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Developing Fluent First-Grade Readers Using Repeated Readings

An Action Research Report

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Developing Fluent First-Grade Readers Using Repeated Readings

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in fulfillment of final requirements for the MAED degree

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate what effects, if any, the implementation of repeated readings, as an intervention, has on first-grade students' reading fluency. Baseline data was collected, and twelve first-grade students were chosen to participate in the small group repeated reading intervention. Throughout the six-week repeated readings intervention, students practiced short vowel word lists, short leveled passages, and sight word lists until these words became automatic and fluency and accuracy increased. Data collected during this study included benchmark Fountas and Pinnell reading level assessments, benchmark AIMSweb R-CBM assessments, AIMSweb R-CBM progress monitoring, short grade-level passages and sight word lists, weekly student reading surveys, and teacher observation notes. The data showed an overall increase in students' word recognition, fluency, and accuracy of first-grade text. The results of this study indicate that the repeated readings intervention had a positive effect on students' reading fluency, and the researchers will continue to implement the intervention with first-grade students.

Keywords: reading fluency, repeated readings, word lists, word recognition

Many eager first-graders will enter the school year with the feeling that this year is going to be even better than the last. They come in with the absence of fear because the school seems less scary, faces seem more familiar, and they are excited to see their friends from last year. They come in as confident learners because they remember the letter names and sounds, they can sound out words, read short books, and they can write their name independently. The day arrives when the teacher announces she will be calling on students individually to complete a reading assessment; it only takes one minute, and they should just try their best. She smiles at them because she knows they can do it. Many first-graders read the first word automatically, then begin to sound out the second and third words ever so slowly, letter-by-letter. They look up for reassurance just as the teacher says “stop.” These committed first-graders have just mentally completed a 5K race in their minds, and many will have read less than ten words in one minute. Therefore, teaching effective reading strategies becomes the major focus in first-grade classrooms as educators are required to prepare students to become fluent and accurate readers. In reality, fluency and accuracy are difficult skills; becoming a master reader takes time, effort, motivation and powerful teaching techniques.

Currently, first-grade teachers see evidence which indicates students are struggling to meet first grade-level reading standards. Due to a lack of practice, students cannot continue to make substantial improvements, especially in reading fluency. Becoming a fluent reader is a necessary skill and interventions are essential if progress is not evident. The repeated readings intervention provides multiple opportunities to practice text to increase word recognition and reading fluency.

Based on below level beginning of year (BOY) data at the start of the year, 12 first-grade students from two elementary schools were selected. This baseline data included AIMSweb R-CBM (fluency and accuracy), recognition of irregularly-spelled words, and the Fountas and Pinnell leveling system. The students participated in a small group repeated readings intervention for six weeks from the beginning of January to the end of February 2016. These students benefited from this intervention as it is individualized. Each student worked at his/her current reading level, with the opportunity to continue participation through the remainder of the year.

Building fluency can be messy, difficult, and frustrating for beginning readers. However, students can potentially acquire the ability to read fluently and accurately through repeated readings and guided instruction. Research supports repeated readings because it provides an opportunity for students to gain perseverance and determination. Fluency is a critical skill because students' reading behaviors affect all content areas. When students are fluent readers, reading becomes effortless. Students will be able to concentrate more on comprehending the text rather than decoding the words. Research supports the effectiveness of repeated reading interventions; however, the guiding question for this action research study was "What effect does the implementation of the repeated readings intervention in small groups have on first-grade students' reading fluency?"

Review of Literature

In classrooms across America, the development of sight word recognition continues to be a top priority when instructing emerging and beginning readers (M., 2014). According to Kear and Gladhart (M., 2014), sight words are important for early

readers to master because 75% of the words used in early literacy printed materials are sight words. Common Core standards require first-grade students to recognize and read grade-appropriate irregularly-spelled words and read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015). Educators need to understand each student progresses at his own pace through various stages of literacy development. Identifying these specific stages of literacy development will help guide instruction, implement interventions, and tailor independent student activities (Johnston, 1998; Morris, 2003). Stahl (2011) explains the importance of understanding the developmental continuum of constrained and unconstrained abilities in reading instruction. Conley, Derby, Roberts-Gwinn, Weber and McLaughlin (2004), and McGrath, McLaughlin, and Derby (2012) suggest other sight word instruction strategies including: flashcards, See it, Say it, Spell it strategy, Copy, Cover, Compare strategy, Reading Racetracks, and Repeated Reads to increase first-grade students' reading fluency.

Systematic Phonics Instruction

An important aspect of learning to read involves developing word recognition techniques that enable students to access the meanings and pronunciations of printed words, both familiar and unfamiliar (Stuart, Masterson, & Dixon, 2000). Educators can implement phonics instruction to build students' foundational reading skills. Phonics instruction can vary, but according to research a systematic phonics approach has a statistically greater effect on students learning to read than a non-systematic phonics approach (Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001, p. 419). Phonics instruction implemented in kindergarten and first-grade has shown a significant impact on student success rate

(Ehri et al., 2001, p. 428). According to Ehri (1998), Johnston (1998), Morris (2003), and Bettis (2010) word knowledge has four phases of development: the pre-alphabetic phase, the partial alphabetic phase, the full alphabetic stage, and the consolidated alphabetic stage. In the first phase, pre-alphabetic, students use salient visual cues to read. Because pre-alphabetic students struggle to memorize words, when texts are filled with visually similar words such as call and sell, word recognition becomes daunting (Morris, 2003). The second phase, partial alphabetic, happens when students recognize words from memory. Students might focus on the beginning and end of words. Students also have letter-sound correspondences and can begin phonics instruction (Johnston, 1998; Morris, 2003; Bettis, 2010). A solid phonics program leads to better achievement in reading when introduced earlier rather than later (Ehri et al., 2001). With increased understanding of phonemic awareness, the full alphabetic phase begins. In the third phase, full alphabetic, students can read specific words and apply beginning phonics skills, like blending or recognizing differences in words such as spoon and spin (Johnston, 1998; Morris, 2003; Bettis, 2010). The final phase, which is the consolidated alphabetic phase, begins when readers recognize units of words and apply those skills to recognize unfamiliar words. The consolidated alphabetic phase relies on memory work and word chunking, such as /-ock/ to make words like rock, lock, block (Johnston, 1998; Morris, 2003; Bettis, 2010). The phases of learning to read are best achieved through a scaffolding approach.

A systematic phonics approach scaffolds skills so students can learn to sound out phonemes and blend the sounds into recognizable words and units. Systematic phonics

programs produce more effective results than non-systematic phonics programs (Ehri et al., 2001).

Teaching phonics to the whole class, in small groups, and in tutoring sessions are all proven ways to deliver effective phonics instruction; however, tutoring did show a higher degree of an impact than larger group sizes (Ehri et al., 2001). When systematic phonics instruction is taught effectively in primary grades, word recognition skills are significantly established. If systematic phonics is not taught effectively in primary grades, phonics instruction every year after first-grade has little significance in establishing reading skills (Ehri et al., 2001).

Constrained and Unconstrained

Various methods of learning and applying sight words in isolation and context are beneficial to first-grade readers (A. Rummel, personal communication, Sept. 2015). There are two types of reading abilities: constrained and unconstrained. Along the continuum of constraint, there are various levels of skills ranging from highly constrained skills to unconstrained skills. Constrained abilities contain a finite number of items and, as a result, can be mastered within a relatively short period (Stahl, 2011). Letter identification, sight word recognition, and phonics are highly constrained abilities because they can quickly be mastered, and they contain a finite number of items that remain relatively stable once mastered (Stahl, 2011). Between kindergarten and third-grade, children learn a limited number of high-utility, letter-sound patterns. As these phonics patterns advance, the skill becomes less constrained because the learning impacts broad areas of academic knowledge (Stahl, 2011). As highly constrained skills produce

clear-cut data, these quantitative skills tend to dominate school assessments within curriculum-based measures (Stahl, 2011).

