

THE MELDING OF LITERACY STRATEGIES

The Melding of Literacy Strategies to Enhance Reading Fluency, Comprehension, and Enjoyment

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Abstract

This report describes an individualized literacy intervention program that was developed for a fifth grade boy who struggled with reading. Based upon informal assessment and evaluation procedures, the following literacy strategies were taught within a one-to-one instructional setting: Repeated Readings, Personal Vocabulary Journal, Phonemic Awareness, Reader Response Journal, Character Perspective Chart, and Self-Questioning. Data collection included field notes, audio tape recordings, assessment and evaluation tools, and participant work samples. Findings suggest that a melding of literacy strategies worked in concert to enhance reading fluency, reading comprehension, and reading enjoyment for the participant.

Key Words: Literacy Intervention; Literacy Assessment; Individualized Literacy Intervention Program; Tutoring; Struggling Reader; Elementary Education; Reading Fluency; Reading Comprehension; Reading Enjoyment; Literacy Strategies; Case Study; Informal Reading Assessment

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Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Zack (a pseudonym) is an eleven-year-old boy who is in my self-contained fifth-grade classroom. The setting for this case study is a community of about 2,000 people in a mid-western state. Zack has attended this school since he was in kindergarten. His interests are playing junior league football, playing with friends, his two dogs, and watching movies. At school I have noticed that he sometimes bullies other kids; he is larger than many boys in my class and sometimes takes advantage of them. He has a habit of getting into trouble with other teachers and staff in our building by not paying attention to them when they are trying to redirect his misbehavior. I originally hoped that our tutoring time together might help his behavior at school. While the time we spent together brought us closer, it did not change his behavior problems at school. I think that there were too many unresolved factors influencing his life at home that were difficult for him to deal with. He was seeing our school counselor throughout the school year.

I initially became concerned over Zack's reading ability when I first heard him read aloud in class. I noticed that he had trouble decoding words and understanding what he read. His reading fluency was choppy and slow. When others were reading in class, Zack was preoccupied with pencils, pens, and other objects at his desk that he systematically disassembled. When I administered

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The Benchmark Progress Test (Houghton Mifflin, 1997) as a pretest of reading comprehension, Zack scored a 55%.

I had a conversation about my concerns over Zack's reading behavior with his mother and asked her if she could describe his reading activities at home. She said that he doesn't read much at home even though the rest of the family does. She said that Zack prefers to play outside with friends. She has always been concerned about his reading behavior but didn't know what to do to help him improve. She seemed excited to have Zack in a tutoring program and said that she would support him in any way she could at home. She, too, hoped that the time Zack and I spent together might help him with his other behavior problems at school.

When I discussed the tutoring program with Zack he seemed enthusiastic about it and willing to get started. Since he lived in town and close to the school he usually rode his bike to and from school, so transportation after school was not a problem, he simply went home on his bike like he usually did. I told him that I would not keep him for more than 45 minutes after school and that seemed to agree with him.

Informal Testing and Observation

As mentioned in the previous section, my initial concern over Zack's reading stemmed from his performance on our school district's curriculum-based measurement of reading comprehension: *The Benchmark Progress Test* (Houghton Mifflin, 1997) that I administered to all of my fifth-graders in the fall. He scored a 55% on the reading comprehension section. I did feel that this was a

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valid indicator of his reading ability. I watched him read the passages and answer the questions. On this particular test, there was a fiction selection and an expository selection. Following each selection the student is required to respond in writing to five short essay questions and five multiple mark, multiple choice questions. Zack's responses indicated that he had read the selections, but his answers lacked sufficient detail.

In addition to the benchmark tests, since I was Zack's primary teacher for all subject areas, I was able to observe first-hand his reading and writing performance in reading/language arts, math, social studies, and science. He struggled with reading fluency along with comprehension. He didn't choose to read during his free reading time, and avoided reading whenever he could. He was one of the less capable readers in my class.

After a discussion with Zack's mother and Zack about the tutoring program I was proposing, and receiving their approval, Zack and I began working together the following week. Since I was concerned about Zack's motivation towards reading and felt that this was at the root of some of the difficulties that he was experiencing, I gave him the *Assessment of Motivation to Read Survey* (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). Which is an assessment used for evaluating children's self-concepts as readers and the value they place on reading. The results of the assessments are in Figure 1.

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Figure 1. Zack's Motivation to Read Survey Results

Motivation to Read Profile Initial

Reading survey

Name Zack Date 2-2-01

Sample 1: I am in _____

Second grade Fifth grade
 Third grade Sixth grade
 Fourth grade

Sample 2: I am a _____

boy
 girl

1. My friends think I am _____

a very good reader
 a good reader
 an OK reader
 a poor reader

2. Reading a book is something I like to do.

Never
 Not very often
 Sometimes
 Often

3. I read _____.

not as well as my friends
 about the same as my friends
 a little better than my friends
 a lot better than my friends

4. My best friends think reading is _____.

really fun
 fun
 OK to do
 no fun at all

5. When I come to a word I don't know, I can _____.

almost always figure it out
 sometimes figure it out
 almost never figure it out
 never figure it out

6. I tell my friends about good books I read.

I never do this.
 I almost never do this.
 I do this some of the time.
 I do this a lot.

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Figure 1. Zack's Motivation to Read Survey (continued)

7. When I am reading by myself, I understand _____
 almost everything I read
 some of what I read
 almost none of what I read
 none of what I read

8. People who read a lot are _____
 very interesting
 interesting
 not very interesting
 boring

9. I am _____
 a poor reader
 an OK reader
 a good reader
 a very good reader

10. I think libraries are _____
 a great place to spend time
 an interesting place to spend time
 an OK place to spend time
 a boring place to spend time

11. I worry about what other kids think about my reading _____
 every day
 almost every day
 once in a while
 never

12. Knowing how to read well is _____
 not very important
 sort of important
 important
 very important

13. When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, I _____
 can never think of an answer
 have trouble thinking of an answer
 sometimes think of an answer
 always think of an answer

14. I think reading is _____
 a boring way to spend time
 an OK way to spend time
 an interesting way to spend time
 a great way to spend time

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Figure 1. Zack's Motivation to Read Survey (continued)

15. Reading is _____.
<input type="checkbox"/> very easy for me
<input type="checkbox"/> kind of easy for me
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> kind of hard for me
<input type="checkbox"/> very hard for me
16. When I grow up I will spend _____.
<input type="checkbox"/> none of my time reading
<input type="checkbox"/> very little of my time reading
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> some of my time reading
<input type="checkbox"/> a lot of my time reading
17. When I am in a group talking about stories, I _____.
<input type="checkbox"/> almost never talk about my ideas
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sometimes talk about my ideas
<input type="checkbox"/> almost always talk about my ideas
<input type="checkbox"/> always talk about my ideas
18. I would like for my teacher to read books out loud to the class _____.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> every day
<input type="checkbox"/> almost every day
<input type="checkbox"/> once in a while
<input type="checkbox"/> never
19. When I read out loud I am a _____.
<input type="checkbox"/> poor reader
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OK reader
<input type="checkbox"/> good reader
<input type="checkbox"/> very good reader
20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel _____.
<input type="checkbox"/> very happy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sort of happy
<input type="checkbox"/> sort of unhappy
<input type="checkbox"/> unhappy

I told Zack that there were no right or wrong answers for the survey, and he should answer what he honestly felt, without thinking about what I may want him to say. He finished the survey in a few minutes. I scored it later with the *Motivation to Read Survey Scoring Guide* (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). The results are shown in Figure 2.

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Figure 2. The Results of Zack's Motivation to Read Survey

MRP Reading Survey scoring sheet

Student name Zack

Grade 5 Teacher Weih

Administration date 2-2-01

Recoding scale

1 = 4
2 = 3
3 = 2
4 = 1

<p>Self-Concept as a Reader</p> <p>*recode 1. <u>2</u> 3. <u>2</u></p> <p>*recode 5. <u>3</u></p> <p>*recode 7. <u>4</u> 9. <u>2</u></p> <p>*recode 11. <u>3</u> 13. <u>3</u></p> <p>*recode 15. <u>2</u> 17. <u>2</u> 19. <u>2</u></p> <p>SC raw score: <u>25 / 40</u></p>	<p>Value of Reading</p> <p>*recode 2. <u>3</u> 4. <u>2</u></p> <p>*recode 6. <u>3</u></p> <p>*recode 8. <u>4</u></p> <p>*recode 10. <u>3</u> 12. <u>3</u> 14. <u>3</u></p> <p>*recode 16. <u>3</u></p> <p>*recode 18. <u>4</u> 20. <u>3</u></p> <p>V raw score: <u>31 / 40</u></p>
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Full survey raw score (Self-Concept & Value): 56 / 80

Percentage scores	Self-Concept	63
	Value	76
	Full Survey	70

Comments: I explained to Zack that there were no right or wrong answers and that the survey was not for a grade. I encouraged him to answer what he felt without thinking about pleasing me.

