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The Use of Guided Reading Strategies by Second-Grade Students in a Regular Classroom Setting

Jaime Mayer
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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Jaime Mayer

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Committee

Name	Department/School
Jarene Fluckiger	TED
Deborah M. Shiva	Sp Ed

Chairperson *Wilma Kuhlman*

Date *July 15, 1998*

Abstract

Guided reading, a context in which a teacher supports a reader's development of effective strategies for processing texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty, is a relatively new practice in the field of education. A review of current literature indicates that little research has been conducted which identifies the results of incorporating guided reading instruction into the curriculum. The purpose of this research was to investigate the use of guided reading strategies by second-grade students as they read in an independent setting as well as one-on-one with their teacher. Three second-grade students were chosen as case participants for the research. Data included running records, observation field notes, and informal interviews. The results of the study indicated that all three case participants learned and used guided reading strategies. The findings suggest that incorporating guided reading instruction into the curriculum has possible positive implications and that further research needs to be conducted.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to the chair of my committee, Dr. Wilma Kuhlman, for her for insights, knowledge, and commitment. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Jarene Fluckiger, Dr. Deborah Irvin, and Deborah Ady, whose recommendations contributed significantly to the process. A special thank you is extended to my new husband, Jeff, for his continuous support during the writing process. Finally, I would like to express special appreciation to my very first teachers--Rob and Cyndi Mayer.

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Chapter I

The Problem

<u>Introduction</u>

Guided reading is a relatively new practice in the field of education. The earliest reference found by the researcher dated back to 1995 in a paper entitled "Meeting the Instructional Needs of Students Through Flexible Grouping of Children During Guided Reading Lessons: A Look at One Teacher's Decision Making" presented at the National Reading conference in New Orleans (McCarrier, Henry, & Bartley, 1995). Although the terminology may not be new to some educators, the process of current guided reading instruction is original. Stemming from a foundation in Marie Clay's Reading Recovery (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), guided reading applies similar principles of supported reading experiences to a feasible classroom setting.

Guided reading is grounded in theories of learning developed by Lev Vygotsky. Cognitive change involves movement through the "zone of proximal development," a concept of Vygotsky's. This zone is the area lying between where the child is now, cognitively speaking, and where he or she could be with help. Cognitive growth occurs through a process of guided participation in which others provide various kinds of help tailored to the child's current level of ability (Vygotsky, 1978).

Although much research exists regarding Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, little research has been conducted regarding the effectiveness of guided

reading in the classroom. This is due in part to its relative newness. Despite the scarcity of educational research, that is grounded in theory and practice-based, many schools nationwide are implementing guided reading instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

The Problem

Debates are surfacing about reading instruction and how teachers can reach all students. In the words of author Mary Ellen Giacobbe (1996):

Some educators believe the problem is an emphasis on phonics versus literature-based instruction, homogeneous grouping versus heterogeneous grouping, early intervention versus wait-and-see, accepting approximations versus expecting correctness, and direct (explicit) instruction versus discovery. (p. ix)

New information on how children learn language and become literate inspires teachers to implement changes, sometimes with extensive professional development and a rich array of materials but often without essential support systems. Teachers are using more and more varied texts to support reading; they use children's literature instead of controlled vocabulary texts; and they place more emphasis on learners' construction of knowledge through their own discoveries (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

One notable change in instructional practices was the introduction of guided reading in 1995 (McCarrier, Henry, & Bartley, 1995). Interest in the reading support program grew rapidly and has been implemented in many schools nationwide. The

relative newness of guided reading, however, has limited the amount of educational research regarding its effectiveness in the classroom. This study works on filling the gap in the scarcity of research on guided reading.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

How do second-grade students use guided reading strategies when they read orally during a running record?

What behaviors that indicate the use of guided reading strategies, if any, are observed as second-grade students read independently?

Purpose of the Study

As educators go back and forth on the issues regarding best practice in reading instruction, one of the most important variables is an individual classroom teacher who understands how children acquire literacy. The classroom teacher plays an important role in helping each child achieve his or her potential.

The results of this study will inform interested educators of the impact guided reading had on second-grade readers in a regular classroom setting. While guided reading is not designed to replace whole-class instruction, it has implications for small group instruction. As an extension of the successful Reading Recovery program, guided reading utilizes similar methodology in helping students become more proficient readers, but within a regular classroom setting. Guided reading provides an update on the traditional practice of ability grouping and addresses individual student

needs.

Definition of Key Terms

Behaviors (Actions). Observable evidence of strategy-use (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Cues. Sources of information within the text and within the reader that are used to problem-solve unfamiliar aspects of text (Clay, 1993).

Dynamic Grouping. Students grouped by specific assessment for strengths in the reading process and appropriate level of text difficulty; dynamic, flexible, and changeable on a regular basis (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Guided Reading. A small-group context in which a teacher supports each reader's development of effective strategies for processing texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Running Record. A tool for coding, scoring, and analyzing a child's precise reading behaviors (Clay, 1993).

Skills. Reader's ability to manipulate bits of information useful only within a context; elements of checklists and scopes and sequences; features to note in content when reading and writing (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Strategies. Operations that allow a reader to apply, relate, and attend to information from different sources; the use of more than one cue at a given time (Clay, 1991).

Limitations

One limitation of the study included the natural maturation of students

throughout the time of study. Outside influences often affect performance in school,

thus individual reading results may have been affected by family and community

events.

A second limitation was the length of the study. The study was conducted

over a nine-week period: seven weeks of guided reading instruction and two

additional weeks of pre- and post-instructional data collection.

A third limitation was the experience of the teacher. The teacher had not

conducted any formal guided reading sessions prior to the onset of this study which

may have affected individual students' strategy acquisition. However, the teacher

took several measures to prepare for the research including: six observations of

Reading Recovery lessons; observations of two classrooms and three videotaped

guided reading sessions; attendance at a four-hour guided reading in-service provided

by the school district; attendance at a state conference entitled "Guided Reading in the

Elementary Classroom: Individualizing Materials and Instruction to Fit Individual

Levels of Student Development;" attendance at a reading conference with Gay Su

Pinnell, co-author of Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All Children (1996)

as the keynote speaker; informal interviews of teachers who conducted guided reading

in their classrooms; and, a review of related literature as presented in Chapter II.

Summary

This chapter presented the problem statement regarding the scarce amount of research that has been conducted on guided reading instruction in the elementary classroom. Connections were made between guided reading and the theories of Lev Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. The purpose of this study is to inform interested educators of the impact guided reading had on second-grade students in a regular classroom setting. This chapter included the research questions that guided this study as well as descriptions of the study's limitations. Key terms were also defined, some of which will be explained in greater detail in the following review of literature.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this review of literature is to provide a basis of understanding to establish the significance of this study. In a qualitative research design, the historical perspective and review of current trends is used to justify and acknowledge the importance of the topic. The intent is to use this information as a guide for the study. Analysis of the study will not be affected by the review of literature. Areas of relevance to this study are ability grouping, dynamic grouping, guided reading, repeated readings, and reading recovery.

Ability Grouping

Ability grouping is one of the oldest and most controversial issues in education (Slavin, 1987). One important problem in discussing "ability grouping" is that the term has many meanings. Several programs or policies, while differing vastly by comparison, are labeled with this umbrella term. In general, ability grouping implies that students are grouped for instruction by ability or achievement so as to reduce their heterogeneity. For the purposes of this paper, ability grouping will refer to the within-class grouping of students according to their reading ability. The question is, how is reading ability determined?

Reading ability has typically been determined by scores from a basal test, a word list, or perhaps even a standardized test. Judging from the variety of sources

used to measure a student's ability to read, reading ability has an inconsistent definition. Consequently, and as a necessity to this research, student grouping by reading ability can be clarified through the words of Margaret Mooney. "You could consider grouping children by identifying those working at approximately the same developmental stage and displaying common attitudes, understandings, and behaviors" (Mooney, 1990).

Many adults can remember learning to read as a member of a group labeled the cardinals, robins, or bluejays, or some other euphemisms for high-, average-, and low-ability. In today's American classroom, any mention of ability grouping, is discouraged because of its linkage to tracking (Slavin, 1987). In addition, because research studies show the lack of student progress during ability grouping, many teachers avoid ability grouping altogether (Slavin, 1987). However, more current research indicates that there may be benefits to ability grouping. The following is a compilation of the research detailing the impact of ability grouping on children.

One of the most compelling arguments for the practice of ability grouping in elementary schools is the instructional-social context of classroom learning. Learning to read, as with any area of content, cannot be viewed as an exclusively instructional phenomenon (Hiebert, 1983). In fact, the classroom has long been recognized as a social system (Cohen, 1972; Parsons, 1959). Setting up groups in the classroom sets in motion social processes that can have social and instructional effects (Rosenbaum, 1980). Small groups established for reading instruction, ability groups for example,

would be expected to form instructional-social contexts that are unique from other organizational contexts (Hiebert, 1983).

From a different standpoint, however, students who are grouped according to ability or achievement must face an alternate source of social influence--peers. The peer system is clearly one of the most potent influences on children's learning and becomes increasingly important as children move through the elementary grades (Asher, Oden, & Gottman, 1976). Students within a class can influence a child's perception of him/herself as a learner (Weinstein & Middlestadt, 1979), as well as a child's reading performance (Martin, Veldman, & Anderson, 1980). Presumably children within a smaller group also affect one another, but at this point the influence of peers on children's performance in teacher-directed reading groups remains unclear. Teachers are cautioned to change children's group placement frequently (Smith & Robinson, 1980) in an effort to avoid stereotyping among peers. This also prevents the tracking effect from one school year to the next. Unfortunately, there seems to be a great deal of truth to the statement, "Once a bluejay, always a bluejay" (Slavin, 1987).

Because of the achievement criterion for group membership, the experience of being in the high-ability group could be very different from that of being in the low-ability group. In turn, these different instructional-social contexts could influence the learning outcomes of the participants. Ability grouping is supposed to increase student achievement primarily by reducing the heterogeneity of the class or instructional

group, making it more possible for the teacher to provide instruction that is neither too easy nor too difficult for most students. Within instruction models, the match between children's learning rates and the pace at which new information is presented has been identified as a crucial determinant of learning (Bloom, 1976). If children are receiving information at their optimal learning rate, learning will progress much more efficiently than if new information is presented too quickly or too slowly. Ability grouping presumably allows the teacher to increase the pace and level of instruction for high achievers and provide more individual attention, repetition, and review for low achievers. However, homogeneously low performing reading groups have been observed experiencing a slower pace and lower quality of instruction than do students in higher achieving groups (Allington, 1980).

Another basic component is the amount of time teachers spend with groups. Since the amount of time children spend in teacher-directed reading groups has been found to be highly related to reading achievement (Rosenshine, 1979), how teachers allocate their time to groups of different levels could influence children's reading opportunities. In several studies, teachers have been found to spend more time with high-ability reading groups than low-ability ones (McDermott, 1976).

In addition, teachers appear to vary the amount of time they direct groups of different levels to spend on decoding tasks that focus on individual words or word segments, and meaning tasks that focus on sentences or longer units of text. In the classrooms studied by Gambrell, Wilson, and Gantt (1981), instruction in decoding

skills and isolated words consumed 17% of low-ability readers' time as compared to 7% of high-ability readers' time. Furthermore, the proportion of time allocated to meaning-type tasks differed greatly for high- and low-ability readers: over half of the instructional time in high-ability groups was devoted to meaning-related activities as compared to about one quarter of the instructional time allocated for such tasks in low-ability groups.

