Spring 2019

Effective Strategies That Provide Support and Enhance Learning for Strong Readers

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EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES THAT PROVIDE SUPPORT AND ENHANCE
LEARNING FOR STRONG READERS

by

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

Hamline University
St. Paul, Minnesota
May 2019

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Acknowledgements

This work is dedicated to my father, who showed me what it truly meant to be an educator. His compassion, faith, and hope for all students was his legacy; a legacy I hope I can continue for my students.

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Introduction

"I am convinced that there is no instructional approach more powerful than guided reading."

~Jan Richardson~

Introduction

Small group instruction has proven its value time and time again. An instructional strategy that follows whole group instruction, small group instruction provides reduced student-teacher ratios, allows teachers to work more closely with individual students on a specific skill or objective, reinforces skills learned in whole group instruction, and most importantly, checks for student understanding.

Most students thrive in a small group setting. They receive more of the teacher's focused attention and often times feel more comfortable asking specific questions about what they do not understand. On the flip side, students also feel more free about contributing to discussions; sharing their thoughts, opinions, and ideas about a text they are reading. When thinking of small group instruction, teachers often immediately think of their struggling students and how they can support these developing readers.

While struggling readers most definitely need the support of teachers and small group instruction, I argue that strong readers do as well. Reading development never stops and there are familiar frameworks out there that can support strong readers just as well as struggling readers. Through my literature and action research, I hope to help general education teachers understand the *effective strategies that provide support and enhance learning for struggling students, also help support learning for all students.*

My research will include guided reading and reciprocal teaching strategies and how they can be implemented to support strong readers in second grade. Both strategies take dedication and perseverance from both teachers and students. Through my research, I want to discover the most effective steps one should take to implement both strategies with fidelity. I will include in my research the spectrum of the guided reading framework, the specific roles used in reciprocal teaching, and the types of data collection methods that work best to analyze a student's reading development.

My Personal Story with a Strong Reader

My reason for wanting to research this topic stems from personal experience with my own daughter. Piper is currently in second grade and is reading at an end of fourth grade reading level. She is able to read fluently and comprehend what she is reading. As a mom and a teacher, I am over the moon proud of her reading ability. However, because she is so independent at her grade level, she doesn't get pushed or challenged to go beyond what she is capable of in the classroom. Understandably, districts put so much of their resources and focus on struggling readers. But we cannot push those students who do well to the side simply because they meet grade level targets independently. It was at this point that I decided to provide my daughter with reading activities that challenged her thinking and enhanced her learning.

My Journey with Guided Reading

When I was completing my undergraduate degree, I understood guided reading to be an instructional approach for struggling readers only. An approach that teachers would use to hone in on the reading skills these readers were deficient in. Thankfully, my perception has since evolved over time into a more comprehensive understanding of the power guided reading has for

all levels of readers. It was not until my student teaching experience that I gained this realization and began a new journey with guided reading.

I student taught in a kindergarten classroom with an incredibly knowledgeable and supportive cooperating teacher. She had learned and understood the art of guided reading and implemented it with such ease and effectiveness. She had very clear, high expectations for her five and six-year-old students when it came to teaching them the behaviors and routines that went with the guided reading framework. My cooperating teacher showed me that for guided reading groups to work, students needed to be able to work independently for a solid twenty to twenty-five minutes. That is a long time for a kindergartener to stay on task, especially at the beginning of the year. Yet, she modeled, students practiced, and before we knew it, guided reading groups were in full swing.

After observing each of her guided reading groups, I shared how much I enjoyed watching her with the higher-achieving students in the classroom. She then went on to explain why she uses the same framework with higher readers as she does with her struggling readers. I learned quickly that it is just as important to extend learning as it is to strengthen learning. My cooperating teacher also taught me the variety of ways to reach and engage students during small group instruction time. Much of what I observed during my student teaching, I continue to use in my classroom today.

As I began my teaching career as a first-grade teacher, I knew I wanted to implement the guided reading framework in to my literacy block. I felt confident in doing so with my struggling readers and always had the hope of implementing it with all my reading groups. Even though I had seen first-hand how a veteran teacher effectively implemented guided reading

groups in her classroom, it was a struggle for me to get it going in my classroom. I knew what I needed to do but felt as though I did not have the time do it. I was feeling that I should not be taking so much time modeling and practicing routines and behaviors because there was so much academic content that needed to be covered. Over the years, as I have reflected day after day, I learned how important it is to take the time to set expectations, model, and practice until students can execute routines and behaviors independently. When this step is taken, the amount of instructional time that teachers have with students is incredible-everyone is learning even if students are working independently because of effective implementation.

I have been out of the general education classroom for four years now. I now provide tier 2 and tier 3 reading interventions. The most valuable instructional approach I brought from the classroom to the intervention room was the guided reading framework. I only have twenty-five, quick minutes with each of my groups so every second I have with them must count. Having the experience in implementing guided reading groups and tweaking my approach over the years has helped me implement interventions more effectively and efficiently. I have also learned from another veteran teacher how to make the transition from general education classroom to intervention classroom happen more smoothly.

In 2015, my district hired its first ever instructional coach. She has opened my mind up to a whole new world of guided reading. She introduced me to guided reading guru, Jan Richardson, and her book *The Next Step Forward in Guided Reading* which has forever changed my approach to small group instruction. Richardson's framework is structured in a way that supports implementation procedures and provides a variety of strategies to engage students in improving their reading development.

Our instructional coach used this book for an eight-week book study that I was more than eager to participate in. I found it to be beneficial to have opportunities to discuss guided reading with colleagues, learn how they felt towards the idea of guided reading, and implement a few new strategies into my intervention groups. It was during this book study that I decided I wanted to learn more about the effective ways to enhance learning for strong readers like my daughter. I am still amazed at how much teachers continue to learn after many years of teaching and how that learning directly impacts student achievement.

The Power of Guided Reading

"I am convinced that there is no instructional approach more powerful than guided reading" (Richardson, 2016). The power of this approach comes during guided practice for students. During this time, teachers give their learners immediate feedback if they make a mistake or struggle with their reading or writing. Teachers can quickly guide them back on track and help them make sense of the why and how of a new strategy or skill. As teachers, we are helping readers see how the new strategy or skill can be manipulated and applied to authentic reading.

Guided reading recognizes that students need experience reading across a range of literacy and practical texts (Fountas & Pinnell, 2009). Exposing students to a variety of texts allows students to apply an array of literacy skills, specifically comprehension skills, that must be practiced. In guided reading, teachers provide a model for applying these strategies, giving students a foundation to build their own application on. By providing a sequence of high-quality, engaging texts that support individual growth, students are receiving what they need most: an opportunity to perform effectively as a reader.

Guided reading is designed to provide numerous opportunities to read continuous text. The reading that students do in guided reading groups is strongly supported by instruction to move them further ahead and is accompanied by independent rereading of texts at an independent level. Thus, guided reading gives teachers the opportunity to assure more reading in school.

My Journey with Reciprocal Teaching

This is a shorter, more recently started journey for me. I never once heard the term reciprocal teaching in my undergraduate career. It was my second year of teaching when I first heard about this incredible strategy. As we were working together to strengthen small group instruction in her fourth grade classroom, my colleague and I stumbled upon the reciprocal teaching strategy on the Florida Center for Reading Research website. The strategy stood out to us because of its scaffolded discussion framework that supported student comprehension. We both decided this was a great route to take and my colleague began implementing it after a week of her own research. Like any new strategy she learned as she went and with only a couple months to try it out before the end of the year, she found it valuable. I wanted to see if reciprocal teaching would be a valuable fit for younger students as well, which led me to consider it as a part of my action research with second grade students.

The Power of Reciprocal Teaching

As stated above, reciprocal teaching is scaffolded discussion that supports comprehension. This approach was designed to focus on four key strategies readers use to comprehend text: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. In her book *Reciprocal Teaching at work: Powerful Strategies and Lessons for Improving Reading Comprehension,* Lori

Oczkus encourages us to "think of reciprocal teaching as a reading vitamin that ensures reading success and strengthens overall comprehension instruction" (pg. 4). Reciprocal teaching has been known to be an effective approach to improving reading comprehension with just two doses a week. It's an instructional approach that complements any core reading instruction and can be used side by side other comprehension strategies. Reciprocal teaching fits with any grade-level and gives responsibility and ownership to the student; allowing them to guide discussion among their peers. Reciprocal teaching also gives strong, fluent readers the opportunity to extend their learning, strengthen their reading skills, and see books through a more critical eye.

Conclusion

Researchers tell us that struggling readers need frequent, quality instruction in small groups (Allington, 2001). Yet, we know that all our students, from strong to struggling readers, benefit from differentiation that they receive in a more personal environment (Allington, 2001). As a reading teacher, I have the opportunity to work with readers in small groups on specific skills that will make them feel more confident in their reading ability. I am eager to research, learn, and implement effective guided reading groups and the reciprocal teaching strategy to push my students to become stronger readers and more critical thinkers. I look forward to supporting other teachers in my district with the knowledge I gain about the effective implementation of both guided reading and reciprocal teaching approaches.

Chapter Two of my capstone thesis will explain current research around guided reading and reciprocal teaching and the impact small group instruction has on all readers, specifically strong readers. My research will focus on how effective implementation and research-based instruction will meet the reading development needs of already strong readers.

Chapter Three will focus on the methods I will be using to investigate my action research. I will explain who will be participating, where my action research will be taking place, what methods I will be using to collect data, and when my action research will take place. I will explain the research methods I chose, as well as the data analysis methods I will use.

Through progress monitoring charts, field notes, and student examples and interviews, Chapter Four will discuss my action research results. I will clarify my analysis and interpretation of the data. Finally, Chapter Five will allow me to reflect on what I learned through my action research and how I will use my findings to support students and teachers. *Effective strategies that provide support and enhance learning for strong readers* will support teachers in their own endeavors to be successful with reaching strong readers in their own classroom.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

     Reading is a complex skill. There are many stages of reading and each individual student will reach these stages at different times within their reading development. Through their *Continuum of Literacy Learning*, Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell explain that "even as adults, we learn new skills that enable us to navigate a new array of texts" (2001). Guided reading and reciprocal teaching are approaches that will give students the strategies that will turn them into lifelong learners. Fountas and Pinnell also assert that "learning how to read and using reading to learn are inseparable" (2001).

     Teaching students to read is more about delivery of instruction more than anything else. When we look at students in the primary grades, reading instruction is the core of their day. Each day they receive explicit teaching that improves their "processing power" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). This explicit instruction is crucial for a teacher, especially in a state where the legislature requires public schools to submit reading proficiency reports for all students K-2. A state in the upper midwest has a literacy goal that seeks to have every child at or above grade level no later than the end of third grade, including English Language Learners, and that teachers provide comprehensive, scientifically-based reading instruction.

     This is a hefty goal. Especially when considering that students come from all different kinds of backgrounds that affect their attendance, focus, and learning development at school. Add this to the fact that reading is already a complex process on its own, it is no surprise that all students need ongoing, explicit instruction throughout their reading development. As teachers, we want all of our students to become strong, proficient readers. We also want our students who

are already proficient to have the opportunity to enhance their reading skills in order to keep their learning moving forward.

When I think of what a proficient reader looks like, I refer to the skills that Fountas and Pinnell (2001) use to define a proficient reader: proficient readers are able to identify and understand the important information they read, connect personally with the setting, characters, and plot of the story, and react to the text emotionally, experiencing humor, loneliness, fear, or grief. Being able to reproduce the author's intended syntax and phrasing when reading aloud, incorporating meaning of the text into their own knowledge of the world, and making inferences beyond the text are skills Fountas and Pinnell deem important and ones that I am looking forward to teaching my students.

Many may think that after students learn the basic foundational reading skills, they are readers. Even after students learn these basics, they continue to learn and grow as readers. Readers must learn to adjust their strategies as they read for different purposes or encounter new genres (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). They need to learn how to organize their knowledge in order to summarize or draw inferences from increasingly difficult texts (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). As teachers, we cannot expect students to expand their reading abilities on their own; explicit instruction is essential for most students and will make reading more powerful for all students (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

The purpose of guided reading is to meet the varying instructional needs of all students. Through guided reading instruction, teachers enable their students to expand their reading powers. Guided reading also allows teachers to demonstrate how a reader constructs meaning from text, makes personal connection with text, and goes beyond text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Reciprocal teaching pairs well with the guided reading structure because it supports the needs of a variety of reading abilities and can be used in a variety of settings. Research has shown that reciprocal teaching within the guided reading framework has proven to be effective in in-class guided reading groups, after school and in-class interventions, and pull-out programs (Oczkus, 2010). Reciprocal teaching has a scaffolded framework that mirrors the gradual release model. It is an instructional approach that offers a great deal of support for all levels of readers, helping to build confidence and independence in reading. Every time students are engaged in reciprocal teaching, each has the opportunity to participate in scaffolded instruction, propelling them to the next reading level as the support they receive guides them through more difficult texts and reading tasks (Ockus, 2001).

In this chapter, I establish the importance of *effective strategies that provide and enhance learning for strong readers*. I will begin with why small group instruction works for all students. I will then explain the steps teachers take to implement guided reading effectively with fidelity. Reciprocal teaching also requires implementation with fidelity and I will describe how to do this effectively. Next, I will share research-based instructional strategies to use with strong readers who may be at various reading levels, and finally, what types of data collection tools work best and how to analyze data adequately.

The Learning Zone

Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky (1978), has given educators a compelling theoretical idea. Vygotsky maintains that with support of another, more experienced person, the learner is able to do more than he could on his own. Vygotsky also created the "zone of proximal development" which refers to the ideal level of task difficulty to facilitate learning which is the

level at which a child can be successful with appropriate support (Temple et al, 2011).

Vygotsky's idea of the zone of proximal development relates closely to the term "differentiated

instruction" and has the same idea that students should be provided with the opportunity to learn

at their own individual level.

The zone of proximal development is used to describe the experience of a learner who

works successfully with the support of another and extends his knowledge in the process (Tracey

& Morrow, 2012). "The learning zone", as Fountas & Pinnell (2001) refer to it as, is where

teachers create a learning zone for students, carefully selecting and introducing text, support and

interact briefly with them during reading, and teach with clarity after reading.

Guided reading is an *instructional* approach designed to help individual students learn

how to process a variety of increasingly challenging texts with understanding and fluency.

Guided reading occurs in a small-group setting because small-group allows for interaction

among readers that benefit them all (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Getting Started with Guided Reading

The guided reading assessments are effective data tools for teachers, delivering rich

information about students' reading interests and motivation along with their current proficiency

in word knowledge, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. Teachers conduct systematic

assessments to determine student strengths and needs (Richardson & Walther, 2013). For my

action research, I will be using the Assess-Decide-Guide framework, developed by Jan

Richardson (2016). This framework supports teachers in creating their guided reading groups as

well as simplifying the entire guided reading process.

By using this assessment piece of this framework, I will be able to gain information on each of my students about their reading habits and preferences, pinpoint each child's developmental word knowledge, understand whether a student can comprehend in various reading situations, determine my student's instructional reading level, and identify the skills and strategies the student needs to learn in order to become a proficient, independent reader (Walther, 2015).

Assess. It seems as though states and districts are requiring more and more testing. *Assessment* is usually not a word teachers like to hear. According to Richardson (2016), most assessments are not designed to help children become better readers or help teacher's instructional decisions. Guided reading assessments, however, are systematic and specifically created to support teachers in determining a students' strengths and needs.

Decide. When assessments are geared toward student achievement, teachers can easily decide the next steps to take for a student. With the data I gather from guided reading assessments, I will be able to form flexible, needs-based groups, pinpoint an instructional focus, select texts that will compel readers to think and problem-solve, differentiate and evaluate reading instruction, and monitor progress (Richardson, 2016).

