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ABSTRACT

Historically when children have experienced difficulty in learning to read they have been served by remedial reading programs, special education programs, or retention practices. There is considerable evidence that these programs have been ineffective in raising the achievement levels of those they serve. In addition, because these programs are generally provided as a means of supplementing rather than supplanting the regular classroom program, the ineffective programming is confounded by a lack of articulation and lack of congruency between the two programs. This case study research examines the implementation of a district's Early Literacy Project whose goal was to establish curricular congruence for struggling readers who receive instruction both in their regular classroom and in a remedial setting. More specifically, it examines whether two interventions (improved classroom instruction and Reading Recovery) are working congruently along five curricular components: philosophy; instructional materials; instructional methods and student activities; reading strategies; and reading goals. In one case study, congruence between reading programs helped to alleviate tension the student felt toward reading, while in the second case study the student began to receive more appropriate instruction. (Contains 19 references.) (Author/RS)

Running head: CURRICULAR CONGRUENCE AT AN IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Curricular Congruence at an Implementation Level:

Are two interventions of a district's Early Literacy Project (improved classroom instruction and Reading Recovery) working congruently to address the needs of low-achieving readers?

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Abstract

Historically when children have experienced difficulty in learning to read they have been served by remedial reading programs, special education programs, or retention practices. As a result of erroneous beliefs about teaching reading, within these programs, low-achieving students have been exposed to instructional practices that emphasize decoding and word recognition skills rather than meaning, they are involved in little reading of connected text, they receive small amounts of direct instruction, they engage in more oral reading where they are frequently interrupted and seldom encouraged to self-monitor or self-correct, they spend a considerable amount of time off-task, and their written assignments are generally limited to worksheet tasks (Allington and Johnston, 1986; Johnston et al., 1985; Pike, 1992). There is considerable evidence that these programs have been ineffective in raising the achievement levels of those they serve. In addition, because these programs are generally provided as a means of supplementing rather than supplanting the regular classroom program the ineffective programming is confounded by a lack of articulation and lack of congruency between the two programs. This case study research examines the implementation of a district's Early Literacy Project whose goal was to establish curricular congruence for struggling readers who receive instruction both in their regular classroom and in a remedial setting. More specifically it examines whether their two interventions (improved classroom instruction and Reading Recovery) are working congruently along five curricular components: philosophy, instructional materials, instructional methods and student activities, reading strategies, and reading goals. Conclusions are presented in the form of answers to the following questions: (a) Would I recommend that schools and school districts go about creating congruent programs? (b) What are my reasons for this recommendation? and (c) What things should be considered when following this recommendation?

Curricular Congruence at an Implementation Level:

Are two interventions of a district's Early Literacy Project (improved classroom instruction and Reading Recovery) working congruently to address the issue of low-achieving readers?

Statement of the Research Problem

Historically when children have experienced difficulty in learning to read they have been served by remedial reading programs, special education programs, or retention practices. As a result of erroneous beliefs about teaching reading, within these programs, low-achieving students have been exposed to instructional practices that emphasize decoding and word recognition skills rather than meaning, they are involved in little reading of connected text, they receive small amounts of direct instruction, they engage in more oral reading where they are frequently interrupted and seldom encouraged to self-monitor or self-correct, they spend a considerable amount of time off-task, and their written assignments are generally limited to worksheet tasks (Allington and Johnston, 1986; Johnston et al., 1985; Pike, 1992). There is considerable evidence that these programs have been ineffective in raising the achievement levels of those they serve. In addition, because these programs are generally provided as a means of supplementing rather than supplanting the regular classroom program the ineffective programming is confounded by a lack of articulation and lack of congruency between the two programs. Johnston et al. (1985, p. 85) describe incongruent programming and suggest that this lack of congruency results in ineffective and highly fragmented educational experiences for children:

> Readers who are already struggling and are provided with divergent curricula in different settings become caught in a situation in which it is not clear how to attack a word. Strategies favored in one context fail in a second context. Thus, instruction in one situation may interfere with that in another, confusing students about the nature of the task and solution strategies (p.85).

Can a school or district ensure congruent programming (curricular congruence) for struggling readers who receive instruction both in their regular classroom and in a remedial setting? This research examines the implementation of a district's Early Literacy Project that set

out to do just that. More specifically it examines whether their two interventions (improved classroom instruction and Reading Recovery) are working congruently along five curricular components as suggested by the literature: philosophy, instructional materials, instructional methods and student activities, reading strategies, and reading goals.

Literature Review

Evidence about ineffective programming for students experiencing failure in learning to read, along with several other factors, has led educators to seek alternatives to meeting the needs of these students. One factor is the increasing acceptance of the emergent literacy view of early reading which asserts that children are active participants in the process of becoming literate long before formal reading and writing instruction begins (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Another factor is research that suggests that if children's reading is brought up to grade level within the first three years of school it will stay at grade level (Carter, 1984; Juel, 1988). Yet another factor influencing our need to change the programming provided for at-risk students has been evidence of the success of various early intervention programs (Hiebert & Taylor, 1994).

Unfortunately, even with effective interventions for low-achieving readers that emphasize authentic reading and writing tasks, such as Reading Recovery, there continues to be segregation and isolation between the regular classroom teacher and the specialist teacher and therefore a lack of congruence between the programs contributing to these students' cognitive confusion. How then, can we effectively program for these students experiencing failure in learning to read in order to raise their achievement levels and maintain those levels?

One way is by improving classroom instruction for children at risk of experiencing reading difficulties such that they can become successful readers (Hiebert & Taylor, 1994). Another way is through early intervention programs, which recognize the nature and importance of the development of children's reading and writing in the early years (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Yet another suggestion for addressing the issue of low-achieving readers is to ensure curricular congruence for students receiving remedial reading instruction in addition to their regular classroom reading instruction (Allington & Johnston, 1986).

Curricular congruence is described as instruction that is carefully planned and mutually supported in both remedial and regular programs in order to provide students at-risk with the content and strategies needed for achieving success in the regular classroom (Sanacore, 1987). In addition, Johnston et al. (1985) suggest that the programs should employ similar philosophies, instructional materials, instructional methods and student activities, reading strategies, and reading goals. They conclude that curricular congruence should result in "cognitive clarity" (Downing, 1979, p.5) for the child at-risk such that he/she can succeed in learning how to read. According to Downing's cognitive clarity theory the critical factor in developing reading skill may be the child's clarity of thought in the reasoning and problem-solving tasks involved in learning how to read.

The Hapsburgh District* (all names have been given pseudonyms for purposes of confidentiality) has attempted to address the issue of low-achieving readers in each of the three ways suggested by the research: (a) through improved classroom instruction (Hiebert & Taylor, 1994), (b) through an early intervention program which recognizes the nature and importance of the development of children's reading and writing in the early years (Teale & Sulzby, 1986), and (c) through coordinating efforts to ensure curricular congruence between the two (Allington & Johnston, 1986). The district's primary focus is the regular classroom as the first intervention in literacy instruction for all students. But as part of its comprehensive framework it also includes a reduced ratio safety net for at-risk readers.

The intervention that they have elected to use is Reading Recovery (Clay, 1979), a one-on-one tutoring program designed to accelerate the progress of young readers who have failed to profit from 12 months of formal reading instruction. Evaluations of Reading Recovery (Clay, 1979; Pinnell, Lyons, Deford, Bryk, & Seltzer, 1994) have indicated that this pullout intervention program has led to substantial reading level gains. However, further evaluations (Center, Wheldall, Freeman, Outhred, & McNaught, 1995) have revealed methodological shortcomings as well as evidence that children in Reading Recovery lose their advantage over comparison children following discontinuation (Glynn, Bethune, Crooks, Ballard, & Smith, 1992). It has been

suggested that one reason for this may be a lack of articulation and communication between the Reading Recovery program and the regular classroom reading program (Glynn et. al., 1992).

Reading Recovery teachers must undergo one year of extensive, rigorous training and are expected to follow a set pattern of instruction with their students following the philosophy and techniques of the program. In fact, they are monitored and evaluated throughout their training. This being the case, how then can the Hapsburgh District bring about congruence between its two interventions?

One of the goals of the Early Literacy Project is to try to align reading instruction in the classroom with Reading Recovery instruction. That does not mean that the district expects classroom teachers to import Reading Recovery directly into their classrooms by trying to create one to one contexts or by trying to duplicate activities such as the use of cut-up sentences. What it does mean is that the district expects teachers to take the guidelines and principles that make Reading Recovery so successful and to interpret those within the social and cultural environments of their classrooms. For the Hapsburgh Early Literacy Project a developmental approach is the key. It is the foundation of Reading Recovery and the foundation for classroom reading instruction to promote and accelerate learning.

To facilitate this alignment between the two interventions and to emphasize a developmental approach in raising students' achievement levels in reading, the Hapsburgh district has communicated a common message about literacy instruction to both their classroom and Reading Recovery teachers. This has been achieved through in-service education, including a five-day summer training session and regular follow-up visits from the P.D. Consultant, and through providing teachers with professional reference texts. According to Clay (1993, p.12) information about how classroom teachers are teaching reading processes to their students is critical for the Reading Recovery teacher. Since she is trying to help the Reading Recovery student to gain the same competencies as successful students, she needs to know how successful students behave.

Research Questions

Analysis of five components of the district's Early Literacy Project (philosophy, instructional materials, instructional methods and student activities, reading strategies, and reading goals) revealed that congruence existed between the two interventions (improved classroom instruction and Reading Recovery) at a conceptual level. Given the level of congruence between the two programs conceptually, along with efforts by the district to facilitate coordination between them, there was considerable potential for the two programs to be implemented congruently. The purpose or goal of this study then, was to examine whether curricular congruence existed at an implementation level. More specifically, in line with Johnston et al.s' (1985) suggestion, the initial questions to be investigated in this study include:

(a) Are the two interventions working congruently by employing similar philosophies, instructional materials, instructional methods and student activities, reading strategies, and reading goals?

(b) Is there a difference between the way two schools are implementing the Early Literacy Project; one in the first phase and one in the second phase of implementation?

Significance of the Study

A search for congruence between the two interventions serves several purposes. First, it provides insight into the concept of curricular congruence as a means of increasing the success of at-risk students. This is especially significant considering the suggestion that the lack of articulation between the Reading Recovery and classroom teacher may be a cause for Reading Recovery students not maintaining their reading level gains. Second, it provides a framework that will serve to assist districts and schools that seek to understand, examine, and establish congruent programs for at-risk students. Finally, the theoretical significance of this study is its potential to expand the current knowledge-base on cognitive clarity (Downing, 1979) and cognitive confusion (Vernon, 1960).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This ethnographic research (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993) investigated the Hapsburgh School District's implementation of their Early Literacy Project in order to examine the role of

curricular congruence in raising the achievement levels of at-risk readers. It is an analytic description of that phenomenon beginning with the summer, week long, in-service training and continuing over the course of one school year with repeated visitations by the researcher to the site. It is also a collective, instrumental case study (Stake, 1994) in that two schools, each at different phases of implementation of the Early Literacy Project were closely examined. The cases themselves play a supportive role in facilitating our understanding of the role that curricular congruence can play in raising the achievement levels of at-risk readers.

Site and Participants

This research investigation was initially conducted during the five-day in-service training for teachers about to begin implementation of the Early Literacy Project in the Hapsburgh School District. Participating in the training allowed the researcher to hear first-hand the message given to the teachers. It also allowed the researcher to gather data needed to conduct a content analysis of the two interventions as a precursor to this investigation, used to determine curricular congruence between the two interventions at a conceptual level. Following the training, the investigation was conducted in two of the district's schools in order to examine curricular congruence between the two interventions (Reading Recovery program and classroom language arts program). Within each school, research was conducted in a first grade classroom and a Reading Recovery program. One school investigated, Willow Elementary, was in its second year of implementation. The other school, Elm Street School, was just beginning its first year of implementation. Both schools are K-4 schools in middle class neighborhoods with diverse student populations. They were recommended as schools that were keenly interested in raising the achievement levels of at-risk students and were considered to be responsive to making changes in their programs. Therefore, it was expected that these schools would allow the researcher to investigate the issue of curricular congruence without extraneous concerns about issues of opposition or resistance to the Early Literacy Project.

Participants in each of the two schools included (a) a first grade teacher, (b) a Reading Recovery teacher, (c) a Reading Recovery student who receives instruction from both teachers, (d) a parent of the Reading Recovery student, and (e) the school principal. At Willow Elementary

School (the school in its second year of implementation) the classroom teacher is Laura Stacey, the Reading Recovery teacher is Casey Koster, the student is Tyler Black, his father is Mr. Black, and the school's principal is Ms. Guereno. The names of the participants at Elm Street School (the school in its first year of implementation) are: Karen Abner, the classroom teacher, Jackie Bouchard, the Reading Recovery teacher, Rachel Cooper, the Reading Recovery student, Mrs. Cooper, Rachel's mother, and Mr. Barry, the school principal. In addition to these voluntary participants, the District Instructional Specialist, Ms. Kostanza, and the Professional Development Consultant, Dr. Flaherty, also participated in the study.

Data Gathering

Following a traditional ethnographic approach, participant observation was used to acquire firsthand, sensory accounts of phenomena as it occurred. The database consisted primarily of field notes. This data was gathered with reference to time (observations were conducted at different times of the school day and year), space (data was gathered in different settings) and person (several individuals were sources of data). In addition, like Agar's (1980) research, emphasis was also placed on interviews as a core of the ethnographic fieldwork. The combination of observations and interviews helped to determine the relationship between what people say and what they do. The two methods mutually interacted with each other either simultaneously or sequentially during the course of doing the ethnography.

Data Analysis

In order to determine if the two interventions were working congruently by employing similar philosophies, instructional materials, instructional methods and student activities, reading strategies, and reading goals, data from the observational field notes was initially read and reread several times. The data were then coded by recording the curricular component in the margin next to any information related to each of these five curricular components. Information coded in this way was organized into a matrix format in order to examine the level of congruence between the two reading programs at an implementation level more closely.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following section presents these two case studies, Following Tyler and Helping Rachel that recount my observations and interpretations as I followed Tyler's reading instruction in two settings and watched two teachers helping Rachel learn to read. The cases provide descriptive accounts of: (a) the participants, their understanding of the Early Literacy Project and my perception of their relationships, (b) instructional routines in both the classroom language arts programs and Reading Recovery programs, and (c) interactions between peers and between teacher and students in each setting. They also provide analyses of the levels of congruence found to exist within each case and across both cases.