Teachers' plans for different groups have been found to vary on another dimension--whether the mode of reading is oral or silent. In a series of studies, Allington (1977) has found that children in high-ability reading groups read silently much more than they read orally, while the opposite is true for children in low-ability groups. Since silent reading is somewhat faster, it follows that children will read more if their predominant mode is silent reading. Indeed, Allington found that children in high-ability groups read twice, and in some situations as much as three times as many words as children in low-ability groups. Oral reading in low-ability groups also appeared to be more repetitive. Grant and Rothenberg (1980) found that in low-ability groups, students frequently reread text materials which other members of their group had already covered. In contrast, when children in high-ability groups read aloud, each child read new material.

Differences in learning outcomes have also been shown to be highly related to the degree of children's engagement in learning tasks (Bloom, 1976). A number of researchers have reported that children in low-ability groups are less frequently

engaged in the assigned tasks than those in high-ability groups (Gambrell, 1981).

Teachers seem to spend a comparatively larger proportion of group time dealing with

behavior and attention problems in low-ability groups than in high-ability ones (Camp

& Zimet, 1975). Eder (1982) reported that one teacher spent twice as much group

time in managerial acts with the low-ability group as with the high-ability one. Since

time spent on the management of behavior has been found to be negatively correlated

with learning (Brophy, 1979), this finding suggests that low-ability pupils may have

diminished opportunities to receive reading instruction.

Although these findings are generally interpreted as evidence that low-ability

readers have shorter attention spans and greater behavior problems, some alternative

suggestions deserve consideration. First, some teachers place children in low-ability

groups because of behavior or attention problems and not necessarily because of low

reading potential (Camp & Zimet, 1975). A second explanation for the inattentiveness

of low-ability groups is that oral reading, which is frequently the task, creates more

opportunities for distractions than silent reading since only one reader can be directly

involved in oral reading while all can be engaged during silent reading (Eder, 1982).

A great amount of research in this literature review was dedicated to defining

ability grouping and identifying its impact, both positive and negative, on learners.

The importance of these definitions will help the reader further distinguish ability

grouping from the practice known in guided reading as "dynamic grouping."

Dynamic Grouping

Traditionally, only one kind of grouping--based on ability--was used for classroom work (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Guided reading, however, uses a process known as "dynamic grouping." Dynamic grouping is like ability grouping in that small clusters of students are gathered on a needs basis. Each group of students is similar in their development of a reading process or, in other words, the group is considered "homogenous." From there, dynamic grouping differs from ability grouping in several ways.

In dynamic grouping, students are placed in needs-based ability groups for specific instruction rather than as broad ability categories. In addition, the composition of the group is flexible and fluid thereby working against the dangers of tracking (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The dynamic groups set up for guided reading sessions are expected to change as the needs of the students continuously change. This is in contrast to the permanence and rigidity of traditional ability groups.

Another difference between ability grouping and dynamic grouping is the amount of time students spend in homogenous groups. In dynamic grouping for comprehensive literacy, many kinds of groups are used for reading and for other activities. For example, teachers maintain heterogeneous whole-group activities such as reading aloud, shared reading, literature circles, readers' workshop, science and social studies, interactive writing, and other curricular activities. Heterogeneous small-group activities in these same areas are also promoted. Only the guided reading

sessions are grouped according to achievement or experience, or "homogeneously."

Moreover, in dynamic grouping, children do not read a fixed sequence of books. Texts are chosen for their appropriateness for the group. Dynamic grouping is a continuous process of observing and analyzing individuals, grouping and regrouping, and selecting appropriate texts that support the readers' use of strategies but offer opportunities for new learning.

Differences also arise in the teaching provided to groups; using appropriate-level texts avoids the slow progress through texts experienced by many "low" groups (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). In the past the low group typically spent many days on a story that the middle and high groups spent only one or two days reading, partly due to the difficulty of text and the exercises that accompanied it. Consequently, the teacher had to spend many days going over the material (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). With dynamic grouping, all children can read many books; children making slower progress have easier books, but they are building experience. Evaluation is not based on unit tests or progress through a fixed sequence of texts, but on running records and teacher observations that are documented through notes (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Table 1 shows important differences between traditional, or ability, grouping and dynamic grouping in terms of underlying assumptions and the processes of grouping, teaching, and evaluation.

Table 1

Comparison of Traditional and Dynamic Grouping

	Traditional Reading Groups	**Dynamic Grouping for Guided Reading**
Assumptions	- General ability as determining factor - Progress through same phases with established rate; change not usually expected - One kind of grouping prevails	- Ability to use sources of information to process text is determining factor - Change on a continuous basis is expected - Different groupings for other purposes are used
Process of Grouping	- Grouped by general determination of ability - Static, usually remain stable in composition - Progress through a fixed sequence of books - May not skip materials	- Grouped by specific assessment for strengths in the reading process and appropriate level of text difficulty - Dynamic, flexible, and changeable on a regular basis - Books chosen for the group from a variety on the appropriate level-- some overlap but generally not the same for every group - Difference in sequence of book level expected

Table 1 Comparison of traditional and dynamic grouping
(Reprinted with permission from Gay Su Pinnell, 1996)

Table 1 Cont.

	Traditional Reading Groups	**Dynamic Grouping for Guided Reading**
Process of Teaching	- Words pretaught - Skills practice follows reading - Limited number of selections buttressed by skills practice in workbooks or worksheets - Limited variety of selections - Controlled vocabulary - Selections usually read once or twice - Heavily focused on skills - Round robin reading; children take turns, each reading a page or line	- Introduction foregrounds meaning and language with some attention to words in text - Skills incorporated into reading; skills teaching directly related to selection - Unlimited number of selections; skills taught during reading - Wide variety of selections - Many frequently used words but vocabulary not artificially controlled - Selections reread several times for fluency and fast problem solving - Balanced focus on reading for meaning and the use of flexible problem-solving strategies to construct it - All children read the whole text to themselves
Process of Evaluation	- Evaluation based on progress through set group of materials and tests	- Evaluation based on daily observation and regular, systematic individual assessment

Guided Reading

Guided reading is a context in which a teacher supports each reader's development of effective strategies for processing novel texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The teacher works with a small group of children who use similar reading processes and are able to read similar levels of text with support. The teacher introduces a text to this small group, works briefly with individuals in the group as they read it, may select one or two teaching points to present to the group following the reading, and may ask the children to take part in an extension of their reading. The text is one that offers the children an optimum number of new things to learn; that is, the children can read it with the strategies they currently have, but it provides the opportunity for a small amount of new learning.

The purpose of guided reading is to enable children to use and develop strategies "on the run" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). They are enjoying the story because they can understand it; it is accessible to them through their own strategies supported by the teacher's introduction. The students focus primarily on constructing meaning while using problem-solving strategies to figure out words they do not know, deal with tricky sentence structure, and understand concepts or ideas they have not previously met in print. The idea is for children to take on novel texts, read them at once with minimal support, and read many of them again and again for independence and fluency.

The ultimate goal in guided reading is to help children learn how to use independent reading strategies successfully (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Teachers, based on their knowledge of children, possible texts, and the processes involved in reading and learning to read, make a series of complex decisions that influence and mediate literacy for the young children in the group. Guided reading also involves ongoing observation and assessment that inform the teacher's interactions with individuals in the group and help the teacher select appropriate texts.

In order to select appropriate texts, teachers analyze the supports and challenges inherent in each text. In doing so, the teacher considers how individual readers might respond to these supports and challenges in reading the text. Each text has specific features that support a child's use of strategies and offer new opportunities. For example, some early books support the use of phrasing by laying out the text so that each sentence begins a new line or certain words are grouped on a separate line.

An essential element of guided reading is its use of a gradient of text. A gradient of text reflects a defined continuum of characteristics related to the level of support and challenge the reader is offered. In order to create a gradient of text with a classroom library, books should be placed in groups according to difficulty (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). A few books are compared at a time and the following factors are considered: length, size and layout of print, vocabulary and concepts, language structure, text structure and genre, predictability and pattern of language, and

illustration support. Running records are the most powerful tool for helping teachers

identify if the selected text was appropriate (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) and further

adjustments can be made.

Table 2 outlines the essential elements of guided reading. It summarizes the

teacher's and children's actions before, during, and after the reading.

Table 2

The Essential Elements of Guided Reading

	Before the reading	During the reading	After the reading
Teacher	- selects an appropriate text, one that will be supportive but with a few problems to solve - prepares an introduction to the story - briefly introduces the story, keeping in mind the meaning, language, and visual information in the text, and the knowledge, experience, and skills of the reader(s) - leaves some questions to be answered through reading	- "listens in" - observes the reader's behaviors for evidence of strategy use - confirms children's problem-solving attempts and successes - interacts with individuals to assist with problem solving at difficulty (when appropriate) - makes notes about the strategy use of individual readers	- talks about the story with the children - invites personal response - returns to the text for one or two teaching opportunities such as finding evidence or discussing problem-solving - assesses children's understanding of what they read - sometimes engages the children in extending the story through such activities as drama, writing, art, or more reading

Table 2 Cont.

	Before the reading	During the reading	After the reading
Children	- engage in a conversation about the story - raise questions - build expectations - notice information in the text	- read the whole text or a unified part to themselves (softly or silently) - request help in problem solving when needed	- talk about the story - check predictions and react personally to the story or information - revisit the text at points of problem solving as guided by the teacher - may reread the story to a partner or independently - sometimes engage in activities that involve extending and responding to the text (such as drama or journal writing)

Table 2 The essential elements of guided reading
(Reprinted with permission from Gay Su Pinnell, 1996)

Repeated Reading

Guided reading utilizes the practice of repeated readings in several ways. A text is most frequently reread during running records—a tool used for the assessment of a child's precise reading behaviors. Students also have access to books previously read in a guided reading session. Known as the "browsing box," this collection allows students to read many of the texts again and again for independence and fluency.

A plethora of good books is available for reading aloud to children, but relatively little time is available to read. It is understandable that those who share books with children—teachers, librarians, and parents—might want to expose children to as many books as possible. However, what may be overlooked are the advantages to be gained by repeatedly sharing one book with children.

Initially and most obviously, it can be discerned that repetition and young children are happy partners. As preschoolers practice oral language, stack blocks, or repeatedly turn the pages of a favorite book, they appear to be attempting to gain mastery of their world (Martinez & Roser, 1985). When adult observers consider how children structure their own experiences, it makes sense that returning to a story again and again is simply following an existing pattern. However, in classrooms of young children, only occasionally do teachers have the luxury of returning to a book for a second time.

During a study conducted by Miriam Martinez (1983), it was noted that the quality of children's responses changed as stories became increasingly familiar. During the initial reading of a story, the children appeared to be more intent on listening rather than discussing it. As the story became more familiar, due to repeated readings, the quantity of talk about the text approximately doubled (Martinez, 1983). In addition to the amount of response generated, the quality of conversation seemed to improve. During an initial reading of a story the children's responses were predominately answers to the teacher's questions. In later readings, children appeared to be active initiators who shared more comments about the story. Martinez (1983) concluded that students tended to talk more about story language, events, settings, and titles as stories became familiar.

