WHAT PARTICULAR PRACTICES MAKE READING RECOVERY AND OTHER
INTERVENTIONS EFFECTIVE

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By,

Allison Lee Bisker, Reading Education

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Dr. William Earl Smith, Associate Professor, Teacher Education

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Dr. John Henning, Professor and Chair of the Department of Teacher Education

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Abstract

This study focuses on the question: what particular practices make Reading Recovery and other interventions effective? It compares the effects of Reading Recovery and small reading interventions to no intervention. The instrumentation for this study is running records. The Running Record was taken once a week from each participant. Three carefully selected participants took part in this study. Participant BL (1) received Reading Recovery as his intervention. BM (2) received the small reading interventions. Participant KR (3) did not receive any interventions. Three tables of data were made from the results of the running records. The first table records the reading accuracy of each student. The second table displays the numbers of errors each participant made. Table Three records the number of self-corrections each student made. Reading Recovery proved more effective at instructing reading accuracy, self-corrections and lowering errors made during reading. Some of the future studies that could stem from these findings include but are not limited to: Is illiteracy genetic and passed from parent to child? What environmental factors play the biggest role for struggling readers? If parents are illiterate can a child learn to read through Reading recovery? Is inclusion or pull out more effective?

Chapter 1

Being an educator means finding out how my students learn best and teaching them in the most effective way possible. I am a teacher in a first grade classroom and I have seen first-hand that reading is essential to students' accomplishments. All prior schooling up until this point teaches the basics of phonics and the usage of the alphabet, which provide in turn the baseline for reading comprehension. Understanding how to read is the most vital aspect of learning in every subject. Some students can master this foundation more quickly than others.

At the school where I teach, Reading Recovery teachers help children who struggle to master reading comprehension. Reading Recovery is a program in select schools for elementary students who are not at the expected grade level for literacy. They learn skills to help improve their reading. Ohio University students and other aides also provide interventions to students. Some students do not require any interventions and simply receive general reading instruction from their classroom teacher.

As a student in the Reading Education Masters program at Ohio University I have learned a great deal about the Reading Recovery program. I want to learn the best way to teach Reading Recovery and which methods of teaching are most successful. I am considering becoming a reading teacher; therefore one of the goals of my project is to determine what makes Reading Recovery so valuable. Another of my goals is to comparatively study other interventions and their levels of effectiveness. For example, reading with an aide on a daily basis is a common form of intervention that needs to be considered. Part of this goal would then be to compare this approach to other applicable methods used in the school where I teach.

The research question guiding this project is: what particular practices make Reading Recovery and other interventions effective? Observing my experienced co-teacher has given me the opportunity to recognize the wide range of cognitive abilities in our reading groups. After identifying these gaps I decided to do a comparison on a few of my students. I specified these students into three categories. The first student in the study received Reading Recovery, the second student received daily intervention reading with a reading teacher and the third student did not receive any interventions for reading.

Purpose of the Study

This study addressed three purposes. It's first purpose was to identify the reading strategies which were already present through a first-grader's perspective. The second purpose was to compare these strategies and their effectiveness over time. The third was to share any findings about the reading strategies, reading recovery, and other interventions with parents and other teachers.

To achieve my first purpose, errors in reading were studied to find the children's individual weaknesses and strengths on the subject. Story retellings and prompting questions were used to compare their comprehension abilities. Looking at the above areas helped determine each student's personal progress within one school year. This method allowed for a comparison of overall reading progress and assisted my attempts to decide what factors contributed to or hindered student's reading skills. Reading Recovery and interventions were carefully considered to determine what strategies were used with each student, as well as how these strategies contributed to individual reading progress over the course of a year.

The second purpose of this study was to compare these strategies. In my research I took weekly running records (defined in the definition of terms below) to compare reading accuracy of three participants. The specific strategies used to teach reading were taken into account to decide which one was most helpful.

The third purpose was to share these findings with parents and other teachers. Each set of parents was later informed about the intervention their individual child did or did not receive in the course of the study. Each child learns differently, but this study lent some insight into what interventions are especially effective. It will be helpful to know the best practices to use for teaching reading to future struggling readers.

Definition of Terms

Reading Recovery: a support network developed by Clay (1970). Reading Recovery is a school-based intervention for five-to-six year olds who are low achievers in reading after their first year of elementary school. It consists of thirty-minute lessons one-on–one with the reading teacher. These lessons vary for every child but their main focus is to help the children learn strategies that will strengthen their reading and writing skills along with their ability to focus. Once the child is achieving at the same level as his peers based on teacher provided judgments and formal assessments, they no longer receive lessons. Students are chosen to participate in this program if they are not achieving at grade level. A typical Reading Recovery session is very formalized, with seven steps to every lesson:

1. Begin with a familiar rereading of two or more books.

2. Take a record of the errors the child makes reading the book that was introduced the previous day. (This process is called a running record and will be described in the definition of terms.)

