The Effects of Parental Involvement Strategies on Elementary At-Risk Students' Oral Reading Accuracy Levels

Kenneth Leon Jenkins

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THE EFFECTS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES
ON ELEMENTARY AT-RISK STUDENTS’
ORAL READING ACCURACY LEVELS

by

Kenneth L. Jenkins

Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders

School of Education

Duquesne University

October 2005
Duquesne University
School of Education
Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders

Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

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October 17, 2005

THE EFFECTS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES ON ELEMENTARY AT-RISK STUDENTS' ORAL READING ACCURACY LEVELS

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to work with parents who used two different reading interventions at home and find out which parent intervention was more effective in improving their children’s oral reading accuracy levels. The total sample size was the parents of 34 elementary at-risk reading students who were taking part in a summer reading and writing program at a state university. Approximately 15 to 20 parents were randomly assigned to both the experimental and main control groups. The main design of this study was an experimental design of parents who were selected randomly by grade level to be in two different treatment groups. The independent variables in this study were information (gender of student, grade level and total amount of time completing interventions) about these two groups. The experimental group of parents used the School-Home Links Reading Kit activity pages with their children recording the number of minutes they spent after each tutoring session completing the activity pages on the weekly Activities Page Log. The control group parents listened to their children read to them and recorded their daily reading time on a weekly Student Reading Log. All parents were given an End of Project Survey the third Friday of the tutoring sessions.

Instrumentation used in this study was the DRA accuracy growth level, Activity Pages Logs, Student Reading Logs, End of Project Surveys and End of Project Interviews. The dependent variable was the growth in the oral reading accuracy levels from the DRA given by university graduate students before the tutoring started and again at the end of the tutoring sessions. An independent samples t-test was used to determine if there was a significant difference in the oral reading accuracy growth levels between the two groups. In addition to the quantitative aspect of this research, qualitative data was also gathered.
Seven parents from both the experimental and control groups were randomly selected to participate in interviews. The notes from these interviews were transcribed and analyzed for similarities and differences in the perceptions parents had regarding the two reading interventions.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I want to thank God for giving me the wisdom, perseverance and hope needed to finish this monumental task. Without the comfort of the Holy Spirit, the teaching of His inspired Holy Bible and the freedom to walk in the newness of life, this dissertation would have been impossible. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

I also respect and appreciate the advice my committee gave during the numerous revisions of my dissertation. Thank you, Dr. Denise Anderson, Dr. Kimberly Bright and Dr. Tom Austin for your insight and support. I will always remember the assistance you gave me, which made my dissertation more concise and scholarly.

To my wife, Christine, I thank you for allowing me to consume myself in this research project. It has taken several years to finish this dissertation with many evenings and weekends away from our special times together. I look forward to more quality times together with you and our children, Joshua and Bethany.

This dissertation has been a team effort. I have learned to ask for assistance; realizing we all have different strengths. In addition to my committee, I had two friends from Texas help me with the editing of my dissertation. These two friends, Elaine Stewart and Cheryl Bugg, took an ordinary paper and transformed it into something special. I am grateful for all the help I had along the road to Doctorateville.
INSRIPTION

During the most difficult days of this dissertation project, when it seemed impossible to keep moving forward, these two passages of scripture calmed my heart and gave me the inspiration to take the next step of faith.

*Psalm 23*

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

*The Lord’s Prayer*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be you name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

(Scripture quotations taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.)
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Imagine reading instruction as spokes of a bicycle wheel. The various components of the reading program are the spokes. To spin properly, the spokes of the wheel must be balanced and adjusted correctly. Loose or missing spokes can cause the rider to become frustrated and make it difficult or impossible to reach the final destination. A reading program is no different. Like a bicycle wheel, it must be balanced and adjusted to meet the students’ needs. Like the spokes of a bicycle wheel, a well-designed, comprehensive reading program must also have all the necessary components to work properly. Only then will the reading program consistently produce proficient readers.

The bicycle wheels of reading instruction are wobbling. Many of its riders are being thrown off. The unfortunate result is that many wounded students lag behind their classmates in reading ability. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) states, “Only 32 percent of the nation’s fourth-graders performed at or above the proficient achievement level [in reading]… And, while scores for the highest-performing students have improved over time, those of America’s lowest-performing students have declined” (United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2003, p. 15). United States Representative John Boehner (Long & Riley, 2003, p. 1) agrees. He states:

Regardless of the circumstances you’re born in and what level of income, we know that education is the great equalizer. And if you’re going to have any chance at what we call the American dream, you have to have a sound, basic education.
There are many spokes on the wheel of reading instruction. Many of these spokes need adjustment. However, this dissertation will examine only two: the spokes of oral reading accuracy and parental involvement. Parents possess an important tool, allowing them to adjust and balance the spokes of their children’s bicycle wheels. When used, parents may better prepare their children for a successful ride. Educators, who are ultimately responsible for student success in reading, need not work in isolation from parents who can help them reach the goal of reading proficiency for all students. Schools that form meaningful partnerships with parents are rewarded with significantly improved student reading development (Cairney & Munsie, 1995; Pena, 2000; Warren & Young, 2002). According to LeTendre (1997, p. 3), “When schools work together with families to support learning, children are inclined to succeed not only in school but throughout life as well. Three decades of research show that parental participation in schooling improves student learning.” This evidence has led to greater government interest in improving parental involvement through tax-funded reading programs.

As federal expectations in school performance have risen, educators are going beyond the traditional status quo and utilizing every resource available to instill proficient reading skills in their students. Even though many of the required spokes for reading are contained within the school, some necessary spokes to balance the wheel exist outside the school setting. Only when all spokes, within and outside the schools are adjusted correctly, will the wheels of reading spin properly. Schools are only a part of a complex system; parents play a key role in aiding their children to become proficient readers. Early intervention and success is urgent because “children who do not learn to read well in first grade usually continue to do poorly in subsequent grades” (Invernizzi, Rosemary,
Juel and Richards, 1997, p. 277). Needless to say, without all the elements of parental involvement in place, at-risk reading students will be inhibited in their progress.

No Child Left Behind

Thirty-two percent or about one-third of our nation’s fourth-graders are reading at or above a proficient level. This number has remained stagnant with basically no improvement since 1975 (USDOE (United States Department of Education), 2003, p. 4). This means that the vast majority of students (64%) have fallen off their bikes in our educational system. Additionally frustrating is the lack of results proportional to the increases in spending allocated to improve student reading performance. The expenditures are disproportionate to the results. In 1975, the federal government spent approximately three billion dollars on kindergarten through twelfth grade reading programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (USDOE, p. 4). A significant comparison of the 1975 figures to more recent expenditures is included in the 2003 statement by the USDOE (p. 3):

Today, more than $7,000 on average is spent per pupil by local, state and federal taxpayers. States and local school districts are now receiving more federal funding than ever before for all programs under No Child Left Behind: $23.7 billion, most of which will be used during the 2003-04 school year. This represents an increase of 59.8 percent from 2000 to 2003.

Such a significant increase in federal spending should be used to develop additional tools for improving reading proficiency in the United States.
In the booklet *No Child Left Behind, A Parents Guide* (which can be downloaded from the USDOE NCLB website), the first section, *The Law that Ushered in a New Era* (USDOE, 2003, p. 1) provides:

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] – the principal federal law affecting education from kindergarten through high school. In amending ESEA the new law represents a sweeping overhaul of federal efforts to support elementary and secondary education in the United States. It is built on four common-sense pillars: accountability for results; an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research; expanded parental options; and expanded local control and flexibility.

One of the main goals of NCLB is to develop students who are 100% proficient in reading in the United States by 2014 (NCLB, 2001, Title I, (b), 2, F). Beginning in 2005, every state had to administer standards-based tests to all third through eighth grade students to demonstrate progress toward the goals established in the NCLB Act (Educational Research Services, 2001). While Chapter I, the older and more established federal program, provided additional funds to help disadvantaged students, it did not have the high expectations and consequences NCLB has established under the newer Title I (USDOE, 2003). It is still a requirement, however, that “any school district with a Title I allocation above $500,000 [will] spend at least 1% of its allocation for district and school-level parental involvement activities” (LeTendre, 1997, p. 3). For example, if a district receives $630,000 in Title I funds for the 2004/2005 school year, the district must spend $6,300 on parental involvement activities during the same school year.
Former U.S. Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, addressed these higher expectations in the forward section of several USDOE booklets written for parents. In *Back to School, Moving Forward*, Paige (USDOE, 2001, forward) elaborated:

In 1965, Congress created a role for the federal government in education. Among other things, that role committed the government to helping students from disadvantaged backgrounds to receive a quality education and thus gain access to a bright future. While states and districts still have the lion’s share of responsibility for educating our children, we are working with Congress to ensure that the federal role advances the kind of reform that improves our educational system.

While the federal government is holding the states and districts more accountable for student achievement, it is also encouraging parents to become more involved. The federal government distributes free of charge parent booklets and pamphlets to facilitate their interaction with schools.

