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The Effects of Feedback on Student Learning in a Kindergarten Classroom

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An Action Research Report

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Abstract

This action research study was conducted in a kindergarten classroom at a public elementary school, and it included 18 students, 10 boys and eight girls. My study examined the effect of feedback on learning by utilizing rubrics and target statements to increase student self-motivation and engagement. Data was collected from a pre- and post- student feedback form, a rubric, a student observation form, a student discussion form and a teacher reflection journal. The student observation forms and student discussion forms indicated that students displayed a higher level of self-motivation, engagement in the learning environment and acquisition of the skills necessary to demonstrate proficiency in reading. By using the feedback from rubrics and target statements students were able to do self-evaluations and peer-assessments that promoted engagement and self-motivation. Implications are that providing feedback helps students to become more engaged and self-motivated in their learning which in turn improves their ability to acquire the necessary skills.

What ignites a student's self-motivation and engagement to drive their own learning? As I observed my students working I noticed they lacked the self-motivation and engagement that is necessary to facilitate their own learning. As a kindergarten teacher, I am always looking for ways to help my students understand what my expectations are and how they can be successful and confident learners. I questioned whether incorporating rubrics and target statements would help students gather feedback about their skill acquisition, that in turn would lead them to become self-motivated and engaged in their learning. The next question was how to implement them effectively. My project question: What effects will feedback, using the rubric and target statements in the classroom, have on student motivation and engagement, and thus student learning and skill acquisition?

"A rubric is a scoring tool used to evaluate the quality of students' constructed responses, such as, written compositions, oral presentations, or science projects" (Popham, 1997 p. 1). Popham goes on to state, "rubrics have three essential features, evaluative criteria, quality definitions, and a scoring strategy"(1997, p.1). The role of rubrics within the classroom according to Goodrich (as cited in Goodrich, 2005) "is an assessment tool that lists the criteria for a piece of work and articulates gradations of quality for each criterion, from excellent to poor" (1997, p. 1). Birky found "with the focus placed on accountability, as a result of No Child Left Behind (2001), assessment has come to the forefront of education" (Birky, 2012, p.19). Brookhart found that "Good assessment yields good information about the results of instruction"(1999, para. 1). She clarifies that if a student is going to participate fully in managing their own learning they must understand what is expected of them and how to demonstrate their mastery of the

skills. She goes further by stating, "Sound assessment and grading practices help teachers improve their own instruction, improve students' motivation, focus students' effort, and increase students' achievement" (1999, para.1).

Brookhart (2013) describes four types of rubrics: analytical, holistic, general and task-specific. Analytical rubrics are more effective in a classroom because they evaluate several criterion and indicate the skills demonstrated. The analytical rubric provides relevant information to the teacher of student learning, provides the student with actionable feedback, offers formative assessment and can be adapted for summative assessment. Holistic rubrics are constructed to evaluate all criteria together. These rubrics take less time to create and score but do not provide feedback for students. The holistic rubric is best used for a final grade. General rubrics use criteria and descriptions of performance over a variety of tasks. The general rubric helps to connect assessment with instruction, can be reused, provide the student with a general understanding of how they are doing, and they are easier for students to co-create. Task-specific rubrics are scored for a specific task and are easy to score. These are single use rubrics and are not designed to be shared with students and are considered highly reliable.

Andrade "warns against approaches that limit the effectiveness of rubrics and encourages teachers to take the simple steps toward ensuring the development and use of rubrics that are valid, reliable and fair" (2005 p. 28). Rubrics are a means to communicate expectations, so students do not need to ask, "Why are we doing this?" or "I do not get what to do!" When used, rubrics clearly explain the expectations and skills to be demonstrated.

The rubric does not replace quality instruction in the classroom. Teachers need to

develop thoughtful lessons in which they model the skills and allow time for questions. When first introducing rubrics, teachers need to explain the expectations, criteria and the skills their students will need to demonstrate at each level. As students revise their work they need teachers to give feedback and guidance. Students get a clear understanding of the learning objectives when teachers use a rubric and display related samples of student work as examples. Students gain a feeling of confidence that the work is "do-able!"

Andrade (2005) found "rubrics orient teachers towards their goals. Rubrics help teachers clarify learning goals, design instruction that address those goals, communicate the goals to students, give feedback to students on their progress towards the goals, and judge final products in terms of the degree to which the goals are met" (2005, p. 28). Rubrics provide focused feedback from teachers, students (self-evaluation) and peer assessment. "Permanent change in behavior or skill (i.e., learning) can happen much quicker with peer assessment and evaluation by using a rubric" (Birky, 2012 p. 20).

There are several articles and websites that can help a teacher begin the process of developing rubrics for their classroom. One method is to co-create a rubric with your students. To co-create a rubric students need to have prior knowledge about what makes a rubric a useful tool by first experiencing rubrics designed by the teacher. As students begin to understand the purpose of a rubrics' criterion and skill levels, they are able to help create rubrics with their teachers.

Reddy and Watanabe & Hall-Kenyon's (2011) found that students as young as kindergarten benefit by assisting in the development of rubrics. They discovered that students have a better sense of what the essential learning is and how to demonstrate their skill level when they participate in the creation of rubrics. Students are empowered to be

active participants in their learning by using higher levels of questioning, self-evaluation, and peer assessment.

