Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading in a First Grade Classroom

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Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading

in a First-Grade Classroom

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Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading
in a First-Grade Classroom
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The impacts on attitudes toward and perceptions of reading among first graders who were students of a scientifically-based reading program known as Treasures were investigated. The impacts on attitudes toward reading and perceptions of reading among first graders were investigated using multiple data collection tools. Students’ attitudes toward reading were collected through the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS; McKenna & Kear, 1990). Students’ perceptions of reading itself and the reading process were obtained through individual interviews with each student using the Burke Reading Interview (Burke, 1987). The data were then triangulated through classroom observations that were noted on a double-entry observation form during whole group and small group literacy instruction, as well as small group literacy centers. Many different behaviors were observed during the study, including off-task behaviors, on-task behaviors, and helping behaviors. The results of the study indicated that students relied mainly on decoding techniques to figure out unknown words. There were little data revealing that students utilized reading comprehension strategies. The findings paralleled current research cautioning educators about the uses of “one size fits all” reading instruction and reading programs that focused primarily on phonics and phonemic awareness instruction. The findings had multiple implications for educators and literacy professionals. Suggestions for possible methods to include more reading comprehension instruction were made. In addition, suggestions for further research regarding the topic were made.
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“Congratulations to Mrs. Doe’s class for achieving higher scores on their nonsense word reading assessments!”

On one of my first days of subbing at a new school district, I noticed these words carefully printed on a certificate and signed by the principal. It was hanging just above the classroom door. The only thoughts that came to mind were, “Wow! What a message we are sending to our children. It is great if they can read words quickly and accurately, even if the words don’t make sense.” Is that really the message we want to convey to our students? That reading is only about getting it done as quickly as possible, and that it doesn’t even have to make sense?

With the release of the National Reading Panel’s (NRP) report in 1999 and the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, more schools have opted to participate in the national Reading First program in exchange for federal funding. Through the Reading First program, American children between kindergarten and grade 3 began receiving “explicit and systematic” reading instruction in five areas including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension strategies. This type of instruction was meant to ensure that students would be reading well by the end of their 3rd grade year. Through Reading First funds, schools received federal funds to “establish research-based reading programs” and “focus on providing significantly increased teacher professional development to ensure that all teachers...have the skills they need to teach these programs effectively. Additionally...in preparing classroom teachers to
However, many critics (Cunningham, 2002; Allington, 2005; Krashen, 2009) of the Panel’s report on reading argued that the Panel’s recommendations weren’t enough to fix the nation’s reading problem, mainly because the Panel focused more on reading skills out of context. While students were being taught isolated skills, critics contended that they were not receiving the full benefits of reading instruction and that children continued to receive the wrong message about what reading truly was (Cunningham, 2002; Allington, 2005; Krashen, 2009).

During 1997, the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) was approached by Congress with the task of developing a national panel to review and evaluate a number of “research-based” studies that investigated how effective a variety of instructional approaches were in teaching children to read. Thus the National Reading Panel (NRP) was born, which consisted of 14 people who were considered by Congress as “leading scientists in reading research, representatives of colleges of education, reading teachers, educational administrators, and parents” (NRP, 2000, p.1). The report was originally to be submitted in November of 1998; however, the NRP sought permission to extend the deadline because the professionals involved realized the enormity of the task that was presented to them (NRP, 1999). The final report of the meta-analysis was released in April of 1999 (Garan, 2001).

Shortly thereafter, the Bush Administration passed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001. The NCLB Act mandated that each state create yearly assessments based on that state’s educational standards, through which students’ basic skills were to be tested. Any school district that administered the assessments was promised federal funding, as long as assessment scores showed adequate yearly
Students Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading progress (AYP). Schools not meeting AYP were to be labeled failing schools, and parents would be given the opportunity to send their students elsewhere for education (No Child Left Behind Act, 2009).

With the inception of NCLB, a reading program known as Reading First was also created as part of the Title I funding. Reading First was designed to improve reading instruction in local schools (No Child Left Behind Act, 2009). Through the Reading First program, American children between kindergarten and grade three were to receive “explicit and systematic” reading instruction in five areas: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension strategies. This systematic instruction, which focused on the five most important areas of reading instruction as determined by the NRP, was meant to guarantee student success in reading by the end of their third grade year. Through Reading First funds, schools received federal funds to “establish research-based reading programs” and “focus on providing significantly increased teacher professional development to ensure that all teachers...have the skills they need to teach those programs effectively” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 1). In addition, schools received monetary funds to prepare classroom teachers to learn how to screen and diagnose children’s reading abilities and to help students overcome their reading difficulties (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

The Development of Reading First

Shortly after the release of the NRP report, the government created the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and designed the Reading First program. The government claimed that the goal of Reading First was to implement “proven methods of early reading instruction in classrooms” (U.S. Department of Education,
It was a program that dispersed funds to districts using instructional and assessment tools for reading based on scientifically based research to guarantee that children were reading well by the time they finished their third grade year (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Under the Reading First initiative, children would be able to read well after explicit and systematic instruction in five areas, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension strategies. These areas of instruction were identified based on “research that applies rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 3-4). Reading First required that schools only use programs meeting the characteristics as defined by scientifically based reading research. The funds from the Reading First grant were also available for use to provide teachers with professional development opportunities so they could effectively teach the research-based reading programs. Teachers were supposed to receive training on the use of diagnostic tools to measure student abilities and progress. As a result, the government believed children in Reading First schools would be reading fluently as they reached the end of their third grade year (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Purpose of the Research and Research Questions

Reading is an activity necessary for life-long survival. Although some people engage in reading as a source of entertainment, people read for a variety of reasons. For instance, people read directions when they purchase a new electronic device or appliance to learn how to use it. Other people rely on many sources of print to inform themselves about the events of the world, to find out what the weather forecast is for
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the day, or in order to fill out a job application. Therefore, it is extremely important that children learn to read in school so they have the skills that are essential to be successful in life.

This research project was an attempt to investigate Treasures (2005), an approved Reading First program, and the instructional practices involved. The project grew out of my desire to further understand the program itself and determine the impact of the program as well as its implications for students and teachers. The research question I attempted to answer is: How might a Reading First approved program, such as Treasures (2005), impact students’ perceptions and attitudes of reading?

This study was significant because it presented information regarding how students perceive reading and what their attitudes toward reading are like. There was numerous research on how students should be taught to read, albeit that the research differs depending on the source of information. There has even been some, although limited, research on the achievement of students in schools where Treasures (2005) was being used. However, the existing research has not investigated how students viewed the reading process and what impact Treasures (2005) may have had on student perceptions and attitudes toward reading. Therefore, I felt this research study would provide critical information for various stakeholders in the field of education.

For the purpose of this study, it was necessary to define the following terms:

1) Reading comprehension: a complex process in which readers actively engage with a text in order to construct meaning; readers must flexibly use a number of comprehension strategies to interact with the text (Durkin, 1993; Soderman, Gregory, & McCarty, 2005; Paris, 2005; Pinnell & Fountas, 2009);
2) Perceptions: Upon being triggered by a stimulus, ways in which the brain transforms visual information (i.e. text) and experiences into meaning (Lyons, 2003); and

3) Attitudes: “Manner, disposition, feeling, position, etc., with regard to a person or thing” (Dictionary.com, n.d.)

The research question I studied was investigated in three different ways. I collected data through the use of surveys, observations of student behaviors during whole group and small group reading instructional settings, and interviews that I conducted with students in the classroom. From some of these tools, it was necessary for me to infer what student attitudes were. Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The survey responses were given points, similar to a Likert scale. The observations and interviews were analyzed qualitatively through the constant comparative method in which common themes were sought. Using multiple methods of data collection allowed for triangulation to occur, since the varying methods provided me with multiple perspectives of student perceptions and attitudes toward reading.
Since the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act and Reading First, a division between a number of different stakeholders (i.e. teachers, administrators, policymakers, etc.) ensued regarding literacy instruction of children. Many people heralded the National Reading Panel’s report on reading (Shanahan, 2005), while others, such as reading researchers (Cunningham, 2002; Wilson, Martens, Arya, & Altwerger, 2004; Allington, 2005; Krashen, 2009) critically investigated the Panel’s findings and advocated that the findings were not altogether even. Since my research was driven by a federal law (No Child Left Behind, 2001), a particular federal program (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2008), and a particular curriculum program (Treasures, 2005), I knew I had to begin my research there. When beginning my literature review, I immediately researched the National Reading Panel Report (1999), as well as any information regarding Reading First. From there, I also searched for articles representing the points of view of reading researchers to provide a balanced view of the issue at hand. Furthermore, I realized I needed to find information on one of Reading First’s approved programs, Treasures (2005), since I knew I would be studying it in the setting I chose to collect my data. Moreover, since I was interested in student perceptions of and attitudes toward reading, I knew I had to find some information regarding student perceptions and attitudes toward reading. All of this information provided me with an overall view of many different perspectives toward reading instruction, specifically regarding comprehension, how varying stakeholders view comprehension, how varying stakeholders view the National Reading Panel Report (1999).
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading, 2008), and Treasures (2005), and how emotions could influence students as they learn to read and write.

The National Reading Panel

Originally, the National Reading Panel (NRP) identified around 100,000 reading research studies that were published since 1966 alone and an additional 15,000 studies that were published before that time. However, the NRP’s study did not include all of these studies. Due to time constraints, the Panel knew it had to focus its research on specific topics. In the beginning of their report, the National Reading Panel described their process of selection (National Reading Panel Report, 2000). To determine which topics the NRP would investigate, members of the NRP examined the research literature that was available and held a number of public hearings around the nation for input from important members of the educational field, such as teachers, students, parents, and policymakers. After those hearings, members of the NRP discussed which topics they thought were critical to examine. The Panel decided to study topics such as alphabetics, fluency, comprehension, teacher education and reading instruction, and computer technology and reading instruction. A number of subtopics were also identified as necessary to study. Then the NRP applied an intensive research review process to select and analyze studies regarding effective reading instruction (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Once they studied their topics, the members of the National Reading Panel released their findings in the National Reading Panel Report (1999). For phonemic awareness instruction, the NRP determined that it was highly beneficial to teach children to manipulate phonemes in words, regardless of teaching style, range of abilities, age, and grade-levels among children. The NRP also found that targeting
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading

Instruction to phonemic awareness helps children increase their reading proficiency more than instruction where phonemic awareness was not a part of the reading program. The Panel did note, however, that even though systematic early phonics instruction should be an essential part of successful reading programs in the classroom, it cautioned “giving a blanket endorsement of all kinds of phonics instruction...Programs that focus too much on the teaching of letter-sound relations and not enough on putting them to use are unlikely to be very effective” (NRP, 1999, p. 10). The Panel also stated that keeping the end in mind was necessary; that educators must make certain children realize the importance of learning letter sounds and that children would be able to transfer this knowledge “accurately and fluently in their daily reading and writing activities” (NRP, 1999, p. 10).

In terms of fluency, the report from the NRP stated that guided activities in repeated oral reading significantly and positively impact students’ abilities to recognize words and increase their fluency and comprehension across varying grade levels. The NRP also claimed that such activities benefit all types of readers, from good readers to those who face difficulty reading (National Reading Panel, 1999).

For comprehension, the Panel studied three sub-areas: vocabulary instruction, text comprehension instruction, and teacher preparation and comprehension strategies instruction, and released their findings for each area separately. For vocabulary instruction, the Panel said that in order for comprehension to increase, instruction in vocabulary was necessary, but should be age and ability appropriate. The Panel also found that comprehension among students increases and helps improve student performance on standardized tests when students utilize multiple comprehension strategies as they read a text. Furthermore, the report stated that teachers should
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receive extensive formal training in comprehension strategy instruction in order to benefit students (National Reading Panel, 1999).

The National Reading Panel also revealed implications for instruction as it relates to the last two topics they examined, teacher education and reading instruction and computer technology and reading instruction. With regards to teacher education for reading instruction, the Panel’s findings were limited due to the lack of a large number of experimental studies. The Panel noted that inservice training typically involved “specific curricular needs” instead of learning methods and how to use reading materials (NRP, 1999, p. 5-1). For example, the Panel found that inservice instruction varied widely. Instruction ranged from teaching educators about particular methods of reading instruction, such as the ways in which to use reading groups, to classroom management, lesson design, and methods for teaching reading. Overall though, the Panel maintained that “for conclusions to be drawn about the effectiveness of teacher education, information on both teacher and student outcomes must be reported” (NRP, 1999, p. 17). However, with the information they had, the report insisted that when inservice teachers attended professional development trainings, student achievement increased significantly.

The NRP (1999) also asserted that although only 21 studies met the criteria to be included in the meta-analysis, they were able to still make some generalizations on the subject of computer technology and reading instruction. Only a handful of the studies measured a direct effect of using computers for reading instruction on student outcomes. Since previous published studies focused on the capabilities of computers in reading instruction, computers had only been used as supplemental to reading instruction in prior years. Furthermore, the studies involving research regarding computer technology and reading instruction addressed multiple reading problems.
The seven categories of computer technology and reading instruction the Panel found in the studies included “the addition of speech to computer-presented text,” (NRP, 1999, p. 6-5) the outcome of vocabulary instruction, instruction in word recognition and comprehension instruction, spelling, the outcome of learning to read from broad programs, and the methods through which comprehensive software delivered reading instruction. With what little research had been conducted, the Panel believed that the studies revealed results that support the use of computers for reading instruction. Members of the Panel also felt that using hypertext and computers as word processors would be beneficial for reading instruction (National Reading Panel, 1999).

The Development of Reading First

After the release of the NRP report, the federal government created the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and designed the Reading First program. The government claimed that the goal of Reading First was to implement “proven methods of early reading instruction in classrooms” (U.S. Department of Education, 2008 from http://www.ed.gov/programs/reading/first/index.html). The program was designed to disperse funds to districts that use instructional and assessment tools for reading based on scientifically based research as reported in the NRP to guarantee that children would be reading well by the time they finish their third grade year (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). The funds from the Reading First grant were also available for use to provide teachers with professional development opportunities so that they could effectively teach the research-based reading programs mandated by Reading First. Teachers were also to receive training on the use of diagnostic tools to measure student abilities and progress. As a result, the goal was for children in
Reading First schools to be reading fluently as they reached the end of their third grade year (U. S. Department of Education, 2002).

Under the Reading First initiative, children would be able to read well after explicit and systematic instruction in five areas, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension strategies. These areas of instruction were identified based on what the NRP deemed to be scientifically based reading research, which is “research that applies rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties” (U. S. Department of Education, 2002). Reading First required that schools only use programs meeting the characteristics as defined by scientifically based reading research (see Figure 1 for a complete description of these characteristics).

**Figure 1.** Characteristics of scientifically based reading research.

1. Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
2. Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
3. Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
4. Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review.


**Comprehension According to the National Reading Panel and Reading First**

The National Reading Panel and the Reading First program viewed comprehension as one of five skills readers need to master in order to be efficient readers. In its report, the NRP defined reading as a very complex process in which readers actively engage with a text in order to construct meaning. The Panel cited
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading

Durkin (1993) as saying that comprehension is “the essence of reading” where readers actively interact with a text in order to construct meaning (National Reading Panel, 2000b, p. 4-5), and that the main reason readers read texts is to learn something new or for enjoyment (National Reading Panel: Reports of the Subgroups, 2000). In addition, the Panel noted that according to Harris and Hodges (1995) readers bring knowledge to a piece of text to help them construct meaning as they are reading (National Reading Panel: Reports of the Subgroups, 2000). Overall, enabling students to use comprehension strategies helped them improve their comprehension and there was a better chance students retained the information (National Reading Panel Report, 2000). Experts also agreed that teachers should instruct students on how to flexibly use multiple comprehension strategies (National Reading Panel, 2000; Dole, 2005; Paris, 2005). In the National Reading Panel: Reports of the Subgroups (2000), the Panel explained that three main themes for teaching comprehension emerged during its study: text comprehension instruction, vocabulary instruction, and teacher preparation for comprehension instruction.

Although a formal meta-analysis of studies for text comprehension was impossible because much of the available research did not meet NRP criteria, the NRP did a review of the studies for implicit evidence of how readers comprehend text. In its study of text comprehension, the National Reading Panel found 203 studies that met the criteria it set for identifying studies to help them understand how readers comprehend text. Included in these studies were 215 grade-level samples, or samples that took place in a specific grade, and 170 of the studies covered grades ranging from 3rd through 8th grade. More specifically, the NRP’s scientific criteria applied to 73 grade-level samples, and 53 of the samples ranged from grades 3-8. The main recommendation the NRP stated for text comprehension instruction was
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading that teachers should formally instruct students on the use of comprehension strategies during reading. The Panel (1999) claimed that this type of instruction helped students better comprehend texts and to use information they have gleaned from texts. In order for this type of instruction to occur, the Panel (1999) asserted that teachers should model use of specific strategies and guide readers until they can use strategies actively and independently. In fact, the Panel found 16 types of effective procedures teachers use to instruct students on the use of comprehension strategies, and 8 of these types “offered a firm scientific basis for concluding that they improve comprehension” (National Reading Panel: Reports of the Subgroups, 2000, pp. 4-5).

Four of the Panel’s findings were related to specific comprehension strategies; that is, some of the effective procedures for text comprehension instruction included comprehension monitoring, which would help students become problem solvers to overcome obstacles they face when reading, questioning, summarizing, and using comprehension strategies flexibly. The Panel also felt that readers could work collaboratively to learn the strategies. Moreover, the Panel felt that teachers should instruct students on story structure, plot, characters, sequence, and should help students use graphic organizers to aid in comprehension. Lastly, the Panel determined that readers benefit from answering teacher-posed questions when they are given feedback regarding correctness of their responses. The implications of those findings were that students benefit from instruction of how to use multiple comprehension strategies since they learn the strategies better, that students can transfer their learning of the strategies to reading, and that retention and comprehension of new passages is increased which improves comprehension among students overall (National Reading Panel: Reports of the Subgroups, 2000).
The second theme the National Reading Panel found to be essential for comprehension was vocabulary instruction. Some teachers and reading specialists alike believed that increased vocabulary leads to increased comprehension (National Reading Panel, 1999). In its search for studies, the Panel selected studies that met its criteria and that occurred as early as 1979 until 1999 when the National Reading Panel commenced its research. Members of the Panel were only able to find 47 studies meeting its criteria. Overall, the NRP determined that although “there are age and ability effects learning gains that occur from vocabulary instruction,” comprehension vocabulary instruction positively influenced learning gains when compared to traditional methods of instruction (National Reading Panel: Reports of the Subgroups, 2000, 4-4). Furthermore, instruction in vocabulary enabled readers to better comprehend a text, and pre-teaching new vocabulary words to students before reading helped students acquire new vocabulary which will help them comprehend texts. The Panel (1999) also claimed that, according to the studies, students needed to have multiple exposures to new words to help them increase their vocabularies. Additionally, the Panel felt that in order to assist students in acquiring new vocabulary words and becoming better at comprehension, text materials or procedures should be restructured in such a way that is beneficial for students. For example, the Panel finds it necessary to substitute hard words with easy words (National Reading Panel: Reports of the Subgroups, 2000).

As stated in the National Reading Panel (NRP) Report, there are five main methods through which children can acquire new vocabulary: explicit instruction, implicit instruction, multimedia methods, capacity methods, and association methods. When referring to explicit instruction, Panel members noted the necessity for children to learn definitions or attributes of words. However, the Panel also mentioned that
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading 22

children are capable of learning words implicitly, be it through exposure by the
teacher or reading. In addition, the Panel found that in the technological age, children
could learn word meanings through the use of multimedia; that is, students could
learn words through the use of graphic representations, hypertext, or American Sign
Language. Two other methods the Panel found particularly useful for vocabulary
instruction were the capacity and association methods. When discussing capacity
methods, the Panel believed that repeated practice of vocabulary allows for increased
capacity to make reading automatic; for instance, the more times a child was exposed
to a word, the more likely he or she would be able to recognize it in multiple contexts.
By association methods, the Panel thought that students should be encouraged to
make connections between prior knowledge and unknown words (National Reading
Panel, 2000). However, the Panel stated that further research needs to be done in
authentic classroom situations, as it was unable to answer all questions they had
regarding vocabulary instruction. Whether the methods for teaching vocabulary were
explicit, implicit, or some other method, many people agreed that larger vocabularies
assist children in comprehending a piece of text (National Reading Panel, 2000).

The final theme that emerged in the Panel’s study was that of teacher
preparation in terms of comprehension instruction. A formal meta-analysis was
impossible to be performed, as the Panel only identified 4 studies that matched its
criteria; however, the Panel included comprehensive summaries in the report.
According to the Panel, the 4 studies examined how teachers received strategy
instruction and the focus of the studies was how effective the training was on
students’ reading. The studies revealed two main approaches to strategy instruction:
direct explanation and transactional strategy instruction (TSI). In direct explanation,
teachers taught students to think of reading as a problem-solving process requiring
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading 23 strategic thinking. In addition, teachers using the direct explanation technique taught students to think strategically about how to solve reading comprehension problems. Throughout the process, teachers did not explicitly teach individual strategies to their students. Transactional Strategy Instruction (TSI) also consisted of the same elements of direct explanation; however, the teacher’s role was different. During TSI, teachers moderated student discussions where they collaborated to interpret the text and explicitly reflected upon the processes and strategies involved in reading comprehension.

As a result of the investigation of the four studies, the Panel (1999) claimed that it was important for teachers to have training in comprehension strategy instruction to best help teach students how to use these strategies, and that teachers could indeed be instructed how to teach comprehension in authentic settings. In addition, the Panel (1999) asserted that during instruction, teachers need to be flexible and skillful so students receive the maximum benefit from the teaching. Therefore, the Panel (1999) stated it is essential for teachers themselves to understand the strategies be able to employ effective methods of instructing students on the use of these strategies. Moreover, the Panel thought that no matter what type of method was used to prepare teachers for this kind of comprehension instruction, students would have a heightened sense of awareness regarding the strategies, which, the Panel said may have a positive affect on student reading. Nevertheless, the Panel mentioned that many questions about teacher preparation and comprehension instruction were still unanswered and admitted that it was unclear how effective comprehension instruction would be after teachers have received training (National Reading Panel: Reports of the Subgroups, 2000).
Although many different literacy educators described comprehension in a slightly different manner, most experts have agreed that comprehension is a very complex process in which readers actively engage with a text in order to construct meaning. Many reading researchers, like Durkin (1993), argued that comprehension is “the essence of reading” (National Reading Panel, 2000b, p. 4-5); in other words, an individual was not seen as a reader unless he or she understood the piece of text they were reading (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009). Readers actively construct meaning of a text by using multiple comprehension strategies, such as self-monitoring, summarizing, questioning, predicting, and making connections. Many other reading experts (Soderman, Gregory & McCarty, 2005; Pinnell & Fountas, 2009) maintained this idea of flexibly integrating the strategies in order to completely understand a text. When readers used these comprehension strategies flexibly, they were able to make sense of what they have read (Durkin, 1993; Soderman, Gregory, & McCarty, 2005; Pinnell & Fountas, 2009).

Since comprehension was viewed, at least by some, as the most important goal of reading, there have been many advocates for comprehension strategy instruction during reading lessons in the classroom. They (Routman, 2000; Boyles, 2004; Pinnell & Fountas, 2009) contended that teachers should formally instruct students on the use of comprehension strategies, because students become more capable of comprehending the texts and using information they have learned from the texts they have read. Nancy Boyles, author of *Constructing Meaning Through Kid-Friendly Comprehension Strategy Instruction* (2004), thought that students were capable of learning how the strategies are integrated during reading, for example. Boyles (2004) contended that at first, teachers should introduce students to a handful
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading 25 of strategies that they can begin to use as they read. In her book, Boyles outlined how teachers could focus instruction on a particular strategy for a short period of time, but they should continuously reiterate to students how these strategies were intertwined with one another to completely comprehend the text being read (2004).

