impact does collaborative professional development between classroom teachers and reading recovery teachers have on first grade students’ reading acquisition and teacher understanding of reading instruction?* I chose this as my action research because of my passion for improving Tier 1 literacy instruction at the elementary level. How can I use my own year-long Reading Recovery training and experiences to provide professional development to first grade teachers to improve their instruction and make an impact on the first grade students in my building?

The intervention that I would like to address is providing professional development to the four first grade teachers that teach literacy in my building. I will provide 45 minutes of professional development four times during the fall of 2015, I then will ask the teachers to provide literacy instruction to their first grade students based on what they learned through this professional development. The main change I would like to see the teachers make is in their prompting and guidance during their small group guided reading time. The goal is to get the students more independent in their literacy behaviors.

**Rationale**

I want to provide this professional development to first grade teachers at my school because I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to be trained in Reading Recovery and I would like to share my learning with others. I often think about what I would change if I went back to being a classroom teacher and those are the things that I would like to share with the teachers. I would like this professional development to not only help the “lower” readers in the grade level, but to also help improve student learning.
for the “average” and “high” students in the grade level as well. I feel like the students I
work with and other students receiving interventions gain strategies to solve unknown
words and to decode while they are reading, but our “average” and “high” students do not
always receive such rich teaching because “they just get it.” I feel this is inequitable
because all students need to be strategic readers and I am hoping that my professional
development helps all students in the first grade classrooms in my school.

Summary

Reading Recovery is a reading and writing intervention provided to the students
who are having difficulty with these skills. Reading Recovery teachers receive yearlong
training their first year and continued professional development thereafter with their
teacher leader. All teachers should have the opportunity to receive strong professional
development in early reading and writing acquisition so that is why I chose to provide the
first grade teachers at my school with this training. Teacher implementation will be
measured through pre- and post- surveys. Student growth will be measured with Fall to
Winter scores from a literacy assessment created for this action research. Professional
development is an important aspect of teaching and teachers need to continually grow.

Chapter Two goes into more detail around the research there is related to Reading
Recovery. It will discuss professional development related to Reading Recovery and
research behind professional development in general including what makes good
professional development. It will also discuss what embodies strong reading instruction
in the younger grades. Through my literature review, I will explain more about the impact
Reading Recovery training can have on classroom teachers. I will explain research and
best practices in reading instruction and also details about qualities of good professional development.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to review the research that will help answer the question: What impact does collaborative professional development between classroom teachers and reading recovery teachers have on first grade students’ reading acquisition and teacher understanding of reading instruction? I believe all teachers should have the opportunity to receive strong professional development in early reading and writing acquisition so that is why I am going to provide the first grade teachers at my school with this training.

In Chapter Two, I uncover the research behind Reading Recovery and how to apply the practices of Reading Recovery in general education first grade classrooms. To begin, background of Reading Recovery is introduced. The theoretical perspectives of Marie Clay are discussed. Reading instruction in the United States will be looked at to discover what best practices in reading instruction consists of and what that looks like in a classroom. Professional development is unfolded, where Reading Recovery as professional development is looked at along with effective leadership and communication skills.

Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery is a short-term reading intervention for low-achieving first grade students. It is a one-on-one intervention that lasts 12 to 20 weeks. It is a comprehensive literacy program that covers reading, writing, and word work each day in the thirty minute lesson. This section provides a definition of Reading Recovery, the
implementation of Reading Recovery into a school, and the theoretical principles of
Marie Clay (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2001-2016).

**Theoretical view of Marie Clay.** Marie Clay is the creator behind Reading Recovery. In the 1960s, when she was working on her dissertation for her doctoral work, she developed observation tools for analyzing students over time in literacy behaviors. These tools eventually became *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (2005a). In this book, she discussed the importance of observation and also the theoretical rationales behind them. When discussing the observation of students to a school, she stated that, “Teachers must find out what children already know, and take them from where they are to somewhere else” (Clay, 2005a, p. 9). The Observation Survey is the assessment that Reading Recovery teachers use to find the students that they will be working with during the school year. She also stated, “All children are ready to learn something, but some start their learning from a different place” (Clay, 2005a, p. 9). Clay talked about four areas that will facilitate student progress. If one of these is inefficient, the child will not accelerate quickly. These four areas are as follows: Reading involves messages expressed in language; Reading involves knowing about the conventions used to print language; Reading involves visual patterns; Reading involves listening to language and hearing clear breaks between words.

One item that Clay felt very strongly about is having experienced teachers who have,

...been trained to think incisively about the reading process and who is sensitive to individual differences; a teacher who has continued to seek professional
development, and understands the literacy issues of the day, and the particular programme the school is delivering. (Clay, 2005a, p. 25)

She talked often of how the teacher needs to know his/her students and be in tune to the needs of the child and adjust the lesson accordingly. She also had a belief in early intervention. Students should receive intensive interventions in their second year of education.

Having a psychology degree, Clay often connected literacy to psychological theories and the brain.

Children use their brains to attend to certain things, to work out certain things, to find similarities and differences, to build complex processing systems, to use the language they already speak, and to link it to visual squiggles on paper. (Clay, 2005b, p. 3)

Clay was very interested in the brain and did a lot of research as well.

**Reading recovery lesson framework.** A Reading Recovery lesson has six major components. The lesson begins with the child rereading a few known books. It then moves on to the child reading the new book from the day before. At this time, the teacher takes a running record of the child reading that book. A running record is an assessment to help teachers record student reading behaviors. The purpose is to figure out the student’s reading behaviors so the teacher can target the lessons to the student’s needs. The lesson quickly moves to a large easel where the child manipulates magnetic letters to practice letters, sounds, and words. These portions of the lesson take about ten minutes. The teacher and child then go sit back down to work on writing. This portion also takes
about ten minutes. The last ten minutes of the lesson is reserved for the introduction and reading of a new book at the child’s instructional level.

**Student selection.** To choose the students for Reading Recovery, the teacher assesses the lowest 20% of readers in the first grade class. The assessment used to choose students is called the Observation Survey. This is a standardized reading assessment that contains six subtasks: Letter Identification, Ohio Word Test, Concepts about Print, Writing Vocabulary, Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words, and Text Level. The scores are each assigned a stanine for fall, winter, and spring. Stanines are scores based on the mean and standard deviations of each of the tasks on the Observation Survey (Clay, 2005a). Stanines are between one and nine. Stanines of four, five, and six are considered average. Stanines of one through three are considered below average and stanines of seven through nine are considered above average. The teacher looks at how the students assessed do on the stanines. The students with the most ones and twos receive Reading Recovery.

**In-depth reading recovery teacher training.** Reading Recovery teachers in their training year (their first year) receive yearlong training that also gains them graduate credits. This is true for all Reading Recovery teachers in the nation (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2001-2016). There is a two credit class that is part of the summer training and then a three credit class in the fall and a three credit class in the spring. This training takes place weekly in the evening, where the teachers, led by a Reading Recovery Teacher Leader, learn about the processes and theories of Reading Recovery. In addition, Reading Recovery trainees read Marie Clay’s writings and
research behind Reading Recovery and also discuss and observe current students and their learning (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2001-2016).

A major part of Reading Recovery training is behind-the-glass. This is where a Reading Recovery teacher brings a student to a school that is set up for this type of lessons. On one side of the glass is a teacher and the student. When they look up, they see a mirror. On the other side is the Teacher Leader, Reading Recovery teachers, and sometimes even principals, classroom teachers, and other educators. The teacher and student go through a normal Reading Recovery lesson and the people on the other side observe and discuss various topics. For example, they may be watching for prompting that the teacher is doing or they may be discussing where the child’s learning should go next. This type of training is valuable to all involved because of the hands on learning that occurs (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2001-2016). When a teacher is in his or her training year, they do behind-the-glass lessons at least three times (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2015, p. 10). In years after the training year, teachers do behind-the-glass once a year (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2015, p. 13).

As mentioned, in years following a Reading Recovery teachers’ training year, there are still opportunities to be involved with behind-the-glass learning. These typically occur at professional development sessions that teachers attend six times per year, each year they teach Reading Recovery (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2001-2016). The Teacher Leader chooses a topic to focus on and the teachers dive deeper into that subject to improve their teaching and to continue the work of Marie Clay.
**Reading recovery research and effectiveness.** Reading Recovery collects numerous amounts of data on the students that are worked with during the school year from all over the country. Reading Recovery teachers enter student data into a system called IDEC, which is an acronym for the International Data Evaluation Center. Reading Recovery staff take that information and report it to schools and districts (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2001-2016). Reading Recovery has positive effects on general reading achievement and potentially positive effects on alphabetics, reading fluency, and comprehension (WWC intervention report: Reading recovery, 2013).

**Statistics.** Reading Recovery statistics are very positive. According to data collected by the Reading Recovery Council of North America, “75% of Reading Recovery students read at grade level after a full series of lessons” (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2001-2016). Also, “99% of students who successfully complete Reading Recovery lessons don’t need to be referred to special education for reading at the end of Grade 1” (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2001-2016). What Works Clearinghouse analyzed the effectiveness of Reading Recovery by looking at three studies on the reading skills of beginning readers. “Reading recovery was found to have positive effects on general reading achievement and potentially positive effects on alphabetics, reading fluency, and comprehension for beginning readers” (WWC intervention report: Reading recovery, 2013, p. 1).

A study was completed in March 2016 by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) at the University of Pennsylvania in collaboration with the Center for Research in Education and Social Policy (CRESP) at the University of Delaware.
The evaluation was funded by an Investing in Innovation (i3) grant to The Ohio State University (OSU) from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Innovation and Improvement. The grant, which was awarded in 2010, totaled $45 million, with an additional $10.1 million raised from private sources, to cover the expansion of Reading Recovery around the U.S. Of this, $5 million was earmarked for the completion of the independent evaluation of the scale-up effort between 2011 and 2015. (May, Sirinides, Gray, & Goldsworth, 2016, p. 1)

A four-year, multi-site randomized controlled trial (RCT), investigated the immediate impacts of Reading Recovery. “The RCT was conducted from the 2011-2012 school year through 2014-2015” (May et al., 2016, p. 27).

The four-year, multi-site RCT examined Reading Recovery’s impacts on students’ scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) Reading Total assessment as well as the ITBS Reading Comprehension and Reading Words subtests, and on the Observation Survey of Early Literacy Assessment (OS). Within schools, students were matched into pairs based on pretest scores and randomly assigned, within matched pairs, to treatment and control. Students in the treatment group received 12- to 20-weeks of daily, one-to-one Reading Recovery lessons provided by a trained teacher as a supplement to regular classroom literacy instruction. Students in the control group received regular classroom literacy instruction as well as any interventions normally provided to low-performing 1st-grade readers in their schools. (May et al., 2016, pp. 2-3)

The study found evidence that Reading Recovery has a strong impact on short-term progress of students who struggle with reading. There was research on the long term
impacts on third grade students, but the results were not enough to find conclusive
evidence of the impact on long term progress of struggling readers. There is a plan to do
further research in this area.