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The results are what I predicted to see from Zack. After looking over his answers, I agreed with everything he said except I would have scored him lower on his ability to answer questions over his reading. I think that he was not fully aware of what his problems were in reading. According to Zack's answers, he knew that he was not the best he could be in reading. He was unsure what his problems were, and I was, too, until I started to work closely with him and discovered what I had suspected, that he did not think about what he was reading while he was reading. By this I mean, that he did not self-question or relate the information to his background or apply the information to any construct in his thinking. He was merely reading along, saying the words. This became more evident during our tutorial sessions, and Zack even realized the problem on his own when he said, "I don't think about what I am reading, I just read along." The results of the assessment demonstrated that his self-concept as a reader was low however; he placed an emphasis of importance on reading.

The next assessment I gave him was the *Motivation to Read Profile Interview* (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). This consisted of me asking him questions and recording his responses. I tried to make this flow as natural as possible and altered the interview to be more of a conversation depending on his responses. This interview is shown in Figure 3. I learned from the interview that reading didn't play an important part in his life. It had at one time when his father read to him when he was little. Zack didn't have a favorite author, type of book, or subject that he chose to read. Instead, he was checking out books from the library that had been previously read to him by teachers. He

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seemed only to glance at these books, not really reading them. He already knew what the story was about, and he showed little interest in actually rereading them on his own. He kept a collection of these books on his desk, but I did not see him actively engaged in reading any of them. During silent reading time in class, Zack was usually busy taking apart pens and other objects at his desk, while the other children were reading. Why did he do this? After all, he was an average reader. I think it was because he didn't know how to enjoy a book on his own. He didn't know how to become engaged without the support of his teachers. He did not relate the story to his own life, past or future. He didn't think about the characters' personalities and compare them to friends. In essence, he was not developing relationships with the characters in the story, nor was he creating a reason to read. These evaluative findings, gleaned from the informal testing and observations done with Zack, were applied to the methodology used to design an individualized, literacy intervention program just for him.

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Figure 3. Zack's Motivation to Read Interview

Motivation to Read Profile Initial

Conversational Interview

Name Zack Date 2-2-01

A. Emphasis: Narrative text

Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): I have been reading a good book...I was talking with...about it last night. I enjoy talking about good stories and books that I've been reading. Today I'd like to hear about what you have been reading.

1. Tell me about the most interesting story or book you have read this week (or even last week). Take a few minutes to think about it. (Wait time.) Now, tell me about the book or story.

Probes: What else can you tell me? Is there anything else? Boys Start The War

2. How did you know or find out about this story? Mrs. Finchem read it to class

assigned in school
 chosen out of school

3. Why was this story interesting to you? Funny

B. Emphasis: Informational text

Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): Often we read to find out about something or to learn about something. We read for information. For example, I remember a student of mine...who read a lot of books about...to find out as much as he/she could about.... Now, I'd like to hear about some of the informational reading you have been doing.

1. Think about something important that you learned recently, not from your teacher and not from television, but from a book or some other reading material. What did you read about? (Wait time.) Tell me about what you learned.

Probes: What else could you tell me? Is there anything else? Airplane Books

2. How did you know or find out about this book/article? Friend did

assigned in school
 chosen out of school

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Figure 3. Zack's Motivation to Read Interview (continued)

Motivation to Read Profile (cont'd.)

3. Why was this book (or article) important to you? cool airplanes to make

C. Emphasis: General reading

1. Did you read anything at home yesterday? What?
directions to remote control car

2. Do you have any books at school (in your desk/storage area/locker/book bag) today that you are reading? Tell me about them. Shiloh Season by Naylor

3. Tell me about your favorite author. No favorite author

4. What do you think you have to learn to be a better reader? doesn't know

5. Do you know about any books right now that you'd like to read? Tell me about them. old Yeller

6. How did you find out about these books? last year in school

7. What are some things that get you really excited about reading books? He likes funny books & got

Tell me about... He described The Watch Dog and the Coyotes by Wallace

8. Who gets you really interested and excited about reading books? His Dad read to him when he was little

Tell me more about what they do. His Dad used to read bedtime books to him.

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Methodology

Through the process of informal assessment, observation, and review of past research, I decided upon these reading goals for Zack (a) increase the level of his reading comprehension, (b) increase his reading fluency, (c) improve his self-concept as a reader, and (d) increase the value that he places on reading.

To help Zack reach these goals I worked with him through the means of informal assessments and discussions to identify his personal interests and thereby to choose books that would complement his interests (e.g., Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996; Ruddell, 1995). Next, through our tutoring sessions, I helped Zack to identify his strengths and needs and taught him strategies that he could apply to his reading. One of these strategies is Repeated Readings, a method whereby the child rereads the same passage over and over again to gain a certain level of fluency. Studies have demonstrated that through repeated readings, not only do children's fluency increase, but also their comprehension (e.g., Morris, Ervin, & Conrad, 1996). Once the reader is not struggling with the words, they are able to focus on the meaning and the details of what they are reading (Samuels, 1997). I found this to be true with Zack. Each time he practiced Repeated Readings during our tutoring sessions, his reading speed increased, he experienced less and less difficulty with pronouncing words, and he was able to comprehend what he was reading.

Along with the strategy of Repeated Readings, I also applied Phonemic Awareness instruction to help Zack with words he had trouble pronouncing. While Zack was silently reading, I asked him to keep a list of all the words in his

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Personal Vocabulary Journal (Wood, 1994), another strategy that was integrated into his program, that he didn't know how to pronounce or understand the meaning. After his silent reading, he would show me these words, we would work together sounding the words out and discuss their meanings. I felt that it was instructionally important for Zack to learn the words that he was struggling with in the context of the book that he was reading. "Phonemic awareness development is not meaningful in and of itself. It is important only in the context of comprehensive reading instruction" (Yopp & Yopp, 2000, p. 132). Griffith and Olson (1992) contended that, "Phonemic awareness activities will not be helpful unless they can be placed in a context of real reading and writing (as cited in Yopp & Yopp, 2000, p. 132). At first, Zack seemed not to be able to identify letter/sound patterns in words he didn't know. But, after some practice with phoneme identification, he had less and less trouble with pronouncing new words.

As Zack and I continued to meet together for his tutor sessions I discovered through observation and discussion that he didn't self-monitor, or ask himself questions during his silent reading to check his understanding, or to make sense out of what he was reading. I asked him what he thought about while he read and he said, "Nothing, I just read along." This became increasingly evident during our discussion over the content of his reading. To help Zack to think about what he was reading, I integrated a questioning strategy called Character Perspective Charting that emphasized narrative story structure and character understanding (Emery, 1996; Shanahan & Shanahan, 1997). There is

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an example of a Character Perspective Chart in Appendix A that I used as a model to question Zack over his reading material. I also modeled for him how to ask questions while reading (e.g. Ruddell, 1995; Schwartz, 1997).

Initially, Zack was going to read the chapter book that he had chosen, at home, and keep a Reader Response Journal, another strategy integrated into his program, in which he could write or record any response he wanted in relation to the book he was reading. Writing as a response to reading has been demonstrated to increase children's reading comprehension, increase their level of literal competency, and increase the level of involvement with reading (Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995). However, Zack did not follow through with our original plans. His mother said that he wanted to play outside and with friends from the moment he came home to bedtime. I was disappointed that Zack was not reading and writing at home. In order to individualize and accommodate Zack in the best instructional format, he read his novel during our tutor sessions and wrote responses in a Reader Response Journal that he kept at school. Since reading and keeping logs or response journals were part of my classroom-reading program, this was a process Zack was familiar with. At the conclusion of each tutoring session, Zack would respond to his reading by writing in his journal. He usually summarized or wrote about a significant event that he had just read. Since the chapters in the book that Zack chose were very short, some being only 4 to 6 pages, the book lent itself well to 30-45 minutes of instructional time.

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Procedures

Scenario of a typical tutorial session. The following is a sample scenario of a typical tutoring session with Zack. The procedures were developed based upon the initial assessment and evaluation of Zach's individual literacy needs in combination with past research on improving reading comprehension, fluency, and motivation to read. Although we established a semi-structured routine, it was not set in stone, therefore, changes occurred that best accommodated Zach's literacy needs, personal preferences, and home and school culture. I was best able to provide for his needs due to the fact that I was not following a published, scripted program, but instead was able negotiate with Zach whatever was going to work best for him.