3. Work on letter identification (plastic letters on a magnetic board) and/or word-making-and-breaking.

4. Write a story together focusing on the sounds heard and recorded that day.

5. Copy this message onto a strip of paper and cut it into individual words or sounds. Have the student put it back together and glue it on paper.

6. Introduce a new book.

7. Make attempts to read the new book.

Clay (page 14).

Intervention in Early Childhood Education: a support system for families who have children with cognitive, emotional or social disabilities, which provides necessary services. Children qualify for interventions by being tested and receiving test results that requires them to have Individualized Education Plans (IEP) that include interventions. There are Intervention Specialist teachers offer this support with the help of classroom aids in the form of one-on-one or small group instruction for the troublesome students. Sometimes these teachers will come into the regular classroom and work with the classroom teacher to help teach students at different levels of cognition. While intervention can also be classified as extra support from an aide in the classroom, in the case of this study the reading recovery teacher provides the other intervention.

Guided reading lesson (The other intervention in this study): in which the reading recovery teacher provides a daily thirty-minute reading intervention for the student. This time is shared with another struggling reader; two students receive help from one teacher. These students do not complete a full formal reading recovery lesson each visit; instead their format follows this pattern:

1. Reviewing or writing of a sight word from the previous lesson.

2. Introducing a new book.

3. Text reading with prompts.

4. Teaching points after reading (one or two are chosen each day).

5. Teaching one sight word (picking out a difficult word from the text and learning it memorization).

6. Word study is the last component, (examples: picture sorts, making words).

   Richardson (page 292).

Running Record: tool used as a method of assessing a child's reading level. It can be done every day if the teacher has time, but generally takes place once a grading period. The time needed to take a running record will depend on the length of the book a child is reading. If it is a short book, it could take only a minute, while a beginning chapter book could take up to half an hour. Running records examine accuracy and the type of errors a child makes to help the teacher determine if the book's reading level is appropriate for the child. Areas where the child needs improvements are also determined. The child reads a book aloud to the adult who then marks their errors and correct readings. Afterward the adult calculates the errors and percentage of words read accurately. In Clay's words, the teacher must "compare the number of errors with the number of running words," (30). This practice is done one-on-one in a quiet place. Each error is coded into a kind of shorthand so the teacher can make notes and still keep up with the child. Errors are recorded and analyzed within three categories: visual errors, semantic or grammatical errors and meaning changing errors. This procedure was developed in it's entirety by Marie Clay (1970)

Reading Comprehension: the level of understanding of reading that a child possess. Proficient readers need to be able to read quickly and effortlessly. Being able to retell a story and answer questions about it is a way to assess reading comprehension.

Miscues: defined by Ken Goodman as a way to describe the reader's response in comparison with the expected response to text. He used this term in place of errors to avoid value implications; these are not to be looked at as negative, but rather as a window into the student's reading abilities and difficulties. Miscues provide insights into how to better instruct individual student (Goodman, 1969 p.123).

Miscue Analysis: a diagnostic tool used to help teachers and researchers gain insight into the reading process (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005).

Self-Correction: when a student makes a mistake in reading and is able to go back and use cueing systems to read the word or words correctly.

Cueing systems: reminders to students that prompt them on how to read better. The three-cueing systems include: grammar, meaning and letters/sounds.

Individualized Education Plans: helps individual children who have disabilities according to federal regulations meet education needs. This plan helps students reach educational goals more easily, which is necessary because they struggle in one or more areas of school. It describes the best ways for the students to learn and details their specific educational needs. It also gives details as to how the teacher, aides or intervention specialists can help the student meet educational goals. Assistance granted to these students includes: having any test read to them in a quiet room, getting intervention from a special education teacher daily, (times and subjects will vary), and not having to take standardized tests that are

otherwise required. Goals and objectives are decided on and frequently checked to ensure

that they are being followed.

Limitations

The first limitation to this study is its sample size. As a researcher I have limited

access to participants because confidentiality is so important when working with minors. I

am a teacher at a small, rural elementary school in southeast Ohio; due to time constraints I

picked participants that fit three variables from my class. The three variables in my

research are: receiving reading recovery, receiving other interventions, and receiving no

intervention. By design I chose three students that fit my variables. This decision does limit

my study but does not threaten its validity.

Time is the second limitation. This study takes place only over a six-week period.

The requirement for completion of the Reading Recovery program is one year; this study

looked at six weeks within this time frame. This constraint means I will not be able to look

at the participants over a few years' time; only six weeks were available to me. The

student's performance could vary and produce more results over a longer period of time,

but this study does not provide sufficient time to collect that amount of data.

Being both the researcher and the participants' classroom teacher is a limitation to

this study. I have been with these students all year and know their personalities, strengths

and weaknesses in academic performance. As a researcher I will try not to let this

knowledge affect the results of my study. Even though I know the students, I will not be

biased in collecting research and developing my findings. I will be very detail orientated

when taking the assessments and will not let emotions or previous knowledge of the

children affect the results. By being a professional about the research and setting time aside from teaching, I will attempt to overcome this limitation.