Repeated readings is also a component of Reading Recovery, another method of early literacy intervention, as described below.

Reading Recovery

In the course of her detailed studies of how children learn to read and write, New Zealander Marie Clay studied children having difficulty learning to read. This work led her to design a one-on-one tutorial intervention that was subsequently named "Reading Recovery" for its potential to help these young readers recover a trajectory of progress towards the development of independent reading strategies.

A body of evaluative research supports Reading Recovery's success. Research conducted by Adams (1990) and Slavin (1987) has identified Reading Recovery as one

of the most successful reading programs in the United States for pupils in the federally supported Chapter 1 programs (for socioeconomically disadvantaged children), especially those in the lowest groups. Reading Recovery also demonstrates success through replications with diverse populations of high-risk children in New Zealand (Clay, 1985) and the United States (Lyons, Pinnell, DeFord, Place, & White, 1990). Two studies (Clay, 1985; Pinnell, DeFord, & Lyons, 1988) suggest it has long-term effects.

Reading Recovery has been described as a balanced approach that helps high-risk students to learn phonological awareness and to use contextual information to assist reading (Adams, 1990; Slavin, 1987). Reading Recovery is designed to provide the social interaction that supports the child's ability to work at a level at which he or she may be "half right," not having full control, but able, with the support of the adult, to problem solve and perform. Vygotsky calls this the "zone of proximal development," and within this zone of operations, interaction with the adult is critical. Working just beyond the child's actual development builds a system that leads to further learning. This theory of instruction differs from a Piagetian view of cognitive development that suggests development must take place before learning (Wood, 1988).

Clay's theory of learning to read is based on the idea that children construct cognitive systems to understand the world and language. These cognitive systems develop as "self-extending systems" that generate further learning through the use of multiple sources of information. Clay states, all readers "need to use, and check

against each other, four sources of information: semantic (text meaning), syntactic (sentence structure), visual (graphemes, orthography, format, and layout), and phonological (the sounds of oral language)" (Clay & Cazden, 1990, p. 207).

Reading Recovery is not a classroom program. It is a specially designed program for providing individual help to the very lowest achieving students. However, teachers who have worked with Reading Recovery have found that this close, intensive look at children makes a difference in their views of learning and teaching.

While the objectives of Reading Recovery have implications in the regular classroom, guided reading differs in that it provides for a classroom setting rather than intense one-on-one instruction. Regardless of the educational setting, both programs aim to help children construct the inner control that will enable them to continue to develop reading ability independently as they encounter more difficult and varied texts.

Summary

Guided reading is a relatively new concept in the field of education. Some educators would argue that guided reading is just a culmination of practices that have already been adopted. As the review of literature suggests, guided reading utilizes the most effective elements of traditional practices and is regarded by some as the "heart of a balanced literacy program" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). This chapter described the practices of ability grouping, dynamic grouping, and repeated readings. It also

discussed guided reading and reading recovery in greater detail. Additional research

needs to be completed for further understanding of the effectiveness of guided reading.

Chapter III

Methodology and Procedures

Introduction

This study investigated the use of guided reading strategies by second-grade

students as they read in an independent setting as well as one-on-one with their

teacher. Data were obtained through observation field notes, running records, and

informal interviews.

Overview

This chapter will explain the methodology used for this study. It will include

descriptions of the a) research questions, b) methodology, c) design of the study, d)

setting of the study, e) participants, f) procedures, and g) data analysis.

Research Questions

How do second-grade students use guided reading strategies when they read

orally during a running record?

What behaviors that indicate the use of guided reading strategies, if any, are

observed as second-grade students read independently?

Methodology

Qualitative research methods are designed to discover what can be learned

about some phenomenon of interest, particularly social phenomena where people are

the participants (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). This method of research attempts to

gain an understanding of a person or situation that is meaningful for those involved in the inquiry. This understanding evolves by looking closely at people's words (i.e. informal interviews), actions (i.e. observation field notes), and records (i.e. running records). To collect and analyze these data, the qualitative inquirer looks to the human-as-instrument.

The human-as-instrument is a concept coined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to illustrate the unique position taken by qualitative researchers. A person, that is, a human-as-instrument, is the only instrument which is flexible enough to capture the complexity, subtlety, and constantly changing situation which is the human experience. It is human experiences and situations that are the foci of qualitative research, thereby lending credibility to the purpose of qualitative methodology for this research.

Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding people's experiences in context. The natural setting is the place where the researcher is most likely to discover, or uncover, what is to be known about the phenomenon of interest (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). As a participant observer in this investigation, the researcher was able to record what was seen and heard, without interpretation, in the form of field notes. Qualitative research was appropriate for this study because of the use of "naturalistic" inquiry. This method of inquiry focused on students and their needs in a pre-existing educational setting and did not impose new or unusual circumstances on those people evaluated (Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

Traditional, or quantitative, researchers attempt objectivity through the use of
non-human instruments for gathering information, such as standardized tests and
mathematical or statistical analysis. While quantitative methods of data collection,
such as making tally marks for each recognizable behavior, could be conducted, this
methodology only records the mathematical significance of words and actions.
Qualitative research allows for mediative or reflective thinking rather than this
calculative thinking. In other words, meaning is not given to the behavior as
interpreted through quantitative analysis but emerges from data that is often presented
in the participants' own words (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Design of the Study

The results of a qualitative research study are most effectively presented within
a rich narrative account, sometimes referred to as a case study. The number of case
participants varies with each study, from one case participant to several. The
researcher in this study avoided the use of one case participant to eliminate the
possibility that data could be the result of unusual circumstances. Using a modified
case-study mode of reporting, the researcher chose to include three case participants
which provided sufficient information to accurately describe the findings of the study.
The three case participants were students from one self-contained second-grade class
and each participated in all aspects of the research. Prior to the onset of research, the
researcher obtained permission from the parents of each case participant, as well as
from the school district, in the form of signed letters explaining the study (see

Appendix A).

An emergent research design was used. The researcher's focus of inquiry was pursued using qualitative methods of data collection and data analysis while allowing the design to evolve over time. Any important leads or features identified in the early phases of data analysis were allowed consideration in this type of research design. It is this very notion of pursuing important or salient early discoveries that undergirds qualitative approaches to inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Data from each of the three case participants were initially collected and analyzed individually, then collectively. Data were collected over a nine-week period which began in March. The three case participants were observed individually during twenty-minute guided reading sessions held two times a week and/or throughout the school day during sustained silent reading and other subjects, over a seven-week period. While guided reading instruction accounted for only seven weeks, data collection began one week prior and continued one week following that instructional period. Therefore, the total length of the study was nine weeks.

Setting of the Study

The school. The school used for this study is a public elementary school located in a Midwestern city with a population of about 650,000. The socio-economic status of the neighborhood surrounding this suburban school is mostly middle-class, dual-income families of European descent.

The classroom. The teacher had already set the expectation with her students

that she was not to be interrupted or disturbed while listening to a student read during sustained silent reading. The teacher sat beside the student and gave her undivided attention as the child read. Each student in the classroom has an isolated place in which to read and was completely silent. The teacher also set up the expectation that she was not to be disturbed while she conducted a guided reading session. If a student approached the group at an inappropriate time, the teacher would hold up a "Do not disturb" sign and the student waited patiently for a few minutes until the teacher was available. If a student approached the group and the teacher had an opportunity to quickly assist the student, she did, and the student would return to work at his or her assigned center.

Participants

The Teacher.

In this study the classroom teacher was also the researcher. The researcher was a first-year teacher and was conducting the research in conjunction with the requirements for a master's degree in elementary education.

The Students.

There were twenty-three students in the classroom, twelve boys and eleven girls. Twenty-two students are European American, one male student is Mexican American. The students' ages range from seven to nine years.

Three students were selected as the case participants through the use of purposive sampling. The researcher chose to limit the number of case participants to

three students to keep the observational data manageable and as accurate as possible. The researcher excluded those students receiving special services including: READ, a district program designed to accelerate reading levels of emergent readers; ESL, English as a Second Language instruction; Pre-Challenge, a district program for students exhibiting high levels of aptitude; Resource, a pull-out program directed by a special education teacher typically in the subjects of Reading and Math. Students receiving these services were excluded from the sample because of possible contamination of the data. Excluding these students from the study eliminated the possibility that skills and/or strategies learned in these programs were a contributing factor. These exclusions limited the sample pool to seven students.

The definitive sample was selected through the use of a word list assessment. The Revised Dolch list contained twenty words commonly found at the second-grade reading level. Each of the seven students read the list orally as the researcher scored the number correct while noting sight and analysis cues. The scoring guide for the graded word list ranged as follows: Independent level, 20-19 words correct; Instructional level, 18-14; Frustration level, 13 or less. While no student scored at the frustration level, the three lowest scores in the class appeared at the instructional level: 17, 15, and 15. The three students with these scores were then selected as the case participants. The researcher chose the students with the lowest scores to participate in the study, rather than selecting a more representative sample of the class, for the purpose of shadowing the students that required the most intense level of

additional reading support supplemental to the current reading program.

The case participants included one male and two females. The following is a brief description of each student's level of reading ability and reading behaviors observed prior to guided reading instruction. Pseudonyms are used to provide confidentiality.

Trenton. Trenton is an eight-year-old male of European descent. He was a non-fluent reader characterized by frequent pauses during oral reading which impeded comprehension. Trenton had been observed using picture cues (meaning) to identify unfamiliar words. He was able to produce the beginning sound of a given word (visual) when prompted, and would occasionally combine it with text meaning and letter/sound relationships (visual) to determine the word. Trenton was often observed reading with his finger as a guide.

Robin. Robin is an eight-year-old female of European descent. She was a non-fluent reader characterized by frequent pauses during oral reading which impeded comprehension. While reading aloud to her teacher, Robin would completely stop at unfamiliar words and made no attempt to pronounce the word or even appeal for teacher support. After a significant wait time of ten seconds or more, the teacher would prompt Robin for the beginning sound. Robin would not orally read the beginning sound, rather, she attempted to read the entire word. Because her attempt was usually correct, the teacher assumed she was internally using letter/sound (visual) and possibly meaning cues when she encountered an unfamiliar word.

Molly. Molly is an eight-year-old female of European descent. She was a moderately fluent reader characterized by her ability to read print that had several lines of text somewhat fluently, but only occasionally using phrasing. Molly would independently offer a beginning sound when she approached an unfamiliar word but was usually incorrect in her attempt of the whole word. These incorrect attempts signified the ineffective use or possible lack of meaning and visual cues.

Procedures

The following procedures were used to help answer the first research question:

How do second-grade students use guided reading strategies when they read orally during a running record?

One week prior to the onset of guided reading instruction (Week 1), one running record was administered for each case participant as well as for the other twenty students in the classroom. Each student read the same text, a short story called "The List" from Frog and Toad Together (Lobel, 1972), which was unfamiliar to the students and is considered to be at a second-grade reading level (Guided Reading Book List, Level K; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Seven running records, one taken each week of the seven-week guided reading instructional period (Weeks 2-8), were taken for each case participant using familiar text.