Phonological awareness and fluency are moderately constrained skills. Fluency tends to build rapidly for a few years until students plateau around third to fifth-grade. Mastering these constrained skills, including phonological awareness, sight word recognition, phonics, and fluency are the stepping stones on the continuum to learn unconstrained skills.

Unconstrained abilities like vocabulary knowledge and comprehension are harder to quantify because the improvement happens over a lifetime and does not reach clear, consistent levels of mastery. Unconstrained skills are broad in scope, and to meet proficiency varies by the difficulty of the text, the type of the genre, the form of the task, and the nature of the context (Stahl, 2011).

Teaching Sight Words in Isolation

Children must develop a sight vocabulary of familiar words that can be instantly recognized and understood (Stuart, Masterson, and Dixon, 2000). According to the National Reading Panel (2000) cited by Nist & Joseph (2008) basic reading skills, such as reading words accurately and quickly, need to be explicitly taught. For students to learn to read words automatically and effortlessly, words may need to be taught and practiced in isolation (Nist & Joseph, 2008, p. 295). One effective method for teaching sight words in isolation is using flashcards with repeated exposure (Nist & Joseph, 2008). According to Stuart et al. (2000) using flashcards is an excellent way to focus attention on the printed sight words in isolation with appropriate repetition. Various flashcard

methods have proven helpful in building sight word recognition including: traditional drill and practice, incremental rehearsal, and strategic incremental rehearsal.

Using flashcards is not the only method for teaching recognition of words in isolation. There are multiple strategies to teach and practice words using a word list including See it, Say it, Spell it, and Copy, Cover, Compare. The goal for both of these strategies is to teach students to identify words correctly when presented in isolation with a word-list format (Conley et al., 2004). Ersland (2014) suggests timing may be helpful for students who require incentives to stay on-task but that it should not be used with students who demonstrate anxiety, as it would prove ineffective for those students. Reading Racetrack is a researched strategy used to assist students in their basic reading skills, such as sight word recognition (McGrath et al., 2012). This approach is different than using flashcards and can be tailored to address any learner (McGrath et al., 2012, p. 61).

Teaching Sight Words in Context

Repeated readings is another skill-based and performance-based strategy that involves modeling, drill, or practice of sight word recognition to build fluent reading of an instructional-level text. Once students can pass the decoding barrier, word fluency increases and errors decrease (Chafouleas, Martens, Dobson, Weinstein, & Gardner, 2004). Repeated readings are short passages at the learner's instructional level and should be connected to content. The passages should be practiced three to five times to develop greater automaticity, especially when feedback is provided (Faver, 2008). Repeated readings vary in procedures and type of implementation (Lo, Cooke, & Starling, 2011). Three types of repeated reading procedures include: read along, in which a teacher reads

along with the student; assisted reading, in which students are paired and read together; and unassisted reading, in which students read the text independently (Faver, 2008).

Educators can implement repeated readings of text only, repeated reading with feedback of words read correctly, or repeated reading with feedback and reinforcement incentives (Chafouleas et al., 2004, p. 74).

Individualized instruction has become a necessity due to the pressures of meeting grade-level reading fluency expectations. Whole group learning is a thing of the past while small group instruction is a present day reality. Small group instruction provides a climate that is conducive to educator differentiating for the needs of many tangled learners. Differentiation allows educators to build on the five stages of literacy development. Building fluency is an essential component of becoming a successful, fluent reader. Establishing fluency requires direct instruction, individual attempts, repeated readings with feedback, and monitoring progress to ensure literacy progression.

Methodology

A small group intervention was implemented to help improve first-grade students' word recognition and reading fluency rates using repeated readings. Implementation of repeated readings required planning carefully, designating a scheduled time, and evaluating prior assessments to create small groups. Before beginning the intervention, we gathered and organized student materials including: leveled passages, short vowel word lists, sight word lists, fluency graphs, and surveys. A parent notification letter was sent home January 4, 2016. After consent was achieved, the implementation of repeated readings and data collection took place from the beginning of January 2016 through the end of February 2016. The intervention was administered by a district reading specialist

and two first-grade classroom teachers. The students were from two first-grade classrooms in a large school district in North Dakota. The participants met for the intervention 20 minutes a day, five days a week for six weeks. During the repeated reading intervention, students were provided individual binders containing repeated readings of short vowel word lists, grade-level passages, and sight word lists. All students began reading aloud a short vowel word list while being timed for one minute as the teacher recorded misread words. When one minute was up, the teacher documented total words read correctly, and percentage of accuracy on a graph visible to the student. The teacher then reviewed and corrected miscues with the student by providing explicit instruction and modeling. The student would reread the passage independently for additional fluency practice until they felt confident and ready to be timed again for one minute while the teacher marked any miscues. The repeated reading procedure continued until the student achieved the MOY goal of reading at least 27 words correctly per minute with at least 96% accuracy. Once the MOY goal was met, the student moved onto the next passage or word lists and the procedures began again with a one minute timed read. The teachers guided the students through each reread. This provided explicit instruction for each child which allowed them to move at individual rates of progress.

Quantitative and qualitative data sources were used to determine what impacts, if any, repeated readings had on first-grade student's reading fluency. Research results were retrieved from the following data sources: AIMSweb (Achievement Improvement Monitoring System based on the web) R-CBM (Reading-Curriculum Based Measurement) benchmark and progress monitoring assessments, daily progress monitoring of short vowel word lists, reading passages, and/or sight word lists, Fountas

and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (F & P), a student reading survey, and teacher observation notes.

Triangulation in action research is important to determine if the evidence is consistent, valid and reliable. The following data sources helped researchers determine what progress was being made and how the implementation of repeated reads affected students' fluency and accuracy scores.

The first quantitative data sources, AIMSweb R-CBM benchmark and progress monitoring assessments (Appendix A) are district mandated assessments which are recorded and stored online. AIMSweb R-CBM assessments provide a national percentile to evaluate student's growth compared to other first-grade students in the nation. These one minute assessments evaluate the number of correct words read and number of errors made on an end of the year, first-grade level passage (fluency and accuracy). Benchmark assessments are administered three times throughout the school year: beginning of the year (BOY), middle of the year (MOY), and end of the year (EOY). Students are expected to be reading at the 40th percentile or higher for all three benchmark periods. The BOY expectation is 10 words read correctly per minute with 96% accuracy. The MOY expectation is 27 words read correctly per minute with 96% accuracy. The EOY expectation is 56 words read correctly per minute with 96% accuracy. The benchmark assessment consists of students consecutively reading three EOY grade-level passages for one minute each. As students read each passage aloud, the teacher records all the words read correctly and incorrectly. When one minute is up, the score of correct words and errors is calculated. After all three passages have been read and scores have been calculated, the median score is documented as their benchmark score. The median score

is the middle score among all three passages. The AIMSweb R-CBM benchmark assessment was administered twice (BOY and MOY) prior to beginning the repeated readings intervention. The BOY and MOY benchmark assessments determined baseline data for students' reading fluency and accuracy. Weekly AIMSweb R-CBM progress monitoring assessments were also used. Students were progress monitored weekly based on a one minute, EOY passage. The score was then recorded online to track student progress.