1. Zack has self-selected a chapter book that was predetermined to be at or above his reading level. He silently reads this book for about 20 minutes or a chapter. After each reading he writes in his Reader Response Journal a response to the reading. He can choose how he wants to respond. For example, he might write poetry, a retelling or summary, a reference to his own life, or other thoughts that he had while reading. Zack and I discuss his written responses and the content of the pages that he has read at the beginning of each session.

2. In the next part of the tutorial session, Zack works on fluency. He selects where he would like to read from in his novel. He reads several pages silently and points out any words that he does not either understand their meaning or

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how to pronounce them and records them in his Personal Vocabulary Journal. After we work with these words, he reads the passage aloud while I time him for three minutes. When the three minutes are finished, I count the number of words that he read and record this information on a chart. Zack then rereads the same passage and the process is repeated. He has shown improvement every time, which pleases him a lot.

3. Next, I discuss briefly with Zack the next chapter that he will be reading the next time that we work together. I write in his Reader Response Journal some questions over the chapter for him to think about and respond to during our next work session. The discussion of these questions will be the starting point for our next work session, prior to him reading the chapter silently. This will help him to set a purpose for reading and help him to think about his reading.

4. We conclude the session with Zack making an entry in his Reader Response Journal about anything he is thinking about in relation to our work together with his reading. His response will be a springboard into further discussions about his reading, and also help me to understand what he is thinking about in order to meet his immediate literacy needs.

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Results

This section reports on the results from the tutoring sessions held with Zach. There were ten sessions that lasted between 30 and 45 minutes each. I tape recorded our sessions and wrote brief field notes followed by more detailed notes after we were finished.

Date: February 1, 2001

Session: 1

Participant: Zack

In the first session with Zack, I told him what the agenda would be like for each time that we would meet. I wanted him to become familiar with a routine so that he was clear about what was going to happen and therefore reduce some of the possible anxiety that he may be feeling over the tutorial events. I explained to him that we would start each session with a discussion over the book that he chose to read, and then we would work on some reading activities. Following the activities, he would respond about his reading by writing to a prompt that I would have for him. I did not tell him that I was going to bring a snack each time, but when I gave him a soda and some candy, he seemed quite pleased.

Next, I told Zack that I wanted him to fill-out a survey about reading. I explained that he would not be graded on the survey and that he should answer what he felt without thinking what I may want him to answer. The first part of the survey he would fill-out the answers on his own, and for the second part, I would be asking him some questions in an interview fashion. Zack seemed to be relaxed and comfortable during both assessments. When we were finished, I told

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him that next time we would actually do some reading. This first session lasted about 45 minutes.

Date: February 8, 2001
Session 2
Participant: Zack

Zack stayed after school for me to tutor him today. This was our second session. I thought that I would do a computerized reading assessment with him called "S.T.A.R." But, I could not get the program to run on my computer so instead, I went ahead and began the individualized reading program that I had planned to do with him, and I told him that we may do the S.T.A.R. assessment at a later time.

During the first session with Zack, I had told him the agenda for the tutoring sessions so that he would know what to expect and not become over-anxious about the sessions. We started the session with Zack reading aloud to me from a book that I asked him to bring. I had asked him to choose a book that he had previously read and could easily read aloud. He brought to the session *Shiloh Season* by Phyllis Naylor Reynolds (1996). He told me that he had seen the movie and had read most of the book but had not finished the book.

While Zack read aloud to me, I sat so that I could also see the words that he was reading. He made very few mistakes. I wanted to use the books that he brought to our sessions to build his self-esteem in reading by pointing-out to him

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his strong areas. He read with good inflection in his voice, a smooth rhythm, and attended to punctuation marks.

Zack read for about 10 to 15 minutes and then we filled-out a Character Perspective Chart together with him supplying the answers. Character Perspective Charts include the main elements of narrative stories (setting, main characters, a problem, events, and solution) in addition; they also include character goals for the main characters in conflict (see Appendix A). These types of story maps work best with stories that do have main characters that clearly are in conflict with each other. *Shiloh Season* worked well for this strategy. With very little prompting, Zack was able to complete the character Perspective Chart (see Figure 4). He was able to articulate each character's goals and attempts at meeting their goals, along with what he felt was the author's intended message.

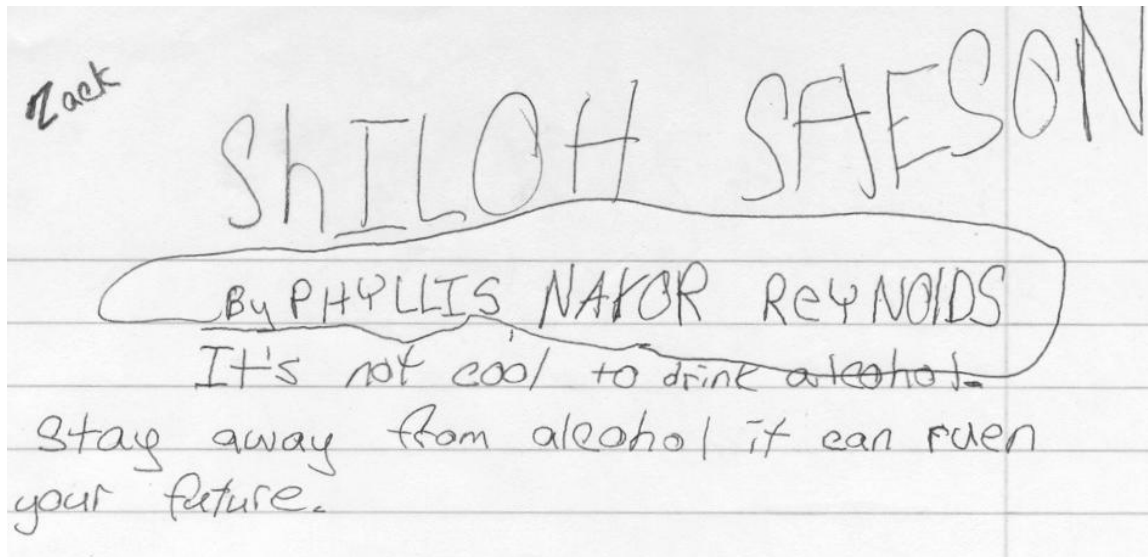
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Figure 4. Zack's Character Chart of *Shiloh Season* (Naylor, 1996)

Character Perspective Chart	
Main character: Who is the main character? <i>Marty</i>	Main character: Who is the main character? <i>Judd</i>
Setting: Where and when does the story take place? <i>around town</i>	Setting: Where and when does the story take place? <i>around town</i>
Problem: What is the main character's problem? <i>Judd is trying to get Shiloh back</i>	Problem: What is the main character's problem? <i>Marty won't let him have him</i>
Goal: What is the main character's goal? What does the character want? <i>Keep Shiloh</i>	Goal: What is the main character's goal? What does the character want? <i>Keep Shiloh</i>
Attempt: What does the main character do to solve the problem or get the goal? <i>Keeps Shiloh away from Judd</i>	Attempt: What does the main character do to solve the problem or get the goal? <i>goes to Marty's house and tries to get him</i>
Outcome: What happened as a result of the attempt? <i>hides Shiloh in house</i>	Outcome: What happened as a result of the attempt? <i>Marty's dad punches Judd</i>
Reaction: How does the main character feel about the outcome? <i>Scared</i>	Reaction: How does the main character feel about the outcome? <i>angry and leaves</i>
Theme: What point did the author want to make? <i>Stay away from Alcohol</i>	Theme: What point did the author want to make? <i>Not Cool to drink</i>

In Figure 5, I asked Zack to write a few sentences about what the message was that the author might be trying to get across to the reader. He felt very strongly that the author's message was that drinking alcohol was bad.

Figure 5. Zack's Interpretation of the Author's Intended Message



At the conclusion of the session I asked Zack to tell me why he had chosen Shiloh to read to me. He said that he had seen the movie and checked out the book from the school's library because he wanted to know more about the details of the story. I was very impressed with that answer. I asked him if he identified with the main characters in the story in any way. At first he said no, but when I asked him if he had a dog (Shiloh is about a dog) and he said yes, and when I asked him to tell me the story about how he got his dog, I found out that he identified very deeply with the story, and that is why I think he chose the book as one of his favorites and one that he wanted to share with me.

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Date: February 15, 2001

Session: 3

Participant: Zack

This afternoon I tutored Zack for 35 minutes. He had chosen a narrative book to read for the remainder of our tutor sessions called *Crash* by Jerry Spinelli (1996). I asked him to read the book at home for thirty minutes each night. He had read 17 pages from the book in three nights. I didn't think that was very much, but I didn't say so to him. I asked him to tell me about what he had read so far. After he told me as much as he could think of, I asked him some comprehension questions about the characters, setting, problem, and action of the story. His understanding was very sketchy. When I questioned him as to why he had trouble remembering some of the details, he commented, "I just read along and don't think." I had a feeling that he didn't self-question as he read or related his reading to his own life. When I asked more questions about the main character and why he chose the book, we discovered that he did have a lot in common with the character and the action in the story; he had just not been relating the story to his life as he was reading. I told him that during the next reading sessions he was to think about what he was reading and ask himself questions while he was reading, for example, "Have I ever felt the same as the main character?" "Has something like this ever happened to me?" I wrote these questions into his Reader Response Journal for him to refer to.