One week following the seven weeks of guided reading instruction (Week 9), one running record was taken for each case participant using an unfamiliar text. This

unfamiliar text was not the same for each case participant as was the baseline running record. An appropriate text was selected by the researcher according to the gradient of text the child's guided reading group was working on at the conclusion of the seven-week period of guided reading instruction.

The Week 1 running record provided the researcher with a baseline of each student's reading level and information about strategies already used by the reader. In addition, the results of the running record aided the researcher in setting up the initial guided reading groups. Both the baseline (Week 1) and final (Week 9) running records provided an indication of the kinds of strategies, if any, the child was using while reading unfamiliar text. The seven running records taken throughout the study (Weeks 2-8), using familiar text, were used to uncover patterns in the child's responses.

Each case participant was placed in a small guided reading group with children who used similar reading processes and who read similar levels of text with support. Due to differences in reading processes, each case participant was placed in a different group. The texts selected for each group offered opportunities for instruction but were not so difficult that the students' processing broke down. In effect, the case participants read different texts from each other during subsequent guided reading sessions and running records.

Administering a running record involved sitting beside the child while he or she read the text. Both teacher and child looked at the same text during a running

record. The teacher, watching the child closely as he or she read, coded reading actions on a separate form or a blank piece of paper. The teacher did not intervene; her role was that of a neutral observer. When the child needed help to move on, the most neutral thing to do was to tell him or her the word (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). This process offered an opportunity to observe what the child could do on his or her own without adult support.

The teacher recorded all the accurate reading with a check for each word read accurately. Mismatches were recorded with a line, children's reading actions above the line, and text information and all teacher actions below the line (see Appendix B). These miscues, or errors, were identified by the following: the child substituted another word for the word in the text, the child omitted a text word, the child inserted a word not found in the text, the child had to be told what the word was, or if the child did not comprehend the text and had to be told "Try that again." Errors were not recorded for repetition, self-correction, or an appeal for teacher support. Self-corrections were identified when a student reread the word accurately as printed in the text. Through qualitative analysis, the teacher looked at evidence of cue use and evidence of the use of strategies, such as cross-checking information and searching for cues, after taking a running record.

The teacher examined each incorrect attempt and self-correction and hypothesized about the cues or information sources the child might have been using (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). In Marie Clay's (1993) analysis, cues refer to the sources

of information a reader uses to problem-solve unfamiliar aspects of text. The three

major sources of information, or cues, are meaning, structure, and visual information.

Meaning (M). The teacher thinks about whether the child's attempt makes

sense up to the point of error. She might think about the story background,

information from the picture, and meaning in the sentence in deciding whether the

child was probably using meaning as a source (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Structure (S). Structure refers to the way language works. Some refer to this

information source as syntax because unconscious knowledge of the rules of the

grammar of the language the reader speaks allows him or her to eliminate alternatives.

Using this implicit knowledge, the reader checks whether the sentence "sounds right"

(Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Visual information (V). Visual information includes the way the letters and

words look. Readers use their knowledge of visual features of words and letters and

connect these features to their knowledge of the way words and letters sound when

spoken. If the letters in the child's attempt are visually similar to the letters in the

word in the text, for example, if it begins with the same letter or has a similar cluster

of letters, it is likely that the reader has used visual information (Fountas & Pinnell,

1996).

Readers use all of these information sources in an integrated way while reading

for meaning (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). A complete running record for this study

included a teacher's coding of errors and self-corrections (SC) as she thought about

the sources of information the child was probably using at that point in reading. For each incorrect attempt and self-corrected error, the letters M S V are indicated in the Error column and the SC column, as appropriate (See Appendix B). If the child probably used meaning, M was circled; if structure (syntax), S was circled; if visual information, V was circled.

The value of this activity was to look for patterns in the child's responses (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The running records indicated the kinds of strategies the child was using and strategic action the child took. The teacher could also observe whether the child was actively relating one source of information to another, a behavior that Clay (1991) calls cross-checking, because the child was checking one cue against another.

The following procedures were used to help answer the second research question:

What behaviors that implicate the use of guided reading strategies, if any, are observed as second-grade students read independently?

All learners have in-the-head processes they use to integrate new information with what they already know (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Readers have the particular challenge of applying their cognitive processes to text. Clay (1991) describes strategies as operations that allow the learner to use, apply, transform, relate, interpret, reproduce, and re-form information for communication. Through this "network of unobservable in-the-head strategies the reader is able to attend to

information from different sources" (p. 328).

Teachers cannot observe these complex in-the-head strategies but must hypothesize that they are being used. Behaviors, however, can be observed. As Kenneth Goodman (1982) has said, children's reading behavior gives us a "window on the reading process." This behavioral evidence must be collected over time (Goodman, 1982). The teacher who is systematically taking running records of children's reading is building a pattern of evidence from which she or he can make fairly reliable hypotheses (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Aside from running records, behavioral evidence can be collected through the use of observation field notes.

One week prior to the onset of guided reading instruction (Week 1), observation field notes were taken once for each of the case participants. Observation field notes were taken twice each week for each case participant for the duration of the seven-week guided reading instructional period (Weeks 2-8). One week after the conclusion of the seven-week period (Week 9), one final set of observation field notes were taken for each case participant. In all, sixteen sets of field notes were collected and typed in greater detail for each of the three case participants. These observation field notes were analyzed individually, then collectively, to describe the reading behaviors observed as the students read independently.

Observation field notes were taken as the teacher listened to the child read independently during a guided reading session and during whole-group activities. The teacher also took observation field notes while listening to the child read during

sustained silent reading (S.S.R. time). During that time, each student chose an isolated place in the classroom in which to read silently. The teacher sat beside the student, she listened to him or her read for about five minutes, then she moved on to another student. The teacher had already set the expectation with her students that she was not to be interrupted or disturbed while listening to a student read. Students who were in need of assistance patiently waited for a few minutes until the teacher was available.

As the child read independently, the researcher looked to answer questions such as "Does the reader appeal to the teacher in a dependent way or appeal when appropriate (that is, when the reader has done what he or she can)?" "Does the reader read with phrasing and fluency?" "Does the reader make comments or respond in ways that indicate comprehension of the story?" The teacher did not intervene or use guided reading prompts unless an appeal was made by the student. These observations were quickly noted on a clipboard as the child read and were typed in greater detail at the end of each school day.

Embedded in the observation field notes were data obtained through informal interviews. Informal interviews were conducted after the child had read to the teacher and included questions such as "How did you know that word was _____?" "How did you figure out that tricky word?" "Show me the tricky part on this page."

The research was conducted during familiar classroom routines. The reading lesson began with heterogeneous whole-group activities such as reading aloud, shared

reading, and skill building or maintenance from the basal reader or selected literature. The students then completed an assigned activity that reinforced the objective of the lesson. After an appropriate amount of work time had passed, the students divided into four pre-assigned heterogeneous groups labeled Red, Yellow, Green, and Blue. Each of these "teams" contained four or five students and were reassigned periodically to increase interaction between students.

Eight learning centers had already been established in the classroom: ABC center, for letter and word study; listening center, containing a variety of stories on tape; writing center, providing a range of writing materials to encourage writing for different purposes; independent reading, for free-choice reading from the classroom library; poem box, containing a collection of poems for students to read or use as a basis for their own poetry; browsing boxes, specified for each guided reading group and containing several books that children had previously read in their group; art center, providing a place and materials for a variety of projects; computer center, highlighting word processing and book publishing software.

A work board posted in the classroom allowed students to check which two centers their team was assigned to each day. After working at the first center for a period of twenty minutes, the teams were signaled with a timer to rotate to their second center. Students worked at the second center for another twenty minutes; a total of forty minutes each day. The teams visited each of the eight centers, two per day, by the Thursday of each week. Fridays were not included in the rotation

schedule. The students used the allotted time on Fridays as a make-up period for the two centers they missed as a result of being called to meet in their guided reading group.

In this classroom setting, the researcher chose to set up four guided reading groups which each consisted of four or five students. Four groups were established due to the similarities in reading processes and the level of performance on similar levels of text among group members. The teacher was aware of each student's reading performance based on the baseline running record, reading one-on-one with texts selected by the student and by the teacher, a Revised Dolch word list assessment, and daily observation in whole-class and small group settings.

The four students identified as pre-challenge were placed in one group labeled and known only to the teacher as "M." The group identified as "J" included Trenton and four of the students receiving READ services. Group "L," which Robin was placed in, referred to the four students who could read print that had several lines of text and could write many words independently, spelling them accurately, but who did not read fluently using phrasing. The students in the fourth group, "K," which Molly was placed in, exhibited behaviors such as directionality and word-by-word matching but who needed to concentrate more on problem-solving for unfamiliar words.

These initial guided reading groups, J, K, L, and M changed during the course of the study, as expected. The initial guided reading grouping was a hypothesis that was continually being tested as the study progressed. This "dynamic grouping"

enabled the teacher to group students effectively for efficient teaching. As students'

reading strategies evolved, the fluidity of groups allowed for more directed instruction

on a needs basis. Evaluation and movement of students from one group to another,

was not based on unit tests or progress through a fixed sequence of texts, but on

running records and teacher observations that are documented through notes (Fountas

& Pinnell, 1996).

A typical guided reading session consisted of six components: running records,

vocabulary building, pre-reading, reading, word analysis, and writing. The researcher

chose a leveled children's book that provided the right amount of support for the

group (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The guided reading group began with a few

minutes of independent reading from a familiar text, usually from the group's

browsing box. At this time the researcher would choose one student to take a running

record on using this familiar text. The researcher initiated the instructional

intervention by using a few minutes to build vocabulary. Using dry erase boards,

students were asked to "fast write" a tricky word that appeared in a previous text. If

the researcher saw the need, a mini-lesson highlighting phonetic generalization of that

word followed. The researcher quickly moved on to pre-reading. The researcher

introduced each new text, discussing the premise behind the book while drawing upon

the students' prior knowledge of the topic. The researcher would flip through a few

pages of the book and encourage the students to search for "tricky" words, or words

that were unfamiliar to the reader. At this time the researcher called the students'

attention to particular details in the story or illustrations that might serve as cues as the students read. Each student received his or her own copy of the book and the researcher invited the students to begin reading their texts. Each student read his or her own copy of the book with a quiet voice. The researcher slightly staggered handing out the individual books to avoid a "sing-song" or read-along effect. The researcher sat next to each student briefly to listen to him or her read. At this time the researcher utilized prompts that were designed to assist the student to search for meaning, structure, and visual cues, hence "guided reading." At the end of the guided reading session, the researcher redirected the group back as a whole to concentrate on word analysis ("tricky" words) and occasionally assigned a follow-up written response to the lesson. The completed book was then placed in the group's browsing box to be read during center time.

Each guided reading group met twice a week with the researcher. The researcher devised a separate rotation schedule for the guided reading groups. This schedule was not posted in the classroom, nor were the students' names in accordance with their guided reading group. On Mondays, the researcher met with group J during the first twenty minutes and group M during the second twenty minutes. Wednesdays held the opposite schedule with group M first and group J second. On Tuesdays, group K met during the first twenty minutes and group L met during the second twenty minutes. Thursdays held the opposite schedule with group L meeting first and group K second. No guided reading groups were held on Fridays.