Guide. The final step in the guided reading framework is to guide. Effective guiding of student's learning provides tools to maneuver to the stage of proficient reader. Richardson is a strong proponent for the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). She states "as you work with students, you will uncover the optimal instructional level, also known as the zone of proximal development" (2016). Richardson stresses the importance of staying in this zone as the teacher introduces the text and states the learning target, scaffolds and teaches strategies,

incorporates word study and vocabulary instruction, connects reading and writing, and engages

reading (2016). I will follow this recommendation as well as connect reading and writing as it

will allow students to demonstrate their understanding of a specific skill. Many of these skills

and the instructional strategies used to teach them will be discussed later in the chapter.

Guiding Reading Levels

There are five levels of readers according to Richardson (2016). These levels include:

the pre-A reader, the emergent reader, the early reader, the transitional reader, and the fluent

reader. I will be focusing on the fluent reader but will share important information about the

others.

The Pre-A Reader . "Children enter school with different literacy experiences"

(Richardson, 2016). Within this level, student will likely know less than 40 upper- and

lowercase letters, know some but few letter sounds, need a model to write their name, have

limited concepts of print and need support with left-to-right directionality, use chorale reading,

and work mostly with letters and sounds, not words. Pre-A students need a strong foundation in

reading to be able to move forward confidently and successfully; this is the level where that

strong foundation is built.

The Emergent Reader: Levels A-C. According to Harris & Hodges (1981), emergent

reading is a period of acquiring the specific skills and abilities that allow reading to take place as

preparedness or reading readiness. The student's preparedness allows him to cope with a

learning task. Students who are considered emergent readers within Level A, can write their

own name, identify at least 40 upper- and lowercase letter names, demonstrate left-to-right

directionality, can follow simple verbal directions, and know at least eight sounds (Richardson, 2016).

The Early Reader: Levels D-I. Early readers use their foundational skills and several strategies to help them decode, predict, discuss, and comprehend the stories they read. Early readers rely heavily on visual cues and language patterns in a text. It is in these levels when students get into the habit of taking risks while reading (Richardson, 2016).

The Transitional Reader: Levels J-P. Richardson shares that this level of reader can be very diverse, and their specific needs vary (2016). Transitional readers recognize a growing number of sight words and tend to read books that are in a series; the shared characters, settings, and events support their reading development. Transitional readers continue to work on decoding, fluency, and retelling.

The Fluent Reader: Levels N and Higher. Fluent readers are confident in their understanding of a text, how a text works, and are reading independently (Richardson, 2016). Richardson also asserts that fluent readers rarely make errors, but when they do, they can quickly use the meaning and parts of words to self-correct (2016). Fluent readers can maintain meaning through longer pieces of text and have come to think critically about the text as something that influences people's ideas (Richardson, 2016). Comprehension takes center stage in the fluent reader levels, strengthening reader's strategies through increasingly challenging text (Richardson, 2016).

I will challenge my fluent guided reading group by actively engaging them in higher-level comprehension strategies such as: identifying main ideas and important details, making inferences, drawing conclusions, analyzing relationships between characters and ideas,

and evaluating the author's purpose (Richardson, 2016). This group will engage in these strategies through the reciprocal teaching components of predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing (Oczkus, 2010).

I will assess my fluent readers through weekly progress monitoring, group discussion, individual conferring, and a variety of literacy activities. I will analyze the data gathered, select texts, and pinpoint my instructional focus weekly. The supporting structure of this guided reading framework guides instruction clearly and efficiently. Many of the instructional strategies used in guided reading derive from the Metacognitive Theory, where one is thinking about their own thinking (Tracey & Morrow, 2012).

Focused Reading Skills

As stated above, reading is a complex process where readers are continually learning how to use reading strategies in different ways. As teachers, we want to focus on reading strategies that engage students and proved an active learning environment. We are all familiar with the big five ideas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Guided reading instruction is centered on these ideas and will be the focus when planning effective lessons that will engage, motivate, inspire, and activate learning within my students.

Phonemic Awareness. Phonemic awareness refers to children's understandings about words and sounds in words (Cunningham, 2005). It includes the ability to recognize words are made up of a discrete set of sounds and to manipulate sounds (Cunningham, 2005). The emphasis of phonemic awareness is on sounds of spoken words, not on reading letters or pronouncing letter names. Understanding that words are composed of smaller units, or

phonemes, is a significant achievement for young children because phonemes are abstract units (Tompkins, 2006).

     Phonics. Phonics is the set of relationships between the sounds in speech and the spelling patterns of written language (Tompkins, 2006). The emphasis with phonics is on spelling patterns, not individual letters, because there is not a one-to-one correspondence between phonemes and graphemes (Tompkins, 2006). Student's decoding abilities and word knowledge is at all different levels. Therefore, there has not been one research-proven, most effective instructional approach over another when teaching phonics. The National Reading Panel (2000) concluded that "in teaching phonics explicitly and systematically, several different instructional approaches have been used. These include synthetic phonics, analytic phonics, embedded phonics, analogy phonics, onset-rime phonics, and phonics through spelling" (pp. 2-89). The National Reading Panel went on to state that "specific phonics programs are all more effective than non-phonics programs and they do not appear to differ significantly from each other in their effectiveness" (pp. 2-132).

     Cunningham suggests that the best approach to phonics instruction is to provide students with multiple and varied opportunities for children to obtain the information they need to successfully decode and spell words (2005). To provide activities that are multileveled, Tompkins (2006) advises to sort objects, pictures, and word cards according to phonics skill, write letters or words, arrange magnetic letters and letter cards to spell words, make charts of words representing phonics skills, and locate other word exemplifying the sound or spelling pattern in books students are reading.

Students' ability to decode unknown words is the single most important skill phonics instruction can teach. Without the ability to decode, students will struggle with other skills such as fluency and comprehension.

Fluency. Fluency is defined as the ability to read words in context quickly, accurately, automatically, and with expression (Cunningham, 2005). A reader's fluency is directly related to the complexity of the text they are reading (Cunningham, 2005). Fluency is critical to reading because of the attention factor. If a student is reading a text that he is familiar with, his attention will be on meaning and understanding. If a student is reading a text with a lot of new words, his attention is on decoding and all meaning and understanding is lost. A student's brain must be able to recognize words automatically and immediately in order for there to be meaning (Cunningham, 2005).

According to Cunningham, children must read and reread to become fluent readers (2005). "The rereading of favorite books contributes greatly to the development of fluency and students should be offered to do so every school day" (Cunningham, 2005). Allington also asserts that "students become fluent by practicing reading" (1983). Students should also have opportunities to listen to the teacher, or another skilled reader model fluent reading (Tracey & Morrow, 2015). Tracey & Morrow emphasize the need to provide students with support while they themselves are reading aloud, helping them focus on meaningful phrasing (2015). Most importantly, as stated above, it is essential that students are given ample opportunities to read (Tracey & Morrow, 2015).

Fountas & Pinnell offer an array of engaging activities for building fluency (2001). I have gathered some of these activities to use with my emergent guided reading group. Through

the gradual-release model, I will have my students listen to me read, read together, and have them read on their own with support as need from me. We will also be engaging in repeated reading every day. Another activity students are drawn to is readers theatre, which we will do once a week. I will also have students record their reading. This gives students opportunities to self-assess, practice and revise, and hear their reading growth.

Many researchers have found that fluency is highly correlated with reading comprehension and that fluency is a strong predictor of later reading achievement (Armstrong; Breznitz; Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins; Good, Simmons, & Kame'enui; Hintze & Silberglitt; Knupp; Lesgold, Resnick, & Hammond; Pinnell, Pikulski, Wixson, Campbell, Gough, & Beatty; Stage & Jacobsen). Fluency is a vital component in a balanced literacy, but its connection to comprehension is significant. Fluent readers do not need to concentrate on decoding words, therefore, they are able to give all their attention to meaning and understanding of the text.

Vocabulary. Vocabulary is all the words contained in a language (Collins English Dictionary, 2009) Students need to know a huge number of words just to be able to read at progressive grade levels (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Much like teaching phonics, experts are not quite sure the precise process involved in vocabulary instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Fortunately, we know that students gain much of their vocabulary by exposure to books and opportunities to read. Students are learning vocabulary constantly while they are reading (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001).

Students with larger vocabularies are more capable readers, and they have a wider repertoire of strategies for figuring out meanings of unfamiliar words than less capable readers do (McKewon, 1985). Reading widely is the best way students develop their vocabularies, and

that is one reason why capable readers have larger vocabularies (Nagy, 1988; Stahl, 1999); they simply do more reading, both in and out of school (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1986).

I have decided to concentrate on three characteristics suggested by Tompkins (2006) to help build my students vocabulary. Much of making connections in reading is through activating background knowledge. This skill is even more crucial when building vocabulary. Another strategy I will use is repetition. Tompkins states that "students need to read, write, or say words eight to ten times or more before they recognize them automatically" (2006). The final skill I will focus my action research around is meaningful vocabulary use. Students need to be actively involved in word-study activities and opportunities to use the words they learn in authentic experiences. These three characteristics of effective vocabulary instruction will help me put the focus in words students are reading, writing, and engaging with.

Comprehension. Comprehension is the process of constructing meaning using both the author's text and the reader's background for a specific purpose (Tompkins, 2006). Having students read books written in their reading level is the best way for them to apply comprehension strategies (Tompkins, 2006). Debbie Miller stresses the importance of independent reading strengthening a student's comprehension: "Here's the thing. We can have the best lessons in the world, but if our comprehension instruction ends here-with the lesson-we're missing the point" (2011). Miller continues with "even our youngest readers, even those who haven't yet cracked the code, need to practice applying what we're working so hard to teach them" (2011). Duke & Pearson are on the same page as Miller stating, "as with decoding, all the explicit instruction in the world will not make students strong readers unless it is

accompanied by lots of experience applying their knowledge, skills, and strategies during actual reading" (2002).

Setting aside time every day for students to reflect, share, and teach allows students to put their comprehension strategies to use. "When we shift the focus of sharing from what children are reading to what they're learning about themselves as readers, the dynamics change" (Miller, 2011). One of the strategies that Miller believes in, and I plan to implement with my readers, is conferring. "We ask open-ended questions. We listen to what they have to say. We notice and name what we see them doing. We teach. And we ask them what they're learning about themselves as readers. And would they consider sharing these amazing findings" (2011)?

Comprehension is the purpose of reading. Because students are exposed to multiple genres over their reading development, they need to be able to have and know how to use their comprehension strategies while reading independently. Being that comprehension is an invisible process, it makes it difficult to teach (Tompkins, 2006). Through explicit instruction, teachers can make comprehension more visible. Teachers can teach individual comprehension strategies and then model how to use them simultaneously (Tompkins, 2006). Teachers can do this through a combination of explaining, modeling, and thinking aloud.

Reciprocal Teaching

"One of the most effective comprehension strategies is reciprocal teaching" (Palinscar & Brown, 1984). Through reciprocal teaching, students use predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing strategies to figure out the meaning of text, paragraph by paragraph (Oczkus, 2010). Teachers can use this instructional procedure with the whole class when students are reading chapters in a content-area textbook or in small groups, such as literature circles when

students are reading novels (Ozkus, 2010). Reciprocal teaching will be an effective, engaging

literacy activity for fluent readers.

Goals of Reciprocal Teaching During Guided Reading Groups

According to Oczkus (2010), there are six goals reciprocal teaching has in guided reading

groups:

1. To model the reciprocal teaching strategies and guide students to use them.

2. To allow students to benefit from a small-group setting.

3. To teach comprehension strategies for texts that the students would not be able to
    read and understand as easily on their own.

4. To expose students to more teacher modeling of reciprocal teaching strategies.

5. To group students flexibly, based on regular assessments to better their needs.

6. To guide students through interactive lessons that prepare them for literature
    circles and other group discussions.

Successful reciprocal teaching instruction includes the following four instructional

foundations: scaffolding, think-alouds, metacognition, and cooperative learning. These four

foundations work together in the following ways to make lessons successful:

● The teacher models using constant think-alouds.

● Students work in cooperative pairs or teams to practice on their cooperatively.

● The teacher expertly provides the right amount of scaffolding, which might
  include a language frame or prompt such as "I didn't get...so I…"

- The lesson also includes lots of metacognition as students and the teacher discuss the steps to using each strategy and at the end of the lesson know which one was most helpful (Oczkus, 2010).

Scaffolding

During reciprocal teaching, the instruction is scaffolded, or supported. The students can see models of the four strategies, experience "seat holding" as they try out reciprocal teaching in a supported environment, and, finally, work independently as they read while using reciprocal teaching strategies to help them comprehend the text (Oczkus, 2010). "Every time students are engaged in reciprocal teaching, each has the opportunity to participate in scaffolded instruction, because modeling and support are integral steps of the reciprocal teaching model" (Oczkus, 2010).

Other scaffolds Oczkus (2010) recommends in supporting students include using characters, props, or hand motions to represent each strategy. Visual scaffolds include icons, bookmarks, and posters with the language of the strategies clearly displayed so students can refer to them as they use the strategies with peers or on their own.

Think-Alouds

"Reciprocal teaching is not a paper-and-pencil activity. It was designed as a discussion technique in which think-alouds play an integral part" (Oczkus, 2010). During a reciprocal teaching think-aloud, the reader talks aloud about each of the four strategies. Think-alouds show students what a good reader is thinking while reading, which again provides scaffolding toward developing good reading comprehension (Oczkus, 2010). Using think-alouds is a technique I

will use daily with my fluent readers, constantly verbalizing my thinking so they can see more clearly the steps taken to create understanding while reading.

Metacognition

Metacognition is the awareness of one's own thinking processes. The think-aloud process goes hand in hand with metacognition, as students reflect on their thinking and how they are using predictions, questions, clarifications, and summaries (Oczkus, 2010). Metacognition is an essential component to reciprocal teaching because is support students in learning to consciously think about and reflect on their strategy use. When students are trained to engage in the same strategies that good readers use when monitoring their reading comprehension, they will, in turn, improve their own comprehension.

Cooperative Learning

The National Reading Panel (Armbruster et al, 2001) recommends cooperative learning for improved reading comprehension, especially in content area texts. Reciprocal teaching builds on the cooperative nature of learning that causes one's reading comprehension to be deepened through social interactions (Oczkus, 2010). Strategies that I will implement to support this idea include turn and talk with partners, triads, and table groups. These strategies will work best because all of the positive research results were achieved with reciprocal teaching as an oral discussion technique, not through writing.

According to Kagan (1989), cooperative learning needs to encompass positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, and simultaneous interaction. Reciprocal teaching lessons lead students to becoming accountable for the roles and provides ample opportunities to participate in discussions.

Predicting

Predicting is a strategy that readers start doing even before they are considered readers. In the early years of school, students often define predicting as a form of guessing. However, as teachers, we know that predicting goes far beyond just guessing. To make a prediction, students will preview the text to anticipate what could happen next in a text. Predicting differs when reading fiction or nonfiction.

According to Lori D. Oczkus (2010), when predicting with a fiction text, readers will preview the cover, title, and illustrations. The reader will also preview text structure looking for clues using story structure: setting, characters, problem, resolution, events, and a theme or lesson. When predicting with nonfiction, readers preview headings, illustrations, and text features such as maps, captions and tables. Nonfiction readers will also look for clues to predict and use text structure to decide if the text is compare-contrast, sequence, main idea and details, or cause-effect.

Oczkus (2010) recommends for both fiction and nonfiction texts, to "stop periodically during the reading and ask students to gather clues from the text read up to that point and look ahead to make predictions for the next portion of the text" (pg. 18). She also recommends using a graphic organizer such as a story map or Venn diagram that fits the text type (2010). "Giving students the opportunity to preview what they read by discussing text features and using graphic organizers provides them with visual clues for predicting" (Oczkus, 2010).

The language that students may use with predicting includes the following phrases (Mowery, 1995; Oczkus, 2009):

I think…

I'll bet…

I wonder if…

I imagine…

I suppose…

I predict…

I think I will learn...because…

I think...will happen because…

Predicting is a strategy that assists students in setting a purpose for reading and in monitoring their reading comprehension. It allows students to interact more with the text, making them more likely to become interested in the reading material while improving their understanding (Fielding, Anderson, & Pearson, 1990; Hansen, 1981).