Other prominent figures within the reading field, such as Routman (2000) and Soderman, Gregory & McCarty (2005), believed that meaning was at the forefront of any literacy activity. In Conversations (2000), Routman stated that children need to have a strong foundation of meaning in order to understand the basic skills used in reading, such as letter identification and knowledge of sounds that letters make. She referred to Falk’s (1998) idea of learning as a cyclical process where students develop concepts and high-order thinking skills simultaneously, rather than the idea that students learn in a linear fashion where they are required to master the basics first before they can focus on meaning. Soderman et al. (2005) supported this idea that understanding be the most important thing in reading. They said that instead of overlooking comprehension until children can decode words, teachers could focus on comprehension instruction orally with children in the beginning stages (Soderman, Gregory, & McCarty, 2005).

Studies from leading reading researchers illustrated that while intensive decoding instruction may help students achieve better scores on phonemic tests, students failed to perform well on comprehension related activities and assessments. In the article Does Intensive Decoding Instruction Contribute to Reading Comprehension? by Stephen Krashen (2009), he reported that students in first grade Reading First classrooms did significantly better on decoding tests as part of their Direct Instruction (DI) curriculum. However, they did not perform better than the first through third grade students on reading comprehension tests. This phenomenon
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading occurred even though the students in the DI group received instruction through the Reading First program, where more time was supposed to be spent on reading instruction (Krashen, 2009). Krashen also referred to The Clackmannanshire Study (Johnson & Watson, 2005) which provided supportive evidence for systematic phonics instruction. Yet, in the same study, students again did not perform as well on reading comprehension tests as they did for decoding. The study revealed that students achieved only a three month advantage above the expected level of instruction. Moreover, Krashen argued that studies not involving systematic phonics instruction illustrated that children who receive instruction with interesting, authentic texts perform better on reading comprehension tests, which he maintained is a measure that actually matters (Krashen, 2009).

Another study conducted by Wilson, Martens, Arya, and Altwerger (2004) examined three sites with varying instructional reading methods and reported findings similar to Krashen’s (2009). In their study of 84 students from urban settings with low socioeconomic status but that had no special education services, the researchers investigated schools in which Direct Instruction (DI), Open Court (OC), and Guided Reading (GR) were being used. The researchers stated that the National Reading Panel research and evidence for the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was founded upon research involving word lists, short passages with blanks, and nonsense word lists. Wilson et al. (2004) contended that this type of research did not provide evidence for how students process authentic texts. Throughout their study, they analyzed miscue analyses, interviews with students, phonics assessments, and language arts instruction at schools using one of the three types of reading instruction aforementioned. Their findings revealed that there were no significant differences between student performance relative to varying instruction (i.e. direct explicit
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading (phonics instruction vs. skills taught within reading contexts) between all three sites. Furthermore, they found that students at the DI and OC sites spent more time focusing on sounding out words, in which case those students usually came up with words that did not fit the context of the story or made up nonsense words. Therefore, students in those sites illustrated moderate comprehension of a text by answering literal questions successfully, but not higher level thinking questions. From interviews conducted with these students, the researchers also determined that the students had limited strategies for figuring out unknown words as they were reading. On the contrary, students at the Guided Reading (GR) site were more willing to take risks while reading a text. Their retellings were much more unified and they were able to answer higher-level thinking questions more correctly. Results of interviews with those students also revealed that students relied on multiple strategies to figure out unknown words (Wilson et al., 2004).

In conclusion, literacy educators (Routman, 2000; Boyles, 2004; Soderman, Gregory & McCarty, 2005; Krashen, 2009; Pinnell & Fountas, 2009) have agreed that comprehension is a multifaceted process where readers must actively interact with a text in order to construct meaning. They further argued that comprehension is the real purpose of reading and a person cannot possibly construct meaning without flexibly using multiple comprehension strategies simultaneously. Utilizing the strategies allows people to make sense of what they have read.

Vocabulary Instruction According to Literacy Educators

Many reading researchers and reading specialists viewed vocabulary as an integral part of comprehension (Moats, 2001; Lyons, 2003; Pinnell & Fountas, 2009). Pinnell and Fountas (2009), for instance, stated there is a strong connection between
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reading comprehension and vocabulary. Not all children come to school with the

same number of words in their vocabulary. This was especially noted among varying
economic groups. As cited in Pinnell and Fountas (2009), Moats (2001) found that
the gap between vocabularies of economically advantaged and economically
disadvantaged children was significant. In some cases, this difference was as much
as 2,000 words (Moats, 2001). A similar idea was noted by Lyons (2003), in which
she stated that research showed that how small or large a child’s vocabulary
correlated to how much parents talk to their children. She argued that children need
to experience face-to-face conversations with their parents, and that children did not
acquire vocabulary and language structures from television programs (2003). Still,
some children experienced difficulty learning vocabulary once in school.

Similarly, Soderman, Gregory, & McCarty (2005) and Routman (2000)
thought that students with wider vocabularies were more successful during reading.
Soderman et al. (2005) supported the idea that “the number of vocabulary words a
child is able to use and understand is an indicator of future success in reading” (p.
78). In other words, they believed that children who had a larger vocabulary would
be more successful when reading in the future, because children are more capable of
learning new words, as well as quickly decoding and understanding new words
(Routman, 2000; Soderman et al., 2005). Furthermore, Soderman et al. thought that
having a larger number of words accessible would result in children being able to
convey their ideas with others. They also believed that teachers should purposefully
introduce children to “new or rare” words whenever applicable to help children learn
those words (Soderman et al., 2005, p. 78).

Routman (2000) proposed that although direct vocabulary instruction is
beneficial in teaching students new words, it is not the sole technique teachers should
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utilize in order to help build a child's vocabulary. Routman (2000) noted that children should read quite frequently, at least twenty minutes per day, would be beneficial in helping to expand a child's vocabulary. However, Routman stated that students should not read only books that are easy for them, otherwise vocabulary growth would be minimal. Routman (2000) also suggested that children listen to “challenging material,” as well (p. 435). Routman thought that this technique would benefit children by helping to broaden their background knowledge about a topic, enabling them to learn new terms. Furthermore, Routman claimed that it is not enough for teachers to expect students to readily figure out unknown words in context. She explained that in past reading conferences with students she noticed that some students, especially struggling readers, skipped over unfamiliar words instead of solving them. Therefore, Routman thought it was necessary to teach children how to successfully solve words so that they would be able to figure out unknown words in the future by themselves (Routman, 2000).

Reutzel and Cooter (2009) agreed that while children acquire new vocabulary indirectly there are some vocabulary words that need to be taught directly to children. They claimed that children need direct instruction when learning difficult words and that instruction should also include word-solving techniques. This is especially important when students are learning about concepts which they have little or no familiarity with, or topics that students do not discuss on a daily basis as part of their oral language. To support comprehension, Reutzel and Cooter (2009) thought teachers should pre-teach certain vocabulary words and word-solving techniques prior to reading a text so students are more successful handling texts with unfamiliar concepts. Similarly, Reutzel and Cooter (2009) argued that improving student word consciousness helps boost vocabulary learning. In other words, teachers should
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utilize “word consciousness learning activities” which in turn stimulates “an awareness of and interest in words, their meanings, and their power” (Reutzel and Cooter, 2009, p. 117). In order to stimulate student word consciousness Reutzel and Cooter (2009) proposed that students should be engaged in wide reading activities and the writing process. Wide reading activities could include teacher read-alouds where the teacher points out how the author(s) uses certain words in order to communicate meaning. Although Reutzel and Cooter supported vocabulary instruction, they admitted that teachers should not teach all unknown words to students. Rather, they stated that teachers should use texts that do not have too many unfamiliar words. Secondly, they believed that vocabulary instruction last no longer than 5 or 10 minutes so that students spend the majority of the time reading the text. Furthermore, they claimed that students require multiple opportunities to practice reading and utilizing word-solving techniques that they have been taught (Reutzel and Cooter, 2009).

Since vocabulary plays such an important role in comprehension, then teachers must be responsible for helping children acquire new vocabulary. Pinnell and Fountas (2009) stated that in order to understand word meanings, readers must be able to: 1) monitor their understanding by recognizing when their comprehension breaks down; 2) identify the important words they should pay attention to and figure out those meanings; and 3) use contextual information, including background knowledge, how the word is used in a sentence, the overall message of the story and integrating textual information in combination with the other cueing systems. In order to support students in their learning, Pinnell and Fountas maintained that teachers could provide support through text introductions and discussions after reading (2009). Furthermore, Pinnell and Fountas (2009), as well as others, said that
every time individuals are exposed to a word in multiple contexts the word and its meaning becomes enhanced (Lyons, 2003; Pinnell & Fountas, 2009; Reutzel & Cooter, 2009).

**Treasures**

*Treasures* (2005) was one of the many curriculum options that school districts could utilize under NCLB and Reading First. It was a scientifically based reading and language arts program designed and written by a number of co-authors and was originally published by the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Company in 2005. Each week, teachers followed the prescribed reading plans included in the *Treasures* (2005) program. Every day, *Treasures* targeted specific skills in a number of areas. The four major areas *Treasures* authors thought were important to address in daily lessons were oral language, word study, reading, and language arts. For oral language, *Treasures* prescribed lessons revolving around oral vocabulary, listening comprehension, and phonemic awareness. Word study involved investigations in phonics, spelling, and high-frequency words that children would encounter in the literature. During reading, teachers would assist children in comprehension and fluency skills. Lastly, grammar and writing skills were addressed as part of the language arts portion of the lessons (*Treasures*, 2005). Over the course of five days, teachers followed the plans addressing a thematic unit. For example, in the first unit of the school year in New York State, the theme for 1st graders was titled “All About Us.” On Day 1, teachers read a short story aloud to the students related to the theme. During the second day of instruction, students read a short theme-related passage from their textbooks. Over the course of Days 3 and 4, the teacher and students read and reviewed the main story regarding the theme. For the last day of instruction, the
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students read a new story and then completed a reading comprehension assessment about that story (K. T. Rodgers, personal communication, August 2, 2009). Each day, teachers were supposed to address oral language, word study, reading, and language arts. During the oral language lesson, teachers proposed a focus question to the students that related to the theme they were to be studying. Then, a following discussion between the teacher and students would help promote oral vocabulary that focused on a specific strategy, such as summarizing, and a skill, such as main idea and details. Afterward, teachers were to target instruction on phonemic awareness, like onset and rime, for instance. Word study was the point in the lesson where the students were taught about phonics. Teachers targeted and isolated specific letter sounds for children such as the short o sound in octopus. A short spelling lesson and introduction of high-frequency words were meant to conclude the word study lesson. During the reading portion of the lesson, students were to read a variety of short stories including decodable readers and get ready stories. Teachers also were to include lessons in comprehension that focused on specific comprehension skills. After reading, students were to have opportunities to practice fluent reading. The final piece of the Treasures program was language arts. During this piece, students would work in their grammar practice books to learn grammatical rules. They would also have opportunities to participate in writing activities, as well. Throughout the entire first unit, the focus was on teaching students all about phonemic awareness. According to Dr. Timothy Shanahan, former member of the NRP and co-author of Treasures, the foundational knowledge of phonemic awareness could help children as they read, by allowing them to quickly read words, spell words, and focus on meaning. Furthermore, he stated that children need to understand that words consist
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading 33 of phonemes before focusing on the print, and that, as the NRP discovered, phonemic awareness could be taught (Treasures, 2005).

In a McGraw-Hill News Release of the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Treasures program (2007), the program received high ratings “across all areas of study and, in most cases, received the highest possible score” (News Release, no page). The Dynamic Measurement Group (DMG), an educational assessment and curriculum materials development group, evaluated the program using A consumer’s guide for evaluating a core reading program – a critical elements analysis: grades K – 3. The consumer guide was established by the University of Oregon’s Institute for Development of Educational Achievement at the College of Education to help teachers and parents analyze reading programs. A DMG evaluator, who was specially trained in “scientifically based reading research and instructional design” (News Release, 2007) had to undergo formal training by the authors of the consumer’s guide in order to evaluate the reading program. The results of the evaluation indicated that the Treasures program was a comprehensive reading program that was carefully designed by the authors. The summary report from DMG also stated that the program supports all children’s reading needs (News Release, 2007).

Developed by Deborah C. Simmons, Ph. D. and Edward J. Kame’enui, Ph. D., the second edition of A consumer’s guide to evaluating a core reading program - A critical elements analysis: Grades K-3 (2003) outlined steps for which school districts could evaluate a core reading program for possible use. Simmons and Kame’enui asserted that reading programs must be reviewed in a critical manner requiring an objective, in-depth analysis. Therefore, they offered some recommendations and procedures in order to analyze elements of a reading program.
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Simmons and Kame'enui defined a core reading program as “the primary instructional tool that teachers use to teach children to learn to read and ensure they reach reading levels that meet or exceed grade-level standards” (Simmons & Kame'enui, 2003, p. 1). They also argued that the core reading program districts select for instructional use fit the needs of most of the students within that district based on the district's requirements. Although Simmons and Kame'enui thought schools and districts should adopt core reading programs as the primary reading program, they believed supplemental materials were necessary to help teachers develop a more rounded, comprehensive instructional program (Simmons & Kame'enui, 2003).

Simmons and Kame'enui (2003) recommended two stages of examination of a program in order to determine whether or not an instructional reading program would suit the district's needs. In the first stage, they suggested that districts look for trustworthy evidence of efficacy of a program. That is, program reviewers should answer four questions about the program regarding available evidence of efficacy based on experimental studies, whether or not the program supports updated and official reading research, whether or not explicit systematic instruction covers four major areas (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension), and if the program was tested in a school similar to the school district reviewing the program, in terms of demographics. Simmons and Kame'enui felt that if a program reviewer was able to answer yes to the above questions, then most likely the program would be effective within that school district. However, Simmons and Kame'enui argued that even if the program did not meet the criterion in Stage I, the program should not be excluded from consideration for use, since newer programs have not yet had opportunities to be examined on a larger scale, such as in longitudinal studies. In
Stage II of the program review, Simmons and Kame'enui recommended that program reviewers investigate the program based on a critical elements analysis. During the critical elements analysis, program reviewers should examine the program to see if the standards for all of the grade levels were addressed and that each high priority standard is taught “in sufficient depth, breadth, and quality that all learners will achieve or exceed expected levels of proficiency” (Simmons & Kame'enui, 2003, p. 4) for early reading skills and strategies acquisition (Simmons & Kame'enui, 2003).

In another news article, *Test scores reveal Pittsburgh students excel with McGraw-Hill’s Treasures Reading and Everyday Curricula* (2008), *Treasures* (2005) received high accolades from the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Public Schools. According to the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) for the 2007-2008 school year, Pittsburgh students have continued to make improved progress in reading. After use of the Wright Group/McGraw-Hill’s Everyday Mathematics program for about 14 years, the Pittsburgh Public Schools decided to adopt *Treasures* as their reading and language arts program in 2005. Prior to the adoption of *Treasures*, achievement results indicated that 48.7% of third grade students scored proficient and advanced in reading on the PSSA. After use of *Treasures* (2005), however, achievement results indicated that 64% of third grade students scored proficient and advanced in reading on the 2007-2008 PSSA. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders also showed an increase in their achievement scores; between the 2005-2006 and 2007-2008 school years, 4<sup>th</sup> graders increased in the advanced level of proficiency by 3.2% points, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders increased their score by 7% since 2002, even though comparable results showed a 4% point increase gain statewide. In addition, the article noted that Pittsburgh students outperformed students throughout the state of
These results provided limited support for the use of *Treasures* in Reading First classrooms, due to the newness of the program itself. In addition, there were no rigorous, peer-reviewed studies involving an investigation of the *Treasures* (2005) program.

**Critiques of the NRP and Reading First**

Critics (Garan, 2001; Cunningham, 2002; Wilson, Martens, Arya, & Altwerger, 2004) of the National Reading Panel Report have given a number of reasons why the Report’s recommendations were insufficient for understanding reading instruction and curriculum. Cunningham (2002), argued that the ways in which the National Reading Panel investigated reading limited the findings in the report. He stated that the Panel members, for example, selected studies to examine based on logic, not empirically. He also maintained that the NRP limited itself by only including experimental and quasi-experimental studies. In choosing those studies, Cunningham thought that the NRP had not met its own standard, saying, “The Panel members’ determination of what reading research is scientific is not scientific, as they themselves define it” (Cunningham, 2002, p. 54). Furthermore, Cunningham thought that the NRP saw reading instruction as a way for curing psychological and physical diseases, which he noted reduces schooling, especially reading education, to interventions that were low interaction or had none at all. Cunningham also questioned the credibility of the NRP, since he noted that although the Panel attempted to perform a meta-analysis, it was impossible to perform because
the instructional methods were inconsistent in the studies the NRP selected for their investigation (Cunningham, 2002).

Allington (2006) declared that the studies included in the NRP’s meta-analysis revealed only a slightly positive effect after using systematic phonics programs. In addition, Wilson, Martens, Arya, and Altwerger (2004) as well as Garan (2001) noted that the studies providing a basis for the NRP’s recommendations included research where students were not involved in reading authentic texts. Instead, the studies in the meta-analysis of the NRP investigated students’ abilities to read word lists, short cloze passages, and nonsense word lists (Wilson et al., 2004). Wilson et al. (2004) claimed that use of authentic reading activities instead “would make it possible to determine the impact of phonics instruction on the strategies young readers use, on how they comprehend, or on how they perceive the reading process” (243).

Nevertheless, Allington (2006) stated that the NRP’s statistics were significant enough for it to recommend systematic instruction in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension strategies (Allington, 2006).

Joanne Yatvin, former member of the National Reading Panel, also criticized the National Reading Panel for a number of reasons (Yatvin, 2002). Similar to Cunningham (2002), Yatvin mentioned that the Panel decided only to include experimental and quasi-experimental studies, and that the Panel followed medical research standards set by the National Institute for Child and Human Development (NICHD), which examined issues as if treating a disease. However, Yatvin stated that medical research is different from educational research in that it chooses participants randomly from homogenous populations and usually entails double-blind procedures, which is unfeasible in educational settings. Yatvin also argued that as a
whole, scientific members of the Panel, whose backgrounds are in medicine and not reading, viewed the reading process similarly, so their view was accepted more readily. Thus, scientists were quick to accept reading as a three-part hierarchical model involving decoding, fluency, and comprehension, where beginning readers learn to read first by separating the sounds, then matching them to written language and combinations of written letters, moving to decoding words and finally reading words in sentences. Yatvin claimed that this model ignores how children understand oral language, literature, conventions, and the lack of interaction with print impacts their ability to learn to read. The scientists, including a medical doctor who lacked experience or knowledge of reading instruction, did not even consider other models of reading as they began their research. Other points Yatvin made in her critique included how the Panel ignored the interconnectedness of reading and writing, types of reading, quality of reading, amounts of material, and how it can impact students; additionally, she stated that while the Panel did not construct its own definition of reading, the definition of reading was inconsistent throughout the report itself (Yatvin, 2002).

In their article *Reading First: Cautions and Recommendations*, Yatvin, Weaver, and Garan (2003) stated that the NRP report had many inadequacies, and therefore administrators and educators should be cautious when following the Panel's recommendations and implementing commercial reading programs. As a result, the authors offered alternatives to using commercial reading programs that they claimed were not scientifically based or effective in teaching students how to read. Some reasons they felt the report was inadequate was because the NRP did not focus on how students integrate basic skills (i.e. phonics) into the actual reading process, and that the definition of reading was not consistent within the report itself. Furthermore,
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the research base from which the report drew its conclusions was not as large as the Panel led people to initially believe. In addition, Yatvin et al. (2003) argued that there was not any research in the report supporting commercial reading programs, and the NRP did not recommend those types of instructional programs, either. Neither did the NRP suggest that scripted reading programs, as typically found in Reading First, were beneficial for students. In fact, Yatvin et al. (2003) stated that in classrooms above the first grade, the studies found that the use of scripted reading programs had a negative effect on spelling and comprehension for those students. For those and other reasons, Yatvin et al. (2003) offered some recommendations with regards to Reading First.

Many literacy educators (Garan, 2001; Cunningham, 2002; Wilson, Martens, Arya & Altwerger, 2004) have critiqued the National Reading Panel Report, claiming that the Panel's analysis was an inadequate regarding reading instruction and curriculum. Some critiques mentioned issues with the analysis itself, while other critiques noted that there was not enough evidence from the study to propose certain reading curriculums. Other critics found fault with the members of the Panel itself. Despite what arguments the critics had with the report, all agreed that there were many problems with the Panel and its resulting report.

Therefore, critics like Garan (2001) and others (Cunningham 2002; Wilson, Martens, Arya, & Altwerger, 2004) thought that National Reading Panel Report exhibited many inadequacies regarding reading instruction and curriculum. Many critics examined varying aspects of the Panel's investigation and felt it was unsuitable for educators for many reasons. The reasons the critics thought the Panel's report was inadequate included but were not limited to the design of the Panel's research, the
Recent research by reading researchers (Lyons, 2003; Pinnell & Fountas, 2009) revealed that emotions play an integral role in reading instruction. Reading researchers (Lyons, 2003; Pinnell & Fountas, 2009) argued that when planning reading instruction and during the implementation of reading instruction, teachers must consider their students’ emotions toward reading and related literacy activities, as well as student emotions toward particular reading topics. Failure to do so would significantly impact a student’s view of reading and taint further reading experiences (Lyons, 2003; Pinnell & Fountas, 2009).

Lyons (2003) referred to Webster’s New World Dictionary’s definition of emotion as “a state of consciousness having to do with arousal of feelings and distinguished from other cognitive states such as volition and awareness of any physical sensation” (p. 59). There were two aspects of emotion: inner emotion, which refers to a person’s feelings; and how people express their emotions, through laughter, tears, sweat, etc. Lyons proposed that cognition and emotion work together to assist learning. She said there are three principles: 1) children determine and control what to pay attention to and therefore, learn; 2) everything a child senses also plays a part in what they are feeling at that time; and 3) there are certain parts of the brain and nervous system that cope with how people regulate their emotions. Being able to regulate our emotions was very important when it comes to making decisions, particularly during learning.
Lyons also contended that emotions effectively impacted how children think; she believed that “emotion is the heart of learning and remembering” (2003, p. 70). For example, when children remember an event, it tends to be associated with how they felt during that event, whether it was positive or negative. Those memories also become stronger if the event is repeated, allowing the child to retain the memory. Therefore, Lyons claimed that difficult learning experiences become associated with negative emotions and easy learning experiences become associated with positive emotions. Therefore, students lacking the confidence felt incapable of being able to learn were typically the students who could not read, which resulted in them becoming frustrated and unmotivated to learn. To prove her point, Lyons cited Joseph LeDoux (1996) who stated that when children continue to experience emotional distress, deficits began to occur in a child’s academic capacity, which severely hinders a child’s capability to learn. If children recall repeated frustrating experiences while trying to learn to read, chances were that they would become unmotivated to try the experience again (Lyons, 2003).

Summary

Many researchers argued that NCLB and Reading First were the result of a narrowed study with a previous agenda in which people misinterpreted the findings for their own benefit. On the other hand, some people viewed the investigation and report as a fair representation of how children best learn to read. There have been some studies providing evidence for a specific commercial program meant to help students become better readers. Those studies showed an increase in achievement for students in reading. Yet, some reports did not actually state what the achievement tests were measuring. Were children becoming better at reading comprehension? Or
were they simply becoming better at reading nonsense words quickly? How did children translate these activities into their own reading? Other reports said that teachers should pay more attention to a child’s emotions as he or she is learning to read. It was not enough to expect them to be motivated to read every book handed to them. What emotions were they feeling as they learn to read in a number of instructional settings? This last question was at the heart of the research study, since I was attempting to discover how students view reading as they learn according to the curriculum in their school district.
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Chapter 3

Methods

Introduction

This research study was designed to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of students who were in a Reading First program known as Treasures (2005). Specifically, I explored student behaviors and practices during reading, which allowed me to infer their perceptions of and attitudes toward reading in a Reading First district. Through prior experience in planning a pilot study involving Reading First programs, I gathered information on multiple perspectives regarding how children learn to read and recommendations for how to provide proper reading instruction. This research included viewpoints of reading researchers and experts, as well as medical doctors. Yet, one particular perspective was missing: the perspective of the students with whom teachers worked on a daily basis. Therefore, I wanted to examine students’ views about reading and the reading process.