Case Study #1: Tyler

Following Tyler

This case study, as the title indicates, represents movement. Over the course of five months I followed Tyler from his Reading Recovery sessions back to his regular classroom to observe the reading instruction he received. I followed him wearing my "Johnston, Allington & Afflerbach lenses" looking for curricular congruence between the two programs. Not only did I follow him in the literal sense of the word, from one place to the next, but also I tried to follow, to be attentive to and to understand, the reasons for the congruence that I came to see.

While I followed Tyler, his two reading teachers also followed him. They followed his progress, slow that it was, and followed his lead, wearing a different set of lenses than mine but ones that seem to have achieved the same end. The lenses that I came to recognize them wearing were "developmental lenses" for they followed the developmental cues he gave them, and responded by organizing and reorganizing his program to provide him with the appropriate balance of literacy instruction he needed. I also came to believe that their lenses were bifocals for, though they weren't overtly aware of the literature that gave me the impetus for my study, they seemed to be looking at the same curricular components I was.

Tyler's school: Description of the setting. Tyler Black, the student I followed, is one of approximately one hundred first grade students at Willow Elementary School a K - 4 school in a quiet, suburban, middle class neighborhood attended by about six hundred students. Up to

twenty percent of the students come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. The students' parents are generally well educated, are highly active in the school through PTA involvement and through volunteering in the classrooms, and have high expectations for their children. The school consists of five classes for each grade with class sizes set by the district. Kindergarten classes each total up to eighteen students, grade one classes have up to twenty two students, grade two classes have as many as twenty four students and grade three and four classes total between twenty four and twenty eight students each.

Fortunately for Tyler, Willow Elementary School is one of four schools in the district involved in an Early Literacy Project aimed at raising the achievement levels of students, particularly those considered to be at-risk. The teachers at Willow Elementary have one year of implementation under their belts and are now beginning their second year of the project. Improved classroom instruction is the main emphasis of the Early Literacy Project but it also includes a safety net for the lowest achieving students in a program called Reading Recovery. In fact, Tyler was one of the four first grade students selected from the over one hundred first graders early in the school year to receive daily one on one reading instruction for 30 minutes by a teacher trained in the philosophy and techniques of Reading Recovery. This instruction was provided in addition to his classroom reading program.

What was particularly interesting about Tyler's reading instruction was that, according to the research, it was unlike the instruction that other students like him tend to receive in most schools. In most schools, when an at-risk student receives pull-out remedial reading instruction it typically is provided in relative isolation from the classroom reading program (Johnston & Allington, 1991). The two teachers generally have little knowledge of one another's philosophies, instructional materials, instructional methods, reading strategies and reading goals (Johnston et al., 1985). But, because the district has undertaken to coordinate efforts to ensure congruence between Reading Recovery and the classroom program, Tyler's teachers are very aware of what goes on in each other's rooms. They share ownership and responsibility for raising Tyler's achievement levels such that he can eventually function independently in the regular classroom.

Tyler's teachers: Description of the classroom teacher and her understanding of the Early Literacy Project. Laura Stacey, Tyler's first grade teacher is an eight-year veteran teacher of this grade level. She is in her mid-thirties, has a Master's degree in reading education and is keenly interested in furthering her knowledge about reading. She regularly attends workshops, has engaged in action research, and is currently involved in a study group, which she helped organize, to extend her learning about the components of balanced literacy instruction. She is described by her colleagues and by Ms. Kostanza, the District Instructional Specialist, as an excellent teacher.

In her interview, Laura was able to clearly articulate her understanding of the Early Literacy Project in a manner which was closely aligned with that communicated by Dr. Flaherty, the Professional Development Consultant, and Ms. Kostanza, the District Instructional Specialist. Laura stated that the philosophy of the Early Literacy Project was to "look at where students are and to use the developmental cues they are giving you to determine when they're ready to begin a certain instructional component in order to bring balance to their program." These instructional components, she explained, include such things as shared, guided and independent reading, word study, and shared, interactive and independent writing. She further described the importance of continuous assessment to be able to do this and her use of Reading Recovery leveled texts to respond to and support small steps in students' reading progress. Laura understood that students need to orchestrate all three cueing systems, visual, structure, and meaning and told me that she often asks students, "Does it look right? Does it sound right? Does it make sense?"

Description of the Reading Recovery teacher and her understanding of the Early Literacy Project. Tyler's Reading Recovery teacher, Casey Koster, is in her second year of tutoring students in the one-to-one program having received her Reading Recovery training last school year. In the morning she provides Reading Recovery instruction to four students and in the afternoon she is a PCEN (Pupils with Compensatory Educational Needs) teacher. She has taught at Willow Elementary for four years prior to which she taught grades five and six for two years and stayed home to raise a family. Like Laura, Casey is in her mid-thirties, has her

Master's degree in reading education, regularly attends conferences, and is a member of the same study group endeavoring to learn more about balanced literacy instruction. She is also a member of several professional reading associations, has made numerous presentations and demonstrations for teachers in her district, and has spoken to doctoral students studying early interventions about the Reading Recovery program.

In her interview with me it was evident that Casey clearly understood that the Early Literacy Project was designed with an emphasis on developing a balanced literacy program within the classroom to respond to the developmental needs of students: "I think the philosophy is to change things in the classroom to make literacy more applicable to everyone in the classroom – to kids at the lower end, to kids at the higher end – meeting their needs in a more developmental way." She explained that the Reading Recovery program was supplemental to the classroom instruction and recognized the need for the two programs to be congruent in order to benefit Tyler's development in reading. She described the leveled texts that she used in Reading Recovery and told me that similarly leveled texts were also used in Tyler's classroom. Not only did she describe the components of the Reading Recovery program but she also listed the components that Laura uses in her classroom. She talked about commonalties between their programs as being their use of similarly leveled texts, their instructional response to students developmental needs based on running record assessments, their emphases on reading and writing, their prompting for strategy use between all three cueing systems, and their goal to raise him to the average of his class.

My perception of the relationship between the two teachers. Casey and Laura are not only Tyler's teachers, but they are very close friends. It was evident to me that the two teachers shared a mutual understanding of the Early Literacy Project and a mutual understanding of one anothers' programs. I perceived that they also shared mutual ownership for raising Tyler's achievement levels in reading. I assumed that these factors, as well as the friendship they shared that naturally promoted interaction, would lead them to communicate regularly and to collaborate to bring about congruent programming for him.

Description of Tyler and his developmental profile at the beginning of the year. Tyler Black is an attractive "all-American" looking boy who dresses in the latest clothing styles, is described by his teachers as "cool", and is well liked by his peers. Of his three siblings, one brother has been classified as having learning disabilities and is currently receiving special education programming. According to his father, as a pre-schooler, Tyler was disinterested in books, letters, and reading. He would rather play with trucks and blocks than sing the alphabet song, listen to a story, or look at books.

Tyler entered kindergarten without knowing the majority of the alphabet and did not see a need for it until entering first grade. At the end of his kindergarten year, Tyler's teacher identified him as a student in need of intensive reading intervention. In his first grade classroom this year, Tyler is a member of the lowest reading group joined by three other students who are struggling with print. Tyler is considered at-risk of reading failure.

At first I followed Tyler's assessment results on The Reading Recovery Observation Survey to learn about his reading behaviors at the beginning of the school year. Tyler was assessed for admission to the Reading Recovery program on September 10, 1997. Test results indicate that he was reading at a level 2 according to Reading Recovery leveled texts. Scores on further subtests of The Observation Survey (see Table 19) were as follows: Letter Identification 40/54 (2nd stanine), Word Test 0/20 (1st stanine), Concepts About Print 11/24 (3rd stanine), Writing Vocabulary 5 (4th stanine), and Hearing Sounds in Words 11/37 (3rd stanine). In his regular classroom, by the end of September, Tyler was not yet reading level 1 books at an independent level.

From closer examination of the subtests I learned that Tyler was slow at reading letters and lacked confidence in doing so. He didn't know the letters Y, L, f, y, q, g, and r. He confused f with G, e with Z, n with h, and l with i. I learned that Tyler made no attempts to read any words on the given word list even when prompted.

In terms of print concepts, Tyler could identify the front of a book. He knew that print carries a message and that the left page is read before the right page. He couldn't distinguish between a letter and a word, and couldn't control one-to-one matching. He could identify a period

but not a question mark or quotation marks. He didn't demonstrate knowledge of return sweep but was aware of the beginning and end of print on a page. Tyler could write his own name and the words *the, to, is, mom, dad,* and *I*. He wrote words with a mix of upper and lower case letters and held a pen awkwardly. He could not say words slowly to stretch out the sounds. Words he attempted contained either the beginning or ending sound.

Using Reading Recovery books that are leveled 1-20 by Ohio State to acknowledge and support small steps of reading progression Tyler was able to apply some useful strategies on text. He possessed an awareness of book handling skills. He utilized picture clues and structure to approximate text, especially on level 2 books (books with a Readiness Grade Equivalence). He used left to right progression and return sweep on level 3 books (books with a Preprimer 1 Grade Equivalence). Though he used structure and meaning on levels 1 and 2 texts, meaning broke down on level 3. Tyler made no attempt to self-correct or monitor himself using visual cues. He was unsuccessful at scanning text to locate specific words, and though he did attend to beginning and ending sounds on dictation he did not apply that knowledge during text reading. At the time of the assessment, Tyler was reading at a level 2 with 90% accuracy. This was the beginning of my being able to follow who Tyler was as a reader. It gave me some perspective from which I could try to follow his instruction.

I began to follow Tyler's reading instruction both in his classroom language arts program and in his Reading Recovery program on September 24th, 1997 and continued to do so every other Wednesday through to January 21st, 1998 when his Reading Recovery program ended. In each of Tyler's reading programs I quickly began to follow patterns of instruction. Although Tyler's school day began with his Reading Recovery instruction, a description of his classroom reading program will be presented first so as to move from the larger, more general context to the smaller, more specific context of his one-to-one instruction.

Following Tyler in His Classroom Language Arts Program

Description of the Setting. Tyler's first grade classroom was arranged with activity centers around the perimeter of the room and with students' desks formed into four large tables in the center of the room. One corner was set up as a listening center with a tape recorder, books,

and several headsets. Another corner was set up as a computer station. In a third corner, a math center with activities that changed every week based on the math concept being addressed was set up. The fourth corner was used for the word wall and for independent reading. Students' browsing boxes (boxes full of books that students had previously read) were placed on the floor here. Little wall space was visible since it was plastered with student work, chart stories, songs, and poems. A pocket chart hung near the word wall with word cards for students to create sentences. The morning message written on chart paper was also hung nearby. A chart stand held an abundance of large size poems for students to read. Another chart stand, placed near the entrance to the room, served as the work board. This listed each of the tasks that students in various groups were expected to accomplish that day and in that order.

Routines and description of instruction. Each day after his Reading Recovery session I would follow Tyler as he entered his first grade classroom. He would check the work board to find his tasks for the day and then immerse himself in them. While he was in Reading Recovery, Tyler's peers would have begun their tasks as outlined on this board after having read and worked on that day's morning message as directed by the classroom teacher. Horizontally across the top of the board were 4 cards labeled Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4, representing the way in which the students' desks were arranged. Underneath each of these headings were the names of the students at those tables. Then, beneath each of those cards were individual cards with icons representing various tasks or activities that students were directed to follow. Each group had between three to five tasks to complete. They included such things as: (a) using a specific program on the computer; (b) completing a hands-on math activity at the math center related to the current concept being addressed in whole class lessons; (c) reading the room, which meant walking around the room reading charts, the morning message, and poems that were posted all over the walls and cupboards as well as reading the words on the word wall; (d) listening to a story at the listening center while following along with the text in the accompanying books; (e) creating something at the art center connected to other events, activities or themes going on in the class; (f) reading familiar books in their browsing boxes (books students had

previously read in their guided reading groups); (g) writing several sentences in their journals; and (h) working on word study activities.

This is the first year Laura has used this approach and she has found it to be a tremendous help in building student independence and in reducing classroom management problems. The students go back and forth across the room checking the board to monitor themselves in what they should be doing. Each activity center is clearly labeled with directions for students to follow, accompanied by icons, wherever possible to assist students with print.

This system also freed Laura to focus on student's needs in small groups. Each Wednesday I observed Laura conduct between two and three guided reading groups. These groups were homogeneous groups based on students' reading levels as determined through running record assessments. One of the groups was always Tyler's group which, in addition to Tyler, included two other boys and one girl. All of these three students had been placed on the Reading Recovery waiting list and were receiving additional support through a PCEN teacher.

The instructional materials that Laura used in her class with all of her students for reading instruction were Reading Recovery leveled texts. These texts were recommended by Ohio State and come from a variety of publishers including Rigby, The Wright Group, and Richard Owens. I was informed by the Reading Recovery trainer (A. Wallace, personal communication, March 10, 1998) that they are leveled in such a way as to support small steps of progression. Texts at levels 1 – 4 (Readiness - Preprimer 1 Grade Equivalence) are patterned texts with familiar objects and initially few words. They are used to build left to right progression, voice print match, and to develop "anchors", a sight vocabulary of high frequency words. Texts at levels 5 – 8 (Preprimer 2 – Preprimer 3 Grade Equivalence) have more text on the page, have varied sentences but ones that are predominantly in the student's oral language structure. The illustrations provide a high level of support. With these texts students have to operate strategically. They have to monitor their reading (check on themselves for voice/print match, use pictures, use known words, look at first letters in words, etc.) and cross-check (check between cueing systems to make sure they are correct by looking, for example, at the first letter and the picture). Levels 9 – 12 texts (Primer Grade Equivalence) have less pattern and less picture

support. The sentences are more varied and different genres are introduced. Students must become more strategic when reading these texts. For example, more words contain endings such as "ed" and "ing" and therefore the student must learn to recognize chunks of words in order to read new words. Texts at levels 13 – 15 (late Primer – early Grade 1 Grade Equivalence) have more specialized vocabulary, more print, less picture support, and more dialogue. And, texts at levels 16 – 20, which represent the end of 1st grade, are texts that include challenging vocabulary, low picture support, episodes and events, literary language, and are texts on which students must operate strategically.