Daily progress monitoring of the six-week intervention of repeated readings short vowel word lists (Appendix B), grade-level passages (Appendix C), and sight word lists (Appendix D) were charted. Students' also filled out individual fluency graphs (Appendix E) to chart their progress towards achieving a greater number of words and a higher accuracy score each read they were timed. The next data source used was Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (F & P) (Appendix F). This system consists of fiction and nonfiction texts, grades K-8 including levels A-Z. The F & P assessment is used to accurately determine a student's level of frustration, instruction and independent reading levels. The F & P assessment is completed one-on-one, beginning with the optional Where to Start Word Test. This word test requires students to read from word lists, leveled 1-8, each containing 20 words, to help determine the most appropriate reading level to begin with. For example, if a student reads only five words correctly out of the 20 words on the level one list, the teacher would use the conversion chart provided, and know to begin with a level A book. When assessing beginning reading levels, with or without the Where to Start Word Test, the student reads aloud a text as the administrator conducts a running record using the provided assessment form. The running record is

used to track errors and self corrections, as well as determine accuracy and fluency. Educators can further analyze errors and self corrections by determining if the reader was reading for meaning, visuals, or syntax. The F & P assessment should be conducted at least one time each school year. However, based on teacher discretion, it can be administered more often to track reading progress. We conducted this assessment twice prior to beginning the action research process. These assessments were used to determine appropriate guided reading group placement, as well as to identify students' who would benefit from the repeated readings intervention.

The first qualitative data source utilized was a student reading survey (Appendix G). This survey was administered to students each week throughout the six weeks. Each student completed the survey individually, within the small group. The student reading survey consisted of five statements. Each statement was answered through a smiley face rating scale (sad face with a tear means "strongly disagree", sad face without tears means "disagree", neutral face means "OK", smiley face means "agree", open mouth smile face means "strongly agree"). Statements were read aloud as needed. The purpose of this survey was to evaluate the students' feelings about reading, their reading progress, student perception of their involvement in the intervention, and to evaluate students' comfort level in sharing their reading strategies. This data was used to compare student's feelings from the first week of the intervention to the end of the intervention.

The second qualitative data source used was from teacher observation notes (Appendix H). Observation notes were recorded daily on individual recording sheets. There were four main areas in which teacher observations were focused including: student participation, ability to attack unknown words, automatic sight word recognition,

and willingness to share strategies. Teachers also recorded daily reflections on what went well, what needed to be changed, unexpected results, and additional questions and/or concerns. This allowed for deeper discussion on how things were going during weekly meetings.

The quantitative and qualitative data used in this study were reliable because all pieces display students' initial and final reading abilities in multiple forms of data. Also, the data was more reliable since assessments were conducted more than once. Assessing students more than once eliminates the possibility of students' scores being skewed.

Analysis of Data

At the conclusion of our six-week action research study, we analyzed five primary data sources, which included district required assessments and action research data: AIMSweb R-CBM, F & P, repeated reading passages, two types of word lists, a student survey, and teacher observation. First, we evaluated the district assessments AIMSweb R-CBM (fluency and accuracy) progress monitoring scores and F & P reading levels. Next, we evaluated the fresh reads of all the repeated reading scores charted for leveled passages, short vowel word lists, and sight word lists. These assessments provided us with quantitative data. Lastly, we evaluated the qualitative data from student survey responses and teacher observation notes. After reviewing the quantitative data and qualitative data, we determined repeated readings had a positive impact on building word recognition.

The baseline AIMSweb benchmark results were used to determine the students who were selected for the repeated readings intervention. Each student was assessed using AIMSweb R-CBM, end of the year, first-grade level reading fluency passages.

These results are compared with national norms to determine where students score in relation to grade-level peers. These scores were recorded before the action research study took place. First-grade students are expected to read 27 words per minute at the middle of the year (MOY), 56 words per minute at the end of the year (EOY) with an accuracy of 96% or higher for both MOY and EOY, and rank at or above the 40th percentile nationally. The students selected for repeated readings had an average composite score of 39th percentile. Repeated readings participants struggled to apply consolidated alphabetic skills in order to quickly recognize unfamiliar words. Repeated readings provided explicit instruction of word recognition strategies for each text practiced. Below, figure 1 shows the relationship between the expected first-grade MOY and EOY reading fluency score and students' MOY first-grade R-CBM fluency scores. The second graph demonstrates the relationship between students' MOY first-grade R-CBM accuracy percentage and the first-grade expected MOY and EOY accuracy percentage.

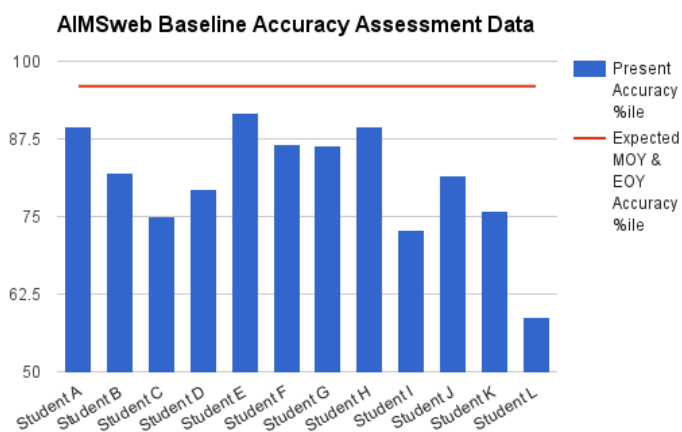


Figure 1. First-grade AIMSweb Benchmark Baseline Assessment Data for fluency and accuracy.

During the six-week repeated readings intervention, students were progress monitored weekly using AIMSweb R-CBM. Although the progress monitoring scores were inconsistent from week to week, scores displayed in figure 2 a and 2 b indicate that the repeated readings intervention was beneficial. First, we compared week one through week six, which indicated students made improvements in both fluency and accuracy. Two students increased their words correct per minute prior to week six of progress monitoring, even though their scores showed a decrease in week six. Overall, positive progress was documented for these two students throughout the duration of the intervention. Secondly, while examining the mean scores, three students hadn't met MOY R-CBM expectation of 27 words per minute; however, they had increased their word recognition skills since the first progress monitoring assessment. Thirdly, there was an increase in accuracy scores from all students at least twice within the six weeks. We saw an increase in fluency and accuracy in our first collection of quantitative data for all our students, thus supporting the research that repeated readings help students build word recognition skills.