Throughout my graduate work, I was taught that the main goal of reading is for students to comprehend a passage they are reading. It was not a separate skill of reading; rather it was the goal of reading. While teaching students how to comprehend a text, skills instruction that help students achieve comprehension (i.e. questioning, visualization, phonics, etc.) could be embedded into reading instruction. In contrast, many other individuals (i.e. politicians, scientists) believed that comprehension was a reading skill, and that readers were unable to comprehend until they were able to decode words. Therefore, I wanted to see if the type of instruction the National Reading Panel promoted had any influence on how children perceive the reading process. I intended to collect data through multiple methods, including observations of students during a variety of reading activities, conducting interviews
with students about reading, and administering an attitude survey about reading activities.

The research question I intended to answer in this study was:

How might a Reading First approved program, such as *Treasures*, impact students’ perceptions and attitudes of reading?

**Participants**

The study took place at Westerville Elementary School, which was located in a rural school district, known as Westerville Central Schools, in Western New York. (Pseudonyms are used for places and people.) The community mostly relied on agricultural means as a way of life. The population in the town was approximately 11,251 people. Roughly 2,000 of this population were students within the Westerville School District. The school district had four educational facilities: a primary school that housed Grades PreK-2; an elementary school that housed Grades 3-5; a 6-8 Middle School, and a 9-12 High School. Between the primary and elementary schools, there were approximately 950 students (www.westervillecsd.org).

The Westerville Elementary School had approximately 500 students alone. Within this population, African-Americans or Black children accounted for 14% of the students, Caucasian children accounted for 81% of the students, 4% were Hispanic or Latino, and 1% were Native American or Native Alaskan. Approximately 46% of the students were eligible to receive free or reduced lunch and 2% were Limited English Proficient. The average class size at Westerville Elementary School was 19 students. 2% of the teachers working in Westerville Elementary School had no valid teaching certificate. Approximately 5% of the
teachers at this school had fewer than 3 years of teaching experience, and 11% of the
teachers had a certificate equivalent to a Master's Degree in Education or higher.
Some students within the school also received additional support for reading if
necessary (www.greatschools.org).

The research took place in a classroom within a cluster setting that housed 4
classrooms. In other words, there were three solid walls, with the fourth side of the
room exposed to an outer common room where students hung their backpacks and
coats and teachers could use for whole group instruction if they so chose. There was,
however, an accordion “wall” that the teacher could pull open to close off the
classroom from the rest of the classrooms in the cluster.

Mrs. Smith’s classroom population consisted of 18 children, 10 of whom were
boys and 8 girls. Twelve of the students were Caucasian, 5 of the students were
African-American, and 1 of the students was Hispanic. In terms of reading ability,
according to running records and DIBELS at the beginning of the study,
approximately 2 students were above average students, 12 students were average
students, and 4 students were below average. (The data were available to me by the
teacher upon request at the beginning of my study; she had administered running
records and DIBELS prior to my study.)

In my study, I observed the behaviors of 11 students whose pseudonyms were
the following: Andrew, Elizabeth, Amy, Lionel, Donny, Xavier, Isabella, Piper,
Audra, Stephanie, and Emily. Of these 11 students, four were male and seven were
female. These students also represented various ethnicities. One of the boys
(Andrew) was Hispanic, while two boys (Lionel, Donny) were Black or African-
American, and the other boy (Xavier) was Caucasian. The majority of the girls in my
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Although one of the girls was Black or African-American (Isabella).

During the study, my role was that of a participant observer. At times, I was strictly an observer to the reading lessons and activities taking place within the classroom. During other times, I was also a participant, such as when I conducted interviews with the students whom were involved in my study.

Prior to the start of my data collection, I sent home a letter of consent to the parents/guardians of each student in the classroom (Appendix 1). In the letter, I informed parents about the purpose of my study, how I would collect data, how I would ensure confidentiality for their child, and asked permission for them to allow me to collect data regarding their students’ attitudes and perceptions of reading. There was also a section where the parents/guardians could sign the letter, giving me permission to study their child. Once I had permission from the parents, I read a statement (Appendix 2) to the students explaining the study to them. Then I asked them to write their name and the date on the statement if they chose to participate in the study. Eleven students participated in the study.

So that I could be sure that I maintained confidentiality of the students in my study, I assigned each child a pseudonym. As I administered the surveys and conducted the observations and interviews, I used the pseudonyms in place of the child’s real name. Throughout data collection and analysis, I was the only person who was aware of which pseudonym belonged to which student. Once that portion of the study was completed, all evidence was destroyed to further ensure the confidentiality of the students involved.
Data Collection

At the beginning of my study, I administered the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990; Appendix 3). The survey measured various aspects of students’ attitudes about reading and books. There were twenty questions in which the students had to respond by circling one of four pictures of Garfield, who displays different moods on his face, to represent how they felt about books and reading in certain situations. To ensure that the students understood each question, I read them aloud to the entire class. I also had students respond to their surveys honestly, by providing them with dividers to separate them from each other while they answered the questions. The survey took approximately ten to fifteen minutes.

After the development of the survey, it was administered nationally to over 18,000 students who were in grades 1-6. The survey was administered during the middle of the school year. Reliability of the survey was established by the use of Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha measured the internal consistency of attitude scales, and the alpha was calculated for each grade level and all grades taken together. In order to establish validity for the instrument, the authors tested the survey in multiple ways. First, the authors validated the recreational subscale by examining student use of libraries. The authors chose students who had access to libraries and compared their results based on whether or not those students had library cards. A second test was performed to compare scores of students who had checked out library books versus students who did not have library books checked out. Although the test was limited to students who were not required to check books out of the library by their teachers, students who checked books out of the library scored higher than those who did not check books out of the library. The final test of validity compared scores of students who claimed to watch less than one hour of television per night versus the
scores of students who claimed to watch more than two hours per night (McKenna & Kear, 1990).

The test results showed that the students' attitudes toward recreational reading varied reciprocally depending on the amount of television that was watched. The authors also tested the validity of the academic subscale. They tested the validity based on how the scores related to the students' reading abilities. Teachers provided information on students' reading abilities by categorizing them into low, average, or high reading ability overall. The test revealed that high-ability readers' scores reflected the students' feelings about reading for school (McKenna & Kear, 1990).

Over the course of seven weeks (12 observation days), I observed participants in a variety of reading activities involved in the reading series Treasures (2005). Each week I attempted to observe students for two days, although sometimes I had to observe once a week due to scheduling conflicts. These observations took place as students participated in whole group reading lessons, small group reading lessons (such as guided reading and literacy centers), and/or one-on-one reading lessons. Instruction in reading involved direct and indirect teaching in skills related to phonics and phonemic awareness, comprehension strategies, literacy games, and other related activities. Typically, whole group observations lasted for an hour to an hour and 10 minutes, and observation of small group lessons and activities lasted for approximately 30 minutes. During this time, students rotated around between a number of centers focusing on literacy skills, including a listening center, a game center, and a guided reading center. Near the end of my observations, however, the teacher had the students work on individual packets, because students had not been staying focused in small groups and academic performance on weekly assessments had declined overall.
Observations were recorded in the form of field notes on a double entry style form (Appendix 4). At the top of the observation form, there was a place where I specified which type of instructional setting (whole group, small group, one-on-one, literacy centers) in which the lesson occurred. One column of the double entry form was devoted to recording observations of the participants, while the other column was used for writing interpretations and questions regarding the direct observations of the students. My observations captured students’ body language, tone, and levels of engagement as they interacted with text and other literacy tools, as well as the interactions they had with other students and the teacher. As I recorded observations, I referred to students according to their pseudonyms.

After each session of reading instruction, I conducted interviews with the participants in the study in order to collect information about students’ perceptions regarding reading until I completed the formal interviews. Each time I observed the classroom, I interviewed two students. The interviews lasted for approximately 10 minutes. I used the Burke Reading Interview (Burke, 2005), which consisted of 10 items (Appendix 5). Eight of these items were open-ended, 1 was close-ended, and I asked students to rate themselves as a reader. Overall, the questions in the interview required students to discuss their reading process, identify good readers they know, how they learned to read, and identifying their weaknesses as readers. As the participants revealed their answers to me, I recorded notes on my interview papers. I also audio-taped the interviews so that I could revisit the interviews as many times as needed to make sure I did not miss anything. After the interviews were concluded, I transcribed them myself.

If the need arose, I also conducted informal interviews with students to ask clarifying questions about their behaviors during observation or responses to the
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survey. For example, if I observed a student doing something during a reading activity, but a response from his or her survey or interview did not match the action, I asked the student about what he or she was doing during the observation. During observations, I recorded notes in my double-entry journal. In addition, if a child gave me a response to my interview question, but upon arriving home I read through the responses but did not quite understand what the child meant, I visited with the child again to clarify what he or she meant.

Data Analysis

All of the data were analyzed using a constant comparative method and began as soon as the first set of data was collected. As I made observations of students during whole group and small group instruction and center work, I made notes about things that I saw to ask them clarifying questions during informal interviews as they related to the questions involved in the interviews.

I also analyzed data to look for common themes and patterns among the observations, survey responses, and interview responses. As the themes surfaced for the interviews, I created charts to assist me in understanding and analyzing the data. For each student, I created a chart consisting of 10 rows and 2 columns. Each row in column 1 corresponded to each question in the interview. Each row in the 2nd column contained the answers the student gave me to the corresponding question in column 1. As I analyzed the data, I made connections between student responses, by highlighting similar responses with the same color for each question. I found that the common themes were categorized in three different ways: 1) student behavior during instruction and instructional activities; 2) survey responses regarding attitudes about reading; and 3) interview responses regarding students' understandings of the reading
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process and themselves as readers. I continued to analyze all data until I no longer found new themes and patterns that emerged.

In addition to looking for themes among the survey responses, I scored the surveys to quantify student responses. I scored the surveys based on the responses for each question. Each happiest Garfield face (leftmost graphic) received 4 points, and each partially smiling Garfield graphic received 3 points, while the slightly upset Garfield received 2 points, and the most upset Garfield (rightmost graphic) received one point. Three scores were obtained from the survey responses, including a score for the first ten items, which related to recreational attitudinal reading, a score for the last ten items, which related to academic attitudinal reading, and an overall score for the entire survey. Upon completion of scoring the surveys, I analyzed the data to determine the mean (average) and the range of the scores for each individual question as well as the responses of the participants as a whole. A pie chart was also constructed to visually represent the data.

For the observations, I examined the notes from the detailed observation forms (Appendix 4). I looked for similar themes and patterns. Once I identified similar themes and patterns, I assigned various highlighting colors and symbols for specific behaviors. The first theme I identified in my observations were coined off-task behaviors. Any time I observed students exhibiting a behavior other than paying attention to the teacher, completing an activity, reading a story, or any other literacy related activity they were supposed to be focusing on at that point I wrote down what they were doing instead. Under that category, I noted students exhibiting 10 off-task behaviors. The behaviors included 1) desk moving; 2) playing with papers or other objects; 3) laying their heads on their desk or arms; 4) standing up, fidgeting in their seat, or out of their chair; 5) yawning; 6) frowning, pouting, or displaying unhappy
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expressions; 7) talking to other students or adults; 8) using the bathroom, getting a
drink, or a tissue; and 9) looking around the room. On the other hand, I observed
students exhibiting on-task behaviors as well. There were 7 of those behaviors
including: 1) fingerpointing; 2) following along when others were reading; 3)
reading; 4) writing/doing work; 5) participating (i.e. clapping, marching, counting on
fingers, etc.); 6) raising hands to read aloud or answer questions; and 7) taking out
materials. A few behaviors I noticed that I did not expect to see included what I
termed helping behaviors. There were two subcategories under that category: helping
others and helping self. I observed the students helping each other in many ways
during literacy centers. I also observed the students helping themselves through self-
talk by reminding themselves what they needed to do, for example.

During data analysis, I examined each set of data individually and across the
data to find common themes and to guarantee triangulation. First, I looked at each
student's results from the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. I examined each
response to each question and compared their score for each question to their overall
raw scores. I also compared their raw scores to the corresponding percentile for 1st
graders according to the scoring guide. I did this to see if their scores fell within the
appropriate percentiles according to the scoring guide. In addition, I used some
descriptive statistics to determine the students' combined average of scores to see how
they ranked as a group. I then compared each student's response on the survey to
their behaviors during my observations. I noted whether or not their attitudes toward
reading (according to their answers on the survey) corresponded to each student's
behavior during literacy instruction and related activities.

I also compared the data from the observations to the data I collected during
my interviews. I looked at each child's response to a question relating to the reading
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading 53 process (i.e. what to do when they come to an unknown word) and compared it to their behaviors during my observations to see if they utilized the techniques they told me they used while reading. Furthermore, I looked across the students to see how often the students as a group exhibited the behaviors they mentioned during the interviews.

Using multiple methods of data collection and data analysis ensured that triangulation would occur. This triangulation resulted in validating the data and ensuring the reliability of the data as well.

**Limitations**

Throughout my data collection and data analysis, there was the potential for factors or variables to affect my investigation. One limitation may have resulted from potential absenteeism of the participants. Since I was not the classroom teacher, it was difficult for me to set up alternate times to interview and observe specific students if they were absent on the days which I planned to collect data. Time was also a factor since, again, I was not the classroom teacher. I had to set aside certain times during the week to collect data. Furthermore, Fridays in the Westerville Elementary School were typically used as assessment days through the *Treasures* (2005) program, so I was not able to observe whole group reading instruction during those days.

In addition, since the study took place in one classroom within a specific school that was not chosen randomly, it was difficult for me to generalize my findings to other classrooms within the school. Additionally, it was difficult for me to generalize my findings to other schools around the country as well, especially since schools who receive Reading First funds tended to use a number of different commercial programs.
Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of students who were in a Reading First approved program known as Treasures (2005). Throughout the course of the study, I examined student behaviors and practices during reading, which allowed me to infer their perceptions of and attitudes toward reading in a Reading First district. Although multiple authors offered numerous propositions regarding how children learn to read in the past, one key element was missing: the perceptions of and attitudes toward reading from the students themselves. Therefore, I studied students’ views about reading and the reading process.

Research Question

The research question I intended to answer was: How might a Reading First approved program, such as Treasures (2005), impact students’ perceptions and attitudes of reading? I used three different instruments to obtain data in order to provide triangulation for this question. The three different instruments I used were the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Appendix 3), a Detailed Observation Form (Appendix 4), and the Burke Reading Interview by Carolyn Burke (1987 – Appendix 5).

Organization of This Chapter

This chapter was organized into three major sections: 1) Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys, 2) First Graders' Attitudes Toward Reading, and 3) First Graders’
Student Perceptions of Reading: Burke Reading Interviews. Within the first section titled Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys, I discussed the raw scores the students in my focus group received for the survey. I addressed the students' raw scores for recreational reading as well as for academic reading, and then the students' final raw scores overall. Afterward, I used descriptive statistics to summarize the trends. Following the descriptive statistics, I interpreted the surveys in two ways: informally by describing where the students' scores fell and how “happy” or “unhappy” the students seemed about reading, and more formally by using percentile ranks provided by the authors of the survey.

*Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys*

The data from the Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys were analyzed quantitatively. Responses were scored according to the directions given by the creators of the survey, which was to assign each Garfield a certain number of points based on his expression, to calculate the raw scores for each student in both recreational and academic categories. I found each student’s raw score for both recreational and academic reading, as well as a full-scale raw score, which combined the raw scores for recreational and academic reading. The minimum raw score a child could receive was 10 in both recreational and academic reading categories, while the maximum raw score a child could receive was 40 in both instances. The minimum full raw score a child could receive was 20, and the maximum full raw score a child could receive was 80. I also used Table 1 (McKenna & Kear, 1990) to determine the mid-year percentile ranks by grade and scale for each student.

Furthermore, I ran some descriptive statistics tests on the raw data. I found the mean (average) of the full scale raw score for my focus group. Then, I found the
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mean for both the recreational and academic raw scores separately for my entire focus group. I also found the minimum (lowest score) and maximum (highest score) for the overall raw scores, the recreational and academic raw scores, so I could see the range of scores within my focus group. Additionally, I constructed a table in Microsoft Excel for each question by student and recorded the raw scores each response received. This allowed me to look across the student data according to recreational and academic questions and compare responses among students and to see which responses occurred the most often.

Raw Scores

In order to analyze the data from the Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys, I first scored each student’s response with a 1, 2, 3, or 4, depending on the Garfield picture they had chosen for each question. Overall, the students scored fairly high (Table 4.4 lists the results for the recreational and academic raw scores by student). The highest score, received by two students, was 40, while the lowest score was 28. The range of the scores (highest score minus lowest score) was 12. For recreational reading, Donny and Andrew scored the lowest (29 and 28, respectively), although their scores were only 11 and 12 points (respectively) away from the maximum possible score. Elizabeth, Audra, Lionel, and Xavier all received a raw score of 30 for recreational reading. Emily received a raw score of 36 for recreational reading, while Stephanie received a raw score of 37 and Isabella received a raw score of 39 for recreational reading. Piper was the only student to receive a perfect raw score of 40 for recreational reading.

For academic reading, the raw scores were again pretty high, although two students scored fairly low. One student received a score of 40 and on student
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received a low score of 18, making the range of scores 22. Andrew received a score of 18 for academic reading and Xavier received a score of 23. The next highest raw score (29) was received by Audra. Donny and Elizabeth received a 30 and a 31, respectively while Isabella received a 33 and Lionel received a 35. Emily’s raw score was a 37 and Amy’s raw score for academic reading was a 38. Stephanie and Piper both received perfect raw scores of 40 for academic reading (see Table 4.4 for a detailed listing of scores for each student).

When I combined each student’s recreational raw score with her or his academic raw score, I again noticed that the scores were relatively high with the exception of a couple of students. Andrew’s total raw score was a 46 out of 80 possible points. Xavier received the next highest total raw score with a 53 followed by Donny and Audra who both received scores of 59 for the total raw score.

Elizabeth received a total raw score of 61, and Lionel received a total raw score of 65. Isabella’s total raw score was a 72, and Emily’s total raw score was a 73. Stephanie and Amy received scores of 77 and 78, respectively, and Piper’s total raw score was an 80.

In order to determine the descriptive statistics for the raw score data, I used a Texas Instruments TI-83 Plus. First, I typed in each of the students’ total raw score into a list in the calculator. Then I ran a 1-Variable Statistics test, which gave me information on the mean (average), the minimum and maximum scores (lowest and highest, respectively), the quartiles, the median (the middle score), and the standard deviation (the distance from the mean in which certain percentages of scores were expected to fall and how the scores were distributed about the mean). Although not all of this data was necessary for the purpose of my study, I found some of the statistics useful (see Table 4.1 below for results).
The overall mean for my focus group was approximately 66. The minimum score received by any student for both of the recreational and academic categories combined was 46, while the maximum score received by any student for both categories was 80.

For the recreational and academic reading raw scores, I again typed each student’s score into a list on the TI-83 Plus and ran a 1-Variable Statistics test. The results are displayed in Table 4.2 (below).

| Table 4.1  |
| Title: 1-Variable Statistics Test: Overall Raw Scores |
| Mean | 66 |
| Minimum | 46 |
| Maximum | 80 |

The academic raw score mean for my focus group was approximately 32. The lowest score received by any student in my focus group was 18 while the highest score was 40.

I also ran a statistics test for the recreational raw scores, as shown in Table 4.3 (below).

| Table 4.2  |
| Title: 1 Variable Statistics Test: Academic Raw Scores |
| Mean | 32 |
| Minimum | 18 |
| Maximum | 40 |
The recreational raw score mean for my focus group was approximately 33. The minimum and maximum for recreational reading were 28 and 40, respectively.

**Interpretation of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey**

According to the directions for interpreting the results of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, the authors recommended two methods (McKenna & Kear, 1990). Informally, the scores could be interpreted based upon where the scores fell in regards to the four nodes (four different Garfield expressions) of the scale. For example, knowing that the maximum raw score for recreational reading was 40, I determined that each Garfield character was worth 10 points; therefore, the leftmost Garfield (happy Garfield) was 40, the next Garfield (slightly happy) was 30, the third Garfield (slightly unhappy) was 20, and the rightmost Garfield (angry) was 10. Any scores in between these nodes were either rounded up or down. In other words, numbers whose ones digits were 1-4 were considered closer to the smaller number, whereas numbers whose ones digits were 5-9 were considered closer to the larger number (i.e. 31-34 were closer to 30, whereas 35-39 were closer to 40). Using this information, I concluded the following results for each student in Table 4.4 (organized by descending scores for recreational scores):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Statistics Test: Recreational Raw Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five (Piper, Amy, Isabella, Emily and Stephanie) of the eleven students were extremely happy to be engaged in recreational reading, while the other six students (Donny, Elizabeth, Audra, Lionel, Andrew, and Xavier) were only slightly happy to be engaged in recreational reading. In terms of academic reading, five students (Piper, Amy, Lionel, Emily, and Stephanie) were extremely happy to be engaged in academic reading, while four of the students (Donny, Elizabeth, Audra, and Isabella) were only slightly happy to be engaged in academic reading. Andrew and Xaviers’ scores revealed they were slightly unhappy to be engaged in academic reading. Interestingly, Lionel was more excited about academic reading than he was for
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading 61
recreational reading, while Isabella was more excited about recreational reading than
she was for recreational reading.

Additionally, I examined each student’s overall raw score to informally
analyze how that student felt about reading. Using a similar node scale only doubled
this time to find a composite total between the two categories, which encompassed
both recreational and academic reading scores, I determined a new node scale (as
recommended by the authors of the survey; McKenna & Kear, 1990). For instance,
knowing that the maximum score overall was 80, I determined that each Garfield
color was 20 points; therefore the leftmost Garfield (happy Garfield) was 80, the
next Garfield (slightly happy) was 60, the Garfield that was slightly unhappy was 40
and the rightmost Garfield (angry Garfield) was 20. Just as before, any scores in
between these nodes were either rounded up or down. In other words, numbers
whose ones digits were 1-4 were considered closer to the smaller number, whereas
numbers whose ones digits were 5-9 were considered closer to the larger number (i.e.
71-74 were closer to 70, whereas 76-79 were closer to 80). Using this information, I
concluded the following results for each student (see Table 4.5, organized by
descending scores):
Overall, Piper, Amy, Isabella, Emily, and Stephanie were the students who were extremely happy to be engaged in recreational or academic reading, while Donny, Elizabeth, Audra, Lionel, and Xavier were only slightly happy to be engaged in recreational or academic reading. Andrew was the only student whose score placed him in the “slightly unhappy” zone. Although not all of the students’ scores revealed that each child was extremely happy to be engaged in reading, there were very few overall responses indicating that students did not care to be engaged in any type of reading.
Percentile Ranks

For a more formal analysis, the authors of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) noted that users of the survey could convert the raw scores into percentile ranks using Table 1: Mid-year percentile ranks by grade and scale, which was attached to the survey for use by the administrator of the survey.

For this study, I converted each student’s raw score into a percentile rank, as noted in Table 4.6 (organized by descending scores for recreational reading):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Recreational</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audra</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xavier</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donny</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students’ scores in terms of percentile ranks were spread out across the board. Some of the students' individual scores placed them within different percentiles for each category. For example, Amy scored within the 99th percentile for recreational reading but only scored within the 88th percentile for academic reading.