This four-year evaluation revealed significant positive impacts of Reading
Recovery on students’ reading achievement. Treatment students who participated
in Reading Recovery outperformed students in the control group on the Total
Reading battery of the ITBS, Reading Comprehension and Reading Words
subscales of the ITBS, and the OS. The average ITBS Total Reading score for the
Reading Recovery (treatment) group was equivalent to the 36th percentile for
students nationally, while the average score for the control group was equivalent
to the 28th percentile for students nationally—a difference of +18 percentile
points. A similar pattern of large gains in test scores for the Reading Recovery
students relative to their control group counterparts was observed using subtests
of the ITBS and the OS. Moreover, these findings were generally similar for
students attending schools in rural and their counterparts in non-rural areas and
for ELL students and their non-ELL counterparts. (May et al., 2016, p. 44)

The positive impact found from the evaluation of Reading Recovery with use of
funds from the i3 grant is evident. Students receiving Reading Recovery lessons
compared to the control group scored higher based on the ITBS Total Reading score. The
results were similar whether the schools were rural or non-rural and also for ELL and
non-ELL students.
Conclusion

Reading Recovery is a short-term reading intervention for low-achieving first grade students. It is a one-on-one intervention that lasts 12 to 20 weeks. It is a comprehensive literacy program that covers reading, writing, and word work each day in the thirty minute lesson. It is effective because teachers receive quality professional development and reflect on their instruction. Quality reading instruction is vital for students to learn how to read.

Reading Instruction

In 2000, the National Reading panel came out with five essential components of effective reading instruction. These include: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Learning Point, 2004).

Phonemic awareness is commonly defined as the understanding that spoken words are made up of separate units of sound that are blended together when words are pronounced. However, it can also be thought of as skill at hearing and producing the separate sounds in words, dividing or segmenting words into their component sounds, blending separate sounds into words, and recognizing words that sound alike or different. (Learning Point, 2004, p. 4)

Another way phonemic awareness can be thought of is the ability to hear that the word cat has three phonemes, or sounds /k/ /a/ /t/. Some examples of how students are doing in regard to learning phonemic awareness are: Can they isolate phonemes? Can they blend onset-rimes? Can they blend, delete, add, or substitute phonemes? Can they segment words into phonemes? Phonemic awareness is not an isolated part of reading instruction. It should be taught with other reading skills, such as phonics.
Phonics is similar to phonemic awareness, but it connects the sounds to the written language. Phonics is “a set of rules that specify the relationship between letters in the spelling of words and the sounds of spoken language” (Learning Point, 2004, p. 12). The key to phonics is that it “should be explicit and systematic” and in the end, it should be connected to text. Students not only are taught letter names, sounds, and how to decode words, but they are also taught to use these skills in texts that they are able to read.

Fluency has had many definitions over the years, but it is important to note that it is no longer being able to read fast. “Fluency is recognizing the words in a text rapidly and accurately and using phrasing and emphasis in a way that makes what is read sound like spoken language” (Learning Point, 2004, p. 17). These two key items can also improve comprehension. Some ways to improve fluency may be to tell students unfamiliar words so they do not get caught up, help students group words into phrases, have students read along with the teacher so they know what fluent reading feels like and sounds like, and use repeated readings (Learning Point, 2004).

“The term vocabulary refers to words we need to know to communicate with others. There are four types of vocabulary: listening, speaking, reading, and writing” (Learning Point, 2004, p. 22). Vocabulary is important to help children recognize words and it is also important in comprehension. If a child does not know what a “ladder” is, for example, they will not be able to read that word quickly using other cues in the book and they may also not understand the story. Ways to improve vocabulary in students can be to relate new words to words they already know, use words in a sentence, match definitions,
use the words in a new way, and make sure to expose students to new words as often as possible (Learning Point, 2004, p. 25).

It has been said that young students are learning to read and as they get older, they are reading to learn. “Comprehension involves constructing meaning that is reasonable and accurate by connecting what has been read to what the reader already knows and thinking about all of this information until it is understood” (Learning Point, 2004, p. 30). Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading. As adults, we read to learn and obtain information. If comprehension was not there, major issues would ensue.

The Emergent Literacy Theory by Marie Clay explained early literacy development and how children learn to read,

One of the central tenets of Emergent Literacy Theory is that children’s development in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are all interrelated. This means that children who are already proficient with listening and speaking tend to excel at early reading and writing tasks. (as cited in Tracey & Morrow, 2012, p. 99)

You could also then say the opposite is true and if students have a hard time with speaking and listening, they might struggle more with reading and writing. This also means if a teacher can help a child accelerate in some of the areas, the child will begin to improve in the other areas as well. “A second central belief of Emergent Literacy Theory is that literacy development starts at birth and is continuous and ongoing” (Tracey & Morrow, 2012, p. 100). In contrast to some other theories, Emergent Literacy Theory stated that any exposure to words, print, books, etc. is beneficial to the child. It also means that just because students do not know all of their letters, they can still learn how
to read. With this belief, classroom teachers need to give their students many avenues to experience literacy from active read alouds and word walls to read to self and time to read to a partner.

**Best practices in reading instruction.** There is a lot of research out there on best practices in reading instruction. Pressley and Allington (2015) discussed teaching skills along with teaching for meaning when providing reading instruction. In some of Pinnell’s research in 2006, she listed eight guiding principles that teachers can follow for best literacy instruction. The first is to “learn about learning” (p. 78). She gave an example of a teacher that understood that reading is cognitive and emotional and that comprehension takes place throughout the whole reading process, not just while the child is reading. Next, she discussed that you need to “put your theory into action” (p. 79). She then discussed how teachers should teach comprehension and fluency and other reading concepts “all day long across instructional contexts” (Pinnell, 2006, p. 79 ). Pinnell went on to talk about the need to “establish inquiry as an integral part of your teaching” (p. 80). She defined this as “ongoing, systematic investigation” (p. 80) and discusses how teachers should use assessment to inform their instruction. The next topic was to “use research-based practices and put extra energy into making them work” (p. 80). She discussed how it is vital for teachers to be informed and up-to-date on best practices. She stated in this section that Reading Recovery is popular and effective because professional development is a main part of Reading Recovery and all teachers can learn to self-reflect. “Put your theory to work in the classroom” (p. 81) is next. In that, she discussed that even if a curriculum changes, teachers that have the appropriate skills and values will still be effective no matter what books are involved. “Take every opportunity to create
community” (p. 82) is another important factor. Working together with other teachers is an important piece of literacy instruction. Finally, she discussed to “enjoy reading and writing with your students” (p. 82) and to “imagine a future and work toward it” (Pinnell, 2006, p. 82).

**Approaches to reading instruction.** There are three main approaches to reading instruction. Skills Emphasis, Meaning Emphasis, and Balanced Reading Instruction are the three approaches. The Skills-Emphasis approach focuses on the fact that phonemes are the smallest units of language and this approach focuses on decoding words. The National Reading Panel found that ten minutes of phonics instruction a day does improve decoding, but does not have much of an effect on comprehension (Pressley & Allington, 2015).

The Meaning-Emphasis approach has a variety of programs: the story method, the language experience approach, the independent reading approach, and the whole language model. Of the four programs, whole language is the most recent.

Whole language is a meaning-emphasis approach to literacy education that emphasizes natural development of literacy competence. Immersion in real literature and daily writing is favored over explicit teaching of basic reading skills. Skills instruction, when it occurs, appears in wholly committed whole-language classrooms on an as-needed basis only, and then only in the context of reading and writing rather than as a focal point of instruction. (Pressley & Allington, 2015, p. 31)

In whole language, children do not rely on decoding as much as they rely on meaning to help figure out unknown words. Weaver (as cited in Pressley & Allington, 2015), an
advocate for whole language, believes that good readers use syntactic and semantic clues to figure out unknown words. These clues help them predict what would make sense next. Her beliefs about phonics are as follows, “It’s not necessary. Just as they learn the patterns of oral language, so most children will unconsciously learn common phonics patterns, given ample opportunity to read environmental print and predictable and enjoyable materials, and ample opportunity to write with invented (constructive) spelling” (as cited in Pressley & Allington, 2015, p. 39). There are positive studies supporting whole language. However, some studies show that whole language students rely heavily on pictures and semantics, which can trouble them later.

A balanced approach might be best because it takes the positive attributes of both skill-emphasis and meaning-emphasis approaches. It can also keep out some of the negatives of each. For example, skill-emphasis helps students to read more accurately than the meaning-emphasis approach might allow. On the other hand, meaning-emphasis approaches focus more on student interests and combinations. The right combo can be a very motivating classroom where students read, read, read (Pressley & Allington, 2015).

This information impacts my study because understanding best practices in reading instruction and understanding the areas of reading instruction are vital if I am going to make a difference in the classrooms of the teachers for which I am providing professional development.

Reading acquisition. Children acquire the ability to read differently. Some begin learning to read at home and some begin to learn at school. No matter where a child’s reading acquisition begins, there is a goal to become independent readers including at points of difficulty. McGee, Kim, Nelson, and Fried (2015) studied “first- grade readers’
errors to determine insights into the strategies and information sources they draw on to solve problems in reading and how these strategies and sources of information change over time as students become more proficient readers” (p. 263). In this research, Reading Recovery students were studied to see what they do at points of difficulty at different reading levels from level 5 to level 12. Then, the researchers took a look at point of difficulty and found that “students’ errors were either simple, single- action error episodes or complex, typical or flexible action chains (McGee et al., 2015, p. 280). They studied these errors and determined which types of errors were sophisticated and which were less sophisticated. They studied groups of Reading Recovery students who were not caught up to grade level by the end of the year and Reading Recovery students who were caught up to grade level by the end of the year. “Students who ended the year reading at first- grade level showed indications of greater change compared with students who ended the year reading below first grade level. Of most importance is that these students had increasing proportions of errors that were monitored and self- corrected” (McGee et al., 2015, p. 290). Teachers can learn from this study and improve their instruction because,

...the results also suggest that it might be detrimental to only draw students’ attention to print and always call for decoding at point of difficulty. Additional results of the current study showed that students who became first- grade- level readers also had a superior ability to coordinate the use of both graphic and contextual information in the same error episode. Thus, teachers should focus on teaching students to monitor both the print and the context and, when a problem is detected, to employ
multiple actions drawing on what is known about print using letter sounds, word parts, and context. Only paying attention to one source of information (only the print or only the context) and failing to monitor will be a clear indication to observant teachers to provide direct, explicit instruction in monitoring, expanding understanding of how print works, and using more than one source of information to problem solve. (McGee et al., 2015, p. 289)

From this research, teachers can learn that students need to pay attention to more than one source of information when they are reading to be successful solving unknown words. If teachers notice that students are only using one source of information, they should provide explicit instruction on using more than one source of information to figure out the unknown words.