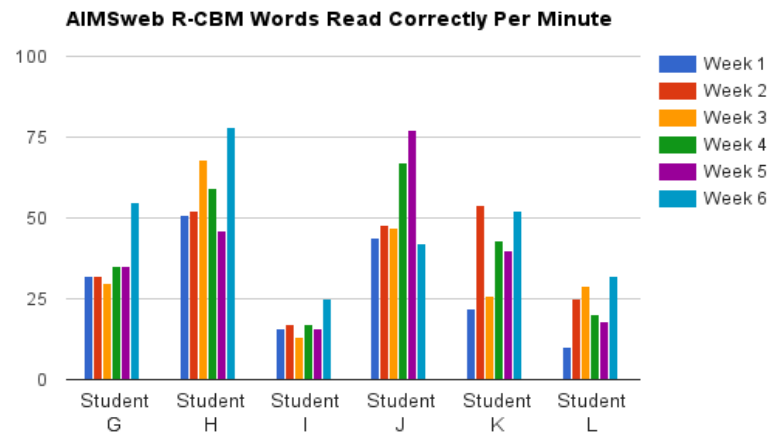
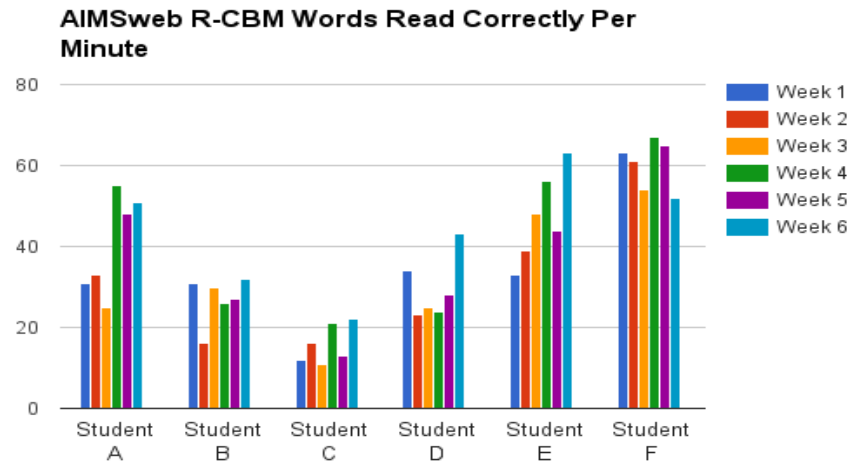
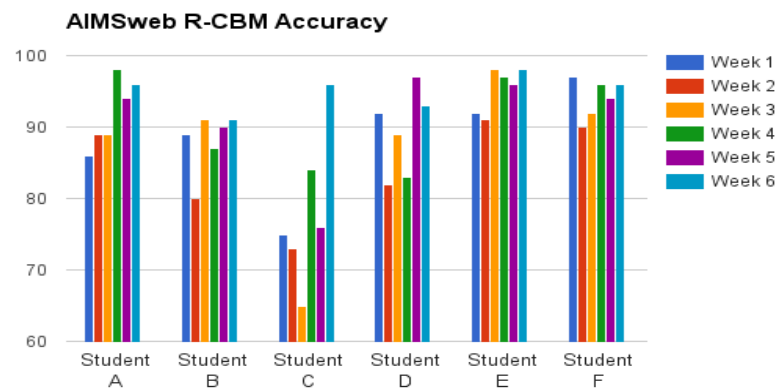


Figure 2 a. First-grade students' AIMSweb R-CBM progress monitoring fluency.



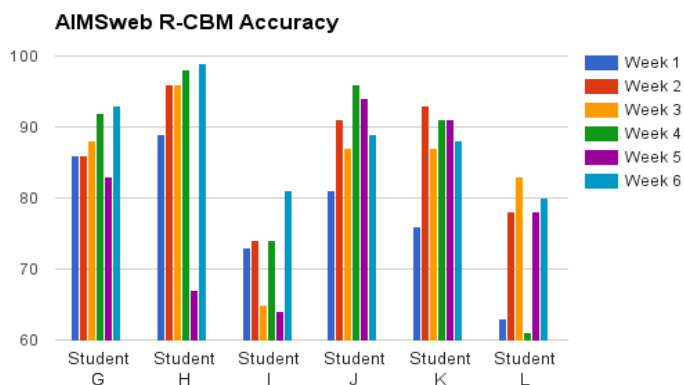


Figure 2 b. First-Grade students' AIMSweb R-CBM accuracy progress monitoring.

The second quantitative data analyzed was the F & P. First-grade students are expected to read fluently and comprehend at level K (level 11) by the end of the school year. Students reading at level one would be reading instructional A level books, level two would read B level books, level three would read C level books, level four would read D level books, and so on. F & P reading levels were recorded before the action research process took place and also after completion of the action research. Figure 3 shows MOY student reading levels prior to the repeated readings intervention, and after the six-week intervention was implemented. All students increased by at least one or more F & P levels. Prior to participating in the repeated readings intervention, students progressed at a slower rate towards meeting their MOY fluency and accuracy goal. This evidence shows that the repeated readings intervention promoted word recognition, and increased accuracy and fluency, which improved comprehension.

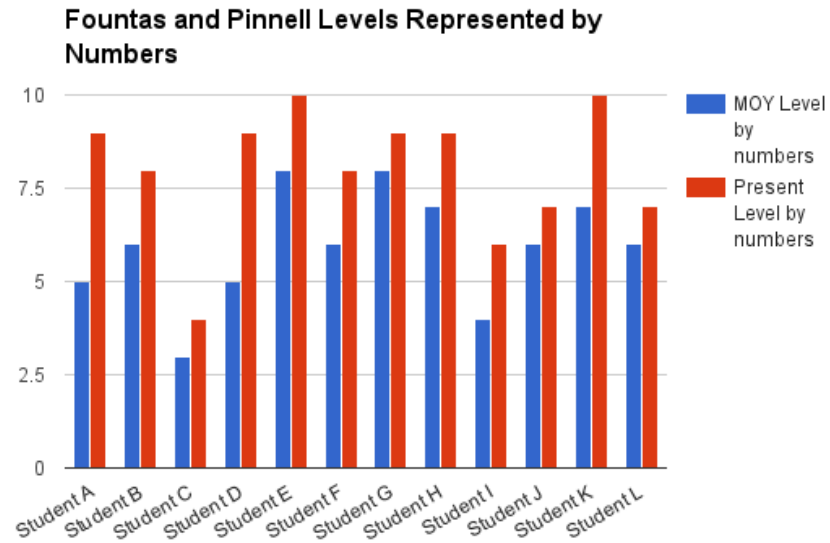


Figure 3. First-grade students' MOY and end of six week intervention F & P levels.

The third quantitative data analyzed was short vowel word list repeated readings. We recorded the fluency and accuracy scores of the first fresh read word list I, final read word list I, last fresh read word list II and the last final read word list II. The data we first compared were from the first fresh read to final read of word list I, and the next data compared were from the last fresh read to last final read of word list II in figure 4 a. We analyzed the effect repeated readings of short vowel word lists had on building word recognition and increasing accuracy for all participants. The results supported moving students from the decoding phase to the whole word recognition phase with explicit instruction. Analysis of the initial fresh read scores from list I showed nine students needing additional practice transitioning from decoding Consonant, Vowel, Consonant (CVC) words to whole words. Data indicated that when explicit guided instruction and independent practice time were provided, students increased the number of whole words they read correctly per minute. When analyzing last fresh read word list II containing

Consonant, Consonant, Vowel, Consonant (CCVC) words, ten students needed additional guided instruction until they became fluent.

	Fresh Read Word List I	Final Read Word List I	Last Fresh Read Word List II	Last Final Read Word List II
Student A	47	47	16	50
Student B	24	30	19	29
Student C	15	28	18	22
Student D	20	32	28	28
Student E	35	37	13	28
Student F	60	60	30	35
Student G	30	31	32	32
Student H	28	35	21	38
Student I	15	27	14	29
Student J	26	37	18	43
Student K	37	37	22	35
Student L	8	28	17	64

Figure 4 a. First-grade students' fluency of short vowel word lists.

Figure 4 b, demonstrates students' average reading fluency scores of short vowel word lists. It shows an overall increase in words read correctly per minute from first fresh reads to the first final reads. The graph shows that the last fresh reads average fluency scores are lower than the first fresh reads average scores. This decrease may be a result of the word lists progressing in difficulty. With repeated reads, students increased their average words correct per minute score to more than 35 words in the more difficult word list II.

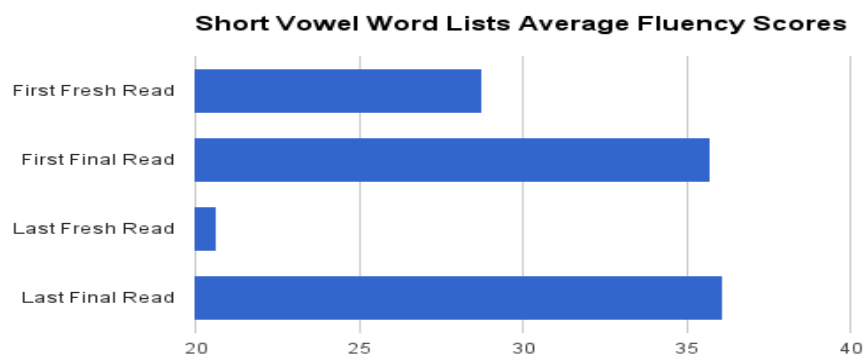


Figure 4 b. First-grade short vowel word list averages.