Four of the students scored within lower percentiles for academic reading than for recreational reading, which was what I expected to see. Interestingly, five of the students scored within higher percentiles for academic reading than for recreational reading, which I did not expect to see. Two of the students in my focus group scored within the same percentile for both categories. In addition, the girls in my focus group scored within the higher percentiles than the boys overall.
In terms of total percentile ranks, six of the students in my focus group scored within the upper 50% of the percentiles, while the rest of the students scored below the halfway point. Five of the students who scored within the top 50% were girls, while the majority of the boys scored within the bottom 50%. Two of the students scored considerably low in terms of overall percentile ranks.

In conclusion, the scores revealed some diversity in terms of what attitudes students had toward reading. I was somewhat surprised to find that some of the students scored as high as they did, meaning that they were eager readers inside and outside of the classroom. I did not expect them to be as excited about reading. However, some results did verify my predictions about what student attitudes toward reading were. Not all students were as excited about reading as others, as was evidenced by their surveys.

1st Graders’ Attitudes Toward Reading

The data from my focus group of 11 first grade students were quite varied. While many of the students’ results from the survey responses revealed mostly positive attitudes toward reading, some student responses did not demonstrate a positive attitude toward reading. Similarly, much of the data from my detailed observation forms illustrated the varying attitudes toward reading among the students in my focus group. Not all students were enthusiastic about reading throughout the durations of all of the lessons I observed. These behaviors allowed me to infer what types of attitudes students had toward reading in general.

As I began sifting through my double entry observation forms, I looked for common themes and patterns. There were four overall themes that occurred during
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my observations: 1) off-task behaviors; 2) on-task behaviors; 3) helping behaviors; and 4) body language, oral language, and facial expressions.

I titled the first group of themes off-task behaviors, because they were all behaviors that occurred when the students were distracted from the learning task at hand. Within this category, I identified six common themes and patterns. They ranged from students moving their desks, playing with papers or other objects on top of or within their desks, students who were standing, fidgeting, or out of their chair, talking to others in off task discussions, bathroom/tissue/drink breaks, and looking around the room. The second set of behaviors was labeled on-task behaviors. The on-task behaviors theme encompassed behaviors in which the students were focused on the task at hand. Within this category, I identified seven behaviors. These behaviors included 1) finger-pointing, 2) following along when others were reading, 3) reading, 4) writing or doing work, 5) participating, 6) raising hands to read or answer questions, and 7) taking out materials.

There were also times during my observations when I saw the students asking for or offering assistance. Sometimes the students even used self-assistance. These types of behaviors were categorized into a third theme called helping behaviors. I noticed six of these types of behaviors: 1) answering questions or reading words, 2) showing a fellow student how to complete a task, 3) general behavior management, 4) sharing materials, 5) orally reminding oneself what to do, and 6) asking others or the teacher for help. The fourth theme that emerged during my study involved observing students' body language during reading instruction and related activities. Through the observed behaviors, I inferred how students felt about reading. The behaviors I noticed were all behaviors in which I inferred students had negative attitudes toward reading. I titled them body language, oral language, and facial expressions. There
were three behaviors that fell into this category: 1) head on arms or desk; 2) yawning; and 3) frowning, pouting, or unhappy expressions.

**Off-task behaviors.** Over the course of my 12 observations in the classroom, I noticed students in my focus group displaying many different off-task behaviors during reading lessons. I titled those behaviors “Off-task Behaviors,” because the behaviors kept the students from completing their work at some point in time.

**Off-task behaviors: Moving desks.** One of the first distracting behaviors a student displayed during reading block was moving his desk. Although there were not very many occurrences there were a few times when this student was moving his desk back and forth as he sat underneath it. This behavior was limited to Lionel. Lionel was moving his desk 6 times during my observations. Three of these occurrences happened on the same day, January 19, while one happened on January 27, and the last two occurred on February 22. Every single time Lionel was moving his desk occurred during whole group reading instructional times. During the lesson on January 19th, the teacher's focus was on analyzing characters and setting. Initially, Mrs. Smith provided direct instruction to the entire group about the characters and the setting of the story. She explained what each word meant; for instance, that characters were the people in the story and the setting was the time and place of the story. The first time Lionel moved his desk on this day took place during this type of instruction. Then the teacher shared the big book *When I Am Old With You* (1993) by Angela Johnson. Students were asked to pay attention to where the characters were and what they were doing throughout the story. As she read through the book, the teacher modeled to the students in the form of a think aloud how to analyze the characters and the setting of the story.
The second time Lionel was moving his desk, the teacher was in the process of a think aloud. This time he was pushing his desk directly into the desk of the student who was sitting next to him. The last time Lionel moved his desk on this day occurred during another whole group activity in which the students were learning about triple consonant blends such as str, spl, scr, and spr. In this case, she was teaching them how to blend the sounds together, and then she had students apply this skill within words from the English vocabulary. The last two times Lionel moved his desk occurred during whole group reading instruction. On February 22, while students were involved in reading and discussing the morning message, Lionel was again moving his desk back and forth. He was again moving his desk back and forth later during the whole group blending lesson. During blending, the students learned how to blend with the long /ə/ sound when words were spelled with –ay and –ai. The teacher first taught the students that when combined with y or i, “a” made the /ə/ sound, then she modeled how to blend the /ə/ sound with other consonants to make new words, such as bay and bail. After modeling Mrs. Smith wrote numerous words on the board and asked for volunteers to blend the sounds and read the words to the rest of the class.

Although I cannot be completely sure why Lionel continued to move his desk back and forth, I inferred he was doing it as a result of boredom. The blending lessons tended to last 10-20 minutes when counting the introduction of the lesson. Students were required to look at the whiteboard and listen while other students or the teacher practiced blending. Unfortunately, I was unable to determine the actual reason Lionel was bored. Perhaps it was because he did not need lengthy instruction in this particular blending since he understood it quickly, or perhaps he did not understand how to put the sounds together. Maybe it was because he was not allowed
to do any active learning with his hands, such as practice writing the words or sorting word cards. However, I felt it was important to note that Lionel was struggling to keep from being distracted during the lessons.

This information was consistent with one of the questions on Lionel’s Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. Although overall Lionel’s raw score was pretty high (35/40), he did only score 3 out of 4 points for question 16 on the survey: “How do you feel when it’s time for reading in class?” Granted, his score was only one point away from the highest possible score for that question. However, this response was a good indication that he was not always eager for reading instruction in his classroom.

*Off-task behaviors: Playing with papers/objects.* A second distracting behavior that surfaced during my observations was that students were easily distracted by objects in, on, and around their desks. Although some people need small, manipulative objects to focus, there were multiple times when the students in my focus group were distracted by objects in and around their desks. In addition, the behaviors, which are discussed in the following section, were more than just simply doodling or squeezing a stress ball. The behaviors I noticed showed that the students were thinking about other things. Therefore, I thought it was necessary to include this section, even though I was aware that the students may not really have been off-task. Many times during the reading block, students were playing with their nametags, playing with their pencil boxes, looking through their workbooks or reading books, playing with shoes or any other number of objects around them. This behavior was not limited to just a handful of students. All eleven students were distracted by some type of object during the reading block over the course of my investigation. The majority of the occurrences of distractions occurred during whole group instruction.
At times, however, students were playing with objects during small group literacy centers.

One of the times students became distracted during whole group instruction took place while Mrs. Smith was teaching them about segmentation, a sub-skill of phonemic awareness. During those lessons, the goal was that students would be able to hear the different sounds within words. For example, on January 19, the students had to determine how many sounds were in words like strap, splash, trap, slim, scrap, stick, sprain, and skill. After the teacher said each word, students were to hold up the number of fingers that represented the number of sounds. If the teacher said strap, for instance, students held up five fingers to represent five sounds. During my observations, the students who were distracted during segmentation lessons were Donny (twice), Lionel (three times), Isabella (once), and Xavier (twice). Evidence from the Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys provided additional data to support my observations. On the academic reading portion of Donny, Lionel, and Isabella’s surveys, for example, their responses received only 3 points out of 4 for each question. Only 1 of the questions directly applied to this type of instruction which was how they felt when it was reading time. Even though their responses were only one point away from the maximum possible score, it provided more support for why they were becoming distracted so much during reading block. Although he was not distracted many times during blending, Xavier was still distracted a couple of times, which correlated directly to his response on the survey question. In fact, his response only received one point for that question, illustrating he did not look forward to reading time at all. Therefore, the data supported my observations that students were not that excited about reading instruction in class.
Another time students were distracted during whole group instruction was when they were learning how to blend sounds together. On January 21, for instance, Mrs. Smith taught the students how to blend triple consonant blends, another sub-skill of phonics. To introduce triple consonant blends, Mrs. Smith said that the first three letters of the word “scrape” made the sounds /s/ /k/ /r/. Then, she told the students that since there was a silent e on the end it made the “a” say the /ə/ sound, followed by the /p/ sound for “p”. Then she blended the sounds together, stretching out the word so the students could hear each sound in the word. Throughout my observations, Lionel (4 times), Donny (8 times), Emily (once), Xavier (twice), Piper (twice) and Amy (once) were distracted by objects in and around their desks. As noted in Table 4.7, most of the observational data were supported by one of the questions on the Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys (organized by descending scores, alphabetically).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.7 Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys: Academic Raw Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xavier</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As noted above, the observational data were consistent with the Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys for Piper, Donny, Amy, Lionel, Emily, and Xavier. Although Donny, Lionel, and Emily received raw scores that were only one point away from the maximum possible score for that question, it supported the observational data, because it demonstrated that those students were only “slightly happy” (according to the survey) when it came time for reading in class. This was especially true for Xavier, who only scored one point on the survey question, meaning that he was “very upset” (according to the survey) when reading time occurred in school. Piper and Amy both received maximum points for the survey question, which was consistent with the observational data since they were only distracted one or two times throughout my entire observation.

A third time students were distracted during whole group instruction was when the students were listening to or reading a story as a class. When listening to the story, the teacher played an audio version of the story while the students followed along in their books. When reading together, students took turns reading a page from the story in their books. While one student read, the others were supposed to follow along in their books. Some of the students got distracted a few times, however. Nine of the eleven students were distracted numerous times when they were reading stories from their books or Scholastic News articles (“Penguins Head to Toe,” 2010). (See Table 4.8, organized by descending number of observations).
What was most interesting about this data was that the majority of the students who were distracted were girls. However, the boys tended to be distracted more often during the reading activities themselves, with the exception of Piper. Lionel, Donny, and Xavier were distracted more often than most of the girls.

The data from the Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys also supported the observations I made. Four questions from the survey applied to this aspect of my observations: 1) How do you feel about reading in school? (ERAS Question 13); 2) How do you feel about reading your school books? (ERAS Question 14); 3) How do you feel when it’s time for reading in class? (ERAS Question 16); and 4) How do you feel about stories you read in reading class (ERAS Question 17)? (McKenna & Kear, 1990). (See Table 4.9, in alphabetical order).
Some of the students' actions during reading block were supported by the responses from their surveys. Typically, the students who had lower scores on their surveys typically were distracted more often, while those with higher scores were distracted less often. Donny and Xavier were two of the students who were distracted during reading block, and they received lower scores on their surveys. Similarly, most of the girls such as Elizabeth, Emily, Isabella, and Stephanie were distracted the least amount of times, and their actions were supported by the responses on their surveys. The exception to that was Piper who received a perfect score on the survey.

Students also tended to become distracted during times in the lessons when the teacher was leading a discussion about the story they were reading. For the most part, the teacher did think-alouds to demonstrate how to utilize a comprehension strategy. She also asked students comprehension questions about the story. Each lesson focused on a certain comprehension skill. For instance, on February 9, the students were reading *June Robot Cleans Up* (2009) by Mary Anderson. They were
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learning how to make inferences and draw conclusions. After reading the first few pages and modeling how to make inferences and draw conclusions, the teacher helped the students draw conclusions about June’s character. Although the teacher did not directly ask each individual student questions about the reading, it was a question directed to the class and a volunteer answered the question. At times the conversation bounced back and forth between the student and the teacher. Five of the students in my focus group were distracted during whole group discussions (see Table 4.10 for a summary of behaviors and ERAS Scores, in descending order of number of occurrences of behaviors).

<p>| Table 4.10: Off-task Behaviors: Distractions during whole group discussions &amp; ERAS Scores for Question 11 |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Number of Occurrences</th>
<th>ERAS Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donny</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five of the eleven students in my focus group were distracted during whole group discussions. The students who were distracted most often during discussions were both boys, Donny and Lionel. The other three students who were distracted during whole group discussions were girls. More of the girls in my focus group were distracted during whole group discussions, but the two boys were distracted more often. Regardless, the observational data was mostly supported by the ERAS scores those students received on the surveys for most of the students. For example, Piper and Isabella responded that they were extremely happy when the teacher asked them
questions during reading class, and they were only distracted once. On the other hand, Donny was one of the students who was distracted most often, and he received a score of 2 which was interpreted that he was slightly unhappy about answering questions during class. Surprisingly, Elizabeth's score did not really reflect the score received on the ERAS question 11. For a student who was slightly unhappy about answering questions during class, I expected to see a higher number of distractions during whole group distractions. Similarly, Lionel received a score of 4 on his survey for the corresponding question, yet he was one of the most distracted students during whole group discussions. I expected his score to be much lower or that he would be less distracted during discussions. However, there were only a few times I observed classroom discussions during my visits, so my data could have been limited as a result.

Additionally, students were distracted during the opening of the lessons, which was called the Morning Message. At the beginning of each lesson, Mrs. Smith wrote a one or two sentence phrase on the white board and then read it to the students. The students would then read the message with Mrs. Smith as she read it a second time. Afterward, Mrs. Smith had students approach the board to locate high frequency words or punctuation marks from that week's lesson. Finally, students had a chance to respond to the morning message. Table 4.11 lists the students who were distracted during the morning message and how many times they were distracted (organized in descending order).
Eight of the eleven students in my focus group were distracted during the morning message portion of the lesson. Their distractions were many, including playing with their pencil boxes, their desks or objects in their desks, drawing, tying their shoes, throwing papers off their desks, playing with their name-tags and playing with their hair. The distractions were almost an even split between boys and girls in the focus group (3 boys, 5 girls). They also each tended to be distracted only a couple of times, whereas before some of the students (Donny, Lionel) had been distracted multiple times throughout other parts of the lessons.

Lastly, students were distracted one other time during instruction. The distractions also occurred during small group time when students were involved in literacy centers after the reading block. Interestingly, the students were distracted during small group literacy centers; however, the students were distracted less often during small group literacy centers. The distractions during small group instruction included students playing with objects (i.e. scissors, stopwatch, pencil), drawing, and tying their shoes. Table 4.12 summarizes the number of distractions during small
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group literacy centers (arranged in descending order according to number of
distractions).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Number of Distractions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xavier</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12: Off-task Behaviors
Distractions during Small Group Literacy Centers

Six of the eleven students in my focus group were distracted during small
group literacy centers. There were no clear patterns demonstrating who was
distracted more often in regards to boys and girls. Piper and Isabella were the two
students who were distracted the most often. Piper especially had a high number of
distractions when compared with the other students. In fact, Piper and Isabella had
the most distractions on one particular day because they were constantly arguing with
each other throughout the centers. This was an unusual circumstance, because I had
never before encountered any of the students in my focus group arguing with each
other on a continual basis, and it was the only time it happened during my
observations. The rest of the students who were distracted during small group
literacy centers were distracted only a few times overall. Lionel was distracted the
most often, followed by Xavier, Andrew, and Amy.

Looking at Table 4.10, scores for the ERAS for question 11 revealed how the
above students felt about reading time during school. Lionel was distracted the most
often during small group literacy centers, which was supported by his response on the
survey, as his score revealed he was only slightly happy for reading time in class.
Andrew and Xavier were the next two students who were distracted most often, which was supported by their scores of 1 on the survey. Amy, who received a score of 4 on the survey, was only distracted once during small group instruction. Piper and Isabella received a 4 and a 3, respectively, which was not supportive of the observations on that particular day. However, I felt it was important to note how often Piper and Isabella were distracted during literacy centers. Since I observed the classroom 12 times, my data were limited as a result, because I was unable to observe each child every minute of every observation. There could have been other times when the students in my focus group were distracted, but I was unable to see it.

*Off-task behaviors: Standing/fidgeting/out of chair.* Many times during my observations, I noticed another common theme: students were repeatedly squirming in their chairs, standing up, or out of their chairs to talk to other students or get something off the floor. Students were out of their chairs or squirming in their chairs during the morning message, during whole group discussions, when they were working on workbook pages or worksheets, during whole group or buddy reading time. Table 4.11 lists the students who were standing, fidgeting, or out of their chairs during the reading block and how many times it occurred per instructional setting (organized by total number of occurrences).
Out of the eleven students in my focus group, five of the students who were out of their chairs during reading block were girls and four were boys. Therefore, I found that it was just as likely for the boys and girls to be out of their chairs during reading block. One gender was not more likely to engage in the behavior than the other. Isabella was the student who was seen standing up or fidgeting the most out of all of the students in my focus group, while Stephanie, Andrew, Amy, and Donny were the students who were least likely to stand up or fidget during reading block. One student, Audra, was not observed out of her chair at all during reading block.

Reviewing the ERAS scores from Table 4.9, question 16 “How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?” the observations I made were consistent with the students’ scores on the ERAS. In other words, students who were more likely to be out of their chairs during reading were more likely to have lower scores on the survey.

*Off-task behaviors: Body language, verbal language, and facial expressions.* Throughout the duration of my observations, I noticed students’ body
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language, their verbal language, and their facial expressions in order to infer what attitudes they had toward reading. Most of the time, it seemed students had a blank stare on their faces during instruction, which prohibited me from determining how they felt about what they were doing. There were a few times during the lessons when they were laughing with the teacher or smiling at something the teacher said they thought was funny. Yet those moments were outnumbered by the other moments when they displayed more negative expressions and body language. Four specific behaviors I noticed were students putting their heads on their arms or desks, yawning, frowning or pouting, and verbalizing negative opinions about how they felt.

The first body language behavior I noticed was students putting their heads on their arms or desks. Students typically displayed that type of behavior during whole group instruction time, although there were a couple of times when a student displayed the behavior during small group or individual work time. The behaviors were counted and summed up in Table 4.12 (organized in descending order of number of times observed).
The majority of the boys in my focus group were most likely to put their heads on their desks at some point during the instruction, whereas the girls were not as likely to do the same. The number of times that the boys put their heads on their desks was remarkably high, especially since my observations only occurred over 12 days. Furthermore, Piper was the girl who put her head down the most during instruction, which was surprising to me, especially because she received the maximum possible score on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. However, she only displayed the behavior less than once per day on average, and considering how long the reading block was (1.5 hours), her putting her head down only 9 times was a low count. One student, Xavier, even put his head down twice during small group or individual work time. Otherwise, students were resting their heads during whole group instruction time, which consisted of discussions before, during, and after reading, phonics lessons, worksheets reinforcing phonics lessons, morning message
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time, and even a few times when students were supposed to be marching out the letters of new words spelled together as a class.

I also noticed a few things students said that expressed their negative feelings toward the lessons they were involved in. For example, on January 27th during a review lesson in s-blends, Lionel said, “I don’t wanna do this.” Later as the teacher was going over the review sheet, Lionel was distracted by the snow that had begun to fall outside, and then told the teacher, “She got it wrong,” referring to the work of a student sitting next to him. Even later during the lesson when the teacher was reviewing the words to know, Lionel said, “This is not fun.” On a totally different day, Audra had gone to the nurse and then later returned during the morning message. Lionel, who was not completely engaged in the lesson said, “Hi Audra, where were you?” One last comment Lionel made during reading block expressed how he felt about the lesson. Mrs. Smith taught the students how to blend words with the long /ö/ sound in words with -oa and -ow. However, Lionel said, “I’m not doing it,” expressing his lack of desire to complete the worksheet. Although Lionel’s comments could have been a result of some other unexplained event that happened before school even started, I felt that what he said provided some insight as to how he felt toward reading block. Some of the other students had negative comments about the activities they were involved in as well. For example, when students were completing worksheets to review for a unit test, Donny expressed his displeasure asking, “Is this the last one?” twice. Lionel and Donny were the only two students who verbally expressed their feelings in a negative light throughout the course of my observations. Even though they did not score too poorly on the overall academic portion of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, their scores placed them within
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The behaviors mentioned above were again supported by the data from the Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys for questions 13, 14, 16, and 17, as evidenced in Table 4.9. Overall, the students who received high scores on the survey were least likely to put their heads down during reading time, while the students who received lower scores on the survey were more likely to put their heads down during reading time. The same was evident for students who made negative comments toward reading.

*Off-task behaviors: Yawning.* Over the course of my observations, some students were yawning during reading instruction. A little more than half of my students (6) were observed displaying that behavior. It was not observed until some of the last days of my observations, and it was not observed multiple times for each student. The students who were seen yawning included Elizabeth, Amy, Isabella, Donny, Piper, and Lionel. The behavior was observed during whole group reading instruction when Mrs. Smith was teaching students how to break words apart by their syllables, when students were supposed to use the vocabulary words in sentences, when Mrs. Smith taught students that the letter *y* could make the long /iː/ sound, and when Mrs. Smith taught the class about the long /ɔː/ sound in words such as boat and row. Those behaviors were again evidenced as consistent, as was reflected in Table 4.6. The students’ scores were not incredibly low for questions involving their attitudes toward reading in school; however, the display of behavior was still considered symbolic of negative attitudes toward reading.
of the students throughout my observations were seen exhibiting unhappy expressions on their faces during reading instruction in whole group, small groups, and even when working individually. For example, Lionel stuck out his tongue, growled, and then was pouting while the class was reading through a *Scholastic News* article ("Penguins Head to Toe," 2010) for kids. On another day, he had an angry expression on his face while completing a page in his workbook that had to do with sight words. He also wore frowns on his face while learning about the long /ʊə/ sound and growled while doing his workbook page for words with -oa and -ow in them. In addition, he pouted when he was told to fix a mistake in his workbook and another time when the class began marching out their vocabulary words for the week. This was somewhat consistent with the score he received on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey for question 12: How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets? Lionel’s response received a score of 3, slightly supporting his actions mentioned above, because he did not receive the maximum possible score for that question.

Similarly, Isabella was observed glaring at a teacher during whole group reading, because the teacher told her to finger-point and follow along with the rest of the class as they listened to a story. That behavior was somewhat reflected in Isabella’s survey for questions 14 and 16, which asked how she felt about reading her school books and when it was time for reading in class. For both questions she only received a score of 3, which although was only one point away from the maximum score, reflected her entire lack of desire to read in school. One other student, Donny, was observed displaying a negative attitude toward reading when during a vocabulary meaning discussion, he said angrily to Mrs. Smith, “What?!?” That attitude was reflected in his
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading survey, overall, for which he only received a score of 30 out of 40 for academic reading.

Though the students’ behaviors were only somewhat reflected in their Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys, for whatever reason they were observed displaying negative body language at some points during reading instruction. Those behaviors were examples of how students felt about reading, at least at that time.

**Off-task behaviors: Talking to others (off-task talk).** Many times throughout the course of my observations, I noticed students were involved in conversations amongst themselves that were not directly related to the tasks they were involved in. A lot of the conversations occurred during small group literacy centers, which was when students had more opportunity to talk with each other. There were some times during whole group instruction when students were talking to a neighbor or said something to the teacher that was totally off topic. Not all of the students were observed engaging in off-topic conversations, though. Table 4.13 lists the students who were seen talking and how many times over the course of my observations I saw them talking (arranged by descending number of occurrences).
Piper and Isabella were the two students who were talking off-task the majority of the time. The number of times they were observed for that behavior was unusually high, however, because one of the days I observed them, they were in an argument during small group literacy centers. Their task for the day was to listen to the story *Swallow* (2005), and then they had to complete a cloze activity about groundhogs. Piper listened to the story and afterward began working on the cloze activity. Later when Isabella came to listen to the story was when the trouble began. Piper decided she wanted to listen to the story again as she worked. When Isabella turned the volume down on the cd player, Piper said, “No I wanna hear that.” Yet, as the story progressed, Piper turned down the headphone volume on the headphone jacks so Isabella and another student could not hear the story. She asked another student if he could hear his headphones. She also stopped the cd so it wouldn’t play anymore. Isabella asked her, “Why you did that?” to which

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Number of times engaged in off-task conversations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xavier</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donny</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audra</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Piper responded, “It was annoying me.” Even later during the center, Piper was still trying to hear the story and Isabella and another student turned Piper’s headphones down and Isabella asked Piper, “How do you like it when we do it to you?” There were many other comments made between Isabella and Piper as they continued to argue about the cd player. Eventually, Mrs. Smith had to intervene so the students would stop arguing.