In the document *NCLB, A Parents Guide*, Paige (USDOE, 2003, forward) gives parents the following proclamation:

On January 8, 2002, when the NCLB Act became the law of the land, we began a new era of education in our nation’s history. … Accountability, local control and flexibility, new options for parents, and record funding for what works are now the cornerstones of our education system. If your child isn’t learning, you’ll know why. If your school isn’t performing, you’ll have new options and the school will receive additional help.
Schools must provide parents with annual report cards to inform them how their school is meeting the NCLB requirements. In areas where schools have not met the standard for three consecutive years, the schools must provide parents with additional services, such as tutoring.

Before the passage of NCLB in 2001, the bell shaped curve was the general rule and expectation in student assessment. Under the old system, 50% of the students were expected to score in the 50th percentile or higher. Currently, the NCLB Act stresses that 100% of the students must eventually be proficient in reading. This change in expectations has major ramifications for educators. The NCLB Act is changing the philosophy of education dramatically as educators realize the implications of not meeting the goals established in NCLB. Educators are beginning to understand that they must make improvements in student achievement or it will not be the child who is left behind. It will be the educators who are left behind without employment.

President George W. Bush emphasized, “Some say it is unfair to hold disadvantaged children to rigorous standards. I say it is discrimination to require anything less. It is the soft bigotry of low expectations” (USDOE, 2001, Introduction). President Bush’s statement reinforces the expectations set in NCLB that all students will be proficient readers, regardless of their socio-economic background or race.

Principals are in a precarious position with the NCLB federal mandate because they would be the first ones to lose their jobs if their schools have not met their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by the end of two years of corrective action (Levin, 2003, p. 20). For principals in elementary schools to meet these high goals, the schools must change their mantra from “our school is good enough” to “our school must help every child
succeed.” This paradigm shift is bringing about significant changes in the way at-risk reading students are taught. The result: “some schools in cities and towns across the nation are creating high achievement for children with a history of low performance” (USDOE, 2003, p. 5).

Implications of the No Child Left Behind Act

In this new environment, school systems must demonstrate annual progress in reading, math and science. NCLB has instituted a new term for annual progress in these three subject areas called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Each state must have its own NCLB Plan approved by the United States Department of Education. This plan includes benchmarks for meeting AYP each year so that 100 percent of students will be proficient by 2014 (USDOE, 2003). Schools that do not meet AYP after three consecutive years will suffer stiff consequences, which include notifying parents that their school is not meeting AYP, paying for students to attend other schools that are meeting AYP, providing after-school tutoring or summer school, and, eventually, even restructuring the school with a new principal and staff (USDOE, p. 9). The prospect of such bold changes is causing educators to rethink the traditional methods of teaching reading to students and the role parents play in student success.

According to Paige (USDOE, 2001, forward), it is essential for parents to be involved in their children’s education. He insists on the following criteria:

The source of a good education is found in the family. You [the parent] are your children’s first teacher. You play a critical role in ensuring that they make steady progress in school, that they go to schools that hold them to high standards, and that the schools help them meet those standards.
The National Panel for Professional Teaching Standards (1987) confirmed the importance of parental involvement, citing, “Accomplished teachers find ways to work collaboratively and creatively with parents, engaging them productively in the work of the school” (p. 4). The “NCLB Act has for the first time put in place laws intended to foster parental involvement” (Paulson, 2003, p. 1). Some researchers have found family participation to be a stronger indicator of higher student achievement than a student’s socio-economic level (Reading Today, 1999).

In a meta-analysis of 41 studies involving parental involvement programs, Mattingly and others (2002, pp. 549-550) reached the following conclusion:

The goal of improving parent participation has enjoyed bipartisan support and has been part of all major educational reform legislation. Most recently, parental involvement is one of the six targeted areas in the NCLB Act of 2001. Rhetorical support has been supplemented with financial support; schools receiving Title I funding are required to spend part of that money on parent participation programs.

With such a broad base of political support for parental involvement in this time of increased accountability, the time is ripe for educators to do additional research to find the best methods to involve parents in helping students meet the optimistic goals set forth in NCLB. Considering the disparity between current reading levels and the goal to leave no child behind, educators must depend on scientific research to accomplish the difficult challenges before them.

Importance of Parental Involvement

Parents have a significant influence on their child’s reading development. The USDOE’s A Parents Guide (2003, p.10) reiterated that, “NCLB supports parental
involvement because research overwhelmingly demonstrates the positive effect that parental involvement has on their children’s academic achievement.” When educators implement well-coordinated, research-based parental involvement programs to improve reading development, they will see the time invested to implement such a program offset by the benefits.

Several problems escalate when parents are not involved in their child’s reading. First, without valuable parental involvement, 100% student reading proficiency will be difficult to attain. Second, teachers have a limited amount of time for remediation and individualized instruction. With the correct training and support, volunteers (i.e. parents) can help meet the needs a child has for remediation and individualized instruction (Invernizzi et al., 1997). Similarly, Edwards & Warin (1999, p. 3), contended, “Parental involvement matters for any kind of school program success and for any individual child’s school achievement, especially in reading and language arts.” Enlisting parent participation in reading is a goal schools should make a priority.

According to Baker (2003, p. 90), “Children who have more opportunities to engage in literacy-relevant activities at home have more positive views about reading, engage in more leisure reading, and have higher reading achievement.” Baker also emphasized the importance of parents focusing more on the enjoyable aspects of reading than the decoding skills. However, Faires (2000, p. 197) countered, “Many schools are not fostering effective literacy partnerships that facilitate early literacy proficiency. Many of these schools are simply encouraging parents to listen to their children read at home.” While listening to children read at home is commendable and is to be encouraged by
educators, there is some concern that this may not be enough to help students become proficient readers.

While reading to a child has many benefits and is certainly better than no reading at all at home, it is unlikely to accomplish the conversion of an at-risk student to a proficient reader. For example, Faires (2000) believed teachers needed to provide parent workshops that teach them effective reading strategies to use with their children at home. With some basic instructional materials provided by schools, parents can help beginning readers blend or segment individual phonemes or reinforce other types of specific reading skills. Such assistance from home also supports the role of teachers as instructional leaders. Classroom teachers should still be the main ones in charge of reading instruction, but they should also have an increased role in guiding parents to use more rigorous reading interventions at home with their children. Merritt (1998) emphasized the need for teachers to be in charge of the detection and remediation of any difficulties students have in reading. The parents’ role is to provide additional opportunities for their children to practice reading skills and read in a meaningful manner.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The combined efforts of both parents and educators working together to accelerate student reading levels are necessary to help students to reach a proficient level in reading. Educators can maximize their efforts to accelerate reading development by choosing the most effective types of family involvement for their schools (Reading Today, 1999). For some schools, meeting AYP may be easier the first few years if they are already ahead of the benchmarks set for AYP in their state. Educators need to use NCLB as an opportunity to look closely at coordinating their curriculum and instructional
materials and strategies to make long-term plans, including developing a strong parental involvement component.

In many schools, teachers and administrators tend to place the bulk of the responsibility for the at-risk population with students and their parents (Edwards, 2001). If educators want to make improvements in at-risk reading students’ reading development, they must change their philosophy and realize that students and parents are not the problem, but are actually a significant part of the solution. Most parents want the best education for their children and will help their children be proficient readers if they are provided with the proper information, sufficient support, necessary encouragement and appropriate school materials (Warren & Young, 2002, p. 225), such as the School-Home Links Reading Kit activity pages.

The purpose for this dissertation topic was to study how the School-Home Links Reading Kit activity pages could be implemented at home to help meet the challenge of improving the oral reading accuracy levels of at-risk reading students. The main reason for selecting this topic was to implement the Home-School Links Reading Kit activity pages with an experimental group of elementary at-risk reading students, thereby documenting the effect of the kit in improving the oral reading accuracy of at-risk reading students. Additional research with the School-Home Links Reading Kit was needed to help determine which factors “either promote or hinder the effectiveness of the School-Home Links once they are implemented” (Wong and Shen, 2001, p. 20). This type of reading intervention would either confirm or negate the advantages of employing the activity pages in the School-Home Links Reading Kits. Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez and Kayzar (2002, p. 571) remarked, “[the] implementation of parental
involvement programs must be theory based and that evaluations of such programs should be rigorous, well-designed, empirical investigations.” The same researchers also stressed, “Few quality studies of parental involvement interventions exist, and given the political and academic support for these interventions, there is a pressing need to examine such programs in a more rigorous manner” (p. 572). Using research and assessments to guide decision making to improve student reading development is no longer a choice in education, but a necessity (USDOE, 2003).

Research Questions

Research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

1. Will students whose parents use the explicit activity pages in the School-Home Links Reading Kit have significantly higher levels of oral reading accuracy growth than those students who read often to their parents?

2. Will there be a significant difference in the total amount of minutes from each of the weekly times between the Activity Pages Log and the Student Reading Log, and if so, will it make a significant difference in the students’ DRA oral reading accuracy growth levels?

3. Will the different perceptions parents have about the effectiveness of the interventions between those who use the Activity Pages Log and the Student Reading Log have a significant effect on the students’ DRA level of oral reading accuracy?
Hypotheses

Research hypotheses considered in this study are as follows:

1. Students completing the School-Home Links Activity Pages with their parents will have a significantly higher level of oral reading accuracy growth among elementary at-risk reading students than those who read often to their parents.