With single subject study research, the possibility of participant withdrawal always exists. I understand and assume this risk. Luckily in this case the only way withdrawal could become a possibility is if a student left the school.

Carry-over effects are the last limitation to this study. A carry-over effect is when an effect of the intervention is seen at the next phase of research. (Best page 215) Since this study is single subject in nature, only three participants are included. These participants could produce the same results over a short period of time despite their individual interventions and there may not be a large degree of comparison in the results. Having so few subjects is a limitation to the degree to which any findings that could be generalized to a broader population may not apply to the real world.

Diversity is another limitation to my study. The school where I work is over 94% Caucasian. In my class alone all the children are fluent English speakers, though one student is bilingual (his father is Mexican). A selection of other races is not even available for consideration for my study. This is a limitation because the children all have similar home lives and background knowledge on reading and real world experiences. They could therefore produce similar results during the study. I will overcome this limitation by being aware of all their similarities.

Delimitations

Some delimitation is present in this study. Delimitations are the boundaries of a study. I had to pick the three participants to fit my three interventions. The first participant was selected because they received Reading Recovery. The next participant was selected

because they received other interventions. The last participant was the comparison and received no interventions. Having to meet these criteria are the delimitations.

Summary

Reading is critical to making gains in school. Many children struggle with learning to read. As an educator I would like to compare two reading interventions throughout this study and look at the effectiveness of both in promoting progress in lower-level students. Findings from this research can help me become a better teacher through learning what strategies work best, especially in the field of reading comprehension. I understand that several limitations apply to this study and will be aware of them as I conduct my research. The definition list is fairly long and somewhat technical due to specific education terms and developmental subject matter but it does help clarify the terms that are used in this study.

CHAPTER 2

I have read various articles and books relating to Reading Recovery and other interventions. In the hopes of finding out the best practices for teaching struggling readers how to read. In the course of the research, I also wanted to find out about the differences in interventions as they relate to the previous literature.

Review of literature

The following section is a review of literature on Reading Recovery. Many positive themes, along with some setbacks came up during the review. I will describe these themes in depth.

One of the first benefits to Reading Recovery is that the program has resulted in comprehension gains by students who had completed it versus students that did not. These gains were positive and measurable. According Maggie Moore and Barrie Wade titled "Reading Recovery: Its effectiveness in the long term," these gains include: more decoding strategies, used longer passages written and the development of a better outlook toward reading.

The students who receive Reading Recovery develop decoding strategies they can use for the rest of their lives. These strategies help the children break down the individual sounds in words to comprehend them; for example, some of these strategies include blending sounds together. Students are also taught how to use their finger as a tool to break apart words and push through difficult sentences to read them fluently. Another strategy that may seem simple is "looking back". This concept gives the student a second chance at trying to read a word or sentence correctly. The decoding strategies above may

seem straightforward, but some students who are not in Reading Recovery may never be taught these clues for becoming a more successful reader.

Being able to write longer passages is another advantage apparent in students who receive Reading Recovery. In a study done by Moore and Wade, distinctive tests were completed on students who had received Reading Recovery. One of the tests was to write a passage. Reading Recovery-taught students outperformed the comparison group in length of their written story. Every Reading Recovery lesson includes writing; those who attend lessons have more practice and modeled help writing stories than their peers who are not in Reading Recovery.

Students who have attended Reading Recovery lessons have a better outlook towards reading. According to the authors of the study "Reading Recovery: Its effectiveness in the long term," students in the program enjoy reading more than students who have not received intervention. Reading comes more easily to them because they have been given strategies to help them decode while reading. Naturally when something comes more easily to someone it is more enjoyable because it takes less effort.

The components of each Reading Recovery lesson (listed in the definitions) have proven to be very effective, according to Meree Reynolds and Kevin Wheldall's study, "Reading Recovery 20 Years Down the Track: Looking forward, looking back*."* Each thirty-minute lesson follows an exact process previously described in the definition section. Children need consistency in order to successfully learn; these steps are followed through in each lesson to help each child get practice and instruction for thirty minutes each day in the component of the lesson.

The timing at which Reading Recovery takes place is optimal. This intervention is always done during kindergarten, first or second grade. During these grades, students are very impressionable. They learn new ways of reading that will stick with them for the rest of their lives. If young students are able to receive Reading Recovery at this moment in their lives, they have an advantage of learning correct ways to read. For this reason, Reynolds and Whendall emphasize the key timing of Reading Recovery and how it proves to be effective.

Reading Recovery lessons are one-on-one. This setup is a huge benefit to the effectiveness of the program. The article, "The Effects of Varying Group Size on the Reading Recovery Approach to Prevention Early Intervention," written by Sandra Iverson, William Tunmer and James Chapman discusses the small teacher to student ratio of Reading Recovery and how it is therefore more successful. When children have the teacher's undivided attention they can accomplish more in a lesson. Teachers can also see when a student is struggling or ready to be pushed further without other students getting in the way of instruction. One-on-one instruction proves to be the most effective way to intervene with the teaching of reading.