The next student who talked most often during instruction was Andrew. I noticed him talking to students around him during whole group instruction and during workbook time. Multiple times during a unit test review on the long /i/ sound, for example, Andrew was talking to Isabella who was seated right next to him. The rest of the students were not observed talking off-task as often. When excluding Piper and Isabella’s scores, Andrew was engaged in off-task talk the most often, followed by Lionel, Xavier, Donny, Stephanie, and Amy. Elizabeth and Audra were not observed talking off-task at all.

Once again, the data from my observations were consistent with the scores from the Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys. Upon examination of Table 4.3, I noticed that the students who were more likely to talk typically scored lower on the academic portion of their surveys. That observation was true for Amy (88th percentile), Donny (43rd percentile), Lionel (75th percentile), Isabella (63rd percentile), Andrew (5th percentile), and Xavier (18th percentile), all of whom had scores which placed them in lower percentiles. The observations were also consistent for Stephanie who scored within the 99th percentile and was only observed talking 3 times.
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Off-task behaviors: Bathroom/ tissue/ drink break. During the reading block I also observed the students ask Mrs. Smith to go to the bathroom, get a drink, or get a tissue. Of all of my students, more than half displayed that behavior. All of the behaviors were observed during whole group instruction. Whole group instruction usually consisted of Mrs. Smith teaching the students how to blend long vowel sounds, unit test review, sight words, and a read-aloud. Table 4.14 shows the number of times each student go up to go to the bathroom, get a tissue, or get a drink (arranged by descending number of observations).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Number of Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audra</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the girls were more likely to get up during instruction to use the bathroom, get a tissue, or get a drink. For instance, five of the eleven students in my focus group who exhibited the behavior were girls, while only two were boys. The student who got up the most during instruction to use the bathroom, a tissue or to get a drink was Piper. Amy, Audra, and Stephanie were the students who exhibited the behavior the fewest times.

Although the students were taking care of bodily functions, I noticed in my observations that the students tended to take care of those issues right after another
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One student in the classroom mentioned they had to use the bathroom. For example, on one of the days while Mrs. Smith was reviewing the morning message with her students, three of the students in my focus group got up one right after the other to use the bathroom. During another lesson on another day, two of the students in my focus group got up to go to the bathroom in the same fashion. Three of the other students in my focus group also got up to use the bathroom one right after another during another lesson. In addition, one of those students got up twice in the span of about ten minutes to use the bathroom. As a result I interpreted the behaviors as off-task behaviors, because I thought the students' behaviors occurred very close to one another.

Off-task behaviors: Looking around the room/ unfocused. The last off-task behavior I noticed in Mrs. Smith’s room was when students were looking around the room instead of at the teacher, at the stories they were reading, or at the worksheets they were supposed to be completing during various instructional times. Many times I noticed students were looking around the room while whole group instruction was going on. The lessons in which the behavior occurred ranged from discussions about the characters and setting of a story, to unit review, directions on how to complete a task (such as for the workbook pages or centers), the morning message, vocabulary words, and phonics.

All of the students in my focus group were observed displaying the behavior at least once throughout the study (see Table 4.15 for a summary, organized by descending number of observations).
Isabella, Andrew, Piper, and Lionel were the students who were looking around the room most often. The student who was most often looking around the room was Isabella. The students who were looking around the room the least were Audra, Emily, and Amy. I was unable to determine a clear pattern of which gender of students were distracted most often, since girls were the majority of the students in my focus group. However, it seemed that with the exception of Isabella who was observed talking off-task the most often, the boys were more likely to be exhibiting the behavior than were the girls.

On-Task Behaviors. Many times throughout the course of my observations I also noticed students engaged in the varying reading and related activities in many different ways. I titled those behaviors “On-Task Behaviors,” because the students were engaged in the reading lessons. The on-task behaviors I noticed included finger-pointing while reading, following along when others in the classroom were reading,
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading reading (including reading words by practicing new blending skills, reading sight words, reading vocabulary words, and reading connected text), writing or doing work, participating in the activity, raising hands to read or to answer questions, and taking out materials.

**On-Task behaviors: Finger-pointing.** Finger-pointing was a technique that Mrs. Smith taught her students so they would be able to follow along in any story that was being read by themselves or by other students. Students were taught to point to each word in each line of text as they were reading a story. Students were expected to finger-point any time they were reading, whether it was during whole group reading, small group guided reading lessons, or individual reading. Almost all of the students were observed finger-pointing at least once throughout my observations, although there were times when some students did not use their finger to follow along in the story.

Over the course of my observations, I noted that almost all of my students engaged in finger-pointing as they were reading as a whole group, in small group literacy centers, and in small group guided reading. The students in my focus group were observed reading from their class books, Scholastic News magazines, review sheets, workbooks, and books in their guided reading groups. The number of opportunities for me to observe this behavior was limited due to the availability of my schedule. Table 4.16 shows the number of times I observed students finger-pointing while reading (in descending order of number of observations).
Amy was the student who was observed doing that behavior the most.

Overall, I noticed the girls were more likely to finger-point than the boys.

Interestingly, I never observed Xavier exhibiting the behavior. Typically, he was observed looking around the room instead of finger-pointing as the class read the story. One thing I noted as fascinating was that the students were mostly finger-pointing while they were reading a story whole group with Mrs. Smith. When reading alone, the students did not utilize finger-pointing as a tool to help them. Another interesting observation I made was that 3 out of the 4 times I noticed him finger-pointing, Donny had to be told by Mrs. Smith to use his finger to follow along. Each time he was told to finger-point, he displayed unhappy expressions. Lastly, I noticed early on during my observations that Andrew appeared to only finger-point to the first word of each line. I wondered why he was doing this and not pointing to each word. I originally thought maybe it was because he did not understand the concept of a word yet. However, I noticed by my 2nd observation that he was doing a
finger-sweeping motion across the page; that is, he was not individually pointing to each word, but running his finger underneath the words in one fluid motion. It made me think that he had not yet gained complete control over the behavior, or that he no longer needed to finger point.

*On-Task behaviors: Following along when others were reading.*

Another time I noticed students exhibiting on-task behaviors was when they were following along while other students or Mrs. Smith was reading. I noticed all of the students in my focus group exhibiting the behavior. If I noticed a student looking down at his or her book and they were turning the pages at the correct places, then I considered them to be following along even though I knew that this could not necessarily be the case. Table 4.17 shows how often students were observed following along, in descending order of number of observations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Number of times observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audra</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xavier</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donny</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emily and Piper were the students who were observed exhibiting the behavior the most often, while Donny was the student who was observed exhibiting the behavior least often. However, there was not much of a difference between the students who exhibited the behavior most often and the students who exhibited the behavior the least often. Furthermore, there did not seem to be any clear pattern as to which group of students, male or female, were most likely to follow along with a story.

*On-Task behaviors: Reading.* Many times throughout my observations I noticed the students in my focus group reading. Throughout the majority of my observations they were reading words when applying new blending skills, while sometimes they were reading sight words and vocabulary words that Mrs. Smith held up for them to read. There were also times when the students were reading words from their worksheets or workbooks that reviewed the skill they learned that day. During other times, I noticed students reading during small group literacy centers and guided reading. There were also some times when I observed students buddy reading.

For the first part of the analysis of reading, I looked at the number of times I observed the students reading words when applying new blending skills. Table 4.18 lists the number of times I observed students reading words as they practiced blending (in descending order).
All of the students read words aloud at least once while practicing blending skills during the reading block. Piper, Amy, and Stephanie blended words the most, while Elizabeth read the words the least.

Other times I saw students read words was when they read sight words and vocabulary words. Each week, Mrs. Smith introduced the students to five or six new sight words in addition to one or two new vocabulary words. When Mrs. Smith taught the words to the students, she said the words and had the students repeat and spell the words with her. For daily review, Mrs. Smith held up the words on flashcards and had the students read the words to her. Table 4.19 lists the number of times I observed students reading sight words and vocabulary words aloud (organized in descending order).
Piper was the student who I observed reading sight words and vocabulary words the most often, while Lionel was the student who I observed reading sight words and vocabulary words the least, or in this case, not at all. The number of times I observed students read vocabulary or sight words was low; however, they may not have always read the words on the days of my observations. There were no real clear patterns as to which gender was most likely to read the sight words or vocabulary words.

During the reading block, students also read words from their worksheets or workbook pages as they completed the activities. Sometimes the students read words on the page to match to a picture and sometimes they read the words as they completed sentences in a cloze fashion. Table 4.20 lists the number of times I observed students reading from their worksheets or workbook pages (in descending order).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Number of times observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audra</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donny</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xavier</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All of the students in my focus group read words from a worksheet or workbook page at least once during my observations. Piper was the student who read workbook pages and worksheets the most, while Stephanie was the student who read from those pages the least. Overall, I observed the students reading from the pages a total of 56 times combined between all of the students.

Other times I observed students reading was during small group literacy centers. For the most part, students read connected text during small group literacy centers. At small-group literacy centers, students read connected text from their classroom library, poems, and connected text from books the students had to put together paper books. At the classroom library center, the students chose a book from the classroom library to read. Afterward, they were allowed to play sight word or vocabulary word games. At the poetry center, students were sometimes engaged in a reading race where they had to read as much of a poem as they could in 30 seconds.
They had to do this three times, and each time the 30 seconds was up, they circled the word they ended on with a highlighter. The goal of the game was to read beyond the word they had finished the last time.

Other times I observed a student reading words from the spelling list to another student so he or she could practice spelling their words with magnets. Some other reading activities the students were involved in during small group literacy centers was reading the small books they had made, where they had to fill in the speech bubbles, or when they were reading along with a Leap Pad. At the computer center, students completed worksheets, put mini-books together, and played word games, as well as used the computer to play blending games focusing on the skill that week. While small-group literacy centers were running, Mrs. Smith also worked with students in small groups doing guided reading lessons.

For all intents and purposes, any time I observed students reading continuous text, such as classroom books (either individually or in the form of buddy reading), guided reading books, and poems, I counted it as reading continuous text. Any other time I observed students reading words, reading worksheets individually and playing word games, I counted it as reading non-continuous text. Table 4.21 lists the number of times I observed students reading connected text, as well as the number of times I observed them reading non-continuous text during small group literacy centers (arranged in alphabetical order).
During small group literacy centers, I observed students reading connected text and non-connected text multiple times. The students who I observed reading connected text the most were Andrew, Emily, and Piper, while the students who I observed reading connected text the least were Audra and Donny. In terms of reading non-connected text Lionel, Amy, and Piper read non-connected text the most, while Audra and Donny read non-connected text the least during small-group literacy centers. It was difficult to capture all of the students reading connected and non-connected text every observation during small-group literacy centers due to changing groups, so the data were not always reliable. That was the main reason for some discrepancies between the number of observations for each of the students in my group. However, I noted that overall there were not many times during small-group literacy centers that the students were reading connected text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Number of times observed reading connected text</th>
<th>Number of times observed reading non-connected text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audra</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donny</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xavier</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading

For the most part, I observed each student in my focus group reading something quite a lot throughout my observations. I noticed that most of the students were reading upwards of 20 and 30 times during my observations. Overall, I observed the girls reading more times than the boys, although I observed Andrew read quite a bit more than any of the other boys. On the other hand, the number of times I observed students reading connected text was much lower than the number of times I observed students reading non-connected text (see Table 4.22 for overall number of times students read connected and non-connected text, in alphabetical order).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Number of times reading connected text</th>
<th>Number of times reading non-connected text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audra</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donny</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xavier</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Piper was the student who was observed reading connected and non-connected text the most, while Audra and Xavier were observed reading connected text the least and Audra, Elizabeth, and Isabella were observed reading non-
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading 101
cleaned text the least number of times. With the exception of Piper and Emily, all
of the students' counts were pretty consistent. In other words, all of the students
except Piper and Emily, were observed reading within a small range of each other.
No student was reading an incredibly small number of times compared to other
students. However, I noted that during most of my observations students were
reading mostly non-connected text. This was because most of the reading block
consisted of whole-group instruction where students had to read high-frequency
words, vocabulary words, and new words that followed a specific blending rule. The
focus of the lessons was on applying new blending skills while words were isolated
from continuous text. Even during small-group literacy centers, there were still many
times when students were only reading words or short phrases, such as when they
were playing word games. Usually students read connected text as a whole group
with the teacher, or in the form of small-group guided reading lessons.

There were no real clear patterns among who read more during the reading
block (for example, boys versus girls, etc.). Although certain students read more than
others, it was difficult to determine whether or not that was because they wanted to,
since many times Mrs. Smith chose which student read during whole group lessons.
However, that type of behavior was determined by observing how many times
students raised their hands to read or answer questions (see On-Task behaviors:
Raising hands to read/answer questions).

On-Task behaviors: Writing/doing work. Multiple times over the
course of my observations, I noticed students doing the work that Mrs. Smith
requested of them. The work I observed them doing involved writing in their
workbooks or completing worksheets, or completing an activity during small group
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading 102

literacy centers. I did not include any times when the students were blending in this
section since it was discussed earlier. The workbook pages and worksheets usually
consisted of exercises focusing on high-frequency words and blending skills.

Throughout the course of my observations, the activities within the small
group literacy changed from week to week depending on the skills Mrs. Smith wanted
the students to master. The main theme of the centers usually stayed the same. For
example, there was always a listening center, a library center, a poetry center, and a
computer center. At the listening center, students had to listen to a book on CD, then
complete other related activities. Sometimes there were worksheets with a focused
skill. Students could also practice their spelling words with magnet letters. At the
poetry center, the students were usually involved in a reading race. After reading a
poem three times as quickly as they could, their choices were to do another reading
race or play some literacy games. Students at the library center had to read a book
first, then they could play literacy games or read more books. The last center gave
students the opportunity to do literacy games on the computer and read with
LeapPads.

Later on during my observations, Mrs. Smith had students make books at their
centers before completing any other activity. A single sheet of paper with 5 or 6
completed story boxes was provided along with small construction paper books.
First, students had to read the story at least once. Then students had to cut out the
story boxes and glue them into construction paper books in the correct sequence.
Afterward, students were able to read with the LeapPads or do other literacy
activities. After a few weeks of observations, students at this center were able to
play a literacy game on the computer to reinforce certain phonics skills. The students
played “Letterbugs,” a game which isolated auditory discrimination skills. One of the
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games, for example, was a game in which they had to move their bug through a maze
that had some obstacles. At each obstacle, the computer voice said a word, and the
students had to choose between 3 pictures in order to match the picture of the word
that was said. Another game involved a similar idea, except that when the voice said
a word, the students had to pick the matching picture from about 20 different images
on the screen. The third game had a bunch of floating individual consonants and a
bunch of blends floating on the screen as well. Students had to match the consonants
with the blends to make words in order to feed the venus fly trap. Not all of the
words were actual words when blended, though, and students had to discriminate
between real words and nonsense words.

In certain instances, students completed worksheets at centers. For example,
on February 4th, students at the listening center listened to the story *Groundhog Gets a
Say* (Swallow, 2005). After listening to the story, students completed a modified
cloze activity about groundhogs called “The Weatherman,” where they had to read a
sentence and then cut and paste the appropriate pictures to glue into the story
(Appendix 6).

Near the end of my observations, Mrs. Smith changed the format of centers,
because the students were not completing their work and a lot of problems occurred
between students. As a result, she created literacy packets (Appendix 7) for them to
work on in which they had to write one of their high frequency words five times, look
up a word in the dictionary and record and illustrate the meaning of the word, practice
spelling a word and use it in a sentence, as well as editing and writing a couple of
sentences.

The last instructional setting I observed students working during the reading
block occurred during small group guided reading lessons. A typical guided reading
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading 104

lesson consisted of the students reading a book, then completing a comprehension activity, such as a discussion (i.e. to sequence events) or a worksheet (i.e. characterization). For example, after reading her book, Amy worked on an activity in which she had to distinguish between real and make-believe events in the story (Appendix 8). In another guided reading group, Isabella, Elizabeth, and Stephanie had to read a story and then compare and contrast the two main characters using a Venn Diagram (Appendix 9). On another day, I observed Donny working on sequencing a number of pictures from his story onto a sentence strip after reading his book (Appendix 10). I also observed Lionel complete a cause and effect comprehension check (Appendix 11). After a couple of days working with a book in their guided reading groups, the students also took a comprehension quiz to measure their understanding of the story (Appendix 12).

All of the students in my focus group were observed doing their work at least once during my observations (see Table 4.23 On-Task Behaviors: Writing/ doing work, arranged in descending order of number of times observed for whole group).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.23 On-Task Behaviors: Writing/ doing work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xavier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Amy, Emily, and Xavier were the students who were observed doing their work the most during whole group instruction, while Piper and Elizabeth were the students observed doing their work the least during whole group instruction. There were no clear patterns as to which gender completed their work the most during whole group instruction, although all of the boys were observed doing their work almost as much as the students at the top of the list. I was surprised to see that Piper was near the bottom of the list for whole group instruction, seeing as how she received the maximum possible score on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey.

In terms of small group literacy activities, Xavier was the student who was observed doing his work the most, while Donny and Audra were not observed doing their work during small group literacy centers at all. In fact, the range between the highest number of observations and the lowest number of observations was very high (20), which I thought was very surprising. I also found it interesting that Xavier was the student who was observed doing his work the most during small group literacy centers, considering that his ERAS score placed him within the slightly unhappy range. Excluding Xavier's extremely high score, the next student who was observed doing her work the most was Piper, who again received the highest possible score on the ERAS. Furthermore, looking at the number of observations for small group literacy instruction (excluding Xavier) the girls of the group were more likely to be observed working during small group literacy centers. However, it also must be taken into account that I was unable to view every student during small group literacy centers every time I observed the students. Therefore, my data could have been limited as a result.

Although I was unable to observe all of the students in my focus group during guided reading, I was able to observe most of the students during that instructional
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setting. Isabella and Elizabeth were the students who were most likely to be observed working during guided reading. Of the students who were observed during guided reading (Isabella, Elizabeth, Stephanie, Lionel, Andrew, Piper, Donny, and Amy) I found that the girls in my focus group were working more often than the boys. The data from the ERAS Question 12 (how do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?) showed the boys (Lionel, Andrew, Donny, and Xavier) had lower scores for that question. Most of the boys also had lower scores for Question 17 (how do you feel about stories you read in class) which also supported the observation of them not working a lot during guided reading. On the other hand, it was also an accurate observation for Lionel who, out of the boys in my focus group, was observed working most often during guided reading and received the maximum possible score for Question 17 (see Table 4.6 for a complete set of scores for question 17).

Lastly, I observed the students in my focus group when they were working individually on workbook pages and worksheets. Interestingly, the data were pretty consistent among the students. In other words, I observed all of the students working independently just about the same number of times as everyone else in my focus group. There was no particular student who was observed working independently many more times than any of the other students. Isabella was the student who I saw working independently the most, while Emily and Xavier were the students who I saw working independently the least. Since Andrew, Donny, and Lionel were observed as the second and third students working the most during independent work time, I concluded that the boys were more likely to be working during independent time. The ERAS data were supportive of my observations for all of the boys except Andrew, who was extremely unhappy to complete workbook pages and worksheets.
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In conclusion, all of the students were observed writing or doing some type of work throughout my observations. It was difficult to determine if the girls or the boys were working more often during whole group instruction, because the data from my observations were not consistent among the students. Although I determined the girls were more likely to be observed working during small group work, it was difficult to determine if this were true, because the observations were not consistent, and the groups were constantly changing based on ability and social skills. Furthermore, I rotated around between groups to see all of the different activities students worked on during small group literacy centers.

*On-Task behaviors: Participating (clapping, marching, punching out words, counting on fingers, etc.).* Another on-task behavior I observed over the course of my observations was whether or not students were participating in the lessons. This category only focused on certain physical activities Mrs. Smith had her students do in order to make lessons more tangible, meaningful, and more engaging as they were learning new skills. Some of the behaviors simply involved the students repeating the morning message or repeating new or review words the students needed to know. On the other hand, Mrs. Smith had students participate in more engaging activities. When teaching her students about syllables, for instance, she had them clap the number of syllables in a word along with her. Sometimes during phonics lessons, she had students sound out the words while holding up a finger every time they heard a new sound. Afterward, they told her how many sounds were in each word. When reviewing spelling words, high-frequency words, or vocabulary words,
Mrs. Smith had her students march, punch the air, step, or shake out the words. In other words, each time they said a letter, the students had to step, march, punch, or shake their hips, and then repeat the word after they finished spelling it (see Table 4.24 for the number of times students were observed participating in the lessons, in order of descending number of observations).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Number of times observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audra</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donny</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xavier</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amy was the student who was observed participating the most out of all of the students. Lionel was the student who was observed participating the least out of all of the students in my focus group. With the exception of Lionel and Andrew, whose observations were markedly lower than their classmates, all of the students' data were pretty consistent. In other words, the students were all participating about the same number of times as each other. Overall the data illustrated that the girls were observed participating more than the boys in my focus group. It seemed that the girls
were more likely to participate than the boys, and they participated more often than the boys as well. However, the results were possibly skewed considering the lack of boys in my focus group. The data from my observations were pretty consistent with the data from question 16 on the ERAS, “How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?” That is, the students who participated the most during class were the students who scored higher for question 16 on the ERAS. The only student for whom it wasn't consistent was Andrew, whose score on the ERAS was a 1 for question 16, although his score was not quite as high as Amy's.

On-Task behaviors: Raising hands to read/answer questions. A sixth on-task behavior I noticed during my observations occurred when students raised their hands to read out loud to the class or to answer questions. The students in my focus group raised their hands to read a passage from a story or to answer her questions. Some students volunteered more often than others during the reading block. Near the beginning of my data analysis, I wrote down each time a student raised his or her hand, when the behavior occurred, and why (to read or to answer a question); however, as time went on, it became extremely tedious and difficult, and I found it easier to just make tally marks for each student for the number of times he or she raised his or her hand by day. All of the hand raising observations occurred during whole group instruction. Table 4.25 lists the number of times each student raised his or her hand to read aloud to the class or to answer the teacher's questions (organized by descending number of observations).
The range between the numbers of times a student raised his or her hand to read aloud or answer Mrs. Smith’s questions was 69. There were a handful of students who raised their hands an exceptionally high number of times, some students who raised their hands a number of times, although not quite as high as the others, and one student who raised his hand a considerably low number of times compared to the rest of the students. (The data were confounded by absences, however.) The student who raised her hand the most was Emily, while Xavier raised his hand the least number of times.

There seemed to be quite a difference between the boys and girls in the classroom in terms of raising hands to read or answer questions. The girls, for the most part, were more inclined to volunteer during reading block, with the exception of Audra and Isabella who did not raise their hands quite as often; however, they still raised their hands almost as often as some of the boys. The boys, on the other hand,
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading 111 seemed less willing to read and answer questions when compared to the girls, especially Xavier.