2. There will be a significant difference in the total amount of minutes for the weekly times between the Activity Pages Log and the Student Reading Log, and it will make a significant difference in the students’ DRA oral reading accuracy growth.

3. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions parents have about the effectiveness of the interventions between those who use the Activity Pages Log and the Student Reading Log. A corollary hypothesis to these perceptions is that they will make a significant difference in the students’ DRA level of oral reading accuracy.

Null Hypotheses

1. There will not be a significant difference in the oral reading accuracy growth levels among at-risk elementary students using the activity pages in the School-Home Links Reading Kit with their parents and those who read often to their parents.

2. There will not be a significant difference in the total amount of minutes for each of the weekly times between the Activity Pages Log and the Student Reading Log, and it will not make a significant difference in the students’ DRA oral reading accuracy growth level.
3. There will not be a significant difference in the perceptions parents have about the effectiveness of the interventions between those who use the Activity Pages Logs and the Student Reading Logs, and the perceptions will not have a significant effect on the students’ level of oral reading accuracy growth.

Qualitative Research Question

1. What are the similar and different perceptions parents have in the experimental and control groups regarding parental involvement to improve students’ oral reading accuracy levels?

Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

Determining how parents can help with improving oral reading accuracy levels at home benefits students, parents and educators. Educators are also interested in strategies that could help them meet AYP. Furthermore, specific research in improving parental involvement is promoted in Title I of the NCLB Act of 2001. A subsection in Title I informs each local educational agency to pursue the following course:

Conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served under this part, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by this section … and use the findings of such evaluation to design strategies for more effective parental involvement. (NCLB Act of 2001, Title I, Section 1118 (a), 2, E)

Educators have an enormous pressure imposed upon them by NCLB to improve student reading development, and implementation of any new parental involvement program must be based on scientific research and should have the support of both
educators and parents. Using research findings to help guide decision-making is an important part of the cycle of continuous school improvement. Furthermore, success in implementing the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* activity pages and reading at home approaches will provide another stone of knowledge to a growing mountain of research and help educators better understand the intricacies of using parental involvement to improve oral reading accuracy.

Looking at parental involvement from a quantitative perspective, the assessments are a combination of both a student reading assessment as well as a survey from parents. Statistical tests were used to demonstrate if there was any significant growth in oral reading accuracy levels between the control and experimental groups.

From a qualitative perspective, interviews were conducted with parents in both the control and experimental groups during the last week of the research project. From the transcribed notes, this researcher looked for common patterns and analyzed them to find any pertinent correlations.

**Theoretical Assumptions**

1. The vast majority of parents had sufficient reading skills to follow the instructions in the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* activity pages or listen to and support their elementary age children read to them at home.
2. The graduate students tutoring the students in this study aspired to improve their students’ oral reading accuracy and reading developmental levels.
3. The Activity Page Logs and Student Reading Logs were completed with integrity by parents.
Definition of Terms

**Accelerated**: Learning at a faster pace than students who advance one grade level per school year.

**Accuracy**: Students reading 95 percent or more of the words correctly on a DRA leveled story may be reading at a level too easy for them and should be assessed on the next higher DRA level. Students reading 90 to 94 percent of the words correctly on DRA leveled story are reading on their instructional or “just right” level. Students who only read 89 percent or less of the words correctly on a DRA level story are reading a story too difficult for them and are at their frustration level. These students should go back to previous level as their instructional level.

**Activity pages**: Activity pages related to explicit reading skills selected by this researcher from the kindergarten to third grade *School-Home Links Reading Kits*. Activity pages involving reading to the classroom teacher or writing will not be given to students as part of this study on oral reading accuracy.

**At-risk reading students**: Students who are identified as not being proficient in oral reading or below grade level in oral reading based on the Developmental Reading Assessment.

**Average Yearly Progress (AYP)**: The minimal goals a school must reach under No Child Left Behind without being placed on a Needs Improvement List.

**Daily**: One time after each tutoring session, which would be four or five times a week.

**Development**: The process students go through based on DRA Continuum to grow from Emergent Readers to Early Readers, to Transitional Readers and onto Extending
Readers. For purposes of this study, just the oral reading accuracy level on the DRA will be used to determine students’ reading development.

**DRA:** Developmental Reading Assessment

**Educators:** Classroom teachers, Title I teachers, Master’s level university students, university professors, school administrators and this researcher.

**Efficacy:** The power to produce an effect (Henderson and Mapp, 2002, p. 33).

**Listen to their children read:** An active reading intervention where parents are listening to their children read and using the “Important Reading Strategies” handout (Appendix H) to help their children learn how to read difficult words and is balanced with encouraging remarks.

**Low performing:** A school that has not met its Average Yearly Progress (AYP) according to No Child Left Behind.

**Oral reading accuracy:** The percent of words in a leveled story a student can pronounce correctly orally. This does not include the rate (how fast) a student reads.

**Parent(s):** Natural/adoptive parent or legal guardian.

**Parental involvement:** Various ways parents invest time in their child’s education at home to improve their child’s reading development.

**Proficient Reader:** First graders will be considered not proficient in reading if their DRA level is below 3 by the beginning of the school year. At the beginning of second grade students are considered not proficient in reading if their DRA level is below 18. By the beginning of third grade, students are considered not proficient in reading if their DRA level is below 30. By the beginning of fourth grade, students...
are considered not proficient in reading if their DRA level below 40. A fifth grade student is considered not proficient in reading if their DRA level is below 44.

**Read often:** When a student reads independently at least 15 minutes, four or five days a week at home or away from school to a parent.

**Read independently:** Students can read a book independently when they can read 90 percent or more of the words accurately. Parents will be asked to help their children select books from the library in which they can read nine out of ten words on the first page or two of a story.

**Scientifically based research:** Evidence that an intervention works utilizing either randomized samples or closely matched comparison groups with reliable and valid assessments.

**Socio-economic status:** Students who are eligible to receive a free or reduced lunch are considered to have a low socio-economic status.

**Title I teacher:** A teacher who is paid for by federal Title I funds and provides additional reading support to help at-risk reading students become proficient readers.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Although educators must ultimately accept the responsibility for their students’ success in reading, combining school efforts with assistance available from other sources will help students reach the intended goal. According to LeTendre (1997, p. 3), “When schools work together with families to support learning, children are inclined to succeed not only in school but throughout life as well. Three decades of research show that parental participation in schooling improves student learning.” Schools that have made significant improvement in their students’ reading achievement form meaningful partnerships with parents (Cairney & Munsie, 1995; Pena, 2000; Warren & Young, 2002).

Educators have the opportunity to build positive relationships with parents as they involve, inform and communicate with parents regarding reading improvement activities to use with their children at home. Research by Academic Development Institute (ADI) (2003) showed that using the School-Home Links Reading Kit increased the number of students passing a state assessment by 7.8 percentage points in two years.

It is important for students to experience success in reading because falling behind in reading will have lasting effects and likely cause students to continue to have poor reading achievement (USDOE, 2003). The USDOE stated that reading is the key to lifelong success. A brochure called, NCLB A Parents Guide (2003, p. 15), affirmed this belief:
Reading opens the door to learning about math, history, science, literature, geography and much more. Thus, young, capable readers can succeed in these subjects … [and] develop confidence in their own abilities. On the other hand, those students who cannot read well are much more likely to drop out of school and be limited to low-paying jobs throughout their lives. Reading is undeniably critical to success in today’s society.

According to a report by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (USDOE, 2003, p. 4), “only 32% of fourth-graders can read at a proficient level and thereby demonstrate solid academic achievement”. This means that over two-thirds of fourth grade students are not able to read on grade level in the United States. Fortunately, there is hope for most of the students who cannot read at a proficient level, but intervention must begin early in a child’s education. Lyon (2003, p. 18) articulated, “By putting in place well-designed and evidence-based early identification, prevention, and intervention programs in our public schools, our data strongly show that the 20 million children today suffering from reading failure could be reduced by approximately two-thirds.” While the reduction of reading failure by two-thirds is not 100%, it is still promising. If educators reduce the percentage of students who are not proficient in reading by two-thirds, the ratio of proficient readers would be 67%, creating a dramatic improvement from the current 32% who are proficient in reading.

If schools are going to meet the challenge of 100% student reading proficiency as mandated in NCLB, it is recommended educators form partnerships with parents in these efforts, starting with children in kindergarten or first grade. Providing an early-intervention reading program to parents is a step forward in the effort to increase reading
proficiency by third grade. One method of intervention that educators can adopt is increased parental involvement through home intervention activities, such as the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* (available free from the USDOE).