Accuracy scores from fresh read word list I to final read word list I in figure 4 c improved for eight students. Accuracy scores from fresh read word list II to final read word list II increased for seven students. Once students moved onto CCVC word list II, accuracy of final fresh reads never fell below 73% unlike CVC word list I, which fell as low as 57%. After repeated reading practice and explicit instruction of short vowel word lists, we determined repeated readings improved word recognition and accuracy of words in isolation for first-grade students. When the average accuracy percentiles were analyzed in figure 4 d, a positive increase was shown from first fresh read to last fresh reads. Evidence shows that accuracy is affected by repeated reads in a positive way. Students can reach and maintain 96% accuracy with repeated reads.

	Fresh Read Word List I Accuracy	Final Read Word List I Accuracy	Fresh Read Word List II Accuracy	Final Read Word List II Accuracy
Student A	100%	100%	73%	100%
Student B	100%	100%	100%	100%
Student C	79%	100%	90%	100%
Student D	91%	100%	100%	100%
Student E	95%	97%	87%	100%
Student F	100%	100%	83%	97%
Student G	81%	100%	100%	100%
Student H	54%	100%	91%	97%
Student I	88%	100%	82%	97%
Student J	84%	97%	90%	96%
Student K	97%	97%	95%	100%
Student L	57%	97%	100%	96%

Figure 4 c. First-grade students’ accuracy of short vowel word lists.

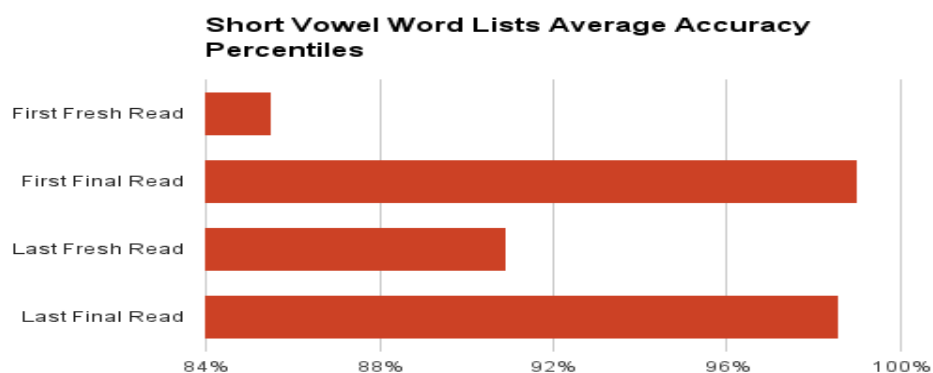


Figure 4 d. First-grade students’ averages for accuracy of short vowel word lists.

The fourth quantitative data analyzed was the fresh reads and final reads of short first-grade level passages. Analysis of scores in figure 5 a, the first passage fresh read I to the last passage final read I shows that 11 students increased fluency scores and improved accuracy. One student achieved MOY fluency and accuracy expectations on the first passage fresh read I. When analyzing the last passage II, six students achieved MOY fluency and accuracy expectations during final fresh reads. This demonstrates that five more students met MOY expectations within a fresh read at the end of the intervention.

Four students achieved the MOY fluency goal by reading at least 27 words correct per minute during their fresh read; however, their accuracy scores fell below the goal of 96%.

Student average fluency scores of short reading passages in figure 5 b increased from first fresh reads to last fresh reads. Students' final read fluency averages exhibit above MOY expectations. An average increase of words correct per minute from first fresh read to first final read was indicated.

When comparing only accuracy percentages in figure 5 c, the first fresh read passage I to the students' last fresh read passage II showed that ten students increased in overall accuracy since the start of the intervention.

Figures 5 a-d display evidence that improvements were made in both fluency and accuracy scores from the beginning of the intervention to the conclusion of the intervention, especially when comparing averages of participants and individual student growth separately. When evaluating figure 5 d, accuracy percentiles, there was a noticeable increase from the first fresh read accuracy to the first final read. Over time, students became accurate.

	First Passage Fresh Read (R-CBM) I	First Passage Final Read (R-CBM) I	Last Passage Fresh Read (R-CBM) II	Last Passage Final Read (R-CBM) II
Student A	25	45	92	92
Student B	9	54	34	34
Student C	13	39	35	35
Student D	27	30	39	39
Student E	25	30	36	36
Student F	25	50	35	36
Student G	26	49	36	57
Student H	51	51	47	65
Student I	20	45	37	62
Student J	44	78	69	69
Student K	19	50	59	59
Student L	8	61	24	51

Figure 5 a. First-grade students’ fluency of passages.

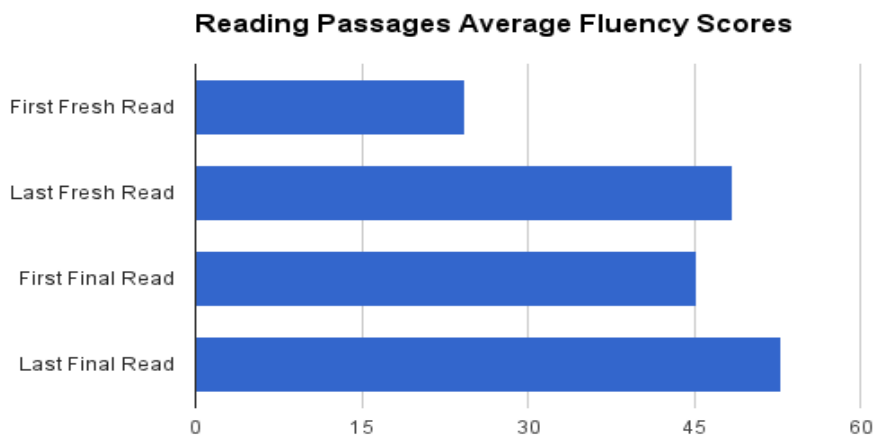


Figure 5 b. First-grade students’ average fluency scores.

	First Passage Fresh Read I Accuracy	First Passage Final Read I Accuracy	Last Passage Fresh Read II Accuracy	Last Passage Final Read II Accuracy
Student A	96%	96%	99%	99%
Student B	90%	96%	97%	97%
Student C	81%	100%	95%	95%
Student D	90%	100%	98%	98%
Student E	93%	100%	97%	97%
Student F	93%	100%	92%	97%
Student G	83%	98%	92%	98%
Student H	98%	98%	94%	97%
Student I	74%	96%	95%	98%
Student J	94%	99%	99%	99%
Student K	79%	96%	98%	98%
Student L	53%	100%	83%	96%

Figure 5 c. First-grade students’ accuracy percentages of passages.

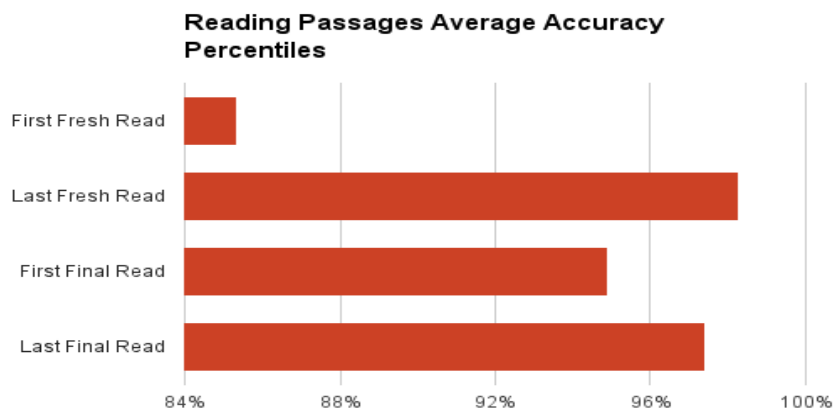


Figure 5 d. First-grade students' accuracy percentage averages.