Questioning

Good readers ask questions before, during, and after reading a text. "Most students enjoy asking questions and being the teacher during reciprocal teaching discussions" (Oczkus, 2010). Questioning is an important strategy for good readers. In reciprocal teaching lessons, students will learn to generate questions about a text's main idea and important details, and about textual inferences, thereby improving their reading comprehension skills (Oczkus, 2010).

One idea recommended by Oczkus that I will try with my students is to give each of them a sticky note to mark the portion of the text he or she would like to turn into a question. I will then give them time to share their questions with the group. Sharing almost always sparks enthusiasm among students and that is what I hope will happen with my group.

Clarifying

Clarifying is defined as "keeping track of one's comprehension of the text and knowing fix-up strategies to maintain meaning during reading" (Oczkus, 2010). Clarifying helps students monitor their own comprehension as they identify problems they are having in comprehending portions of a text or figuring out difficult words (Oczkus, 2010). Oczkus (2010) states that clarifying involves two basic steps: (1) identifying or admitting that one is stuck on a word or idea, and then (2) figuring out how to remedy the situation (pg. 21). She also recommends specific language to use when clarifying:

Identifying the problem

- I didn't get [the word, sentence, part, visual, chapter] so I [used fix-up strategies, reread, read on, broke the word into parts, skipped it, asked a friend, though about my connections]

- I didn't understand the part where…

- This [sentence, paragraph, page, chapter] is not clear. This doesn't make sense.

- I can't figure out…

- This is a tricky word, because...

The clarifying step of reciprocal teaching makes problem solving during reading more explicit for students. When they learn to identify and clarify difficult words or confusing portions of text, students become more strategic readers (Oczkus, 2010).

Summarizing

Teaching students to summarize is a research-based, effective way to improve overall comprehension (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Summarizing is a complex process that requires the unity of various reading skills and strategies. Reciprocal teaching provides students countless

opportunities to put these skills and strategies into practice by formulating verbal summaries throughout the reading of a text. The summary organization is based on the type of text-either narrative or expository (Lipson, 1996).

Summarizing is one the most challenging skills for students. When summarizing a story, students may use the setting, characters, prolem, events, and resolution to guide their summaries (Oczkus, 2010). A nonfiction text requires students to determine important points or categories of information to arrange them in logical order (Oczkus, 2010). However, there are ways to engage students in summarizing. One way I plan to engage my students in summarizing is to allow verbal summaries verses written summaries. I will also ask them to summarize portions of a text and not require them to summarize an entire text. An idea I will implement to improve students' summarizing skills is to ask for their favorite part in a text and sketch on a sticky note a drawing that represents that scene (Oczkus, 2009). Then, other students in the group can share their favorite parts, and the group can place the parts in order and practice a verbal summary.

Summarizing is extremely important because strong evidence exists that practice in summarizing improves students' reading comprehension of fiction and nonfiction alike, helping them construct overall understanding of a text, story, chapter, or article (Rinehart, Stahl, & Erickson, 1986; Taylor, 1982). In reciprocal teaching lessons, students are provided with frequent opportunities to witness others' summarizing and to participate in creating their own summaries, which helps them become more proficient readers (Oczkus, 2010).

There are many more instructional approaches teachers can take to reach their strong readers. Below is a list of such approaches that are research-based and proven to be effective.

Effective Instructional Strategies

"Targeted and intentional instruction characterizes the daily routine of a guided reading teacher" (Richardson & Walther, 2013). Teaching reading strategies is essential in the reading development of all students. Without effective reading strategies, students will struggle with reading and will likely fall behind in their reading development. There are, however, many types of instructional strategies that have been researched to help prevent student struggle and frustration with reading and produce the best reading outcomes.

Explicit Instruction. To begin with, we need to look at how teachers present strategies to students. According to Harvey & Goudvis (2007), when taught explicitly, students not only learn the reading strategy, but are able to apply it when reading independently. Explicit instruction means that we show learners how we think when we read (Harvey & Goudvis, 20017). Tracey and Morrow also explain that explicit instruction "means that teachers attempt to be especially clear, organized, and detailed regarding the nature of metacognitive strategy they are explaining, and when and how that strategy should be applied by the reader during the reading experience" (2012).

Explicit instruction provides a comprehensive approach to incorporating all literacy skills into instruction. I will use explicit instruction to teach: letter sounds, decoding, comprehension, writing, and fluency. Explicit instruction is also developmentally appropriate, being tailored specifically to a student's literacy needs. Most importantly, the explicit instruction approach provides engagement for students. It requires that students become active participants in activities such as self-monitoring and directing their own learning and participation. Explicit instruction is often consistent with another effective instructional strategy: The Gradual-Release Model.

Gradual-Release. Scaffolded instruction is probably one of the most, if not the most, effective instruction teachers can offer students. The gradual-release-of-responsibility model provides such scaffolded instruction (Gambrell & Morrow, 2015). According to Gambrell & Morrow, the gradual-release is the process in which students gradually assume greater degree of responsibility and independence for a targeted learning outcome (2015). This gradual-release may occur over a day, a week, a month, or a year (Fisher & Frey, 2014). This strategy has also been known as the "I do, we do, you do" model.

In the first stage, the "I do" stage, the teacher assumes much of the responsibility by modeling and explicitly teaching a specific skill or strategy. During this phase, I will be modeling through think-alouds (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Throughout the second stage, the "we do" stage, the teacher and students share responsibility. Students practice applying the skill or strategy that was modeled, the teacher providing assistance and feedback when necessary. Eventually, the teacher will release all responsibility onto the student during the third stage, the "you do" stage. It is in this stage when the scaffolds are gradually lifted away so students can demonstrate their understanding and proficiency of the skill or strategy.

Graves and Fitzgerald (2003) note that "effective instruction often follows a progression in which teachers gradually do less of the work and students gradually assume increased responsibility of their learning. It is through this process of gradually assuming more responsibility for their learning that students become competent, independent learners" (pg. 93). Through gradually releasing responsibility to students, teachers are giving frequent feedback, which is also considered an effective instructional approach. This model can be found in Appendix C.

A Model for Success for All Students

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2008). *Better learning through structured teaching: A framework for the gradual release of responsibility.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
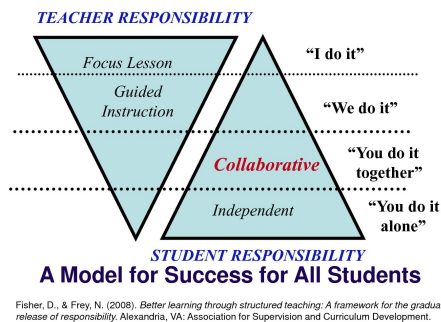
Feedback. Through his many years of research, John Hattie has come to the conclusion that "feedback is among the most powerful influences on achievement" (2009). The feedback Hattie talks about, however, is not a generic "way to go" or "nice try" but rather "can you think of another approach this task?" Feedback has a specific purpose: to provide information specifically relating to the task or process of learning that fills the gap between what is understood and what is aimed to be understood (Sadler, 1989). Therefore, feedback should be just as explicit as instruction. Feedback provides information that helps learners confirm, refine, or restructure various kinds of knowledge, strategies, and beliefs that are related to their learning objectives (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Giving feedback can be done is a number of ways. When I give feedback, I want to increase student effort, motivation, or engagement. I can do this by helping students come to a different viewpoint, confirming to a student that they are correct or incorrect, or guiding students in the direction of finding more information needed or other strategies that could be used (Hattie, 2009). Hattie also stresses that "providing feedback is not about giving rewards, but rather providing information about the task (2009)."

Robert Marzano is another seasoned researcher who advocates providing feedback. He has highlighted that "students need to be given feedback while there is still time to improve"

(2015). He agrees with Hattie on the idea that it is crucial for teachers to give students feedback after they engage with any new material. This will let students immediately know what is correct or incorrect as well as help students see where and how they can improve when learning and applying new reading skills and strategies.

Dr. Natalie Saaris shares her specific guidelines teachers should follow when giving feedback. Her guidelines can be easily implemented into any classroom setting and are more than likely what teachers are already doing in their classrooms:

1. Emphasize the task, not the student's ability. I want my students to understand that it is the quality of their work that I am giving feedback on, not them personally.

2. Give specific guidance on how to improve. The more specific the feedback, the more I hope to inspire my students to reflect on their learning process. Saaris states "taking the time to specify what they student did right or wrong, enables the student to succeed when the same strategy or skill is applied in the future" (2016).

3. Provide regular, ongoing feedback. By providing consistent feedback, I hope to lessen students' frustration around skills or strategies they find more difficult. If I do not give them ongoing feedback, I run the risk of allowing them to fall into habits that can be difficult to get them out of.

4. Focus on process, not results. I will strive to inspire my students to be reflective about their cognitive process. "When teachers focus on the learning process rather than the performance outcomes, feedback becomes a two-way channel"

(Saaris, 2016). Thoughtful feedback that creates deeper learning, enables teachers

to improve their instruction.

All of the instructional strategies listed above are vital tools when implementing guided reading groups in a classroom. This list proves there are multiple pathways to take when trying to enhance the learning of strong readers.

Conclusion

Fluent readers rarely get the opportunities to extend their learning. There are so many avenues for fluent readers to engage in strategies and to continue strengthening their reading. All readers deserve to learn in motivational settings where they feel safe to take risks and be self-aware of their own thinking and reading growth.

Richardson reminds us that although guided reading is essential for struggling readers, all students deserve instruction at their reading level (2016). Through her research, Richardson has learned that many advanced readers push through the text with minimal comprehension (2016). Guided reading is only one part of the literacy program, but it is a critical part (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Oczkus reminds us that reciprocal teaching is a strategy that involves endless discussion about a student's deep understanding about a text. It is a strategy that provides support through modeling, practice, scaffolding, think-alouds, and cooperative learning (2010).

I used this chapter to review literature on the five components of literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, and why each skill is essential for all students. Reading does not stop at being able to decode and read fluently. Reading is the

essence of learning and readers are never fully developed because of the constant experience and change in the world around them.

In Chapter Three, I will discuss the methods for my action research and outline how I plan to observe and analyze student reading growth through effective implementation of guided reading groups with the support of reciprocal teaching with second-grade students. Chapter Four follows and explains my results of my observations and research. Finally, Chapter Five will conclude my thesis with the implications of the research and my own action research, examining the idea of *effective strategies that provide support and enhance learning for strong readers.*

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

My research will explore a topic I feel does not get enough attention in schools today. Students who are considered fluent readers are almost always the students who are left to work independently while struggling readers get more individualized attention from the teacher. Educators understand that guided reading is a systematic approach to small group instruction, but that approach is often times only taken towards students who struggle, not towards students who need their learning extended. My research will aim at examining the *effective strategies that provide support and enhance learning for strong readers.* I conducted my action research from February 4, 2019 to February 28, 2019. My methods for researching this idea will include implementing a research-based guided reading program in my own reading classroom, conducting weekly progress monitoring in fluency and comprehension, interacting with students through discussion, and observing reading behaviors of each of my students and how those behaviors are impacting their reading development.

Rationale for Action Research

I chose to conduct action research in my classroom around guided reading with the support of reciprocal teaching because both have a framework that has been proven to be effective with all reading levels but also has remarkable results in helping strong readers comprehend deeper and really extend their understanding of a text. Many teachers believe that guided reading is meant for struggling readers only and serves no purpose for students who already read fluently. I want to be able to have the evidence that supports guided reading being

effective to strong readers. Mills states that "within education, the main goal is to determine ways to enhance the lives of children '(2011). I also believe that my action research will enhance the instruction of classroom teachers.

Hensen (1996), Osterman & Kottkamp (1993), and Tomlinson (1995) assert that action research impacts professional growth and development. Johnson (2012) states that action research bridges that gap between research and practice and encourages teachers to become continuous learners within their classrooms and schools. It is my hope that my action research will ignite an awareness among classroom teachers that guided reading can have a positive impact on all readers, no matter their reading level. I also want my research to improve my small group instruction, using the most effective practices to improve student's reading development.

Finally, my thesis topic evolved into what it is today because I had first-hand experience as parent of my child not receiving the type of instruction she deserves. This is no fault of her classroom teacher, as many teachers do not fully understand that capabilities of their high flyers or strategies they can implement to reach them. This is enough of a connection to make me excited and determined to research the topics of guided reading and reciprocal teaching further, impact student learning, and help my colleagues reach all their students through *effective strategies that provide support and enhance learning for strong readers.*

Setting

District. I currently teach reading and math in a rural district that serves 798 students kindergarten through twelfth grade. Roughly thirty-four percent of its students receive free or reduced lunch, and about twelve percent of students identify as a student of color. The Hispanic population makes up the largest minority group in the district. The district was created from

merging two small rural towns with elementary serving kindergarten through fourth grade students on one town, and the other serving fifth through twelfth grade students. The district prides itself on their students and staff strives to be the best they can be, taking pride in their school, their communities, and are held to high standards. The district's motto is: "striving to be a model rural school district."

Building. I teach in the district's elementary building. I provide research-based reading and math interventions through ADSIS (Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instructional Services). I provide reading interventions to students in kindergarten through fourth grade and math interventions to students in second through fourth grade. With the help of the district's instructional coach, I provide training and resources to the four Title I paraprofessionals who help implement interventions daily in my classroom. Our intervention time is referred to W.I.N. time or "What I Need" time. Each grade level has a scheduled W.I.N. time where each student gets the specific instruction they need.

It is essential that students who come to my classroom have expectations for behavior and learning. Students are active in my classroom for twenty-five minutes and each second is precious as that twenty-five minutes goes quickly. To keep students focused and moving forward, my interventions must be engaging and relatable to all students.

Participants. I chose to focus on second grade students for my action research. I did this because second grade students, even though fluent, are still learning how to apply many of the foundational comprehension skills and are actively working toward the target of reading well by third grade. I will have a group of four students whom I will be working with. These

students will be considered strong readers; readers who have the foundational skills, can read fluently, and comprehend at grade level.

Guided Reading Framework

Jan Richardson (2016) has laid out an easy-to-follow, effective guided reading framework. As stated in my literature review, this framework is referred to as the Assess-Decide-Guide framework. The assessment piece is the most critical step when forming guided reading groups. I will be using individual assessments to better decipher where my fluent students in their reading development. Assessing students one-on-one is ideal because the data collected can give insight into students to better prepare working with them. Individual assessments conducted for fluent readers beyond their January benchmark assessments will be a work knowledge inventory.

The activities for my guided reading group will be built around Richardson's framework and also have reciprocal teaching strategies plugged in where necessary. My fluent readers will engage in activities including the four strategies used for reciprocal teaching: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Each student will participate in discussions as well as take the lead on each role as predictor, questioner, clarifier, and predictor. I will gather field notes for each student and their roles. Students will also be participating in activities that support their vocabulary.

As I am planning each week for this group, I will use my field notes to determine areas of weakness to focus on the following week. There will also be time made to celebrate the skills the group did well with. Throughout these guided reading lessons, I will be collecting data through quick techniques that will provide me with useful information on each student.

Data Collection Methods

      I collected data weekly through one-minute progress monitoring probes in fluency and comprehension. I will also be collecting data on a daily basis through our group discussions, conferring with individual students, and activities. At the end of each week, students will reflect on how they did individually, writing about one skill they did well with and one skill they need to work on more.

      Progress Monitoring. My district uses Fastbridge Learning (2015) as a universal screener. I will be utilizing Fastbridge's progress monitoring probes for oral reading fluency and comprehension. Progress monitoring these skills will help me decide if the instructional approaches I am taking are effective for student learning.

      Discussion. Reciprocal teaching centers around discussion. I will model for students how to facilitate group discussions as they will be facilitators for each week. We will provide thought-provoking questions to each other. While students contribute to discussions, they will use specific language that will propel the discussion forward and give everyone a chance to participate.

      Conferring. While students are reading and writing, I will circulate among the group and confer with students, individually. By connecting with the student individually, I will be able to ask questions, help clarify confusions, and probe for deeper understanding. This one-on-one time should be about personal connection, not the student reading out loud.