**Strategic activity.** The ultimate goal of reading instruction is to help students become independent, strategic readers. “The children initially perform literacy problem-solving and monitoring activities with the assistance of teachers but ultimately become independent problem solvers who are knowledgeable about how to proceed on their own” (Lee & Schmitt, 2014, p. 34). This has been called many things from Vygotsky coining it as “scaffolding” and also Pearson calling it “gradual release of responsibility” (as cited in Lee & Schmitt, 2014, p. 34). No matter what it is called, it is described as the teacher modeling and demonstrating reading behaviors with the student eventually taking over the reading independently.

Strategic reading activities include: (a) searching the text for a variety of information sources, self-monitoring as a means of making sure all information sources
match, (b) cross-checking information sources against one another while monitoring, (c) rereading to problem solve to gather more information, (d) rereading to confirm that cue sources match, (e) taking words apart as a word analysis strategy while reading, (f) linking sound sequences to letter sequences as a means of monitoring that the information heard in an attempt, or predicted word, (g) matching the visual information seen in the text, (h) self-correcting after an error is made, (i) using meaning as an information source, (j) using structure as an information source, and finally, (k) using visual information as a cue source in searching strategies (Lee & Schmitt, 2014, p. 41). Related to strategic activity are searching and self-monitoring. Schwartz (1997) discussed these two processing strategies in detail,

> Searching strategies enable us to gather cues for an initial attempt to read a text, make multiple tries at difficult words, and self-correct some errors. Self-monitoring strategies enable us to evaluate our attempts and decide if further searching is needed. (Schwartz, 1997, p. 42)

Self-monitoring includes not only checking to see if reading attempts made sense, but it also includes self-correction. Self-correction means the reader has noticed their error and corrects it based on the clues the reading provides. For example, if a child reads “bunny” when the text says “rabbit,” the child may notice that visually the word they read does not look like the one on paper, so they self-correct the error. Similarly, if a child reads the word “bat” when the text says “boat,” they may notice that “bat” does not make sense in the story and another self-correction occurs.
Criticisms. There are some critics to the whole language and balanced literacy approach that Reading Recovery and Marie Clay support. Skills based reading is reading that focuses on individual reading skills beginning with letters and sounds, where the teacher and child work their way toward comprehension. Whole language literacy, like Reading Recovery, argues that reading occurs through the exposure of books, not through solely focusing on individual reading skills.

The five essential components of reading are: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. These components are supported by scientifically-based reading research. Whole language reading instruction includes these five components, but critics say that without teaching these components exclusively, students are not getting the same quality instruction as if they were receiving skills based instruction (Moats, 2007).

Conclusion

Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are the five components of reading instruction. They are important to my research because they will be areas of professional development that I will need to cover when teaching classroom teachers about reading instruction. It is also important to understand the different types of reading instruction, whole language or phonics-based, because it is important to understand that children learn differently.

Professional Development

Professional development is an important aspect to my research because I will be providing professional development that I have received and found beneficial to children with other teachers. Effective professional development is important to my study because
anyone can provide professional development, but to make it change instruction and student growth, it becomes a little more complicated.

**Reading recovery as professional development.** Many articles discuss the importance of collaboration between Reading Recovery teachers and classroom teachers. “We know that Reading Recovery is not an intervention that stands alone. Good classroom instruction and collaboration between first-grade teachers and Reading Recovery teachers is essential to our students’ success” (Kaye, 2013, p. 36). In this particular district, the Reading Recovery teachers met with classroom teachers once a month for 15-20 minutes. The Reading Recovery teachers were sure to cover the same topics so that no matter what school you receive the instruction, you would receive the same information. Some topics included running records, prompting, and writing.

**Elements of effective professional development.** In order for a teacher to provide effective professional development, they must understand what effective professional development means. High-quality professional development should exhibit characteristics that include: alignment with school goals and state and district standards; focus on core content and modeling of teaching strategies; inclusion of opportunities for active learning; provision of opportunities for collaboration among teachers; inclusion of embedded follow-up and continuous feedback (Archibald et al., 2011, p. 3). Another important idea that high-quality professional development has to include is teacher buy-in. “A fragmented system of standards, assessments, and teacher evaluation will frustrate teachers and hinder application of their professional learning” (Archibald et al., 2011, p. 7). It is important that teachers understand the reasoning for the professional development and how they can use it in their classrooms to improve student learning.
There, of course, are some issues with providing effective professional development. Cost and time are two of the biggest obstacles that schools and districts face when looking at quality professional development and they must be careful (Archibald et al., 2011).

Another group that looks at professional development is the National Staff Development Council. “The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) provides a framework and set of standards on which to build a system-wide staff development program that nurtures the capacity of professional learning” (as cited in Simpson & Montgomery, 2007, p. 37). Reading Recovery as professional development meets these standards that the NSDC introduced. Reading Recovery fits with these standards based on three things: context, processes, and content. The professional development involved with Reading Recovery includes a university, district teacher-leader, and teacher. The teachers also receive ongoing professional development and work directly with current practices and theories to problem solve and improve the instruction for the teacher. Reading Recovery meets the processes standard because of the data collected and entered and because of the careful observation involved throughout the whole Reading Recovery process. It also meets the standards in content because the students are chosen based on their performance without discrimination based on attendance or other differences. The yearlong training and collaboration with classroom teachers help the teacher grow professionally. Also, parents are included in the whole process and often get the opportunity to watch a lesson.
Leadership in reading recovery. In an article by Robertson and Simpson (2012), many benefits were looked at for Reading Recovery teachers to be classroom teachers as the other part of their job. Many benefits were listed, which includes leadership. The teachers said that because they were also part of grade level teams, they were more comfortable being leaders and sharing their knowledge with others. Other benefits of this shared classroom model were that the Reading Recovery teachers could then collaborate with their partners and they could share their expertise with someone whom they work closely. Also, the Reading Recovery teachers could provide good classroom instruction based on their training, and Reading Recovery teachers are able to work with and influence students other than the lowest. Teachers from this article using this shared teaching model also need strong leaders in the building to help get rid of any road blocks. Schedules and time are a piece that may cause some issues. Some other problems could be responsibilities of the teachers, space, and choosing teaching partners. Leaders need to be strong and supportive for all of these potential challenges.

Shifting Beliefs and Growth Mindset

Oftentimes, when teachers receive professional development, they become overwhelmed and have a hard time putting the new information they have learned into action. With that, frustration can set in because they want to do what is best. If teachers believe their students can learn, they will. If teachers believe their students can grow, they will. In her book, Dweck (2007) talked about two types of mindsets, fixed and growth. In a fixed mindset, intelligence is static. In a growth mindset, intelligence can be developed. With a fixed mindset, people avoid challenges. With a growth mindset, people embrace challenges.
Teachers with a growth mindset set high standards for their students with; “Great teachers set high standards for all their students, not just the ones who are already achieving” (Dweck, 2007, p. 196). Through setting high standards, they also teach their students how to reach these goals. They teach students to love learning. Dweck gave many examples of how teachers have made this work.

**Communication**

Jasmine (2005), stated,

> The Reading Recovery teacher and the classroom teacher must communicate effectively in order to teach the student for whom they share responsibility. If two teachers perceive a student differently and fail to communicate, strong student progress will be extremely difficult to accomplish. (p. 47)

Communication is vital in teaching especially between the Reading Recovery teacher and classroom teacher. The school district in this article worked to improve communication between the two. To begin, the classroom teachers were interviewed on what they thought of their current communication with the Reading Recovery teacher. From the interviews, they learned that classroom teachers wanted to learn more about their students, be instructional leaders in their classrooms, and wanted to learn more about Reading Recovery so they could use that information in their classroom. These teachers then filled out a literacy rating scale and it was discovered that classroom teachers and Reading Recovery teachers rated their students differently. Classroom teachers tended to rate their students lower than the Reading Recovery teacher. To help fix this miscommunication, the Reading Recovery used communication as a focus of their own
professional development and discussed and thought of ways to communicate with the classroom teachers. Some written ways of communication that they discovered were: sharing observation survey results; sharing the observation summary sheet; highlighting what the child can do; comparing running records; tracking book level in Reading Recovery and in the classroom; sharing writing vocabulary; and, sharing predictions of progress. After the Reading Recovery teachers improved their communication with the classroom teachers, none of the classroom teachers rated their children significantly lower than the Reading Recovery teacher.

**Reading Recovery Teacher**

Reading Recovery teachers often go back to the classroom or teach as the other half of their job. Pressley and Roehrig (2005) discovered that the classrooms led by Reading Recovery trained teachers had many of the same qualities as exemplary classrooms. Exemplary classrooms include “a great deal of instruction about how to read and write” (Pressley & Roehrig, 2005, p. 12). Exemplary teachers “monitor carefully and make instructional decisions on the basis of their observations of student reading and writing processes” (Pressley & Roehrig, 2005, p. 12). Exemplary teachers must also scaffold. Teachers must first model what is expected and then let the child take over the task when they are ready to do so. Exemplary teachers must also teach their students to self-regulate. Students must be able to use strategies on their own and learn how to solve unknown words a variety of ways. Exemplary classrooms are also very positive places where students are motivated to learn and understand the importance of learning. The classrooms of Reading Recovery trained teachers that the researchers observed showed all of these exemplary classroom areas. They did also mention that only 30% of teachers
they observed fell into the exemplary category, so looking at Reading Recovery as professional development for classroom teachers could be impactful to help classroom teachers gain the skills required to become exemplary.

**Learning Communities**

A Professional Learning Community (PLC) is “an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve” (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006, p. 11). Professional Learning Communities can be used to improve student learning. Also, there are four essential questions that professional learning communities should discuss: “What is it we want our students to learn? How will we know if each student has learned it? How will we respond when some students do not learn it? How can we extend and enrich the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency?” (Dufour et al., 2006, p. 119).

One key to making professional learning communities work is collaboration. When teachers are asked to collaborate, they are being asked to,

Engage in a systematic process in which they work together, interdependently, to analyze and impact their professional practice in order to improve individual and collective results. A systematic process is a combination of related parts, organized into a whole in a methodical, deliberate, and orderly way, toward a particular aim. (Dufour et al., 2006, p. 120)

If teachers understand what collaboration is and what it should look like, it will help them focus on the right things in their professional learning communities to improve student learning.
Conclusion

Chapter Two summarized research that can answer the question, *What impact does collaborative professional development between classroom teachers and reading recovery teachers have on first grade students’ reading acquisition and teacher understanding of reading instruction?* In order to answer this question, the areas of reading recovery, reading instruction, and professional development were researched and explained.