The fifth quantitative data analyzed was sight word list repeated readings. Figures 6 a and 6 b listed below, show students' individual fresh read and final read fluency and accuracy scores from the first sight word list attempted to the last sight word list attempted throughout the six-week intervention. When analyzing first sight word list I, ten students achieved MOY fluency and accuracy expectations within their fresh read. Two students achieved the MOY fluency goal on their fresh read by reading at least 27 words correct per minute; however, the accuracy goal of 96% was not met until their final read. When analyzing last sight word list II, four students achieved MOY fluency and accuracy expectations within their fresh read. However, eight students did not achieve MOY goals until repeated practice, modeling, and guided instruction were provided. Only two students did not achieve fluency and accuracy goals within a fresh read throughout the six-weeks.

	First Sight Word List Fresh Read I	First Sight Word List Final Read I	Last Sight Word List Fresh Read II	Last Sight Word List Final Read II
Student A	60	60	59	59
Student B	60	60	27	58
Student C	31	47	12	30
Student D	52	52	44	44
Student E	60	60	60	60
Student F	60	60	23	41
Student G	59	59	22	34
Student H	60	60	50	50
Student I	38	60	31	46
Student J	60	60	21	60
Student K	60	60	42	60
Student L	59	59	37	59

Figure 6 a. First-grade students’ fluency of sight word lists.

	First Sight Word List Fresh Read I Accuracy	First Sight Word List Final Read I Accuracy	Last Sight Word List Fresh Read II Accuracy	Last Sight Word List Final Read II Accuracy
Student A	100%	100%	98%	98%
Student B	100%	100%	93%	100%
Student C	88%	98%	66%	97%
Student D	96%	96%	98%	98%
Student E	100%	100%	100%	100%
Student F	100%	100%	88%	100%
Student G	98%	98%	88%	100%
Student H	100%	100%	100%	100%
Student I	95%	100%	89%	98%
Student J	100%	100%	70%	100%
Student K	100%	100%	93%	100%
Student L	98%	98%	90%	98%

Figure 6 b. First-grade students’ accuracy percentages of sight word lists.

When comparing sight word list averages in figures 6 c and 6 d, the most growth was displayed from the last fresh read to the last final read. One possible contributing factor of this growth may be the added rigor of sight words by the end of the intervention. Regardless of the level of difficulty, students’ average scores indicate an increase in sight word recognition, fluency, and accuracy when explicit instruction is provided, along with modeling and independent practice. With repeated reads, students met and exceeded MOY fluency and accuracy expectations.

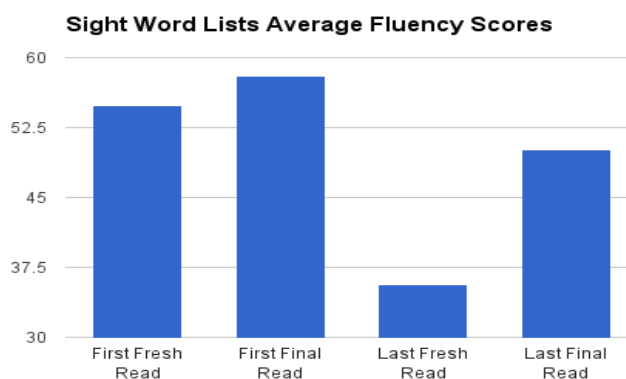


Figure 6 c. First-grade students' average fluency of sight word lists.

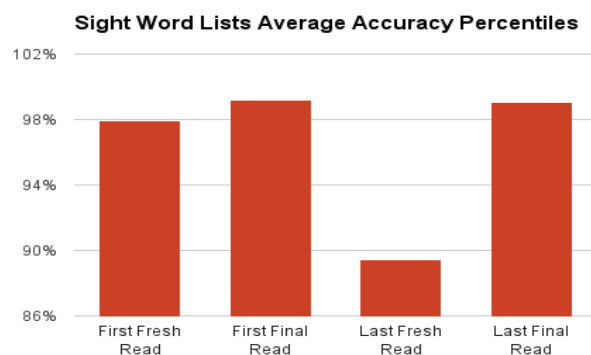


Figure 6 d. First-grade students' average accuracy percentages of sight word lists.

The student reading survey was the first qualitative data analyzed. Figure 7 displays students' initial survey responses before the repeated readings intervention began and the final responses after the six-week intervention was completed. The goal of the student reading survey was to evaluate how the implementation of repeated readings positively affected students' overall feelings about reading and more specifically individual reading progress from the beginning of the intervention to the end of the intervention. In regards to the first statement, "I enjoy reading", students' responses demonstrated a positive increase. All twelve students (100%) responded to "Agree" or

“Strongly Agree” to enjoy reading on their final response. This was a positive increase from the initial 33% responding to enjoy reading “Ok” prior to the intervention.

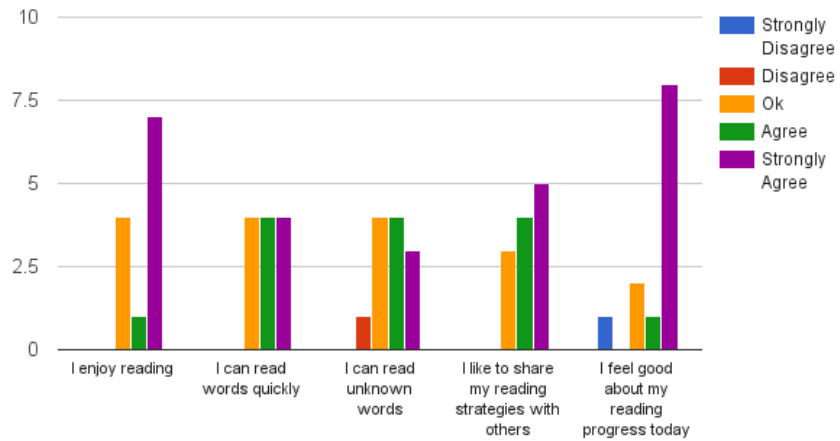
Students also answered the next statement, “I can read words quickly”, with an increase in positive responses. Initially, only 33% of students “Strongly Agreed” and final responses indicated 82% of students “Strongly Agree”. The results from this statement prove a positive increase of 49% of students’ feeling more confident in their reading fluency abilities. Data also shows that none of the students’ responses indicated they do not enjoy reading, or that they have any negative feelings about reading fluently. When reading is difficult for primary students, it can often become unenjoyable. The initial responses from these students’ indicate otherwise, and continue to demonstrate student’s enjoyment of reading according to the final survey results.

Students initially answered “I can read unknown words” with “Strongly Agree” (25%), “Agree” (33%), “Ok” (33%), and “Disagree (8%)”. At the end of the intervention students responded, “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” (83%), and “Ok” (17%) and no negative responses were indicated. The responses from this statement provided insight as to how the students’ felt about overall word recognition.

When asked “I like to share my reading strategies with others” initially students responded, “Strongly Agree” (42%), “Agree” (33%), “Ok” (25%). This indicated students demonstrated positive feelings about sharing their strategies. However, final responses indicate otherwise. Students’ final responses were “Strongly Agree” (58%), “Agree” (8%), and “Strongly Disagree” (33%). The disagree responses indicate a 33% decrease in positive feelings about sharing strategies with others.