      Field Notes. I will be collecting notes throughout my entire research process. I will be keeping track of my instructional approach, how mu students respond to activities, purposes for trying different approaches and activities, as well as student's reading behaviors and mindfulness

of their learning. I will be eager to analyze the data I collect to see how I have positively impacted student learning.

Data Analysis Methods

Coding will be the tool I use for organizing my data. I will use the coding process to generate descriptions of categories or themes for analysis (Creswell, 2014). When interpreting my qualitative data, I will reflect on what was learned and what data shows to be the most effective approach to guided reading and reciprocal teaching. For my quantitative data, I will provide charts and graphs to show student performance from their progress monitoring probes. For validity and reliability purposes, I will use member checking, with the help of my instructional coach, to make sure research-based activities are done with fidelity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I described the district, school, and classroom in which I will conduct my action research. I included my overall plan and timeline for my action research, the data collection tools I will utilize, and the analysis of my techniques I will use. Chapter Four will consist of my findings from my action research examining the idea *effective strategies that provide support and enhance learning for strong readers.*

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

How to support and extend high-achieving readers has become a passion of mine. To examine this more closely, I implemented a guided reading framework with the support of reciprocal teaching strategies for fluent readers in second grade. The guided reading framework I chose to implement is from Jan Richardson's book *The Next Step Forward in Guided Reading*. Richardson's approach was easily implemented and effective for my fluent readers. I chose to incorporate reciprocal teaching because it provides deep thought-provoking discussion that I felt would be most effective in enhancing learning for already strong readers. Through my research, I found that guided reading and reciprocal teaching pair extremely well together because each approach follows a gradual-release type model.

My action research took place during a four-week block of time in which four second-grade students took part in my guided reading group five days a week for twenty-five minutes each day. During this time, each student practiced the role of predictor, questioner, clarifier, and summarizer within the guided reading framework. While conducting each of these roles students learned each reciprocal teaching strategy with the support of language prompts. As the teacher, I provided support and modeling quite heavily in the beginning for each of these roles but this scaffolding soon dwindled as students gained more confidence.

Each week I used a chart titled "Basic Comprehension Chart for Guided Reading Groups" recommended by Lori D. Oczkus (2010). Everyday, students would get sticky notes to to write down predictions, questions, unknown words, and clarifications. Each student would

initial their sticky notes and place them on our guided reading chart each week. By doing this, students were documenting their progress in strategy use.

Every day I saw each student gaining deeper understanding of not only the text they were engaged with, but also the strategies they were learning to expand their learning. When we had our first discussion at the end of week one, students were either giving me one-word answers or not participating at all. Their fluency was above grade level and their comprehension was at grade level. However, I noticed immediately that inferring and summarizing were skills that needed improvement. As the weeks progressed, discussions evolved into constant conversation, fluency remained steady, and comprehension scores exploded as inferring and summarizing skills were strengthened. I kept detailed field notes of daily discussions and progress monitored for improvement weekly to prove that there are *effective strategies that support and enhance the learning of strong readers.*

Participants

I chose a group of four second-grade students who were at or above grade level targets for fluency and comprehension based on their winter benchmark scores. Even though this is a small group of students, they are representative of a larger student population in terms of gender, motivation and academic skill level. This groups was made up of two boys and two girls. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of all students.

Alice. Alice is a well-articulated and poised Caucasian girl who has a strong work ethic. I could tell from the get-go that she would be a leader of our group and was excited to see her in action. Throughout the research period, Alice proved herself to be an organized and eager participant. At times, I had to reign Alice in because she was so eager. Luckily she understood

after explanation, the importance of taking the right steps for each lesson. Alice contributed a great deal to our discussions and was also a cheerleader for others in the group.

Tina. Tina is a very soft-spoken Caucasian girl who displays conscientious habits in everything she does. I can comfortably say that she and Alice were complete opposites when it came to eagerness to participate in activities. Tina is, however, cooperative and has an "I want to do well" attitude. When we started our group, Tina would sit back and take everything in. She was one-hundred percent in tune with what was happening, she was just very apprehensive about joining in. Even the turn and talk activities were intimidating for her. By the end of our time together, Tina was contributing to the discussions in our turn and talk conversations but was still not completely comfortable with talking to the whole group.

George. George is a high-energy Caucasian boy who loves to share anything and everything that comes to mind. I knew that I was going to have set high expectations around sharing and discussing at appropriate times. George would interrupt several times during a lesson for the first couple weeks of lessons. I would have students discuss expectations around sharing each day prior to the lesson starting as reminder for everyone. By week three, George was started to become more aware of his interruptions and did it less. George did well with making personal connections with texts, modeling that skills well for others.

Ian. Ian is a quiet Caucasian boy who has perfected the 'fly under the radar' behavior in his classroom. He often times lagged behind because he was having a difficult time to focusing and staying with the group. Small group was not his favorite thing as it was more difficult to keep to himself and not participate a whole lot. Each week he got a little more eager to try the

different roles and facilitate the discussion. He actually told me he enjoyed reciprocal teaching

because it was a lot of discussion versus writing.

Week #1: February 4, 2019-February 8, 2019

Title/Level of book: Art in Caves/R

Comprehension Focus/Reciprocal Teaching Strategy: Ask and Answer Questions

Days 1 and 2

Introduce a New Book (3-5 minutes)

We started our first guided reading group with an introduction to out first book: *Art in*

Caves. Richardson suggests that the teacher be enthusiastic when introducing the text with

language such as "you are going to enjoy this book!" (2016). I kept this in mind as I presented

the book to the group stating "this book has a lot of really cool information in it!" It seemed to

be the hook I needed to get them engaged. I continued with sharing our comprehension focus

with the group: ask and answer questions. Before we started previewing the text, I gave a brief

synopsis of the book: "Long ago, people made art in caves for various reasons."

As a group we then moved onto previewing text features such as book's title, cover,

illustrations, information on the back cover, headings, captions, and maps. Students then took a

sticky note and jotted down their predictions:

Alice: "I predict this story is about people who made drawings inside caves."

Tina: "I think this story will be about what people did a long time ago."

George: "I think this is going to be about people making pictures on cave walls.

Ian: "I think it's going to take place a long time ago."

Next, I introduced new vocabulary words to the group. Richardson states "Fluent readers should be able to figure out most new words by using vocabulary strategies. However, many scientific and historical texts refer to locations or events that may be unfamiliar to students" (2016). This story had two words, Lascaux (la SKOW) and Chauvet (show VAY) that I knew students would struggle to figure out because they were the names of cities in France. I then introduced three vocabulary words prior to reading with the hope that students would have a deeper comprehension of the text. Words that were defined, connected with background knowledge (if able to), related to the book, and discussed with a partner included:

     Textures: the feel or consistency of a surface

     Cavern: cave or chamber

     Engravings: etching or impression of an object

After discussing vocabulary words, students began to silent read and I rotated through and listened to each one. Opitz & Rasinski (1998) assert not to use round-robin reading because it does not promote reading comprehension.

Read and Respond with Prompting (10-12 minutes)

While students were reading silently, each had sticky notes to use to write down questions or wonderings about what they were reading. I encouraged them to write one question/wondering after each section they read. I circulated as students were reading and writing to provide support where needed. Here are some of the questions students wrote down:

     Alice: What did people use to paint with?

     Tina: Why did they only draw animals?

     George: What did people use to make the drawings?

Ian: How did they make handprints on the walls?

After hearing each question, I asked students, individually, what they could do to clarify their answer. If they found their answer, they were to write it on another sticky note. Most of them stated that they could read on to find the answer to their question. I circulated through the group one more time to see if any more support was needed and noticed Tina was struggling with clarifying her question. Here is our conversation:

Mrs. Benbrooks: How's it going, Tina?

Tina: ok.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Looks like you might be stuck, may I help?

Tina: Yes, please.

Mrs. Benbrooks: So your question is why did people only draw animals, right?

Tina: Right.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Did you find the heading where the answer might be?

Tina: I think it's going to be under why did they do it.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Yes, I would agree with that. So what can we do to search for the answer here?

Tina: I can reread?

Mrs. Benbrooks: That's right! Why don't you start reading and I will listen in.

[Tina begins to read the section]

[Tina stops abruptly]

Tina: I think they drew animals to show they loved and respected them!

Mrs. Benbrooks: Yes! Nice job, Tina. Go ahead and write that on your sticky note. Now, what strategy could you use next time if you're not sure how to answer a question?

Tina: Reread!

This little snippet of our time together shows how conferring can be effective strategy to use. That one-on-one conversation is so crucial in order to get to know our students as readers and as thinkers. After conferring, students shared their questions and clarifications with a partner and then placed their sticky notes on our guided reading chart.

Discuss and Teach (4-5 minutes)

I decided to embed reciprocal teaching into my guided reading instruction because of its guidance into deeper discussion among students. One of my goals was to have all four students actively engaged in discussion while showing each other respect, piggybacking on one another's comments, and praising each other on their contributions.

Our first discussion did not exactly have all those elements, however, almost everyone was eager to share their ideas. One of the topics we discussed was *Why do you think the author wrote this story? What do you think she wanted you to learn?* Everyone started to answer at once so I knew modeling was a high need when it came to students understanding what my expectations were for group discussion.

Mrs. Benbrooks: I love that you all have ideas to share! But we need to be respectful of one another and give everyone a chance to be heard. Everyone will get a chance to voice their ideas. Alice, what do you think the author's purpose for writing this story was?

Alice: I think the author wanted to help us learn about how people made art thousands of years ago.

Mrs. Benbrooks: I agree with your idea. I also think the author wanted us to understand that even today we are still learning about how people lived long ago. George, do you have anything to add?

George: I had the same idea as Alice. I also think we learned why people made art on cave walls a long time ago.

Mrs. Benbrooks: That's right, George. What were some of the reasons why they made art on cave walls? Tina, can you tell us about clarifying your question while reading?

Tina: Yes, I remember reading that people made drawings of animals on cave walls to show their love and respect for the animals.

Mrs. Benbrooks: That's right, Tina. Well done. Ian did you want to add anything?

Ian: I think I read that people also used the drawings to tell a story.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Right. Nice job everyone one. Do you see the difference in having that type of discussion versus blurting at once helps us understand the story better?

Students: Oh yeah!

By modeling how to have a conversation where everyone is contributing, students can see the value in being active listeners. By listening to others first, some were able to recall and add details from specific parts of the story. I also hope they picked up on my praising words and that they will incorporate that into future discussions.

Word Study (1-2 minutes)

For this story, I had students start a new word list. On their new word list, students write the new word along with a definition to help them better understand the word. We will use this

as an ongoing list for future stories as well. The New Word List template can be found in Appendix H.

Day 3

Progress Monitoring

Every Wednesday, I progress monitored each student in reading fluency and comprehension. I did this using Fastbridge Learning, my district's universal screening platform. While I was not concerned with their fluency, I thought it would be beneficial to keep a record of their fluency to make sure they were maintaining (and, who knows, maybe improving) their fluency. According Fastbridge (2015) end of the year targets for second grade are:

Fluency: 106 words correct per minute

Comprehension Recall: 9

Comprehension Questions: 9

Week one story can be found in Appendix D.

Week one progress monitoring results:

Student	Week 1
Alice	Fluency: 169 Recall: 6 Questions: 10
Tina	Fluency: 142 Recall: 5 Questions: 9
George	Fluency: 149 Recall: 4 Questions: 9
Ian	Fluency: 128 Recall: 3 Questions: 7

Day 4

On day four, students continued to read and respond with different prompts. We also discussed the student's responses to their writing prompt and spent some time on word work again.

Read and Respond (10-12 minutes)

Again, students are writing while they are reading. Their written response is still related to our comprehension focus which is ask and answer questions for this week. "Writing during reading help students organize their thoughts and keeps them focused on the task. Students' written responses also help you, as you can monitor their comprehension and know when to scaffold support" (Richardson, 2015).

Each student used sticky notes to record their questions and clarifications. As I rotated to individuals I noticed more independence and strategy use to find their answers. A question George was wondering about was: *Where is France?* This was a question he was not going to find the answer to in the text. So, we gathered around the table and I took out a world map and we found France. Students enjoyed looking at the map and comparing where were live to where France, and other places, were. I will definitely be keeping the map close by!

Discuss and Teach (4-5 minutes)

Our map conversation took up most of our discussion time but I was ok with that. All four students were highly engaged and learning something new. It was exciting to see it happen so spontaneously.

Word Study (1-2 minutes)

We continued to fill out our new word list and review definitions.

Day 5

Guided Writing (20 minutes)

Richardson (2015) states that there are two types of struggling writers: "those who yearn to write but lack the skills, and those who are reluctant to write because they lack the skills" (pg. 242). Alice and Tina were my "yearn to write" writers and George and Ian were my "reluctant" writers. "Guided writing helps students improve writing skills and solidify or extend their understanding of the text" (Richardson, 2015, pg. 243). Guided writing happend at our table so that I was there to provide support if it was needed. I used this first writing lesson as guide to help me better understand where each student was in their writing development. Richardson suggests four steps to fluent guided writing:

1. Analyze writing samples and pinpoint a target skill.

2. Select a response format.

3. Plan with students.

4. Scaffold students as they write.

For this this first guided writing lesson, I connected to to the comprehension focus for the week, ask and answer questions, and related the prompt back to what we discussed earlier in the week. For this lesson, students responded to the following format: *Write about the author's purpose.* Before they began, we refreshed our memories about what we had discussed earlier in the week.

As I was circulating through the group, there was definite hesitation from some and others were writing a lightning speed. After writing, I collected their responses to analyze for next week's lesson.

Week #2: February 11, 2019-February 15, 2019

Title/Level of book: All About Sports/Q

Comprehension Focus/Reciprocal Teaching Strategy: Summarizing

Days 1 and 2

Introduce a New Material (3-5 minutes)

I introduced the new book we would be reading for the week: *All About Sports*, giving a

brief synopsis: *"this book is going to tell us about different kinds of sports and how they*

changed over time." I also shared our comprehension focus for the week: summarizing. I chose

this focus because I felt it would lead to some quality work on writing and summarizing is

almost always a difficult skill to achieve, even for the most fluent of readers.

Similar to last week, we previewed the text features and made our predictions. This week

I provided an Icon and Strategy Poster for predicting, recommended by Oczkus (2010). This

tool has language prompts for students to use rather than always saying "I think…" This poster

can be found in Appendix F. I encouraged students to use a sentence starter other than "I

think…" or "I predict…" Here are their predictions for this story:

Alice: "I wonder what the stick is called the man is holding in the book?"

Tina: "I bet these sports started a long time ago."

George: "I will learn about baseball because there are pictures of baseball

games."

Ian: "I wonder what old ice skates were made of?"

Again, we placed our predictions on our guided reading chart to refer back to at the end of our

lesson.

Next, new vocabulary words were introduced and defined:

> Amateur: a person who engages in a sport and is unpaid; not a professional athlete
>
> Compiled: collect information
>
> Artificially: false, not real

Students were able to make connections with these words better than last week's story. After defining amateur, they all responded with "oh yeah, I've heard of that word before!" Alice also offered a connection to the word artificially: "I see that word a lot on food packages." They also understood the words when we related them to the book and some if the illustrations we could connect them to.

Read and Respond with Prompting (10-12 minutes)

We quickly moved into our silent reading time. With summarizing being our comprehension focus for the week, I had students read a section of the book and write two responses to their reading on sticky notes. I also encouraged students to jot down their questions or wonderings while reading as well as be on the lookout to clarify any questions or wonderings they had. I circulated through the group and supported where necessary. As I was making my way through the group for the second time, I noticed Ian had not written on either of sticky notes:

> *Mrs. Benbrooks: Ian, how are you doing with your responses.*
>
> *Ian: [shrugs his shoulders]*
>
> *Mrs. Benbrooks: It looks like you've read through the first section about*
>
> *LaCrosse. Can you tell me one sentence about what you read?*
>
> *Ian: It's a game you play with a stick that has a net thing on it.*

Mrs. Benbrooks: Ok, good. Let's look back in the text to find out what that is called.