Reading Recovery teachers are very knowledgeable about their field and take pride in their work. This approach to teaching is another benefit to the effectiveness of Reading Recovery. As an educator I know how important it is to have a well-informed teacher available to instruct students that are lacking in an area. Reading is such a crucial topic, any teacher involved needs to be ready to instruct and know how to educate completely. A trained Reading Recovery teacher knows what she is doing and cares about the job in remediating reading, which is one reason why the program is so effective. As stated by

Reynolds, "RR teachers are trained to implement Clay's theories and 'approach reading instruction with a deep and principled understanding of the reading process and its implications for instruction'" (page 212).

According to the authors of "The Effects of Varying Group Size on the Reading Recovery Approach to Preventive Early Intervention," the lesson length is another contributor to the effectiveness of Reading Recovery. The length of a lesson is very important to instruction and success. Children can only concentrate for a certain amount of time before they lose focus, and if they are not focused on the Reading Recovery lesson they will not retain the given information. The Reading Recovery lesson is only thirty minutes long, which is according to the text an ideal amount of time for children within this age range to focus.

Clay states, "A case can be made for the theory that learning to write letters, words, and sentences actually helps the child to make the visual discriminations of detail in print that he will use in his reading" (page 11). Reading Recovery teachers and founders recognize that these two skills of reading and writing need to go hand-in-hand when instructing struggling readers. Teaching these two areas at the same time strengthens both skills, which is why teaching reading and writing alongside each other is another benefit to the Reading Recovery system.

One of the journals that I read mentioned one setback to Reading Recovery. "Long-term outcomes of early reading intervention," written by Jane Hurry and Kathy Sylva described the setback as the lack of significant long-term effects to those students who received Reading Recovery (but only children who were non-readers before the intervention). The students did show many immediate positive gains, but in this study the

gains did not stick for more that three years after intervention. Those non-reader children fell back behind their peers after three years. This decline could be looked at as a benefit to students who were readers when they received Reading Recovery because these students did make significant progress despite simultaneous the decline of their peers. This interpretation is best reinforced by a quote from the article: "Based on the large impact that Reading Recovery had on children's reading during the intervention, when they made about twice as much progress as controls, a Matthew effect would predict that the gap between Reading Recovery and control children should have widened further with the passage of time. The better readers should have been reading more books, building their vocabulary and world knowledge and feeling better about reading, " (page 243).

The Reading Recovery program is very costly, which is another setback to its effectiveness. Reading Recovery teachers are highly qualified and need additional training, resources, and travel; these necessities cost money. Sometimes school districts may not have the extra money required to pay these intervention teachers. This setback was listed in the article, "Reading Recovery 20 years Down the Track: Looking forward, looking back," by Meree Reynolds and Kevin Wheldall. I realize that cost-effectiveness is a big factor to any intervention program, but as an educator I feel that the money should be well worth the benefit to the children.

The last setback to Reading Recovery that I found after reviewing the literature is the need for school-wide intervention. More specifically, Reading Recovery should be made available for every grade. This expansion would make the program more effective. A common theme in the literature about Reading Recovery that came up was that the program would have stronger effects on students' performance if these students could

keep receiving the intervention. The students that have an IEP keep receiving interventions all the way through school (and sometimes through college), so why not make Reading Recovery available for a longer period of time, too? Reading Recovery only takes place for half a year (at the longest) so one can only imagine how much more effective this intervention would be if the program continued.

Summary

I have reviewed a significant amount of literature on Reading Recovery and discovered some benefits and setbacks. Children making reading gains are the most obvious and significant of these benefits. Different factors contribute to these gains. Effectiveness of the actual Reading Recovery lesson includes; the components, one-on-one instruction, lesson length, teaching reading and writing together, and the timing of the remediation. Another benefit to Reading Recovery is that teachers in this program are exceptionally knowledgeable about the field. Students in the Reading Recovery program show the following improvements: measurable reading gains and progress, ability to write longer passages, use of more decoding strategies, and a better outlook towards reading. However some setbacks of the program include: cost, lack of follow-through, and lack of significant long-term gains. These setbacks were found after reviewing the literature. Never the less, each setback could have a positive spin put on it to improve the program's effectiveness.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The research question I asked was, "What particular practices make reading recovery and other interventions effective?" I compared the reading outcomes of a student receiving Reading Recovery, one who is receiving small reading intervention, and a student who did not receive any reading interventions. I hoped to gain insight into the most effective practice for promoting the growth of reading comprehension, especially in those who most need it. My final goal was to provide knowledge on the teaching of reading to other educators and parents by comparing students' progress and gains in response to those strategies.

Demographics

The next few sections describe the demographics of this study and its participants. The school and classroom reading program is also described, as well as the region and area in question.

Description of Participants

The three participants in my study are all in my first grade classroom. I have been their afternoon teacher all year. The morning teacher instructs them in reading, writing and spelling: in the afternoons I teach them math, science and social studies.