For guided reading, Laura would sit inside the center of a horseshoe style table while the students would sit around the outside of the horseshoe facing her. Laura would hold up one book and direct the student's attention to it. She generally began her guided reading lessons by telling the students the title of the book and then by encouraging discussion to activate their prior knowledge on the topic. Laura would then lead Tyler and his peers on a picture walk and would encourage the students to engage in active discussion about the pictures. The students listened to one another use different words for various pictures. For example, when Laura drew their attention to a picture with an illustration of a bear in a body of water one student said the bear was in a "stream," another said he was in a "pond." Since the word in the text was "river" Laura asked, "Could that be a river? What letter would "river" start with?" Once the students said "r" she had them look for the word "river" on the page. Laura later told me that all of the students in Tyler's group tend to have immature language development and lacked the background knowledge that many of their peers had. They often had difficulty identifying objects in pictures or recalling names for the objects or concepts in the pictures. She explained that for this reason she used a lot of discussion and a very rich story introduction and picture walk during guided reading.

Throughout the picture walk, in addition to vocabulary and concept development, Laura engaged the students in making predictions to encourage them to think about the meaning of the story. Before the students began to read she would remind them to use the picture clues to help them, to look at beginning letters and to "get their mouths ready" for the sounds. She would also remind them to think about the meaning of the story and to predict what might happen next. With

these reminders, which sometimes came in the form of asking students to describe what they might do if they run into problems, they were each given their own copy of the book.

When each of the four students in Tyler's group had a book in hand they began to read orally - not in round-robin style and not chorally. They each read aloud; to themselves and at their own pace, but loud enough that Laura could "listen in" on each of them and loud enough that they could "listen in" on each other to get help if they needed it.

Another routine of Laura's guided reading instruction was that the students did not read their books once and then close them up to wait for the teacher to do something else with them. They read and reread the text several times, sometimes reminding one another that they needed to "keep practicing" if one of them sat idle. While this cacophony resounded around her, Laura took a running record on one of the students. When she was done, she continued to "listen in" on the students to determine her teaching points.

At times she would draw the groups' attention to a page where she overheard several of them having difficulty. The difficulty might have been that there was a considerable amount of print on the page and they had gotten confused and lost their places. They weren't attending to each word and therefore she would have them reread that section of text, finger pointing the words as they read for voice/print match. Or she might have noticed them tripping over or skipping words or reading them incorrectly. In this case she would draw their attention to the word, have them frame it between their fingers and look at the first letter or the last letter, or the first and last letters, or at other parts of the word. Sometimes she would write the word on chart paper and segment it. She might have them all hunt for words in their text that began with a certain sound or letter or that shared common letters such as "sh", "th", and "ch" to record on the chart. They would then read these words and look again at the distinctive features and then place the words on their word wall which was brimming with word cards under each letter of the alphabet.

After their guided reading session, which could last between fifteen and thirty minutes, the students would immediately put their books into baggies to take home to reread with at least one family member that evening. They were expected to record their book on their Home

Reading Record. This recording devise was divided into seven columns: date, title, read to child, read with child, read by child, comments, initials. Laura was pleased that Tyler was getting support at home as evidenced by his reading record which was always filled in and initialed by either his father or mother. By mid-January Tyler had reread eighty books at home that he had first read, and received instruction in at school.

Laura would generally begin working with another guided reading group following the same instructional approach but using a different level of book, while Tyler's group and others continued on with their work board tasks. She would also work with different word study groups to examine various patterns in words such as the C-V-C pattern, blends or digraphs depending on what they were "using but confusing" in their writing and what patterns were more evident and problematic in their reading. Sometimes she'd pull the group together and teach a whole class lesson such as writer's workshop where she demonstrated the revising process. Or sometimes she'd listen to students read her their journals on an individual basis.

Interactions between peers. Whenever students were unsure about what task they were to do or how they were to go about doing it they would check with one another. Since many of the activities actively engaged students in reading they naturally provided support for one another in the reading process. For example, one day late in October Tyler took out his cut-up sentence book from Reading Recovery to help him write in his journal in the classroom. Immediately several peers gathered around him to look at his work which they described as "awesome." Tyler proudly began to read his sentences to them and some of them chimed in and were able to help with words that Tyler got stuck on. Another student suggested that he use some of these ideas to help him write his journal.

Another incident I observed that serves as an example of how peer interaction assisted with Tyler's literacy development was as follows. One day Tyler's guided reading group was reading aloud to themselves while Laura listened in. Tyler overheard another boy say a word incorrectly. He told him, "That's not *go*. Later, the other boy corrected one of Tyler's errors. At this point, the boys began to read chorally until they started to accuse one another of "copying." This led them to resort back to their individual read alouds until Tyler got stuck again. I could see

him listening in on his friend for help with the word. Not long after, the two boys were reading chorally again.

This type of social support was what I believe Tyler, in his extremely short responses during our interview, was referring to when he said that he prefers the reading instruction in the classroom because they can help one another there: "If I don't know a word then the other people say it with me. If I know it and the other people don't know it then I'll say it out. If the other people know it and I don't know it then they'll say it out."

Interactions between teacher and students. While conducting guided reading lessons Laura always showed genuine interest in the student's comments, displayed excitement and enthusiasm for the story they were about to read, and established a warm, relaxed atmosphere in which students could share in the reading process. There was never a time while I was observing, that Laura was not engaged with one or more students in some type of literacy activity. She did not stop to take time to talk with me about Tyler or about her instruction while the students were in the room. Yet, during the students' specials (gym, music, or art), she would always update me on his progress and the ways in which she was adjusting her schedule for him. I interpreted this to mean that she took her responsibility to improve students' reading abilities very seriously and tried to make every moment in her classroom meaningful for her students. Never did I see the students involved in "busy work."

Through closely observing Tyler, through analyzing his running records, and through conversations with Casey, Laura made many changes to her own schedule to provide additional support and instruction for Tyler and the others in his group. At the very beginning of the school year she did more whole class lessons and kept lots of open time to meet with students individually to determine their levels, abilities, and needs. As she learned more about the students she began to group them and regroup them for instruction. At first she met with each group once a week in addition to lots of whole class instruction. Then she met with each group twice a week, and by late October she was meeting with Tyler and his group every day. In addition to the guided reading instruction she also met with them on three separate occasions

each week for word study where she'd provide them with two instructional sessions and one consolidation session.

In the beginning of the school year Laura had four different reading groups. By the end of February, when I met with her in a follow-up session, she had six reading groups. Her highest reading group, including six students, was reading at a level 24 (3rd grade equivalent) and higher. She is meeting with them twice per week, not in guided reading, but in a literature circle where they discuss story elements, make connections among texts, and share their responses and interpretations of texts. Her second highest group made up of three students is reading level 20 texts. She meets with these students twice per week in a literature circle format as well. Two students are reading level 16 texts (late grade 1). They meet twice per week for a combination of guided reading and literature circle. Another group, made up of four students, are reading between a level 12 and 13. Laura provides them with guided reading instruction three times per week. The second to lowest group has three students who Laura feels are stuck and have not progressed sufficiently lately. For this reason she is meeting with them daily in a Reader's Circle format in which students observe one another reading to deliberate on the reading process and to construct new strategies. They are provided with both peer and teacher scaffolding in thinking about and applying a variety of reading strategies. Finally, the lowest reading group in Laura's class which includes Tyler and the three other students in his group, is reading at a level 9 text. They receive daily guided reading along with the word study sessions previously mentioned.

Following Tyler in Reading Recovery

Routines and description of instruction. In Reading Recovery, Tyler began his sessions by writing and then reading several words dictated by Casey who encouraged him to write them quickly on a variety of different surfaces including a standing white board, lap- size white board, chalk board, magnadoodle, and sand. These words, I was initially told, came from his writing and over the course of my observations I saw that this was in fact the case. For Tyler, these words were high frequency words such as: *I, a, is, in, am, to, come, like, see, the, my, we, and, at, here, on, up, look, go, this, it,* and *me*. This component, which lasted only a matter of a few minutes,

was implemented to provide Tyler with lots of practice so that he would develop automaticity in writing them and in reading them.

Next, Tyler was involved in the reading of several (up to four) familiar texts. According to Casey's former Reading Recovery trainer (A. Wallace, personal communication, March 10, 1998), with whom I had a phone conversation, these texts, because they were familiar to the student, were easy for him. They did not involve too much work or problem solving so that the student would learn to phrase and not read word for word. This would allow the student to feel like a reader and sound like a reader. The texts that Casey used with Tyler, like those used by Laura were Reading Recovery leveled texts.

I was also told by the Reading Recovery trainer that if students can not read the published materials, the Reading Recovery teacher will make books for the student based on words that he knows or together the teacher and student will co-construct books for him to read. I saw during my observations that Casey had in fact, constructed some books for Tyler to read.

During Tyler's reading he was always given time to self-correct before Casey prompted him to use a strategy. Though he was always encouraged to think about the meaning of the story the repertoire of strategies that she prompted him for increased over time. Observations conducted in September and early October indicate that initially Casey encouraged Tyler to think of the words he knows, to finger point for voice/print match, and to look for picture clues. Tyler was also encouraged to reread text when he became confused. Observations of Tyler's Reading Recovery sessions in late October and into November note that Casey further suggested that Tyler look at the beginning letter of a word and told him to "get his mouth ready" for that sound. She continued to encourage him to think about what was happening in the story and to think about words he'd already seen in the text. By late December and into January Tyler was encouraged to use ending letters and beginning and ending letters together to help him with words. Over the course of his instruction Tyler was prompted more and more to cross-check between strategies such as looking at the picture and the beginning letter. In January, near the end of his sessions even before beginning to read Tyler was reminded to ask himself three things: Does it sound right? Does it look right? and Does it make sense?

After reading his familiar texts, Tyler read the new book that he'd been introduced to the previous day while Casey took a running record. This system is a way of recording a student's reading behaviors (putting a check mark for every word read correctly, recording words read incorrectly, and recording when and where the student repeated words and self-corrected). It allows the teacher to gain information about which cueing system(s) the student is using (meaning, structure, or visual) and whether he is cross-checking one kind of information against another.

When Tyler finished reading the text, Casey would check for comprehension by involving him in a brief discussion about the book and would then give him explicit feedback on his strategy use. For example, in one lesson she said, "I could tell you were thinking about the story and that helped you figure out this difficult word." She also told him, "I could see you look at the beginning letter and get your mouth ready for this word." Sometimes Casey would get Tyler to describe the strategy he used like when she said, "You fixed "cloudy" from "sunny". How did you know to fix that?" Tyler responded, "I looked at the letter "c". Casey praised him and reminded him that he could also check the picture.

Letter or word work came next. Early in his sessions Tyler would work with specific upper and lower case letters, ones that Casey had identified as confusions for him. For example, on October 8, my second observation, Tyler worked on the upper and lower case "L l". On my third observation Tyler worked on the letter "C c". On my fourth observation he worked with the letter "F f", and on my fifth observation the letter "B b" was the letter of focus. Tyler would arrange the randomly placed magnetic letter correctly. Then Casey would model the writing of the letter and Tyler would practice it. He would subsequently read the corresponding alphabet book paying attention to the beginning letter in the word on each page.

For word work, the words were always selected from the text he'd just read. At times Casey would make a word in magnetic letters and have Tyler read it. Then she'd mix up the letters and he'd have to reconstruct it and read it several times. From there, Tyler might be asked to write the word on various surfaces or to trace a word with a water pen. In early October words included *look* and *here*. In a late October observation I could see a continuation and progression

as Tyler continued to practice the word *here* but also was working on the high frequency words *we, my,* and *am.*

Sometimes Casey would draw a vertical line down the center of the chalkboard as she did during my third observation of Tyler's instruction on October 29th. On the left-hand side of the board she would randomly place specific magnetic letters. She would then ask Tyler, "What letter would you expect ____(she'd say a certain word from the text) to start with?" Tyler would have to select the appropriate magnetic letter and move it to the right hand side of the board. He would then say the letter and repeat the word Casey had given him.

Later in his Reading Recovery sessions Tyler learned how to make and break words into word chunks. At first the tasks were quite simple. During my fourth observation, in early November, Casey wrote the word "we" on the board. Under the word, she randomly placed the magnetic letters "h", "m", and "s". Tyler was asked to make the words "he", "me", and "she". In the next lesson that I observed Tyler was shown how some words have common word chunks and that by changing the beginning letter a new word is created. That day Tyler changed the "l" from "look" to a "b" to make "book" to a "t" to make "took" and to an "h" to make "hook". He also learned to make and break words into root words and endings. Tyler was able to make "look" into "looking" by adding "ing". He was also able to do the reverse, he broke "looking" into "look" and "ing". These tasks, as described to me by the Reading Recovery trainer (A. Wallace, personal communication, March 10, 1998) and reconfirmed by Casey, were used to teach Tyler principles about words. They were used to teach him to analogize, to learn to do quick visual processing so that known parts of words could be used to determine new words which would get more difficult over time. Whichever approach was taken or whichever skill was addressed in the word work, Tyler was always directed back to the text to locate and reread those words in context.

Letter or word work was followed by the writing component. Each day Tyler wrote a sentence with Casey's help. She emphasized the sounds in words while he identified the letters making each sound. Casey used what she called push-up boxes to assist Tyler in this process. Casey would draw a series of boxes attached to one another to represent the number of sounds in each word. Tyler would push a counter up into the box where he heard a certain sound and

then write the associated letter in that box. These push-up boxes changed over time to be called "letter boxes" in order to accommodate Tyler's growing knowledge that some sounds are made up of more than one letter or that sometimes words have silent letters.

When Tyler's sentence was written Casey copied it onto a sentence strip, cut it up into sections, and had Tyler reconstruct and read it. Again, like each component, this component changed over time for Tyler in terms of complexity. On my first observation Tyler wrote the following sentence: I ride my go-cart in the rain. After Casey wrote this sentence on a sentence strip she cut it up into individual words. On my final observation day Tyler wrote: Dad had to take care of them because they had spots. This sentence was cut up in the following manner: Dad / had / to / take / care / of / the/m / because / they / had /spot/s.

Tyler's Reading Recovery sessions always ended with a new story. Casey would summarize the story and lead him on an extensive picture walk, engaging Tyler in describing what was happening in the pictures. She would use key vocabulary from the text and as the text levels increased, she would use specific phrases from the text in her story introduction. Casey often asked Tyler, "What letter would you expect _____(she'd say a word found in the text) to start with?" and have him locate that word in text. Before he read she would encourage him to use various strategies that they'd been addressing. Near the end of the sessions she'd say, "Tyler, when you read this I want you to ask yourself: Does it sound right? Does it look right? Does it make sense? the first time you read it." After his reading Casey would provide him with explicit feedback on his strategy use. At the end of his sessions Casey would put a few of his familiar books in a baggy along with his cut-up sentence for Tyler to take home. That evening Tyler was expected to reread the books in the following manner that was communicated to his parents: First, Tyler was to listen to a family member read the books. Next, he would read the book along with the family member, and finally, he would read the books to the family member on his own. In addition to reading, Tyler was expected to reconstruct his cut-up sentence, glue it into his booklet, read it to a family member, and make a picture to accompany the sentence.