I had also asked Zack to make a list of any words that he had trouble with while he was reading, and to write them in his Personal Vocabulary Journal. He

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pointed out only one, *duet*. He had sounded it out correctly. I reviewed with him how to sound words out and encouraged him to take the time to sound out all the words he didn't know. We reviewed some strategies for working with words that we had covered in class earlier in the week.

Next, Zack read aloud to me and I kept track of any mistakes that he made, which were very few. We discussed the mistakes he had made when he was done. I had him reread the same passage that he had just finished after I read it back to him to work on speed and fluency. This intervention strategy of Repeated Readings has shown to help students not only in reading fluency but also in comprehension (Samuels, 1997).

For the next week, I asked Zack to keep a Reader Response Journal. In the journal, he could respond to his reading in any way that he wanted to, for example, writing a poem, a retelling, a picture, or relate what he had read to something in his own life. He was receptive to this idea, but he mentioned that he thought thirty minutes of reading every night was too much, so we negotiated to twenty minutes three nights each week with at least five minutes of journaling. He seemed happier with this plan. Research has shown that the method of responding through writing to what is read has helped children become more involved in their books as readers and thinkers (Wollman-Bonella & Werchadlo, 1995).

THE MELDING OF LITERACY STRATEGIES

Date: February 22, 2001

Session: 4

Participant: Zack

Zack and I had a tutoring session this afternoon after school. He had forgotten his book and his journal. I tried not to act disappointed. I was hoping to see what he had been recording in his journal. He said that he had gone to his dad's for the weekend and didn't read and left his book and journal at home. He had read only about five pages since last week, which is less than what I had hoped for. We started a new Reader Response Journal and Personal Vocabulary Journal to keep at school and I gave him a copy of the novel, which now, he will also keep at school.

I asked him some comprehension questions over the story thus far. He was unsure about many of the questions, so I wrote them down for him to take home and asked him to think about these questions while he was doing his home reading.

Next I told Zack that we were going to work on his reading fluency. I asked him to read silently the beginning of the next chapter that he was ready for in his book. When he was done, I asked him to point out any words that were unfamiliar to him and to record these in his Personal Vocabulary Journal. He had trouble with two of the words, and we worked on sounding them out and discussing their meanings before he read aloud. Next, I told him to re-read aloud from the beginning the chapter that he had just read silently. I told him that I would stop him after three minutes. When the three minutes were completed, I counted the number of words that he had read and recorded them on a chart for

THE MELDING OF LITERACY STRATEGIES

him to see (the chart is displayed and discussed in the next section). This is a strategy in addition to Repeated Readings that has been known to not only motivate struggling readers through immediate feedback, but also to help them concentrate on their reading, and to increase fluency (Morris, Ervin, & Conrad, 1996). This is exactly the response that I was hoping to see in Zack. He reread the same passage again for three minutes. The first reading resulted in 219 words in three minutes and the second reading resulted in 283 words. Zack seemed pleased with his progress.

I then asked Zack some comprehension questions over the page that he had just read, and his comprehension was very good. In fact, he understood his reading better than ever.

For the next week, I gave Zack a list of open-ended comprehension questions to think about prior to reading the next chapter in his novel.

Date: March 2, 2001

Session: 5

Participant: Zack

Zack and I had a tutoring session this afternoon after school. Once again, he did not bring his book or journals to school. He said that he just forgets. The tutoring sessions are not working out the way that I had hoped that they would. I thought Zack would take some responsibility for his own work, but he has taken very little, and I am starting to feel that I made a mistake in selecting him. However, past experience with teaching children has taught me to take them as they are and not impose my own ideals on them. However, I do have high

THE MELDING OF LITERACY STRATEGIES

expectations for my students, and I think that I communicate my expectations through goal setting and encouragement. I think there is something else going on with Zack that is outside of my school day with him. He has decreased in his general attitude and work habits, and he seems to be constantly in some kind of trouble. I will be conferencing with his mother in a couple weeks. Hopefully she will be able to shed some light on the situation.

As we continued with our tutoring session, Zack claimed to have read the next chapter (the chapters are very short, about 4-6 pages). I asked him the comprehension questions that I asked him to think about while reading at home. He didn't know, or said he didn't remember much about what he had read. I asked him to silently reread the chapter that he said he had read at home. I then asked him to point out any words that he had difficulty with, and to record these in his Personal Vocabulary Journal. He had trouble with two words, and we worked on these before he read aloud. We then continued with the same procedure that I outlined during last week's session in which Zack performs repeated, timed readings of the same passage, and I record the number of words that he reads. During this session, his first reading was 249 words in three minutes, and his second reading was 288 words for three minutes. He was happy with this progress. When I asked him the comprehension questions over the chapter that he just read, and his accuracy was 100%.

To conclude our session, I asked Zack to make an entry in his Reader Response Journal about his reading done in our session today. After he did this,

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I asked him to take it home and recopy it into his Reader Response Journal that he was keeping at home.

Date: March 8, 2001

Session: 6

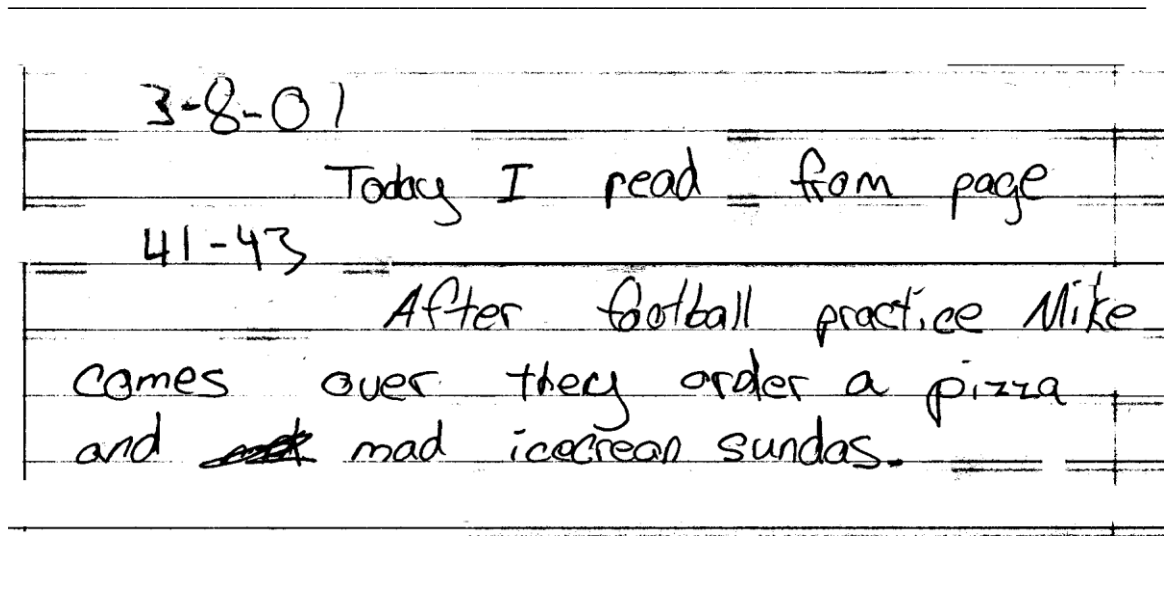
Participant: Zack

Zack and I had a tutoring session this afternoon after school. Once again, he did not bring his book or journals with him. We went ahead with our usual activities and used the journals that we had now started at school. I asked him to silently read the next chapter in the book. When he was done, he said that he knew all of the words. He next reread the passage twice for three minutes each time, and I counted the number of words that he read each time. When he was done, he had read 264 words during the first timed reading, and 323 words during the second timed reading. I wrote these results on the same chart where I had recorded his other scores, and pointed out a marked improvement in his reading speed. He was also having less and less trouble recognizing words. Clearly he was making strides in the direction that I had hoped for. When I asked him comprehension questions over what he had just read, all of his answers were accurate. He also told me that he had been thinking about the characters in the story and could relate himself to the main character and his friends to the minor characters in the story. After we discussed this further- I thought, wow! Things were starting to connect for Zack. The procedures for our tutoring sessions were not working out as I had originally envisioned, however, the goals that I had planned for Zack were being accomplished within an instructional

THE MELDING OF LITERACY STRATEGIES

framework that best suited his needs and life. Since few of the home connections of him reading and writing in his journals seemed to be working, I needed to adjust my plans for working with him, and maintain an attitude of positive adjustment. By the big smile on his face as he looked at his reading speed progress, I could tell he was very pleased with himself. His face also lights-up as he realizes he knows the answers to the comprehension questions that I ask him. After today's work session, I asked Zack to write whatever he wanted to in his Reader Response Journal related to our work together. His response can be viewed in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Zack's Reading Response for Chapter 12 in *Crash* (Spinelli, 1996)



I must remember to always be flexible and to continually assess and reassess Zach's literacy behaviors in order to make things work. I feel that this has been the key to helping Zack succeed so far in his individualized literacy intervention program.