Summary

Reading Recovery is a comprehensive literacy program that covers reading, writing, and word work each day in the thirty minute lesson. The Reading Recovery section talked about the framework of Reading Recovery, student selection, and the in-depth training Reading Recovery teachers receive. It concluded by talking about Reading Recovery research, and the theoretical perspectives of Marie Clay, the creator of Reading Recovery. This theme is related to the research question because the Reading Recovery teacher will be providing professional development to classroom teachers that are not trained in Reading Recovery.

The reading instruction section began explaining the five components of reading instruction, which were introduced by the National Reading Panel in 2000. These five components are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (as cited in Learning Point, 2004). This section presented the best practices in reading instruction and discussed the fact that teachers need to keep up with their own learning on best practices. There are three main approaches to reading instruction. Skills Emphasis, Meaning Emphasis, and Balanced Reading Instruction are the three approaches (Pressley
Reading acquisition is the process of learning to read. In learning to read, students need to gain skills to become independent problem-solvers so that when they get to a point of difficulty, they are able to solve things on their own. Strategic activity and its importance in reading instruction were discussed. This section ended with some Reading Recovery statistics and some criticisms related to whole-language instruction. This theme is related to the research question because improved reading instruction in the classroom is the goal of the research. Student growth and improved learning is also a goal.

The professional development section talked about how Reading Recovery training can be an effective form of professional development. It also discussed elements of effective professional development and growth mindset and shifting beliefs that all students can learn. This section continued by discussing the importance of communication between the Reading Recovery teacher and classroom teacher and also how effective professional learning communities can make a difference in classrooms and help with student growth. This is related to the research question because the Reading Recovery teacher providing professional development to the classroom teachers needs to be aware of effective professional development and needs to have effective leadership skills to provide this professional development to her peers.

Chapter Three explains how I went about researching and finding the answer to

What impact does collaborative professional development between classroom teachers and reading recovery teachers have on first grade students’ reading acquisition and teacher understanding of reading instruction? I explain who received the professional development, what research methods I used and what data was involved, when the
research took place, where the research took place, why this research was done, and how it was completed.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this section is to explain the methodology for my action research study. I provided professional development to classroom teachers to improve their reading instruction. This was a mixed-methods study designed to explore the effects that professional development provided by a Reading Recovery teacher to classroom teachers has on student learning. This chapter includes an overview of how and why a mixed-methods approach is effective for this research. The question guiding this research study is: What impact does collaborative professional development between classroom teachers and reading recovery teachers have on first grade students’ reading acquisition and teacher understanding of reading instruction?

Research Design

My research paradigm was mixed-methods (Creswell, 2014). I chose this paradigm because I believe that the balance of qualitative and quantitative research added value to my research. My qualitative data were teacher questionnaires and teacher observations. The questionnaires identified if teachers understood the professional development I provided and saw if they were changing their instruction based on the professional development I provided. The observations were for me to stay aware of what was going on in the classrooms and to see if the Reading Recovery strategies were being implemented. My quantitative data was a reading assessment given to the students. This was needed to measure whether or not the professional development I provided increased student growth. My research was convergent parallel, “In this approach, a researcher
collects both quantitative and qualitative data, analyzes them separately, and then compares the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm each other” (Creswell, 2014, p. 219). My qualitative data (questionnaires and observations) were collected separately from my quantitative data (student reading scores) and were compared to see if instruction improved. The data was also used to see if student scores improve as well.

**Observations**

One week after providing professional development, I went into the classrooms to observe the classroom teachers and students. “A qualitative observation is when the researcher takes field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site” (Creswell, 2014, p. 190). This was important to my research because it gave me the opportunity to watch the literacy instruction in action. I was able to record observations to help improve my future professional development. And, it helped me observe the instances that teachers were questioning so I could answer them. I observed each teacher one time after each professional development session, making sure the observation was before the next professional development session. The observation form can be found in Appendix A.

**Questionnaires**

I gave all of the teachers receiving professional development questionnaires. The purpose of these questionnaires was to get feedback on how the professional development was affecting instruction. There was a questionnaire after the first three professional development sessions and at the end of the action research. “Questionnaires allow the teacher researcher to collect large amounts of data in a relatively short amount of time” (Mills, 2014, p. 93.) The questionnaires were a good way to monitor how the professional
development was going and gave the teachers the opportunity to ask questions they may not be comfortable asking. The teachers self-administered the questionnaires using paper-and-pencil. The questionnaires can be found in Appendix B and Appendix C.

**Literacy Assessment**

The literacy assessment was used to assess whether or not the students were learning the reading strategies taught by the classroom teacher. Most of the assessment was taken from the Reading Recovery Observation Survey (Clay, 2005a) to see whether or not the professional development the classroom teachers were learning was affecting student growth. The literacy assessment can be found in Appendix D.

**Data Collection**

**Participants.** Participants in my study included teachers and students. Four first grade teachers voluntarily received professional development from me during the fall of 2015. The Spanish teacher does not teach literacy, so she did not participate. The students participated as well because I was in their classrooms observing instruction and some students were assessed at the beginning of the year and then again in January to check their growth.

**Setting.** This study took place in the elementary school where I was employed. The school was in a large suburban district in the Upper Midwest, consisting of eight elementary schools, two junior high schools, and one high school. The school where the research took place is a grades K-3 school. There were 550 students enrolled in the fall of 2015. The school also offers a partial Spanish immersion program. The students spend half of the day speaking Spanish and half of the day speaking English. Reading is taught in English. Approximately one-third of the students participate in the partial Spanish
immersion program. There were two Reading Recovery teachers in the building for the 140 first grade students. The reason for the professional development need can be linked to MCA reading scores. In 2013, 38.2% of third graders passed the MCA reading assessment. In 2014, 49.3% of the third graders passed the MCA reading assessment (Minnesota Department of Education). To continue this upward climb in scores, the students need to be reading earlier.

**Procedure**

**Professional development.** The professional development provided to the classroom teachers was based on Reading Recovery research. Four different professional development sessions taught the teachers various reading strategies to teach the students and provided them with the tools to teach this information beginning the next day. The four professional development sessions occurred in 45 minute sessions during their professional learning community time before school in late August, October, November, and December. See Appendix E for professional development session notes.

The first professional development session was an introduction to the five things students should do when they get to a word they do not know. According to Kinnucan-Welsch, Magill, and Dean (1999), those five things are: 1. Think about the story. 2. Check the picture. 3. Go back and reread, and get your mouth ready. 4. Look for "chunks." 5. Ask yourself, "Does that make sense? Would we say it that way?" The Reading Recovery teacher explicitly taught these five strategies and offered to model in the classroom if necessary.

The second professional development session focused on helping the classroom teachers become observers of their students. According to Pressley and Roehrig (2005),
“a hallmark of exemplary teachers is that they monitor students carefully and make instructional decisions on the basis of their observations of student reading and writing processes” (p. 12). Teachers need to then learn how to use these observations for instructing their students. This session began with instruction on completing a running record on a student. During this professional development session, videos were shown of the Reading Recovery teacher observing her students and the decisions made from these observations.

The third professional development session focused on writing. The Reading Recovery teacher provided strategies students can use to become independent writers. Some areas that the professional development focused on were having the child use the work it out page, having the child reread to make sure their writing makes sense, and having the child monitor for capitals in the appropriate places and punctuation.

The fourth professional development session was to help the teachers lead their students to become self-regulated. Since this was the last professional development session, the teachers had several months to teach the students the five things students should do when they get to a word they do not know. Scaffolding strategies were taught to the teachers so they could learn how to help their students become self-regulated.

Observations. Observations took place approximately a week after the professional development occurred. This gave the teachers time to implement things they learned from the professional development. It was close enough to the professional development that if teachers had questions, the Reading Recovery teacher could clarify the information before it got too far away from the professional development session. Observations could have been added if the Reading Recovery teacher felt it would be
beneficial or if the teacher requested another classroom observation. Extra observations did not occur. The Reading Recovery teacher also observed whether or not the students were using the taught strategies during independent, partner, small group, or large group time to improve their literacy skills.

**Questionnaires.** One questionnaire was completed after each of the professional development session. The purpose of the questionnaires was to make sure the teachers felt like they were able to give feedback and to collect data on the opinions of the teachers.

**Literacy assessment.** The literacy assessment was given the week before the first professional development and two weeks after the last professional development session. This ensured that the first assessment was before any changes have been made in the classroom. It also ensured that the classroom teachers had enough time to implement all four professional development sessions into their classrooms.

**Data Analysis**

The data from this research was placed into spreadsheets and typed into charts and tables to be analyzed. Numerical data was turned into graphs so results could easily be seen. The questionnaires’ short answers and observations were turned into tables and written summaries after they were studied closely for similarities and differences. Questionnaires were looked at and numerical results were put into a spreadsheet to compare the results. Questionnaire short answers were turned into paragraphs summarizing teacher responses. Observations were recorded and reflected on regularly to be sure that they were helpful to the research and impacted the professional development that occurred. Observations were studied, summarized, and turned into paragraphs to
explain various events observed from teacher instruction to student reading and writing leaps toward independence. The literacy assessment was given by either the classroom teacher or Reading Recovery teacher, both of whom have been trained on how to administer all three sections of the assessment. The literacy assessment results were placed into a spreadsheet and compared to see if the professional development had an impact on the students. The literacy assessment was given to all five classrooms of students that had received instruction from teachers that had received the professional development. There were four teachers that received instruction, but one teacher teaches a literacy class in the morning and in the afternoon, so it was five groups of students. The Ohio Word Test was a score out of 20. The Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words (HRSIW) section was out of 37. The Running Record of a story had several scores, most importantly the level the child read with at least 94% accuracy. Other data was collected with the Running Record and were shared with the teachers so that they were able to use this information to improve instruction. Some of the data included words read per minute, comprehension at each level assessed, and fluency of the reading.

**Verification of Data**

The literacy assessment was reliable and valid because the Ohio Word Test and Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words section were taken from the Observation Survey. I feel these are good assessments to use due to this rating. Also, the information taken from the assessment can help classroom teachers change their instruction to help the students that are found to be struggling based on these assessments.
**Ethics**

I reviewed the Human Subjects Committee Procedures Handbook several times to ensure that I was doing everything possible to help my subjects remain anonymous and that I stayed ethical in my research. I also stayed unbiased throughout this research. My research took place at the school where I work and I have some colleagues that I have better relationships with so I had to “Make certain that all participants receive the same treatment” (Mills, 2014, p. 93). I had to make sure that everyone got the same professional development and heard the same answers to questions. I have a colleague that I talk with more about instruction and problem solving, so I had to be sure not to give her more information than the others or that may skew my professional development data.