The first student, BL, is seven years old. He is a male and has gone to this school since Kindergarten. His family is native-born American and speaks English as their first language. He receives free and reduced lunch so his family lives near or under the poverty level. He is on a daily behavior plan for anger control. This program consists of a weekly sheet that is broken down by daily fifteen-minute time increments. If BL is able to control

his behavior during the fifteen-minute time block (i.e., refrain from yelling, kicking, or making negative comments about schoolwork), he will receive a star. At the end of the day if he has twelve stars he will get a small prize, like a sticker or key chain. This behavior plan was stopped in the middle of the study because it was not proving successful for BL. He was still acting out and the rewards were not in line with his negative behavior. The new plan is to make consequences matching BL's actions that he can relate to his behavior. He meets with the school counselor once a week for an art break. During this time he will paint some recycled piece of material. BL has two older siblings (one who is in fourth grade and at the school with him. The other is at the middle school), and his parents are separated, so the children go back and forth on an irregular basis to the parent's consecutive houses.

BL is the child who received Reading Recovery during this study. He was assessed in March and started daily Reading Recovery thirty-minute lessons with his reading teacher during the last week of March. These lessons will go on for ten weeks through the end of his first grade year. During this same time I collected data for this study for six of the ten weeks.

Student BM is the youngest of the three. She is a six-year-old female. BM was new to our school at the beginning of the fall. She does not have an IEP or behavior plan. Her family is native-born American and English is her first language. She is on free and reduced lunches; her family lives near or under the poverty line. Her two male siblings attend the school as well and all of them live with both parents. One brother is in second grade and one is in third.

Starting the last week of March, BM began receiving interventions from the reading teachers. This intervention took place for six weeks during the time of this study. BM is the student listed as receiving "other interventions" because the program she participates in is not a full reading recovery lesson. Her classroom-reading teacher referred BM to intervention. The teacher referred her based on her reading and writing scores this year, her lack of progress and not being up to grade level. The Reading Recovery teachers preformed additional tests to decide whether or not she would indeed benefit from reading intervention. BM is not going for the full 30 minute Reading Recovery session because she shares this time with another student who is at a similar level and they are just doing guided reading tutoring not the formal Reading Recovery method.

The last participant in this study is KR. He is a six-year-old male who turned seven in the middle of this study. He does not have an IEP or behavior plan. His family does not receive free and reduced lunches. KR is native-born American and speaks English as his first language. He has one older sibling who attends the school: both children live with the same parents. This participant did not receive any interventions for reading. His only reading instruction during this study was regular classroom instruction.

Participant's Literacy Background

At the time of the study, BL was not receiving many literacy experiences at home. He did not complete his homework on a regular basis. His parents, who are separated, would take him back and forth to their homes with no consistent schedule. This unpredictability could have affected his reading performance. Because he experienced stress from his parents' separation, he became angry easily and had trouble focusing on his work when upset. His self-esteem and confidence was also affected by his lack of support at home. At

the beginning of the year a tornado went through the whole community and tore down BL's house, so he experienced strong anxiety whenever a storm took place during school.

BM was not receiving many literacy experiences at home either. Her family, which is living under the poverty level, and moved a few times throughout the school year. She came to first grade lacking the print awareness and exposure to literature that she should have had. She also did not turn in homework on a regular basis. She and her two older brothers, who also attend the school, were always left wondering how they will get home on a given day because their parents did not display consistency. This inconsistency could have affected her reading ability because she was often stressed about how she would get home and what it might be like there once she arrived.

KR had the most consistent home life of the three students. At the time of the study he lived with both parents, both of who worked and he was living above the poverty level. KR turned in homework frequently but often did it and forgot to turn it was because he is very active and talkative when at school. He had positive literacy experiences at home and this experience was clear from his confidence with books and life experiences he often shared with the class.

Description of School and Reading Program

The three students are in the same classroom and have received the same reading instruction all year. The reading program at the school is a literacy collaborative model. Every day the children work with guided literacy centers, guided reading, Writers Workshop and morning meetings. Guided literacy centers consist of children being grouped by reading levels. They each get a turn to meet with the teacher for reading groups. In the group they are introduced to new books, work on comprehension strategies,

and learn mini lessons that teach decoding and reading strategies. The other parts of the centers include spelling word practice, phonics instruction, journaling, reading theme related books, books on tape, and art projects that relate to books being read in the classroom. Writers Workshop is led by the teacher and is a time where the students get to write about topics that interest them while learning correct writing techniques and practicing handwriting skills. Morning meeting consists of greeting the other students to work on social skills. Then students do an activity to strengthen classroom community. A morning message is read together to teach grammar, followed by a read-aloud during which the students have reading modeled to them by the teacher. Each exercise provides the students a chance to interact with literature.

Description of Region

The school selected for my study is located in Southeastern Ohio. The culture there is Appalachian; most of the population is near or under the poverty level. A large percentage of the students receive free and reduced lunch and breakfast. The students BL and BM were both receiving the free and reduced lunch meals at the time of the study.