Andrade notes "that instructional rubrics help give more informative feedback to students and that this feedback is profoundly educative" (2005, p. 20). Formative feedback is an active and intentional feedback process in which the student and the teacher gather evidence with the intention to promote student development (Brookings, 2012).

In a study by Watanabe and Hall-Kenyon (2011) it was evident that students use feedback to engage in their learning during a writing lesson. "They emphasize that the guided writing context is an appropriate and important venue to encourage, practice and teach writing to young children. More specifically the study suggests that kindergarteners' writing increases in complexity as they participate in guided writing lessons focused on story elements" (2011 p. 78). These findings show, as students are given the opportunity and guidance to write, they begin to write more by connecting their thinking to the text written. Watanabe & Hall-Kenyon acknowledged, "the use of oral, written and graphic types of text in each writing sample provide a more accurate representation of the student authors' thinking"(2011, p. 278).

Revision is an expectation of all writers beginning in kindergarten. Chase & Fink (2012) note that one teacher's desire to help her kindergarten students with the revision process led her to incorporate their inherent artistic ability to draw for understanding, making this integral to her lesson. She also noted, "how important the development of a few essential practices was for determining what "best work" means and how it might be achieved with children so young." The teacher in the study noted, "the students who were

dependent on adults took fewer risks, but students that took risks and experimented with new ideas made more progress"(2012, p. 166). The writings of Gullatt, Stevenson and Deasy (as cited in Chase & Fink, 2012) noted that by integrating the arts students are more confident to take risks. They stated that incorporating the arts promotes creative thinking, problem solving, focus and persistence, which foster participation and engagement in learning.

According to the study by Chase and Fink (2012 p. 167-170) there were five essential instructional practices that contributed to the success and growth of each child and laid the foundation for their later comfort and facility with revision in their work, particularly writing.

These practices include:

1. Co-developing rubrics

2. Collaborating and sharing what they know

3. Conducting collaborative critiques

4. Looking, noticing, and describing

5. Tools of the trade: providing models, technical assistance and tools

My project was conducted in my kindergarten classroom made up of 18 students, 10 boys and eight girls. The project took place during our 90-minute literacy block each morning. My students are strong high average to low average students, but they seemed to be missing the motivation and engagement in their own learning. It concerned me because a student that does not fully participate in their instruction will not experience the appropriate level of success. The first step I took was to read the literature around rubrics in the classroom and what, if any, benefits there were for students. All the literature I read

led me to decide to use a rubric as my tool. I also decided that coupling the rubric with target or "I can" statements was crucial for the students to begin to relate and communicate what and how they are learning.

As I considered the use of rubrics and target statements in the classroom, I realized that I also needed to incorporate the use of formative feedback. Formative feedback offers strategies that teachers can use to gather feedback about students or to give feedback to students on their progress. The feedback given to students instructs them on specific strategies to use to improve weak areas. The next steps were to introduce self-evaluation or assessment and peer feedback.

Description of the Research Process

I collected data for my research from April to May 2014, by using several data collecting tools I created. Tools used in my research were a student feedback form (see appendix A), a student discussion form (see appendix B), a teacher reflection form (see appendix C), a student observation form (see appendix D), a weekly rubric (see appendix E) and posted target "I can" statements (see appendix F) that corresponded with the skills taught.

My project began by having my students complete a student feedback form. This form helped me develop a baseline of my students' understanding of their learning in the areas of reading and writing. The student feedback also helped in determining if they understood the expectations. A rubric was used from the previous unit to introduce and discuss the parts of the rubric. I chose this rubric, in order to draw on their prior knowledge, limiting the number of new concepts I was introducing together. I modeled how students could demonstrate their understanding of the skills using the different levels

assessed. I also added our first target statements that correlated with the concepts. We talked about how the "I can" statements help students communicate what they are now able to do because of their learning.

Over the first two weeks, we practiced using the rubric. First, I used a rubric to score students on the following criteria: letter sound recognition; blending sounds to create consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words; identifying high frequency words accurately; drawing conclusions using pictures and text; classifying and categorizing using pictures and words. Then I gave them feedback on what skill level they demonstrated. The feedback helped the student identify the skills they were doing well on, and generate strategies to improve the areas with which they were struggling. During this week, I also modeled self-evaluation techniques by asking them what skills they thought they were displaying and which skills they wanted to work on improving. Over the last two weeks, I recorded my observations in my teacher reflection journal. The teacher reflection form asked what I was noticing was going well, what specific areas were not going well, adjustments required, and a general reflection of the lesson.

When students developed an understanding of using the rubric and receiving feedback, and the self-evaluation methods, they could work independently. During this process they used the rubric to assess and evaluate their own skill acquisition: remembering the name of the letter and letter sound; blending sounds to create CVC words fluently; reproducing the high frequency words; using the comprehension strategy for the week.