Ian: [flips through the pages and points] It's called a crosse.

Mrs. Benbrooks: That's right. I never knew what that was called-I'm glad you showed me!

Ian: So I should write that on my sticky note?

Mrs. Benbrooks: I think so! What will your sentence be?

Ian: LaCrosse players use a stick called a crosse to catch the ball?

Mrs. Benbrooks: Perfect! Nice job, Ian!

When our silent reading time was done, students placed their sticky notes on our chart to use for our discussion time.

Discuss and Teach (4-5 minutes)

This book had three sections, each on a specific sport. Section one was about lacrosse, Section two, ice skating, and Section three, baseball. I decided to have a short discussion about and summarize each section. Students did a nice job of writing down what they thought was most important about each section without writing too much. At this point, we focused on what students wrote during their reading and whether or not those were the most important details. We will work together on Thursday to put the sentences into a fluent summary.

Word Study (1-2 minutes)

During this time, we added our new vocabulary words to our new word list (Appendix H). On Thursday we will review our words and use them in a sentence with a partner.

Day 3

Progress Monitoring

Fluency: 106 words correct per minute

Comprehension Recall: 9

Comprehension Questions: 9

Week two story can be found in Appendix D.

Week two progress monitoring results:

Student	Week 2
Alice	Fluency: 136 Recall: 6 Questions: 10
Tina	Fluency: 131 Recall: 2 Questions: 9
George	Fluency: 130 Recall: 4 Questions: 6
Ian	Fluency: 127 Recall: 3 Questions: 8

Day 4

Today, I gave more of our focus to summarizing with the reciprocal teaching approach. We spent the majority of our time verbally summarizing the story. I gave students about ten minutes of silent reading time and a minute or two to look over our guided reading chart to review their notes from earlier in the week. We then used the summarizing response poster to create and share a summary of each section of the book with a partner. We took our sticky notes

from earlier in the week for each section and students had to put them in order to make a fluent summary. This is an activity recommended by Oczkus (2015).

George and Alice took the section on lacrosse to summarize and Ian and Tina summarized the ice skating section.

George and Alice's summary: Native Americans started to play lacrosse hundreds of years ago. Lacrosse is still played today by amateurs and professionals. When you play lacrosse, you have to wear a helmet with a face mask. Players use a stick called a crosse to catch and throw the ball.

Ian and Tina's summary: People started using ice skates 3,000 years ago. Skates were made from animal bones tied to feet and people would skate to get from one place to another. Today, skates have metal blades and people mostly skate for fun or competition.

These summaries are done very well. I was impressed as I went back and forth and listened to groups work through their notes and create their summaries together. My goal for tomorrow is to get their words onto paper by summarizing the section on baseball.

Day 5

Guided Writing (20 minutes)

After analyzing student's writing from last week, I pinpointed areas that need more focus. Those areas include:

- Organization
- Sentence fluency

- Capitalization/punctuation

- Transition words and phrases

Realistically, I could not tackle all of these areas in my timeframe. I decided to focus on organization and capitalization/punctuation. To begin this lesson, we had a discussion on capitalization and punctuation and how we use those skills in writing. I then explained that when we write, we need the sentence to make sense together.

Mrs, Benbrooks: When we start our summary on the baseball section, what would make sense to start with?

George: I think it would make sense to begin with how baseball started.

Alice: I agree with George. And then move onto to talk about what baseball is like today.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Yes, that makes a lot of sense. Let's use our sticky notes as guides and see if we can create a fluent summary of the baseball section.

Students began writing their summary using their sticky notes and myself as support. As I observed their writing, I needed to give reminders for capitalization and end punctuation. I feel as though the use of sticky notes to have as a tool is a great scaffolding piece for sentence fluency and organization.

Week #3: February 18, 2019-February 22, 2019

Title/Level of book: Tall Tail Tuesday/M

Comprehension Focus/Reciprocal Teaching Strategy: Inferring by analyzing characters

Days 1 and 2

Introduce a New Material (3-5 minutes)

This week I decided on a fiction text. I also chose inferring by analyzing characters as our comprehension focus. During progress monitoring, I noticed the use of several inferring questions and that most of the students were struggling with answering them. The text for this week, *Tall Tail Tuesday* will lend itself well for making inferences.

I introduced the book to the group: "*This is a story about a boy who tells tall tales and his cousin gets really frustrated when he does.*" We did a quick preview and predict of this text. One question that came about during our preview was from Ian:

> *Ian: What exactly is a tall tale?*
>
> *Mrs. Benbrooks: That's a great question, Ian. Does anyone know what a tall tale is?*
>
> *Alice: Isn't it a made-up story?*
>
> *Mrs. Benbrooks: Sort of, yes. A tall tale is a made-up story but the events or characters are really exaggerated. Do any of you know the story of Paul Bunyan?*
>
> *George: YEAH! I have seen him up north! And his blue ox!*
>
> *Mrs. Benbrooks: Yep, that would be him! Paul Bunyan is a giant lumberjack who had superhuman powers-like he would pick his teeth with a pine tree, or cut down one acre of trees with one swing of his ax. Those are things that real people can't do. The story of Paul Bunyan is a tall tale.*

Student predictions:

> Alice: "I bet the story is about fishing the boy and his dad going fishing."
>
> Tina: "I'm wondering if the boy catches a really big fish."
>
> George: "I think the fish will sink their boat because it is so huge!"

Ian: "I think the dad is worried about what his son caught on his pole."

I can see each student has grown with their reciprocal language use by this discourse about predictions. George gave a reason why he was thinking they way he was. Student language is much richer and they are looking or specific details to help make a prediction while previewing the text.

The new vocabulary words introduced for this story were:

- Rickety: shacky, likely to fall apart

- Vacant: empty

Read and Respond with Prompting (10-12 minutes)

While students were engaged in silent reading, I asked them to analyze the characters throughout the story. Prompts I provided for them included:

- How are the characters feeling? What is your evidence?

- Why did the character do or say something?

- How did the characters change? What caused the change?

- What is the character thinking?

Again, each student used sticky notes to record their responses. As I was observing and conferring, these are some of the responses I saw:

Alice: The girl looks like she is mad or annoyed because her eyebrows look like she might be feeling that way.

Tina: The boy always looks happy because he is smiling in every picture and he has fun telling his story.

George: Manny likes telling tall tales.

Ian: The girl doesn't like listening to her cousin's stories because they are so fake.

At this point I asked students to stop reading and writing. I told them that we would continue with this activity tomorrow and practice making inferences about what they already wrote. I added further that there might be more reasons why the characters are feeling they way they are or why they are doing/saying something specific.

Discuss and Teach (4-5 minutes)

I used the following activity from Jan Richardson (2015) (Appendix I) to help students make inferences about the story:

1. Find an important or surprising dialogue or action.

2. Why did the the character say or do that?

3. What is the character thinking?

4. What are you thinking?

I'm thinking _____ because the character _____.

The following is the conversation we had based on the questions above:

Mrs. Benbrooks: Can anyone think of an important or surprising part of the

story?

[silence]

Mrs. Benbrooks: Ok. How about the part when the girl gets really frustrated and

yells at Manny?

Tina: When she accused him of making the whole story up?

Mrs. Benbrooks: Yes. Can we go back to the text and find that dialogue?

[students look back through the text]

Alice: I found it.

Girl: "A tug-of-war" With the Great Fearsome Tuna of Minnesota? " I exclaimed. "There's no such thing! You made the whole thing up."

Manny looked upset. "That's a rude thing to say."

Girl: "Well, I think it's rude that you can't tell the truth."

Mrs. Benbrooks: Good. So why do you think she said something like that to him?

George: Because she was angry. She was angry that he kept telling lies in his story.

Ian: She was really annoyed with him.

Mrs. Benbrooks: I agree. I think she had heard enough. What do you think she was thinking?

Tina: Probably that she couldn't listen to him anymore. Or maybe she thought that Manny thought is was actually true.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Do you think that Manny thought it was true?

George: I don't think so. I think he just enjoys telling stories.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Ok George so how could you fill in the sentence about your thinking?

George: I'm thinking Manny likes telling stories because the character is really good at it.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Nicely done.

This quick activity allows for enough discussion to make inferences using one small piece of text. This conversation also proves, once again, that reciprocal teaching language helps facilitate deep discussion among students.

Word Study (1-2 minutes)

Students participated in an activity using character feeling and traits for their word study. This activity can be found in Appendix G.

Day 3

Progress Monitoring

Fluency: 106 words correct per minute

Comprehension Recall: 9

Comprehension Questions: 9

Week three story can be found in Appendix D.

Week three progress monitoring results:

Student	Week 3
Alice	Fluency: 149 Recall: 6 Questions:
Tina	Fluency: 136 Recall: 6 Questions:
George	Fluency: 140 Recall: 6 Questions:
Ian	Fluency: 133 Recall: 5 Questions:

Day 4

Read and Respond with Prompting (10-12 minutes)

Students took their inferences from earlier and read to see if they could find more evidence for their inference. As I conferred with each of them, students were able to find more clues that supported their thinking.

Conferring with Alice

Initial inference: The girl looks like she is mad or annoyed because her eyebrows look like she might be feeling that way.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Ok Alice, you have good evidence of why you think the girl is mad or annoyed. I like how you used the pictures. Is there anything you read that could help support your thinking?

Alice: In the story on page 2 and page 6, She tried to tell him he was lying but Manny ignored her both times. That probably made her mad.

Mrs. Benbrooks: I agree. Nice job. Keep reading and see if you can find anything else.

Conferring with Tina

Initial inference: The boy always looks happy because he is smiling in every picture and he has fun telling his story.

Mrs. Benbrooks: I think you are right that Manny has fun telling stories. How do you know for sure? Besides the pictures, can you find evidence in the story that supports your thinking?

[Tina begins reading aloud]

Tina: There are a lot of exclamation points on page 6. That probably means he's excited or yelling when he's telling that part of the story. He seems to be pretty excited about it.

Mrs. Benbrooks: That is very true. Good ideas.

Conferring with George

Initial inference: Manny likes telling tall tales.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Were you able to find specific evidence that shows Manny likes telling tall tales?

George: I sure was. At the beginning of the story the girl says "Manny was telling one of his ridiculous stories, as usual."

Mrs. Benbrooks: What about that statement tells you he likes to tell these stories?

George: She said as usual so he must do it all the time.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Great evidence!

Conferring with Ian

Initial inference: The girl doesn't like listening to her cousin's stories because they are so fake.

Mrs. Benbrooks: So you think the girl doesn't like Manny's stories because they are fake, right?

Ian: Right.

Mrs. Benbrooks: So what in the story makes you think that?

Ian: I guess because she questions everything he says.

Mrs. Benbrooks: She does do that, doesn't she? It seemed that more exaggerated he got, the more frustrated she got.

Ian: Yeah, definitely.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Good job, Ian.

Conferring took a little longer than usual today so we did not get to our word study. I was extremely pleased with the engagement of students during this activity and impressed with their ability to search for evidence to support their thinking.

Day 5

Guided Writing (20 minutes)

Today students wrote their inferences focusing on capitalization/punctuation and organization. I felt that the inferring activities we did together prepared them for writing a brief response on their own. Of course, we reviewed our notes and discussion from the week prior to students working on their own. I also gave them some time to reread the story. I was excited to get started because the students were excited to start!

As students started writing, I held back and just observed them in their process. Students used the same character feelings and traits format (Appendix G) to write their responses as they did earlier in the week. This time, they needed to choose a different character to write about.

Week #4: February 25, 2019-February 28, 2019

Title/Level of book: Good Dogs, Guide Dogs/O

Comprehension Focus/Reciprocal Teaching Strategy: Identifying Main Idea

Days 1 and 2

Introduce a New Material (3-5 minutes)

Another skill many students have difficulty with is identifying the main idea. For this skill, I chose another nonfiction text: *Good Dogs, Guide Dogs.* I felt that the topic of the text would be of high interest to the students. As I introduced the book, I explained that *"some types*

of dogs are trained to help people. This book is going to explain the many ways they can help

people." I also explained that our comprehension focus for the week would be identifying the

main idea, or what the story is mostly about. We went on to preview the text features and make

predictions as we did in past weeks. Here are student's predictions for this story:

Alice: "I'll bet dogs have to train a long time to learn how to help people."

Tina: "I think dogs have to wear something special."

George: "I wonder if these dogs help people who can't see."

Ian: "I think different kinds of dogs can help people because there are different

kinds of dogs in the pictures."

Next we jumped into identifying and defining new vocabulary words:

- Quiver: shake or tremble

- Ability: being able to do something

- Snap: to take quickly (bite)

Students explained these words to a partner and used them in sentences by doing a turn and talk.

Read and Respond with Prompting (10-12 minutes)

This story could be divided into four parts. I assigned a student to read one part of the

story and respond to this prompt: What is this part mostly about? I encouraged students to use

complete sentences with appropriate capitalization/punctuation. I alloted students some time

before I started conferring with them. I wanted them to get something written down on their

sticky notes so I could get a clear starting point for our discussion around this skill.

Alice read and responded to the section titled *Dogs Helping People.* When I sat to confer

with her, I asked her to read her response to me:

Mrs. Benbrooks: Alice, can you please read me your response?

Alice: This section was mostly about the kinds of people dogs are trained to help.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Great, you can go put your sticky note on our chart and

continue reading the text.

I did the same routine with each student:

Mrs. Benbrooks: Tina, you read the section titled Guide Dogs. What do you

think this section is mostly about?

Tina: It was about how guide dogs usually help people who can't see and the

most common types of dogs are Labradors and German Shepards.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Nice job. You can go place your sticky note on our chart and

continue reading the text.

Mrs. Benbrooks: George, you read the section titled How a Guide Dog is Trained.

What do you think this section is mostly about?

George: I think it's about how dogs are trained from when they are puppies until

they are adults and ready for a human that needs help.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Well done. You may place your sticky note on our chart and

continue reading the text.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Ian, you read the section titled Freedom and Independence.

What do you think this section is mostly about?

Ian: This is section is mostly about how dogs help people live even though they have a disability.

Mrs. Benbrooks: Great work. You may place your sticky note on our chart.

I then invited students back to our table to discuss their work as a group. All four did an excellent job with stating what they thought their section was mostly about.

Discuss and Teach (4-5 minutes)

I wanted to show them one more strategy they could use to help them figure out what a section of a text is mostly about. We followed these three steps to identify the main idea of a section:

1. Turn the heading into a question.

2. Bullet key words that answer the question.

3. Use the question and key words to identify the main idea of the passage.

This activity can be found in *The Next Step Forward in Guided Reading* by Jan Richardson (2015) (Appendix I).

We took one of the bigger sections of the text to try this strategy with.

Section Title: How a Guide Dog is Trained

1. Turn the heading into a question: How are guide dogs trained?

2. Bullet key words that answer the question: teach, tasks, learn, partner, obey

3. Use the questions and key words to identify the main idea: This section is about how guide dogs are trained. A trainer will teach the dog special tasks and how to obey their partners.

As we talked through this strategy, students were very receptive to the process.

Word Study (1-2 minutes)

We took this time on both day one and day two to add our new vocabulary words to our new word list.

Day 3

Progress Monitoring

Fluency: 106 words correct per minute

Comprehension Recall: 9

Comprehension Questions: 9

Week four story can be found in Appendix D.

Week three progress monitoring results:

Student	Week 4
Alice	Fluency: 158 Recall: 6 Questions: 10
Tina	Fluency: 142 Recall: 6 Questions: 9
George	Fluency: 144 Recall: 6 Questions: 10
Ian	Fluency: 136 Recall: 6 Questions: 9

Day 4

Exit Interviews

I used the final day of my action research to conduct exit interviews with each student. I was pleased to hear that the instructional approached I took seemed to have enhanced their learning.

Question 1: What strategy helped you the most? Why?

Alice: *I think using the sticky notes is what helped me the most because they were always right on our chart. I could use them anytime I need to.*

Tina: *Writing was easier because we could use our notes.*

George: *I liked that we had the charts to go back to and reread.*

Ian: *I liked that we used different ways to learn how to do things. Like we used the sticky notes to make notes on but then used them to help organize our writing-so we used them in different ways.*

Question 2: What reading strategy did you dislike the most? Why?