Interactions between teacher and student. The relationship that I observed between Casey and Tyler could be described as business-like. One critical aspect of the Reading

Recovery program is the effective use of time. Reading Recovery teachers, therefore, set timers to keep their instruction on target. Though she always greeted Tyler warmly when he entered the room Casey was clearly conscious of using every minute for instruction, and therefore did not engage in much chitchat with Tyler. Some of her comments when he entered the room did, however, indicate that she was aware of things like his mother's trip to Florida and various activities in which Tyler and his father had done together. Tyler seemed to follow Casey's business-like manner and in turn went about working to the best of his ability within the instructional setting and answering questions that were asked of him.

Throughout the thirty minute sessions she gave him positive feedback but in very matter-of-fact tones. At times, I sensed that Casey was somewhat irritated with Tyler. This was likely due to the frustration she described to me resulting from him not remembering words that they'd worked on numerous times or from him forgetting to use strategies that she'd prompted him for over and over.

Following Tyler's Developmental Progress

On September 24th during my first observation of Tyler I noticed that whenever he did not know a word or whenever he made an error in his reading or writing he would make a croaking noise, tighten the muscles in his face and neck, and pull his shoulders up close to his ears. This behavior occurred in both the Reading Recovery setting and in his classroom setting. By the time Tyler's instruction in the Reading Recovery program was over, these behaviors had completely diminished.

On my second observation of Tyler on October 8th I was informed that he had missed three sessions. In Reading Recovery Casey described what she had observed from Tyler's sessions up to this point. She saw Tyler self-monitoring by rereading when he got stuck. She also saw him using meaning and picture clues but saw that he didn't know how to use letters as clues. He was not looking at the first letter or cross-checking between the picture and the first letter in a word to help him. She explained that Tyler had no phonemic awareness and described him as slow moving. Casey also said that she and Laura had just met and that Laura had concurred with her observations. In the classroom on that same day Laura verified Casey's

observations and added that "Tyler is weak in his alphabet recognition and his mistakes are often topic related." She explained that, "he has weak concept knowledge and is delayed in language compared to the majority of my students."

October 29th was my third observation of Tyler. Tyler's running record assessment for the end of the month showed him reading at a level 1 independently. Laura explained that Tyler and the three other students in his guided reading group were not progressing as she had expected. One of the boys in the group was also assessed at a level 1 and the other two students in the group were assessed at a level 2. The average level of the class at this time was a level 7.7. Tyler and the other level 1 student in his group were the lowest in the class while five students were already reading at a level 17 having progressed from a level 12 at the end of September. To remedy this, Laura told me she would be meeting with Tyler's group every day and would be including three word study blocks with them each week in addition to their guided reading instruction.

My fourth observation of Tyler's reading instruction was on November 5th. On this day Casey conveyed her frustration in working with Tyler in that, "he doesn't seem to remember words from one day to the next." She mentioned also that she thought he might be developing an attitude where he thought he was "too cool to be in here." Yet when I followed Tyler back to his class that day he beamed with pride as some of his peers read his cut-up sentence book from the Reading Recovery class. At the end of November Tyler had progressed from a level 2 in October up to a level 4 in Reading Recovery. In Reading Recovery, running records were always conducted using a book that the student had been richly introduced to the previous day. For his classroom assessment Tyler was assessed using either a book that had been richly introduced to his guided reading group that day or using a new book he had never seen. At the end of November Tyler was assessed by Laura at a level 3. He had progressed two reading levels in one month in his classroom and two levels in Reading Recovery.

In December Casey told Tyler, "I'm proud that you're now looking at the ending sounds in words and you're thinking about words you know and self correcting more." She told me that she intended to try to move him quickly through levels 5, 6, and 7 since she believed the average of

the class at that time was a level 9. This of course was skewed she said, because Laura had several students reading at a level 20. In fact, five students were reading at a level 20 by the end of December. Tyler's reading level at the end of the month was assessed at a level 5 in the classroom. Six other students in the class were assessed at that same level and one student was assessed at a level 4. He was assessed at a level 6 in Reading Recovery. Again, Tyler had progressed two levels in his reading in both instructional settings in one month.

On January 7th, my seventh observation, Casey told me that Tyler was not progressing as she'd hoped. He needed to be reading at a level 9 which was the average of the class but he was only reading at a level 6. She was disappointed that she would only be able to work with him to the end of the month and that he would then likely be "exited" from the program. This term meant that Tyler had not successfully reached the average of his class within the given number of lessons allocated. Casey felt that two factors could be hindering Tyler's progress. One factor was that he had missed several sessions and another even more critical factor was that there were some family problems that both Casey and Laura saw were affecting Tyler's ability to focus and attend. Once again, by the end of the month Tyler had progressed 2 reading levels in both instructional settings.

When Tyler entered the Reading Recovery program both Laura and Casey were determined that he would reach the average level of his class by the end of the program. That was not the case. Tyler was exited from the Reading Recovery program after 60 lessons. This meant that he had not reached the average reading level of his class. He was assessed for de-mission from the Reading Recovery program on January 30, 1998. Test results indicate that at that time he was only reading at a level 4 according to Reading Recovery leveled texts. Scores on further subtests of The Observation Survey (see Table 19) were as follows: Letter Identification 51/54 (4th stanine), Word Test 2/20 (2nd stanine), Concepts About Print 15/24 (4th stanine), Writing Vocabulary 21 (5th stanine), and Hearing Sounds in Words 33/37 (7th stanine).

In February and March Tyler continued to make reading progress in his classroom through daily instruction from Laura in his guided reading group and word study group. Each

month he progressed steadily at the same pace he demonstrated between October through January – two levels per month.

Laura's goal is for all of her first grade students to exit her class at the end of the school year between a level 18 and 20. Over the course of Tyler's Reading Recovery instruction the three students in his guided reading group have progressed at the same rate as Tyler. Laura thinks it's possible for them to achieve the goal she has set if they make consistent 2 level increases each month. It is her intention to continue following Tyler and to continue responding to his developmental needs. And, as evidence that she shares the responsibility and ownership of Tyler's reading progress with Laura, even though she will not be working with Tyler one-on-one in the second term, Casey says that she will also be following his progress through conversations with Laura.

Analysis of Congruence Within the Case Study

Following What has Happened for Tyler Between the Two Programs

Congruence between the classroom language arts program and the Reading Recovery program. As I followed Tyler's reading instruction in the Reading Recovery program and in his classroom program my "Johnston, Allington & Afflerbach lenses" were in clear focus. My observations had been conducted to determine the levels of curricular congruence between the two programs for each of the five curricular components (philosophy, instructional materials, instructional methods and student activities, reading strategies and reading goals) as recommended by Johnston et al (1985). Based on a content analysis which examined the levels of congruence between the two programs at a conceptual level, I knew that there was potential for congruence to be found at an implementation level. From my analysis of observational field notes and teacher interviews I could see that the two programs were being implemented in such a way that there was strong curricular congruence between them.

Both teachers' programs shared the philosophy that all children, and specifically Tyler, can learn if things are presented at the students' appropriate developmental levels. They were both keenly aware that the classroom is the main intervention for Tyler and that Reading Recovery is a safety net designed as a supplement to the classroom instruction. Laura stated

very matter-of-factly that, "Reading Recovery is definitely a supplement to what's going on in the regular classroom" just as Casey did, "Our main focus is what's going on within the classroom. We have Reading Recovery that is a part of that but when the district adopted Reading Recovery it was very clear that it would have to be followed up by an intense program within the classroom so it would all be congruent with what we're doing within Reading Recovery."

The two reading programs that Tyler received were congruent in that both teachers based their instruction on continuous assessment, using running records to inform them about the appropriate level of text to be using with Tyler. The instructional materials used by both Laura and Casey were Reading Recovery leveled texts which allowed them to recognize and support small steps in his reading progression. It was explained to me that it is not unusual for a student to be reading up to two levels higher in Reading Recovery than in the classroom due to the higher level of support in the one-on-one setting. Though their month-end assessments varied by one level, my field notes indicate that not only did both teachers use similarly leveled texts, but they were using the same level of text with Tyler on each of my observation days.

In addition to sharing similar philosophies and instructional materials, Laura and Casey also used similar instructional methods. The guided reading instruction that both teachers provided for Tyler included rich story introductions, picture walks, the activation of prior knowledge, the development of vocabulary and attention to distinctive features in words. Both teachers engaged Tyler in lots of real reading and writing. In fact, when asked what he does most in each setting Tyler replied, "reading and writing". In addition, both teachers encouraged the reading of familiar texts at home and supported this with a steady flow of materials sent home with Tyler.

The running record assessments that both teachers used with Tyler also brought about strong congruence between the two programs in terms of reading strategies, the fourth curricular component. Their analysis of Tyler's running records allowed each teacher to determine what cueing systems Tyler was using in order to prompt him for further strategies and to cross-check between the strategies. Not only did the two teachers encourage Tyler to use a variety of similar strategies in reading including looking at the beginning letter, the ending letter, and picture clues,

they tended to use the same wording in their prompts to him. They could each be heard regularly asking, "Does it look right? Does it sound right? Does it make sense?"

Finally, the two programs were congruent in terms of their reading goals for Tyler. The ultimate goal of raising his achievement level to the average of his class, unfortunately, was not attained. But, both teachers recognized the importance of communication and collaboration as a means to achieve their common goal of accelerating Tyler's ability to read increasingly complex texts with greater comprehension. As such, they met formally once a week and informally almost every day to discuss his progress and/or lack of progress.

Tyler's father, Mr. Black, appreciated this communication: "I know those two teachers talk tremendously. I know. I'm glad that happens. There's good communication that happens between the two so that they both understand where Tyler's level is at this point and what he should be comprehending in the normal classroom." When asked how he knew this he said that he and his wife had each spoken to both teachers and his wife had observed in both instructional settings.

From my field notes and through listening in on their conversations I know that they discussed how, with confidence and improved skills, "Tyler isn't making the croaking noise or making that funny face" when he made an error or didn't know a word. They discussed that Laura could "work on the words *look* and *like* with Tyler in guided reading" since "he was confusing them" when he worked with Casey. They discussed that "he's making slow progress", that he was "lacking concentration and motivation since after Christmas", and that they thought "there are family problems" that were influencing this. They both described practically in unison how, "Tyler looks tired and pale and lacks motivation." They discussed his reading level and the reading levels of the other students in Laura's class. And, with grave disappointment, they discussed the fact that Tyler would not be "discontinued" from the Reading Recovery program (a term meaning that he had successfully reached the average of his class within the twenty two week program) but that he would be "exited" (a term meaning that he had not successfully reached the average of the class within the given time frame).

Not only did Laura and Casey communicate, but they collaborated in rescheduling Tyler's Reading Recovery time slot halfway into the program so that he would not always be missing some of the components they felt were essential for him such as the morning message and shared reading. This allayed some fears that Mr. and Mrs. Black originally had about Tyler missing out on things in his regular classroom while receiving his Reading Recovery instruction, "The initial concern for me and my wife was that he didn't get pulled away from normal activities. Because you know, I think that can be harmful to the children also. So I think they worked it out from a schedule standpoint and what's very good is that when you talk with Tyler, if you ask him if he feels he's missing something, he feels very comfortable that he's not. If anything he enjoys, I think, this additional attention. So that works out nicely."

Communicative congruence. Prior to observing Tyler's instruction in the classroom and in the Reading Recovery setting a content analysis was conducted to determine whether the two interventions were congruent along five curricular components (philosophy, instructional materials, instructional methods and student activities, reading strategies, and reading goals). Results of this analysis indicated that the programs are congruence at a conceptual level. This suggested that there was potential for the two programs to be congruent at an implementation level. Following the observations, analysis of the levels of congruence between the two programs for each of the five curricular components was found to be strong at an implementation level.

As described earlier, the district had coordinated efforts to ensure congruence between the two programs through: (a) carefully selecting its early intervention program, (b) introducing them at the same time and communicating a common message to both classroom and Reading Recovery teachers about the philosophy, instructional materials, instructional methods, reading strategies and goals of the project, (c) presenting the project's design as being flexible to accommodate their teaching styles and methods within its framework and by conveying respect, trust and professionalism in its teachers, (d) providing support to teachers by way of resources, follow-up visits by the Professional Development Consultant, and (e) encouraging communication and collaboration between teachers. It appears then that these efforts by the district to facilitate coordination of the two programs has served to ensure curricular congruence between them, at

least for these two teachers at Willow Elementary School. This also suggests that there is strong communicative congruence between the district's message, the teachers' understanding of that message, and the teachers' ability to implement it accordingly.

Case Study #2: Rachel

Helping Rachel

One of the most memorable lines in the 1997 comedy, Jerry Maguire, starring Tom Cruise and Cuba Gooding Jr. was Jerry Maguire's frustrated cry in the locker room to his one and only client, "Help me help you!" The title of this case study is reminiscent of that cry. From my perspective, the two teachers responsible for raising Rachel's achievement levels in reading (the Reading Recovery teacher and the regular classroom teacher) were making that cry, though it was inaudible, to one another and to Rachel.

While each was going about the business of helping Rachel learn to read, they were also going about the business of learning how to implement an Early Literacy Project. Both teachers from Elm Street School had been participants in a week long in-service session addressing the philosophy, instructional materials, instructional methods, reading strategies and goals for early literacy in the classroom. In addition, the Reading Recovery teacher was in her training year and the classroom teacher was now having to rethink, readjust, and reflect on various practices that inhibit or promote acceleration in reading. Help was in great demand all around.

Rachel's school: Description of the setting. Elm Street School is a K – 5 school with an enrollment of 685 students. It has six classes for each grade level and has the highest socioeconomic level in the district, with free and reduced lunch at seven percent. Fifteen to twenty percent of the student population is of diverse ethnicity and sixteen students require Individual Educational Plans. Like Willow Elementary, this school has strong parental support and numerous volunteers. The school has forty-two teachers and thirty-eight para-professionals. The attendance rate is ninety-six percent. Elm Street School is in the second phase of implementation of the Early Literacy Project. This means that the teachers in this school were just beginning to implement the project in the year when this investigation began. It was selected during the summer in-service training sessions and was recommended by Ms. Kostanza, the

District Instructional Specialist, as a school whose teachers' characteristics closely matched those of teachers at Willow Elementary.