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Date: March 28, 2001

Session: 7

Participant: Zack

Zack and I met after school today for a tutoring session. He did not bring his book or journals from home. However, we had agreed that since he was always forgetting to bring his book and journals that we would just do the reading and journaling during the tutoring sessions at school. This is the system that seemed to work best for Zack. Since I wanted to keep him enthused and willing towards the tutoring sessions, I wanted to try to discover something that worked best for him even if this meant altering my own preconceived ideas about the tutoring sessions (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 1997). Since I was not following a published and scripted assessment, evaluation, and intervention program, I was free to attend to just Zach, his needs, and to creatively think about what would work for him.

We continued with the activities that we had agreed upon. He read the next chapter (13) in *Crash* (Spinelli, 1996) silently and wrote down any words that he had didn't know how to pronounce in his Personal Vocabulary Journal. He didn't know how to pronounce *midget*, *real estate*, and *draggier*. We worked with spelling and sound patterns to sound these words out (Yopp & Yopp, 2000). I asked Zack what the words meant and he knew what *midget* meant from his background knowledge. He figured out what *draggier* and *real estate* meant from the context of the story. For example, he explained that he knew what a real estate agent was from the mother's comment in the story when she said, "I have not sold a house since the Pilgrims landed." Since we had been studying idioms

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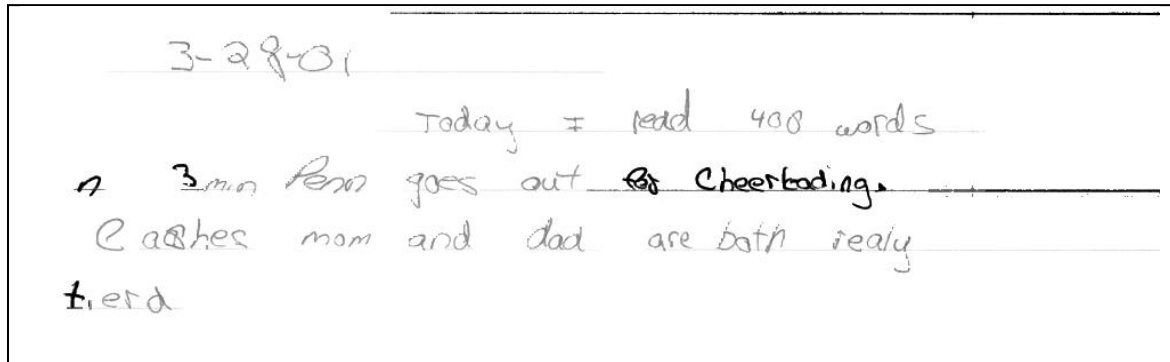
in our classroom reading, he also knew that the mother's statement was an idiom.

After we had worked through the unknown words, we continued with the reading intervention strategy of Repeated Readings. Zack read the passage twice for three minutes each time, and I counted the number of words that he read each time. When he was finished, he had read 351 words during the first timed reading, and 400 words during the second timed reading. I kept a running record of all his results in the field notes that I recorded during the tutoring sessions (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). This way, Zack could see his progress immediately. When he looked at the number of words that he had read, his face was beaming. He said that his goal was to break 400 words next time. His reading was much more fluent and smooth than it has ever been. When I asked him comprehension questions over the chapter that he had just read, his answers demonstrated an understanding that has been lacking in his reading.

At the conclusions to our sessions, I usually ask Zack to record in his journal a response to his reading for our session. I leave the content open to his discretion. Figure 7 has his response to the session. It appears that he chooses to record the main idea of the chapter that he just read, but he also recorded the number of words this time, obviously very proud of himself.

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Figure 7. Zack's Reading Response for Chapter 13 in *Crash* (Spinelli, 1996)



Based upon our work together, I can now see that developing an individualized literacy intervention program also allows for the participant to set his own goals, which is very motivating.

Date: April 5, 2001

Session: 8

Participant: Zack

Zack and I met for his tutoring session after school today. He continued reading from his novel *Crash* (Spinelli, 1996). Zack read the next three chapters (14, 15, and 16) silently to himself. Since these chapters are very short, three or four pages, they only took him about 10 minutes to read. I asked him to record any words that were unfamiliar to him into his Personal Vocabulary Journal. He said that he knew them all.

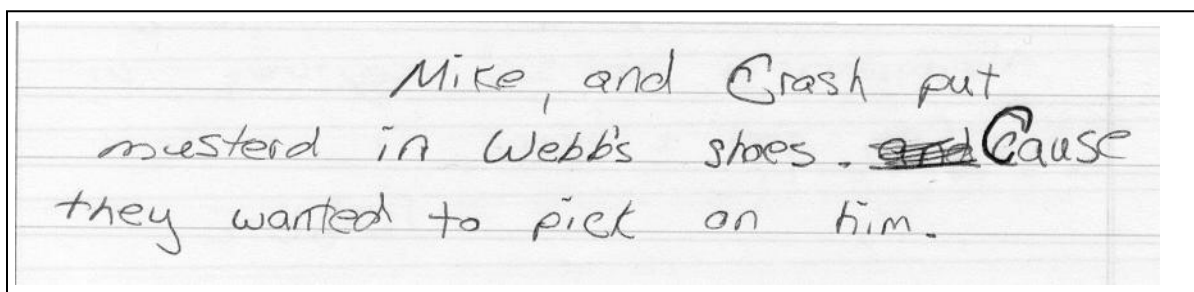
After Zack had read the chapters silently, he was ready to continue with the reading intervention strategy we had been using that consisted of two timed oral readings of three minutes each. He reread aloud the same passage that he had read silently. During his aloud reading, I noticed that he was struggling to pronounce some of the words, and his fluency was not as smooth as it usually is.

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Instead, his reading sounded halting and choppy. I asked him what he thought was the matter, and he said that the words were harder. I asked him to point out to me the words that he had difficulty with, and he pointed to *geography*, *routine*, *moron*, and a tongue twister, “chippy chirpy perky self.” After we worked on sounding out the words, discussing their meanings and practicing the tongue twister, Zack reread the passage over again. His fluency was much better the second time. When he was done, he had read 332 words for the first reading and 402 for the second reading. He had met his personal goal of breaking 400 words for three minutes and was very pleased with himself. I also recognized that he had realized his own reading difficulty, which demonstrated to me that he was learning how to think about his reading behavior.

To conclude our session, Zack made a journal entry in his Reading Response Journal that was related to his reading for the session. He focused on the main idea that he understood from the chapters that he had just read.

Figure 8. Zack’s Reading Response for Chapter 14 in *Crash* (Spinelli, 1996)



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Date: April 12, 2001

Session: 9

Participant: Zack

Zack and I had a tutoring session today after school. He decided that he wanted to reread chapter 15 from *Crash* (Spinelli, 1996) silently first, recording any unknown words into his Personal Vocabulary Journal, and then to reread the chapter aloud for speed and fluency. I noticed that Zack seemed more motivated than usual, not that he isn't motivated for our tutoring sessions; he just seemed more excited than ever to read. He took charge and told me what he wanted to do, what chapter he wanted to start with, and he asked for his Personal Vocabulary Journal to record any unfamiliar words. Usually he doesn't take that much initiative with his learning, preferring to wait for me to tell him what to do.

Zack recorded two words into his Personal Vocabulary Journal while he was reading silently that he was unsure about: *Deluca and emotional*. He figured out that Deluca was the boy's last name and how to pronounce it, but he misunderstood *emotional* which he read in the story's context of a rough and tumble event between some adolescent football players before practice that also included the phrases, "We were ready to kill each other," and, "Football, see, is a violent and *emotional* game" (Spinelli, 1996, p. 53). Given these context clues surrounding the word "emotional," Zack naturally assumed that "emotional" meant violent feelings. After discussion, we concluded that *emotional* could stand for a range of feelings.