There are several barriers that must be overcome if partnerships between schools and homes realize fruition. Warren and Young (2002, p. 218) listed several broad areas in which school/home barriers can be categorized:

- Changing demographics of families
- School culture and traditions
- Negative attitudes and defensive behaviors
- Limited time and resources
- Increasing demands and expectations of educators
- Lack of reading skills among parents
- Increasing population that does not speak English as a first language
- Communication style between school and parents
- Not involving parents in meaningful and purposeful ways

Additionally, some educators feel uncomfortable pursuing parental involvement because they think it could hurt their professional status to ask parents to become involved in activities at home that have traditionally been teacher responsibilities (Pena, 2000). Collaborating with parents also may create awkward situations when educators only contact parents about negative situations or when educators and parents have different values regarding parenting style and methods of parental involvement in school (Pena). Perhaps one of the most difficult obstacles to overcome is when educators are ambivalent and become indecisive about improving parental involvement. Even though
educators realize parental involvement is critical, they often become frustrated, believing there is nothing they can do to make a positive difference in the way parents help their children improve their reading skills (Pena). Educators may struggle with investing their time and energy initiating parental involvement if they are convinced no change will occur because of their efforts.

Although research studies favor parental involvement, the authors of two meta-analysis studies on parental involvement concluded that many of the individual studies had either faulty methodology, no measurable outcomes or “also included components unrelated to parental involvement, such as peer tutoring, multiyear student-teacher assignments, and alternative curricula” (Mattingly et al., 2002, p. 566).

This researcher was not able to find any negative comments about parental involvement in the development of student reading skills on the websites of the USDOE and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Therefore, it may be politically correct for the USDOE and PDE to foster parental involvement and emphasize the positive attributes of their involvement on government websites.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

The catalyst for much of the reform districts are presently undertaking across the country is a direct result of the NCLB Act signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002. Even though the act was signed into law in 2002, it is generally referred to as the NCLB Act of 2001. According to Hardy (2003, p. 14), when NCLB became law, “public education became a truly national issue.” The NCLB Act is an amended and more robust version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. Several other United States Presidents have tried to bring education to
the national forefront, but their initiatives have not been very successful. The focus of
President Clinton’s administration was The Goals 2000: Educate America Act. It was
“largely forgotten, [and] ultimately unattainable” (Hardy, p. 14). President George Bush
(not George W.) enacted an ambitious National Education Goals plan (Hardy). Even
earlier, the administration of Ronald Reagan cautioned America with A Nation at Risk
report (Hardy). When the NCLB Act was signed into law in 2002:

The federal government seized a significant amount of real control, raising the
visibility of educational issues – and the stakes of the game. Indeed, the very title
of the law left no room for failure or compromise. All children would succeed.
(Hardy, 2003, p. 14)

The NCLB Act overcame many of the inadequacies of former attempts to
improve education in schools throughout the United States of America. NCLB goes much
further than previous government education acts with severe consequences for school
personnel who remain in low-performing schools. In the past, the emphasis was on an
equal opportunity for all children to learn as well as administrative accountability.
However, NCLB “provides new funding to states in their efforts to close the achievement
gap … and [it] takes significant steps to ensure that academic results are produced”
(Donlevy, 2002, p. 257). Some of the consequences include providing students in low
performing schools with after-school or extended-year tutoring and sending students in
low performing schools to schools where NCLB goals are being met. These extra
services would be paid for out of the low performing school district’s budget (USDOE,
2003, p. 2). The consequences of not meeting AYP for three consecutive years could
result in the replacement of that school’s principal as well as reconstituting the school’s
staff. Such a situation places an educator in a position similar to that of an athletic coach who has experienced a losing season. Educators are becoming more like coaches who can be replaced any time they do not have a winning season.

This can even be a wake-up call to schools that have reputations for being quality schools. Although a school may have 80% of its students at or above a proficient reading level, 80% success indicates that 20% of the students are not proficient readers. Many in this 20% are disadvantaged and/or minority students who are in special education classes. Riley and Long (2003) compared NCLB to an onion and contended, “NCLB peels away the layer of the onion to make sure that every group of children is targeted” (p. 3).

Another facet of NCLB is that schools must generate documentation and provide parents report cards, demonstrating their school’s performance in reading, math and attendance as well as verifying the professional qualifications of the teachers (USDOE, 2003). Not only must schools report their performance as a whole, but also the report cards must include “student achievement data broken out by race, ethnicity, gender, English language proficiency, migrant status, disability status and low-income status” (USDOE, p. 2). In the past, a school could announce 90% of its students achieved reading proficiency on the state assessment in reading. Under the new plan, with 90% of the students proficient on the reading assessment, the school administration would also have to reveal the percentage of reading proficient special education students or a specific minority sub-group who were proficient on the same assessment. No longer can the subgroups be hidden in the overall group’s scores. Kucerik (2002, p. 483) contended, “Proponents of testing strongly tout the accountability that testing will provide to parents
and students, arguing that the accountability will empower parents and ensure that schools provide a quality education.”

The NCLB Act is broken down into ten different chapters, which are called titles. The first chapter, Title I, is Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged (USDOE, 2003, p. 3). According to the statement of purpose in Title I (section 1001):

The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.

Out of the $23.7 billion budget for NCLB for the 2003/2004 school year, $11.7 billion is expressly for Title I (USDOE, 2003). The NCLB, A Parents Guide (USDOE), described Title I as grants “awarded to states and local education agencies to help states and school districts improve the education of disadvantaged students” (p. 3). Presently, around half (55 percent) of public schools in the United States are able to receive funding through Title I (USDOE).

Section 1118 of Title I is devoted solely to parental involvement. Every local educational agency (LEA), or local school district, must spend at least one percent of its total Title I allotment on parental involvement (NCLB Act, 2001, 1118, (a), 3). An LEA may receive federal Title I funds only if it “implements programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents in programs … and procedures shall be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children” (NCLB Act, 1118, (a), 1).
A written parental involvement policy must be developed by each LEA with input and agreement from parents (NCLB Act, 2001, 1118, (a), 2). The written policy must include the following components and will describe how the LEA will:

- Jointly develop policy with help of parents
- Review the plan and make improvements
- Increase the school’s capacity to build parental involvement
- Coordinate with other types of federal initiatives (i.e. Head Start)
- Evaluate the policy annually
- Use the evaluation to improve academic achievement
- Involve parents in school activities

(NCLB Act, 1118, (a), 2)

Another key aspect of Section 1118 is subsection (d), which requires individual schools to:

Jointly develop with parents for all children served under this part a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state’s high standards.

Regardless of whether a school has a district administrator to help coordinate this process, each school is held responsible for developing a school-parent compact (Appendix A). If a school is not meeting the goals set in NCLB, it is the principal and staff who are replaced, not the central office staff. The concept of a school-parent compact was not the original idea of the George W. Bush administration. It first became a
federal initiative when Title I was reauthorized in 1995 (Reading Today, 1999, p. 3). The school-parent compact was based on a handbook called *A Compact for Learning* (Reading Today). Henderson, Berla and others (Reading Today, p. 3) conducted the research in this handbook, and found three main predictors of student success:

1. The students’ families create an environment that encourages student learning.
2. The students’ families express high (but not unrealistic) expectations for children’s achievement and future careers.
3. Families become involved in their children’s education in school and in their lives in the community.

The last large part of Section 1118 is subsection (e), which deals with ways to build capacity to increase parental involvement. The purpose of building capacity is to make sure parents are involved in meaningful, educational activities and to strengthen the partnerships between parents, schools and communities so that schools increase their academic achievement (1118, (e)). Building capacity is the joint responsibility of the school and the LEA. Some of the key ways to build capacity are:

- Assist parents in understanding the state’s standards
- Provide instructional materials and training for parents to use at home
- Provide educators training on how to involve parents
- Coordinate parental involvement activities with other educational programs
- Send school newsletters to parents about upcoming activities

(NCLB Act (2001), Section 1118, (e), 1 – 5)
Because of the extremely high standard (100% proficient in reading) set in NCLB, there are some who are opposed to this federal act. Hardy (2003, p. 13) explained, “Even though the No Child Left Behind Act passed congress with bipartisan support, that coalition was unraveling over money – Democrats charged not enough was provided to cover the new federal mandates – and implementation.” Thomas and Bainbridge (2002) also alleged that NCLB is unfair because educators have no control over many societal problems, which may negatively affect students’ performance, such as:

- 10.5 million children have no health insurance and therefore receive inadequate medical care
- High rate of poverty
- Poorly funded schools and special education programs
- Low language skills of children entering school
- Inadequate daycare centers which fail to prepare students to enter kindergarten

Parental Involvement

For over 30 years there has been a growing amount of research emphasizing the significance of parental involvement in schools to improve student academic achievement (Mattingly et al., 2002). Many of these studies have shown “parental involvement is correlated with higher student academic achievement, better student attendance, and more positive student and parent attitudes toward education” (Mattingly et al., p. 549). Even with these positive attributes of parental involvement, a few barriers have kept parents from getting involved. Pena (2000) explained that the most common obstacles were finding and paying for a babysitter and conflicting work schedules.
Mattingly et al. (2002) conducted a meta-analysis on parental involvement and found there was a persistent pattern with parents who decide to get involved. The patterns he found to be most consistent regarding parental involvement were:

- Decreasing amount of parental involvement as children get older
- Decreasing amount of parental involvement among parents with lower income
- Decreasing amount of parental involvement correlating to the level of higher education obtained by the parents
- Lower level of involvement from single and minority parents

He also discovered that “the most common type of intervention, included in 75.6% of all programs, focused on increasing parent support for student learning at home. Typical activities included sending packets of teaching materials home for parents to use” (p. 566). Unfortunately, only 43.9% of the programs used at home in these studies had a direct assessment that could measure the effect of the intervention.