Introducing self-evaluation was an easier process than expected, because each time I met with students in regards to their progress I had them share within the

parameters of the rubric and target statements. Using the language of the new tools, the students discussed what they saw as their strengths and areas that were weak. They knew what they needed help with and could ask for this, thus driving their own learning.

At first students scored themselves as either a 1 or 3 without being able to support the score. As we talked about which skills they were demonstrating, several of them realized that they were scoring themselves too high or too low. Students began to expect more of themselves as they began to understand the standards and the level of skill required to demonstrate proficiency.

The final step was to introduce peer feedback. Peer feedback is when two students complete activities together around the skills they are learning and then give feedback to each other on what their partner did a good job with and one thing to work on. As with all of the other areas, I first modeled how this would look and sound. For example, I gave constructive ideas to a student about how they were doing on the skill of "retelling" using detail about a story they read to me. I first modeled sharing areas that the student did well on, then brought up one particular thing they could do better on to help them when retelling. I then had students practice with their partner as I watched and listened and gave feedback.

Providing peer feedback was a hard process for the students and took a lot of our literacy block time, especially at the beginning.

I used most of the forms to track information during the last three weeks of my project. The first week I needed to work directly with the students one on one, and then all of us came together to discuss what went well and what needed more work. As students began using the rubric to assess their own skill level, they paired with their

learning partner to provide peer feedback to one another and met with me for feedback on what I was seeing and hearing from them. Several times a week I recorded observations and met with students one on one to record the information from the student discussion form. Twice a week I wrote in my teacher reflection journal. Each week I would complete the summary form of the observations and student discussions from the week.

During the last week of my project students continued to use the rubric to self evaluate, provide feedback and work with me. I reviewed the "I can" statements daily to help students continue to use the language to communicate what they were learning. I was able to spend more time observing my students, individually and with their partners, and meeting with students to complete the student discussion form. I administered the post student feedback form, and we discussed what went well over the past four weeks and what we did not like and why. I then completed my last summary and reflection form.

This section described the multiple tools used to gather information throughout the action research project in an attempt to answer what effects feedback, from the rubric and target statements in the classroom, have on student motivation and engagement. The following are the results of data in the form of student feedback (pre and post), observation summary, student discussion, and rubric scores collected during the action research project, followed by a description of discoveries found throughout the action research project.

Analysis of Data

I began my project by administering the student feedback form. This form asked the students eight questions; students circled the corresponding face that best answered

the question. These questions provided data showing whether student's perception of reading changes with the use of rubrics and target statements. To indicate always, students circled the smiley face, to indicate sometimes, students circled the straight face and to indicate never, students circled the sad face. The form was designed with a limited range of answer choices to keep it simple and limit confusion.

The first and fourth questions were phrased as the statements, "I like reading." and "I like writing." The results from the baseline and final student feedback form are represented in Figure 1.
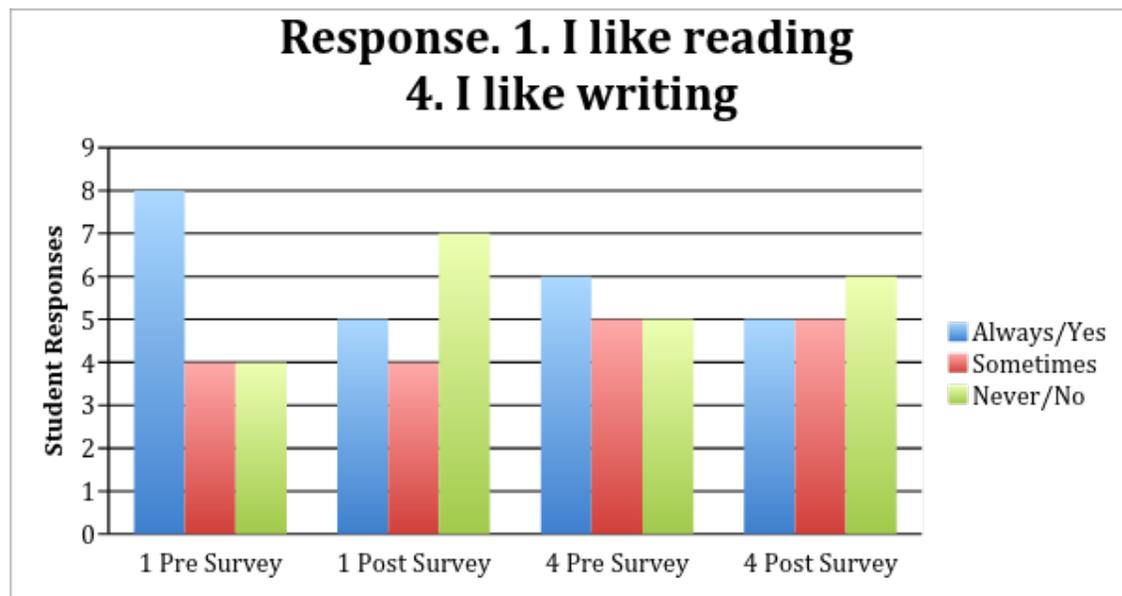
Figure 1. I like reading. I like writing.