<u>Data Analysis</u>

The data collection for this research drew on the following sources of information: (a) running records, (b) observation field notes, (c) informal interviews. Triangulation of data was obtained through these sources. The use of an outside reader, Deb Ady, ensured the trustworthiness and confirmability of results.

The goal of qualitative research is to discover patterns which emerge after close observation, careful documentation, and thoughtful analysis of the research topic (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

The researcher looked for evidence of any reading actions indicating the use of guided reading strategies as well as reading actions that were not expected as a result of the research. To restate, any other patterns which reoccurred as a student was reading, that the researcher had not anticipated, were noted as well.

Data collected from running records were compiled for each case participant and critically analyzed. The number of miscues and self-corrections made by the student was indicated on each running record. At the time of each running record, the researcher also indicated which cues--meaning, structure, or visual-- the student was probably making at error and at self-correction. While analyzing each running record, the researcher counted the number of times each cue was used at error and at self-correction. For example, on a running record with eight errors, the notations indicated that meaning cues were probably used three times, structure cues were used four times, and visual cues were used six times. The researcher then assumed that the

student was probably using visual cues most frequently. If two cues were used an equal amount of times, the researcher assumed that both cues were used most frequently--possibly indicating cross-checking. On the same running record, for example, the student made three self-corrections. The researcher again counted how many times each cue was used. The cue with the highest number indicated on the running record was assumed to be used most frequently. The researcher also looked at each running record to identify whether any attempts at self-correction were made.

Each student's running records were then compiled and analyzed. A chart was made noting the week of study, the most frequently used cue(s) at error, and the most frequently used cue(s) at self-correction. The researcher then counted the cues reported from each week's running record to find the cues, at error and at self-correction, that were used most frequently during the course of the study. This gave the researcher an indication of how the students used guided reading strategies when they read orally during a running record.

All information present in observation field notes, including responses from informal interviews, was also analyzed. The researcher composed a chart noting the date, observed reading behaviors, and instructional intervention. As each observation field note was analyzed, the researcher noted the date, indicated behaviors observed of the student, and any instructional intervention that took place. The researcher then went through the chart, highlighting the key words in both columns in different colors. For example, the word "reread" was highlighted in blue, indicating a meaning

cue. Behaviors that indicated the use of structure cues were highlighted in yellow, and observed behaviors that indicated the use of visual cues were highlighted in pink. The researcher then looked for any observable patterns. For example, if meaning cues were not observed during the first three weeks of the study but then surfaced by Week 4 throughout the rest of the study, it was assumed that the cue was learned and used. In making this assumption, the researcher also looked at the instructional intervention to identify whether this was a strategy taught during the guided reading sessions. For example, if chunking was an instructional intervention during Weeks 3, 5, and 6 and the student was observed using the strategy independently by Week 7, the strategy was assumed to be learned and used. A pattern was assumed if an observable reading action occurred in more than two observation field notes. If however, a student frequently used a particular cue before any instructional intervention on that strategy had taken place, it was assumed that the student had knowledge of that strategy prior to the study.

All sources of data were then compared, by individual, to highlight any patterns exhibited by each case participant. For each student, the researcher looked at how students used guided reading strategies at error and at self-correction on the running records, cue use as observed through observation field notes, and comments each student made about cue use during informal interviews.

After analyzing each case participant individually, all aspects of data were analyzed collectively to allow commonalities and differences, or cross-case patterns, in

the three case participants' behaviors to emerge. The researcher compared the most commonly used cues at error and at self-correction on running records which indicated how the students were using guided reading strategies. Cues used during observation field notes were also reviewed for patterns of usage and whether or not they were learned strategies.

What can be discovered by qualitative research are not sweeping generalizations but contextual findings (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). In this sense, the results of this study may or may not apply to other people or settings. Readers will determine if results might transfer to their own settings.

Summary

Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding people's experiences in context. This chapter described qualitative research methods and the purpose for using qualitative methodology in this study. An emergent research design was used as well as a modified case-study mode of reporting. The manner in which the three case participants were selected was discussed including a brief description of the students' reading behaviors observed prior to guided reading instruction. The research questions were also presented along with the procedures used to help answer each question. The data collection for this research drew on running records, observation field notes, and informal interviews. Triangulation of data was obtained through these sources and will be explained in greater detail in Chapter IV.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter reports the findings of this study. The data collection for this research drew on the following sources of information: (a) running records, (b) observation field notes, and (c) informal interviews. The researcher looked for evidence of any behaviors indicating the use of guided reading strategies as well as reading behaviors that were not expected. All sources of data were analyzed separately then compiled for each case participant. All aspects of data were then analyzed collectively to discern commonalities and differences, or cross-case patterns, in the three case participants' behaviors to emerge.

In order to make researcher involvement as clear as possible, from this point on I will write using first person. The case participants' names have been changed to provide for confidentiality.

Question 1

How do second-grade students use guided reading strategies when they read orally during a running record?

A set of running records, one running record taken each week for the duration of the nine-week study, was compiled for each of the participants. Each running record was analyzed for errors and self-corrections the child made while reading a particular text. This indicated which sources of information, or cues, the child used at

that point in reading. This set of nine running records was used to look for patterns

in the child's responses regarding how they were using guided reading strategies.

Trenton. At error, Trenton seemed to rely on visual cues the most while

attempting unfamiliar words. Visual cues were predominantly used during four of the

nine running records. It was evident that Trenton was probably using visual cues by

the types of errors made. For example, while reading Henry and Mudge (Rylant,

1987) (Week 2), Trenton read "hand" for the word "head" and "looked" for the word

"licked." Trenton could identify the beginning and ending sounds of the words and

"assumed" the word based on these visual cues.

Meaning cues were most commonly used while attempting unfamiliar words

during two of the running records while both visual and meaning cues were used

equally during three running records. For example, while reading The Big Sneeze

(Van Horn, 1985) (Week 7), Trenton read the word "some" for "and *small* flakes."

Trenton identified the beginning sound (visual) and, although the word was incorrect,

it did not impede comprehension (meaning).

At self-correction, all three cuing systems were apparently used during three of

the running records. While reading Henry and Mudge (Rylant, 1987) (Week 3),

Trenton read "He *want* down one road" instead of "went." His error appeared to

show that he identified the beginning sound which indicated use of a visual cue at

error. Trenton quickly self-corrected, this time using all three cuing systems.

Trenton used visual cues again by looking more closely at the letters and thinking

about the letter/sound relationships. Meaning cues were probably used since he was able to determine internally that the sentence did not make sense to him. Structure cues were also probably used as Trenton knew a sentence would not read "He want." Both visual and meaning cues were used equally during three of the records while visual cues alone accounted for one running record. No attempts at self-correction were made during two of the running records (Week 2 and Week 9).

Two running records (Week 1 and Week 9) were taken using unfamiliar text. While reading Crosby Crocodile's Disguise (Vaughan, 1989) (Week 9), Trenton appeared to use visual cues on every one of his fourteen miscues. For example, "sighed" was read "sighted," "meldy" for "moldy," and "usual" for "ugly." Meaning was compromised for all of these miscues except two: "sock" for "stocking" and "tumbled" for "trampled." Comparatively, Week 1's running record also showed a frequent use of visual cues. No noticeable differences were observed in cue usage on unfamiliar text between Week 1's and Week 9's running records.

Robin. At error, Robin's use of guided reading strategies was divided evenly between visual cues, meaning cues, and both visual and meaning cues combined. For example, while reading Tony and the Butterfly (Scott, 1997) (Week 2), Robin read the word "laying" for "lying." This miscue indicates the possible use of letter/sound relationships (visual), identification of the inflectional ending -ing (structure), and understanding of context (meaning). It is also possible that the word "lying" may have been unfamiliar to Robin.

At self-correction, visual and meaning cues appeared to be used together during four of the nine running records. For example, while reading A Tree Is Nice (Udry, 1956) (Week 6), Robin read "We build pl--," hesitating on the word playhouses, and restarted the sentence. She was able to self-correct, identifying the beginning sound (visual) and figuring out what would make sense in the sentence (meaning).

All three cuing systems were used together on one of the running records while self-correcting. While reading Grandad (Cartwright, 1990) (Week 3), Robin read "and he wents to help me." She reread the phrase beginning at "he" (indicating meaning) and was able to self-correct. Visual cues were also probably used and structure cues also may have been used due to the inflectional ending of -s. Visual cues alone accounted for self-correction on only one running record, and no attempts at self-correction were made on three running records.

Analyzing Robin's responses on unfamiliar text (Crosby Crocodile's Disguise-- Vaughan, 1989--Week 9) revealed that she made nine miscues and four self-corrections. Robin seemed to rely on visual cues, namely beginning sounds, at error while using both meaning and visual cues at self-correction. For example, Robin read "'Just look at me,' he sid (sighed)." Her error indicated a possible use of visual cues. Robin quickly self-corrected, possibly indicating what she had read did not make sense to her (meaning). Robin also could have used structure cues, noting the inflectional ending -ed, and might have used visual cues by focusing on letter/sound relationships.

In comparison to the cues used in Week 1's running record on unfamiliar text, Robin

not only used letter/sound relationships and reread as noted before, she also identified

the beginning sounds of words and chunked unfamiliar words during Week 9.

Molly. At error, Molly's use of guided reading strategies was limited to the

use of visual cues on eight of the nine running records. For example, while reading

Nine-In-One, Grr! Grr! (Spagnoli, 1989) (Week 3), Molly read "came out to *great*

Tiger" instead of "greet Tiger." She did, however, use all three cuing systems on one

running record. During Week 5's running record, while reading "Bored" from Stories

From Our Street (Tulloch, 1989), Molly split the contraction "we're" into "we are"

on two occasions. Although noted as a miscue, it appeared that Molly used meaning,

structure, and visual cues when reading the word.

At self-correction, Molly used all three cuing systems on two of her running

records. For example, while reading "Wet Paint" from Stories From Our Street

(Tulloch, 1989) (Week 4), Molly read "Mr. Murphy was very proud of *he* new green

fence." She reread the sentence, indicating meaning, in addition to identifying

letter/sound relationships (visual) and using structure cues to self-correct her miscue.

Meaning cues, visual cues, and meaning/visual cues were each used predominantly on

three running records while no attempts at self-correction were made on four of the

running records.

On an unfamiliar text, Song and Dance Man (Ackerman, 1988) (Week 9),

visual cues were used predominantly on eleven out of twenty-one miscues. Errors that

indicated the use of visual cues include "super" for "supper," "racket" for "rack," and "crayon" for "canyon." Molly made one self-correction and used both visual and meaning cues. Compared to Week 1's running record on unfamiliar text, Molly not only identified the beginning sound of words and used letter/sound relationships as noted before, her reading behaviors on Week 9's running record showed the addition of rereading, chunking, and use of picture cues.

<u>Question 2</u>

What behaviors that indicate the use of guided reading strategies, if any, are observed as second-grade students read independently?

Observation field notes were compiled for each student during the course of the study. One week prior to the onset of guided reading instruction (Week 1), the first set of observation field notes were taken for each of the case participants. Notes were taken for each case participant, twice each week, for the duration of the seven-week guided reading instructional period (Weeks 2-8). One week after the conclusion of the seven-week period (Week 9), observation field notes were taken for each participant one last time. In all, sixteen sets of field notes were collected and typed in greater detail for each of the three case participants. These observation field notes were analyzed individually, then collectively, to describe the reading behaviors observed as the students read independently.