Pena (2000) noted that most parents were willing to help their child at home, but life was too hectic and overwhelming for parents to come to workshops at school. Pena also found some parents who were willing to become involved but were not involved because they were not shown how to assist their child. Therefore, educators and students will benefit by being more explicit in explaining how parents can get involved in a variety of activities both at home and in school. Pena (p. 53) concluded, “Parents participate in activities that meet their needs. First, schools need to create a hierarchy of involvement opportunities for parents, ranging from working with their children at home to participating in school decision making.” When educators provide opportunities for
parents to get involved in a variety of different activities with various levels of commitment in their schools, everyone benefits.

In addition to the concerns that parents have about becoming involved, there are also concerns from educators. Pena (2000) listed reasons educators hesitate to encourage parental involvement:

- Efforts by schools were poorly organized
- Lack of training or poor training of parents with educators
- Little training in universities for education majors
- Increased work load with limited time for educators
- Belief that parental involvement would not make a difference
- Decisions made on past experiences instead of research
- Tension between educators and parents
- Parental involvement has been largely symbolic
- It is easier to make decisions without parental involvement

Mattingly et al. (2002), in a meta-analysis on parental involvement, found there were many studies that demonstrate a strong association in education between student success and parental involvement. An important finding from Mattingly’s meta analysis study was that “longitudinal studies show that parental involvement in education has lasting effects on children’s success in school regardless of class, race, ethnicity, gender, or age” (p. 552). Pena found parental involvement helped students become more successful in several areas:

- Academic achievement (short and long term)
- Attendance
Promotion

Attitudes and behaviors

While there is a considerable amount of research supporting parental involvement, Mattingly et al. (2002) also found deficiencies in the research regarding parental involvement. From analyzing 41 parental involvement programs Mattingly et al. (p. 571) concluded:

[The] most serious among the flaws is the fact that evaluation designs and data collection techniques are often not sufficiently rigorous to provide valid evidence of program effectiveness. Among the many threats to the validity of studies are a failure to report crucial information, a lack of a control group to account for maturation and history effects and a reliance on highly subjective indicators of effectiveness. Our analysis, therefore … [finds] a lack of conclusive evidence about the effectiveness of parental involvement programs.

School-Home Links

As discussed earlier in this chapter under the NCLB heading, every school that receives Title I funds is required to develop a school-parent compact, which delineates the responsibilities of the parent, student, teacher and principal. The School-Home Links Reading Kit section is one component of the Compact for Reading and is an example of how a school can fulfill the mandate in the NCLB Act of 2001, Title I, Section 1118 (d) regarding the “means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state’s high standards.”

Ginsburg, one of the authors of the Compact for Reading, believed one of the problems with parental involvement with students from low-income homes was these
students usually do not have the same access to quality books at home that students have from higher income families. Ginsburg suggested the *Compact for Reading* “tries to address that [problem] by helping schools and teachers develop materials to send home with parents to reinforce what children are learning in school” (Reading Today, 1999, p. 4). The largest part of the *Compact for Reading* are the *School-Home Links Reading Kits*, which provides 100 free reading activity pages per grade level for educators to copy and send home with students in kindergarten through third grade to complete with their parents. Explicit homework activity pages are in each of its kindergarten through third grade kits. A summary of the Table of Contents for Reading and Literacy Skills of the Kindergarten and First Grade School-Home Links Reading Kit is provided in Appendixes B and C. Five samples showing various reading skills from different grade levels are shown in Appendixes D – H. These kits were “first developed by elementary school teachers in Boston … [and later] refined by the USDE [USDOE] and structured around a Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities Framework for Reading” (ADI, 2003, p. 3). The kits contain a wide variety of lessons for parents to reinforce important reading skills at home with their children.

In the current study parents in the experimental group used the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* to help their children improve their reading skills while the parents in the control group listened to their children read. Students’ who read to their parents in the control group emphasized more of a literacy-based approach. Students who completed the School-Home Link activity pages with their parent in the experimental group emphasized more of an explicit instruction approach.
The *School-Home Links Reading Kit* was chosen for the experimental group in contrast to students in the control group who read independently to their parents for several reasons. Both approaches have been used successfully in previous research studies and have been shown to improve reading achievement (Academic Development Institute, 2003; Baker, 2003; Berger, 2000; Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003; Reading, Langdon, Meyer & Shelby, 2004; Padak, Rasinski & Mraz, 2002; Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole, 2000). This researcher, however, was not able to find any research comparing the efficacy of one approach over the other in improving oral reading accuracy levels. Berger (2000) recommends that parents help their children with their homework individually and that the best homework requires students to practice recently learned skills. Parents helping their children complete explicit activity pages at home can assist in the process of children practicing recently learned skills. Another reason for the selection of the *School-Home Links Reading Kits* as a reading intervention is because it may be downloaded without cost (except for printing costs) from the USDOE website. Additional research is also needed to verify whether using the School-Home Links activity pages alone produces positive results when used as a smaller component of a comprehensive parental involvement program. The primary research evaluating the effectiveness of the *Home-School Links Reading Kits* was a study completed by Solid Foundation. Redding, Langdon, Meyer and Sheley (2004, p. 4) explained,

> The Solid Foundation model included 12 components, and each school’s implementation of the components was measured. All the schools successfully implemented the 12 components to an extent that made differentiation among the schools based on the level of implementation impossible.
Research by Academic Development Institute (ADI) (2003, p. 4) showed that using the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* along with other parental involvement tools increased the number of students passing a state assessment by 7.8 percentage points in two years. However, the research completed so far using *School-Home Links Reading Kit* has not had the advantage of a stratified, randomly matched control group, which measures students in the same grade level and focuses on just the *School-Home Links Reading Kit*. Conducting a stratified (by grade level) randomly matched design study on the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* and reading often will contribute significantly to this field of study.

Baker (2003) warned that an excessive amount of emphasis on developing specific skills can be detrimental to students learning how to read because it can hurt the parent-child relationship, reduce the child’s motivation to read and make reading less enjoyable. The key word in this previous sentence is “excessive.” The School-Home Links’ activity pages are not skill and drill worksheets. Students will not have to spend excessive amount of time on highly repetitive activities (e.g. Hooked on Phonics). The students in this study are to complete the School-Home Links’ activity pages with the collaborative assistance of their parents. If a particular activity page is frustrating to a student, then the student should not complete it and the parent should move onto the next activity page.

Originally, the goal was to distribute *A Compact for Reading* workbook to every Title I school in the country with the Los Angeles Times paying for half the printing costs (Reading Today, 1999, p. 4). However, according to a phone interview this researcher had with Thompson-Hoffman (2003), when the Bush administration implemented NCLB,
the *Compact for Reading* was no longer emphasized. Instead, the philosophy and book from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, in Austin Texas, called *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement* (Henderson & Mapp, 2002) is now being recommended by the USDOE as a tool for schools and LEAs to promote an understanding of the research on parental involvement.

In a study conducted by Redding, the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* was just one of the components of a larger program called “Solid Foundation.” According to the Academic Development Institute (ADI) (2003, pp. 2 & 3), the following are the key components to Solid Foundation:

- Parent Education Facilitator (teacher or other staff member)
- Support team
  - Develop a School Community Compact
  - Refine homework policies
  - Organize parent-teacher-student conferences
- Reading School-Home Links Activity Pages
- Home visits by teachers
- Courses for parents
- Interactive reading workshops
- Family Reading Nights
- Family Resource Library

The analyses were based on 129 Solid Foundation schools. The 129 schools in the “control groups were formed by pairing each of the 129 Solid Foundation schools with a
randomly selected Illinois school not in the Solid Foundation project with the same pretest score” (ADI, 2003, p. 8). The experimental group showed a small, but significant difference in the pre and post Illinois State Assessment Test (ISAT) scores. The Solid Foundation schools had an average increase of 1.2% compared to 0.4% increase of the matched control group. The state average change on the ISAT was –0.3%. ADI (2003, p. 8) concluded:

Ninety-five percent of the pretest matched control groups showed a smaller average gain than schools in the Solid Foundation project [which] indicated that the additional gains realized by the Solid Foundation schools are likely due to the Solid Foundation project, rather than mean reversion or state-wide effects.

This means there was only a five percent likelihood the results of this study by ADI were due to chance. Therefore, there is a high degree of certainty that the Solid Foundation project had a positive effect on student reading achievement.