The pre- and post- feedback response for the statement "I like reading" is the largest spread from this feedback form. It was interesting to see the downward change from the pre- to the post- feedback form in both of these statements. There was a change from the majority of the students indicating they always like reading in the pre- to the majority of the students indicating they never like reading in the post- feedback. I would like to be able to ask my students what made such a marked change in their attitude from

the beginning of my project to the end. I wonder if these responses were due to the changes in expectations and procedures during our reading and writing time?

Figure 2 represents the second, third and sixth questions, all in the form of statements and all addressing comprehension.
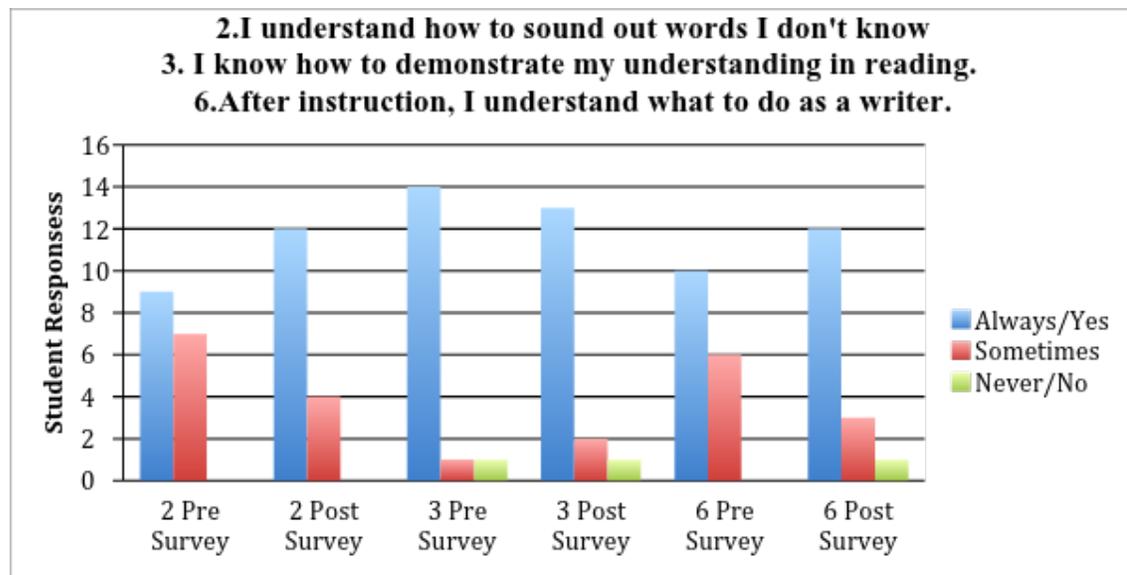
Figure 2.

Question two states "I know how to sound out words I don't know". Question three states, "I know what my teacher expects and how to show my understanding of what I am reading." Question six states, "When my teacher teaches, I understand what I am supposed to do as a writer."

Questions three and six both refer to the students' perception of their comprehension of what is expected of them as a reader and writer respectively. This perception did not change substantially from pre- to post- feedback form. However I do wonder whether the feedback from the reading rubric affected how students perceived their writing knowledge. The last two questions indicate if students feel they are learning

a lot and if they enjoy learning in our room. I asked these questions to learn about their perception and attitude about learning in the classroom.

Figure 3 illustrates the results to question 5. This question was also in the form of a statement "The work we do in writing is..." where the answer choices were Just Right, Too Easy, and Too Hard. The purpose of asking this question was to gain an understanding of the students' perspective of the expectations on them as a writer.
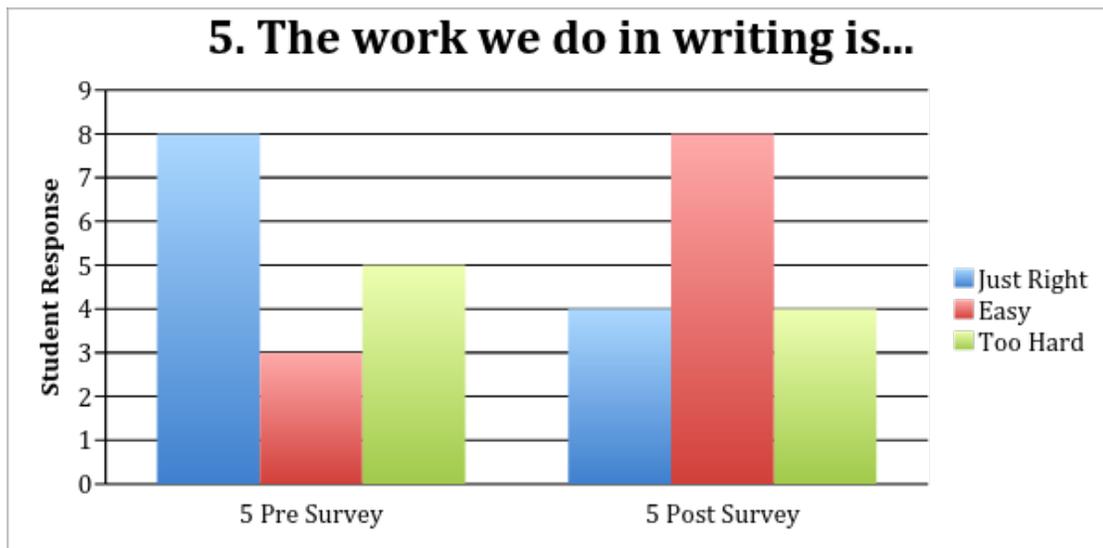
Figure 3.