Informal interviews were done periodically throughout the study. Generally they consisted of only one or two questions such as "How did you figure out that

tricky word?" or "What was your favorite part of the story and why?" Comments

from these informal interviews were reported within the same-day observation field

notes.

Trenton. Prior to guided reading instruction, Trenton's observed behaviors

indicated a frequent use of visual cues. While reading independently during S.S.R.

time (Week 1), Trenton frequently assumed words based on their initial letters. For

example, the word "watched" was read "waited."

Week 2 provided more insight into the types of cues Trenton was apparently

using. During a guided reading session Trenton read a passage from Henry and

Mudge (Rylant, 1987). The text read, "He looked at the bear. He looked at Henry.

He licked him." On the last line, Trenton read "He looked at him." Trenton

appeared to use visual cues as both "licked" and "looked" begin with an "l" sound.

He also probably used structure cues because what he had read was grammatically

correct and also followed with the sequence of the two previous lines. Meaning cues

were also probably used as the sentence Trenton read still made sense, at error, and

was supported by the illustration on the page. Two of the instructional interventions I

introduced to Trenton that week were initiating the first sound of a tricky word and

stopping to ask himself, "Did what I just read make sense?"

The books used for guided reading sessions during the first three weeks had

simple story lines and topics that were familiar to the students. At this level more of

the story was carried by the text, usually two to five lines of text on a page, but

pictures were very important in supporting meaning. Trenton's running records

showed few miscues and no noticeable problem-solving which indicated that the text

was relatively easy to read. In looking for more instructional reading material in

which Trenton would have to call on his cuing strategies, I began choosing books that

were slightly more complex but still very easy for children to understand. I looked

for books that contained a full range of punctuation as well as words that had

appeared in previous texts. The vocabulary also contained more inflectional endings--

ing, ed, s--so that the students would have an opportunity to notice the variations in

word structure.

By Week 3, Trenton used some voice and phrasing on his first reading of Mr.

Gumpy's Outing (Burningham, 1970). His fluency could have been attributed to the

repetitive and predictable text. Trenton was also observed using a picture (meaning)

in addition to visual cues to aid him in reading an unfamiliar word. As he read, "said

the..." Trenton paused to look at the picture, looked at the word again, and produced

the correct word "calf." As Marie Clay described (1991), this behavior known as

cross-checking was observed as Trenton checked one cue (meaning) against another

(visual). That week I introduced another intervention to Trenton called "chunking."

Trenton was unable to decode the word "mucked." I covered up the "ed" and asked

Trenton if he could figure out the remaining word. Trenton quickly read "muck" and

I asked him to add the rest. Trenton was able to read the word correctly. I explained

that this was called chunking because a tricky word can be chunked into recognizable

words. I also reviewed the interventions discussed the week prior including initiating

the beginning sound and asking, "Did that make sense?"after reading a passage.

Week 4 included a cue usage that Trenton had not previously utilized up until

that point. While reading The Big Sneeze (Van Horn, 1985), Trenton initiated the

"wa" sound in "wasn't" but was unable to read any further. Previously, he had to be

prompted to initiate the beginning sound of a tricky word. After a ten-second wait, I

framed (chunked) the word "was" with my fingers. Trenton read "was" and as I

moved my hands to uncover the rest of the word, Trenton read the whole word

correctly. I used this example to re-explain chunking. Trenton also was observed

rereading five different phrases, possibly indicating self-monitoring for meaning.

Another instructional intervention I chose to highlight that week was using the picture

to help with tricky words (meaning).

During Week 5, Trenton seemed to use visual and meaning cues. While

reading a different story in The Big Sneeze (Van Horn, 1985), Trenton hesitated at the

word "laughed." I prompted Trenton to give the first sound, to which he did, and

offered the word "looked." I responded, "It could be looked, but look at the letters

again (prompting visual cues)." Trenton was unable to decode the word so I

suggested using the picture (prompting meaning cues). Trenton said, "laughed?" I

asked how he was able to figure the word out to which he said, "It looks like he's

laughing in the picture." Based on these reading behaviors, Trenton could have been

using the strategy of cross-checking. This led to one of that week's instructional

interventions of using the picture as a meaning cue. Trenton also hesitated at the word "climbed." I asked Trenton to chunk the word into parts on his own, at which he was able to read the word correctly. My second instructional intervention was a review of chunking unfamiliar words.

Through Trenton's reading behaviors, and those exhibited by his group members, I observed that the students rarely needed to call upon their problem-solving strategies which indicated that the text was relatively easy to read. In choosing more difficult text, I looked for books in which the amount of text gradually increased, having three to eight lines of text per page with varied text placement.

During Weeks 6 and 7, Trenton seemed to use visual cues more than any other cues. He also provided the beginning sound, without prompting, on three unfamiliar words. While reading the beginning sound aloud, Trenton was able to decode two of the unfamiliar words correctly and independently, and needed some assistance with the third. The word "climbed" appeared in a different book this week. Trenton was able to read it without hesitation, possibly showing some retention from Week 5. The instructional interventions for Weeks 6 and 7 included using the picture (meaning) and chunking (visual). The amount of text in the books used during Weeks 6 and 7 was gradually increasing. The reading vocabulary required more skill in word analysis since the words were longer and had inflectional endings.

By Week 8, Trenton was able to chunk three words independently and without error. The text used at the end of Week 8 contained more challenging ideas and

vocabulary. The books had between four and eight lines of text per page, but the sentences were longer than previous weeks' texts.

During Week 9, I conducted one final informal interview after Trenton had read an unfamiliar text during a running record. When I asked Trenton how he was able to figure out tricky words in the text he responded, "I just sounded them out," indicating the use of visual cues. When I asked what kinds of things good readers do when they read, Trenton answered with more strategies. He stated that good readers, "Get their mouths ready (identify the beginning sound of a word) and can look for 'littler' words inside a big word (chunking)." I asked Trenton to tell me about the pictures. He answered that good readers look at the pictures to help them figure out a word.

When compiling all observation field notes for Trenton, several patterns emerged. Behaviors that indicated the use of visual cues appeared on all sixteen observation field notes. It is assumed that using visual cues, namely identifying the beginning sound of a word, was a strategy already used by Trenton prior to guided reading instruction. Reading behaviors that indicated the use of meaning cues, namely rereading passages of text, appeared on ten of the sixteen observation field notes. Again, rereading text was probably a strategy Trenton had previously developed. Several new cues, however, were more commonly used as the guided reading sessions progressed. The observational field notes indicated that both visual cues, initiating the beginning sound and chunking, introduced as instructional interventions during the

sessions were learned and used. The meaning cues, using the picture and asking "Did that make sense?," were also introduced as instructional interventions but were not obvious consistently enough to note a pattern.

Robin. Robin's reading behaviors observed prior to guided reading instruction (Week 1), led me to assume that she was internally using letter/sound (visual) cues to decode unfamiliar words. While reading aloud in class or one-on-one with me, Robin would stop at unfamiliar words and make no attempt to pronounce the word nor appeal for teacher support. After a significant wait time, I would prompt Robin to give the beginning sound. Rather than orally reading the beginning sound, she attempted to read the entire word. Her attempt was usually correct so I assumed she was internally using visual, and possibly meaning cues, since the guess was consistent with letter/sound relationships.

I began Robin's group with the story Tony and the Butterfly (Scott, 1997) (Week 2). The initial running record taken from Frog and Toad (Lobel, 1972) (Week 1) indicated that the students were capable of reading text with three to eight lines of text per page and a larger variety of frequently used words. While reading the story, I observed Robin primarily using visual cues. For example, the text read "He looked at it more closely" whereas Robin read, "*move* closely." I asked Robin if that made sense to her (prompting meaning). She quickly responded with the correct phrase. This became one of the instructional interventions that I emphasized with Robin that week. In another story, Grandad (Cartwright, 1990), Robin participated in the

group's pre-reading search for tricky words. Robin was observed rereading three

phrases, possibly indicating the use of meaning cues. Another instructional

intervention that I introduced to Robin was to skip an unfamiliar word and to go back

and reread the sentence. Using context cues (meaning), would presumably make the

word easier to decode.

The level of text difficulty remained the same for Week 3. One student in the

group, however, was ready to attempt more difficult text. I moved her to a more

appropriate group made up of students with reading processes similar to hers. I did

not observe any dissension with the move as students were already aware that changes

in the guided reading groups would be made.

While she was rereading Grandad (Cartwright, 1990), I noticed several

behaviors that Robin did not normally exhibit. Robin read with much confidence,

loud and fluent, using some voice and phrasing. This could possibly be attributed to

the fact that this was a second reading. Robin also attempted to decode words

verbally instead of internally as before. I noticed that Robin was able to provide the

beginning sound of a tricky word when prompted but would assume the rest of the

word without looking at individual letters. For example, Robin read "tags" for

"tackle." At the end of the passage I said, "You said 'and a box of fishing tags,' does

that look right to you?" Robin paused for a moment then read, "and a box of fishing

tackle,"indicating that used letter/sound relationships (visual) and possibly thought

about meaning. Using this as an example, I explained to Robin the instructional

intervention of asking "Does that look right?" after reading a passage.

Week 4, I observed Robin return to internal decoding. While reading Concert Night (Cartwright, 1989), Robin hesitated at the name "Johnson." Robin's head dropped and she looked at the word. After a wait time of approximately ten seconds, Robin read the name correctly. It is apparent that Robin was able to use letter/sound relationships (visual) to decode unfamiliar words. Robin and I discussed other options for figuring out tricky words. I introduced chunking by asking Robin if she knew any words inside the word "Johnson." She could identify the name "John" and the word "son." I explained that good readers chunk large words into smaller words that they can recognize, then put the words together. I also noticed that Robin reread five words, possibly indicating self-monitoring for meaning.

During Week 5, Robin used two different meaning cues on the story A Tree Is Nice (Udry, 1956). I observed Robin rereading passages (usually two or three words) which possibly indicated self-monitoring. Robin paused at the word "bonfire." After a short wait time, Robin read the word correctly and I asked how she was able to figure out the tricky word. Robin responded, "I split it in half (indicating chunking)." Robin became frustrated with the word "pirate" but did not pout or become silent as typically observed prior to guided reading instruction. I asked her to skip the tricky word and read the rest of the sentence, assuming the context cues would help her problem-solve. When I asked her to reread the entire sentence, she was able to read the word "pirate" without hesitation. When I asked how she figured out the tricky

word, Robin responded, "I looked at the picture (meaning)." I shared Robin's reading

actions, the use of chunking and picture cues, with the rest of the group when they

had finished reading. Robin explained her strategies to the other group members and

I reinforced them with a few examples.

Robin's reading behaviors, and those exhibited by the other group members,

indicated that they were able to move quickly through the text while attending to

meaning which showed they were ready for more difficult text. I chose books with

more challenging ideas and vocabulary for Weeks 6 and 7.