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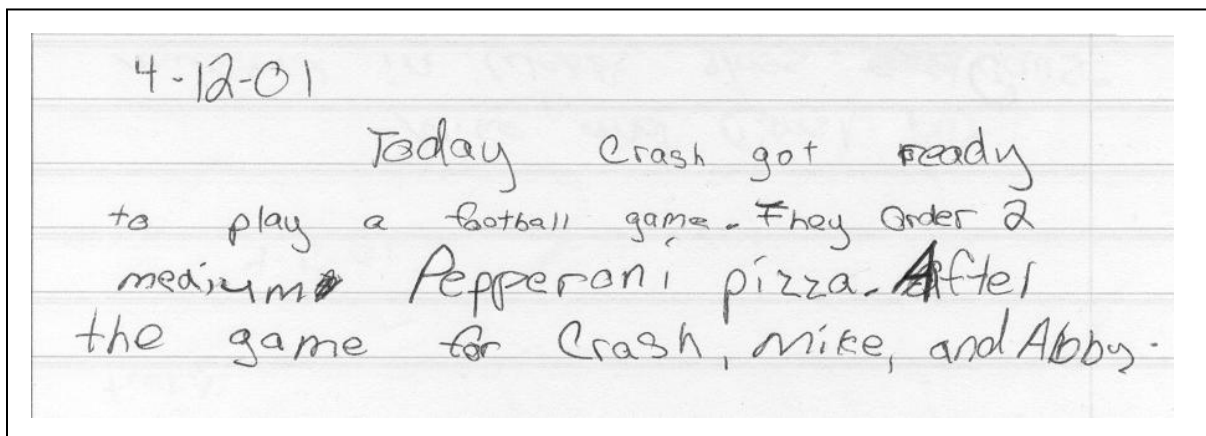
Zack started his first oral reading much faster than he usually does. I also noticed that he was reading more smoothly and attending to punctuation marks that he had previously ignored. He read a total of 387 words in three minutes for his first oral reading, which was an increase of 55 words from last week and an increase of 168 from his very first session. He read a total of 507 words for his second reading, which was an increase of 105 words from last week, and a total of 224 words from his very first session. Zack's face beamed from ear-to-ear as he surveyed the data. I also told him that I had noticed that the smoothness and speed of his oral reading in class had improved considerably. I was amazed by his response when he said that he had been practicing the reading passages to himself prior to reading aloud to the class, and that is why, in his opinion, that his reading was improving. During regular class time, he had been coming up to me and asking me how to pronounce words and asking what they meant, but I was usually so busy with other students during these times that I was not fully aware of the responsibility that he had taken with his literacy learning. Zach's metamorphosis from a disengaged reader to one that was fully cognizant of his reading was a gradual process that was not noticeable to me at first. It helped to keep a running record in the form of the Repeated Readings chart from each tutoring session so we both could clearly see the results in a concrete way. Zack also demonstrated a confidence in his literacy behavior that was lacking when we first started working one-on-one.

To conclude our session, Zack wrote a response to his reading into his Reader Response Journal. Even though it was a short response, he spent more

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time on this one than he did on the others. He picked up the book and was looking for details to record. This is something he hadn't taken the time to do before. Figure 9 demonstrates that Zack is paying closer attention to the details in the story. During one of the first tutoring sessions, Zack had commented that he doesn't think about the story while he is reading. This clearly has changed, and was evident when I asked him comprehension questions over his reading for the tutoring session. He could answer every question with accuracy and added detail. Previous to our tutoring sessions, Zack would answer reading comprehension questions with a shrug of his shoulders and say he didn't know what the answer was.

Figure 9. Zack's Reading Response for Chapter 15 in *Crash* (Spinelli, 1996)



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Date: April 18, 2001
Session: 10
Participant: Zack

During our last session I gave Zack the same assessments that I had administered in the beginning in order to evaluate how his reading behavior and thoughts about reading had changed over time. These assessments were the *Motivation to Read Profile: Reading Survey*, and the *Motivation to Read Profile: Conversational Interview* (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). *The Bench Mark Progress Test* (Houghton Mifflin, 1997) was given a week earlier to Zack with the rest of my class as part of our district's requirement for informal reading assessment of comprehension. The results of these assessments are given and discussed in greater depth in the next section.

During the post-assessments, Zack seemed relaxed and eager to participate as he always was during our time together. He filled out the *Reading Survey* on his own, and then I gave him the *Conversational Interview*. I was pleased by how easily and confidently he discussed his answers during our interview. This time he had much more to say about his reading and the books that he has read.

For measurements of Zack's performances on the predetermined reading goals that I selected for him at the onset of the tutor program, I administered post tests that were the same as the pretests with the exception of the curriculum-based measure of reading comprehension test: *The Benchmark Progress Test* (Houghton Mifflin, 1997) which covered different selections than the pretest that

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was given, however, the selections were similar in difficulty and genre. The results of his *Motivation to Read Profile: Reading Survey* is given in Figure 11.

Zack's self-concept as a reader increased by seven percentage points over his pretest score. This was evidenced also by his comment in item 1 where he indicated that he now thinks of himself as a "good reader." In item 5, he commented that now when he comes to a word that he doesn't know, he can "almost always figure it out."

The value Zack places on reading decreased overall by only one percentage point. Here is where I think it becomes very important to emphasize the teacher as researcher, because I am Zack's classroom teacher, and he is with me throughout the school day, I can lend insider information in regards to his literacy behavior that a quest researcher would not normally have. Therefore, I can clarify some of his answers on this part of the assessment. On item 4, for example, Zack commented, "My best friends think reading is no fun at all," and item 6, "I almost never tell my friends about good books I read." These are contrary statements to what I have observed in the classroom. I have seen Zack on numerous occasions enthusiastically sharing his books with other very good readers; however, he may not consider these children his "best friends" as the assessment states, but rather his classmates, so this is a term that I will change in future assessments. Additionally, from the actions I have seen from him in class, and the comments that he has made about reading and books, I would have expected a much higher score in the value that he placed on reading. It may also have been the type of questions that were asked on the survey, they

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may not have been applicable in determining differences in the way children place personal value on reading.

The next posttest given to Zack was the *Motivation to Read Profile: Conversation Interview*. The results of this interview are included in Figure 12. I was most amazed with Zack's performance on this assessment. Whereas with the pretest, his answers were short and unsure, on the posttest, he was detailed and confident. When asked in the pretest interview to tell about a favorite book that he had read recently, he could only answer with a title and couldn't tell me about the book. However, when asked during the posttest in item 1 to tell about a favorite book that he had read recently, he was able to discuss the book in great detail. In the posttest interview, he was able to comment on other books he had read recently, favorite authors, books he planned to read, and friends and family members that he shared books with. These were all ambiguous to him in the pretest interview, concepts that he hadn't even thought about before.

Zack took *The Reading Benchmark Progress Test* (Houghton Mifflin, 1997) as a posttest in reading comprehension with the rest of my class. He had scored a 55% on the pretest, and he scored a 93% on the posttest. These results strongly indicate that the individualized literacy intervention program had a significant influence on improving Zack's reading abilities.

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Figure 11. Zack's Motivation to Read Profile: Reading Survey (Posttest)

Figure 2
Motivation to Read Profile

Reading survey

Name Zack Date _____

Sample 1: I am in _____.

Second grade Fifth grade
 Third grade Sixth grade
 Fourth grade

Sample 2: I am a _____.

boy
 girl

1. My friends think I am _____.

a very good reader
 a good reader
 an OK reader
 a poor reader

2. Reading a book is something I like to do.

Never
 Not very often
 Sometimes
 Often

3. I read _____.

not as well as my friends
 about the same as my friends
 a little better than my friends
 a lot better than my friends

4. My best friends think reading is _____.

really fun
 fun
 OK to do
 no fun at all

5. When I come to a word I don't know, I can _____.

almost always figure it out
 sometimes figure it out
 almost never figure it out
 never figure it out

6. I tell my friends about good books I read.

I never do this.
 I almost never do this.
 I do this some of the time.
 I do this a lot.

From: Gambrell, L. B., Palmer, B. M., Codling, R. M., & Mazzoni, S. A. (1996). Assessing motivation to read. The Reading Teacher, 49(7), 518-533.