Rachel's teachers: Description of the classroom teacher and her understanding of the Early Literacy Project. Rachel Cooper, the student I observed at Elm Street School, received reading instruction from two teachers; from her first grade teacher and from a Reading Recovery teacher. Karen Abner, Rachel's first grade teacher, is in her mid-to late-forties, has a Master's degree in reading education, and has taught for sixteen years, thirteen of them in first grade. From what I could gather, Karen is highly respected in her building. She is considered to be "exceptional" by her principal, "on the cutting edge" by Jackie, the Reading Recovery teacher who has team-taught with her in the past, and "a literacy leader" by team members.

On December 3rd, in response to my interview questions addressing each of the five curricular components, Karen described her understanding of the Early Literacy Project. She indicated a general awareness of the philosophy of applying a developmental approach to instruction by stating that she is learning to "zero in on each child and to look at their abilities." She explained that the instructional materials she uses are "real literature" and that she is learning to level books to use for assessment purposes. She did not think that it was critical to use leveled books for instructional purposes. Karen told me that she used "a combination of different components" as instructional methods and specifically mentioned two; shared reading and guided reading. From the list of reading strategies that she listed as ones she encourages students to use it was evident that she was aware of meaning and visual cues as sources of knowledge. In terms of reading goals, Karen's response was for her to help students progress as far as they can. Karen felt that it was important for the Reading Recovery teacher to know what she was doing with Rachel in the classroom and thought that she should also know what the Reading Recovery teacher was doing with Rachel in her instructional setting. Yet, at the time of the interview she categorized her understanding of the Reading Recovery program and how it was conducted as minimal.

Description of Rachel's Reading Recovery teacher and her understanding of the Early Literacy Project. Jackie Bouchard was Rachel's Reading Recovery "teacher in training" during

the course of this study. Jackie is a well-educated, articulate woman in her mid-forties with a Master's degree in reading. She has taught English in senior high school for two years, grades 7 and 8 for two years, and after ten years spent raising a family, she has been a reading specialist and PCEN (Pupils with Compensatory Educational Needs) teacher for the past several years. Just recently she received certification as an educational administrator.

Jackie's understanding of the Early Literacy Project, as communicated to me during her interview, was in alignment with what the district had communicated during the summer institute. She described the classroom as the primary intervention for the majority of students and Reading Recovery as a supplement for students at-risk. She explained that continuous assessment was used in both instructional settings to inform instruction that was developmentally appropriate. With regard to instructional materials she explained the importance of both Reading Recovery and classroom teachers using leveled books for assessment and instruction. She further explained that as a result of the one-on-one instruction in Reading Recovery Rachel would likely be reading texts up to two levels higher than what she'd be reading in the classroom. The instructional methods that she described placed an emphasis on giving students a "maximum exposure to text at an appropriate level, at an instructional level and an independent level each and every day." Jackie talked about guided reading and independent reading as components of the classroom reading program as well as embedded word studies. In terms of reading strategies, she focused on the use and integration of all three cueing systems to build independent, strategic readers. Though she did not discuss overall goals of the Early Literacy Project, Jackie described specific reading goals for Rachel. These included the enjoyment of reading and raising her achievement level to the average of her class.

My perceptions of the relationship between the two teachers. My initial perception of the relationship between Rachel's two teachers, Karen and Jackie, was that there was some friction between the two and perhaps a lack of trust on the part of Karen toward Jackie. I had been warned by Karen at the beginning of this study that she had experienced some difficulties working with Jackie in the past, and I therefore anticipated that this might have an influence on their ability

to communicate and collaborate to bring about congruent programming for Rachel, a goal that had been established by the district.

Description of Rachel and her developmental profile at the beginning of the year. Rachel Cooper is a petite six-year-old in first grade and an only child who came to school each day looking as though she had just stepped out of a children's clothing catalogue. She would be decked out from headband to designer shoes but appear sleepy-eyed and tired. Rachel was not a morning person. I would have described her as a quiet, even timid child had I not seen her spring into dramatic performance mode at the sight of my tape recorder when I interviewed her. Apparently she has performed as one of Bob Schneider's Rainbow Kids and some of her sleepiness could be attributed to late night rehearsals and performances.

Her name appeared on a list that Karen Abner, Rachel's first grade teacher, received from Rachel's former kindergarten teacher. That list identified students who were at-risk of reading failure and who required intensive reading instruction in first grade. Rachel, along with three other students also identified as at-risk, was tested for possible placement in Reading Recovery, a one-on-one tutorial designed to bring students up to the average of their class within sixteen weeks.

Both Karen and Jackie, the Reading Recovery teacher, believed that Rachel came from a literacy rich home environment and thought that she might be able to read better than she was actually demonstrating at school. However, they both also believed that Rachel was a needy child with many gaps in her skills and abilities, possibly influenced by her mother having battled a terminal disease and her father's numerous absences as a result of frequent business trips. Their reservations about placing Rachel in the Reading Recovery program though were initially alleviated by her results on The Reading Recovery Observation Survey which did confirm that, of the four students tested from Karen's first grade class, Rachel scored the lowest overall.

When Mrs. Cooper, Rachel's mom, was told that her daughter was reading below the majority of the class and had been selected for Reading Recovery instruction, she was devastated and shed many tears over the phone to both Jackie and Karen. Mrs. Cooper thought that Rachel was "pulling the wool over their eyes." But she agreed to the supplemental reading

program after meeting with both teachers. Jackie relayed Rachel's results on The Observation Survey and stated that the Reading Recovery trainer had confirmed that Rachel was indeed a candidate for one-on-one instruction. Karen explained that in class, Rachel seemed to lack focus and had difficulty listening and remembering things. From that point on Mrs. Cooper supported her daughter and both teachers, whom she trusted and respected. Interestingly though, throughout Rachel's program Jackie made several comments to me that indicated she was still seeking confirmation about Rachel's placement. Likewise, Karen continued to express an uncertainty about the selection process for Reading Recovery, specifically about the selection of Rachel for the one-on-one tutorial.

Rachel's test results on The Observation Survey provide initial information about Rachel as a reader at the beginning of the school year. Rachel was assessed on September 13, 1997 as a possible candidate for the Reading Recovery program. Test results indicate that she was reading at a level 3 (Preprimer 1 Grade Equivalence) using Reading Recovery leveled texts. Scores on the subtests of The Observation Survey (see Table 20 for pretest – posttest scores) were as follows: Letter Identification 50/54 (7^{th} stanine), Word Test 7/20 (6^{th} stanine), Concepts About Print 17/24 (6^{th} stanine), Writing Vocabulary 18 (7^{th} stanine), Hearing Sounds in Words 29/37 (6^{th} stanine). In her regular classroom, by the end of September, Rachel was assessed to be reading independently at a level 4 (Preprimer 1 Grade Equivalence). At this time the average level of the class was 8.3. Six students were assessed to be reading below Rachel, at a level 3, and one other student was reading at the same level as Rachel.

Observations of the subtests indicate that, at the time of testing, Rachel could identify all of the upper case letters of the alphabet except for "Y" and could identify lower case letters with some confusions. She confused "x" with "z", "a" with "g", and "p" with "q." She was able to read seven words from the given word list (list A): *and, the, town, what, one, like,* and *yes*. Rachel understood that print contains a message, she could demonstrate both return sweep and word-by-word matching. She noticed when pictures were upside down but failed to notice changes in line placement, word order or letter order. Rachel could write her own name and sixteen other words with considerable prompting including: *Mom, We, The, dad, at, me, Love, in, no, Go,*

Going, my, cat, and *can.* On the dictation task she wrote letters very closely together and with prompting, was able to hear beginning and ending sounds in words and some medial vowels.

Rachel was aware of story conventions; she was eager to talk and write about her favorite books and was playful with language, demonstrating an ample vocabulary. Her knowledge of punctuation included the period, comma, and quotation marks which she called "talking marks." She knew the "ing" suffix in both reading and writing vocabulary. When she entered the Reading Recovery program she was reading at a level 3 (early Pre-Primer level) with 94% accuracy.

I began to observe Rachel's reading instruction both in the Reading Recovery program and in her first grade classroom on September 17, 1997 and continued to do so every other Wednesday through to January 28, 1998 when her Reading Recovery program ended. Since the district had set out to ensure congruence between the classroom language arts program and the Reading Recovery program I wanted to see how each teacher was going about helping Rachel and if they were helping her in ways that were congruent. More importantly, I wanted to see what factors were influencing the level of congruence and what impact this was possibly having on helping Rachel and others like her attain higher levels of achievement in reading. As was the case with Tyler, Rachel received her Reading Recovery instruction at the very beginning of the school day but it is her classroom instruction that will be presented first since it is considered to be her primary intervention supplemented by the one-to-one instruction of Reading Recovery.

Helping Rachel in her Classroom Language Arts Program

Description of the setting. In Rachel's first grade classroom the students desks are arranged into groups to make up four large tables. There is a computer station with five computers for students to use when they finish their work, a round table where students generally put their completed work and where Karen sometimes conferences with individual students, and a horseshoe style table used for reading instruction. A few chart stands are scattered about the room containing some word lists, poems, or math related information. One entire wall above a counter is reserved as the word wall. From the beginning of my observations in September to the

last of my observations in January, there were many letters of the alphabet with two to five words on cards underneath and under some letters of the alphabet there are no word cards.

Routines and description of instruction. When Rachel's Reading Recovery session was over, she and I would walk down the hall to her first grade classroom where I would observe how her teacher, Karen Abner, was going about helping Rachel become a better reader. Upon entering her room Rachel would go immediately to her desk, put her Reading Recovery baggy of books and cut-up sentence in it, and join the other students on the carpet where they sat in front of Karen. Generally two things occurred at this time. A book was read aloud by the teacher or by a student who was a fluent reader and the students were told the jobs they were expected to do that morning.

On my first visit, Karen put on an audio tape that went along with a big book she had on the chart stand. As the tape played, Karen sang and bopped along with the music and tried to finger point the words in the book, "Dig-a-dig-a-dig-a-dig-a dinosaur", but with the fast paced rhythm she had difficulty keeping up. Karen replayed the tape, tried to finger point the words again and encouraged the students to sing along. On two other occasions Karen read from alphabet books and had the students form letters in the air. Before, during, and after reading with the whole class she would involve the students in the story. She would either engage them in predicting what might happen next in the story, link their experiences with the story through discussion, have them orally generate lists of words related to the story, or ask them to describe what happened and what they thought about the story.

The second thing that occurred at the carpet was that Karen would quickly run through the three to five jobs that students were expected to complete that morning. She would hold up the worksheet or booklet they were to work on and say, "Do this first" then in a sentence or two explain it and tell them where to put it when it was finished. She would proceed in this fashion through the jobs and then send the students back to their desks to "get to work." Over the course of my observations the "work" that students were assigned included the following: practicing letter formation, recording letters that come before, after, and in between certain letters, writing sentences in their journal using key words, illustrating written work, following directions to color

and possibly cut out a picture on a worksheet, and creating their own pictures using various art materials.

When students began their work, Karen might call small groups of students over to the horseshoe style table for guided reading. During the course of my eight biweekly observations there were two days when no small group guided reading instruction occurred. On one of these days, Karen conferenced individually with students to help them edit stories they had written the previous day. This meant that Karen corrected the students' work for them while they watched and then showed them how she used a dictionary to help her with spelling.

On the other day when no small group reading instruction occurred (mid-October), Karen conducted a reading survey with each student individually to determine their attitudes about reading and the strategies that they used. Statements included such things as: "I like to read." "I like to read with a partner." "I like to retell stories to a friend." "When I don't know a word I reread the sentence." Karen would read the statements to the students and then circle the students' response: Y for yes, S for sometimes, and N for no.

On two of my observation days Rachel received guided reading instruction with a group of three other students. When she called the students to the table Karen told me that she, "just wanted to see how they were doing." The instruction proceeded in the following fashion. Each student was given a copy of the same book. It was a literature-based basal series by Houghton Mifflin containing several stories and this particular story about a cat was new to the students. Karen told them to "go on a picture walk." This meant that the students quickly flipped through the pages of their books individually looking at the pictures with no discussion. Following this, the students took turns reading aloud while the other students were expected to follow along in text using their fingers to point at the words. Since the book was quite short each student read only a couple of sentences. When it came to Rachel's turn to read she read, "My cat loves to nap. I love to play." At the end of the story Karen asked only Rachel some questions. This was their exchange:

Karen: Tell me about the story. Who are the characters Rachel?

Rachel: The boy and the cat.

Karen: What did the kid do while the cat was napping? Rachel, what else was he doing?

Rachel: Napping.

Karen: Who?

Rachel: The kid.

This guided reading session lasted approximately three minutes in total.

The second time that Rachel received guided reading instruction during my visits her group took their anthologies with them to the reading table. They all had markers in their books so as soon as they were opened Karen asked, "Is this a story?" One boy responded that it was a poem. Karen agreed, made no distinction between a story and poem, and asked, "Who wants to start?" Since Rachel was at one end of the table she started: "Peck, peck, peck on the ____ brown egg." Karen said, "Have a go at it" and made a "w" sound to help her with the word "warm." Next Rachel got stuck on the word "neck" so Karen asked, "What comes out first?" Rachel was still unable to answer so she was told the word. Another student took over the reading, again only a couple of lines, while the others were reminded to use their fingers. After the poem was read round-robin style Karen had the students read the poem chorally and then involved them in a brief discussion about how baby chicks know to peck.

The students read one more poem. As with the first poem, they were encouraged to look at the pictures on their own and read in turn. When students got stuck on words Karen suggested the following strategies: "Sound it out." "Look at the word." "Cover up part of the word." "Have a go." Once this story was read Karen asked, "What happened?" but allowed little time for discussion.

One day Karen provided individual reading instruction for Rachel following a running record assessment with her. On that day Karen gave a brief story summary, "This story takes place at another spot than the beach." She asked Rachel to read the story title and to predict what the story would be about. She asked Rachel a question to activate her prior knowledge about a topic. The story title was By the tree. Her question was, "Do you like baseball?" Karen made no connection between the two. Rachel took her own picture walk – a quick race through

the pages, was reminded to use her finger, and read the story with encouragement to attend to the letters in the words.