For the most part, my observations were consistent with the ERAS for questions 11 and 18. Question 11 referred to how students felt about their teacher asking them questions about the story they read. In general, the students who scored higher on the ERAS were more likely to raise their hands to answer comprehension questions during my observations, and the students who scored lower on the ERAS were less likely to raise their hands to answer comprehension questions. I also found that most of the girls received higher scores for the question, whereas most of the boys received lower scores for question 11. Question 18 referred to how students felt about reading out loud in class. Overall, the scores from the ERAS were much lower than I anticipated for question 18. Only three of the students said they were very happy about reading out loud in class, whereas only two of the students said they were slightly happy about reading out loud in class. On the other hand, the other six students in my focus group were slightly upset about reading out loud in class. There were no clear patterns about which gender preferred to read out loud in class more than the other, but most of the boys responded they did not want to read in class. In comparison to my observations, there was no clear pattern about scores and observations. In other words, students with higher scores for question 18 on the ERAS were not more likely to be observed wanting to read than the students who had lower scores for question 18. However, my data were limited considering that I did not keep track of the number of times students raised their hands to read aloud or to answer questions separately.
within the reading block, students were required to use a number of different
curricular and non-curricular materials to help them complete a task. By curricular
materials, I referred strictly to workbooks, worksheets, books, educational games, etc.
Non-curricular materials encompassed tools like writing utensils, scissors, and glue.
Students were required to use those materials in a variety of instructional settings,
including whole group, small group literacy centers, small group guided reading
groups, and individual work. This behavior was, at times, affected by the lack of
necessity for materials depending on the activities for the day. Sometimes I observed
all of the students getting out their materials all at once, while at other times, some
students got their materials out right away and some waited for a few minutes. I
noticed that the behavior occurred in varying instructional settings (whole group,
small group, individual). Table 4.26 lists the number of times I observed the students
taking out their materials during reading block (organized by descending number of
observations).
Over the course of my observations, I noticed all of the students getting out their curricular materials during instruction. Usually, the students had to get their workbooks. The workbook pages consisted of fill-in-the-blank activities using their high-frequency words for the week, words that focused on specific phonics skills (i.e. long /ə/), reading for fluency, or other miscellaneous activities. I also observed students getting their hardcover anthologies for reading. All of the students were pretty consistent about getting their materials. I did notice, however, that Lionel did not take his workbook out as many times as everyone else. On occasion, I noticed a number of students who took their time retrieving their materials. The student who did the most often was Lionel, but Stephanie, Amy, and Isabella were observed delaying getting their materials, too.

Another time I observed students getting out curricular materials was during small groups and individual work. For example, one day during small group literacy centers, I saw Xavier retrieve a rhyming word game at the poetry center, and
Stephanie got a dictionary while working on her packet at her desk during centers.

For the activity, she needed to look a word up in the dictionary, write down the definition, write down the word that came before it and after it in the dictionary, and then use it in a sentence.

The rest of the times I observed students getting out their materials consisted of times when they needed non-curricular materials (scissors, glue, etc.) to help themselves complete a task. I only saw a handful of students pulling those items out, but my data were limited as a result of only being able to observe one center at a time.

For the majority of the time, I saw all of the students pull out the curricular and non-curricular materials as needed. There were no occurrences when students refused to take out the materials they needed. Something I thought was interesting, though, was that some of the students took a little bit longer retrieving their materials than others, and sometimes students had to go back to their desks to get their materials, as in centers. I noticed that the girls were more likely to have to get up and get materials, because they had forgotten to bring them to centers. I expected that the boys were more likely to do that.

**helping behaviors.** Unexpectedly, I observed students exhibiting helping behaviors toward one another throughout the course of my observations. These behaviors were unexpected, because I was not specifically looking for the students to help one another, but I noticed that they helped each other in many different ways. Sometimes the helping behaviors occurred between students, while other times students were observed helping themselves, by orally reminding themselves what to do, for example. Typically, students displayed helping behaviors during small group literacy centers, guided reading, or individual work, but there were a few occurrences
when students helped each other out during whole group instruction, such as when a student taught another student a certain concept. The helping behaviors I observed included answering questions and reading words, telling a student how to do a task, general behavior management reminders, sharing materials, orally reminding oneself what to do, and asking others or the teacher for help. I included that last behavior in the helping behavior category, because it was related to giving and receiving help.

See Table 4.27 for a summary of the helping behaviors by student, in alphabetical order. Following the table are specific examples of how students helped others in each of the above mentioned categories.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.27 Helping Behaviors Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donny</td>
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<td>Elizabeth</td>
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<td>Emily</td>
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<td>Isabella</td>
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<td>Piper</td>
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<td>Stephanie</td>
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<td>Xavier</td>
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*Helping behaviors: Answering questions, reading words.* I observed a few times when students in my focus group assisted their fellow classmates in answering their questions about specific concepts or helping them complete a task.

For instance, at the listening center students were able to practice spelling their words
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out with magnet letters. One example of this was when Emily read the spelling words to Stephanie as she practiced her spelling words. Once Stephanie was finished, Emily checked her spelling and showed her how to correctly spell the word if Stephanie misspelled the word.

Piper, Xavier, Stephanie, and Amy were other students who offered assistance in some way to their classmates. One day at the listening center, Piper helped another student sound out a word while she was reading. Xavier also offered help to another student. During centers when students were working on a fact and opinion worksheet, Stephanie asked if a certain statement about groundhogs was an opinion or a fact. Xavier told her it was an opinion. In addition, Stephanie helped Lionel during small group literacy centers. When the students were making a book about groundhogs, Lionel asked Stephanie a question, and she answered him. The last two observations I made were the most interesting helping behaviors in my opinion. That was because the students who displayed the helping behavior were explaining certain concepts to other students. For instance, on January 21st, the Mrs. Smith and the students were reading a story about fish when Andrew asked, “What’s a dock?” Mrs. Smith called on Amy, who had her hand raised, to explain what a dock was. Another time when a student explained a concept to a student occurred during phonics instruction. While the teacher was reviewing digraphs, Andrew asked where the –ng digraph usually went. Stephanie replied, “Usually at the end of words.”

*Helping behaviors: Showing a student how to complete a task.* One of the activities at the poetry literacy center was the Reading Race. At the reading race, the students were supposed to read through a short poem (Appendix 13) as fast as they could in 30 seconds. At the end of each time trial, they circled the word that
they last read. The goal of the activity was to read farther every time. Once during
the reading race, Stephanie helped Lionel by telling him words that he didn’t know or
that he didn’t read correctly. The rest of the time I observed this group doing the
reading race Emily helped Lionel by reminding him of what to do. For example, she
told Lionel, “two more times,” after he completed his first reading. The she told him
to circle the last word he read before time was up and later she said, “You didn’t
circle it,” reminding him he had to circle the last word. The final time she helped
Lionel on that particular day she told him a reading strategy to help him figure out a
word he did not know. Emily told him,

Whenever you don't know... [a word] you cover 'em up
and you s-, you sound 'em out, the words that you know
and there's a word that you know in the word and then you
say the word. Like if it's 'standing' and you don't know it,
say 'stand' then '-ing' then you say 'standing.'

On that same day, I also observed the library center. Donny, Amy, and
Elizabeth were at the library center reading books of their choice. Both times I
observed helping behaviors, Donny was telling Amy how to do something. The first
time, Donny told Amy she was holding the book incorrectly. She had been holding it
upside down and backwards, but he told her to fix it. A little later on, he told Amy,
“You sound like a robot,” because she was reading her book monotonously and word
by word.

Once I moved to another center, I noticed Piper displaying a helping behavior.
Piper, who was at the listening center, told Isabella she would help her cut out the
words for the groundhog cloze activity. I thought this was remarkable, because
before that they had been arguing with one another and trying to boss each other
around for approximately 20-30 minutes.
The next time I observed the students exhibiting helping behaviors I noticed Emily, Andrew, Isabella, and Xavier helping other students in their small groups. Since Amy had been absent the previous day and didn’t know what to do, Emily paired up with her and gave her the directions page by page. When asked how to color the pictures, Andrew told another student, “Any way you want...color the heart pink” (Appendix 14). Another student told Isabella what to do when she asked how to complete the same make-a-book activity (Appendix 14). She told Isabella that she had to read the story then write the words. Later on, Xavier showed two students at the reading race how to use the stopwatch. He showed them how to start it, stop it, and reset it. At another center, students were working on an activity on the computer that isolated the phonics skill, -ay and -ai, of the day. Amy and Andrew helped other students play Letterbugs. Amy helped a student figure out how to open up the game by telling him to click on the bug box. As they continued playing the game, Amy pointed to the pictures on the screen to help the other student locate words that the voice on the program said. Andrew was also observed helping a student play the games. When the student said they were looking for clay, Andrew’s response was, “Clay? Let’s see...,” and then he pointed to a picture he thought was clay.

An interesting helping interaction I observed between Lionel and another student during guided reading also occurred. Lionel’s group read the www.ReadingAtoZ.com Level F book Scaredy Crow (Appendix 15) to themselves, then worked on a comprehension activity related to the story. The comprehension activity was a cause and effect chart that the students had to fill in based on the story (see Appendix 11). One of the pictures showed a crow named Spike hiding behind a tractor since he had been spooked by something. In the cause column, the students needed to write down why the crow was hiding. When the other student asked what
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made Spike hide, Lionel said, “The wind.” Although the teacher did not want Lionel to help the other student, since it was an activity gauged to help show student understanding of the story, Lionel’s behavior was a helpful one.

Lastly, I noticed Donny helping some of his classmates several times. However, in those interactions I detected a sign of annoyance within Donny as he helped other students. Three different students asked Donny for help on how they were supposed to complete the first page of the packet (see Appendix 7). On the first page was one of their sight words in large, bold print and on the bottom half were 5 sets of lines. What the students were required to do was practice writing the word 5 times by using 5 different colored crayons and trace the words. Then, on the lines below, the students needed to write the word 5 times, once on each set of line, for extra practice. Some of the students had been absent the previous day and were not quite sure what to do. They approached Donny for help. Yet each time a student asked him for help, Donny displayed signs of annoyance. For example, one time he put his head in his hands. Another time he somewhat shouted at a student, “Write the color word!” The last time someone asked him for help, he said something inaudible to me and sounded annoyed. Although I was not aware of the reason why Donny was annoyed, I figured that he was probably tired of helping his classmates and of being interrupted.

*Helping behaviors: General behavior management.* There were many times over the course of my observations that students were observed monitoring other students’ behaviors. The behaviors ranged from telling other students what to do, to cleaning up, to providing positive reinforcement to others. Almost all of the students in my focus group exhibited general behavior management behaviors. It was
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interesting to see how many students attempted to act as the teacher to ensure that others were following the procedures and doing their work.

Stephanie, Amy, Elizabeth, and Emily were some of the students who displayed general behavior management characteristics during the reading block. Those students in particular displayed the behavior during whole group instruction. For instance, once during the morning message, Stephanie informed Mrs. Smith that another student was not “sitting on his cushion.” Although this was more of a tattling behavior, it was a helping behavior to both Mrs. Smith who perhaps did not notice, and to the other student who was apparently not doing what he was supposed to. Amy also helped out a student by telling him or her that he or she was on the wrong side of the worksheet when they began working. Finally, Emily told a student next to her to pull his or her desk back in line with the rest of the students’ desks, because it had gotten pushed ahead of everyone else’s. Andrew and another student were inappropriately using the stopwatch and Amy said, “Quit pulling on that. That’s Mrs. Smith’s.”

Helping behaviors: Sharing materials. Another helping behavior I observed during the reading block was when students shared their materials with one another so their classmates could complete a task. Various students shared their materials with other students. Most of the behaviors occurred during small group or individual work time, but there were times when students shared materials during whole group instruction as well. There was one interaction when two students did not share materials, but eventually worked it out.

The students who I noticed shared materials during my observations were Lionel (twice), Piper (once), Stephanie (once), Xavier (twice), Isabella (once), and
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Audra (once). Lionel offered to help two of his classmates on two separate occasions. Audra, Piper, and Lionel all lent pencils or erasers to other students so they could complete their work. The second time I noticed Lionel helping another student was during small group literacy centers. Emily had misplaced her glue stick and asked Xavier several times to borrow it throughout the center. At one point, Lionel took it upon himself to go over to Emily’s desk to search for her glue. He found it on the floor and brought it back to her. At the listening center, Isabella held up the book *Groundhog Gets a Say* by Swallow (2005) so that the other student who was listening to the story could follow along with the audiotape.

As mentioned before, Xavier and Audra were also students who displayed helping behaviors in the form of sharing materials. When Emily needed to borrow a glue stick and Xavier willingly offered his. Something that struck me funny was that even though he shared his materials, he still reminded her to give him his glue back when he was done, and he also told her, “Make sure you push it [glue stick cap] down when you’re done.” I thought it was interesting that he was willing to help, but he also wanted to make sure his materials were well taken care of.

In conclusion, students in my focus group were observed helping others in terms of lending them materials so they could complete tasks during the reading block. The behaviors mostly occurred during small group literacy centers, but some did occur during whole group instruction. Although I only a few students sharing materials with others, my data may have been limited by the fact that I could not observe every center simultaneously. Therefore, some of the other students in my focus group could have exhibited the same behaviors and I just did not have the opportunity to observe it.
Helping behaviors: Orally reminding oneself what to do. Quite a bit during small group literacy centers and a few times during whole group or individual work time, I overheard students talking to themselves. They weren’t carrying on actual conversations with themselves, but they were orally reminding themselves what to do or how to write something. For example, on January 19, Lionel was working on a page in his workbook that reviewed long /i/ words (Appendix 16). I noticed that as he wrote the word “stripe,” he mouthed each of the letters as he wrote them down. During a guided reading lesson on March 15, Lionel asked Mrs. Smith how to spell the word hide. Then he realized it was in the book he had just read. He said, “Oh,” then again wrote the word “hide” as he sounded it out. Amy was another student who utilized a similar strategy, although I noticed she sounded the word out after she had written it down. Another student, Stephanie, was seen talking to herself about a task. For instance, when using magnets to practice her spelling words, Stephanie said to herself, “I need an s.”

The other two students who I noticed talked to themselves quite a lot were Xavier and Emily. At one center before Groundhog Day, Xavier was working on a make-a-book about groundhogs (Appendix 17). He made a few comments to himself about his progress. When he noticed he hadn’t put the correct pieces on the correct pages, he said to himself, “There’s a problem here.” Then later he said, “[Page] One should be on the front, two and 3 should be inside the book.” As he was getting close to finishing he said, “I have two more [pictures] to cut out.” During another day while he was working on a different make-a-book and a rhyming game Xavier also talked to himself as he worked on his tasks. For instance, he said, “He [the bunny] says ‘hello’ on this page,” and “See those talking marks? You have to copy those.” Later during centers when he was playing the rhyming words card game, he told
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Various times throughout the game he continued to say the rhyming word as he looked for it amongst the puzzle pieces: “Coat, boat; Flag, bag; I need to find something that rhymes with truck…truck, duck.” Also, when he was working on his centers packet on March 15, he said to himself, “You have to write it [the word] five times on the bottom.”

In conclusion, many students exhibited self-talk during whole group and small group instruction. The forms of self-talk usually occurred when students were reminding themselves of what to do.

Helping behaviors: Asking others/teacher for help. Several times during my observations, students also requested help from their classmates and teacher if they got stuck on the task they were completing. Many of the requests for help were observed during small group literacy centers and guided reading, but on occasion students asked for help during whole group instruction and individual work time. A few of the times I noticed that the students asked how to do something even though the teacher had just reviewed what the students were supposed to do. Some of the requests were limited to asking to borrow materials from a friend.

A few of the times students asked Mrs. Smith or another student in the classroom for help occurred during whole group instruction or when students were given a few minutes to work on a worksheet (Appendix 18). Andrew, Piper, and Lionel were both students who asked Mrs. Smith for help on how to complete one of the worksheets even though she had already reviewed the directions for it. For example, on February 8, Lionel had read the sentence, “Dad has to get ________ socks because his are really ________.” As he read the sentence aloud to the class, he filled in the words new and old in the blanks, respectively. Even after Mrs. Smith
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said that was correct and students filled in the blanks, Lionel asked, “Do we have to put old first?” Similarly, Andrew told Mrs. Smith, “I’m stuck on the bottom,” when he was working on his workbook page. Another time, Piper asked another helping teacher that was in the room for help. She said, “Miss Knight¹, I can’t find it,” when she was looking up a word in the dictionary for her centers packet.

Additionally, students asked other students in the classroom and Mrs. Smith or other teachers for help when completing their work individually. Donny, Andrew, Isabella, and Stephanie asked for help as they completed a workbook page, for example. Once during buddy reading, Elizabeth asked Mrs. Smith what the students were supposed to do, also. Donny asked a student in the classroom for help while he was working on his centers packet. After completing his centers packet, Andrew asked Mrs. Smith if he could do his morning work since he was finished.

Students also asked for help during small group literacy centers or small group guided reading. On February 3rd, for example, I was watching Stephanie, Emily, Lionel, and Xavier as they completed a number of activities at their small group literacy center. They were supposed to make a book about groundhogs (see Appendix 17), complete a fact and opinion worksheet about groundhogs (Appendix 19), and then color a small picture of a groundhog’s face (Appendix 20). Several times the students asked each other in their group for help. Stephanie, for instance, asked, “Do we put this on the front of the page?” while working on her make-a-book. Later she held up some of the phrases from the fact and opinion worksheet and asked, “Is this a fact?” or “Is this a fact or opinion?” Lionel also asked for help when working on facts and opinions; he asked, “Do groundhogs look funny?” Emily requested help a few times from her classmates. She asked her classmates, “What do

¹ Real name of helping teacher was replaced with pseudonym for anonymity.
you do with the groundhog face?” and when nobody knew the answer she asked Mrs. Smith the same question.

Other students were also seen asking their classmates for help. At another center the next day, Piper asked another student who was working on a groundhog cloze activity for help a few times. She asked, “What is this?” when she couldn’t figure out one of the pictures, and “Is this right?” after she placed one of the pictures on her worksheet. A couple of times at the reading race center, Andrew asked other students and the observer, “Do you know what that says?” or he said, “I’m stuck on this one,” when he didn’t know a word in the poem. When students were working on Letterbugs on the computer, Andrew asked another student, “Can you help me?,” and then asked if it was his turn when he came back from guided reading. Andrew also asked Donny, “Can you help me?” when he began working on his centers packet.

Finally, students asked Mrs. Smith for help during guided reading lessons. Whenever Amy got stuck on a word, she told Mrs. Smith, “I need help.” Isabella also asked for reassurance when filling in a graphic organizer for comprehension. Several times, Andrew asked Mrs. Smith for help when trying to figure out words. In fact, three times in the same day, he asked Mrs. Smith, “What does that say?,” or “What is that word?” Lionel also asked Mrs. Smith for help while reading his book Scaredy Crow. When looking at the pictures he asked, “Is that a crow? Is that Spike [the main character]?.” He also asked Mrs. Smith, “How do you spell hide?” when he was filling in his graphic organizer.

As mentioned earlier, the students in Mrs. Smith’s class asked each other and the teacher herself for help many times throughout my observations. The students in my focus group displayed the behaviors throughout various instructional settings. Sometimes the questions were about how to do something, while at other times they
were more specific in terms of content. Overall, many of the students exhibited positive helping behaviors during my observations. There were times when students helped each other by telling them how to complete a task. I was surprised at how often the students helped each other and that generally they did it without complaint. I did not expect to see students offering assistance to one another as often as they did. Again, since I was not looking for students to help one another, I was surprised to see it. In addition, the helping behaviors showed me how the students were able to rely on each other for assistance. Another thing I noticed was that the questions that were asked during small group instruction were all answered by other students in the same groups or their neighbors when it was individual work time. This was important because the students knew they could rely on each other to help them with something before asking the teacher to help them. Although I was not sure, I thought this was a practice the teacher had instilled in the students since the beginning of the year to help with management issues while the teacher was helping other students. Again, I was not able to determine if that was the reason.

1st Graders' Perceptions of Reading: Burke Reading Interviews

The Burke Reading Interview was a tool that helped me gain insight about how first graders understood the reading process. Consisting of 10 items, the questions focused on the process of reading, role models of reading, and to rate themselves as readers. When I interviewed the students, I had two students present, at the suggestion of Mrs. Smith, so the students did not feel intimidated, especially if they were some of the first students I interviewed. However, I interviewed them individually. Some of the answers, I noticed, may have been influenced by who was with them.
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The data from the Burke Reading Interviews (see Appendix 5) were analyzed qualitatively. Student responses were compared and then coded based on similarity of answers. For instance, if two students responded to the question “How do you figure out a word?” with the reply “By sounding it out,” their answers were highlighted in the same color on a word processor using the highlighting feature.

**Question 1:** When you are reading and you come to something you don’t know, what do you do? and **Question 2:** Do you ever do anything else? For the most part, students responded to Question 1 similarly and in at least one of two ways. One of the responses common among the students in my focus group was “to sound it out.” The other common response was “to look for chunks you know.” Some students responded with answers that were not quite clear, and therefore I was unable to infer what they meant without putting words into their mouths (organized in alphabetical order).

- **Amy:** Sound it out or find pieces you know in it.
- **Andrew:** Think.
- **Audra:** Put my finger on it. Go back and start again.
- **Donny:** Sound it out.
- **Elizabeth:** Look for pieces you know.
- **Emily:** Well, first I look for chunks I know.
- **Isabella:** Go back and read it?
- **Lionel:** Ask a friend.
- **Piper:** Say it out, um, say the letters.
- **Stephanie:** Raise your hand.
- **Xavier:** Look for chunks I know.

Two of the students (Amy, Donny) responded by saying they sounded out the word first, meaning that they would start at the first letter, say the sound, move to the next letter, say that sound, and so on, until they sounded out the entire word and then
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blended the sounds together to read the word. For example, in reading the word “sun,” students read “/s/ /u/ /n/ sun,” where the /letter/ represents the sound each letter makes in the word. Three of the students (Elizabeth, Emily, Xavier) responded saying they look for familiar word parts already known to them. For instance, when reading the word cat, students recognized that the c made a hard c sound and the –at ending says “at.” Audra responded with “Put my finger on it. Go back and start again” was a different technique altogether, but still a valid technique for trying to figure out a word. Isabella replied similarly yet different with her response of “Go back and read it?” These were all valid reading techniques students used to figure out words they didn’t know, showing they were becoming independent readers, because they knew what to do when they were stuck. Lionel and Stephanie both responded by saying that they appealed for help when they came to a word they didn’t know. Although asking the teacher was something they could do, this response showed that they were not yet as independent as some of their classmates when it came to reading.

Their understanding of reading at the time of the interview was that the teacher would tell them what the word was, but that they did not have to do any thinking in order to figure out a word. Even though Andrew’s response to “think” was something that teachers encourage their students to do, “think” could have meant a number of different things. Piper’s response to “say the letters” was also a phrase that could have meant anything. Therefore, I drew no conclusions about either Piper’s or Andrew’s responses to the first question (organized in alphabetical order).

Question 2 was related to question 1 because it was an extension of what readers did when they came to a word they didn’t know. The idea here was that if the student was unable to solve the unknown word the first time by using their technique, they would be able to figure it out the second time using their second technique. As
before, I received some similar answers, although if students responded with one
answer for question 1 (i.e. sound it out), they tended to respond with the second
answer (i.e. look for familiar word parts) for question 2. Still, there were some other
answers as well (organized in alphabetical order).

Amy: Hold the e and say the vowel.
Andrew: Go back to the story.
Audra: Nope.
Donny: Look for a chunk you know.
Elizabeth: Sound it out.
Emily: I skip and then go back to it.
Isabella: Ask the teacher what the um, word is?
Lionel: I sound it out or I ask the teacher.
Piper: I raise my hand to ask what it is.
Stephanie: No I just wait patiently or raise my hand.
Xavier: I just look in the dictionary and see what chunks I know.

As previously stated, some students (Donny, Xavier) used the second technique
known to them in order to figure out the word, which was looking for familiar word
parts. Other students responded by saying they sounded it out, which they hadn’t said
for question 1 (Elizabeth, Lionel). Still, some students admitted that they appeal for
assistance (Lionel, Isabella, Stephanie). Emily responded by saying that she skipped
the word and then came back to it once she had a little more information from the rest
of the sentence. A similar response was voiced by Andrew who said he would “Go
back to the story.” Audra was unable to identify a second technique to help her figure
out an unknown word. Amy’s response was quite different from anyone else’s.
Although I was quite sure that she was referring to how the silent e makes the vowel
“say its name” (hearing the long a sound as in make), I was not positive that’s what
she meant, so I could not infer what her true meaning was.
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Question 3: Who do you know who is a good reader? Many of the students’ answers varied as was expected, since each student knew different people. I expected more of the students to say their teacher, Mrs. Smith, was a good reader, but I didn’t receive many answers like that. I felt that some of the students’ responses were also influenced by who else was present at the time, since some of them said each other (organized in alphabetical order).