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Figure 11. Zack's Motivation to Read Profile: Reading Survey (continued)

7. When I am reading by myself, I understand _____

- almost everything I read
- some of what I read
- almost none of what I read
- none of what I read

8. People who read a lot are ____

- very interesting
- interesting
- not very interesting
- boring

9. I am _____

- a poor reader
- an OK reader
- a good reader
- a very good reader

10. I think libraries are _____

- a great place to spend time
- an interesting place to spend time
- an OK place to spend time
- a boring place to spend time

11. I worry about what other kids think about my reading _____

- every day
- almost every day
- once in a while
- never

12. Knowing how to read well is

- not very important
- sort of important
- important
- very important

13. When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, I _____

- can never think of an answer
- have trouble thinking of an answer
- sometimes think of an answer
- always think of an answer

14. I think reading is _____

- a boring way to spend time
- an OK way to spend time
- an interesting way to spend time
- a great way to spend time

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Figure 11. Zack's Motivation to Read Profile: Reading Survey (continued)

15. Reading is _____.

- very easy for me
- kind of easy for me
- kind of hard for me
- very hard for me

16. When I grow up I will spend _____

- none of my time reading
- very little of my time reading
- some of my time reading
- a lot of my time reading

17. When I am in a group talking about stories, I

- almost never talk about my ideas
- sometimes talk about my ideas
- almost always talk about my ideas
- always talk about my ideas

18. I would like for my teacher to read books out loud to the class _____.

- every day
- almost every day
- once in a while
- never

19. When I read out loud I am a

- poor reader
- OK reader
- good reader
- very good reader

20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel

- very happy
- sort of happy
- sort of unhappy
- unhappy

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Figure 11. Zack's Motivation to Read Profile: Reading Survey Scoring Sheet

MRP Reading Survey scoring sheet

Student name Zack

Grade 5 Teacher Weih

Administration date 4/19/01

Recoding scale

- 1 = 4
- 2 = 3
- 3 = 2
- 4 = 1

Self-Concept as a Reader

- *recode 1. 3
- 3. 1
- *recode 5. 4
- *recode 7. 4
- 9. 3
- *recode 11. 2
- 13. 3
- *recode 15. 3
- 17. 2
- 19. 3

SC raw score: 28/40

Value of Reading

- 2. 4
- *recode 4. 1
- 6. 2
- *recode 8. 3
- *recode 10. 3
- 12. 4
- 14. 3
- 16. 3
- *recode 18. 4
- *recode 20. 3

V raw score: 30/40

Full survey raw score (Self-Concept & Value): 58/80

Percentage scores	Self-Concept	<u>70</u>
	Value	<u>75</u>
	Full Survey	<u>72</u>

Comments: _____

From: Gambrell, L. B., Palmer, B. M., Codling, R. M., & Mazzoni, S. A. (1996). Assessing motivation to read. The Reading Teacher, 49(7), 518-533.

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Figure 12. Zack's Response to the Motivation to Read Profile: Conversation Int'w

Name Zack Date 4/18/01

A. Emphasis: Narrative text

Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): I have been reading a good book...I was talking with...about it last night. I enjoy talking about good stories and books that I've been reading. Today I'd like to hear about what you have been reading.

1. Tell me about the most interesting story or book you have read this week (or even last week). Take a few minutes to think about it. (Wait time.) Now, tell me about the book or story.

Probes: What else can you tell me? Is there anything else? Crash, it is about this kid who likes football. He likes to order pizza after practice. His sister Abby also eats pizza with them. His friends are Mike and Penn. Mike is on the football team with Crash and Penn is a cheerleader. The other boys think he is weird. He is also a vegetarian.

2. How did you know or find out about this story? I selected from a stack of books that Mr. Weik had gotten.

assigned in school
 chosen out of school

3. Why was this story interesting to you? It was interesting because I put myself in his place.

B. Emphasis: Informational text

Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): Often we read to find out about something or to learn about something. We read for information. For example, I remember a student of mine...who read a lot of books about...to find out as much as he/she could about.... Now, I'd like to hear about some of the informational reading you have been doing.

1. Think about something important that you learned recently, not from your teacher and not from television, but from a book or some other reading material. What did you read about? (Wait time.) Tell me about what you learned.

Probes: What else could you tell me? Is there anything else? I learned how some kids' lives are from Crash.

2. How did you know or find out about this book/article? My teacher.

assigned in school
 chosen out of school

(continued)

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Figure 12. Zack's Response to the Motivation to Read Profile: Conversation Int'w

Motivation to Read Profile (cont'd.)

3. Why was this book (or article) important to you? Because I related it
to my life.

C. Emphasis: General reading

1. Did you read anything at home yesterday? Yes What? Spelling book

2. Do you have any books at school (in your desk/storage area/locker/book bag) today that you are reading? Yes Tell me about them.
Backward Bird Dog & Maniac McGee

3. Tell me about your favorite author. Bill Wallace and Naylor

4. What do you think you have to learn to be a better reader?
Try harder at reading

5. Do you know about any books right now that you'd like to read? Tell me about them.
Mysteries of the Unexplained
Kyle has it. (my friend)

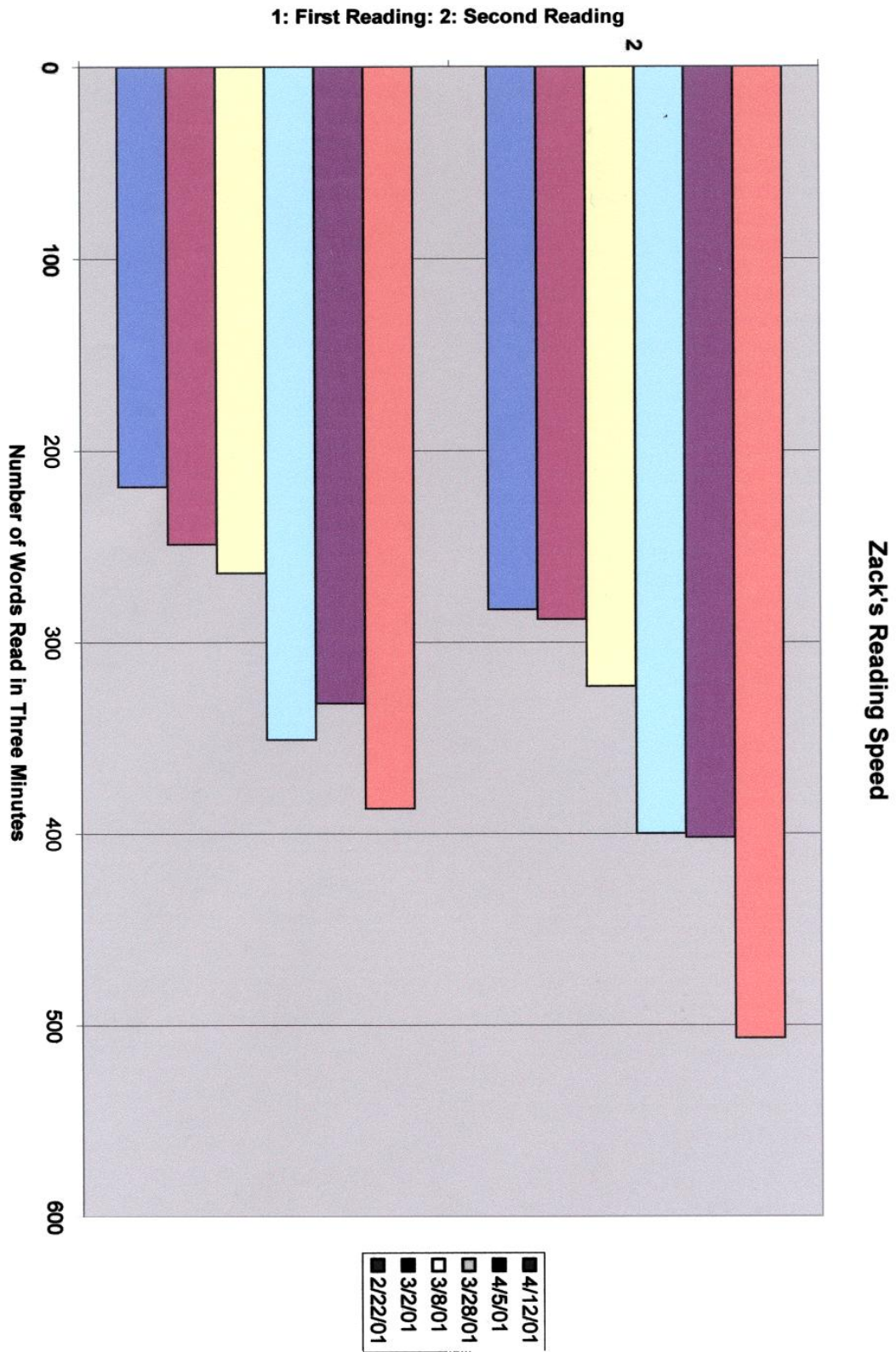
6. How did you find out about these books? Teacher read it in front
of class.

7. What are some things that get you really excited about reading books?
I want to find out about mysteries.
I want to find out how his life changes
when he grows up more.
Tell me about...