On six of the days that I observed in Rachel's first grade class the teacher provided small group reading instruction for anywhere between one to three groups. Their guided reading was conducted much like Rachel's has been described. Students looked at pictures on their own with little to no discussion of them. Sometimes Karen would have the students predict what might take place in the story based on the title but the discussion would be brief. Always the students read aloud in turn. For her top reading group Karen might follow the same pattern of instruction but stop part way through the story, have the students predict what might happen next and then send them off to read with a buddy or to themselves. They would then be expected to record a summary of the story ending in their literature logs.

On two occasions I observed some word study instruction. Karen had every group look at the "ow" pattern by hunting for words and then watching her arrange them into two categories represented by *show* and *now*. The "ar" combination was another pattern that she set about to teach one day telling the students that the "r" controlled the "a". Students were asked to make words such as *star, car, far*, and *jar* from magnetic letters. When one word was created it was dismantled in order for another word to be created.

During three of my visits Karen pulled Rachel aside to take "cold" running records on her reading. This meant that the running record book was entirely new to her, unlike in Reading Recovery where she'd been introduced to the running record book the previous day. This practice of doing "cold reads" in the classroom to determine student's independent reading levels was common practice within all of the schools involved in the Early Literacy Project. Rachel would however, be given the opportunity to take her own picture walk and be given some assistance with words that gave her some difficulty. Following her reading, Karen would ask Rachel a few questions to check her comprehension.

Interactions between peers. Students in Karen's class sat in groups of six and as a result of their proximity they conversed with one another frequently. Much of their conversation was unrelated to their work tasks but I could hear them on occasion ask one another for help.

Generally their help seeking was related to what task they were to complete next or where they were to put various pieces of work once it was accomplished. Most often when they needed help with reading instructions on their worksheets they would approach Karen or me.

During their guided reading instruction there was minimal interaction between the students. They engaged in very little discussion before, during, or after the reading of text. Any discussion that was encouraged by Karen was done so more in the context of single conversations between her and one student. There was also very little interaction between the students by way of assisting one another with reading strategies. Their involvement with one another generally consisted of listening to one another read in turn.

Interactions between teacher and students. During my observations in Rachel's first grade classroom it was clear to me that Karen enjoys working with students of this grade level. She has an enthusiastic manner when working with her students, particularly during whole class instruction when she would read a book to the group and engage them in responses to the reading. She has a nurturing style and uses hugs and positive phrases such as "way to go" or "good for you" often with her students. Her voice has a dreamy, soothing quality when she speaks to them. When the students are too noisy though, and are interrupting her guided reading instruction, she would ring a little bell and speak in clipped tones telling them to "get back to work." When students came to her with questions about what to do next, where to put completed work, or how to read certain words, Karen would generally ask them if they had checked with a friend first. While students went about their work tasks Karen would often make statements to the entire class about whether she was pleased or displeased with the way they were working.

Helping Rachel in Reading Recovery

Routines and description of instruction. Rachel began each session by writing dictated words on a white board. On several occasions Jackie would emphasize the individual sounds in each word as Rachel wrote. After writing each word Rachel would read it while running her finger underneath. Sometimes she would be asked to orally put the words into sentences. Sometimes she would be asked to orally break the words into syllables. Sometimes, instead of writing dictated words, she would be asked to write as many words as she knew and be provided with

prompts when she hesitated for any length of time. On my last observation, Rachel was asked to read and highlight words she knew from a 1st grade list of words. That day she also played a game they called "my pile your pile" in which Rachel would make a pile of all the word cards she read correctly and in which word cards read incorrectly were piled in front of Jackie.

The next component of Rachel's Reading Recovery lessons was the reading of familiar texts. These texts, like those used with Tyler at Willow Elementary, were Reading Recovery leveled books. Over time, and based on her running records, the level of texts used with Rachel would increase. When she first began the program Jackie used level 2 texts with Rachel and when she completed the program Rachel was reading level 18 texts.

Rachel would read two to three books, depending on their length, that she had previously read with Jackie and on which she had received guided reading instruction. During this time Rachel generally showed enthusiasm and spark. Based on a self-evaluation of attitudes towards reading given to Rachel by her classroom teacher, Rachel liked to read a variety of books in a variety of different contexts; by herself, with a partner, and in front of the class. In her interview with me on December 3rd she also expressed that she liked to read, that she thought she was a good reader, and that she liked it even more as she got better at it. As she progressed in her reading ability Rachel would read with expression, which she explained means, " that you read it in the way like it's so exciting or it's really sad or it's like happy," make side comments relating to the story, and giggle.

When Rachel read, Jackie always gave her time to self-correct. When she experienced difficulties, she might have Rachel frame the word with her fingers and look at specific parts of the word, particularly the beginning or ending letters. Sometimes Jackie would have her reread parts of difficult text and encourage her to finger point or look for picture clues, or think about what was happening in the story. Other times she would tell Rachel to "get her mouth ready" for the sound the first letter makes, tell her to think about words she knows or have her cover up part of the word. She would often ask, "Does it look right? Does it sound right? Does it make sense?"

Always, at the end of her reading of each book, Jackie would give explicit feedback on Rachel's use of strategies such as, "I like how you fixed *they*." First you said *the* then you self-

corrected because you looked at the end of the word." Other examples of explicit feedback were when she told Rachel, "I like how you used expression in the story. That told me you understood what you were reading." And when she said, "I like how you used the bookmark when there were lots of words then you put it away when there weren't as many words. You knew when you needed it and when you didn't." Sometimes after Rachel read her familiar texts Jackie would write certain words from the texts on the white board or form them with magnetic letters and have Rachel manipulate them. She might have Rachel look at word endings and make and break words into root words and endings or look at contractions and show her how these words and made.

The third lesson component was the taking of the running record. Rachel would read a book that had been richly introduced to her the previous day. Jackie would take a running record, give Rachel explicit feedback as described above, and possibly engage in some word analysis such as clapping out syllables in some difficult words or making them and breaking them on the white board.

Following the running record, Rachel would be introduced to a new book. Jackie would always show enthusiasm, making this part of the lesson a very special event. She would activate Rachel's prior knowledge about the topic by having her look at the front cover, telling her the title, or asking her a question. She would explain the main idea of the story or give a brief summary then lead Rachel on a picture walk. As they looked at the pictures on each page, Jackie would engage Rachel in discussion about the pictures, she would introduce new vocabulary, she might write some key words on the white board then have Rachel find them in the text, or she might ask, "What letter would you expect ___ to start with?" Then she had her identify the word in text. Following this, Rachel would read the text and then again, receive explicit feedback on her strategy use.

Rachel would end her sessions with writing a sentence, though sometimes this component came before the guided reading instruction...Jackie would encourage Rachel to think of a sentence she wanted to write and encourage her, if possible, to connect it to the stories she had read. She would then assist Rachel in writing the sentence by having her attempt certain

words on her practice page and by using "push-up boxes" or "sound boxes" to isolate the sounds in words. These boxes changed over time. At the beginning of the program Rachel would push chips up into the boxes that Jackie drew each time she heard a sound in the particular word and then write the letter representing that sound in the correct box. Later on, the boxes were referred to as "transition-boxes" where letter combinations such as "er" were written together in one box since they made one sound and then "letter-boxes" where the "e" and "r" in "er" would be written in separate boxes.

When Rachel's sentence was completed it was written on a sentence strip by Jackie and cut up into words. As Rachel's knowledge about words and punctuation increased, some of the words would be cut into chunks such as "look" and "ing" for "looking" and the punctuation would be cut onto it's own card. Rachel's sentences increased in complexity over time. Her first sentence during my observations was "I like to go to the mall." Near the end of her Reading Recovery sessions she wrote, "We went down the hallway at the end of the year." Rachel would reconstruct her cut-up sentence and read it before leaving the room with several of her familiar books, including the one she'd read for the running record that day, in a baggy along with the cut-up sentence. That evening she would be expected to read her stories to a family member and to reconstruct and paste her cut-up sentence into her booklet and make an accompanying picture. Rachel always did this follow-up.

Interactions between teacher and student. Rachel's Reading Recovery lessons began at the start of the school day, at a time when, as mentioned earlier, she was not particularly at her best. She frequently yawned throughout the sessions but told me that "Ms. Bouchard didn't get mad." In fact, Jackie was extremely warm and nurturing toward Rachel. Despite the emphasis on the efficient use of the thirty-minute instructional time, Jackie always commented on Rachel's well-selected attire or on any recent interesting event in Rachel's life such as her involvement with Bob Schneider's Rainbow Kids or the Festival of Trees around Christmas time. Throughout the course of instruction Jackie would make the lesson fun by giggling when Rachel read with expression or by introducing a book in a creative way that would make Rachel laugh.

Did it Help? Looking at Rachel's Developmental Progress

Rachel was assessed on September 13, 1997 as a possible candidate for the Reading Recovery program. Test results indicate that she was reading at a level 3 (Preprimer 1 Grade Equivalence) using Reading Recovery leveled texts. Scores on the subtests of The Observation Survey (see Table 20 for pretest – posttest scores) were as follows: Letter Identification 50/54 (7th stanine), Word Test 7/20 (6th stanine), Concepts About Print 17/24 (6th stanine), Writing Vocabulary 18 (7th stanine), Hearing Sounds in Words 29/37 (6th stanine). In her regular classroom, by the end of September, Rachel was assessed to be reading independently at a level 4 (Preprimer 1 Grade Equivalence). At this time the average level of the class was 8.3. Six students were assessed to be reading below Rachel, at a level 3, and one other student was reading at the same level as Rachel.

One of the first signs of progress I noted with Rachel was in terms of her letter reversals. Jackie recognized this as one of her weaknesses on entering the Reading Recovery program. During my first observation on September 17 and my second observation on October 1st Rachel was reversing the letters *a, g,* and *p.* These reversals were not evident in subsequent observations. One sentence I observed her write was fairly simple, "I like to go to the mall." Rachel's reading during those first observations was quite choppy with no expression. She read very quietly such that I could hardly hear her and she covered her mouth with her hand as she read. She used picture clues often and finger pointed the words as she read.

Finger pointing was not used as much by Rachel in the third session I observed on October 15. At this time Rachel was more enthusiastic and was very eager to read and write. She attended to punctuation and clearly read for meaning as was evidenced by her use of expression. She continued to use picture clues but also used beginning letters to help her identify words and could recognize some blends such as *bl* and *br.* In her writing in the Reading Recovery setting she was able to use "push-up/sound boxes" to help her stretch out and listen to sounds in words (phonemic awareness).

On October 22nd, my fourth observation, Rachel was reading books with considerably more words than those she had read in her first sessions. Because of this, she had resorted to

using her finger to keep her on track as she read. She used picture clues in Reading Recovery but, according to Karen, did not do this as much in the classroom. My observations suggest that the reason for this was that Rachel did not have the vocabulary for the objects found in the pictures. An example of this was when Karen wanted Rachel to use the picture to determine the word *cliff* but not having discussed this word prior to her reading Rachel was unfamiliar with it.

Rachel clearly used beginning letters and word endings to help her identify words (example: *ming* for *making*). Jackie was pleased with the number of self-corrections Rachel was making. At the end of October Rachel was reading at a level 8 in Reading Recovery and at a level 5 in her classroom. At that time the average reading level in her class was 9.8. Four other students in the room were reading at Rachel's level. Two students were reading at a level 20, the highest in the class followed by two students at a level 18. No students were reading below a level 5.

By my fifth observation, November 12th, Rachel was reading without using her finger however, when she recognized that she didn't have voice to print match she would pull out a bookmark to help her track the print. This tool would be put away when she felt it was no longer needed. Rachel continued to make numerous self-corrections based on meaning. For example she replaced *balloon* for *brother* but self-corrected. To this Jackie responded, "Good fix up. You knew Tom wasn't a balloon." Rachel read with expression and a number of comments throughout the story demonstrating an enthusiasm for and enjoyment of the story. Her sentences had become more complex as in the following sentence written that day, "Baby bear liked the blue car and Father Bear like the train." By the end of November Rachel was reading at a level 11 (Primer Grade Equivalence) in Reading Recovery and had been assessed at a level 7 (Preprimer 3 Grade Equivalence) in her regular classroom. At that time the average reading level in her class was 10.7. Six students were reading at the same level as Rachel (level 7) and four students were reading one to levels below her. The highest reading level in the class was a level 20 (four students).

On December 3rd, my sixth observation, Rachel was reading quite fluently, phrasing the words "to make them sound like the way we talk." She was very confident in her reading and was

very excited about taking home six books to read from the Reading Recovery program. Although she was told that she did not have to read every book Rachel announced that she wanted to. In her writing Rachel had progressed from "sound/push-up boxes" to "letter boxes" where she was working on spelling words conventionally. She was also using periods and question marks appropriately in her writing. On this observation day Jackie told me that Rachel was making the best progress of her four Reading Recovery students. Later in December on my seventh observation Rachel's sentence used more difficult words and continued to use a complex sentence structure: "We went down the hallway at the end of the school year." By the end of December Rachel was reading at a level 15 (Grade 1 Grade Equivalence) in Reading Recovery and at a level 8 in the classroom. The average reading level of her class at that time was a level 12.2. Four students were reading at Rachel's assessed reading level and one student was reading below her at a level 5. Four students were reading at a level 20, the highest in the class, followed by three students reading at a level 18.

During my last two observations in January, Rachel was reading very confidently with lots of expression. She often laughed and commented throughout her reading in the Reading Recovery setting though she continued to be somewhat hesitant in her classroom reading. Her classroom teacher, Karen, described Rachel as "not reading very fluently" yet she did so in the Reading Recovery setting with higher level books than those she used in the classroom setting. She read mostly with her eyes, without finger pointing, but did so when she caught herself losing her place or not having voice to print match. Rachel was able to break words up into chunks to identify such words as *nowhere* and *everywhere*. At the end of January Rachel was reading at a level 17 in Reading Recovery and at a level 15 in her classroom. At that time, the average reading level in the class was level 14.4. Rachel had just exceeded the average. She had surpassed fourteen students; four were reading at a level 14, one was reading at a level 12, six were reading at a level 11, two were reading at a level 10, and the lowest student was reading at a level 7. Seven students were reading at a level 20, the highest reading level.