Responses to question 5 showed great change over the research period. It was interesting to see that at the start of the research the majority of the class felt that the writing we did was "just right", however the results of the post-feedback revealed that they felt work we were doing as writers was "easy". Were the students feeling more confident by using these tools, and was that why they perceived the work easier? It would be interesting to gain insight on these results by asking students why they responded as they did on the pre- and post- feedback. Did the feedback they were getting from their reading rubric and understanding of how to demonstrate their skill level play a part in their answers?

The results of the student feedback form alone did not reveal enough change to indicate that the feedback provided by the rubric and the target statement, in fact, improved students' self-motivation or engagement. However, when you look at the teacher observations and the rubric scores in conjunction with the student feedback form some change is apparent. The change was in attitude. There was greater participation with their classmates, as well as engagement with the activities designed and used.

Observation notes were the second piece of data collected. The purpose of these notes was to record student engagement and self-motivation during our reading activities as well as when they were doing self-evaluations and peer assessments. Student on-task behaviors include eye contact with the speaker, participation by raising their hand to contribute and applying concepts to their learning. I observed that although students may not always sit still, those who were wiggling appeared to be able to stay focused and participate during discussions. Off-task behaviors such as having conversations not related to reading or not being able to respond when called upon were exhibited less as the study progressed. I also observed students, although appearing as though they were not paying attention, were able to repeat the learning that was being shared by peers.

The observation notes also included notes of re-occurring language being used by the students and teacher. Teacher behaviors included repeating and clarifying student thinking and ideas. The phrases used were: "Who can repeat that? Can you explain your thinking? Do you agree or disagree?" During the discussion, the teacher was using more questions than statements. The students repeatedly used the phrases: "Can you repeat that, please? I agree or disagree because..." Within the phrases and repeated language of teacher and peers, the students were engaging in the practice of being able to explain their

thinking. I observed that students became more supportive of each other's thought process by offering clarification, assistance or re-teaching a skill.

The observation process revealed the most change in students' reading process and the ability to communicate about their learning. Students started out curious and a little hesitant to learn about rubrics and how they inform the learning expectation and what needs to be demonstrated for proficiency. However, once I modeled and had students practicing using the rubric to get and give feedback, to help guide self-evaluations, and finally to offer peer-feedback, students began to use the language and became more self-motivated and engaged. I also observed that not all of the students found it natural to go from direct instruction to a self-directed instruction.

I had a couple of students with autism, and this change affected their routine, so more work was focused on aiding them. These students required more foundation, explanation, time to process and practice to develop a sense of comfort. Because of the time of year and the length of the study, these two students were not able to build confidence around this new process. By the end however, they did show more engagement.

By the conclusion of my study, all of the students had shown positive change by becoming actively engaged and self-motivated in their learning environment.

I observed that using the rubric to provide feedback to students could be challenging due to the time that a lesson may take. When students were engaged in their learning they were reflective, shared and expanded on their thoughts. This was an emerging skill. This feedback process takes longer than if a teacher lectures on a concept or idea. It creates difficulty when a teacher tries to teach a concept which is hindered by

time restraints.

The student discussion form was the next piece of data collected. During the student discussions, students were asked to state the target statement that they were working on at the time. Then students were asked to provide information on how they were feeling about what they were learning in reading. They were also asked, "What are some of the strategies you are using to improve your learning?" The next question asked, "Are there areas that you are struggling with in your reading and writing this week?" And finally, "What can I do to help you?"

I met with students twice a week to complete the student discussion form. This form was slow to produce relevant information because I was not able to conduct this discussion more often to help students understand what I was asking. Figure 4 shows that in the beginning, only three to four students were able to remember the target statement and what it meant. However, by the end of my study 50% or nine of my 18 students were successful in stating the target statement and how to demonstrate the skills. Students' responses to the next three questions provided the same results. In the beginning, 50% or nine of my 18 students were able to give limited relevant information about how they felt they were doing in reading, to list some of the strategies they were using and to indicate areas they found challenging. By the end of my study, 78% or 14 of my 18 students were successful in giving responses that articulated how they felt they were doing as a reader, listed many of the strategies they had been using and indicated areas needing improvement.

Student Discussions

Before action research	After action research
Students were asked to state the target statement that they are working on ➢ 17% (3 of 18) of the students are able to recite our target statement. **Students were asked to provide information on how they were feeling about what they were learning in reading.** ➢ 50% of the students gave relevant information **What are some of the strategies you are using to improve your learning?** **Strategies shared:** ● Sounding out the words, ● Using the beginning sound, ● Reread to understand, ● Chunk the word, ● Use what makes sense in the sentence.	**Students were asked to state the target statement that they are working on** ➢ 50% of the students are able to recite our target statement. **Students were asked to provide information on how they were feeling about what they were learning in reading.** ➢ 78% (14 of 18) of the students gave relevant information **What are some of the strategies you are using to improve your learning?** **Strategies shared:** ● Sounding out the words, ● Using beginning sound, ● Breaking the words into parts, ● Using the picture and thinking about what made sense in the sentence ● Using questions to understand the story, ● Writing down new words found in their reading, ● Stretching out the words in their writing and recording all the sounds, ● Rereading their sentences to make sure they make sense.