Another analysis that Solid Foundation conducted concerns *School-Home Links Reading Kit* (ADI, 2003, p. 7). With an average of 154 rural and urban schools throughout Illinois participating each of the three years, a total of 1,374,860 daily School-Home Links activity pages were sent home and 1,018,287, or 74%, were returned (ADI). When considering this large number, it is important to remember that each student can receive as many as 100 School-Home Links activity pages within a given school year. Additionally, the Solid Foundation study only measured the impact of implementing the entire Solid Foundation project, not just the *School-Home Links Reading Kit*. Therefore, it is not possible to quantify the exact increase in reading proficiency achieved in the Solid Foundation study by its use of the *School-Home Links Reading Kit*. 
Wong and Shen’s (2001) study, *Supplementary Report on the School-Home Links Program: Teacher Responses in the Metro East St. Louis Area* used a sample of 33 schools in the Metro East St. Louis Area. Not only did Wong and Shen use the scores from the ISAT like Redding, but they also included a parent survey and three teacher surveys. Wong and Shen (2001, p. 1) briefly reviewed the preliminary report by writing:

The School-Home Links are being readily accepted by both parents and teachers. Parents seem to think that the School-Home Links are worthwhile and in the parent survey they express positive attitudes toward the School-Home Links activities they have seen. Teachers also seem to be positively embracing the School-Home Links. From their survey responses, it seems clear that teachers have a strong desire to increase parental involvement.

While the research done by Wong and Shen in the supplementary report was more detailed than Redding’s research, it did not answer the most important question of this research project: Will emphasizing the School-Home Links activity pages significantly increase elementary students’ level of oral reading accuracy? The Wong and Shen (2001, pp. 18, 19) report was about the various factors that impacted the implementation and effectiveness of the *School-Home Links Reading Kit*. Some of the factors in their report were:

- Income of parents
- Mobility and chronic truancy of students
- Student attendance
- Student achievement
- Below level scores on the ISAT
Wong and Shen (2001, p. 20) concluded, “Our correlation analysis supports the notion that reading programs that link home to school may help to improve student achievement.” This is not a definitive answer to the question: Will using the School-Home Links Reading Kit significantly improve at-risk reading students’ reading development or accuracy? The selection of the words “may help” suggests there was a positive correlation but possibly not enough to be significant.

Explicit Instruction

The School-Home Links Reading Kit expands upon the explicit instructional approach to teaching reading. This is a drastically different approach than the whole language approach where students are taught in more implicit, incidental, indirect or embedded methods. Explicit instruction is more focused, detailed, deliberate, systematic and direct types of instruction. Explicit instruction usually provides clear and stated objectives with specific strategies or steps to accomplish the desired goal. While explicit instruction has been around since the 1960’s and is applicable to any subject area, research has grown in the last few years regarding the benefits of explicit instruction to success in reading.

Many researchers posit the percentage of students who are at-risk in reading could be dramatically reduced if students were taught how to read using an explicit instructional style (Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2001; Bursuck, Munk, Nelson & Curran, 2002; Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Hall; Heath, 2004; Snow, Burns & Griffin 1998; USDOE, 2003) The critical parts of an early reading program, which should be taught explicitly include:
• Phonemic Awareness
• Phonics
• Fluency
• Vocabulary
• Comprehension

(USDOE, 2003; Heath, 2004)

Even though research has shown that students in each ability level may benefit from explicit instruction in reading, educators may be encouraged most by the positive outcomes shown by students who are at-risk in reading (Bursuck, Munk, Nelson & Curran, 2002; Hall) At-risk reading students need to be identified early and given more explicit instruction either one to one or in small groups (Bursuck, Munk, Nelson & Curran, 2002; Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). Foorman & Torgesen (2001, p. 206) also claimed, “Instruction for children who have difficulties learning to read must be more explicit and comprehensive, more intensive, and more supportive than the instruction required by the majority of children.” Not only do at-risk reading students need more intensive and explicit instruction, but they also need to spend more time immersed in quality, explicit instruction than students who are proficient in reading (Bursuck, Munk, Nelson & Curran, 2002; Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998).

Students Reading to Parents

The control group in this study focused on students reading appropriately leveled books to their parents. One part of a reading lesson at-risk reading students often have with their Title I teacher is to apply their newly acquired reading strategies by reading orally a leveled book in a guided reading lesson. Once a guided reading book is learned,
students need additional practice reading these books independently to build fluency and other reading skills. Therefore, Title I teachers should send these guided reading books home with their students to help them become proficient readers.

To increase the amount of time students read to their parents at home, parents should be encouraged to listen to their child read for at least 15 minutes a day, four to five days a week during summer tutoring sessions or the school year. This is a demanding parental goal. However, as the urgency is growing to get all students to become proficient readers, students must spend more time reading. Setting a challenging reading goal for students has resulted in increasing the amount of time students spent reading in previous research (Baker, 2003). When students increase the amount of time spent reading, they are also more likely to increase their reading level (Cunningham and Stanovich, 2003). The amount of time spent reading per day is also an indicator of the reading percentile in which students can be ranked academically. As the reading time increases for students reading per day, so does their reading development (Cunningham and Stanovich, 2003).

It is not enough to just ask parents to read to their children or listen to them read. Parents need to be given appropriate and additional support to help them be successful in improving the reading development of their children. According to Baker (2003, p. 93), “Teachers should provide specific advice on what to read, how much to read, how long to read, how to respond to mistakes, what kind of discussions to hold with children, and how to keep the experience enjoyable.” During this research project this researcher provided this type of advice and support to parents.

In the control group the goal was for these students to spend at least 15 minutes reading to their parents after each tutoring session and enter it onto the Student Reading
Logs. A handout on Important Reading Strategies (Appendix H) also was given to parents in the control group. It is beneficial to provide parents advice on how to help their children in reading (Baker, 2003). Using the weekly reading logs helped this researcher follow up on parental involvement and collect the data needed to retain or reject the null hypotheses.

Since many students in the summer tutoring program may also have been economically disadvantaged and may not have had appropriately leveled books in their home, the students in the control group were able to borrow appropriately leveled books from the university’s lab school library. According to Baker (2003, p. 95), “Sending books home is a simple and effective strategy for enhancing motivation [to read].” When parents help their children borrow from a lending library appropriately leveled books, the parents can ensure their children are reading books at the correct oral reading level. At-risks students may be more motivated to read to their parents when they can successfully read their books (Baker, 2003). The parents were encouraged to check out leveled books in which their children could read 90 percent or more of the words correctly. If students could read all the words in a book correctly, then the level of the book was too low.

On the other hand, the level of the book was too high if students incorrectly read more than 10 percent of the words. It is important for parents to help their children select books they can read successfully so their children will enjoy reading to their parents and parents will enjoy listening to their children read. While parents were provided some support as to what to do when children made mistakes, books that were too difficult for students to read independently could create a negative learning experience. Educators can
increase their students’ impact of reading at home with their parents by making their students’ reading experiences with their parents enjoyable (Baker, 2003).

Cueing Systems in Reading

As previously mentioned, all parents in the control group received a handout on Important Reading Strategies (Appendix I). This handout contained cueing strategies parents used to help their children decode words pronounced incorrectly. This research project focused on the three types of cueing systems to help parents assist their children when they came to a word they could not read. Fisher (1995, p. 82) described these three cueing systems in the following table:

Table 1

*Cueing Systems for Parents to use with Children*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cueing System</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semantic</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Does it make sense?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic</td>
<td>Sound of the language</td>
<td>Does it sound right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphophonemic</td>
<td>Letters and sounds</td>
<td>Do the letters and sounds match what we know about the word? Does the word look right?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These three types of cueing systems were elaborated upon in the Important Reading Strategies handout given to parents in the control group. Fielding (1999, p. 292) warns that at-risk readers “often emphasize a single cueing system instead of cross-
checking one cueing system against another.” Parents were asked not to rely on any single cueing system by itself when helping their children at home with their reading.

Even though students were reading books to their parents, which were at or close to their oral reading accuracy level (based on the DRA pretest), students still needed help from their parents on a limited basis. Parents were asked to prompt their children using two or three cueing questions, with appropriate wait time before they tell their child the correct pronunciation of the word. This helped to keep reading a positive experience for both the students and parents. If students could not pronounce more than 10 percent of the words in a book at home with a parent, then the selected book was too difficult. The purpose of the control group was not for parents to teach their children how to read, but for their children to practice reading appropriately leveled books integrating the various cueing systems. The type of cueing system, which parents were being asked to use at home during this research project, were most likely familiar to students since it has often been used by educators.

**Independent Reading Approach**

When students in the control group took a leveled book home to read to their parents, they should be able to read it independently. Educators know students can read a book at an independent level when they are able to read about 95 percent of the words in the story correctly or only miss one out of every 20 words (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001). An independent oral reading accuracy level means a student rarely has difficulty reading a word. In the classroom, educators generally aim to have students read books where they are able to read 90 percent of the words correctly. When students are able to
read 90 percent of the words or miss only one out of ten words in a story, the student is reading at an instructional level (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001).

For purposes of this research project, parents were asked to help their children select books in which they could read 90 to 97 percent of the words correctly. If students chose books in which they could read 98 to 100 percent of the words accurately, then the books were too easy and students would not have enough opportunities to practice their skills. When students orally read less than 90 percent of the story accurately, then the book is considered to be at their frustration level, meaning the books are overly challenging and not as enjoyable to read to their parents. Another important aspect of students reading at or near their independent level was that it helps builds reading fluency. “If the text is more difficult, students will focus so much on word recognition that they will not have an opportunity to develop fluency” (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001, p. 27).