**Summary**

This was a mixed-methods study designed to explore the effects that professional development provided by a Reading Recovery teacher to classroom teachers has on students. This chapter included an overview of how and why qualitative and quantitative data were effective for this research. After providing professional development, I regularly went into the classrooms and observed the classroom teachers and students. The purpose of the questionnaires was to get feedback on how the professional development was affecting instruction. There was a questionnaire for the teachers after each of the professional development sessions. The literacy assessment was used to assess whether or not the students were learning the reading strategies taught by the classroom teacher. Most of the assessments were taken from the Reading Recovery Observation Survey to
see whether or not the professional development the classroom teachers were learning was affecting the student growth. The next chapter presents the results of this study.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter reviews the results of the professional development provided to four first grade teachers based on observations, survey results, and student scores. Following procedures described in Chapter 3, I measured the impact of this four month professional development project in three ways: Surveys were given after each professional development session to see how teachers used the professional development provided to improve their teaching. I observed the teachers during literacy instruction approximately a week after each professional development session as well. Finally, student data was taken before professional development started and again after all four professional development sessions were completed.

The research question that was answered through this process is: *What impact does collaborative professional development between classroom teachers and reading recovery teachers have on first grade students’ reading acquisition and teacher understanding of reading instruction?*

Analysis of Qualitative Data

**Questionnaires.** Through the questionnaires, I hoped to assess the helpfulness of the professional development: whether the teachers received teaching strategies, thought more about reading acquisition when making lesson plans, listened to their students read in a different way, or prompted differently when providing reading instruction. The questionnaires were given to the teachers after each of the four professional development sessions for a total of four questionnaires. Figure 1 shows the average response score for
the question, “On a scale of 1-5, how helpful was the professional development?” See Figure 1.

![Bar Chart](image)

**Figure 1**: Mean response score for the question “On a scale of 1-5, how helpful was the professional development?”

In all four questionnaires, teachers were asked, “Did the professional development you received give you teaching strategies to take back into the classroom that same day? Explain.”

See Table 1 for these results.
Table 1:

*Did the professional development you received give you teaching strategies to take back into the classroom the same day?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>After Professional Development Session 1</th>
<th>After Professional Development Session 2</th>
<th>After Professional Development Session 3</th>
<th>After Professional Development Session 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Answer left blank</td>
<td>Some I could, some had to wait.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers also gave more input on this question after the fourth professional development session. In response to the same question, Teacher 1 said, “Some of the strategies I implemented that same day, others had to wait because I was doing something else in my room. It helped give me other ways of reaching kids or tricks to help them.” Teacher 2 said, “Yes, we received several prompts/cues to use for each reading hurdle the students face.” Teacher 3 said, “Yes. I especially like the paper I was given with the hand and five fingers. On each finger was a strategy students can use to figure out unknown words. It is a nice visual and reminder of what steps should be taken in decoding words.” Teacher 4 said, “Yes, I liked the 5 finger hand on what to do when the kids are stuck. I did that right away and I liked the visual for them to use. I think that really helped some of my kids.”

When asked, “What impact did the last PD session have on what is happening in your classroom?,” after the writing session, two of the four teachers responded that they are now using Elkonin boxes in their classrooms to help students with hearing and
recording sounds in words. Three of the four teachers found prompts the most helpful because now they have specific things to say to their students when they are stuck in reading and writing.

After all the sessions were complete, teachers were asked, “What impact did the professional development sessions have on what is happening in your classroom?” Teacher 1 responded with, “I think the 5 things that kids can do when they get stuck is a way for kids to help themselves and become more independent. I also really liked the self-regulating. The running records are good for those few kids but our classes are too big to use them with all the kids especially when we are trying to monitor their reading levels and their 181 words they need to know for 1st grade.” Teacher 2 said, “I hadn't thought a lot about teaching students to self-regulate and how important that step is. I have this as a goal now.” Teacher 3 said, “The sessions were helpful. Many of the things we talked about I already am doing in the classroom, so they were more reinforcement I guess. I have tried doing more running records in my classroom. Also instead of just marking words they missed I will gather more information about what exactly their mistakes were.” Teacher 4 said, “I liked the self-regulating information because I think it's good for kids to be thinking about what they are doing and the impact it has on their learning. I don't do running records on all of the kids but I do like it for the kids who are really struggling. It gives me an idea of what they are struggling with in reading. I thought the writing was good too but I struggle with teaching it because my kids are either high or really low. I have 2 kids in the middle and the rest are at opposite ends.”

On the last survey, I asked, “What other professional development would be helpful to you?” This question was also on the other three surveys, so I took the results
from the first three surveys and put them as ideas for the final survey. The teachers responded with: work on writing, more discussion around ideas to hold kids more accountable during centers, ongoing current research, differentiated word work activities for the stages of reading, and how to help kids self-correct and read for meaning.

Three teachers said that all four professional development sessions were all equally helpful. One teacher found the first session the most helpful because of the visual of the hand to help kids when they are stuck on words. She said this was the most helpful because, “I think kids need to be taught what to do if they get stuck.”

From the final questionnaire, all four teachers stated that they felt the four professional development sessions improved their understanding of reading instruction. When asked, “If yes, do you have specific items you used or are using now in your classroom that has improved your reading instruction,” Teacher 1 said, “I remind kids of the different strategies they can use.” Teacher 2 said, “I have 7 decoding strategies now hung in my room to help students when they are stuck on words - I plan on reteaching these 7 strategies. I have also implemented the use of the different prompts that encourage the students to become self-regulators of their reading.” Teacher 3 said, “Running records.” Teacher 4 said, “I think it gave me ideas on ways to help kids. Kids learn in different ways and it's nice to have a bunch of strategies to help kids. I like that they are now monitoring themselves and they are thinking about their actions. I just liked the discussions because they help make us all better.” When asked if they have noticed an improvement on their students’ reading acquisition because of their changed reading instruction, two of the four teachers said yes. Teacher 2 said she noticed that, “Students are using the strategies as they read and are aware themselves of what they should do to
self-monitor.” Teacher 4 said she noticed, “I think the kids who struggle are using the 5 strategies more. I think it's good for them to have ideas to try before they ask for help.”

**Observations.** I observed the classroom teachers for 45 minutes during their literacy blocks approximately a week after the professional development session occurred. This led to four observations for each of the four teachers. During all four observations of all four teachers, I observed large group and small group work. After the first professional development session, which focused on five things readers should do when they get to an unknown word, I observed students in two of the four classrooms reading to self and observed students making attempts at unknown words.

After the second session, which focused on running records and observing students, I observed three of the four teachers listening to students read. During the observation of one teacher, she took a group to the back table. I observed her using prompts to cue kids when they were stuck on words. She also had leveled her students because these were the groups into which they had been divided. None of the teachers took running records while I was in their rooms.

After the third session, which focused on writing, one student I observed in one of the classrooms was working on an independent project and I heard him saying words slowly. In another classroom, the class did a whole group brainstorm for writing about a picture they painted. They were working on improving their vocabulary in their writing. Later, during small group time, some students were at their writing center and they were also saying words slowly as they were writing. In this classroom, the students had sentence starters, which were a good way to make sure the students had a topic to write about. I also observed a student using their finger for spacing. In a different classroom,
two boys were not making good choices so she switched the partners so that they would get to work. The teacher read with the student that was disrupting and used many cues to get him back on track. “Use your finger to help you.” “Say the sounds.” “What do you hear?”

After the fourth session, which focused on students working toward independence in reading, I observed the teacher calling over a student to listen to him read a passage for one minute. He sounded very smooth. She charted the results and called another student over to read. He was struggling to sound out words and needed some help. She called over a third student. He read very smoothly, as well. She charted all three of these scores.

In another classroom, they were doing whole group writing. The teacher used some prompts to promote conversation and to extend the writing so students could go back to writing at their own desks. In another classroom, as a whole group activity, the class clapped words to figure out how many syllables there were in the words.

As a result of these observations, a theme that I noticed was that each classroom showed a change in reading instruction during one or more of the 45-minute observations. These changes were observing students making attempts at unknown words, students saying words slowly when writing independently, and hearing the teachers using prompts that I shared in reading and writing. The observations showed that teachers were taking the items most important to them from the professional development that I provided and using it in their classrooms.

In doing these observations, I had hoped to see more prompting from my professional development sessions because the teachers really seemed interested in the prompting more than any other aspects of the professional development. If I were to do
the observations again, I would try to see more small group reading instruction because that is where I observed the prompting taking place when I did see it occurring. I would also have had a different sheet for observing to be able to check off the things I talked about at the professional development session with the things that I was observing to make the process a little easier to follow. I could have shared this with the teachers as well so that they would be more conscious of what they were saying when listening to students read.

Analysis of Quantitative Data

Ohio word test. This assessment consists of a list of 20 sight words that the students needed to read. “Children are asked to read a list of frequently occurring words in text. Three alternative lists are available for testing and retesting” (Schmitt et al., 2005, p. 62). The purpose of the task is “To determine if the child is building a personal resource of reading vocabulary” (Schmitt et al., 2005, p. 62). The chart below shows the 30 students’ scores from the fall before the professional development started (blue bars) and it also shows the scores from January, which was two weeks after the professional development was completed (green bars). Student 27 does not have a winter score because the student moved away after the initial data was collected, but before this January data was collected. Figure 2 shows this information.
Figure 2: Number of sight words read in the fall compared to winter, for 30 students, with 20 possible words.

Average student growth from fall to winter was 4.79 words. The maximum number of word growth was 13, where one student went from reading 5 words in the fall to 18 words in the winter. The minimum word growth was -1 word. The one student that went down, read all 20 words in the fall, and read 19 words in the winter. Also, there were seven students that went up zero words because they already had the highest score possible in the fall. All of the students that did not read 20 words in the fall went up at least one word from fall to winter. Eight students read all 20 words in the fall. Twelve students read all 20 words in the winter. Translating raw scores into stanines provides a way to rank the students’ scores. Stanines divide the total student distribution of abilities into nine categories, with stanine 1 the lowest, stanine 5 the midpoint and stanine 9 the highest. When looking at this data, seven percent of the students shifted one stanine. This means they not only increased their raw score, but also comparatively made some increase in their overall word growth as that of an average first grader would from fall to
winter. Similarly twenty-one percent of the students grew two or more stanines, which means not only did they increase their raw score from fall to winter, they also significantly increased their overall word growth, moving them from one normative description of student performance to another (e.g. below average to average or average to above average.) Thirty-eight percent of the students made average growth based on the stanines. Thirty-four percent of the students made below average growth, meaning their stanine decreased.