Informed Consent Procedures

The first step taken to gain consent for this project was my consultation with the principal of our school. I asked her if I could take a weekly running record on each participant if I keep all children's names confidential. She wrote me a letter stating that I did have permission to collect data on these students for research purposes. This letter is attached in the appendix A.

I subsequently wrote a letter to the parents of the children I wished to use in my research informing them of the process and purpose of this study. I also explained to them

that there would be no risks, no discomforts and therefore no compensation to their children during the whole process. The letter stated that they would not be asked to do anything beyond the usual school expectations. All of the children's names would be kept confidential on all records; this fact was also explained within the letter of consent. The benefits of the study were also explained: as parents, they could gain insight into the best way to teach reading to their child and learn how effectively these practices were being carried out in their child's school. I asked the parents to sign and return these letters to me before I started the observations. This letter is attached in the appendix B.

Steps Taken to Identify Confidentiality of the Data

This study is completely confidential. None of the student's names were included in the study. Instead I used the students' first and last initials (1,2,3) to identify them in the study. This method kept their identities secure. Throughout the study I also identified them as Reading Recovery BL (1), Other Intervention BM (2) and No Intervention KR (3). This terminology was applied whenever I discussed which intervention my subjects received, and when comparing their results.

Sampling

This study used single study sampling to measure the reading progress of three students over six weeks. The students were selected based on the interventions they were receiving or not receiving. All three variables of receiving Reading Recovery, receiving small reading interventions and receiving no interventions had to be sampled.

Repeated measurement was taken throughout the time of the study in the form of the same test given to each student once a week. This test will be described further in the next section.

Describe the Instrumentation

Two types of instrumentation were used during this study: running records, and

retelling. I took a running record on each of the participants once a week during the time of

the study. Retelling is the last instrumentation used in this study. A retelling is a tool used

to determine comprehension of the book read. Retellings can be conducted from specific

questions set up by a reading program and included in the book. For this study, a specific

reading program was not used. Books were selected for the children based on their reading

level as determined by the classroom and their reading teachers. Immediately following

each running record the child was asked to retell the story. I took notes on how accurately

each student could remember events from the story. Then asked them to list the characters,

setting and problem of the story. His or her answers were all recorded as evidence to help

determine how well each student recalled what he/she just read. The running record

format is attached in the appendix C.

Summary

This chapter describes the methodology of the study. The first section described the

participants. Three participants are involved in this single study research: BL, who is

receiving reading recovery; BM, who is receiving small reading intervention from the

reading teacher; and KR, who is receiving no interventions during the study. The steps

taken to ensure confidentiality of the data were described. All the demographics of the

school, the classroom and the students were determined to show possible effects on

reading outcomes. The sampling of this single study research was described and repeated

measurement and baselines were determined. The description of the instrumentation was

included last in the chapter.

CHAPTER 4

My research question is, "What particular practices make Reading Recovery and other interventions effective?" I wanted to see if Reading Recovery was an effective way to instruct struggling readers or if other forms of intervention would be more successful. Participant (1) BL received Reading Recovery during the time of the research; participant (2) BM received small reading interventions from the reading teacher (guided reading with two students and one teacher), and participant (3) KL did not receive interventions. The research that I conducted took roughly six weeks to complete. I took a running record from each participant once a week. When taking the Running Record I met with each participant one-on-one. They would read me a book and I recorded their miscues. After the story was over, I had the children retell the story. I then calculated their accuracy and recorded the results of my findings. I compared the results of these running records to see how much improvement, if any, each student made. The scores for each participant were not compared to the other participants' scores, but compared to their own starting point to see how much individual progress was made.

Results

On the following pages are three tables. Table One shows the accuracy rate of the students. Table Two shows the number of errors. Table Three shows the number of self-corrections that each participant made.

Table 1: accuracy rate for each participant

	3-30	4-7	4-12	4-21	4-29	5-6	Mean
BL (1)	95%	97%	98%	100%	98%	98%	97.6%
BM (2)	94%	85%	97%	94%	94%	90%	92.3%
KR (3)	97%	93%	97%	96%	97%	92%	95.3%

Table 2: number of errors for each participant

	3-30	4-7	4-12	4-21	4-29	5-6	Mean
BL (1)	3	2	3	0	3	2	2.16
BM (2)	3	16	1	5	5	7	6.16
KR (3)	4	13	5	12	18	12	10.6

Table 3: number of self-corrections for each participant

	3-30	4-7	4-12	4-21	4-29	5-6	Mean
BL (1)	0	2	3	4	7	1	2.8
BM (2)	0	1	1	3	0	1	1
KR (3)	1	0	1	1	0	1	0.6

Analysis of Data

The data in table One presents multiple findings. Participant (1) has the highest mean accuracy rate. He is the student that is receiving Reading Recovery. Participant (2) has the lowest mean accuracy rate. She is receiving the other reading intervention. From this study, Reading Recovery has proven to be the most effective of the two interventions

for accuracy. BM did have the highest range in her accuracy, suggesting that she made the most improvement in her accuracy from the second week of the study until the sixth week. The comparison student KR still had a high accuracy rate, but did not continue to improve from week-to-week; his accuracy was more consistent. This information suggests that because student KR was not receiving an intervention, he did not make as many improvements to his reading comprehension as the other two participants that were both receiving intervention.