Alice: *I didn't dislike any of them but some of them are harder than others-like main idea.*

Tina: *I liked them all.*

George: *I liked all of them but I don't like to write.*

Ian: *I didn't like that we had to write. I liked just talking better.*

Question 3: How did you like learning in a small group?

Alice: *Definitely.*

Tina: *Yes, it's fun.*

George: *Yeah, I guess so.*

Ian: *Yeah.*

Question 4:   What are some reading strategies you will continue to use during independent reading?

Alice: *I really liked using sticky notes to keep track of my thoughts.*

Tina: *Probably the sticky notes-I think writing things down while I read helps me understand better.*

George: *I like using different words to make my predictions.*

Ian: *Taking notes during reading helps me understand better.*

Question 5:   Do you feel that your reading has improved by learning these reading strategies?

Alice: *Yes, I think it's helped me look at stories differently and understand them better.*

Tina: *Yes, I feel like I understand what I read a lot better now.*

George: *Yeah, I feel like it's easier to talk about books now.*

Ian: *Yeah, I understand inferring better now I think.*

Question 6: Are you a more confident reader?

Alice: *Yeah, for sure.*

Tina: *Yes.*

George: *Yeah.*

Ian: *Yeah.*

Question 7: What stuck with you most during this experience?

Alice: *I liked how we took a book and broke it into smaller parts to practice using a strategy. It made it easier to understand.*

Tina: *I just really liked using the sticky notes.*

George: *Learning different words to use when talking about a book.*

Ian: *Trying different ways to learn how to do something.*

After conducting these interviews, I knew I had gained some great data on *effective strategies that provide support and enhance learning for strong readers.*

Conclusion

The goal of my research was to find, *effective strategies that provide support and enhance the learning for strong readers.* As I explained in Chapter Three, I focused on the guided reading framework and incorporated reciprocal teaching strategies where I was able. Chapter Four has shown how this unfolded in my classroom. I provided scaffolded instruction of specific comprehension strategies and provided a safe environment for students to discuss their ideas and display their thinking. I provided samples of student work showing how effective the activities and discussions was to enhancing their learning. Finally, I asked my students to reflect on how they felt their reading changed because of the skills and strategies we practiced. In Chapter Five, I will interpret the data from my study and share implications for teachers considering the use of guided reading or reciprocal teaching in their elementary classrooms.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

Introduction

Through my experience taking part in guided reading groups with reciprocal teaching, I became interested in harnessing the power of small group instruction for strong readers. After learning more about the guided reading framework, it seemed fitting as the type of setting that would propel the learning of high-achieving students. I took this opportunity to analyze which strategies would be most effective for strong readers.

In this action research project, I attempted to find *effective strategies that provide support and enhance learning for strong readers.* My intentional focus was to implement the guided reading framework and plug-in reciprocal teaching strategies where necessary. Through my research and reflection, I honed in on specific skills and strategies to help strong readers gain more confidence and apply their thinking more deeply about a text. I provided scaffolded support and slowly allowed students to become more independent in their thinking and discussion.

Major Findings

I began my research with the intent of incorporating reciprocal teaching into the guided reading framework. I quickly realized that the guided reading framework I was implementing, already incorporated many of the reciprocal teaching techniques. Had I taken more time to work with this group of students, I would have modeled and practiced the four specific strategies of reciprocal teaching more in depth. There were elements of both guided reading and reciprocal teaching that had a profound impact on student learning.

The Power of Small Group Instruction. Small group instruction enables teachers to observe students' reading behavior and provide support while they practice reading strategies. Small group instruction also allows teachers to model specific reading behaviors and strategies and for students to apply strategies in order to develop competence through practice.

Observations play a critical part in deciding what type of support students need during literacy experiences. It is a teacher tool that is used to determine whether or not a student is ready to participate in a group setting. Observations also allows teachers to collect information on how students process and respond while interacting with a text.

Small group instruction gave me the ability to observe individual behaviors, provide a scaffolded instruction in an effective manner, confer with students one-on-one to provide individualized instruction, model and practice of rich language, and facilitate deep discussions about text.

The Power of Scaffolded Instruction. One of the main benefits of scaffolded instruction is that it provides a supportive learning environment. Another term I used in Chapter Two that referred to scaffolded instruction was the gradual-release-of-responsibility model. Throughout my action research, I conducted this practice through think alouds. I would model a strategy, students would practice, and then students demonstrated their proficiency of the strategy. One strategy that this proved to work well with is modeling what discussions should look and sound like. During the first week, three of the four students wanted to speak at once, not being respectful of one another or their ideas. I needed to take the time to model what my expectations were for discussions. This was an important step to take to insure our discussions in the future would be productive and worth while.

I feel that scaffolded instruction is something teachers do everyday. However, I think it often times needs to be taken a step further with teachers explicitly modeling what a strategy looks or sounds like from beginning to end and giving ample time for students to practice it until they are competent to demonstrate it effectively on their own.

The Power of the Sticky Note. As I was preparing for my research, I was not sure if I should use the sticky note strategy or not. Richardson (2015) suggests *not* to use them as the strategy takes up too much time. Oczkus (2010) suggests to use them because it is an instructional strategy that supports student learning. I decided to give it a try and see how students responded to it. I thought they will either love use the sticky notes or the sticky notes will become nothing more than a distraction.

From the very first sticky note they used, students were hooked on the strategy. During their exit interviews, every student responded positively about the sticky notes and how recording their responses on them helped them increase their comprehension. They also appreciated that they could go back to our charts and apply them to different literacy activities.

The Power of Conferring. If I took anything away from this research,, it would be conferring is an effective strategy for strong readers. I chose to focus on some of the most difficult comprehension strategies for students of this age level. I used our conferring time to focus on each reader and how they process each strategy and respond to the text. During week one, I had a great conference with Tina. She was the student who was apprehensive about contributing anything to our group discussion and it was during this time that she was able to let her guard down and have a conversation with me about how she was going to find the answer her question about the text. I had similar conferring with each of the students in my group and each

time it was like I had a little window into their brain; I could understand their thought process better and really get to know them as a reader.

The Power of Language. Reciprocal teaching is a strategy that involves a multitude of rich language. This language is not only used for strategies like making predictions, but also to encourage members to interact with and respond to one another.

By my own responses and praising students for their contributions at the beginning of instruction, students were exposed in a positive way to this language. I would use phrases like "*nice job"* or *well done"* and always use their names while praising. I also laid a foundation of positivity by sharing I was proud of them. Then I started incorporating the language of reciprocal teaching strategies like making predictions. At first students were just saying "*I think this story is about…"* I gradually encouraged them to use other words or phrases such as *"I wonder if…", "I Imagine…", "I think I will learn...because…"* and so on. I wanted them to get in the habit of using richer language to interact with the text more deeply. Even George said in his exit interview that he enjoyed *"learning different words to use when talking about a book."*

Another point that stuck with me came from our first discussion. Everyone was talking over each other and no one was able to hear anything that was being said; it was quickly turning into an unproductive, ineffective strategy. Once I modeled the language I expected them to use, and when to use it, we were able to have deep, meaningful discussions about a text or a specific strategy.

The Power of Discussion. Prior to this group, my group discussions were fairly one-sided with me taking the reins and almost bordering on answering my own questions. Taking the time to model for students and having them practice daily, turned our discussions into

engaging learning experiences. There were days we could have discussed a text for hours. With

our first text, *Art in Caves*, George had asked where France was. This led to a wonderful

discussion that involved an extensive study of the a world map, an experience none of them had

ever had before. There were multiple pathways a text could take us through our discussions of a

text. Below shows how many times each student contributed to a discussion on a weekly basis.

Turns in Discussions				
	Week 1	**Week 2**	**Week 3**	**Week 4**
Alice	6	7	6	8
Tina	0	1	4	5
George	3	2	5	6
Ian	2	3	4	5

While I facilitated all of our discussions, I have great faith that these students could

eventually facilitate a discussion on their own. With their new knowledge of language and

strategy use, I am confident that they will carry those skills over to other areas of their learning.

Progress Monitoring

All of the focus skills I used were spiraled each week. With every new text, we made

predictions, summarized, found the main idea of the text or a section of the text, and made

inferences. It is for this reason that a student's fluency and comprehension scores improved over

the four weeks of our guided reading groups. Below is each of the student's progress monitoring

graphs along with table showing their improved results.

Like I stated on Chapter Four, inferring was a skill that Fastbridge focuses on during the comprehension piece of the assessment. Early on in my research, I noticed that most of the students in my group were answer those questions incorrectly. By focusing on this skill for a week and giving students multiple practices, I was hoping to see those scores improve, and they did. For second grade, the end of the year targets are:

Fluency: 106 words correct per minute

Comprehension recall: 9

Comprehension questions: 9

Student progress monitoring graphs can be found in Appendix K.

Student	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Alice	Fluency: 169 Recall: 6 Questions: 10	Fluency: 136 Recall: 6 Questions: 8	Fluency: 149 Recall: 6 Questions:	Fluency: 158 Recall: 6 Questions: 10
Tina	Fluency: 142 Recall: 5 Questions: 9	Fluency: 131 Recall: 2 Questions: 9	Fluency: 136 Recall: 6 Questions:	Fluency: 142 Recall: 6 Questions: 9
George	Fluency: 149 Recall: 4 Questions: 9	Fluency: 130 Recall: 4 Questions:6	Fluency:140 Recall: 6 Questions:	Fluency: 144 Recall: 6 Questions: 10
Ian	Fluency: 128 Recall: 3 Questions: 7	Fluency: 127 Recall: 3 Questions: 8	Fluency: 133 Recall: 5 Questions:	Fluency: 136 Recall: 6 Questions: 9

Alice. At the beginning of my research, Alice was already ready showing strong fluency and comprehension. As you can see from her progress monitoring she maintained her fluency

and comprehension skills throughout our time together. Alice was always a leader for the other

in the group and I encouraged her continue doing so because she truly was everyone's

cheerleader. Alice was also always eager to attend our group time and it showed through her

work. She is a hard worker and knows how to challenge herself in everything she does.

Tina. Tina showed the most growth over our four weeks together. She did not want to

contribute anything to group discussions the first week. Her confidence in her ability to produce

good work was lacking as well. As the weeks went on, Tina began to share her ideas more and

more-a great success! Tina's comprehension also showed growth. When I conducted our first

progress monitoring, I would receive a lot of silence and shrugs. By week four, I could see her

wheel turning and she was putting events order and really trying her best to recall every detail.

George. George's success was not only his comprehension scores but the growth of his

discussion behavior. He learned how to to use rich language in his responses and could apply

them effectively on his own. He was also respectful of other group member and wanted to really

hear and understand what they had to see. He was receptive to everyone's ideas.

Ian. Ian came to my group not wanting share as much as the others. He was accustomed

to flying under the radar in his classroom where he is learning, just not contributing. Over the

course of the four week, Ian started to come out of his shell to share his thoughts and respond to

others. Ian's fluency and comprehension also improved and the once reluctant writer hinted that

he might actually like it.

Limitations

The conclusions of my action research are limited for several reasons. The narrow nature

of my study (one grade level, one group, four students) makes it almost impossible to know how

it would apply broadly. Having said that, the narrow nature of my study reveals the complex nature of teaching and learning. Throughout the time I had with my guided reading group, I had preconceived expectations for what the group would look like and what the discussions and activities would produce. Focusing on just one group of students became a limitation that turned into a point of learning for me: Teachers have to be willing to take a step back from what they expect to happen in order to gain a more comprehensive picture of what is actually happening in their classroom.

Another limitation is the lack of data. In a perfect world, teachers would have the time to compile field notes during or immediately after group work. Instead it gets done hours later, or, not at all. In a general education classroom, teachers are managing twenty or more additional students which makes conferring next to impossible most days. Even progress monitoring can be a limitation. Progress monitoring individual students takes time-when the comprehension piece is added, so is another 7-10 minutes depending on the student. If progress monitoring is done using a platform such as Fastbridge, you also run the risk of glitches. I ran into such a problem when my progress monitoring dates became skewed because of a glitch in the system. The data remained accurate, but the dates are off. There was also one (week three) where the comprehension question score was not recording. I was able to score the comprehension recall.

Implications

As I consider the data I have collected, several implications for instruction arise. By providing scaffolded support, one-on-one conferring time, and the use of new strategies, I believe future student learning and comprehension of strong readers will increase and deepen significantly.

Scaffolded Support. When students are given opportunity to gain independence and ownership of their learning, they will engage and interact with their learning positively and vigorously. When a teacher sets those expectations and models those expectations, students gain a better understanding of their role as a student and, therefore, are able to be more productive and competent in their literacy practice.

Students will only reach this independence and ownership if they are provided scaffolded support throughout their learning. Teachers need to understand each of their students to know when to take that support away, or when to add more support. It is imperative that teachers get to know their students as readers.

One-On-One Conferring. If teachers take the time to set expectations for what all students should be doing during guided reading time, then conferring will happen. Conferring with individual students must be done without interruption. Conferring not only allows teachers to assess students on their reading progress but also helps them get to know their students, how they process information, and how they interact and respond to text. Conferring will alert a teacher to a student who is struggling with specific reading skills as well as students who should be challenged. Conferring with students will give teachers endless opportunities to propel every student in their reading development.

Use of New Strategies. My students responded well to a strategy I was on the fence about using. Every student learns differently; we all know that what works for one student may not work for another. But we, as teachers, need to be willing to give everything a chance because that one strategy may be the one that reaches a student when no other strategy would. A

new strategy is never going to hurt a student. It may turn out to be an ineffective strategy for them but at least the student was given the opportunity to try it.

Future Research

The research around guided reading and reciprocal teaching is growing. As I conducted my research for both my literature review and action research, several areas for further examination arose.

As my district adopted a new reading curriculum last year, one of the components that was a deciding factor was the guided reading component. Guided reading is an instructional approach that has been proven to work for all students, no matter their reading level. There are so many avenues to take with readers who struggle, whether it be phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, or fluency. When it comes to strong readers, readers who need to be challenged, or deserve to have their learning extended, teachers often time struggle with what strategies to use.

The strategies I decided to use with my group of strong readers proved to be effective. However, there are many other strategies that I would like to research with strong readers. Strategies like explicit instruction, providing feedback, and a more focused look at reciprocal teaching. I have to admit, incorporating reciprocal teaching into the guided reading framework was more difficult than I had anticipated. Richardson's (2015) framework is so comprehensive that it was difficult to fit reciprocal teaching strategies into each day.   I would welcome the opportunity to see how this guided reading framework and reciprocal teaching help students at all reading levels.

Conclusion

I set out to examine the idea of *effective strategies that provide support and enhance the learning for strong readers.* I went into my research with the highest hopes of not only student success but my own as well. I wanted to come away from research with concrete evidence to support classroom teachers with their small group instruction.

I thought reciprocal teaching within the guided reading framework would hit every comprehension strategy students needed to be able to deepen their thinking and engage in thoughtful discussion with one another. What I found out was that guided reading is an intense and comprehensive approach to literacy instruction. While I was able to incorporate some of the related activities of reciprocal teaching, it was no easy task incorporating all four strategies of reciprocal teaching.

I learned that high-achieving students are ready to learn more and want to be challenged. They are hungry for independence and ownership of their learning. They are eager to try new strategies and are comfortable with trying it on their own. I learned that high-achieving students are capable of making connections and having thought-provoking discussions about a text. Their thought process is complex and informative. Strong readers are capable of teaching their teacher new approaches to literacy instruction-they have a way of giving us confidence in out teaching.

Finally, I learned that no matter what a student's reading level is or what they are capable of doing independently, they need scaffolded support. Teachers may take that scaffolding away sooner than they would with other students, but it still needs to be present. I started this research because I felt as though strong readers in my school are always drawing the short straw; they are expected to work independently because they can and never have the opportunity to have their

learning extended. It is the job of teachers to teach students, no matter their reading level, to

recognize what is happening in their reading development.