Students reading books independently to their parents has its roots in the whole language approach to teaching reading. Fang (2002, p. 109) explains the whole language approach was beneficial because “a literature-based approach – with its emphasis on immersion, process and the use of real literature – provides children with more holistic and relevant educational experiences, which ultimately facilitate their language and literacy development.” Several other key aspects of the whole language approach are the use of authentic literature in reading instruction, the philosophy that literacy is learned in a more natural approach similar to learning to speak, and that reading is learned best when looking at the whole picture first and then working down to the various smaller components of reading skills (Brooks-Harper and Shelton, 2003, p. 37).
Another aspect of the whole language approach, which is embedded in the control group, is that instruction is integrated into reading experiences instead of it being taught explicitly through specific skills (Jeynes and Littell, 2000, p. 23). A key part of the foundation of the whole language approach is that at-risk reading students will learn to become proficient readers because they will learn how to read best when they use their own reading style with authentic literature that is interesting, engaging and fascinating (Carbo, 2003).

Moats (1999, p. 24) stated, “The most effective programs include daily exposure to a variety of texts as well as incentives for children to read independently, and with others.” Daily monitoring by the parent and weekly monitoring by this researcher using the Student Reading Log will also provide an extra incentive for students to read to their parents. The effectiveness of parents helping their children read independently by using cueing strategies that have been successful in education will be measured in the control group.

Summary

Parental involvement in academic activities at home can have a positive influence on student reading development. While the role of the parent is important and influential, educators need to be mindful of the many other significant factors that affect reading achievement (Redding, p. 6). Henderson and Mapp (2002, p. 9) noted that parental involvement is just one of many factors associated with high-performing schools. Initially, parental involvement seems to be the ninth factor of importance in a high-performing school. A closer look reveals that parental involvement can influence all of the following factors:
1. A clear and shared focus
2. High standards and expectations for all students
3. Effective school leadership
4. High levels of collaboration and communication
5. Curriculum, instruction, and assessments aligned with state standards
6. Frequent monitoring of teaching and learning
7. Focused professional development
8. A supportive learning environment
9. High levels of parent and community involvement

In this research project, parental involvement was critical to this study’s ultimate success. Parental involvement was an essential thread woven into the fabric of the tutoring program, which was required to formulate a clear and shared vision of the importance attached to improving student reading development. Parental involvement was needed to reinforce high standards and expectations for all students to become proficient readers. Parental involvement can hold school leadership accountable to provide parents’ resources to improve reading achievement. Parental involvement can draw together more involved educators and concerned parents through collaboration and communication. Parental involvement can provide parents with a better sense of understanding the alignment of state standards with the reading curriculum, as well as their role as parents in improving reading achievement. Parental involvement includes parents monitoring their children’s reading achievement at home. Parental involvement can also improve an exchange of ideas between parents and educators regarding the most important elements required for the improvement of student reading development,
thereby prioritizing and focusing professional development. Parental involvement can assist a school in building a supportive learning environment where more children will experience reading improvement. Finally, parental involvement can result in higher levels of parent and community commitment to enhance the school’s endeavor to ensure reading competence for all students, which will facilitate educators’ efforts in creating a continuous cycle of reading improvement.

While improving parental involvement is a formidable task in schools with students who are at-risk in reading, there is enough evidence to be hopeful this can be done in a reasonable and practical manner. A possible solution to accomplishing this mission would be for educators to work closely with students and their parents coordinating the use of an Activity Pages Log or Reading Logs. These logs could lead to an increase in the reading development among elementary students who are at-risk in reading because parents would be reinforcing reading instruction at home. Emphasizing a reading partnership between parents and educators starting in elementary school is important because at-risk reading students need early reading interventions and parents need to know up front they play a vital role in helping their child learn to read. Parents also need to know their child’s school is expecting them to be an active participant in a well developed parental involvement plan, which is easy enough for them to implement successfully at home and can lead to a significant positive impact on their child’s reading development.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Based on the problem identified in Chapter I and the research cited in Chapter II, a possible solution educators could use to expand parental involvement could be to include parents to reinforce with their children explicit reading skills. In this study, two specific parental involvement activities were compared: whether using the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* activity pages helped at-risk elementary students improve their oral reading accuracy levels more than students who read often to their parents at home. Both have previously had a positive effect on student reading development.

Local school districts near a state university located in a semi-rural area in south-central Pennsylvania referred students for tutoring at the university in this study because they were considered at-risk in reading. Most of the students were referred by Title I teachers or Instructional Support Team teachers. Twenty-four graduate level university students who took a summer reading and assessment course each tutored two students individually for one hour a day for four weeks. The total possible subject size of this summer tutoring program was 48 students. The parents of these 48 students were asked to participate in this research project in a letter (Appendix J) mailed to them about 15 days before the tutoring sessions began on July 12, 2005. Included with this letter was a copy of the official Duquesne University Consent to Participate form (Appendix K) for the parents to read and sign. A self-addressed envelope was included in the packet so the parents could mail back their consent forms before the research project began on July 12. Twenty-two parents mailed in their consent forms before tutoring began, and they were
randomly selected (stratified) by grade level. The remaining parents signed their consent form the first day or second day of the tutoring sessions. These parents were alternately placed in either the experimental or control group as they turned in their Consent to Participate forms. Originally, the parents of 36 students agreed to participate in this study and signed the Consent to Participate form. However, about halfway into the tutoring, one parent with two students in the control group discontinued her participation in the research study. Only the parents of the remaining 34 students participated the entire study.

By the second day of tutoring, 18 students were randomly assigned to the experimental group and 17 students were randomly assigned to the control group for a total of 35 students. Later in the first week of tutoring the 19th student was added to the experimental group because a parent who was assigned to the experimental group on the first day, but was dropped because there was not a tutor available, was added back to the experimental group because the professor overseeing the tutoring sessions was ultimately able to find a tutor for this parent’s child. Thus the total number of students was 34 students: 19 students in the experimental group and 15 students in the control group. As could be expected the number of parents was not equivalent to the number of students because three parents had two children each participating in the interventions. Accordingly, out of 34 students there were only 31 parents participating in this study.

During the four weeks of the study the experimental group was given selected activity packets from the School-Home Links Reading Kit to complete at home with their children. The activity packets were chosen based on the students’ pretest DRA oral reading accuracy level and input from parents on how their children were doing with the
activity packets they were presently completing. The control group parents were asked to listen to their children read appropriately leveled books. These parents helped their children choose appropriately leveled reading books from the university lab school’s library. Library books were in baskets by their DRA levels to help parents find books at their child’s independent oral reading accuracy level. A selection of books was placed in baskets for each of the DRA levels to make it easier for parents to find appropriately leveled books. The librarian and her assistant were available in the library to help parents select appropriately leveled books. This researcher was at the university each morning during the times of the summer tutoring sessions to facilitate the distribution and collection of materials, collect logs, answer questions and to develop better relationships with parents.

Permission to Conduct Study

The Internal Review Board (IRB) at Duquesne University granted official approval of this research project in the spring of 2005. After obtaining approval from the IRB, permission to conduct this study was sought from parents who had children participating in the university’s summer tutoring program. By signing an official Duquesne University Consent to Participate in a Research Study form, parents launched this research project into action on July 13, 2005.

During the third week of the tutoring sessions permission was also sought from the remaining parents who were not in either of the two groups to be in a comparison group. A letter explaining the purpose of a comparison group (Appendix L), was given to them along with a Consent to Participate form (Appendix M) asking the parents to read, sign and return the consent form to this researcher. Out of the remaining 12 students,
none of their parents returned their consent forms. These are the same parents who did not return the first consent form mailed to their home asking them to participate in a parent reading intervention to help their children improve their oral reading level skills.

Participants

Participants were parents with at-risk elementary age children advancing into first through sixth grades. Forty-eight students were selected to participate in the “Shippensburg University Summer Reading-Writing Program for Elementary Students” tutoring program. Out of the possible 48 students in the tutoring program, the parents of 34 students, or 71%, agreed to participate in the study. Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage totals of the boys and girls as well as the number and percentage of students in each of the grade levels. The table shows there were a total of 19 (55.9%) students in the experimental group and 15 (44.1%) students in the control group.

Table 2

*Frequency Table for Gender, Grade and Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>64.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
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<td>41.2</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Control</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Design**

The study employed an experimental design where parents and their children were randomly selected to be in either the experimental or control group. The children of both groups had a DRA pretest before the first day of tutoring on July 12, 2005 and posttest taken the last Thursday of tutoring on August 4, 2005. University graduate students taking an educational assessments class during the summer administered both the pretest and posttest. All the parents of the 19 students in the experimental group remained throughout the study. As previously mentioned, one parent asked to be removed from this study who had two children in the control group after the second week of tutoring. Therefore, only the parents of 15 students remained in the control group the entire 19 days of the tutoring sessions.