During pre-reading of Don't Touch My Room! (Lakin, 1985), Robin shared a

comment about her younger sisters always coming into her room. I observed an

immediate connection between Robin and the content of the story, possibly drawing

on her prior knowledge. As Robin read the story, I noted hearing beginning sounds

of words such as b-bus, tr-train, which had not previously been offered by Robin

without prompting. Self-monitoring was also noted as Robin read "They want to

chase (change) my room around." She gave a puzzled look and reread the sentence

correctly. Robin also used picture cues (meaning) to decode the word "buses." She

miscued by reading "carepet" for "carpet." When I asked, "Did that make sense to

you?" Robin said no but could not offer an alternative. I suggested the instructional

intervention of chunking the word. Robin was able to chunk "pet" on her own but

was unable to read the word correctly. I suggested using the picture to which she

looked at the illustration, looked at the word again, and read the word. This use of

checking one cue against another indicated possible cross-checking.

The same story was reread during Week 7. Robin read very fluently and was able to get farther into the book than in Week 6. I also observed that Robin used several picture cues (meaning) to figure out tricky words such as "wrench." This story also contained the word "pirate," a word Robin had struggled with in a previous book. Within seconds, Robin was able to pronounce the word correctly. When I asked how she figured out the tricky word she offered, "I said "pi" then "r" then "ate" but that didn't sound right so I said "et."

By Week 8, the group was ready for a longer text with more sentences per page. I looked for books that used more challenging vocabulary and had more complex story structures. During pre-reading of Now Listen Stanley (Hessell, 1990), Robin initiated the group's search for tricky words. While reading, Robin independently chunked several words including "recognized" and "familiar." Robin read very fluently and exhibited more word attack skills while problem-solving for unfamiliar words. For example, as she approached the word "shrugged," Robin provided the initial sound "shr" without prompting. She followed by sounding the rest of the word out by looking at the individual letters (visual). Behaviors such as this were strictly internal at the beginning of the research period. Two of the instructional interventions we worked on were asking "Did that make sense?" and applying the beginning sound.

During Week 9, I conducted one final informal interview after Robin had read

an unfamiliar text during a running record. When I asked Robin what made her such a good reader she responded, "I sound out words and look at the pictures." I asked her how pictures help when she reads. She explained that sometimes in the pictures the person would hold something or be standing by it and, "when you look at the word and then look at the picture, you can figure it out." Her response indicated that she was able to cross-check sources of information to help her decode unfamiliar words. Although not stated by Robin, I called her attention to how she would reread passages if they did not make sense which was another guided reading strategy that she used.

While analyzing all observation field notes for Robin, I saw that several patterns emerged. Reading behaviors indicating use of visual cues were noted in ten of the sixteen observation field notes. Assuming letter/sound relationships were being determined internally at the beginning of the research, Robin began applying them orally by Week 3 of the treatment. It is apparent that Robin already used letter/sound relationships as a cue, however, it should be noted that her application changed as the study progressed. Robin also reread (meaning) passages prior to the beginning of the study. Rereading was evident in twelve of the observation field notes. It seems that Robin also used the instructional interventions introduced during guided reading sessions. Evidence of applying the beginning sound, chunking words, using picture cues, and asking "Did that make sense?" independently and on several occasions indicated that the interventions were learned and used.

Molly. Prior to guided reading instruction, Molly appeared to rely mainly on visual cues for problem-solving unfamiliar words. For example, Molly read "and *stated* (started) down the path" while reading during class S.S.R. time.

Based on the reading processes I observed during Week 1's running record on Frog and Toad (Lobel, 1972), I chose a more difficult text as the first book for Molly's guided reading group. The text was longer and more complex, although it still dealt with a subject of interest to the students.

The book read during Week 2 was called Little Grunt and the Big Egg (dePaola, 1990). Molly was easily distracted and stopped reading frequently due to her interest in what another child was reading. She stayed on task when I sat beside her. I noted that Molly used some visual cues such as letter/sound relationships. She also identified the beginning sound of unfamiliar words without prompting but assumed the rest of the word. For example, "cockroach" was read "cockroch." I used the meaning prompt, "You said 'cockroch,' does that make sense to you?" Molly quickly responded "cockroach." I used this example as I discussed the instructional intervention of asking "Did that make sense?" after reading a passage.

During the pre-reading of Nine-In-One, Grr! Grr! (Spagnoli, 1989) (Week 3), Molly offered the comment that "This is good dedication (referring to the illustrations). It should get a Golden Sower!" Molly read with more voice and was not as easily distracted. The instructional intervention focused mainly on the use of meaning cues. For example, while reading the phrase "a large house stood nearby,"

Molly read "a large *horse* stood *neighborly.*" Her miscues indicated the possible use of visual cues. Meaning was being compromised, however, so I drew Molly's attention back to the sentence. I repeated what she had read and Molly was able to reread the sentence without error. Meaning was also lost on the word "curved" read "survived," but was corrected when I asked if the sentence made sense.

Week 4 followed with the same level of text difficulty. While reading the story "Bored" from the book Stories From Our Street (Tulloch, 1989), I observed that Molly was reading with fluency and voice. For example, when reading the phrase "We can play outside," Molly emphasized the word "can" possibly indicating meaning. Molly then read the sentence, "then come in and ruin her carpet" as "run her carpet." I asked Molly if this made sense to her. Molly knew it did not but was unable to decode the word. I asked Molly to provide the beginning sound, which she did, but hesitated again. I asked if there was another word inside of the tricky word that she knew. Molly replied, "in" but did not initiate anything further. I asked her to put the two sounds together and she was able to read the word correctly. I used this example to illustrate the two instructional interventions, identifying the beginning sound and chunking. Noting the high frequency of miscues, I asked Molly to retell the story. She was able to retell the whole story and answer several questions about specific details in the story.

During Week 5, the group read the story "Wet Paint" in the same book. I noted that each time Molly turned the page, she looked at the picture or illustration

first before attempting the text possibly indicating the use of meaning cues. I also heard much voice as Molly read certain phrases such as "Shoo! Scram! Go Away!" Molly read, "He stepped in a puddle of paint and left *stuck* green pawmarks." Molly reread the sentence without prompting, indicating self-monitoring, and corrected the word "stuck" with "sticky." When I asked how she knew to change the word, Molly replied "because stuck doesn't have a 'y' and sticky does" indicating the use of visual cues. The instructional intervention focused on self-monitoring and asking "Did that make sense?"

By Week 6, two other group members were ready to process more difficult text. These two students moved quickly through text, as compared to the other group members, and attended to meaning. I shifted them to another group which, again, did not cause any dissension. I introduced the book The Funny Little Woman (Mosel, 1972) which had more lines of text per page and more specialized vocabulary. I noticed that Molly would assume many words based on their initial consonant/vowel sounds. For example, Molly read "spinning" for the word "shaping." In this instance, the word did not affect the meaning of the text, however, meaning was lost in other parts of the story. For example, "policely" for "politely." It seemed that Molly was using visual cues but needed to cross-check them with meaning cues so comprehension was not compromised. The instructional interventions that I focused on included looking at the letters closely (visual) and asking "Did that make sense? (meaning).

During Week 7, Molly was able to retell the story <u>Ned and the Joybaloo</u> (Oram, 1983) to a student who had been absent. While rereading, Molly assumed many words based on their visual cues. For example, throughout the story Molly read "expect" for "except" which changed the meaning of the passages. Using this as an example, Molly and I worked on looking closely at the letters in words and rereading passages that did not make sense.

At Week 8, I reminded Molly to stop at punctuation. Molly read through several sentence endings while taking unnatural breaks. I explained to Molly how to let her voice go down and to take a breath at the end of each sentence.

While taking observational field notes during Week 9, on an unfamiliar text called <u>Song and Dance Man</u> (Ackerman, 1988), I noted that Molly used more cues than she had during the guided reading instructional period. Molly "sounded out" several words verbally and chunked the word bowler (visual). In addition, she reread a sentence that did not make sense and used picture cues to help decode unfamiliar words (meaning). I also conducted one final informal interview after Molly had read this unfamiliar text. When I asked Molly how she figured out tricky words, she explained that she "sounded them out." She also offered, "Sometimes I break words apart like bowl-er (chunking)." Knowing Molly looked at the page illustrations before reading text, I asked if she ever looked at the pictures to help her out. Molly replied yes and gave the example of "rolls his hat." "I looked at the picture to figure it out. He's rolling his hat in the picture" indicating the use of meaning cues.

While analyzing Molly's set of observation field notes, several patterns seemed to emerge. Reading behaviors such as identifying the beginning sounds of words indicated the possible use of visual cues. These behaviors appeared in ten out of the sixteen observation field notes. It appeared that Molly was already using visual cues when decoding unfamiliar words prior to guided reading instruction. Molly also used picture cues in seven of the observation field notes which implied prior use of meaning cues. The main instructional intervention I introduced to Molly was using the meaning prompt "Did that make sense?" in addition to visual cues to cross-check for meaning. While Molly applied this cuing strategy during Week 9, that use did not indicate that a pattern had been established. Another instructional intervention that I introduced was the use of chunking. Molly was able to apply that strategy on several occasions, indicating that visual cue was used and learned.

Triangulation of Data

Trenton. Triangulation of data allowed for a noticeable pattern in Trenton's data results. His reading behaviors indicated that he used visual cues, such as letter/sound relationships, and meaning cues, namely rereading, prior to guided reading instruction. As the instructional period progressed, however, Trenton's behaviors indicated the use of new visual cues, namely identification of the beginning sound of a word and chunking. Trenton also moved rather quickly, and successfully, through a gradient of text difficulty.

Robin. Robin's data indicated that she used visual cues, such as letter/sound

relationships, and meaning, namely rereading, prior to guided reading instruction. During guided reading instruction, however, patterns emerged from Robin's data indicating that she began using new visual cues, identification of the beginning sound of a word and chunking, and meaning cues, using the picture and asking "Did that make sense?" Another pattern that emerged, that was not anticipated by the researcher, was Robin's increased confidence in her reading abilities. This was indicated by her willingness to sound words out orally, participation in group discussions, as well as her voice and intonation while reading. Out of the three case participants, Robin learned and used the greatest number of cues as introduced during the guided reading sessions.

Molly. Molly's data indicated that she used visual cues, such as identifying the beginning sound of a word, and meaning cues, namely looking at the picture, prior to guided reading instruction. Although many interventions were introduced during the guided reading instructional period, Molly's reading behaviors indicated that she learned and used only one--chunking.

Cross-Case Patterns

After analyzing each case participant's data individually, I collectively analyzed all aspects of data to allow commonalities and differences, or cross-case patterns, to emerge.

All three case participants extended their use of visual cues. Evident in running records and observation field notes, it was also obvious in their statements

during the last informal interview. Each case participant said that they "sounded out" tricky words--a phrase that I did not use during guided reading instruction--which led me to believe the students were already using this visual cue prior to guided reading instruction. A new use of visual cues that the students' behaviors reflected during guided reading instruction was chunking. No data for any of the case participants indicated that this was a strategy used prior to guided reading instruction.

All three case participants used guided reading strategies to help them read increasingly difficult levels of text. Most notably, Trenton began guided reading instruction on slightly easier text than Robin, however, both students read the same unfamiliar text during Week 9. Robin's reading processes had improved throughout the study but it appeared that Trenton's had improved even more.

The students showed a need to learn how to self-monitor their own reading. The question, "Did that make sense to you?" appeared many times in each of the students' observation field notes. It seemed, however, that only Robin was able to adopt this strategy and use it when reading independently.