Figure 4. Results of Student Discussion Form

In the beginning, all of my students had to be led through this form but with each consecutive week more of them were able to provide feedback on their own with little or no prompting. By the end of my study, students shared they felt good to great about what they were learning in reading. They gave examples of working on asking questions

during their reading, making connections and predictions, sharing with their partner, writing about differences and similarities in stories and retelling the details of their story. Some of the strategies they shared that they were working on were: decoding strategies, using beginning sound, breaking the words into parts, using the picture to decode words, and thinking about what made sense in the sentence. They used questions to understand the story, wrote down new words found in their reading, stretched out the words in their writing, recorded all the sounds, and reread their sentences to make sure they made sense.

Their answers to the question, "What can I do to help?" demonstrated that the students in my classroom were becoming more self-motivated. At the beginning of the study, the students said things like "I don't know" or "keep teaching me". By the end, students shared the activities they were working on that were helping them. They also asked for activities that would help them develop specific skills. Watching my students become actively engaged in the choices they made to help improve their knowledge was very exciting.

The last data collection was a rubric. To help students' understanding of the expectations in reading, a student rubric was developed. This rubric was used first by the students to assist them in their self-evaluation of their skills. Then the teacher and student sat down together to discuss how the student scored himself or herself. The teacher followed this providing feedback on the students' identified areas of strength and weakness. The teacher presented specific strategies for the student to practice during instruction time.

These skills were practiced and mastered independently or with a classmate through hands-on activities (moveable alphabet, vocabulary cards, etc.), computer sites

(www.starfall.com and www.ABCya.com) and leveled readers. As seen in Figure 5

below, most of the students demonstrated improved skills by one or two levels. However,

several students showed no change in phonemic awareness or in their knowledge of high

frequency words as they were already working at a first grade level at the beginning of

my data collection.

Unit 9 Reading Rubric

	Phonemic Awareness and Phonics			High Frequency			Comprehension		
Students	B	F	C	B	F	C	B	F	C
S-1	1	2	+1	1	2	+1	1	2	+1
A-1	1	3	+2	3	3	0	2	3	+1
A-2	1	2	+1	1	2	+1	1	2	+1
M-1	3	3	0	3	3	0	2	3	+1
J	2	3	+1	2	3	+1	1	2	+1
M-2	1	2	+1	1	2	+1	1	3	+2
L-1	2	3	+1	2	3	+1	1	3	+2
E-1	1	2	+1	2	3	+1	1	2	+1
A-3	2	3	+1	2	3	+1	1	2	+1
T-1	1	3	+2	2	3	+1	1	3	+2
E-2	2	3	+1	2	3	+1	2	3	+1
T-2	2	3	+1	3	3	0	2	3	+1
S-2	2	3	+1	2	3	+1	1	2	+1
K	3	3	0	2	3	+1	1	3	+2
A-4	2	3	+1	2	3	+1	1	3	+2
R	2	3	+1	2	3	+1	1	3	+2
L-2	1	2	+1	1	2	+1	1	2	+1
A-5	2	3	+1	1	3	+2	1	3	+2

Key: B=Baseline Rubric Score, F= Final Rubric Score, C=Change
Scored Levels: 1=below level, 2=on level, 3=beyond level

Figure 5. Baseline and final rubric score.

For students to score a 1 on the rubric they needed continuous support to recall

the letter names and sounds, to blend CVC words, to identify high frequency words, and

to do the comprehension skills. A student scored 2 if they demonstrated an occasional need for support to recall letter names and sounds and to blend CVC words, knew most of the high frequency words but were not fluent, and could usually complete the comprehension skills. A score of 3 meant students required no support with phonemic skills and were able to recite all high frequency words with fluency and could complete the comprehension skills independently.

After the final student feedback form, I discussed with the students our new learning. We explored what they thought went well and what did not go well during our work with rubrics and our target statements.

Some of the things that went well during our study were: students liked working with their partners, helping each other learn, and working at the centers and computers on the activities. One of the areas that the majority of students liked was using the feedback tools like whiteboards, the "How am I doing" stop light for students to indicate if they felt they needed extra help at the end of lessons, and the thumbs up and thumbs down for sharing if they agreed or disagreed.

Things that did not go well: students did not like the amount of time to introduce and practice using the rubric and target statements, learning about and practicing self-evaluation and participating in peer assessments. A couple of my students also shared that they did not like the "new stuff". During this discussion, several students said they did not like spending so much time practicing their reading for our visit to the Nursing Home with our Book Buddies. I cannot help but wonder if this extra reading practice affected their response to the post question "I like reading." Since I did not analyze the student feedback until after the school year ended, I was not able to ask them for clarification.