In early February Rachel was discontinued from the Reading Recovery program meaning that she had successfully reached the average reading level of her class. Test results from The

Observation Survey are as follows: Letter Identification 53/54 (7th stanine), Word Test 20/20 (9th stanine), Concepts About Print 24/24 (9th stanine), Writing Vocabulary 58 (9th stanine), and Hearing Sounds in Words 36/37 (9th stanine).

When Rachel began her Reading Recovery program she was reading at a level 2 (Readiness Grade Equivalent) and when she was discontinued from the program she was reading at a level 18 (Late Grade 1-Early Grade 2). In her classroom reading program, according to Karen's assessments, Rachel was reading at a level 4 (late Preprimer 1) by the end of September and at a level 17 (end of 1st grade) by the end of February.

Analysis of Congruence Within the Case Study

Looking at How the Two Programs were Helping Rachel

Congruence between the classroom language arts program and the Reading Recovery program. As I watched Karen and Jackie helping Rachel become a better reader I looked to see if they were helping her in ways that were congruent. More specifically, my observations were guided by the five curricular components outlined by Johnston, Allington, and Afflerbach (1985). Throughout my visits to Elm Street School I recorded information related to the philosophy, instructional materials, instructional methods and student activities, reading strategies, and reading goals of each program to determine levels of congruence between the two. The results of my content analysis of the classroom language arts program and the Reading Recovery program determined that overall, there was congruence between the two programs at a conceptual level. From this "ideal" I knew that there was potential for congruence to be found in a "real" setting; between the programs that Karen and Jackie provided for Rachel.

I found that there was some congruence between the Reading Recovery program and the classroom language arts program as they were implemented by Karen and Jackie. Following the same rubric used to determine levels of congruence between the two programs at a conceptual level in the content analysis, I found that many elements were shared by both reading programs in terms of the five curricular components.

Jackie's philosophy in Reading Recovery was to base her instruction on her growing understanding of Rachel's knowledge about reading through continuous assessment (running

records). She also clearly recognized that her program was "scheduled to supplement or to augment what was happening in the classroom and (saw) the classroom as the primary line of intervention for (Rachel)." Karen, on the other hand, tried to "zero in on (Rachel) and look at her abilities and (found it) rewarding to see (her) grow as (she did) the running records." Though she explained that when Rachel "(went) off to Reading Recovery she covered (reading) in here just as if (Rachel) wasn't going anywhere" my observations indicate that, in terms of reading instruction, rather than Reading Recovery being supplemental to her classroom program the reverse seemed to be true. In fact, in our interview she described meeting informally with Jackie to find out "if there was anything (she) needed to do here in the classroom to supplement what Jackie was doing." In addition, in our interview, Rachel's mother, Mrs. Cooper, stated that, "I kind of feel like Rachel's (classroom) teacher has said Mrs. Bouchard is handling the reading."

The instructional materials used by Jackie in Reading Recovery were leveled texts used to determine Rachel's reading level and the types of strategies she was using on text. In addition, these leveled texts were being used to provide instruction at the appropriate level, allowing Jackie to build on small steps in Rachel's progression as a reader. Leveled texts were used by Karen in the classroom for the most part as a means of assessment. They helped her determine and report Rachel's reading level but for instruction she "chose a lot of literature (and) just guessed at what level it was and the kids enjoyed it." She found that "the leveling has definitely helped" but thought it was "not critical that (she) use those books" for instruction. Being in her first year of the Early Literacy Project and new to the concept of using a gradient of text for instruction she explained that "we're still struggling in looking at a text and knowing what level it is...but we're learning as we go along."

Over the course of her Reading Recovery sessions there was a period of considerable variance between the book levels read by Rachel in both settings. By the end of October Rachel was reading at a level 8 with Jackie and at a level 5 with Karen. By the end of November she was reading at a level 11 in Reading Recovery and at a level 7 in her classroom. By the end of December Rachel's reading level was assessed at a level 15 in Reading Recovery and at a level 8 in the classroom. Rachel's reading levels came considerably closer together by the end of

January. In Reading Recovery she was reading at a level 16 at the end of January and at a level 15 in the classroom. And, at the end of February, having discontinued from the Reading Recovery program earlier that month at a level 18, Rachel was reading at a level 17 in the classroom.

I believe that improved communication and an increased level of trust brought about stronger congruence between the two programs in terms of the use of instructional materials. According to Karen she and Jackie met informally "just grab(bing) moments in the hall, though not very frequently." She would "just pretty much check and see how Rachel was doing and how she'd changed." Yet just before parent conferences in early December Karen and Jackie met more formally to discuss Rachel's progress. Karen described that "it just really came down to what level (Rachel) was on when we had our conference. I had her on one level with the cold read and Jackie had her on a totally different level with a familiar read."

In fact, Rachel was reading at a level 14 in Reading Recovery and was assessed at a level 6 in the classroom. Following that, Karen began to pay more attention to the level of text that Rachel was reading in Reading Recovery. She took advantage of listening to Rachel read some of the familiar texts that Jackie sent down to the classroom with her. Then Karen began to assess Rachel using higher level texts in the classroom and found that Rachel could in fact, read level 14 texts. She did explain to me, however, that Rachel would not be able to join the reading group that read at that level because "Rachel was not as fluent as they were."

I think their communication improved and their collaboration increased after Karen took the opportunity to observe Rachel in the Reading Recovery program after the Christmas holidays. This resulted in stronger congruence between the two programs in terms of the level of instructional materials used. In my interview with Karen early in December she told me that she thought "it would be wonderful if she could observe in (Reading Recovery) at the beginning of the program so (she'd) know exactly what (Jackie) was doing." She said that she'd never had an opportunity to do that but early in January she told me that she had gone to her principal and arranged to do just that.

Instructional methods used by Jackie in Reading Recovery emphasized reading, writing, and spelling. The majority of Rachel's time was spent doing what Adams (1990) recommends; doing lots of reading of meaningful connected text including rereading familiar texts. All word and letter work was provided as a support activity to that. The Reading Recovery program took advantage of the home – school partnership by sending home familiar texts for Rachel to do even more practice reading at home.

In the classroom Rachel did very little reading and her reading instruction provided considerably less support than what she received in the Reading Recovery setting though Karen acknowledged after one follow-up visit with the professional development consultant she was determined to "do more reading with the students." Rachel recognized that she "did reading" in both instructional settings but described how she spends most of her time in the classroom setting as "not really reading a lot but working." She explained to me in our interview in early December that "Mrs. Abner's trying to get me to read a lot but she really doesn't know that I read a lot of books with Mrs. Bouchard and do really good." In fact, Karen was unclear about what Jackie did with Rachel in Reading Recovery. When asked to describe Rachel's Reading Recovery program she said, "I think she does a dictation with her as we do in here. I know she reads with her every day. I'm not sure if she does a lot of phonetic work. I don't know. Jackie probably does a lot of the same things that I do."

The social environment of the classroom was not used as a means to support Rachel's literacy growth as Harste, Woodward & Burke (1984) recommend. Karen has not yet come to understand the notion of balancing instruction for students within the different social structures of the two programs. She explained that both she and Jackie were "trying to meet the kids' needs at their level and trying to work one-on-one with them as much as she can or at least in a small group." As a result Karen did not take full advantage of the small group reading environment in preparing students for reading new text. Having students look at the pictures on their own prior to reading did not give them the opportunity to share what they knew and learn from each other. Likewise reading in turn gave them little opportunity to practice reading and since their new books did not go home with them daily, the lack of this important element of their program was even

more pronounced. Karen did however, acknowledge that she "needs to do that more" but explained that "finding the time to do it all" was difficult.

Being new to the Early Literacy Project and having been told to focus on one area at a time, Karen was "not doing much word study yet." The word study she was doing however, unlike that in Reading Recovery, was not embedded in text nor was it based on student's level of development in terms of what they were using but confusing.

The reading strategies that Jackie prompted Rachel for integrated all three cueing systems; Meaning, Structure, and Visual. She provided time for Rachel to problem solve, to be strategic in her reading and was overt in providing Rachel with explicit feedback on her strategy use. Karen, on the other hand, tended to be quick to provide students with a strategy to use and these most often emphasized the visual/graphophonemic cueing system. The suggestion of generating and posting lists of possible strategies students could apply to unknown words or to incomprehensible text was not utilized.

Both Jackie and Karen recognized that the ultimate goal for Rachel was to reach the average level of her class by the end of the Reading Recovery program. Throughout the program however, Jackie's primary goal was "to have (Rachel) enjoy reading on her own. To take it on as an enjoyable activity." Whereas for Karen, "looking at the total language arts picture for Rachel, the goal immediately was for her to focus on her work. To settle down and work and complete it and not have homework to finish." She explained, "I don't think I've set a goal for her to reach level 20 or whatever. I just want her to continue to improve as far as she can go."

When Karen Abner enthusiastically agreed to participate in this research study her response was that I would be able to help her. Throughout the course of my observations she was eager for me to share with her what I had observed. Yet not wanting to influence the direction of the study, I adroitly deflected her questions back in an attempt to encourage her to reflect on her own observations and practices. Karen was also eager to share with me things that were helping her understanding various aspects of the Early Literacy Project such as the follow-up meetings with the professional development consultant, team meeting discussions, conversations with Jackie and her observation of Rachel in the Reading Recovery program.

During our interview in early December Karen also described that in learning about how to help Rachel she also hoped to learn about ways of helping other students in her class too. She hoped that when Rachel was discontinued from the Reading Recovery program "we'd all sit and talk about what she's covered and where I can help her and areas that I should continue working with her in. And maybe along with learning that about Rachel I'll learn it about other children too. You know, I can see where I can help other kids in the class too."

I came to believe that through helping one another, though their forms of helping were not always overt nor may they have been intentional, these teachers were better able to help Rachel progress in reading. I believe that through learning to observe Rachel in each of their instructional settings they came to their own understandings about her developmental needs and how they might best respond to those needs. But it was when they helped one another understand what they each knew about Rachel from their perspective, from within their instructional setting, and shared how they were responding instructionally to her needs that their understanding of Rachel came closer together as did their programming for her.

Communicative congruence. At a conceptual level, as determined through the content analysis of the classroom language arts program and the Reading Recovery program, the two programs were found to be congruent. Analysis of the levels of congruence between the two programs provided for Rachel at Elm Street School indicate that, at the implementation level, there was some congruence between the two. This speaks to the issue of communicative congruence (a phenomenon in which a common message regarding curricular components is presented to teachers, teachers are responsive to the message, understand it, and are then able to implement it accordingly). It appears that, particularly with regard to the classroom program, at this stage in Karen's implementation of the Early Literacy Project (first year), her understanding is not deep enough to exhibit strong congruence with the district's message about each of the five curricular components. Specific areas include: a deep understanding of how to respond to students' developmental cues with appropriate instruction, the recognition of the classroom as the main intervention for the at-risk student, the use of leveled texts for developmentally appropriate instruction in addition to assessment, the use of instructional components such as embedded

word studies, and the importance of emphasizing the orchestration of all three cueing systems as strategies to assist the reading process.

Analysis of Congruence Across the Two Case Studies

Cross-Case Summary: Tyler and Rachel

Tyler and Rachel were both students considered to be at-risk of reading failure at the beginning of the school year. In response to their needs their schools provided each of them with intensive one-on-one reading instruction in Reading Recovery as well as reading instruction in the classroom. The teachers in Tyler's school were in the first phase of the Early Literacy Project, meaning that this was their second year of implementation. The teachers in Rachel's school were in the second phase of the Project, meaning that this was their first year of implementation.

According to the literature, most students who receive instruction in two settings experience a fragmented program where the two teachers seldom meet to discuss the student's program and progress and have little knowledge of one another's philosophy, instructional materials, instructional methods and student activities, reading strategies, and reading goals (Johnston et al., 1985). This was not the case for Tyler and Rachel.

First of all, the Hapsburgh district, through their Early Literacy Project, had made efforts to facilitate coordination of its two interventions; the classroom language arts program and the Reading Recovery program. In addition, at a conceptual level, these two programs were found to be congruent suggesting that there was potential for the programs to also be congruent at an implementation level. Both Tyler and Rachel did, in fact, receive instructional programs that were congruent though they varied in their levels of congruence. I found strong congruence between Tyler's Reading Recovery program and his classroom language arts program whereas I found some congruence between the way in which Rachel's two programs were being implemented.

Looking across cases, the differences in the levels of congruence between Tyler and Rachel's programs can be explained in part by the differences between their classroom instruction. Points of instruction where differences can be found include: (a) the quantity of reading instruction provided, (b) the quality of reading instruction provided, (c) the quantity of text read, (d) the quantity of sustained engagement with text, (e) the effectiveness of social interaction

to support literacy development, and (f) the enlistment of home support to sustain and promote literacy development.

The quantity of reading instruction provided. From the descriptions of their classroom reading instruction it is clear that Tyler received more reading instruction than did Rachel. On each of my observation days Tyler received guided reading instruction lasting between fifteen minutes to one half hour with three other students of like ability. In addition to observing his instruction on each of my visits Laura (his classroom teacher) told me how she had steadily increased the amount of instruction for Tyler and his group members, from meeting with him three times per week to meeting with him daily. She also welcomed me to look at her plan book to see how she had organized her timetable to accomplish this.

Rachel's reading instruction was more sporadic and was of a much shorter duration, generally lasting only a few minutes. Though in her interview, Karen (Rachel's classroom teacher) explained that she met with Rachel's reading group every day, field notes from my eight observations in her classroom indicate that Rachel received guided reading instruction on only two occasions. That instruction lasted less than five minutes. On one occasion she received individual instruction, again lasting only a few minutes. And, on three occasions Karen met with her individually though not for instructional but assessment purposes. No instruction was provided on these days.

The quality of reading instruction provided. During Tyler's guided reading instruction Laura provided him and his group members with considerable support. Initially she prepared them for reading the text by activating prior knowledge, leading them on a picture walk to develop concepts and vocabulary, and by having them identify and read key words on the pages. During their reading she "listened in" on them read to determine teaching points. After their reading she addressed those points with an emphasis on developing strategies for reading and engaged them in discussion to emphasize the importance of comprehension. She also helped students analyze words through embedded word studies.

Rachel's guided reading instruction began with student-led picture walks whereby no direction or support was given to the students to develop concepts or vocabulary needed.

Students' prior knowledge was not always activated. Key words in the text that might present a great challenge for the students were not introduced prior to their reading the text. While students read Karen would prompt them with strategies (with an emphasis on the graphophonic system) and seldom provide time for them to problem solve on their own. Follow-up discussion was minimal, and I did not observe word study in connection with the text students had read during their instruction.