Appendix A

Methods Chart

Week	Focus	Data Collection Tools	Analysis
1	Ask and Answer Questions • Document discussion techniques. • Begin collection of sticky note responses on guided reading chart. • Progress Monitor	• Field Notes • Student Responses • Progress Monitoring	• Sticky note responses • Group Discussion: "What do you think the author wanted you to learn? • Individual conferring • New Word List • Guided Writing: Author's purpose
2	Summarizing • Identify focus areas for writing. • Document language used during verbal summaries. • Document discussions. • Progress Monitor	• Field Notes • Student Responses • Progress Monitoring	• Sticky note responses • Group Discussion-verbal summaries • Individual conferring • New Word List • Guided Writing: Focus on organization and capitalization
3	Inferring by Analyzing Characters • Analyze vocabulary with Character Feelings and Traits chart. • Document Discussions • Progress Monitor	• Field Notes • Student Responses • Progress Monitoring	• Sticky note responses • Group Discussion: Inferring: "I'm thinking_____ because .the character_____." • Individual conferring • Guided Writing: Character Feelings and Traits
4	Identify Main Idea • Conduct exit interviews • Document discussions. • Progress Monitor	• Field Notes • Student Responses • Progress Monitoring	• Sticky note responses • Main Idea activity • Exit interviews

Appendix B

Parent Consent Form

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Hamline University

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The Principal Investigator (the person in charge of this research) or their representative will provide you with a copy of this form to keep for your reference and will also describe this study to you and answer all your questions.

This form provides important information about what you will be asked to do during the study, about the risks and benefits of the study, and about your rights as a research subject.

- If you have any questions about or do not understand something in this form, you should ask the research team for more information.
- You should feel free to discuss your potential participation with anyone you choose, such as family or friends, before you decide to participate.
- Do not agree to participate in this study unless the research team has answered your questions and you decide that your want to be part of this study.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time.

Title of Research Study: Effective Strategies that Provide Support and Enhance Learning for Strong Readers

Student Researcher and email address: Kathleen Benbrooks, kbenbrooks@kw.k12.mn.us

Principal Investigator (Faculty Advisor), Hamline affiliation/title, phone number(s), and email address: Karen Moroz

Associate Professor and Program Director, Hamline University

(651) 523-2927

Kmoroz01@hamline.edu

1. **Who is funding this study?** This is study does not require funding.
2. **Has the research received consent from the organization/school/district where research will be conducted?** Yes. I have received permission from Kenyon-Wanamingo Elementary Principal, Mrs. Katy Schuerman.
3. **What is the research topic, purpose, and its rationale?** My research topic is centered around helping fluent readers become even stronger. My research will focus on effective strategies that support more critical thinking while reading. I will be using a guided reading (small group) framework with reciprocal teaching. Reciprocal teaching is an activity where students become the teacher in small reading groups. As the teacher, I will

model and then guide students and their group discussions using four strategies: summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting. All students will have the opportunity to participate with each role. By using this framework, students will gain skills necessary to look at text more critically and gain a deeper understanding of what they read and how it applies to the real world.

4. **How many people will most likely be participating in this study?** There will be four, second-grade students participating in this study.

5. **What will be done if you take part in this research study?** If you decide to participate in this study, the reading group will meet five days a week for 25 minutes. Students will engage in a variety of texts and participate in the reciprocal teaching (defined above) for each text. Students will be progress monitoring in fluency and comprehension weekly. At the end of the study, students will be debriefed through an exit interview and their growth will also be shared.

   - **Screening to determine eligibility for the study:** I will be using Kenyon-Wanamingo's universal screener, Fastbridge Learning, to determine which students will be asked to participate in the study. Students who have exceeded the winter, grade level target in both fluency and comprehension will be considered.

6. **What is your time commitment to the study if you participate, and the duration of entire project?** Students who participate in the study will meet five times a week for 25 minutes for four weeks.

7. **What are the possible discomforts and risks?** A possible risk that may be encountered is loss of confidentiality. All data is kept in a password protected database (Fastbridge) and cannot be accessed by anyone outside of the Kenyon-Wanamingo School District. I will also be using pseudonyms when referring to students and no identifiable characteristics will be discussed. There will also be no pictures taken during the study. Other risks that might be encountered are students feeling singled out or feel that they are missing more desirable activities in their classroom.

8. **What are the possible benefits to you and/or to others?.** This study will enhance the reading development of students involved. The data collected on how to implement effective reading strategies will be used to support general education teachers reach higher-achieving readers in their classrooms.

9. **If you choose to take part in this study, will it cost you anything?** There is no cost to participate in this study.

10. **Will you receive compensation for participation in this study?** There will be no compensation given to students who participate in this study.

11. **What you decide that you do not want to take part in this study? What other options are available to you if you decide not to participate or to withdraw?** Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate in the study, and your refusal will not influence your current or future relationships with Hamline University or with Kenyon-Wanamingo Public Schools.

12. **How can you withdraw from this research study and who should you call if you have questions?** You are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits for which you may be

entitled. If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, you should contact me at kbenbrooks@kw.k12.mn.us or (507) 824-2211 ext 2238, or my faculty advisor (the Principal Investigator), Karen Moroz at kmoroz01@hamline.edu or (651) 523-2927. You should also call or email the Principal Investigator for any questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints about the research and your experience as a participant in the study. In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Lisa Stegall, Chair of the Institutional Review Board at Hamline University at IRB@hamline.edu.

13. **Are there any anticipated circumstances under which your participation may be terminated by the investigator without your consent?** No.

14. **How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records be protected?** All data is kept in a password protected database (Fastbridge) and cannot be accessed by anyone outside of the Kenyon-Wanamingo School District. I will also be using pseudonyms when referring to students and no identifiable characteristics will be discussed. There will also be no pictures taken during the study.

15. **Will the researchers benefit from your participation in this study?** The researchers will gain no benefit from your participation in this study beyond the publication and/or presentation of the results obtained from the study, and the invaluable research experience and hands-on learning that the students will gain as part of their educational experience.

16. **Where will this research be made available?** The research will be considered public scholarship. The abstract and final product will be cataloged in Hamline's Bush Library Commons, a searchable repository. The final product also has the potential to be published or used in other ways as well.

Signatures:

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedure, the benefits, and risks that are involved in the research study:

_____   _____
Signature and printed name of person obtaining consent   Date

(Student researcher or PI)

_____
Title of person obtaining consent

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this Form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

_____   _____
Printed name of participant   Date

_____   _____
Printed name of parent/guardian if participant is under 18   Date
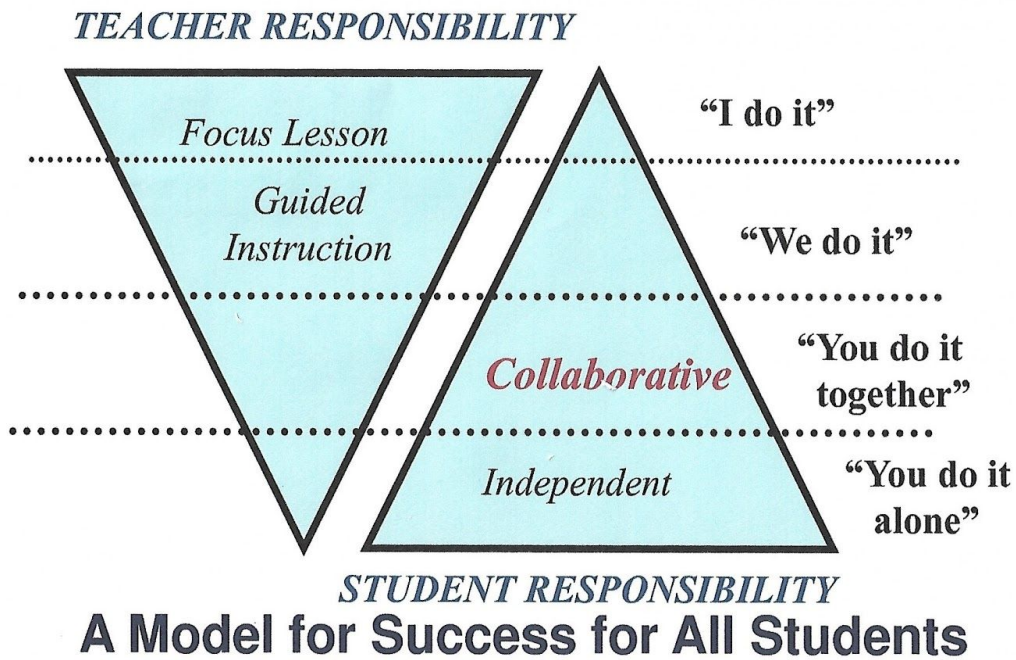

_____   _____
Signature of participant (or parent/guardian for participants under 18)   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Principal Investigator   Date

Appendix C
Gradual Release of Responsibility

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY

Focus Lesson

"I do it"

Guided Instruction

"We do it"

Collaborative

"You do it together"

Independent

"You do it alone"

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

A Model for Success for All Students

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2008). *Better learning through structured teaching: A framework for the gradual release of responsibility.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Appendix D
Progress Monitoring Probes

Level 2 Progress Monitoring Form 14

Todd

When he grew up, Todd wanted to be a baker. He wanted to learn to make cookies, cakes, and pies. Todd knew that his mom liked to cook sweet things. One day, he asked her to teach him how to bake. His mom said that she would help him bake a pie.

Todd and his mom started with the crust. The crust is the bottom of the pie. His mom helped him mix the butter, flour, and water together. When the dough was mixed, they had to roll it flat. His mom showed him how to use the rolling pin. He used it to make a flat, round crust. When the crust was done, Todd put it into the pan.

The next step was to add filling and he wanted cherries. He mixed the cherries and sugar for the pie filling. Then he poured the sugary cherries on top of the crust. Todd wanted to make a fancy edge on the crust. He pushed a fork into the edge of the crust. The fork made a pretty pattern. Now his pie would look like the pies at the bakery.

The last step was to bake the pie. His mom turned on the oven and put in the pie. Todd set the timer and then sat down to wait. A pie takes a long time to bake. Soon, the yummy smell filled the house. Todd was proud of his first pie. He could not wait to eat it.

Bob and Justin

Once there was a boy named Bob who liked rocks. He collected them in all shapes and sizes. His favorite one was dark brown with a red stripe. One day he decided to bring his favorite rock to school. He wanted to show it to his classmates.

When Bob was about to enter the school, he suddenly stopped. He felt his pocket for his rock but it was gone! Bob looked everywhere for it. He checked all his pockets and his bag. He even checked in his shoes and socks. He needed someone to help him find it. The first person Bob saw was a classmate named Justin.

Justin and Bob did not know each other very well. But the other kids hanging around were not in his class. Bob did not like talking to people he did not know. So he decided to ask Justin for help. He felt very nervous, but walked over to Justin. Finally, Bob asked him to help find his favorite rock. Justin said he would like to help.

The two boys worked together to find the missing rock. Justin asked Bob questions about where it could possibly be. He asked when Bob had last seen the rock. Bob remembered having the rock before the bus arrived at school. They walked to the bus stop and saw it immediately. The rock was at the bus stop the whole time.

Sally

Sally's parents said they were going on a trip. They wanted her to guess where they were going. She asked if their trip was to the mountains. Her parents said no and asked her to guess again. Then she asked if the trip was to grandpa's house. No, they said, that was not the place either.

Finally, they told her they were going to the beach. But this beach was by the ocean. Sally had been there before when she was little. Her mom showed her pictures that were fun to see. In one she was sitting on the sand with a bottle. But she did not remember the beach at all. She wondered what it would be like.

They left for the beach on Saturday morning. Her dad said it would be a long drive. Each of them packed a few things to keep busy. Dad took his new music to listen to on the way. Mom took some of her magazines to read. Sally took her favorite books to read and some crayons. She drew pictures of some fish.

After a long time, they were finally at the beach. Sally stared at the ocean and waves for a long time. She spread out her pink towel on the warm sand. Her mom gave her a bucket and shovel to use. She could use it to dig in the sand. Sally made some sand castles that were very large. Now she knew why her parents liked the beach.

Emily

Emily would leave her things where they did not belong. She left her shoes in the bathroom. She left food in her bedroom. Her dirty clothes and toys were all over the house. One day her mom slipped on one of her toys. Her mom was not hurt, but Emily felt bad. She decided to be neat so her mom would not slip again.

Emily used baskets to help put her things in order. All her toys went into one basket in her room. Then she put all her clothes into another basket. The clothes were not clean and they smelled bad too. She put the basket next to the washing machine. Finally she took the food in her room to the kitchen. Then she wiped up her room where food had spilled.

Things were finally in order around the house. Now Emily needed to work on keeping her room clean. She started putting things away after she used them. She put her dirty clothes in the basket at bedtime. If she ate in her room she cleaned up the mess. Emily kept doing these things everyday and became a cleaner person.

Her mom noticed the change in Emily and was very happy. Now she did not have to clean up after Emily. Emily was also feeling good about herself. The house was clean and clear of her things. Her mom never slipped on a toy again. This made Emily and her mom very happy.

Appendix E
Word Knowledge Inventory

APPENDIX J Word Knowledge Inventory

Student _____ Date _____

Directions: Dictate the following words as the student writes them on a blank sheet of paper. Then circle the skills that need further instruction.

	Short Vowel	Digraph	Initial Blend	Final Blend	Long Vowel VCe	Vowel Team Diphthong	R-controlled vowel	Inflectional ending
Word Knowledge Inventory for Transitional Readers								
1. grab	a		gr					
2. sled	e		sl					
3. chin	i	ch						
4. shot	o	sh						
5. thud	u	th						
6. brick			br	-ck				
7. plump			pl	-mp				
8. skunk			sk	-nk				
9. clasp			cl	-sp				
10. stroke			str		o-e			
11. twine			tw		i-e			
12. quake			qu		a-e			
13. stark			st				ar	
14. thorn			th				or	
15. squirt			squ				ir	
16. snare			sn		-are			
17. drain			dr			ai		
18. gleam			gl			ea		
19. croak			cr			oa		
20. fright			fr			igh		
21. blowing			bl			ow		ing
22. talked						alk		ed (/t/)
23. sprouted			spr			ou		ed (/ed/)
24. spoil			sp			oi		
25. prowled			pr			ow		ed (/d/)
26. flapped			fl					-pped doubling feature
27. tries			tr					y to i add -es
28. hiking								e drop
Activities	picture sorts, making words, and sound boxes				analogy charts			

Appendix F
Reciprocal Teaching Posters

Predict

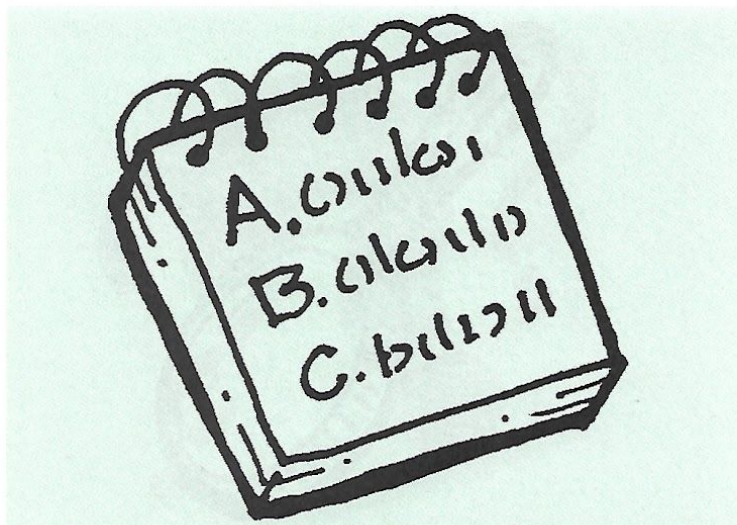I think....

I'll bet....

I wonder if....

I imagine....

I suppose....

I predict....

I think I will learn...because....

I think...will happen because....

Summarize

The most important ideas are....

This part was mostly about....

This [book, chapter, part, article] was about....