Amy: Elizabeth.
Andrew: Devin².
Audra: Xavier.
Donny: Me. (Observer: “You. Anyone else?”) My mom?
Elizabeth: Amy.
Emily: Ummm. Audra.
Isabella: Like, Audra. Xavier.
Lionel: Donny.
Piper: My sister, Carrie³.
Stephanie: Isabella. Mrs. Smith is a good reader because she knows all the words.
Xavier: Me. (Observer: “Do you know anybody else who is a good reader?”) Ummm. Emily.

A few of the students replied that their relatives (Piper, Donny) were good readers.
One student (Stephanie) even said that the teacher was a good reader. Everyone else told me that other students in the classroom were good readers. Most of the other students who they named were students in my focus group. One other student who was not in my focus group was also mentioned as a good reader. As mentioned before, I felt that some of the students’ responses were influenced by who was present at the interview. For example, Amy and Elizabeth both said each other and they were both present at that time. Other students that responded with another students’ name I felt were actually giving honest responses, because they took some time in answering

²  Real name was replaced with pseudonym for anonymity.
³  Real name was replaced with pseudonym for anonymity.
The follow-up question below provided insight as to why the students in my focus group mentioned certain individuals as good readers.

**Question 4: What makes him/her a good reader?** Many of the answers to this question varied (organized in alphabetical order).

- **Amy:** She knows all the words.
- **Andrew:** He goes back to the story and reads it again.
- **Audra:** He helps me read.
- **Donny:** She looks at the words.
- **Elizabeth:** She sounds stuff out.
- **Emily:** Well if I’m reading something to her and I get something wrong she'll say, “That's not right.”
- **Isabella:** She (Audra) learned from her mom. I think he (Xavier) learned.
- **Lionel:** He helps people a lot.
- **Piper:** She read the books 3 times. That’s how she’s a good reader.
- **Stephanie:** When I listen to hear read, when she's ahead of me I hear her say “Good job.”
- **Xavier:** Looks for chunks she knows.

Some of the responses named actual techniques readers use as they construct meaning, and some referred to students helping them. Only two of the students responded to this question by saying that their “good readers” were good readers because they used the techniques that my students were learning from Mrs. Smith. Elizabeth and Xavier were the two students who named the techniques they learned from Mrs. Smith to read (sounding out, looking for chunks). Another student named a different technique, going back and reading something again to figure out a word they didn’t know.

The rest of the responses I got for question 4 did not mention any specific techniques for what makes someone a good reader. The students whose responses fell into that category gave reasons that were general reasons why they were good readers. Two of the responses had to do with people who helped them and that was
why they were good readers. One of the students even replied that her good reader was a good reader because she knew all the words. I was surprised that only one of the students gave that answer. I expected more of the students to respond in a similar way.

**Question 5:** Do you think she/he ever comes to something she/he doesn't know when reading? If your answer is yes, what do you think he/she does about it?

Eight of the students said that their “good reader” came to an unknown word while reading. For the second part of the question, students responded with eight different answers (organized in alphabetical order).

**Amy:** She (Elizabeth) find words she knows.

**Andrew:** Think about it.

**Audra:** (Xavier) No.

**Donny:** She (Mom) sounds it out...looks for chunks she knows.

**Elizabeth:** She (Amy) sounds out stuff. Looks for chunks you know.

**Emily:** She'll (Audra) probably sound it out and look for chunks she knows.

**Isabella:** Go back and read it.

**Lionel:** He (Donny) sound it out. He raises his hand and asks the teacher.

**Piper:** She (my sister) probably asks my mom.

**Stephanie:** I think she (Isabella) should wait patiently and raise her hand. Mostly all the time [is what she does].

**Xavier:** She (Emily) just thinks in her head and see what makes sense.

The responses for that question were more similar than not. Three of the students replied that their “good readers” asked for help when they came to a word they didn't know. Four of the students said that their “good readers” looked for chunks they knew, while four of the students also said that their “good readers” sounded out the words. Interestingly, it was not the same four students who gave both sets of answers. Two students said that their “good reader” thought about what they were reading and what would make sense. Although only one of the students said that his “good reader” thought about it, I inferred that he meant they thought about the story and what would make sense. One of the students said her “good reader” didn't come
to a word he didn't know. There were no clear patterns as to which gender, male or female, was more likely to answer in a specific way.

Question 6: What do you think is the best way to help someone who doesn’t read well?

Amy: Help them sound it out.
Andrew: Go back to the story.
Audra: To help them with long words.
Donny: Help them sound the words out.
Elizabeth: Help them...sounding out.
Emily: Sit by them and tell them if that word's not right.
Isabella: Help them...if there's a chunk that you know.
Lionel: Get two friends and sound it out.
Piper: Help them read...Like, um, saying, “What is this?” (Student makes finger-pointing motion as she says each word.
Stephanie: Teach them how to read at play time. Go word by word by word.
Xavier: Sit by them...and then you watch them read.

Some themes resurfaced during this question that surfaced in other questions. Four of the students said that they would help someone who doesn't read well by helping them sound out a word they didn't know. One student said they would help someone who doesn't read well by helping them look for word chunks they know to figure out the word. Other students gave less specific answers about how they would help someone who didn't read well. They said they would merely “help them with long words,” “sit by them” while they read, or teach them how to read during play time. According to the responses, female students were more likely to reply to the question with a specific reading technique they were learning in school.
c. What helped you to learn?

**Amy:** a. We had the tiny books were we know all the words and we read them. b. Read all kinds of things like how you learn about school...read in different subjects. c. School...reading books and you read them.

**Andrew:** a. Michael (another student in the classroom) taught me. b. I don't know. c. To listen to the teacher.

**Audra:** a. My mom...helped me learn to read. b. When I get to a word I don't know, she helps me with it. She asks me... chunks that I know. c. I don't know.

**Donny:** a. My mom. b. She helps me with the words. c. She helps me sound them out.

**Elizabeth:** a. Kindergarten – she got books and we read them. b. She helps you by sounding out. c. By sounding out.

**Emily:** a. My grandma got me this really cool book and it was easy so I wanted to start reading it. b. I don't remember. c. My mom used to read me a lot of books... before bedtime and now I read them to her.

**Isabella:** a. From my mom and Mrs. Smith and TV. b. Sometimes people don't know “where” (the word). c. Sound it out.

**Lionel:** a. My mom...she teach me how to read. b. My mom would read me a story or my sister would read me a story. c. The teacher...read...a lot.

**Piper:** a. I learned to read because of my sister. b. I remember Carrie (sister) pointing to the words and telling me...to... say it. c. Looking at the pictures.

**Stephanie:** a. My mom. b. When I heard all good reading. c. I had to sound them out.

**Xavier:** a. I'm not sure. b. Not sure. c. Donny. He's next to me in my seat. Reading my books...We look for chunks we know.

Many of the students responded with a similar response for question 7, part a, “How did you learn to read?” In other words, the majority of the students told me that a relative helped them learn how to read, while a few of the students named a teacher or another student in the classroom. In fact, seven of the students (Audra, Donny, Emily, Isabella, Lionel, Piper, and Stephanie) said they learned from a sibling, their mom, or their grandma. Amy and Elizabeth credited school for their learning to read, one specifically mentioning kindergarten, and one referencing the books used at school for reading. One student (Andrew) said another student in the classroom, while the last student was not sure how he learned to read. Xavier was the only student who was unable to identify how he learned to read. Although a lot of the
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students could not identify specific memories of how they learned to read (part b of the question), some of the students (Audra and Elizabeth) said that the relative or teacher “helps me with the words” or helped them “sound out the words.” One of the students (Lionel) replied that his mom read to him a lot while another student (Amy) said that she remembered reading different genres of stories at school. Three students (Andrew, Emily, and Xavier) said they didn’t remember or were unsure about how they learned to read. Lastly, students (Donny, Elizabeth, Isabella, and Stephanie) responded that “sounding out the words” or looking for “chunks we know” (Xavier) helped them to learn how to read. Another student (Piper) named a different reading strategy, looking at the pictures, as something that helped her learn to read. Amy, Emily and Lionel students said that reading a lot, either by themselves or having a teacher read to them, was what helped them learn to read. One student (Andrew) said what helped them to learn was to listen to the teacher. Audra said she did not know what helped her learn to read.

Question 8: What would you like to do better as a reader? (Organized in alphabetical order).

Amy: Science read more science books.
Andrew: To listen to the teacher and pay attention.
Audra: Help my friends read.
Donny: Read instead of go outside. Go home and read.
Elizabeth: Read about artists.
Emily: Make a book...illustrate and author it.
Isabella: Sound the words out and listen to the sounds that I know.
Lionel: I’d like to help and read.
Piper: Learn everything I know and then read the sentence.
Stephanie: When we read our browsing bags it’s all so good.
Xavier: Not sure.

When asked “What would you like to do better as a reader?” the students responded with a variety of answers, which was expected. However, I heard a few
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading responses that surprised me, because I did not expect the students to have reading goals, since they were so young. Some of the students said they wanted to read about different genres, science and about artists, while one student said he would like to read more in general. Other students said they wanted to be able to help their friends read or be able to sound out the words better and hear the sounds in the words better. One student said she wanted to author and illustrate her own book and one said he wanted to listen to the teacher and pay attention. One student said he didn't have a reading goal, while another student (Stephanie) just said she enjoyed reading books from her browsing bag. Four of the students had specific goals for wanting to do things better as a reader. Three of them were girls, and one was a boy, but there was not enough evidence to determine whether or not boys or girls were more likely to have reading goals.

\[\text{Question 9: Describe yourself as a reader. (Organized in alphabetical order).}\]

Amy: Read it all again to make you know it more better.
Andrew: Follow directions.
Audra: I don't know.
Donny: Nothin'.
Elizabeth: By me sounding out...makes me a good reader.
Emily: A good reader...because I like to read a lot.
Isabella: Great.
Lionel: I don't know.
Piper: I can't.
Stephanie: I do read good when I hear good reading.
Xavier: Good reader.

The students in my focus group had a little more difficulty with this question. A little less than half of the students were unable to describe themselves as a reader, even though I rephrased the question. Two of the students who could not describe themselves as readers were girls (Audra and Piper) and two of the students who could
not describe themselves as readers were boys (Donny and Lionel). Approximately
half of the students described themselves as good or great readers. Among those
students, three were girls and one was a boy. With what little information I had from
this question, I was unable to determine which group of students (boys or girls) were
more likely to describe themselves as readers. Interestingly, though, two of the girls
gave specific reasons as to why they were good readers. Two students, Amy and
Andrew gave responses from which I was unable to discern how they felt about
themselves as a reader.

Question 10: Using a scale of 5 to 1, with 5 being a terrific reader, what
overall rating would you give yourself as a reader? (Table 4.28, organized in
alphabetical order).

| Table 4.28 Burke Reading Interview Question 10 Rating oneself as a reader |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Student   | Rating |
| Amy       | 5      |
| Andrew    | 5      |
| Audra     | 3      |
| Donny     | 5      |
| Elizabeth | 5      |
| Emily     | 5      |
| Isabella  | 3      |
| Lionel    | 5      |
| Piper     | 5      |
| Stephanie | 5      |
| Xavier    | 5      |

The majority of the students described themselves as being terrific readers. In
fact, nine of the eleven students in my focus group described themselves as terrific
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readers. Two of the students said they were okay readers, giving themselves threes on the survey. All of the boys labeled themselves as terrific readers, while almost all of the girls said they were terrific readers. Since there were no major differences in ratings between the boys and the girls, I was unable to determine which gender was more likely to say they were terrific readers.

Conclusions from the Burke Reading Interviews  As a result of conducting the Burke Reading Interviews with my focus group, I learned many different things about what these first graders' perspectives toward reading were. Overall the impression I got from the students was that reading was about knowing the words or knowing how to solve unknown words. For many of the questions, the students responded by saying they sound out the words or looked for chunks they know. When asked how they thought other readers figured out words or why they thought someone was a good reader their responses were similar. The students again claimed that someone was a good reader simply because that person knew all the words or that person knew how to sound out the words. From these responses I interpreted two major themes regarding their attitudes toward reading and their perspectives about reading. The first theme I interpreted related to their attitude toward reading. Most of the students responded to the question “When you are reading and you come to something you don't know, what do you do?” with a positive, ambitious attitude. In other words, the students told me they knew specific techniques they could use to figure out a word by themselves instead of relying solely on the teacher for help. This was a significant finding in my research, because the ultimate goal of reading teachers and other reading professionals is for students to be able to read a passage with little or no assistance from an adult. Only one student, Stephanie, was not yet at the point in her reading development to rely on herself to figure out words.
While this was a positive outcome of my research, there was also a negative outcome of my research, because it directly translated the students' perspectives of reading. As a result of the interviews with the students in my focus group, I learned that the students perceived reading as either knowing the words or being capable of figuring out the words by sounding them out or looking for chunks they know. Although these are techniques that reading teachers and reading professionals utilize to help students become more independent readers, it is not the sole purpose of reading. Being able to solve unknown words is only one small piece of the reading process. Yet this was what the students were learning from their reading program.

Conclusion

Revisiting the research question “How might a Reading First approved program, such as Treasures (2005), impact students’ perceptions and attitudes of reading?,” I realized after analyzing all of my data that I learned many different things about the Treasures (2005) curriculum and how it impacted students' perceptions and attitudes of reading. First of all, Treasures is a program that primarily focuses on teaching students how to read using the foundation that they have to know letters and sounds before they can actually read. Once they have mastered letters and sounds, then instruction moves on to blending multiple sounds together in succession in order to “read” words and phrases and eventually sentences, paragraphs, pages, and entire books or documents.

Additionally, there is little to no emphasis on using the comprehension strategies as a tool to help them understand what they are reading. During my observations, I noticed that the comprehension strategies were introduced to the students and the teacher primarily did the thinking for the students and shared her
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thinking with them, but the students were not usually required to think about the
stories themselves. The simplistic view of reading (i.e. letters, sounds, words,
sentences, etc.) was conveyed to me through my interviews with the students because
they generally responded that reading was about sounding out words or looking for
chunks of words they knew in order to identify a word. There were very few
responses from the students about using the comprehension strategies (one mentioned
looking at the pictures, while another mentioned “thinking” about the story) while
they read.

The data from the Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys helped paint a picture
of how students felt toward reading activities, too. By specifically targeting students'
opinions about their enjoyment of academic and recreational reading, the survey
informed me of students' views on reading. Combining the data from my
observations and the surveys, I could see how the students might not be enthusiastic
about academic reading, because all they are taught to do is sound out words in the
beginning. If they are not interested in learning this way, then why would they want
to read outside of school? The information gained from this study has many
implications for parents, teachers, administrators, reading researchers, and the federal
government on how a program like Treasures impacts students perceptions of and
attitudes toward reading.
With the adoption of the No Child Left Behind Act policy and the Reading First program, various stakeholders (i.e. teachers, administrators, policymakers, etc.) became divided over the effective methods for literacy instruction of children. The National Reading Panel's report on reading was praised by numerous people (Shanahan, 2005), while reading researchers (Cunningham, 2002; Wilson, Martens, Arya, & Altwerger, 2004; Allington, 2005; Krashen, 2009) launched critical investigations about the Panel’s findings, advising that the conclusions of the Panel be used with caution. Throughout the course of the study, I examined student behaviors and practices during reading, which allowed me to infer their perceptions of and attitudes toward reading in a Reading First district. I found four overall themes from my classroom observations: 1) off-task behaviors; 2) on-task behaviors; 3) helping behaviors; and 4) body language, oral language, and facial expressions. In terms of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, the students scored fairly high overall, although some of the students received low scores. The interviews I conducted also gave me some insight as to what the students think reading really is.

Conclusions

According to professionals in the field of literacy, reading comprehension is an extremely involved process through which readers actively engage with a text in order to construct meaning. In order to construct meaning, a person must flexibly integrate the reading comprehension strategies to completely understand the text being read. In light of my research, I concluded some very important things about the Treasures program in the classroom I observed and how it impacts students'
perceptions and attitudes of reading and reading comprehension. There were three major ideas I concluded about the program and what it teaches children about reading. The conclusions I made were: 1) the reading program primarily focused on letters and the sounds they make in combination with one another and reading words in isolation; 2) the students did not gain enough experience in reading continuous text; and 3) lack of reading experience prohibited students from effectively practicing the use of reading comprehension strategies.

One of the most important conclusions I made about how the program impacts students' perceptions of reading was that it teaches children how to read by teaching them to focus on alphabetics, phonics, and phonemic awareness. The students in my focus group were taught what sounds letters make and how to combine the various letter sounds to form words. Every week, the students learned new phonics and phonemic awareness skills in order to help them decode words as they read them in a text. This practice was especially evident through the interviews I conducted with my students, who repeatedly mentioned that they learned how to read by “looking for chunks they know” and to “sound out the words.” Most of the activities following the lessons focused on practice involving the application of the newly learned skills. The activities typically involved completing worksheets where the students filled in the blanks with the blends they had learned or matched words to images. They also played games to manipulate letters to make words with the blending rules they learned that day. Although the NRP recommended that a reading curriculum include direct instruction on sounding out words the Panel cautioned against an over-emphasis on teaching letter-sound relationships (NRP, 1999). The Panel also stated that teaching letter-sound relationships would not necessarily mean students could successfully transfer the relationships to reading a text. Literacy educators and
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Another significant conclusion I came to regarding the program was that with the focus on letters and sounds, the students were not engaged in reading enough. About once a week, the students read a story as a class and then had a chance to partner read the same story, as well. There were also times during my observations when students were involved in guided reading lessons with the teacher. However, I noticed that the majority of the reading block was spent on the students practicing blending skills; therefore the students were not spending enough time reading connected text. Most of the reading the students did consisted of reading words from worksheets or workbooks, or as sight words in a game and not from actual texts. Even the texts that the students read from the Treasures anthology were controlled texts that contained words from their vocabulary lists and the phonics skills they were learning that week. As a result, the students were not engaged in authentic reading activities. They were also not engaged in enough reading experiences in which they were able to effectively transfer their knowledge of phonics and phonemic awareness skills from the week's lesson.

Since the students were not engaged in enough reading opportunities that meant they were also not practicing active reading strategies. To review, the meaning of comprehension is that it is a complex process in which readers engage actively
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with a text in order to construct meaning. To do that, readers must flexibly utilize multiple comprehension strategies such as self-monitoring, questioning, predicting, summarizing, and making connections. Then and only then would readers completely understand a text (Soderman, Gregory & McCarthy, 2005; Pinnell & Fountas, 2009). During my observations, there were a few times when the comprehension strategies were mentioned. Initially, the students were introduced to the strategies gradually and one at a time. Mrs. Smith taught the students briefly about a strategy while reading a story as a whole group, then modeled how to use the strategy throughout the story. Since the class read the story as a whole group and Mrs. Smith continued to use think-alouds to model the strategy, the students had little opportunity to implement the strategy themselves. In addition, during those lessons the focus was only on one strategy and not on how to use the strategies flexibly to support comprehension. Furthermore, there were only a few times throughout my observations that students were reading connected text by themselves, whether it was independently or during guided reading. Therefore, they had only a few chances to practice utilizing the strategies interchangeably. The lack of those reading experiences means that the students were not practicing active reading. This conclusion is one of the most crucial to my investigation, because the goal of reading is to actively engage with a text in order to understand what has been read. Yet, the students in my focus group did not have enough opportunities to support their reading development.

A fourth conclusion I came to about my study was that the Treasures reading curriculum did not take into account students' emotions toward reading and related literacy activities, as well as specific reading topics. Like Lyons (2003) stated, emotions are vital when it comes to learning. Not attending to students' emotions,
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according to Lyons, could impact a student's reading development. The Treasures program focused heavily on decoding throughout reading instruction. During my observations, I noted that all of the students in my focus group were distracted multiple times in a number of ways, from playing with objects to talking with others and many other avoidance behaviors. I interpreted those behaviors to mean that the students were bored during instruction. In addition, I overheard some students mention utterances that they did not want to complete worksheets or other activities related to decoding. Those comments signaled to me that the students experienced negative emotions during instruction. It seemed to me that the curriculum was not attending to students' emotions. It did not take into account what students wanted to read about or what they wanted to learn in terms of the reading process. Without the students' complete attentiveness, including how they felt during the lessons, the students were incapable of internalizing what they were learning. If all they remembered from the Treasures reading lessons was that it was about learning how to decode words instead of trying to find meaning within a piece of text, they would not want to continue reading let alone learning how to read. Had the students been more actively engaged in reading activities during my observations, I thought that the number of distractions would have been minimal and the students would not have voiced such strong negative emotions toward the activities that took place during reading instruction.

Consequently, the Treasures program impacted what the students in my focus group think reading is, as well as their attitudes toward reading and reading instruction. During my observations, I learned that the students in my focus group did not receive enough opportunities to read continuous text. This also prohibited them from flexibly utilizing reading comprehension strategies to construct meaning
while reading a text. In addition, emotions played an integral part in reading instruction during my observations. I noticed that the students in my focus group were consistently distracted during reading instruction involving decoding instruction, sight word instruction, and vocabulary instruction. Those distractions as well as verbal comments made by the students signaled that the students’ emotions were impacted by the reading instruction they received. Overall, Treasures impacted how students perceive reading.

**Implications for Practice and Research**

The findings of my study have many implications for the practice and research of many literacy educators and stakeholders. With the information I gained from my research, there are many possible practices literacy educators could possibly exercise in order to effectively teach students reading comprehension.

The first major issue literacy educators could possibly address during reading comprehension instruction is how students are taught to read. If all scientifically based reading programs focus on heavily teaching decoding skills, literacy educators will have a challenging time effectively teaching reading comprehension and reading comprehension strategies. This may be difficult since many schools receive Reading First grants and consequently must utilize scientifically based reading programs such as Treasures. It can also prove difficult to fit in instruction regarding reading comprehension and comprehension strategy use into other times during an entire reading block due to the other requirements of the scientifically based programs. In addition, it would be difficult for teachers to implement comprehension strategy instruction into other times throughout the day considering all of the other curriculum
demands teachers are required to meet for other subjects as well. Somehow, teachers must set aside time for reading comprehension instruction.

Secondly, teachers must ensure that students have ample opportunities to read. It is not enough for students to read non-continuous text. They must have plenty of opportunities to read continuous text, as well as reading in a variety of styles. For example, students need to be active participants in whole-group reading, small-group guided reading centers, individual reading, and partner reading. Literacy professionals (Routman, 2000; Allington, 2005; Pinnell & Fountas, 2009) have proven that students need multiple opportunities to read in multiple ways. Furthermore, the more opportunities students have to read continuous text, the more they are able to practice utilizing reading comprehension strategies, which would help ensure students become proficient readers. Therefore, teachers should be sure to give students numerous opportunities to read continuous text, which will also give students many opportunities to practice using the reading comprehension strategies flexibly to construct meaning.

Third, teachers could be proactive in teaching students about the complexity of the reading process. As I saw during my observations at Westerville Elementary School, the program focused primarily on phonics and phonemic awareness. On a daily basis, the teacher instructed students on a particular sound that a letter or combination of letters made. Following the introduction to the sound(s), instruction continued through the assistance of workbook pages and worksheets. When students read stories during whole group instruction, the stories typically came from the *Treasures* anthology and were texts with controlled vocabulary that included words with the same phonics and phonemic awareness patterns as what the teacher introduced. This type of instruction implied to the students that reading is strictly
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading about “sounding out the words” or “looking for parts of words they know.” This perspective of reading was evident in the interviews I conducted with the students in my focus group, because they consistently responded that they knew how to figure out unknown words. None of the students referred to using reading comprehension strategies in addition to word-solving techniques in order to figure out a word. Therefore, literacy educators must be aware of this dilemma when teaching reading comprehension to their students. With as much phonics and phonemic awareness instruction there is in scientifically based programs, literacy educators must also equip students with the ability to deal with problems other than word-solving during reading.