A major commonality that surfaced throughout the observation field notes was that the students used guided reading strategies to the increase their fluency, voice, and phrasing while reading. One of the instructional interventions I discussed frequently with each of the guided reading groups was that good readers "sound like they are talking" when they read. I used the analogy of a frog hopping from word to word to show how some reading can sound "choppy." Then I explained how good

readers read smoothly like a worm, slithering from word to word in one motion.

Each of the case participants identified with this analogy and were able to distinguish

which type of reading they were doing when asked. The students also used guided

reading strategies when problem-solving "on the run." This led to more fluent

reading as students did not have to pause as frequently, or stop reading altogether, in

order to problem-solve unfamiliar words.

Summary

This chapter reported the findings of this study. The data collection for this

research drew on running records, observation field notes, and informal interviews.

The researcher looked for any evidence of behaviors indicating the use of guided

reading strategies as well as reading behaviors that were not expected. All sources of

data were analyzed separately then compiled for each case participant. All aspects of

data were then analyzed collectively to discern commonalities and differences, or

cross-case patterns, in the three case participants' behaviors to emerge. The data

supported the research questions by illustrating how students used guided reading

strategies when they read orally during a running record and that they used the same

types of strategies as they read independently.

Chapter V

Discussion

Summary

The primary objective of this research was to investigate the use of guided reading strategies by second-grade students as they read in an independent setting as well as one-on-one with their teacher.

Data were obtained through running records, observation field notes, and informal interviews.

Conclusions

How do second-grade students use guided reading strategies when they read orally during a running record?

The case participants used some reading strategies prior to guided reading instruction which were described and accounted for in Chapter IV. However, the data indicated that all three case participants learned and grew to independently use new strategies or cues during and as a result of guided reading instruction. As noted on individual running records, the case participants used meaning, structure, and visual cues at error and at self-correction while reading a text. In addition, following instruction in visual cue use, the students used more than one cue at a time which indicated the use of cross-checking.

What behaviors that indicate the use of guided reading, if any, are observed as second-grade students read independently?

All three case participants displayed behaviors that indicated the use of guided reading strategies. Specifically, the behaviors included: chunking unfamiliar words, identification of the beginning sound of a word, and use of a picture when problem-solving for unfamiliar words. These behaviors were not observable prior to guided reading instruction.

<u>Implications</u>

From the evidence, it seems Trenton used guided reading strategies to become a better reader. Trenton learned and used two new cuing strategies. My observations of Trenton lead me to conclude that he added these strategies to his repertoire of possible sources of information he looked to when problem-solving unfamiliar words. In looking over the data collected during Week 1, I considered Trenton to be reading "below grade level." Nine weeks later, I considered him to be reading "at grade level" and well-prepared for third grade. I feel that without the instructional intervention provided through guided reading, Trenton's reading processes would still be characterized as below grade level. I do not think Trenton would have read as rapidly and successfully through a gradient of text without the support of guided reading.

In addition to my initial thoughts about Trenton's reading success as a result of guided reading, I found some additional support for my conclusions. Outside of the

research and data collection, I administered a one-minute reading probe in February

(prior to guided reading instruction) and in May (after guided reading instruction) for

Trenton. In February, Trenton read twenty-six words in one minute. On the same

text, given in May, Trenton read seventy-three words in one minute, an increase of

forty-seven words. Although maturity may have been a factor in this increase,

Trenton notably learned and used two new strategies as a result of guided reading that

I feel he called on as a part of his cuing system while reading the text for a second

time.

The data also show that Robin used guided reading strategies to become a

better reader. Robin learned and used four new cuing strategies. She was able to read

increasingly difficult text while attending to meaning. Much like Trenton, Robin

"covered more ground" than she would have without guided reading instruction.

More important, however, was her obvious transformation into a confident, fluent

reader. Guided reading instruction provided Robin with an opportunity to read in a

setting that was less threatening than reading in front of the whole class. As time

went on, she became more vocal within the group and was willing to make mistakes.

This eventually translated into an increase in classroom participation in whole-group

activities. For example, Robin was more willing to read aloud during other subjects

such as science and social studies. Robin also showed noticeable signs of retention of

the instructional interventions introduced during guided reading. Robin's reading

behaviors observed prior to guided reading indicated that she used only two reading

strategies and when those did not work she did not know what else to do. Robin would completely stop at the word and would make no attempt to pronounce it or even appeal for teacher support. This behavior could have been an indication that the two strategics she relied on, letter/sound relationships and rereading, were not helping her to problem-solve effectively. Robin used guided reading strategies to develop a broader range of strategies with which to problem-solve, thereby eliminating the frustration that often set in. A one-minute reading probe was also administered for Robin in February and in May. Robin read fifty words in one minute in February and, on the same text, read ninety-four words in one minute in May. Like Trenton, this increase of forty-four words could be attributed to maturity. However, Robin's use of four new guided reading strategies probably aided her word attack skills when problem-solving unfamiliar words.

From the evidence, it seems that Molly used a guided reading strategy to add to her repertoire of visual cue usage. Although Molly's data does not show as much use of guided reading strategies as the other students' did, she was observed using chunking consistently by the end of the research period. Molly's observation field notes indicated that she was easily distracted during the first two weeks of guided reading instruction. This behavior was also indicative of her typical classroom behavior. Molly participated in a behavior modification plan under the direction of a child psychologist and her parents with my assistance. Molly's relative lack of new strategy acquisition could be the result of her off-task behavior and inattentiveness.

Molly's success also depended heavily on her interest in the task. For example, on

Molly's February one-minute probe she read seventy-three words in one minute. On

the same text in May, Molly read seventy-two words in one minute. Although this

probe was not considered in this research study, it does lend some insight into Molly's

behavior regarding, and motivation towards, directed tasks.

Based on the data collected in this research study, I suggest that teachers

implement guided reading instruction in their classrooms. I especially encourage

beginning teachers to adopt guided reading for several reasons. First of all, guided

reading is efficient. Prior to guided reading, I had to schedule times throughout the

day in order to listen to each student read. This process often took up to two weeks

to complete. Guided reading allowed me to meet with every child at least twice per

week. This became especially important because at any given time I was able to tell a

parent or a school specialist the exact reading process being used by a student.

Secondly, guided reading is manageable. Once the work board was posted, the

rotation schedule was organized, and the literacy centers were developed, the only

amount of planning involved was finding the appropriate books for each group in

multiple copies. In addition, assessments were easily recorded through running

records which helped in the completion of report cards. Finally, I believe guided

helped me improve my effectiveness as a reading teacher. In preparing for this

research I had the opportunity to attend many conferences and workshops as well as

read much literature and research that I would have otherwise overlooked. With

guided reading, I felt that I was using best practice to meet the needs of all my students. I fully intend to continue guided reading in my future classrooms.

I plan to make a few adjustments, however, based on the results of this research. While analyzing the data from the observation field notes, I re-evaluated my use of the meaning prompt "Did that make sense?" I had used this phrase only if the case participant had made an error. I questioned whether this prompt actually encouraged a student's own self-monitoring or if it simply signaled the student that an error must have been made. In testing this prompt's effectiveness, the next step would be to use the prompt when no error had been made to gauge the student's response.

As a personal preference, a group of four students, or fewer, was most manageable when conducting a guided reading session. I found that five or more students created difficulties in acquiring enough books to be used at one time. In addition, the noise level of five students reading orally often exceeded a quiet voice level.

Recommendations for Further Research

One recommendation for further research is to lengthen the study. Ideally, the study should be conducted for the length of the school year. This would provide more data to show each child's response to guided reading instruction. A combined design of quantitative and qualitative data sources over a year's time could indicate more clearly how students incorporate guided reading strategies into their reading practice.

Studies that describe students' responses to guided reading instruction from first and/or third grade would provide valuable information about impact of age on feasibility and advisability of teaching reading this way. Younger children may need more time to engage in story before adopting strategies or the strategies may have useful impact at early age.

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Appendix A

Parent Permission Letter

March 2, 1998

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As a member of my class, your son or daughter has the option to participate in a research study. This study is being done in conjunction with a master's degree program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. I am the principal investigator in the study and will work with Dr. Wilma Kuhlman, assistant professor in the Department of Teacher Education at UNO. The study has the approval of our principal, Mrs. Jerri Hart-Wesley.

The study concerns the implementation of guided reading as a means to improve the fluency, comprehension, and word attack skills of our second-grade students. The study will involve oral reading, conducted in small groups of four or five students, under the direction of the teacher. All instruction will focus on meeting regular curriculum goals and objectives. The instructional techniques used, and compared, in the study are well accepted and respected in the educational community.

Participation is completely voluntary and no repercussions will result should you choose to have your son or daughter excluded from the study.

All tests and data collected will be anonymous and confidential. An analysis of the data collected will be available upon completion of all research.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 895-8246.

Sincerely,

Jaime A. Mayer
Teacher, Rockwell Elementary School

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your opinion is important to me. Please offer your approval or disapproval, of your child's participation in this research study, on the lines below. Keep in mind that all tests and data collected will be anonymous and confidential.

Once again, if you have any concerns or unanswered questions, feel free to give me a call at 895-8246. Thank you for your time.

Please mark one of the following:

_____Yes, I approve of the participation of my son/daughter in this research study.

_____No, I do not approve of the participation of my son/daughter in this research study.

_____
Parent/Guardian Signature

_____
Date

Please return this form to school with your son or daughter.

Appendix B

Running Record

RUNNING RECORD

Name _____   Lesson No. _____   Date _____

Title _____   Text Level _____

Error Rate	Percent Accuracy
1:200	99.5
1:100	99
1:50	98
1:35	97
1:25	96
1:20	95
1:17	94
1:14	93
1:12.5	92
1:11.75	91
1:10	90
1:9	89
1:8	87.5
1:7	85.5
1:6	83
1:5	80
1:4	75
1:3	66
1:2	50

Score:

	Miscue Rate	Accuracy Rate	SC Rate
	1:	%	1:
Running Words _____	Words/(Miscues-SC)	1-[Miscues-SC)/Words]	Miscues/SC
Miscues-SC _____			

Observation/Analysis

☐ Easy 95-100%

☐ Instructional 90-94%

☐ Hard 50-89%

Cues Used

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Appendix C

Institutional Review Board Letter

University of Nebraska

May 13, 1998

Jaime Allyn Mayer
805 Richelieu Court
Papillion, NE 68046

IRB#: 060-98-EX

TITLE OF APPLICATION/PROTOCOL: The Effect of Guided Reading on Second Grade Reading Achievement

Dear Ms. Mayer:

The IRB has reviewed your Exemption Form for the above-titled research project. According to the information provided, this project is exempt under 45 CFR 46:101b, category 1. You are therefore authorized to begin the research.

It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines. It is also understood that the IRB will be immediately notified of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project.

Please be advised that the IRB has a maximum protocol approval period of five years from the original date of approval and release. If this study continues beyond the five year approval period, the project must be resubmitted in order to maintain an active approval status.

Sincerely,

Ernest D. Prentice, PhD
Vice Chair, IRB

EDP:jlg

University of Nebraska—Lincoln   University of Nebraska Medical Center   University of Nebraska at Omaha   University of Nebraska at Kearney