When looking at the stanines based on their national achievement group from fall to winter, three more students were in the low category in the winter. One less student was in the low average group from fall to winter. One more student was in the average group from fall to winter. Three less students were in the high average group from fall to winter. There was no shift in the high achievement group from fall to winter. When looking at the data this way, there was not much of a shift in student achievement from fall to winter with sight words. See Table 2 for these results.
Table 2:

*National Achievement Group shift from fall to winter for the Ohio Word Test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Achievement Group (stanine number)</th>
<th>Fall (number of students)</th>
<th>Fall %</th>
<th>Winter (number of students)</th>
<th>Winter %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low (1-3)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Average (4)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (5)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Average (6)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (7-9)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hearing and recording sounds in words.** The purpose of this assessment is “to assess phonemic awareness by determining how well the child represents the sounds of words in letters and clusters of letters in graphic form” (Schmitt et al., 2005, p. 62). When administering the assessment, “the examiner reads a short sentence or two and asks the child to write the words. Children’s scores represent every sound recorded accurately in this assessment of phonemic and orthographic awareness” (Schmitt et al., 2005, p. 62). The sentence contains 37 letter sounds; therefore, it is worth 37 points. This is not a timed test. The chart below shows the 30 students’ scores from the fall before the professional development started (blue bars) and it also shows the scores from January, which was two weeks after the professional development was completed (green bars). You can again see that student 27 does not have a winter score. This is because the student moved away
after the initial data was collected, but before this January data was collected. Figure 3 shows this information.

Figure 3: Number of sounds recorded out of 37 possible sounds from a dictated sentence in fall and again in winter for 30 students.

Average student growth from fall to winter was 5.7 sounds. The maximum number of word growth was 23, where one student went from 12 sounds in the fall to 35 sounds in the winter. Another student also increased 23 sounds, where they went from 6 sounds in the fall to 29 sounds in the spring. The minimum sound growth was -2. The one student that went down wrote 34 sounds in the fall and then 32 sounds in the winter. There was another student that went down one sound. That student had all 37 sounds in the fall and then missed one to have 36 sounds in the winter. Five other students had all 37 sounds in the fall and again had all 37 sounds in the winter. Six students had all 37 sounds in the fall and 15 students had all 37 sounds in the winter. Translating raw scores into stanines provides a way to rank the students’ scores. Stanines divide the total student distribution
of abilities into nine categories, with stanine 1 the lowest, stanine 5 the midpoint and stanine 9 the highest. When looking at this data, seventeen percent of the students shifted one stanine. This means they not only increased their raw score, but also comparatively made some increase in their overall word growth as that of an average first grader would from fall to winter. Similarly, thirty-eight percent of the students grew two or more stanines, which means not only did they increase their raw score from fall to winter, they also significantly increased their overall word growth, moving them from one normative description of student performance to another (e.g. below average to average or average to above average.) Twenty-four percent of the students made average growth based on the stanines. Twenty-one percent of the students made below average growth, meaning their stanine decreased.

When looking at the stanines based on their national achievement group from fall to winter, there was the same number of students in the low category in the winter. There were two less students in the low average group from fall to winter. There was the same number of students in the average group from fall to winter. One less student was in the high average group from fall to winter. There were three more students in the high achievement group from fall to winter. When looking at the data this way, there was a noticeable shift in student achievement from fall to winter. In the fall, eight students were below average and six were below average in the winter. In the fall, 18 students were above average and 20 were above average in the winter. See Table 3 for these results.
Table 3:  

*National Achievement Group shift from fall to winter for Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Achievement Group (stanine number)</th>
<th>Fall (number of students)</th>
<th>Fall %</th>
<th>Winter (number of students)</th>
<th>Winter %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low (1-3)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Average (4)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (5)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Average (6)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (7-9)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reading level.** The students were assessed individually for the purpose of attaining a guided reading level. The level can range from A to Z (A being the lowest level, Z being the highest level.) This is not a timed test. The chart below shows the 30 students’ scores from the fall before the professional development started (blue bars) and it also shows the scores from January, which was two weeks after the professional development was completed (green bars). You can again see that student 27 does not have a winter score. This is because the student moved away after the initial data was collected, but before this January data was collected. Figure 4 shows this information.
Average student growth from fall to winter was four reading levels. This is approximately one reading level each month. The maximum number of level growth was ten levels, where one student went from level D in the fall to level N in the winter. Level N is above average for first grade for this time of the school year. The minimum reading level growth was 0 levels. The one student that didn’t go up any levels started the year at a level C and was still at a level C in the winter. This is below average for a first grader for this time of the year. No students went down in guided reading levels. Translating raw scores into stanines provides a way to rank the students’ scores. Stanines divide the total student distribution of abilities into nine categories, with stanine 1 the lowest, stanine 5 the midpoint and stanine 9 the highest. When looking at this data, fourteen percent of the students shifted one stanine. This means they not only increased their raw score, but also comparatively made some increase in their overall word growth as that of an average first grader would from fall to winter. Similarly, three percent of the students grew two or more stanines, which means not only did they increase their raw score from fall to winter, they also significantly increased their overall word growth, moving them from one normative description of student performance to another (e.g. below average to average.

Figure 4: Guided reading levels from fall to winter for 30 students.
or average to above average.) Forty-one and a half percent of the students made average growth based on the stanines. Forty-one and a half of the students made below average growth, meaning their stanine decreased.

When looking at the stanines based on their national achievement group from fall to winter, there was one more student in the low category in the winter and also one more student in the low average category. There were three less students in the average group from fall to winter. There was one less student in the high average group from fall to winter. There were two more students in the high achievement group from fall to winter. When looking at the data this way, there was a shift in student achievement from fall to winter. See Table 4 for these results.

Table 4:

National Achievement Group shift from fall to winter for Reading Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Achievement Group (stanine number)</th>
<th>Fall (number of students)</th>
<th>Fall %</th>
<th>Winter (number of students)</th>
<th>Winter %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low (1-3)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Average (4)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (5)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Average (6)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (7-9)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

In my research, I used my training in Reading Recovery to help create professional development sessions that could be useful to first grade classroom teachers so that they could study the theoretical principles of Marie Clay when thinking about their own literacy instruction. The four sessions were focused on how to help students when they are stuck on a word they do not know, running records, writing, and self-regulation. These professional development trainings were all guided by Marie Clay’s book *Literacy lessons: Designed for individuals, Part Two* (Clay, 2005c).

My literature review in Chapter Two also discussed reading instruction. I referenced the research I did for my literature review to be sure I was teaching best practices in reading instruction during my professional development sessions. Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are the five components of reading instruction. I made sure I did not just teach about phonemic awareness or only about comprehension because all five areas are important. During my writing professional development session, I discussed all five components. For example, clapping syllables is part of phonemic awareness, sound boxes are phonics, rereading the sentence the child writes is fluency, helping think of topics to write about can include vocabulary, and rereading the story to see if it makes sense is comprehension. It is also important to understand the different types of reading instruction, whole language or phonics-based, because it is important to understand that children learn differently.

The third area of my literature review was around professional development. Understanding effective professional development was essential to my research because if the professional development was ineffective, the research would have been useless. As
I created my professional development sessions, I thought about articles I read for my literature review. Teacher buy-in is another important characteristic. It is important that teachers understand the reasoning for the professional development and how they can use it in their classrooms to improve student learning. I felt the teachers really had buy-in with the professional development I was providing and I made sure that, before they left, they understood how to use what I taught them in their classrooms to improve student learning. I also worked especially hard to be sure that it was collaborative and that I allowed for feedback and communication before, during, and after the professional development sessions. The professional development section of my literature review also talked about how Reading Recovery training can be an effective form of professional development. It also discussed elements of effective professional development and growth mindset and shifting beliefs that all students can learn. This section continued with a discussion of the importance of communication between the Reading Recovery teacher and classroom teacher and also how effective professional learning communities can make a difference in classrooms and help with student growth. I have been working on my communication with the classroom teachers and I joined their professional learning communities for these professional development sessions to make a difference in classrooms.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate how professional development provided to first grade teachers affected first grade students’ reading acquisition and teacher understanding of reading instruction. In studying the results of the classroom observations, questionnaires, and student data, it was found that both the first grade students’ reading acquisition and teacher understanding of reading instruction were positively impacted by the collaborative professional development between the classroom teachers and the Reading Recovery teacher. These positive results will be described in this chapter. The question researched was, *What impact does collaborative professional development between classroom teachers and reading recovery teachers have on first grade students’ reading acquisition and teacher understanding of reading instruction?*

Professional Development Results

Analysis of the qualitative data revealed that participants reported positively about their change in instructional habits due to professional development received. All four teachers took something from each professional development session and used it in their classroom at some point this school year. When asked, “On a scale of 1-5, how helpful was the professional development?” the average was 4 or more after each of the professional development sessions. They each also reported that they felt like their instruction improved due to receiving the professional development. It was also revealed through the observations of the four teachers receiving professional development that helping students become more independent and self-regulated during literacy instruction had become a goal of the teachers as the course of the year went on. When asked if they
had noticed an improvement on their students’ reading acquisition because of their changed reading instruction, two of the four teachers said yes.

**Improved Reading Results**

Analysis of the quantitative data revealed that the students that were assessed in early fall and again in January, after their teachers had received the Reading Recovery professional development, had improved scores in the three areas tested. Twenty-one out of twenty-nine students increased their scores on a standardized measure. Seven students read all twenty sight words in the fall and again in the winter. Twenty-two of the twenty-nine students improved their score in hearing and recording sounds in words. Five students recorded all of the sounds in the sentence in the fall and again in the winter. Twenty-eight of the twenty-nine students increased their instructional text level in reading. When looking at a shift in stanines from fall to winter in the Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words assessments, in the fall, eighteen students were above average and twenty were above average in the winter. When looking at the this data with reading levels, there were two more students in the high average category in the winter than the fall, showing that there were shifts in student reading level more significant than is typical. When comparing results, there is a correlation to teachers feeling better prepared to teach through collaboration and professional development and student growth in the classroom.

**Highlights**

Through this action research project, classroom teacher literacy instruction and student reading acquisition was positively impacted by the professional development provided by the researcher. Four classroom teachers received four professional
development trainings that were 45 minutes. Thirty students from five classrooms were assessed in September before the professional development occurred and again in January, after the professional development occurred to see if their scores improved significantly. Positive conversations came from the professional development sessions and teachers made minor changes to their instruction and were empowered to think differently about their literacy instruction.

**Connections to Literature Review**

Reading Recovery, reading instruction, and professional development were all researched before the professional development began. All had an impact on the research in their own ways. Marie Clay’s book, *Literacy Lessons: Designed for Individuals, Part Two* (2005c), had a large impact on the creation of the professional development sessions. Study of theory and instructional practices regarding phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension were all woven into the professional development at different times and in different ways. Whole language and phonics based instruction were also discussed in a session during a conversation about how students learn differently. Research on professional development was vital to be sure that the sessions were effective. Teachers’ input was vital to be sure they understood how to use what I taught them in their classrooms immediately to improve student learning. I also worked especially hard to be sure that it was collaborative and that I allowed for feedback and communication so that the teachers valued the professional development they were receiving. Growth-mindset was important to understand in my research as well because it is important to know that all teachers can learn, as well as all students.
When I reflect on my research, I am encouraged and hopeful that the professional development I provided to the teachers was beneficial and made a difference. From this action research, I also hope to join the first grade Professional Learning Communities at least two more times to help keep them thinking about these areas of professional interest and need. Just because I am done with the professional development sessions for my action research does not mean I want to stop providing professional development to a group of teachers that are interested. Having the opportunity to provide four planned professional development sessions really helped with my communication with these first grade teachers as well. It is not often that all of the first grade teachers are together where we can talk about only literacy instruction for a solid 45 minutes or more, so this was a great way to make sure we connected regularly this year.