Lastly, literacy educators could possibly become more aware of the emotional connection that exists to learning. Lyons (2003) and Pinnell and Fountas (2009) contended that emotions play a significant role during reading instruction. Failure to consider students' emotions toward reading and related literacy activities could result in impacting a students' view toward reading. Furthermore, if the students' experiences were not positive ones, it could possibly hinder future reading experiences for students (Lyons, 2003; Pinnell & Fountas, 2009). When planning reading comprehension instruction and related activities, literacy educators must take into account the impact emotions can have on learning. If the literacy educators work in districts that require the use of “scientifically-based reading research,” they should be aware of the impact the program can have on students' emotions toward reading. Keeping in mind how repetitious and simplistic phonics and phonemic awareness can be, teachers should prepare lessons in ways that would heighten students' emotions so that it becomes a positive learning experience for their students. Teachers should also find out what students' interests are and teach to their interests while simultaneously
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teaching reading comprehension. In addition, teachers should investigate what the
students already know so they can teach to the students' needs, instead of teaching
them something they may already know (i.e. what sounds letter combinations make).
Furthermore, teachers could question students about what they want to learn about in
terms of the reading process and reading comprehension. This tactic would help
teachers get students interested in learning about reading and reading comprehension,
because it shows the students that their teachers are as committed to teaching them to
read as the students are to learning how to read. Nevertheless, emotions play a huge
role in reading instruction, and teachers need to be mindful of this when planning
instruction, so that the students have positive reading experiences that will only help
them grow and become more interested in the process of reading.

Suggestions for Further Research

Overall, I learned many things about the Treasures program and the impact
that it had on the students in my focus group in regards to their attitudes and
perspective toward reading. I believe my research has important implications for
literacy educators in the field and any future literacy educators as well. However,
there were still some questions left unanswered by my research project. I have made
the following suggestions for further research. The suggestions I have made will help
future researchers determine what kind of impact scientifically-based reading
programs have on students' perceptions and attitudes toward reading. In addition, I
feel that more research is needed regarding how effective the use of scientifically-
based programs is in teaching students about comprehension.

The first recommendation I have for any future researcher wanting to continue
the investigation is to make sure they have enough equipment to record the students
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading 150 during observations. During my observations, I only utilized a single tape recorder that was located at the front of the room during whole-group instruction, and I rotated through different small groups as I visited the groups. In the future, I would recommend that the researcher uses multiple tape recorders for each observation session. I would recommend four tape recorders for whole-group instruction, one for each corner area of the room, plus an additional recorder for the middle of the room. The use of the five tape recorders would capture any chatter in the surrounding areas that the students had in regards to instruction. In addition, it would ensure overlap in the listening area of the classroom so researchers could be sure about what students have to say during the instruction. This would help determine if students were having on or off-task conversation. Then researchers could be sure about student behaviors during instruction and could better interpret the students' actions and more properly infer students' attitudes and perspectives toward reading. Furthermore, I would recommend that future researchers place tape recorders in each small-group literacy center during each observational session. Placing a recorder in each group would guarantee researchers could record students' conversations during small-group literacy centers during each observation. This tactic would help researchers interpret students' perceptions and attitudes toward reading during small-group literacy instruction. Researchers could then also compare comments by student per observation and track their comments throughout the study. Then the researcher could compare students' comments from small-group instruction to the students' comments during whole-group instruction to more thoroughly gain insight into students' attitudes and perceptions toward reading. Moreover, utilizing a videotape recorder during observations would also help the researcher capture students' behaviors during both whole-group and small-group instruction. Not only would this
enable the researcher to capture all the students' behaviors during various instruction, it would help the researcher to be sure he/she has caught the students' behaviors each and every time. Plus, the researcher could utilize the videotape recorder as further evidence to triangulate data between his/her observations, the tape recorders, and the surveys. The use of the tools is necessary to strengthen the data found during the study.

A second recommendation I would make to future researchers would be to observe guided reading sessions more closely to observe student behaviors and comments regarding reading. Guided reading offers teachers an opportunity to closely observe a student's reading development as he/she becomes a more proficient reader. From there, teachers and researchers can interpret the students' behaviors to determine their attitudes and perceptions toward reading. For example, teachers can closely observe a student's body language and oral language to infer what his or her attitude toward reading is. Furthermore, teachers and/or researchers can see how scientifically based reading programs are impacting students' reading processes. In other words, teachers, literacy educators, and researchers can closely observe what processing systems, such as meaning, syntax, or visual cues, students are using as they read. Utilizing running records during guided reading could also help track students as they read would allow teachers to see if students are focusing too much on visual cues, which is what scientifically-based reading programs teach, and not utilizing the other cues to support their reading. In addition, guided reading could also allow teachers, literacy educators, and researchers to determine how well the students are utilizing reading comprehension strategies and to see if they are using them flexibly and competently. All of this data could be gathered in future research
settings to determine what kind of impact scientifically-based reading programs have on students as they read connected text.

A third recommendation I would make to any future researcher would be to hold debriefing sessions or discussions with the students in a focus group to discuss their attitudes toward and perceptions of a scientifically-based reading program. A discussion with children about the program itself would be a great opportunity for students to openly express their feelings about what they learned in a day's lesson. If possible, I would recommend holding discussions shortly after the reading block and ask the students what they liked or didn't like about the lessons, and why. Researchers could also ask students how they felt during specific parts of the lesson, for instance, which would help them infer the students' attitudes and perceptions toward the reading program. Holding focus group discussions would also ensure that the students would be more willing to talk and more relaxed since they would be with a group of their peers. Discussions can be held with students as young as kindergarten up to teenagers, so long as the questions are age appropriate. This technique would help the researcher gain insight into what students think about the program.

Another recommendation I have for future researchers is that they investigate the validity of the assessments as well as how students perform on the assessments given by the program as well as other assessments such as reading records. The Treasures assessment covers reading comprehension, as well as phonics and phonemic awareness skills. It would be very interesting to see how well the students perform in the area of reading comprehension, especially since the Treasures program focuses heavily on phonics and phonemic awareness. In addition, researchers should utilize reading record benchmark assessments with the students in their focus group to
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading

determine how effective the *Treasures* program is in teaching students reading comprehension. Using the reading record benchmark assessments, researchers will gain much insight into whether or not students are comprehending the material being read. Although this may not help determine the impact *Treasures* has on students' attitudes and perceptions toward reading, it will help literacy educators and researchers determine the effectiveness of scientifically-based reading programs.

My final suggestion for researchers to continue investigating the impact *Treasures* has on students' perceptions of and attitudes toward reading is to conduct a longitudinal study on the students in the focus group. Initially, researchers should observe the students learning how to read in the beginning stages of school, such as when they are in first grade. During the initial half of the study, researchers should observe students during whole-group instruction and small-group literacy centers, recording data regarding the students' body language, oral language, and activity level as they engage in reading activities. The researcher should also continue by interviewing the students about their reading processes and administer the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) as well. During the second part of the investigation, the researcher should meet with the students from the focus group a minimum of five years later, when the students are in sixth grade. The researcher can re-administer the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, since it will still be age-appropriate for the students. The researcher can also observe the students as they continue learning reading comprehension and engage in literacy activities at the sixth grade level. In addition, the researcher should re-conduct the interviews with each student from the focus group and any other tool used for data collection during the first part of data collection. After collecting all of the data, the researcher should compare the data between the two years of observation and analyze the data
Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading 154

looking for trends and information regarding the impact programs such as *Treasures*
has on the attitudes toward and perceptions of reading of the students. This
information would be crucial to the investigation of the long-term impacts
scientifically-based reading programs has on students, and is necessary for the field of
literacy.

In conclusion, I learned a lot about the impact *Treasures* has on students' perceptions of and attitudes toward reading during my investigation. The information I gathered has many implications for literacy educators, classroom teachers, administrators, and researchers regarding the field of reading. My research has provided a foundation for the beginning understanding of how scientifically-based reading programs such as *Treasures* impacts students' attitudes toward and perceptions of reading. However, there were still many questions left unanswered by my research. Therefore, I have made a number of recommendations in order to extend the research project in the future. All of the information, once gathered, will provide much needed insight for all of the parties involved in the educational field of reading.


Center on Education Policy. (2007, October 31). Despite scandals, states & districts credit Reading First for gains in student achievement. Retrieved month, day, year, from

Center on Education Policy. (2008, June 24). State test scores in reading and mathematics continue to increase, achievement gaps narrow. Retrieved month, day, year, from


Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading


Student Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Reading


January 12, 2010

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As a graduate student in the department of Education and Human Development at SUNY Brockport, I am currently completing my thesis project required for graduation. I have also been employed with the school district as a substitute teacher. I am conducting a study on student attitudes and perceptions about reading. Part of my study will require me to observe your child’s first grade classroom during reading instruction, and I will be conducting interviews and surveys to learn about student attitudes and perceptions toward reading. I have received permission from the school principal to conduct my research here. My research design has also been approved by the College at Brockport Institutional Review Board.

If you grant consent for your child to participate in this study, he or she may be observed for up to 90 minutes during reading instruction, which is part of their daily reading block. Lesson time will not be extended as a result of my research. The observations will focus on the reading lessons provided by their teacher and how students interact with texts or other literacy tools their teacher uses.

I will be collecting data in three different ways for my study. A survey will be given to your child to determine their attitudes toward reading. I will also conduct interviews with your child to learn what perceptions they have about reading as a process. Lastly, I will be recording notes on your child’s participation in reading instruction. I will be collecting data for approximately 6 weeks, two days per week. None of the information I gather will be recorded or graded by your child’s teacher.

The enclosed Parent/Guardian Consent form includes specific information regarding your child’s rights as a participant, including how I will protect his or her rights to privacy. Please read the form carefully. If you are willing to allow your child’s participation, please indicate your consent by signing the attached statement.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Liz Navarra
Graduate Student, SUNY Brockport
enaval@brockport.edu

Sue Novinger
Thesis Advisor at SUNY Brockport
snovinge@brockport.edu
(585) 395-5935
CONSENT FOR OBSERVATION, SURVEYING, AND INTERVIEWING OF STUDENT

The purpose of this research study is to investigate students’ perceptions and attitudes of reading and the reading process as they participate in reading instruction and related activities in the classroom. The person conducting this study is a graduate student at the College of Brockport, and is completing this project to fulfill her master’s thesis.

If you agree to have your child participate in this research study, your child will be observed during periods of literacy instruction in the teacher’s classroom. Your child will also be responding to a brief survey and informal interview questions.

In order for your child to participate in this study, your informed consent is required. You are being asked to make a decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this project. If you would like for your child to participate in the project, and agree with the statements below, please sign your name in the space provided at the end. You may change your mind at any time and your child may leave the study without any penalty, even after the study has begun.

I understand that:

a. My child’s participation is voluntary and he/she has the right to refuse to answer any questions. My child has the right to decline participation in this research, even if I have already provided my consent.

b. My child’s confidentiality is guaranteed. His/her name will not be recorded in observation notes, on surveys, or on interview notes. There will be no way to connect my child to the observations, surveys, or interviews. If any publication results from this research, he/she would not be identified by name. Results will be given through the use of pseudonyms, so neither the participants nor the school can be identified.

c. There will be no anticipated personal risks or benefits because of participation in this project.

d. The researcher will be observing my child’s behaviors during reading instruction for approximately 90 minutes, 2 times a week. During these observations, the researcher will record notes regarding my child’s behavior and actions during reading activities.

e. My child will complete a 20 question survey, given by the researcher, sharing his/her opinions about reading for school and reading for recreation in and outside of the classroom. My child will choose from 4 different pictures of Garfield for each question, ranging from a really happy Garfield to a really upset Garfield to represent how they feel about reading. The survey will be given at the beginning of the study and will last for approximately 10-15 minutes. The survey will be given in the classroom during a time when instruction is not occurring.

f. My child’s surveys will be collected and his/her name will be removed permanently immediately upon collection.
g. My child will be asked formal and informal interview questions, by the researcher, through a casual conversation one to two times throughout the study. The interviews will last approximately 5-20 minutes depending on the conversation. The researcher will be writing and audio-recording my child’s responses to the questions. The audio-recording will take place just outside my child’s classroom so that the researcher’s data can be collected without noise level being a factor on the recording. I understand that the researcher and thesis advisor will be the only individuals who will listen to the tape.

h. The results will be used for the completion of a thesis paper by the primary researcher.

i. Data from the observations, surveys, and interviews will be kept in the locked horne of the researcher. Data and consent forms will be destroyed by shredding when the data analysis has been completed.

j. There will be a maximum of 15 students participating in this study.

I understand the information provided in this form and agree to allow my child to participate as a participant in this study. I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my child’s participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction.

If you have any questions, you may contact:
Primary researcher
Liz Navarra
Graduate Student, College at Brockport SUNY
enavaria@brockport.edu

Thesis Advisor
Dr. Sue Novinger
Education & Human Development
College at Brockport SUNY
snovinger@brockport.edu
(585) 395-5935

Signature of Parent: ____________________________ Date: ___________

Child’s name: ________________________________
Statement of Assent
To Be Read to First Grade Students

My name is Miss Navarra. I am a student at SUNY Brockport. I came to your classroom to learn about reading. I would like to find out about how you all learn to read and what you think about reading. You may see me writing in my notebook or looking at what you are doing when you are reading, learning to read, or in reading centers. I would like to have you answer some questions on a survey. I would also like you to answer some questions that I ask you about what you think about reading. During our conversations, I may take some notes about what you tell me. I will also be tape-recording our conversations so I can remember what you tell me.

If you decide to let me find out about the way you read and learn to read, I won’t write down your name or let anyone else know who you are. When I write about my study, I will only say what you and your classmates did during reading time and what you tell me about reading. I will also write about your answers on the survey.

Your parent or guardian has given permission for you to take part in this study, but it’s up to you to decide if you would like to. If you would like to take part in my study, but change your mind later on, you can tell your teacher or me that you have changed your mind. It is okay to change your mind at any time.

If it is okay with you for me to find out about how you read, what you think about reading, and what you do during reading, you can write your name on the first line below. Under your name you can write today’s date which is 1/26/10.

Thank you very much,

Miss Navarra

Name: _______________________________

Date: ______________________________

Witness Signature:

Name: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________
# Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><img src="1" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><img src="1" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How do you feel about reading for fun at home?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><img src="1" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How do you feel about getting a book for a present?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><img src="1" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

5. How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?

6. How do you feel about starting a new book?

7. How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?

8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?

10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?

11. How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read?

12. How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

13. How do you feel about reading in school?

14. How do you feel about reading your school books?

15. How do you feel about learning from a book?

16. How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>17.</strong></td>
<td><strong>How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 18. | **How do you feel when you read out loud in class?** |
| ![Image]  | ![Image]  | ![Image]  | ![Image]  |
| ![Image]  | ![Image]  | ![Image]  | ![Image]  |

| 19. | **How do you feel about using a dictionary?** |
| ![Image]  | ![Image]  | ![Image]  | ![Image]  |
| ![Image]  | ![Image]  | ![Image]  | ![Image]  |

| 20. | **How do you feel about taking a reading test?** |
| ![Image]  | ![Image]  | ![Image]  | ![Image]  |
| ![Image]  | ![Image]  | ![Image]  | ![Image]  |
Appendix 4
Detailed Observation Form

Child’s Name:  
Scheduled Observation Dates:  
Setting (Circle One): Whole Group  Small Group  Guided Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Thoughts, Questions, Interpretations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Burke Reading Interview by Carolyn Burke (1987)
Name ___________________________ Date ______________

1. When you are reading and you come to something you don’t know, what do you do?

2. Do you ever do anything else?

3. Who do you know who is a good reader?

4. What makes him/her a good reader?

5. Do you think she/he ever comes to something she/he doesn’t know when reading?
If your answer is yes, what do you think he/she does about it?

6. What do you think is the best way to help someone who doesn’t read well?

7. How did you learn to read? What do you remember? What helped you to learn?

8. What would you like to do better as a reader?

9. Describe yourself as a reader.

10. Using a scale of 5 to 1, with 5 being a terrific reader, what overall rating would you give yourself as a reader?
THE WEATHERMAN

day Mr. woke up from his nap. He had been for a long time. He lived in a in the . He looked out of his . The was so bright that he saw his . Mr. went to for more weeks of .
WEATHERMAN WORDS

ground  one  sleeping

winter  hole  groundhog

burrow  bed  shadow

groundhog  sun  six
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Appendix 7

Name: Emily

happen
happen
happen
happen
happen

### Vocabulary word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dictionary</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page 98</td>
<td>To happen means to take place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Word before

happen

### Word after

Happy

### Illustration

- Bug
- Bug
Name

Spelling Center

Write the spelling word three times and then use it in a sentence.

1. before
   
   before before before
   
   Before school I eat breakfast.

2. heard
   
   heard heard heard
   
   I heard you.

3. keep
   
   keep keep keep
   
   Keep it out
Dear Kay,

5. My mom gave me a puppy.

6. She has a big tail.

Sincerely,
[Signature]

Name
• Write the sentence. Begin and end your sentence correctly.

_Little Rabbit when he heard the crows fly,_

• Draw a picture to illustrate the sentence.
• Use details in your picture.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Real</th>
<th>Make-Believe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Bear" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Bird" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Bear" /></td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Flowers" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INSTRUCTIONS: Have students compare and contrast the characters using the information in the text, pictures, and prior knowledge.

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http://www.readings.com
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Appendix 10
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The scarecrow made the spike hide</td>
<td>![Image 1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The scarecrow made spike go under the corn</td>
<td>![Image 2]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instructions: Review the pictures and sentences in each Effect box. Then have students draw the cause for each effect in the Cause box. They may use the book for assistance.
Reading a-Z Leveled Reader Quick Check

Reading a-Z Leveled Reader Quick Check

Name: Andrew  Date: 3/9

1. What does a glassblower do?
   (a) makes things from glass
   (b) blows on glasses
   (c) paints with colors

2. Why does he add color to the bowl?
   (a) so it won't break
   (b) to make it beautiful
   (c) to blow it bigger

3. What makes the glass gooey and runny?
   (a) blowing through the pipe
   (b) rolling the glass on the table
   (c) heat from the oven

4. What would happen if he blew too hard into the pipe?
   (a) might blow a hole in the glass
   (b) colors would be wrong
   (c) bowl would get too cool

5. What does a glassblower do first?
   (a) dips pipe into the hot glass
   (b) adds color to the glass
   (c) blows a bubble of glass

6. Extended Response: Have the child list three things he/she knows are made of glass on the back of this sheet. Have him/her write (or dictate) how they are used.

Teacher Instructions: Sit next to the student and read the first question as you run your finger under the words. Ask the student to wait to answer until you have read all the choices. Repeat them if necessary. Have the student choose the best answer. Repeat with the remaining questions.
## Reading a-Z Leveled Reader Quick Check

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Appendix 12 (continued)

**Level 1**
Glassblowing

| Name: Piper | Date: 3/9 |

1. What does a glassblower do?
   - (a) makes things from glass
   - (b) blows on glasses
   - (c) paints with colors

2. Why does he add color to the bowl?
   - (a) so it won't break
   - (b) to make it beautiful
   - (c) to blow it bigger

3. What makes the glass gooey and runny?
   - (a) blowing through the pipe
   - (b) rolling the glass on the table
   - (c) heat from the oven

4. What would happen if he blew too hard into the pipe?
   - (a) might blow a hole in the glass
   - (b) colors would be wrong
   - (c) bowl would get too cool

5. What does a glassblower do first?
   - (a) dips pipe into the hot glass
   - (b) adds color to the glass
   - (c) blows a bubble of glass

6. **Extended Response:** Have the child list three things he/she knows are made of glass on the back of this sheet. Have him/her write (or dictate) how they are used.

---

**Teacher Instructions:** Sit next to the student and read the first question as you run your finger under the words. Ask the student to wait to answer until you have read all the choices. Repeat them if necessary. Have the student choose the best answer. Repeat with the remaining questions.
Funny

It is funny to be blue.
It is funny to be red.
It is funny to be upside down,
Just standing on your head.

It is funny to be yellow.
It is funny to be pink.
It is funny to be inside out,
And that is what I think!
Happy Valentine's Day

by ____________________________
There once was a frog with a very big heart. Who would be his valentine on Valentine’s Day?

He made a fancy red card and picked a pretty red rose. Who would he give them to on Valentine’s Day?
Just then Betty Bunny hopped by. "Will you be my valentine?"
he asked.

"Not me," said Betty Bunny. "My valentine is a squirrel."
And she hopped away.
Just then Sally Snail crawled by. "Will you be my valentine?"
he asked.

"Not me," said Sally Snail. "My valentine is a spider."
And she crawled away.
Just then Molly Minnow swam by.
"Will you be my valentine?"
he asked.

"Not me," said Molly Minnow.
"My valentine is a turtle."
And she swam away.
The frog hopped home, and at his door was Tammy Toad. She held a red rose and a fancy red card.

"Will you be my valentine?"
she asked.
"Of course!" said the frog.
"Happy Valentine's Day!"
Scaredy Crow

A Reading a-Z Level F Invented Reader
Word Count: 157

"Let's sleep here," Spike said.
"Is that the farmer over there?"
Billy asked.

Reading a-z
Visit www.readinga-z.com
for thousands of books and materials.

"I don't think so," Spike said.
"I think it's a scarecrow.
But he does not scare me!" said Spike.

That night, Spike did get scared.
First, an arm moved.
Spike hid under the corn.
Then, both arms and the corn moved. Spike hid under the tractor.

“Spike, why are you hiding?” Billy asked.
“I am hiding from the farmer,” said Spike.

The wind stopped blowing. The corn and the scarecrow stopped moving. Everything was still.

Billy thought. He knew it was not a farmer. He knew it was a scarecrow. He thought about why the scarecrow moved.
="It is not the farmer moving," Billy said to Spike.
"It is the wind moving the scarecrow," said Billy.
"Don't be scared."

Billy said, "Now I know."
"The wind moved the scarecrow and the corn."
"Oh, no! Silly me," said Spike.
Long I

Name: Elizabeth

Kite has the long-i sound. This sound is often spelled by i and silent e.

Kite

Name the pictures. Circle each picture whose name has the long-i sound.

1. Kite
2. Tape Dispenser
3. Pie
4. Beehive
5. Bicycle
6. Pig
7. Tire
8. Cloud
9. Lunch Box
10. Number 5

Auditory discrimination of long
Long I

Name: [redacted]

Read each sentence and the words beside it. Write the word that makes sense in the sentence.

1. Jill will ___ dive ___ into the lake.
2. Do you like to play with ___ kites ___?
3. The ___ hive ___ is in the pines.
4. Kim will ___ fix ___ the tire on the car.
5. I like to hike in the ___ hills ___.
6. Mike will ___ ride ___ on his bike.
The groundhog sleeps in his home in the ground.

On February 2, he awakens.

He peeks his head out of his hole in the ground.

If he sees his shadow, he runs back to his home. That means six more weeks of winter weather.

If he doesn't see his shadow, he stays outside. That means spring weather will soon come.

I hope this happens.
Write the word that completes each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>find</th>
<th>after</th>
<th>old</th>
<th>new</th>
<th>terrific</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Dad has __________ socks for __________

2. Can you help me __________ my glasses?

3. We go to the park __________ school.
   We have a __________ time.

Match the word to its meaning.

4. done something you make or invent
5. work finished
6. creation to do a job
Today Is the Day!

Cut.
Glue to match.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fact</th>
<th>Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A groundhog lives underground.</td>
<td>A groundhog is cute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A groundhog looks funny.</td>
<td>A groundhog has fur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A groundhog is an animal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Groundhogs have a funny name.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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