The purpose of my action research project was to address the question of whether feedback, from the rubric and target statements in the classroom, would elevate self-motivation and engagement in their learning process and thus facilitate skill acquisition. My action research data produced results that showed an increase in student understanding of assignment expectations after the completion of the peer-assessment and self-evaluation processes. The data also revealed that with the completion of peer-assessment and self-evaluation, and using the rubric and target statements, students showed an increase in motivation and engagement. The data analyzed brings ideas for further implementation of rubrics used as formative tools.

Action Plan

After conducting my action research, I discovered that through the use of rubrics and target statements, I was able to provide feedback to students that helped them become more self-motivated and engaged in their learning. As students become more able to apply the feedback provided by the teacher, they were more effective in their own self-evaluation and in giving feedback to peers during peer-assessment. In the future, I hope these students will apply some of what we learned and request a rubric if one is not provided, or ask for guidelines on the expectations for learning as well as for examples of the skills they need to demonstrate.

I learned from my observations and the student discussion form that my students were the most self-motivated and engaged when they participated in self-evaluation and peer-assessment. Students learned to look critically at their own level of learning to determine what skills they were successfully demonstrating and which skills they needed more work on. They were then able to seek out activities within the classroom to practice

these skills either independently or with a learning partner. I hope the students will continue to apply these skills to their learning as well as to assist their classmates.

This research demonstrates that kindergarten aged students can be more self-motivated and engaged in their learning if provided meaningful feedback from instructional tools such as rubrics and target statements. These tools help students to understand the expectations as well as the skill levels they need to demonstrate. My research revealed that students can incorporate self-evaluation and peer assessments that will help them make changes in their own learning. By sharing these newly learned skills, they will hopefully encourage their peers to be motivated learners.

I plan to take the knowledge I gained through my research and apply it over the coming years by providing actionable feedback with the use of rubrics and target statements in the areas of writing, math, science and the arts. Another benefit of this research would be students taking more of a leadership role in their own learning. By having a better understanding of the expectations, students will be able to ask higher-level questions about the content and will be able to demonstrate a higher level of mastery.

A potential future research question would be: "What are the effects on student learning if students co-created a rubric with the teacher?" It would also be interesting to discover, "What are the effects on student growth if all teachers in the school used rubrics in their content areas to foster a higher understanding of expectations and the levels of skills to be demonstrated to show mastery?" Another research topic could be to explore the impact of using a rubric to communicate the skill level mastered on the report card, otherwise known as a standard based report card. Learning more about using a standard-

based report card is a topic that several of the staff at our school is interested in pursuing. The staff as a whole feels that our present report card does a poor job of communicating which skills students have mastered and specifically what skills need to be improved to show a higher level of proficiency to the students and their parents.

I envision action research becoming a tool that I can personally use, as well as one our staff as a whole can use, to improve learning and the environment of the classroom. I look forward to sharing what I have learned through my action research with the staff at my school. What I hope to demonstrate to our staff is how using action research in our classrooms can impact our instruction and student learning in meaningful ways.

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Student Feedback Tool

Dear Students,

I want to know how you feel about reading and writing. I am going to read each question to you out loud. Then you will mark the answer that best shows how you feel. Thanks for helping me learn more about you.

Mrs. Gunlock

---

1. I like reading.

Yes   Sometimes   No

---

2. I understand how to sound out words I do not know.

Yes   Sometimes   No

---

3. I know what my teacher expects me to do to show I understand what I am reading.

Yes   Sometimes   No

4. I like writing.

Yes   Sometimes   No

---

5. The work we do in writing is…

Just Right   Easy   Too Hard

---

6. When my teacher teaches, I understand what I am supposed to do as a writer.

Yes   Sometimes   No

---

7. I am learning a lot in school.

Yes   Sometimes   No

---

8. Learning is fun in this classroom.

Yes   Sometimes   No

Appendix B

Student Discussion

Name _____ Date _____
What is your target statement you are working on this week?

How do you feel about what you are learning in reading this week?

What are some strategies you are using to improve your learning?

Are there areas that you are struggling with in your reading and writing this week?

What can I do to help you?

Name _____ Date _____
What is your target statement you are working on this week?

How do you feel about what you are learning in reading this week?

What are some strategies you are using to improve your learning?

Are there areas that you are struggling with in your reading and writing this week?

What can I do to help you?

Appendix C

Teacher Reflection Journal

Date_____

What has gone well today?

What are areas that did not go well?

What adjustments if any are needed?

Reflections:

Date_____

What has gone well today?

What are areas that did not go well?

What adjustments if any are needed?