[First, Next, Then, Finally], ...

The story takes place....

The main characters are....

A problem occurs when....

In the [beginning, middle, end], ...

Appendix G
Character Feelings and Traits

APPENDIX M

Character Feelings and Traits

Feeling: How does the character feel now?   **Trait:** How does the character act most of the time?
(Shaded words are more challenging.)

Happy	Sad	Mad	Good
glad	unhappy	angry	kind
joyful	sorry	upset	helpful
proud	hurt	cross	safe
merry	gloomy	grumpy	friendly
thrilled	lonely	grouchy	thankful
pleasant	hopeless	moody	caring
excited	ashamed	cranky	polite
overjoyed	disappointed	furious	respectful
delighted	discouraged	irritated	thoughtful
terrific	depressed	displeased	patient
cheerful	sorrowful	touchy	generous
optimistic	miserable	annoyed	gracious
elated	melancholy	aggravated	faithful

Scared	Mean	Brave	Other
afraid	selfish	unafraid	lazy
frightened	rude	bold	clever
nervous	cruel	fearless	hopeful
shy	greedy	daring	bored
worried	nasty	confident	curious
terrified	hateful	courageous	responsible
anxious	unfair	determined	impatient
confused	ungrateful	adventurous	embarrassed
panicked	dishonest	plucky	concerned
petrified	uncharitable	heroic	frustrated

_____ felt _____ because _____ .

_____ was _____ because _____ .

The character is _____ . The evidence in the text is _____ .

Appendix H
New Word List

APPENDIX L

New Word List Template

New Word	Definition

Appendix I
Activity Cards

Make an Inference
Fiction

1. Find an important or surprising dialogue or action.
2. Why did the character say or do that?
3. What is the character thinking?
4. What are you thinking?

I'm thinking _____ *because*
the character _____.

Main Idea/Details

1. Turn the heading into a question.

2. Bullet key words that answer the question.

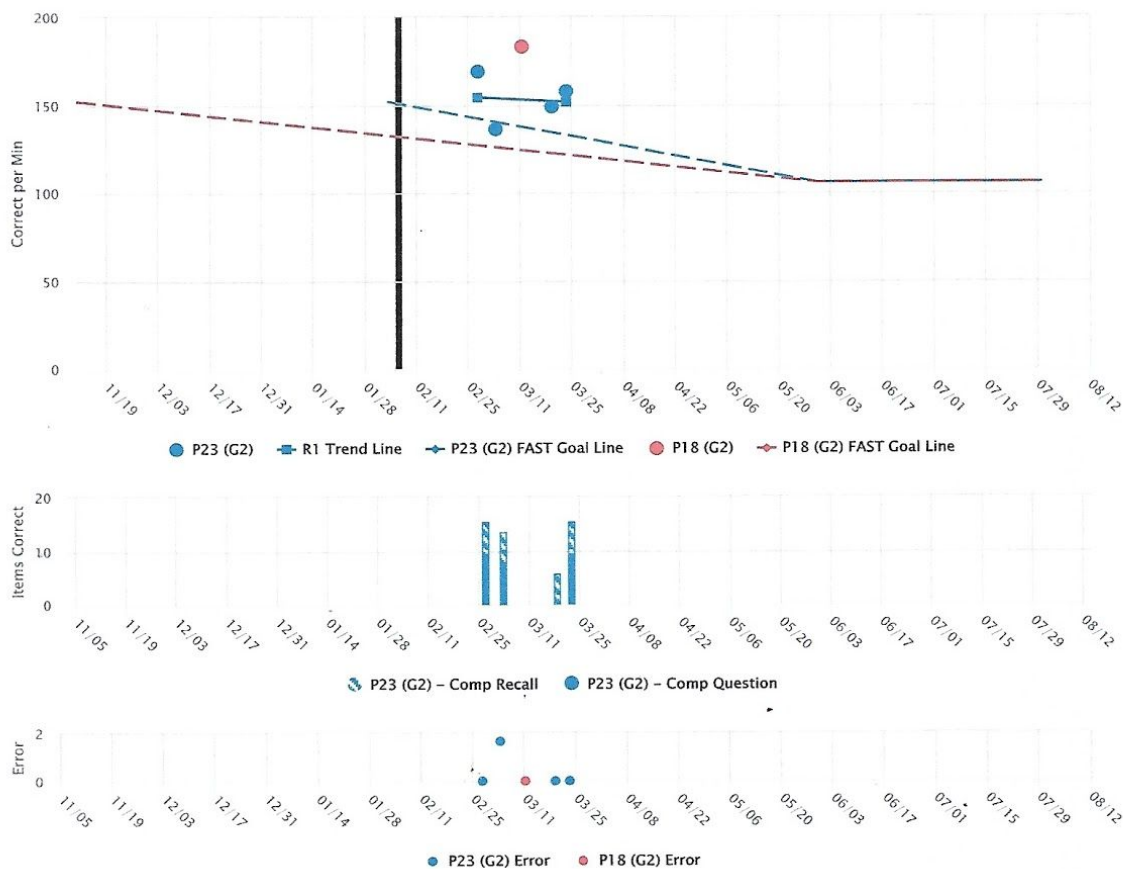3. Use the question and key words to identify the main idea of the passage.

Appendix J
Exit Interview Questions

1. What reading strategy helped you the most? Why?
2. What reading strategy did you dislike the most? Why?
3. How did you like learning in a small group?
4. What are some reading strategies you will continue to use during independent reading?
5. Do you feel that your reading has improved by learning these reading strategies?
6. Are you a more confident reader?
7. What stuck with you the most through this experience?

Appendix K
Student Progress Monitoring Graphs

Alice

CBMreading English Progress Monitoring Report

Legend: P23 (G2) — R1 Trend Line — P23 (G2) FAST Goal Line — P18 (G2) — P18 (G2) FAST Goal Line

Legend: P23 (G2) – Comp Recall   P23 (G2) – Comp Question

Legend: P23 (G2) Error   P18 (G2) Error
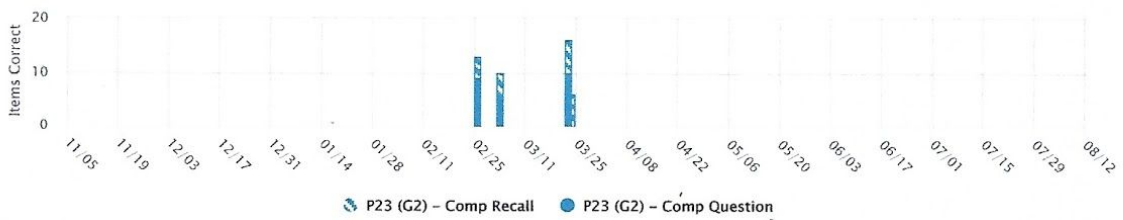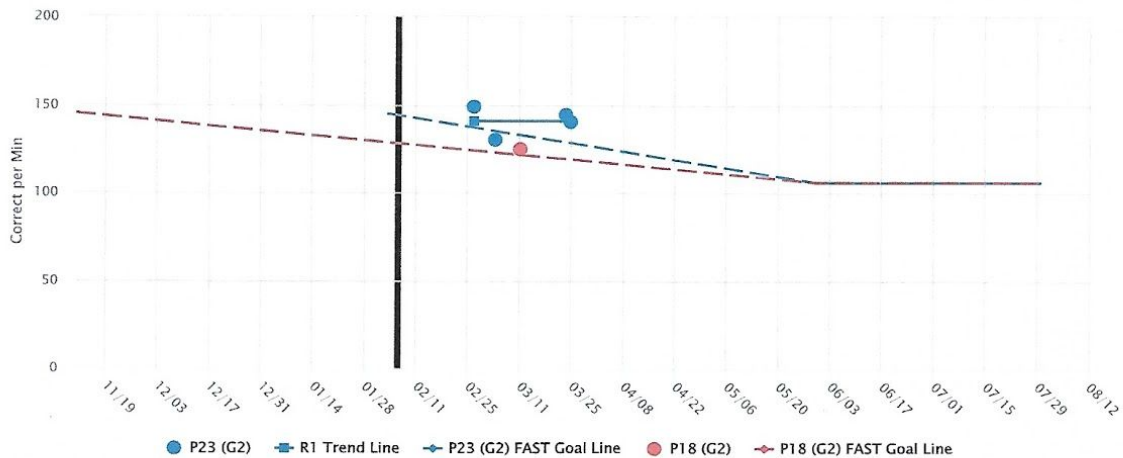
Detailed PM Information

Fall   No Percentile Line

Tina

CBMreading English Progress Monitoring Report

Legend: ● P23 (G2)   ▬ R1 Trend Line   ─◆─ P23 (G2) FAST Goal Line   ● P18 (G2)   ─◆─ P18 (G2) FAST Goal Line

Legend: ◆ P23 (G2) – Comp Recall   ● P23 (G2) – Comp Question

Legend: ● P23 (G2) Error   ● P18 (G2) Error
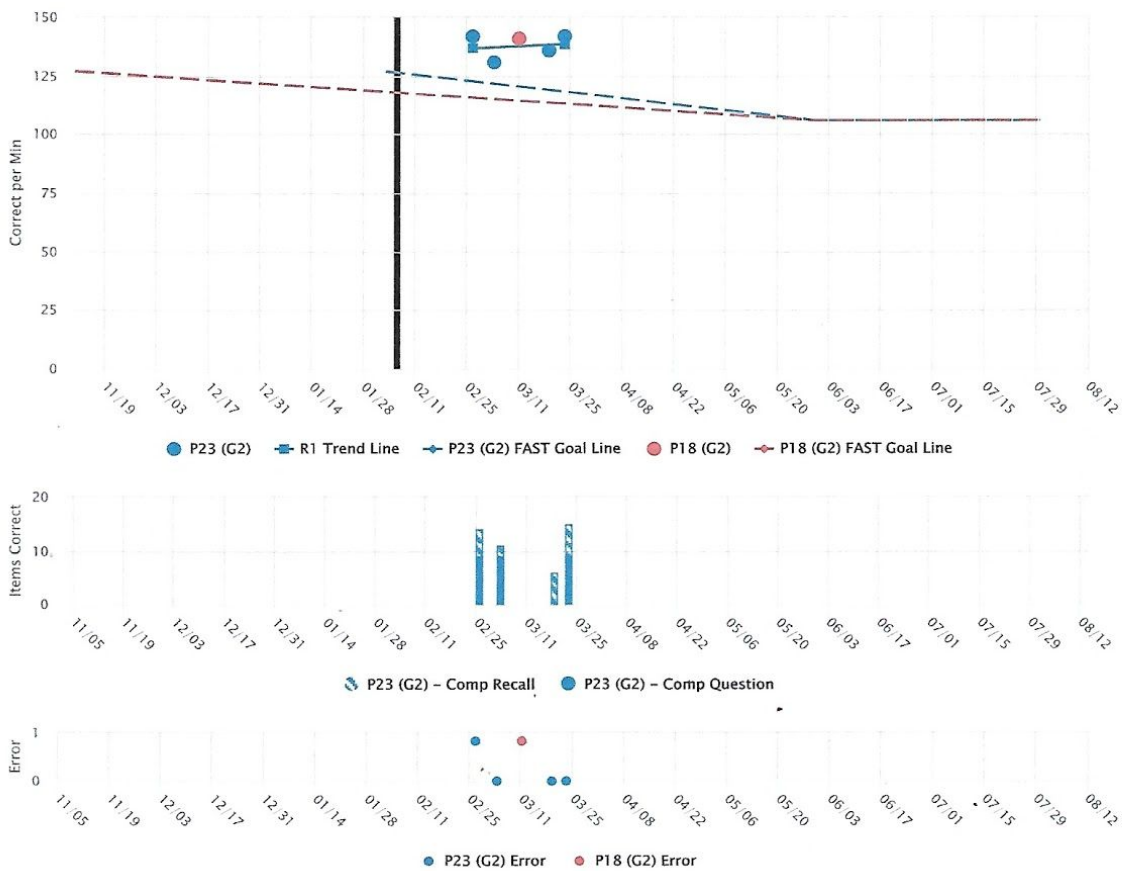
Detailed PM Information

Fall   No Percentile Line

George

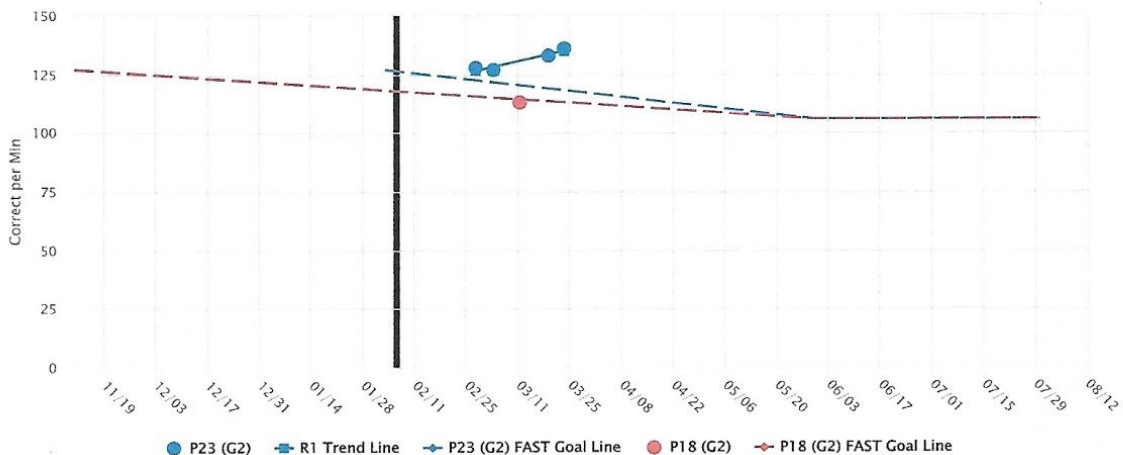## CBMreading English Progress Monitoring Report
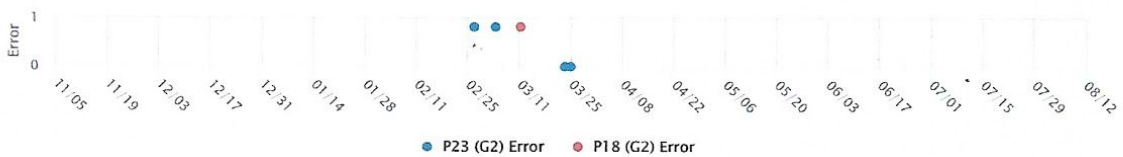
Detailed PM Information

Fall   No Percentile Line

Ian

CBMreading English Progress Monitoring Report
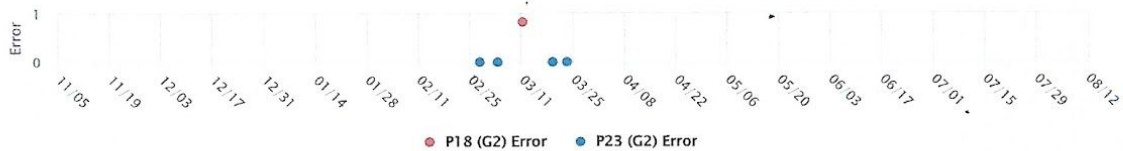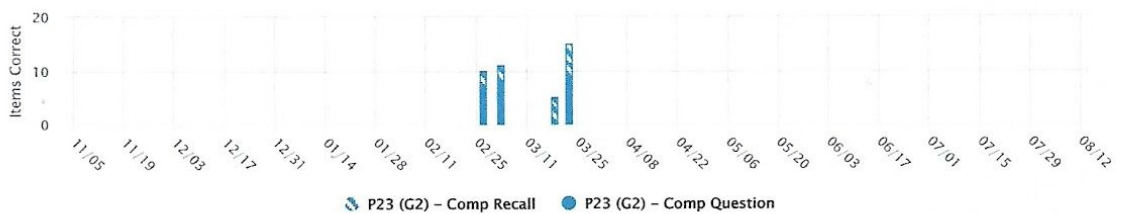
Detailed PM Information

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