Implications

Through this research, I now understand that collaborative work between classroom teachers and Reading Recovery teachers can have a positive impact on first grade students’ reading acquisition and teacher understanding of reading instruction. Through observations in the classroom, I saw evidence of first grade students becoming independent in various literacy activities and self-regulating when working with the teacher and on their own. When analyzing the teachers’ questionnaires, I found that each teacher took something from each professional development session and used it in their literacy instruction either immediately or later in the year, even though they each took different pieces to use. Finally, through the student data collected, I can see that there was improved literacy understanding in the 30 students that were assessed. The data showed
that most students improved their scores in the sight word, hearing and recording sounds in words, and text level assessments that were given.

**Limitations**

In my research, I found three limitations. First, it is hard to gauge whether the progress made was typical first grade growth or a result of the professional development. Secondly, the questionnaires could have been skewed for a variety of reasons, and thirdly, the observations could have been skewed as well.

First graders typically increase their reading skills from September to January, so it is hard to identify the growth as a result of the study versus typical first grade growth. Also, I have no student data to compare the student growth to for this research. If I was able to compare “typical” first grade growth, I would be able to see if the professional development truly increased the reading scores of the students. I hope to collect this data in the future and compare it to the data I collected this year to see if there is a difference.

The questionnaire answers could have been skewed because they are coworkers. Relationships with the teachers could have impacted the results because they may not have wanted to hurt my feelings. They could have thought the professional development was not as helpful as they reported. In the future, I would do a more anonymous electronic version of the questionnaire as opposed to the paper questionnaires, so that the teachers could be more open to share their thoughts without being identified.

I typically did not tell the teachers when I was coming in to observe in their classrooms, but if I did, they could have changed what they were teaching to show that they were using strategies from the professional development as opposed to something else they were planning to teach.
**Recommendation of Future Research Projects**

I would recommend that a future research project take ideas from my research project and try to figure out if the professional development could improve students’ reading scores. It is hard to know how this could be measured, when first grade readers typically have improved scores with a variety of reading instruction. It would also be interesting to see the impact this could have on other grade level teachers. Another research project could take the professional development idea and have it go for longer sessions further into the year so that there is more opportunity for communication and collaboration.

**Growth of Author**

I have grown as a teacher throughout this process because documenting the professional development has helped me to reconnect with classroom teachers and really ask for their opinions on what could work and what may not work in their classrooms from Reading Recovery training. Reading Recovery is a one-on-one intervention, so teachers will not see the same results in teaching their class using Reading Recovery techniques. However, I do feel that taking the main concepts I have taught them can improve their instruction and similarly, increase student learning. Teaching students how to become more independent and self-regulated can improve any classroom’s learning environment. If I go back to the classroom as a classroom teacher in the future, I will definitely take strategies from my professional development sessions to my classroom no matter what grade level I teach.

Creating this professional development helped me to dig back into the things I have learned in Reading Recovery trainings and to review key concepts to improve my
own instruction. It was a great opportunity to review prompts that I had not been using on a daily basis, review the theory behind writing and helping students to become more self-regulated, and reflect on my own teaching in regard to each of the topics I have taught.

**Author’s Future Research Agenda**

I have found this research process and project to be very rewarding as I share my passion for literacy instruction with others. I would like to continue to provide professional development to classroom teachers, to continue learning myself, and to continue to help other teachers improve their instruction.

**Plan for Communicating/Using Results**

I plan on sharing my results at a staff meeting near the end of the school year so that everyone is aware of the research I have done and the impact it has had on teachers and students. Many teachers in the school know I have been doing research but most are unaware of my research area of focus. I have had one Professional Learning Community consisting of multiple primary grade teachers request the professional development on Running Records. They were very interested in specific prompts to help students, and learn how to determine if a child is using visual cues, meaning cues, or structural cues. I hope that by sharing this research with the teachers, there will be more interest in receiving professional development on various literacy topics.

**Conclusions**

The research question that this project was based was: *What impact does collaborative professional development between classroom teachers and reading recovery teachers have on first grade students’ reading acquisition and teacher understanding of reading instruction?* Through the research and collection of data
through observations, questionnaires, and student data, I found that collaborative professional development between classroom teachers and reading recovery teachers is a good thing and first grade students’ reading acquisition can be affected through the collaboration. Through the observation, it was found that classroom teachers made minor adjustments in their instruction to promote student independence and self-regulation during literacy instruction. An analysis of the questionnaires filled out by the teachers indicates that the professional development had a positive impact on their reading instruction because each teacher took at least one idea from each professional development session to use in their classroom either immediately or later in the year. An analysis of student data also indicates that the students had increased literacy scores, but it cannot be determined from this research project if it was because of the collaboration between the Reading Recovery teacher and the classroom teacher.
REFERENCES


https://readingrecovery.org/images/pdfs/Membership/Changing_Futures_WEBPOST.pdf


APPENDIX A

Observation Form

Teacher Name:  
Focus of PD:  

Date of PD:  
Date of Observation:  

Time:  

Number of Students in the Classroom:  

Other Adults in the Room:  

What is the classroom teacher doing?  

What are the students doing?  

What aspects of the professional development has the classroom teacher taken to the classroom?  

What reading strategies are the students using when reading?  

What might be a beneficial next step for professional development?
APPENDIX B

Teacher Questionnaire

Teacher Name:

Date:

Questionnaire Number:

1. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not helpful at all, 5 being very helpful) how helpful has the professional development you have received from the Reading Recovery teacher been for you this year? (Leave blank if you haven’t received any yet.)

1 2 3 4 5

2. Did the professional development you receive give you teaching strategies to take back into the classroom that same day? Explain.

3. What impact did the last PD session have on what is happening in your classroom?

4. What other professional development would be helpful to you?
APPENDIX C

Teacher Questionnaire Final

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not helpful at all, 5 being very helpful) how helpful has the professional development you have received from the Reading Recovery teacher been for you this year?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Did the professional development you receive give you teaching strategies to take back into the classroom that same day? Explain.

What impact did the professional development sessions have on what is happening in your classroom?
The four sessions were: 5 things kids can do when they get stuck, running records, writing, and self-regulating.

What other professional development would be helpful to you? You can choose more than one.
The suggestions are from the other surveys. Even though my capstone will be complete, I would be happy to come to another PLC to do more PD or find resources that would be helpful for you.

- Stretching out sentences - "How to"
- How to help kids self correct and read for meaning.
- Watching a guided reading lesson and possible mini lessons.
- Work on Writing
- Model guided reading lesson that can be done in 15 minutes.
- More discussion around ideas to hold kids more accountable during center/seat work.
- Ongoing current research.
- More writing instruction - sentences
○ Differentiated word work activities for the stages of reading.
○ Other:

Was one professional development more helpful than others?
○ 1 - 5 strategies
○ 2 - running records
○ 3 - writing
○ 4 - self-regulating
○ They were all equally helpful.

If one was more helpful, why was it more helpful?
Do you feel that these four professional development sessions have improved your understanding of reading instruction?
○ Yes
○ No
If yes, do you have specific items you used or are using now in your classroom that has improved your reading instruction?

Any other comments about the professional development you have received this year?

Have you noticed an improvement on your students' reading acquisition because of your changed reading instruction?
○ Yes
○ No
If yes, what have you noticed?
Ex. Students are rereading more, students are practicing writing words they are unsure of on a "work it out" page, students are using the five strategies from the first session, etc.
# APPENDIX D

## Student Literacy Assessment

### Ohio Word Test

Date_____________________ Student Name________________________________________

Recorder________________________ Grade__________________________

Choose one list of words for the student to read

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct Response Check</th>
<th>Record Incorrect Responses</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>List A</strong></td>
<td><strong>List B</strong></td>
<td><strong>List C</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>ran</td>
<td>big</td>
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<tr>
<td>the</td>
<td>it</td>
<td>to</td>
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<tr>
<td>them</td>
<td>then</td>
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<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>play</td>
<td>red</td>
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<td>like</td>
<td>again</td>
<td>now</td>
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<td>could</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>saw</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/20 /20 /20

Date:

Student Name:

Recorder:

**Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words**

The sentence that will be dictated to the student is:

**The bus is coming. It will stop here to let me get on.**

Directions:

Say to the child: I am going to read you a story. When I have read it through once I will read it again very slowly so that you can write down the words in the story. Read the test sentence to the child at normal speed. Then say: Some of the words are hard. Say them slowly and think how you can write them. Start writing the words now. Dictate slowly, word by word. When the child comes to a problem word say: You say it slowly. How would you start to write it? What can you hear? Then add: What else can you hear? If the child cannot complete the word say: We'll leave that word. The next one is ... You could point to where to write the next word if this helps the child. Support the child with comments like those above to keep the child working at the task.

Scoring of the task:

```
The bus is coming. It will stop here to
1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9 10  11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27

let me get on.
28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37
```

APPENDIX E

Professional Development Sessions

Professional Development Session 1:

Taken from “Strategic teaching and strategic learning in first grade classrooms” by Kinnucan-Welsch, Magill, and Dean (1999, p. 7).

Modeling Five Things Good Readers Do When They Come to a Tricky Word

Think about the story "One thing you can do is to 'think about the story.' By thinking what the whole story is about, you may be able to figure out what the tricky word is. For example, if our story is about bears, and the sentence reads, "He likes to eat h," you could guess that the word might be 'honey' since we know bears like to eat honey" (Kinnucan-Welsch, et al., 1999, p. 7).

Check the picture "Another thing you can do is 'check the picture.' Pictures support the text. If you are reading This is the Place for ME, and you are stuck on cave, you can look at the picture of a cave and guess that the word might be 'cave" (Kinnucan-Welsch, et al., 1999, p. 7).

Go back and get your mouth ready "Another way to figure out a tricky word is to use the sentence to help figure out the word. Go back to the beginning of the sentence and reread the sentence. Rather than stopping when you get to the tricky word, this time get your mouth ready for the tricky word by making the beginning sound of the word. Let's take this sentence as an example: T want a drink of w.' If you have to stop for that tricky word, go back to the beginning of the sentence and reread it. But this time when you get
to the tricky word ['water'], make the "w" sound, and the tricky word will just POP OUT OF YOUR MOUTH!" (Kinnucan-Welsch, et al., 1999, p. 7).