Table Two presents the number of errors each participant made. Student KR has the highest mean of errors. This information implies that KR has not learned as many decoding strategies as the other participants who are receiving reading interventions. If he had more knowledge on how to decode words, he would not make as many errors. BL made the least errors out of the participants, signifying that Reading Recovery was the most effective intervention in this study at preventing reading errors. BM was still ten points behind KR with a lower mean error rate, but she is able to make fewer errors than KR. This information suggests that between the two reading interventions, Reading Recovery is more effective than the other intervention at preventing reading errors.

Table Three displays the self-corrections that the participants made each week. BL made the most self-corrections; BM was in the middle; KR made the least amount of self-corrections. This information implies that, compared to the other reading intervention, Reading Recovery was the most effective at teaching the child to self-correct his/her reading errors. The most KR self-corrected during the taking of the running records was once. This low number suggests that KR has not been taught to go back and correct his errors when reading compared to the other participants.

Summary

This study focused on the effectiveness of Reading Recovery versus another reading intervention; additionally results were compared to no intervention as well. Over six weeks I collected data on each participant. The data was taken through a running record for each child and all scores were recorded. This information was then put into three graphs describing the results. The means for all the results was produced and included in these tables. This average helped to organize the data more clearly and display its results. The tables highlighted the accuracy, error rate, and number of self-corrections for each student. After completing this study, I concluded that Reading Recovery is the most effective program at improving reading accuracy. Student BL (receiving Reading Recovery) had the highest mean accuracy. The information in table Two suggests that KL has the highest mean for errors made. He is not receiving any reading interventions. Table Three is displaying the self-corrections made. BL had the highest mean for self-corrections; this finding implies that he learned the most from Reading Recovery about how to correct his reading errors.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Discussions

The interest that sparked this study stems from my personal involvement in the Masters Reading Education program at Ohio University. I am learning multiple ways to instruct reading to learners of all ages. Some students (because of their background and home life) struggle to learn reading comprehension. This struggle is something I have come across very frequently in my five years of education experiences. I would like to learn the best way to instruct these struggling readers so they can become successful students. Reading Recovery is an intervention used at the school where I am teaching. Other interventions are used as well. I wanted to know: what practices made Reading Recovery and other interventions effective.

This study centered on three purposes. The first was to observe the reading strategies that first graders use. This observation helped me as a researcher to find each child's individual strengths and weaknesses. Comparing the findings of those reading strategies was the study's second purpose. I was then able to see each child's individual progress made during the study. The findings from this comparison and observation will be helpful for me as an educator and to share with other teachers about how students learn and what the best practices to teach reading are.

As the researcher, I was aware of the limitations to my study, and to the best of my ability I did not let them affect the outcomes of the research. The first limitation was the time I had to conduct my research. The program I am in only takes place for one year. Students are only in Reading Recovery for roughly ten weeks (oftentimes less). So, once the students were evaluated and chosen, my time to observe them was limited to six weeks.

The second limitation was the size of the study. Only three children in my class fit all three variables in my observation. Since I was their classroom teacher I did know the students, this was a limitation because I was not a random sampler. Diversity was the last limitation to my study, the school and region alone has very limited diversity so the students I chose were all Caucasian, native English speakers.

After completing a review of the literature I found some gains and setbacks to the Reading Recovery program. Gains to the actual Reading Recovery program that I found were: the components of the lesson, one-on-one instruction, the length of the lesson, and that reading and writing are taught alongside one another. The gains shown by students who received Reading Recovery were: reading progress made, able to write longer passages, gain in decoding skills, and a better outlook towards reading. The setbacks that I found after reviewing the literature were that the program is costly, Reading Recovery is not present in all grades; there was a lack of significant long-term gains made.

Even though not much diversity was present in this study, each participant was a very unique learner. BL (1) received Reading Recovery during the time of the study. He came to school this year with very little literature experiences, received free and reduced lunches, and had many anger and anxiety problems. BM (2) received the other small reading intervention, with two students and one teacher, during the time of the study. At the time of the study, her family lived below the poverty line, and she did not have exposure to literature at home. KR (3) did not receive any reading interventions during the study. He had the most consistent home life, with adequate exposure to literature.

The school where I taught is in southeastern Ohio. The region is Appalachia with most of the population living under or near the poverty line. The school focuses on a

literacy collaborative model to instruct reading. In the class where I taught the children were exposed to literature almost all day. The reading instruction includes: morning meeting, read aloud, Writer's Workshop, and guided literacy centers .