The final statement was “I feel good about my reading progress today.” Initially, 92% of the students answered with a positive response of either “Ok”, “Agree”, or “Strongly Agree”; however, 8% responded “Strongly Disagree.” After the intervention was completed, all students, 100%, responded positively. Finally, 75% responded they “Strongly Agree” and 25% responded they “Agree” that they are happy with their reading progress. Overall, student responses indicate repeated readings positively affected students’ thoughts and feelings about reading and their individual reading progress.

Initial Student Survey Responses



Final Student Survey Responses

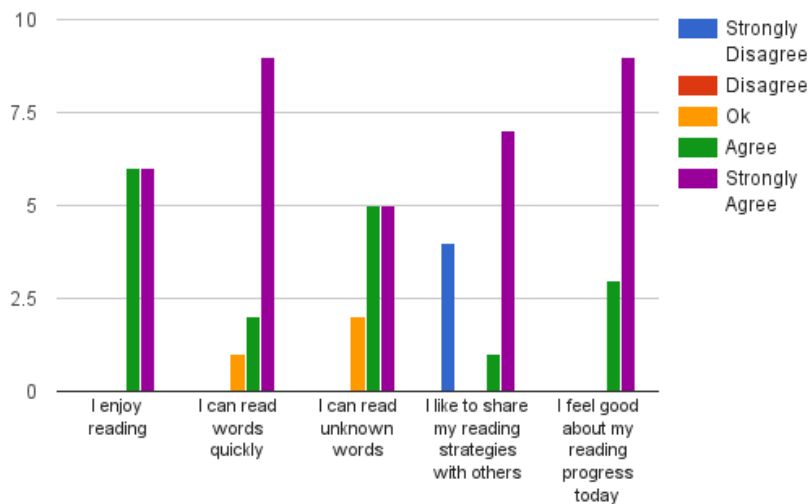


Figure 7. Initial and final student survey replies.

Data from weekly teacher observations of specific behaviors were the second qualitative data analyzed. The pie charts below show student behaviors in comparison from the first three weeks to the last three weeks.

When observing student participation in figure 8, a higher percentage of on-task behaviors were exhibited within the first three weeks of the intervention (58%) than in the last three weeks of the intervention (17%). Observation notes indicate possible factors for increased off-task behaviors could be that materials were progressively increasing in difficulty, distractibility due to competitiveness, and/or observing peers rereading.

Initially, 75% of students' were automatically identifying sight words within short grade-level passages and sight word lists. As the range of difficulty of sight words increased, students' automaticity decreased. In the final observations, only 33% of students consistently recognized sight words automatically. This observation provided an opportunity to have conversations with the students explaining that as they work towards becoming fluent readers, they have to challenge themselves with more difficult words and passages to continue to make growth.

Initial observations of students' ability to attack unknown words revealed 67% of students were decoding words, and 33% were blending words. At this time, none of the students were utilizing whole word recognition strategies. In our final three weeks of observations, only 8% of students were decoding, 50% were blending, and 33% were utilizing whole word recognition. Students were implementing blending and word recognition strategies and moving towards becoming fluent readers. Additionally, throughout the six-week intervention, students were more likely to try strategies

recommended by the teacher and less likely to share the strategies that worked for them with their peers.

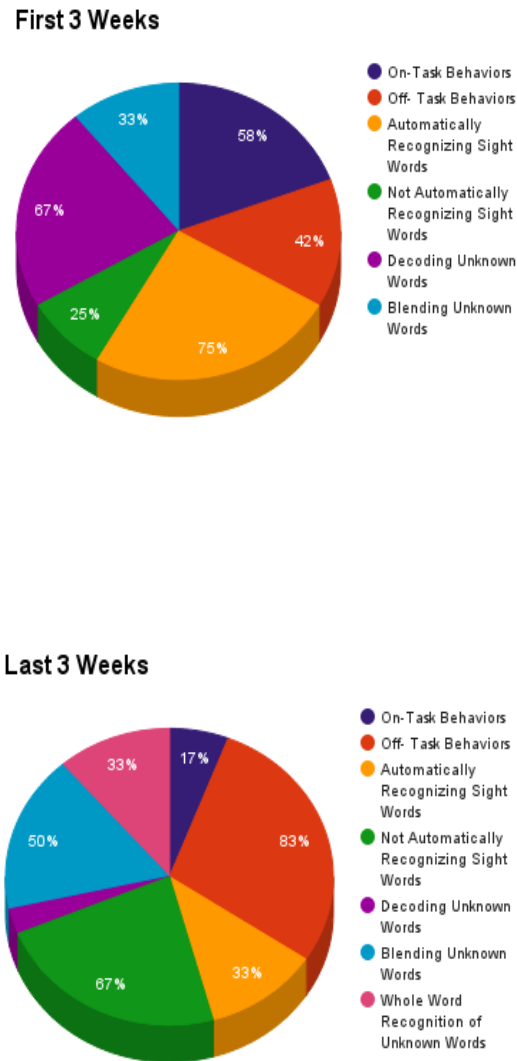


Figure 8. Teacher observations of specific target behaviors.

Action Plan

The purpose of this intervention was to determine what effects, if any, repeated readings had on first-grade students' reading fluency. Reading fluency is an essential

component of reading instruction and influences students' overall academic success. 21st-century learners strive to have strong reading abilities to learn new information quickly, effortlessly, and to deepen their understanding of new concepts. Teaching word recognition skills needs to be a vital focus in primary classrooms. This is substantiated in the research.

Data collected from the implementation of the research based intervention strategy, repeated readings, displayed a significant increase in reading skill acquisition. A conclusion can be drawn that when implementing the repeated readings intervention, teachers can help students increase word recognition, reading fluency, accuracy, and deepen their overall comprehension of text.

This intervention proved beneficial because students were provided multiple opportunities to build their word recognition skills. Repeated readings allowed students to develop oral reading fluency through explicit instruction, guided practice, and modeling. Teachers kept track of errors, which provided opportunities to share explicit feedback with students. Due to the positive increase in students' overall word recognition, fluency, and accuracy throughout the six-week intervention, teachers plan to continue implementing repeated readings within our small groups to improve reading fluency. Teachers will also continue to progress monitor reading fluency and accuracy weekly using AIMSweb to further explore the positive impacts of repeated readings and to better guide instruction.

The following recommendations are suggested for other educators wanting to implement repeated readings as an intervention. First, the intervention should include scaffolding of skills, prior organization of repeated reading materials, as well as

consistency of programming procedures. Second, intervention implementation is recommended in 20-minute uninterrupted sessions. The third recommendation is to assist and guide students when recording their first and final reads on the repeated reading charts. Last, specific feedback and modeling should be provided by the educator after each attempted read.

Further action research needs to be conducted to determine what lasting effects repeated readings have on students' reading fluency. The teachers who conducted this study would like to determine if three or four days of implementation demonstrate the same results as five days. They are interested in how the implementation of the intervention with a larger group size compares to small group size. Continued research should be done in these areas to make appropriate comparisons, determine lasting effects, and provide additional data on the effectiveness of repeated readings.

Going forward, the teachers in the study would like to continue implementing repeated readings as a strategy for improving word recognition to build reading fluency and accuracy. After implementing repeated readings for six-weeks, here are few changes teachers intend to make:

- Extend the interventions to other first-grade students.
- Begin the interventions earlier in the school year.
- Additional phonics skill will be addressed, such as word lists including long vowels, vowel digraphs, and multi-syllabic words.
- Share results with grade-level colleagues and volunteer to assist with implementation of repeated readings.

- Plan to implement the intervention and record results, at least three times a week, but ideally five times a week; however, scheduling conflicts and absences pose difficulty in consistently achieving five days.