Look for chunks you know "You are beginning to know lots of words now, and you have noticed some of those words have parts in them you know. Let's look at these words you know: bat, cat, sat. Those words all have a part that looks the same, the at chunk. When you see a chunk you know, say the chunk you know, then cover up the chunk with a finger to look at the letters which come before or after, adding to the chunk. Looking for chunks words a lot better than 'sounding it out.'" Does that make sense? Would we say it that way?" (Kinnucan-Welsch, et al., 1999, p. 7).

The fifth thing to do when you come to a tricky word is to ask two questions. You know that when you read, it has to make sense. It has to fit with what you have already read and it has to sound right. If you read something that doesn't make sense or sound right, ask yourself, 'Does that make sense? Would you say it that way?' If the answer is no, then try it again and think of how it should have been said" (Kinnucan-Welsch, et al., 1999, p. 7).
5 things good readers do when they meet a "tricky" word.
Professional Development Session 2:

Give teachers overview of session:

The second professional development session will focus on helping the classroom teachers become observers of their students. According to Pressley & Roehrig (2005), “a hallmark of exemplary teachers is that they monitor students carefully and make instructional decisions on the basis of their observations of student reading and writing processes” (p. 12). Teachers need to then learn how to use these observation for instructing their students. During this professional development session, videos will be shown of the Reading Recovery teacher observing her students and the decisions made from these observations.

Practice and Videos from my ipad.

a. Up and Down - Video from April 24th 9:26am (Give Running Record sheets to look at)

b. A Friend for Little White Rabbit - Video from May 8th 10:11am (Give Running Record Sheets to look at)

Questions?
**Professional Development Session 3:**

The third professional development session will focus on writing. The Reading Recovery teacher will provide strategies students can use to become independent writers. Some areas that the professional development will focus on are having the child use the work it out page, having the child reread to make sure their writing makes sense, and having the child monitor for capitals in the appropriate places and punctuation.


Key talking points:

Begin by talking about what writing looks like in a Reading Recovery lesson:

Reading recovery teachers use unlined exercise books turned sideways. There is a working space for teacher and child to use on the top page as they discuss, problem solve, and construct together. The child writes the message on the bottom page.

In writing, conversation is key. “What could you write about that?”

Children should reread their writing.
Prompts for writing:

Helpful questions as the child prepares to write a new word:

What could you try?

How do you think it would start?

What do you know that might help?

Do you know another word that sounds like that?

Do you know a word that starts like that?

A helpful question to use after success in word-solving is:

How did you know it was written like that?

When a child has shown that he knows a word, select from these prompts.

Think carefully before you start and write it here. And here.

Look closely at it and check it.

Do it faster. Once more.

Discuss usage of white board for learning words quickly:

Try it another time. Once more.

Check it carefully.

Write it faster...and even faster. Can you go faster?

Consider the purpose of what you are doing. The task is not to get X number of repetitions. It is to have the child produce the word ‘out of his head.’
Which words would the teacher select for the child to learn to write?

- words that will be used often by this child,
- words needed often in writing (though perhaps not in talking),
- words the child almost knows that need a little more practice,
- words that capture things he knows but also take him into new territory,
- words that occur often in the language.

When the child has a useful knowledge of high-frequency words then a word might be selected because its spelling pattern could lead the writer, by analogy, to other similar words. This shifts the emphasis from phonology to orthography (spelling).

If you wanted the child to search his reading knowledge your prompts would stress ‘seeing’ and ‘looking’.

You can read a word that looks like that.

You can read a word that starts like that.

You can read a word that is like that.

For writing select from prompts such as

Say the word aloud. Say it slowly. Is that like a word you know?

You can say another word like that.

Have you heard another word that starts that way?

Have you heard another word that sounds like that?

Allow the child to stop when he recognizes that something has gone wrong. That acknowledges his self-monitoring.
To help the child to construct a correct attempt, use the work it out page. Call for the child to demonstrate control over the construction saying

Try it on your work page,

Show me up here how you would start that word,

Tell me what you would write.

Other procedures along with writing:

pages 72- 81

Hearing Syllables

Hearing the Sounds (Elkonin boxes)

Slow articulation and hearing sounds/phonemes “Say it slowly.”

Using the boxes for hearing the sounds in words (phonemic analysis) - with chips

Intermediate Steps

Articulate words slowly for the child

Draw boxes during writing

Ask “What can you hear?”

Encourage child to say word slowly by pointing to the boxes.

Say, “How could you write it.”

Ask, “Where will you put it?”

Give helpful links to what he knows somewhere else - in his alphabet book, or his name, or a word he can already write, or a word in his reading.

Prompts:

What else can you hear?
What do you hear at the beginning?

What do you hear at the end?

What do you hear in the middle?

Advanced Steps:

After the child can: hear and record the consonants well, has control over writing letters, and selects some vowels correctly, then the focus can go more toward spelling.

Now the teacher provides a box for every letter instead of every sound. Find similar spelling segments (with the same sounds) in known words….if the child knows, over, they should know what to put at the end of water and monster.

Eventually, the child will not need these boxes.

Purpose of all of this:

First the child has to learn how to do the task.

Then he learns how to do a phonemic analysis of words he wants to write.

Then he learns some rules about spelling and some exceptions.

Through Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words, students learn to distinguish easy to hear sounds, hard to hear sounds, common spelling/sound patterns in English, and the “quirky” things about spelling in English.

Helpful questions as the child prepares to write a new word:

What could you try?

How do you think it would start?

What do you know that might help?
Do you know another word that sounds like that?

Do you know a word that starts like that?

A helpful question to use after success in word-solving is:

How did you know it was written like that?

If you wanted the child to search his reading knowledge your prompts would stress ‘seeing’ and ‘looking’.

You can read a word that looks like that.

You can read a word that starts like that.

You can read a word that is like that.
Professional Development Session 4:

The fourth professional development session will be to help the teachers lead their students to become self-regulated. Since this is the last professional development session, the teachers would have had several months to teach the students the five things students should do when they get to a word they do not know. Scaffolding strategies will be taught to the teachers so they understand how to help their students become self-regulated.
Talk about article:


And read section on self-regulation (pages 117 and 118) - Discuss


Early Stages of literacy learning - Strategic activities

1. Directional Movement

2. Finding the words: One to one matching
   a. Ways to encourage this -
      i. *Read it with your finger.*
      ii. *Did it match?*
      iii. *Were there enough words?*
      iv. *Did you run out of words?*

3. Locating known words or letters in continuous text
   a. Prompt the child to make use of something you know he knows. This may be any type of information in print. The aim is to have the child initiate ‘reading word,’ that is, searching, finding, and deciding. You might say:
      i. *It looks like the first letter in your name.*
ii. That sounds like the beginning of Jake.

iii. We made that word in the board this morning.

iv. Look at this writing. You wrote that word.

b. Tell the child the word, but make the child do some checking by asking the question.

i. What do you think?

ii. Would that make sense?

iii. Would ‘went’ fit there?

iv. Do you think it looks like ‘went’?

4. Locating an unknown word

a. Prompt the child to use something that you know he knows.

b. Tell the child the word as he looks at it closely.

c. Prompt to emphasize looking and say:

i. You said….Was that right?

d. Read up to the problem word fluently and stop, expecting him to finish the reading. Or read fluently and articulate the first letter of the problem word.

Or point to the first letter and ask.

i. Can you hear this letter?

5. Prompt towards ways to remember words

a. Encourage the child to become active about ‘knowing something next time he sees it.’ This will be more productive than saying ‘Remember that.’ For words you have worked on select from invitations like these.

i. You need to know that word tomorrow.
ii. Have you got it in your head?

iii. Let’s go to the board and you write the first letter.

iv. Use your eyes and think about it.
Checking on oneself or self-monitoring

1. To encourage self-monitoring in the very early stages ask the child to go back to one-to-one pointing:
   a. *Point to each one.*
   b. *Use a pointer and make them match.*

2. Direct the child’s attention to meaning:
   a. *Look at the picture.*
   b. *Remember that they went to the shop and...*
   c. You might allow the child to continue to the end of the sentence before you deal with the error.
      i. *I liked the way you did that. Now...*
      ii. *Where is the hard part?*
   d. If the child gives signs of uncertainty—hesitation, frowning, a little shake of the head—even though he takes no action:
      i. *Was that okay?*
      ii. *Why did you stop?*
      iii. *What did you notice?*

Questions like these tell the child you want him to monitor his own reading.
Cross-checking on information

Cross-checking will occur when:

1. he can get movement and language occurring together in a coordinated way, and knows when he has run out of words.
2. he checks language prediction by looking at some letters.
3. he can hear the sounds in a word he speaks and checks whether the expected letters are there.
4. a wrong response is followed by another attempt at the word (searching).
5. a wrong response is followed by repeating the sentence, phrase or word, indicating he is aware of a mismatch, and trying to get some additional information (repeating).
6. a wrong response is followed by a verbal comment about the mismatch, for example ‘No! That’s not right!’

To encourage checking to show the child you value these behaviors, you can say:

1. Check it.
2. Does that make sense?
3. Does the word you said look like the word on the page?
4. It could be.....but look at....
5. What could it be?
6. insert possible words so that the child can confirm the response using some letter knowledge.
7. Check it! Does it look right and sound right to you?
Searching for information

Help the child search for all types of information by saying:

*You said...Can we say it that way?*

*Try that again and think of what would make sense.*

*Try that again and think of what would sound right.*

*Try that again and think what would make sense, and sound right, and look like that.*

Self-Correction

Comment positively on self-correction. The child who monitors his own reading, and searches for more help in the text, and cross-checks at least two types of information, will be self-correcting some of his own errors.

1. Comment positively on these self corrections. I liked the way you found out what was wrong all by yourself.

2. Allow time for self-correction.

3. To make a confident reader even more independent of the teacher don’t do anything when he makes an error or stops. Don’t give him any clues. Place the responsibility on the child. Say, You made a mistake on that page/in that sentence. Can you find it?

Children become more independent:

- if early behaviors are appropriate, secure, fast, and habituated.
- if children learn to monitor their own reading and writing.
- if they search for several kinds of information in word sequences, in longer stretches of meaning, and in letter sequences.
- if they discover new things for themselves.
- if they check that one kind of information fits with other available information.
- if they repeat themselves as if to confirm what they have read or written.
- if they correct themselves, taking the initiative for making all the information they find fit the word they decide upon.
- if they solve new words through their own strategic activity.


A teacher prompting for independent monitoring might say

> Were you right?

But for independent searching further she might say

> What can you try?

A teacher prompting for monitoring meaning might say

> Does that make sense?

But for searching further she might say

> Try that again and think what would make sense.

A teacher prompting for monitoring structure might say

> Can we say it that way?

But a teacher prompting for further searching might say

> Try that again and think what might sound right.

A teacher prompting for monitoring visual information might say

> Does that look right?

But a teacher prompting for further visual search might say

> Try that again and get ready to say the first sound.