8. Who gets you really interested and excited about reading books? Teacher, Mom,
Dad, Kyle and Chase (friends)

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Figure 13. Zack's Number of Words Read Across Repeated Readings



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Figure 13 shows how Zack's reading speeds for Repeated Readings of three minutes each compare from the first readings to the second readings each pair of readings are matching colors, so he did six pairs of Repeated Readings. The graph indicates that Zack continued to improve in his reading speed throughout the tutorial sessions, and served as concrete evidence to Zack and me of his progress. He was amazed and very proud of his growing abilities as he watched his reading speeds increase from one reading to the next and from one tutorial session to the next. I would highly recommend this using this graphing strategy. It gives children a way to gauge and judge their progress, which for reading, is sometimes difficult to accomplish.

At the conclusion of our program, I gave Zack the book *Crash* (Spinelli, 1996), and wrote a personal note inside. He seemed very pleased, and I overheard him telling other students about the book he got and showing them the message I wrote to him, which said, "*To Zack, thank you for caring about reading.*"

Discussion

Zack was one of my regular education students in my self-contained fifth-grade classroom who did not qualify for special education, but struggled with reading. I selected to tutor him based upon his literacy needs and his lack of additional support or intervention. I would describe our relationship as warm and friendly, it was easy to talk to each other, and there existed an honesty and frankness between us. I became concerned about Zack's reading ability when he first entered my classroom in fall of the school year, and I heard him read loud.

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He struggled with decoding words, reading fluency, and comprehension. He didn't seem to care much about reading and usually did his best to avoid it by playing around with objects at his desk during reading times. He lacked confidence when answering reading comprehension questions and didn't volunteer many answers. I selected Zack as the participant for developing an individualized literacy intervention program and selected three goals that I thought were the most important for him (a) increase the level of his reading comprehension, (b) increase his reading fluency, (c) improve his self-concept as a reader, and (d) increase the value he placed on reading.

I choose reading strategies that would help Zack in the targeted goal areas, and pre and posttest material that could be used as indicators for how Zack performed with his goals. One of the reading intervention strategies used during the tutorial sessions was that of Repeated Readings (Morris, Ervin, & Conrad, 1996). Zack and I both found this strategy fun to work with, and the results were very immediate. I would use this strategy again in similar situations with other students. I don't think that Repeated Readings alone would have helped Zack reach his literacy goals. Along with the Repeated Reading strategy I also taught him Self-Questioning strategies and Character Perspective Charting that emphasized story structure and character perspective understanding (Emery, 1996; & Shanahan & Shanahan, 1997). I think these strategies helped Zack to think about what he was reading, which is something he admitted that he didn't do previous to our work together.

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When Zach came across words in his reading that he didn't know, he recorded these in his Personal Vocabulary Journal. This strategy along with Phonemic Awareness instruction was taught to help Zack in sounding out words that were difficult for him along with determining word meanings within the context of story. I found these strategies to be very beneficial and when used in the context of his novel, very meaningful for the reader (Yopp & Yopp, 2000). At the conclusion of every work session, Zack would write something in his Reader Response Journal about what he had read or thoughts that he was thinking. This strategy encouraged Zack to become more reflective about what he was reading and experiencing, thereby leading him to become a more engaged reader.

As the tutorial sessions continued, our relationship grew. The most significant change I saw in Zack following our work together was the change in his attitude towards books and reading. Now I frequently see him during the day sharing books with his classmates. I remember him coming to me one day very excited that his mother had bought one of his favorite books for him as a surprise. He didn't act like this prior to our work together. He used to be a student that shunned reading and played around at his desk instead of opening a book. He used to do everything he could to avoid reading. Now it seems that reading is becoming part of his life.

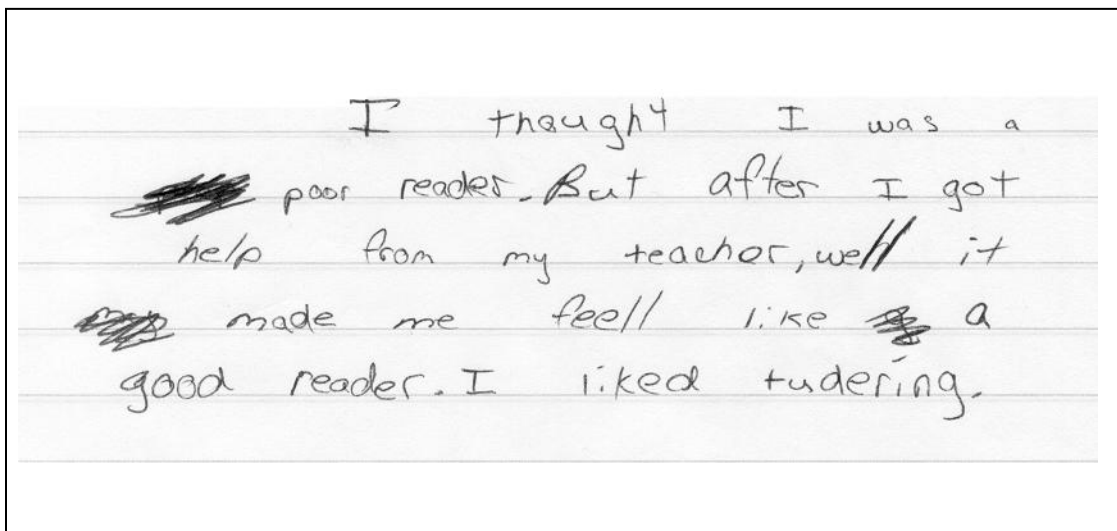
Another area of change in Zack is his ability to answer questions over his reading and to have discussions about his reading. Through the work he did during his individualized literacy intervention program and regular reading classes, he has developed a literacy-based vocabulary whereby he can discuss

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a story's theme and characters' perspectives with a new found confidence. I think that because Zack has learned about reading, not just how to read, that it has become more interesting and less frustrating for him, thereby allowing him to experience the joy of reading that was lacking in his life.

At the end of our work together, I asked Zack to write one last response commenting on any thoughts that he may have about the time we had spent together. As he wrote, I left the table we working at and started grading some papers in order to give him some alone time to write. He took more time than ever to write in his Reader Response Journal. He never did write very much, however, I could tell as I watched him that he put a lot of thought into what he was writing. After he left my classroom I read what he wrote and his words warmly touched my heart. His parting written response is shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Zack's Response to What He Thought About the Tutorial Sessions



I think that I was the one that benefited the most from our work together. I was given a rare opportunity to work one-on-one with one of my struggling

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readers for uninterrupted blocks of time. This is something classroom teachers seldom have the opportunity (or energy) to do. Zack gave me insight into a struggling reader's life that I didn't understand before working with him, and he also gave me the joy of watching him grow from an insecure, detached reader, to one of enthusiasm and confidence, and for this experience, I am indebted to him.

Recommendations

Based on my observations of Zach in the classroom and his responses on the *Motivation to Read Profiles* (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzone, 1996), teachers reading aloud in the classroom had a positive influence upon him. I would definitely recommend that teachers continue to read aloud to their students in the upper elementary and middle level grades.

Zack seemed at a loss in finding literature that interested him to read on his own. I would recommend that teachers expose their students to a wide variety of literature genres and formats and to encourage their students to try new authors or books that are unfamiliar to them.

Zack was a struggling reader before we started working one-on-one together. The melding of the literacy intervention strategies of Repeated Readings, Self-Questioning, Character Perspective Charting, Personal Vocabulary Journal, Phonemic Awareness, and Reader Response Journaling all worked in concert to help him improve dramatically into a confident reader who was then able to enjoy reading. I highly recommend incorporating these literacy strategies into reading programs for intermediate and middle level students.

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Zack's written responses were causing him to reflect and think more deeply about his reading experiences. I think it's important that students be encouraged and given the opportunity to write as a response to their reading. Even though Zach didn't write very much, he put a lot of thought into what he did write.

Finally, I would recommend that teachers make the reading and writing process a social adventure in their classrooms. After Zack developed skills and confidence, he enjoyed reading and sharing books with other children in my classroom. Through teacher guidance, children can learn how to discuss literature with each other, making for a very exciting and motivating literacy environment.

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Appendix A: Character Perspective Chart

Character Perspective Chart

Main character: Who is the main character?	Main character: Who is the main character?
Setting: Where and when does the story take place?	Setting: Where and when does the story take place?
Problem: What is the main character's problem?	Problem: What is the main character's problem?
Goal: What is the main character's goal? What does the character want?	Goal: What is the main character's goal? What does the character want?
Attempt: What does the main character do to solve the problem or get the goal?	Attempt: What does the main character do to solve the problem or get the goal?
Outcome: What happened as a result of the attempt?	Outcome: What happened as a result of the attempt?
Reaction: How does the main character feel about the outcome?	Reaction: How does the main character feel about the outcome?
Theme: What point did the author want to make?	Theme: What point did the author want to make?

From: Shannahan, T., & Shannahan, S. (1997). Character perspective charting: Helping children to develop a more complete conception of story. *The Reading Teacher*, 50(8), 668-677.