One aspect of reading fluently is the ability to recognize unfamiliar words quickly or automatically. Weak word recognition skills impact fluency and accuracy for many first-grade students. Before the intervention, first-grade students stumbled over unfamiliar words, which decreased their fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. After data was analyzed and positive results were evident, repeated readings can be considered best practice for improving students' word recognition, fluency, and accuracy which will better prepare students to be successful learners of the 21st century.

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Appendix A

The black and white dog was very smart. He hid his bones all over his yard. He hid his bones in the shadows of the trees. He hid his bones under the swing set. He even hid his bones in the sand of the sandbox.

The dog was always happy. He was never without a bone. The dog's teeth were very sharp and white, but he never bit anyone. He only chewed on bones.

One day the dog was sleeping. A rat came into his yard.

"I will take this dog's bones," said the rat. "He is sleeping. He will never know that I have taken them."

So the sneaky rat snuck around the yard and stole every bone. Then he slipped under the fence and climbed up a tree. He had all the bones with him in a bag.

"I will watch the dog from this branch. I will see what he does when he opens his eyes."

The dog opened his eyes. He was hungry. He got up to dig up a bone. He dug. The hole was empty.

"I am sure that I hid a bone here. I hid it right in the shadow of this tree." He looked around.

Then he heard the rat laughing. He looked up and saw the rat on the branch.

"I took your bones!" the rat yelled.

Just then the bones fell out of the tree. The dog ran under the fence and got them all. He chased the rat away.

Sue liked to play games. She liked to play inside and outside games. She liked any game she tried. One of her favorites was "Skip Bo." She would always ask her friends to play.

One day, her friend Josh had a new game. Sue had not played it before. It was called "Sorry!" She and Josh got out all of the parts. They tried to read the rules together. Then they set up the game. They played that game many times.

They had a snack time. They had some cookies and milk.

Then they wanted to play a different game. Sue picked out a game. She had lots of games in her room. She picked "Mouse Trap." It was fun to set up the parts. They laughed as they played.

When they got tired of that game, they picked another. Josh chose checkers. Sue was red. Josh was black. They were both good at this game. It lasted a long time.

Sue knew Josh's tricks, and Josh knew her tricks. They didn't fall into any traps.

The game lasted so long that no one won before it was time for Josh to go home.

They left the pieces as they were. They were going to play again tomorrow. Josh was going to come over after school.

Sue told Josh thanks for coming over. Josh said thanks for having him over.

The cat in the yellow house was lazy. All day long he slept in the window.

He didn't hunt for mice. He didn't watch the birds. He didn't chase after bees. He didn't come when he was called.

"Harry!" The old woman that lived in the yellow house with him would call. "Harry, I just saw a mouse!"

Harry would close his eyes and purr. He would not get up to help the old woman. He would not go and catch the mouse. Oh no, he would not move because Harry was very lazy.

One day Harry was sleeping. Something jumped onto his pillow. Something tugged on his ear. Harry opened his eyes slowly. A tiny mouse stood in front of him. The mouse crossed his eyes at Harry. He stuck out his tongue at Harry.

"I bet you can't catch me," he shouted at Harry.

"You are right," Harry said. "I can't catch you." Then Harry went back to sleep.

The mouse watched Harry sleep. "What an odd cat," he said to himself. "I have never heard of a cat who will not chase mice. I think I will call my brothers and sisters. This is a good place to live. No cat will chase us out."

The mouse called his family. His family came to stay. They built nests in the walls. They built nests in the floors. They built nests in the TV. They even built a nest under Harry.

Harry was asleep, so he didn't notice.

Appendix B

SHORT "a" AND SHORT "i" CCVC WORDS

Discrimination Practice

0	brag	grin	flip	grab	spit
5	tram	skip	clap	drip	slip
10	slim	brat	drag	trip	slam
15	trim	crab	spin	flag	glad
20	brag	grin	flip	grab	spit
25	tram	skip	clap	drip	slip
30	slim	brat	drag	trip	slam
35	trim	crab	spin	flag	glad
40	brag	grin	flip	grab	spit
45	tram	skip	clap	drip	slip
50	slim	brat	drag	trip	slam
55	trim	crab	spin	flag	glad
60					

Appendix C

A Circus

Story 14

Review Key Words

tent	a cloth shelter that can be moved
clowns	people, usually in a circus, who paint their faces and do funny tricks
tricks	acts performed with skill
rings	areas for games or activities



Write a Prediction

Read the Story

10 It is fun to go to a circus. Sometimes a
 19 circus is in a big tent. Sometimes a circus
 28 is in a big building. You can see animals
 36 do tricks at a circus. Dogs ride bikes.
 43 Lions jump over sticks. You can see
 51 people do tricks too. They walk on ropes
 61 up in the air. They ride on the backs of
 67 elephants. Funny clowns make you laugh
 76 at a circus. A big circus has three rings.
 85 There is a show in each ring. A circus
 95 goes from city to city. A circus goes to a
 100 city by truck or train.

Cold Timing Score: _____ Final Timing Score: _____

			PRIM		BY TENG
List 13					
0	work	long	here	get	both
5	between	life	being	under	never
10	work	long	here	get	both
15	between	life	being	under	never
20	work	long	here	get	both
25	between	life	being	under	never
30	work	long	here	get	both
35	between	life	being	under	never
40	work	long	here	get	both
45	between	life	being	under	never
50	work	long	here	get	both
55	between	life	being	under	never
60					

Page	Text	E	BC	E			BC		
				W	I	P	W	I	P
8	Another neighbor peeped her head over the fence. "I can tell you something else," she said. "Every day when I pass that house, I hear loud noises, like someone is hammering." All the neighbors were excited about the mystery.								
	Total								

Part Two: Comprehension Conversation p. 26

Guide to total score	Summed score: _____/6
4-7 Excellent Comprehension	Add 1 for additional understandings: _____/1
3 Satisfactory Comprehension	
2 Limited Comprehension	Total score: _____/7
1 Unsatisfactory Comprehension	

Part Three: Writing About Reading (optional)

Read the writing/drawing prompt below to the student. You can also cut the prompt on the dotted line and give it to the child. Specify the amount of time for the student to complete the task on a separate sheet of paper.

Writing About Reading Scoring Key	
0	Reflects no understanding of the text.
1	Reflects very limited understanding of the text.
2	Reflects partial understanding of the text.
3	Reflects excellent understanding of the text.






Write about the horses and how the new neighbors made them a surprise for everyone. You can draw a picture to go with your writing.

Appendix G





Survey: Student Reading Survey

First Grade






Enjoy reading

 <input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	 <input type="radio"/> Disagree	 <input type="radio"/> Dis	 <input type="radio"/> Agree	 <input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree
--	---	--	---	---






Learn read words quickly

 <input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	 <input type="radio"/> Disagree	 <input type="radio"/> Dis	 <input type="radio"/> Agree	 <input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree
--	---	--	---	---






Learn read sentence words

 <input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	 <input type="radio"/> Disagree	 <input type="radio"/> Dis	 <input type="radio"/> Agree	 <input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree
--	---	--	---	---

Like to share my reading strategies with others

 <input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	 <input type="radio"/> Disagree	 <input type="radio"/> Dis	 <input type="radio"/> Agree	 <input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree
--	---	--	---	---

Want read class my reading progress today

 <input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	 <input type="radio"/> Disagree	 <input type="radio"/> Neutral	 <input type="radio"/> Agree	 <input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree
--	---	--	---	---

Appendix H

Observation Notes

Week of _____ Participants Number: _____

Student Participation	
Automaticity in sight word recognition	
Ability to attack unknown words	
Willing to share reading strategy with others	
Reflection:	