Steps were taken to ensure confidentiality of the participants. Only their first and last initials were used in the study. None of their individual information was disclosed. I asked the principal of the elementary school for permission to conduct my research. The parents of each child were also given a permission slip of informed consent for their child. The only sampling that was used during this study was Running Records and retellings.

This study focused on the effectiveness of Reading Recovery versus another reading intervention or no intervention at all (this was the control, but it still showed results). Over six weeks I collected data on each participant. The data was taken through a running record and all the scores were recorded. After completing this study, I concluded that Reading Recovery is the most effective at improving reading accuracy. Student BL (receiving Reading Recovery) had the highest mean accuracy. The information in Table Two suggests that KL has the highest mean for errors made, and BL had the lowest mean for errors made. This proves that Reading Recovery helps prevent errors in reading compared to the other intervention and the control. He is not receiving any reading interventions. Table Three displays the self-corrections made. BL had the highest mean for self-corrections; this implies that he learned the most from Reading Recovery about how to correct his reading errors. In this study Reading Recovery was the most effective at aiding a high reading accuracy, prevention reading errors and making a higher number of self-corrections. In the review of literature section Reading Recovery's effectiveness is back up by the supporting text. This above information is crucial to education. The findings show how effective

Reading Recovery is for the teaching of struggling readers. This study also shows that having an intervention as opposed to not having one is more helpful to students' success. As an educator I will do everything in my power to make sure my students receive some type of reading intervention.

Recommendations for future research

Because of the limitations to this study I do realize the significant lack of validity to its results. If the time allotted, it would be more productive to collect data for the whole school year and then compare outcomes. Using children from more than one school would also produce different outcomes with more diversity in the participants. Having random samplers collect the data would also help the data to prove more valid.

During the review of literature and collection of the data some other possible topics came up. These would be effective at proving different results and outcomes while focusing on literature. The first one that relates to my study is: Is intervention in school enough to teach a child to read who has not been read to at home? This possible study could stem from findings in my research. Participants BL and BM did not have adequate literature experiences at home so I could compare them with students who did have adequate literature experiences to study reading progress and success. My hypothesis would be that children who have strong literacy experiences start out at a higher reading level and make higher gains. The second possible topic that relates to my study is: When using these practices how often can and should they be used? One theme that came up in the review of literature is that Reading Recovery would be more effective if it were carried out in more grades. As the researcher I would predict that a study focusing on this question would prove that interventions should be used more often to prove effectiveness.

Some other possible topics include the following but are not limited to: Is illiteracy genetic and passed from parent to child? What environmental factors play the biggest role for struggling readers? If parents are illiterate can a child learn to read through Reading recovery? Is inclusion or pull out more effective?

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APPENDIX A

Letter of informed consent from the school's principal

The Plains Elementary
90 Connett Road
The Plains, Ohio 45780
740-797-4572

Heather Skinner, Principal
hskinner@athenscity.k12.oh.us

1/26/11

To Whom It May Concern:

I support Allison Bisker in her efforts to use student data from The Plains Elementary for her research of her thesis, Reading Recovery Effectiveness.

As long as parents of those students grant permission, I will assist in any way to help her in the research.

Sincerely,

Heather Skinner
Principal
The Plains Elementary

APPENDIX B

Letter of permission given to parents

Dear Parents,

       I am conducting a study for my thesis paper on Reading Recovery. With your consent I would like to collect some data from MAP testing and running records on your child. This will not harm them in any way or provide any additional instruction or assessments than the student is expected to receive in the regular school year.

       The data collected will be analyzed to set up a comparison of students receiving reading recovery and other interventions to those who are not. With your permission I will be able to conduct a study about reading recovery and make some conclusions of its effectiveness that can benefit educators and parents like you. All data and scores will be kept confidential and the students' names will not be included anywhere in the study.

       Please call or e-mail me with any questions or concerns,

Thank you for your help and consent,

Allison Bisker
First Grade Teacher/OU reading Fellow
The Plains Elementary School
614-419-3722
ab137306@ohio.edu
abisker@athenscity.k12.oh.us

I agree to let (child's name)_____ participate in this study through Ohio University Graduate School.

Parents name_____

Parent signature_____

APPENDIX C

Running record format

RUNNING RECORD SHEET

Name: _____ Date: _____ D. of B.: _____ Age: _____ yrs _____ mos.

School: _____ Recorder: _____

	Text titles	Errors / Running Words	Error Ratio	Accuracy Rate	Self-correction Ratio
Easy	_____	_____	1: _____	_____ %	1: _____
Instructional	_____	_____	1: _____	_____ %	1: _____
Hard	_____	_____	1: _____	_____ %	1: _____

Directional movement _____

Analysis of Errors and Self-corrections

Information used or neglected — Meaning (M), Structure or Syntax (S), Visual (V)

Easy _____

Instructional _____

_____

Hard _____

_____

Cross-checking on information (Note that this behavior changes over time)

Page	Title	Count		Analysis of Errors and Self-Corrections	
		E	SC	Information used	
				E MSV	SC MSV