Reflections:

Appendix D

Student Observation

Observation Summary	Date:

Observation Summary	Date:

Appendix E

Rubrics
Unit 9 Week 1 Rubric

Skills	1	2	3
Phonemic Awareness and Phonics	I need help to know the /g/ and /w/ sound with the letter Gg, Ww and I have difficulty blending these words: rug, mug, gag, wag, wed, gig, wet, hug.	I usually remember the /g/, /w/ sound with the letter Gg, Ww and I can blend most of these words: rug, mug, gag, wag, wed, gig, wet, hug with only occasional support.	I can always remember the /g/, /w/ sound with the letter Gg, I can blend these words: rug, mug, gag, wag, wed, gig, wet, hug.
High Frequency Words (she, he)	I need help to identify the "must know" words.	I know most of the "must know" words correctly, but I cannot say them quickly.	I can say all the "must know" words with correct and fast.
Comprehension	I need support classifying and categorizing using the pictures and words.	I can identify most classifying and categorizing using the pictures and words.	I can always classifying and categorizing by using the pictures and words.

rug,   mug,   gag,   wag,   wed,   gig,

wet,   hug

Student name:
Score:
      Teacher: ____
       Note:

      Student: ____

Appendix E

Rubrics
Unit 9 Week 2 Rubric

Skills	1	2	3
Phonemic Awareness and Phonics	I need help to know the /x/, /v/ sound with the letter Xx, Vv and I have difficulty blending these words vet, van, cat, ox lox, box, fox, Rex, fix, mix, six, ax, wax, tax.	I usually remember the /x/, /v/ sound with the letter Xx, Vv and I can blend most of these words: vet, van, cat, ox lox, box, fox, Rex, fix, mix, six, ax, wax, tax with only occasional support.	I can always remember the /x/, /v/ sound with the letter Xx, Vv and blend these words vet, van, cat, ox lox, box, fox, Rex, fix, mix, six, ax, wax, tax.
High Frequency Words (look)	I need help to identify the "must know" words.	I know most of the "must know" words correctly, but I cannot say them quickly.	I can say all the "must know" words with correct and fast.
Comprehension	I need help to compare and contrast using the pictures and words.	I usually compare and contrast using the pictures and words.	I can compare and contrast using the pictures and words.

vet,   van,   cat,   ox   lox,   box,

fox,   Rex,   fix,   mix,   six,   ax,

wax,   tax

Student name:
Score:
   Teacher: ____
      Note:

   Student: ____

Appendix E

Rubrics
Unit 9 Week 3 Rubric

Skills	1	2	3
Phonemic Awareness and Phonics	I need help to know the /ks/, /v/, /g/, /w/ sounds with the letters Xx, Vv, Gg, Ww and I have difficulty blending these words vet, van, cat, can, ox, lox, box, fox, Rec, fix, mix, six, ax, wax, tax.	I usually remember the /ks/, /v/, /g/, /w/ sound with the letters Xx, Vv, Gg, Ww and I can blend most of these words: vet, van, cat, can, ox, lox, box, fox, Rec, fix, mix, six, ax, wax, tax with only occasional support.	I can always remember the /ks/, /v/, /g/, /w/ sound with the letters Xx, Vv, Gg, Ww and blend these words vet, van, cat, can, ox, lox, box, fox, Rec, fix, mix, six, ax, wax, tax.
High Frequency (she, he, look)	I need help to identify the "must know" words.	I know most of the "must know" words correctly, but I cannot say them quickly.	I can say all the "must know" words with correct and fast.
Comprehension	I need help to distinguish between fantasy and reality using the pictures and words.	I usually distinguish between fantasy and reality using the pictures and text.	I can distinguish between fantasy and reality using the pictures and text.

vet, **van,** **cat,** **can,** **ox,** **lox,**

box, **fox,** **Rec,** **fix,** **mix,** **six,**

ax, **wax,** **tax**

Student name:
Score:
Teacher: ____
Note:
Student: ____

Target Statements

Reading Standards for Literature
I can ask and answer questions about what was read. K.RL.1
I can retell a story. K.RL.2
I can name the characters, settings, and events in a story. K.RL.3
I can ask and answer questions about words I do not know in a story. K.RL.4
I can tell the difference between stories, poems, and other things to read. K.RL.5
I can tell about the author and the illustrator of a story. K.RL.6
I can tell how the story and the pictures go together. K.Rl.7
I can compare characters and events from different stories. K.RL.9
I can take part in group reading activities. K.RL.10

Reading Standards for Informational Text
I can ask and answer questions about what I read. K.RI.1
I can tell the topic and details of a story. K.RI.2
I can tell how two people, places, or things are connected in a story. K.RI.3
I can ask and answer questions about words I do not know in a story. K.RI.4
I can name the parts of a book.K.RI.5
I can name the author and the illustrator and tell what they do. K.RI.6
I can tell how the pictures and the words go together. K.RI.7
I can tell what the author is thinking and why. K.RI.8

Reading Standards: Foundational Skills

I can tell how a book is organized. K.RF.1

1a. Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.

1b. I know that written words represent spoken words.

1c. I know that words are separated by spaces in print.

1d. I know and can name all of the letters of the alphabet.

I can use words, syllables, and sounds. K.RF.2

2a. I can name words that rhyme.

2b. I can count and say syllables in words.

2c. I can put together word parts. I can take apart word parts.

2d. I can read CVC words. I can say each sound of a word.

2e. I can change sounds in words to make new words.

I can decode words. K.RF.3

3a. I know the sounds of each consonant.

3b. I can spell words with short and long vowel sounds.

3c. I can read sight words.

3d. I can tell how two words that sound alike are different.

I can understand what I read. K.RF.4