The effectiveness of social interaction to support literacy development. The social setting of guided reading instruction was used to full advantage in Laura's classroom such that Tyler and his peers could learn from and through one another. They could "listen in" on one another read to get help when they were stuck or they could benefit from the comments that were made during discussions such as those pertaining to vocabulary or concepts related to the story or to predictions about or responses to stories. Social interaction was also encouraged in the structure and type of work tasks in which students were involved. For example, when Tyler went to his group's browsing box or when he "read the room" he could do so with a friend. In these situations the students always assisted one another with text.

Although Rachel's instruction was, at times, provided within the structure of a small group the social aspect of literacy instruction was not tapped into. Discussion was not encouraged between the students and students were not observed assisting one another in any form.

The quantity of text read. In addition to experiencing a greater quantity and a richer quality of instruction that included social interaction to support literacy development, Tyler also engaged in reading a greater quantity of texts. Not only did he read the text used in his daily guided reading group, but he was involved in reading meaningful connected text through his daily work tasks. These tasks included reading familiar texts in his browsing box, "reading the room" and following along in text at the listening center. Rachel read considerably less as a result of fewer guided reading sessions and work tasks that involved little reading of connected text. The reading involved in her work tasks was more geared to following directions as in "color the patch blue." Rachel actually differentiated between what she considered "reading" (this was done in her reading group) and "her work" which were her daily tasks.

The quantity of sustained engagement with text. In his classroom during guided reading instruction Tyler would read the particular story of that day multiple times. He would read it on his own a few times, and he'd read along with his peers. The students knew that they were "supposed to keep reading to get practice". The text was not broken up into sections to be read in chunks by different students. Rachel, on the other hand, read through her story only once using a round-robin approach such that she herself passively followed others read and actively read only a few lines herself.

The enlistment of home support to sustain and promote literacy development. Tyler read a greater quantity of texts in his classroom and sustained engagement with text for longer periods of time than did Rachel. In addition, because Laura had developed a strong home-school connection with Tyler's parents he engaged in even more reading at home to support his classroom reading development. The use of a Home Reading Record with brief descriptions of three different ways to read with the child, along with guided reading books sent home daily enabled this to occur.

Through the strong home-school connection developed between Jackie (Rachel's Reading Recovery teacher) and Mrs. Cooper (Rachel's mother), Rachel's literacy development was sustained and promoted at home. I have no evidence of this follow-up support at home for Rachel through the classroom.

Differences in the levels of congruence between Tyler and Rachel's programs can be explained in part by the differences between their classroom instruction along the points of instruction described above. These differences can also be explained in part by the differences in the phase of implementation at which the teachers in each school are engaged. Considering that Tyler's teachers are in the second year of implementation of the Early Literacy Project and Rachel's teachers are in their first year of implementation, the differences in the levels of congruence found to exist are not surprising. Considering that this is also the first year that teachers at Rachel's school must also implement a new math curriculum, this is even less surprising. Further explanations for the differences between the levels of congruence found to

exist between the two programs in each school are provided in the following section by way of themes that emerged from the various data sources.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The question of how schools can effectively address the issue of low-achieving readers is of great importance considering that "effective reading is the most important avenue to effective learning (Dechant, 1991, p. vii)." Indeed, given that these students have typically been served by remedial reading programs, special education programs or retention practices which have demonstrated little evidence of effectiveness in raising their achievement levels (Johnston & Allington, 1991; Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; and Shepard & Smith, 1989) this question demands our attention.

The Hapsburgh district commendably has undertaken to address this issue of low-achieving readers in three ways suggested by the research: (a) through improved classroom instruction, (b) through an early intervention program (in their case, Reading Recovery), and (c) through coordinating efforts to ensure curricular congruence between the two. For students who receive reading instruction in two settings, in a pull-out program and in the classroom, this concept of establishing congruence between the two intrigued me. It was suggested by Allington and Johnston (1986) as a means of alleviating the typical fragmentation that exists between the two, a phenomenon considered to contribute to the confusion that the at-risk student already has about learning how to read. They proposed that curricular congruence is a possible key to designing effective programs for alleviating school failure and for raising the achievement levels of at-risk students.

My search for congruence has led me to search for some conclusions about whether or not, as Allington and Johnston (1986) suggest, curricular congruence is a key to success for students at-risk of reading failure. My conclusions will be presented in the form of answers to three key questions that I asked myself: (a) Would I recommend that schools and school districts go about creating congruent programs? (b) What are my reasons for this recommendation? And (c) What things should be considered when following this recommendation?

Would I recommend that schools and school districts go about creating congruent programs? Without hesitation, my answer is "Yes". The case studies of Tyler and Rachel support my recommendation. For Tyler, congruent programming meant, "we do reading and writing in both places." Congruence between his two reading programs helped to alleviate the tension he felt towards reading as evidenced in his more relaxed body language. It increased his enjoyment of reading, according to his father, since he was taking developmentally appropriate materials home from both settings. I believe it also increased his clarity about how to read. Since he was being prompted for similar reading strategies in both settings he was learning to apply them and utilize them more on his own. As such, he was making slow but steady gains in reading. Congruent programming, specifically in the area of instructional materials, helped Rachel to progress in her reading level. Once Karen tried to align the instructional materials she used in her classroom with those Rachel used in Reading Recovery, Rachel began to receive more appropriate instruction in terms of her group assignment and to make steady gains in her achievement levels in that setting.

What are my reasons for this recommendation? Since the case studies provided me the opportunity to observe both students and teachers closely, simply put, my reasons pertain to both categories of individuals. Curricular and communicative congruence have the potential to lead to greater understanding for students and greater understanding for teachers - with the result of greater performance by both.

The theoretical framework that underlies this research serves as the basis for my recommendation with regard to students. Vernon (1960) defined reading as essentially a problem-solving task requiring the child to apply reasoning abilities in order to understand the relationships between speech and print. The at-risk child's lack of system in being able to apply such reasoning abilities as analyzing, abstracting, and generalizing is described as cognitive confusion because the child is essentially confused about the nature and process of reading. When strong congruence exists between the two reading programs provided to such a child, particularly as in that provided for Tyler, no additional confusion is added as is the case when the student experiences fragmented programming. As Tyler's teacher, Laura Stacey put it: "I think

that if these kids are not hearing the same kinds of things, that if the same kinds of strategies aren't reinforced and encouraged it could be very confusing. Very confusing. And kind of detrimental too."

In fact, the possibility for adding to the child's confusion is eliminated with congruent programs as is demonstrated in Tyler's case study. When the curricular components of each program are not only congruent but reflect the pedagogical procedures recommended by experts in the field including, in particular, multiple opportunities to engage in meaningful reading and writing (Adams, 1990), there is even greater potential for breaking the confusion and leading the child to cognitive clarity (Downing, 1979). Casey Koster, Tyler's Reading Recovery teacher, addressed this issue in the following way, "The strategies that are used in the classroom are the same strategies that we prompt during a Reading Recovery lesson. And I do feel it's important because, prompting for those strategies are what make the kids independent problem solvers. And if they're hearing it over and over and over again, it's bound - some of it's bound to sink in - and they're going to be somewhat independent, which is what we want them to be." Curricular congruence therefore, has the potential to lead to greater understanding about the nature of reading for students with eventual improved performance in their reading ability.

The reason for my recommendation for creating congruent programs as it pertains to teachers stems from the professional development consultant's insistence that only with deep understanding about sound teaching practices grounded in philosophical principles of student development can improved teaching practices occur. This was confirmed again through the case studies of Rachel and Tyler and verified through the theme of understanding that emerged from a variety of data sources. Further elaboration of this concept came at the recent New York State Reading Symposium in Albany (February 11, 1998) where numerous researchers pointed to professional development opportunities whereby teachers analyze their practices and learn about effective teaching practice as a means of improving reading instruction for students.

Students at risk of reading failure are typically served in two settings (in a pull-out remedial or intervention program and in a classroom program). Given that this practice will likely continue, I have concluded that the act of establishing congruence between the two programs

has enormous potential for improving teachers' understanding of the curricular components that underlie effective instruction. This understanding has the potential to result in greater performance by the teacher, or in other words, to result in greater ability by the teacher to improve instruction for at-risk students who need to work their way out of confusion.

In summary, I strongly recommend that schools and school districts go about creating congruent programs for at-risk students. Curricular congruence has the potential to lead both teachers and students to greater understanding. For students this understanding is related to the nature of reading and how they can go about problem solving effectively in order to do so. For teachers, this understanding is related to the underlying principles of sound teaching practices grounded in philosophical principles of student development and how they can go about programming effectively for at-risk students who are confused about the process. As a result of curricular and communicative congruence greater understanding for both students and teachers can result in greater performance by both.

What things should be considered when following this recommendation to create congruent programs? Based on this investigation, I found three key elements that need to be considered in establishing congruence between the remedial or intervention program and the classroom program. First, the two programs should be examined at a conceptual level for congruence between the five curricular components outlined by Johnston et al. (1985). A content analysis such as those undertaken in this study could serve as a model. In addition, in order for the student at risk to benefit fully, the curricular components should reflect pedagogical procedures recommended by experts in the field. Most importantly students must be given numerous opportunities to engage in meaningful reading and writing (Adams, 1990) as well as opportunities to engage in social interaction to support their literacy development (Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984). When the level of congruence between the two programs is strong at a conceptual level, there is great likelihood that the two programs will be implemented with strong congruence.

The second element is actually an echo of Allington and Johnston's (1986) call for efforts to be coordinated at the school, district, or federal level with several reverberations. When a

common message is presented to both classroom and remedial reading teachers such that communicative congruence is strong, then strong levels of curricular congruence are possible. In addition, when both teachers are involved in or at least exposed to the same training, they can share a common understanding and language that can lead to greater efficiency in their communications about the at-risk student and to stronger levels of congruence between their programs.

The common message presented to the teachers of both the classroom and remedial programs should include information regarding three issues: (a) ownership of and responsibility for the at-risk student, (b) each of the five curricular components, and (c) common assessment tools.

In terms of ownership and responsibility for the at-risk student there are a couple of points to consider. If school districts, schools, and their teachers recognize the classroom program as the first intervention for students and focus on improved instruction in that setting (particularly in the first three years of school) it is likely that the achievement levels of at-risk students will increase and the need for remedial or intensive pull-out interventions will be reduced (Carter, 1984; Juel, 1988; and Hiebert & Taylor, 1994). Furthermore, when teachers recognize that the classroom is the primary intervention for at-risk students they are more likely to ensure that the pull-out remedial reading support is supplemental to the student's classroom reading instruction and should not supplant it. This notion is based on research that these students require an increase in the quantity and improvement in the quality of their reading instruction (Johnston & Allington, 1991). In addition, this recognition is more likely to manifest itself in teachers scheduling the pull-out instruction in such a way as to provide the at-risk student with a balance of literacy instruction between the two settings as was the case with Tyler's program.

Not only should a common message be presented to both the classroom and remedial teachers about ownership and responsibility for at-risk students but a common message should also be communicated to them about each of the five curricular components (Johnston et al., 1985). When the two teachers identify that the ultimate goal for the at-risk student is to become independent in the regular classroom there is greater likelihood that they will communicate

specifically about instructional materials, instructional methods and reading strategies that will enable this to occur. This seems to best be achieved when both teachers have an opportunity to observe each others' programs, as in Rachel's case study, and when the teachers maintain on-going communication with a realistic combination of formal and informal meetings, the efficiency of which is increased with shared understanding. One further comment about the importance of communicating a common message to teachers about the curricular components is related to the role of parents in helping to raise the achievement levels of their children. When communicative congruence is strong, when teachers have a clear understanding of each of the curricular components, they can more clearly articulate their programs to parents. This communication can lead to more appropriate types of support from the home to reinforce the literacy behaviors they are developing with students in the classroom. The reciprocal flow of literacy materials between the home and school seems to be an important element in engendering parental support and accelerating student achievement.

Finally, with regard to coordinating efforts to present a common message to both remedial and classroom teachers, a common message should be communicated to both teachers of the at-risk student about assessment for the purpose of informing instruction. The use of common assessments to inform instruction, such as running records, can be tools used to bring about congruent instruction for a student at risk, as was the case for Rachel. When both teachers have a clear understanding of how to observe and assess students to determine their levels of development (what they can do independently and what they cannot do) they are both more likely to respond to the student's developmental needs with the appropriate instruction. Also in terms of assessment, this study indicated that the systematic collection of data to monitor growth and improvement over time and to demonstrate the efficacy of a program can influence changes in teacher practice and provide motivation for continued efforts for improvement in instruction.

The third and final key element to be considered in following my recommendation to create congruent programs is, after presenting teachers with a common message as described above, to provide them with opportunities for on-going and follow-up support. According to teachers in their second year of implementation of the Hapsburgh Early Literacy Project, when

improved literacy instruction remains an on-going focus in the school setting and when teachers receive on-going and follow-up support, they are more likely to maintain interest and motivation in implementing their programs congruently. They are also more likely to continue striving for improvement and more likely to demonstrate initiative. And, according to survey data from teachers in their first year of implementation, professional development support has proved to be supportive for them initially and on an on-going basis throughout their implementation but grade level teams have proved to be their greatest support. For it is in their teams that teachers can problem solve with others in the same situation with similar struggles, questions, concerns, and successes.

In summary, my search for congruence has led me to conclude that curricular and communicative congruence are a key to success for students considered to be at-risk of reading failure. My recommendation that schools and school districts should go about creating congruent programs is supported by this research. The case studies provided me the opportunity to observe how curricular and communicative congruence have the potential to lead students and teachers to greater understanding and greater performance. Three key elements are presented for consideration in going about establishing congruence between the remedial or intervention program and the classroom program. The first consideration is to initially establish congruence at a conceptual level with attention to pedagogical procedures recommended by experts in the field of reading. Numerous opportunities for students to engage in meaningful reading and writing as well as opportunities to engage in social interaction to support their literacy development are highlighted as most essential. The second consideration is that teachers be presented a common message with regard to: (a) ownership of and responsibility for the at-risk student, (b) each of the five curricular components (philosophy, instructional materials, instructional methods and student activities, reading strategies, and reading goals), and (c) common assessment tools to inform instruction. The third and final consideration is that teachers be provided with opportunities for on-going and follow-up support in order to maintain their interest and motivation in implementing their programs congruently. Further research may explore the degree to which curricular and congruence directly impacts achievement.

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