On the first and second days of tutoring, July 12 and 13, this researcher gave the parents of the experimental group (Appendix N) and the control group (Appendix O) a
letter inside a folder to let them know what type of reading intervention they would be doing at home. The parents were advised to come to the parental involvement table in the foyer of the university’s lab school in the request letter mailed to them about two weeks before the tutoring began. Since this study’s purpose was to measure the parents’ impact on their children’s oral reading accuracy, the activity pages in the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* asking students to either read to their teacher or mainly do writing activities, were not used in this study.

An additional School-Home Links’ Details (Appendix P) handout was also discussed with parents in a brief meeting during the tutoring time on July 25. Sixteen out of 19 students’ parents came to this 10 minute meeting. This researcher met independently with another parent of two children the following day, which brought the total to 18 out of 19 parents who met to discuss the handout called School-Home Links’ Details. This handout was developed after the tutoring started to address some concerns the professor in charge of the tutoring sessions had from observations and discussion with her university students. According to the professor, several students in the experimental group became very frustrated during the tutoring sessions and did not want to do the tutoring lesson activities because they had to do activity pages at home with their parents. There were not any additional complaints reported after the parents in the experimental group met with this researcher and discussed the detailed handout.

The experimental group of parents used the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* activity page packets with their children and recorded the number of minutes spent completing the activity pages after each tutoring session on the Activity Pages Log (Appendix Q). The control group parents listened to their children read to them at home.
and recorded their daily reading time on a weekly Student Reading Log (Appendix R). Gentle reminders were given to parents if they did not return their weekly logs each Friday. After two reminders, if a parent did not return a log for a given week then the student received a zero for the total number of minutes completing the parent interventions for the week. After the tutoring sessions were finished, all the logs were turned in except for one parent who did not turn in her Activity Pages Log for the final week of the tutoring program. Therefore, out of a total of 134 logs needed from the parents for the four weeks of tutoring, 133 of them were returned and recorded.

On the third Friday of the tutoring sessions, July 29, when turning in their weekly logs, all the parents were given a Parent Survey in both the experimental (Appendix S) and control group (Appendix T). Additionally, seven parents were selected randomly to have an End of the Project Interview from both the experimental (Appendix U) and control (Appendix V) groups. These parents were interviewed on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday of the last week of the summer tutoring program. These interviews were transcribed and all the responses are included in Appendix T.

The parents in this study were highly motivated to help their children improve their oral reading accuracy levels. These parents had to fill out the paperwork to get their children registered in the summer tutoring sessions, bring them to the sessions each day, sign-up for this study and return the Activity Page Logs or Reading Logs each week. They took a great amount of initiative to be part of the summer tutoring sessions and this research study. The parents did not seem to be a threat to the internal validity of this study.
The next to last day of the four-week summer tutoring sessions, the DRA was given to all 34 of the participating elementary students again by the graduate student tutors. The amount of oral reading accuracy growth was measured by subtracting each student’s DRA pretest score from the DRA posttest score.

Based on the observations of this researcher all the graduate level tutors were professional tutors working towards their master’s degree in reading. They were all taught by the same professor to administer the DRA in a consistent manner and taught the same instructional strategies to help their students improve their oral reading accuracy levels. Each week the tutors had to turn in their lesson plans to the professor/program director and their tutoring sessions were monitored and critiqued to ensure a consistently high quality of instruction. It would not be likely that the tutors’ instruction during the sessions varied to a high degree or was a major factor in causing the amount of DRA growth to vary between the at-risk reading students. The quality of the graduate tutors did not seem like an issue affecting the internal validity of this study. They were all well trained, present and seemed to interact well with the students they were tutoring.

Variables

The independent variables in this study were composed of two groups. The first group was the experimental group of parents who used the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* with their children. The second group was parents in the control group who listened to their children read at home. The dependent variable was the growth in the oral reading accuracy levels from the DRA. The pretest was given anywhere from a week to up to eight weeks before tutoring sessions began. The DRA posttest was given to all students the next to last day of the tutoring program on Thursday, August 4. Since the students
were selected randomly to be in the two groups it should minimize any affect the dates
the pretests were administered on the overall outcome of the DRA growth.

Instrumentation

As mentioned previously, the primary dependent variable was the oral reading
accuracy growth levels from the Developmental Reading Assessment administered by
university graduate students taking a summer school reading assessment course. A
student needed an oral reading accuracy level of 90 percent or higher to be able to take
the next higher-level assessment of the DRA. The oral reading accuracy growth was
measured by subtracting the DRA pretest oral reading accuracy level from the DRA
posttest oral reading accuracy level. The number of words a student pronounced
incorrectly in a DRA story determined the oral reading accuracy level. When students
mispronounced a word at first, but then went back and said it correctly, then the word
was not counted as a mistake. The fluency (rate at which students read a story) and
comprehension levels were also not part of the oral reading accuracy levels. The DRA
gave the number of pronunciation mistakes a student could make on each story to
determine the students’ independent oral reading accuracy level. For example, in a lower
level short story that only had 53 words in it a student could miss up to five words in the
entire story and have an oral reading accuracy level of 91%. Since 91% is at or above
90%, then the student would take the next higher level DRA.

Developmental Reading Assessment

According to Weber (2000, p. 1), in a study he undertook to validate the DRA:
The DRA is an individually administered diagnostic instrument that is designed to
determine the extent to which a young child is progressing as a reader. … The
results from an administration of the DRA are used to identify the student’s independent oral reading accuracy level.

A test-retest reliability study for the DRA was conducted with 68 first to third grade teachers and over 300 of their students (Weber, 2000). An analysis of the results of the DRA scores “indicates that the obtained correlation coefficients ranged from +.92 to +.99. All were statistically significant. … These correlation coefficients suggest that the English version of the DRA is a reliable instrument” (Weber, 2000, p. 4). With correlation coefficients this high, the DRA is considered a very reliable instrument in consistently measuring students’ independent oral reading accuracy level. Since the directions, texts and method for scoring are the same for each teacher giving the accuracy portion of the DRA, the inter-rater reliability rate of 80 percent is also high between different teachers giving this assessment (Pearson Learning Group, 2003).

Another important aspect of an appropriate assessment is its validity. In order to demonstrate the validity of the DRA, scores of over 300 students in four elementary schools were correlated with the same students’ reading comprehension scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Weber, 2000, p. 5). In Weber’s validation study:

Data were analyzed using the Spearman rank-order correlation technique. … examination of the results … indicates that the obtained correlation coefficients ranged from +.54 to +.83, and all were statistically significant. These results indicate that performance on the …DRA is predictive of performance on the reading comprehension section of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills suggesting a moderate level of criterion validity.
Therefore, the DRA was a valid assessment for measuring students’ oral reading accuracy levels. For example, if the DRA indicated a student was reading at level 20, then educators can be confident the student was reading at the corresponding grade level. The DRA also had the benefit of determining both an independent and instructional oral reading accuracy level at a fraction of the cost and time necessary for the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. For more information, Appendix W explains the general reading abilities students need to have to read the various levels of the DRA stories.

Procedures

Around July 27, 2005 parents were mailed a letter requesting them to participate in this study as well as the Consent to Participate form with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. This researcher gave the Program Director of the tutoring sessions the letters, consent forms and self-addressed, stamped envelopes inside larger, stamped envelopes for her to address and mail to all the parents. This researcher was in the foyer of the university’s lab school each day of the summer tutoring sessions to assist parents. A copy of the proposal was available to any parent who wanted more details about the project. Parents who were willing to be involved in the extra parental involvement reading interventions were asked to sign and return the Consent to Participate form to this researcher by the first day of the tutoring sessions on July 12, but it was still acceptable for several additional parents to sign the Consent to Participate form the second day of the tutoring sessions.

This researcher copied enough School-Home Links Reading Kit packets for the 19 at-risk reading students in the experimental group during the four weeks of this study. Copies were also made of the Student Reading Logs, School-Home Links Logs and other
necessary forms. The university lab school’s library was open each morning during the tutoring sessions so parents in the control group could go with their children to the library to select books for their children to read to them at home.

On the third Friday of tutoring, July 29, a Parent Survey was given to all parents in the experimental and the control groups when they returned their weekly log. The Parent Surveys were all returned by Thursday, August 4, of the following week and each of the eight answers was recorded on *Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences* (SPSS 11.0, 2001). In addition, the amount of DRA oral reading accuracy growth, the students’ gender, group (experimental or control), grade level and total amount of time spent on the intervention strategies were also entered into SPSS. This information provided additional data to better understand the effects parent perceptions had on their children’s oral reading accuracy.

In addition to the quantitative aspect of this research, qualitative data was also gathered to help balance out this research project. The End of Project Interviews for both the experimental and control groups occurred during the first three days of the last week of the summer tutoring sessions, August 1 - 3. As previously mentioned, seven parents from both the experimental and control group were randomly selected to participate in these interviews. Cassette recordings were made during the parent interviews from which transcribed notes were made (Appendix X). The notes were analyzed for similarities and differences in responses to help answer the following qualitative research question in this proposal: “What are the different and similar perceptions of parents in the experimental and control group about this research project?” The chair of this researcher’s dissertation
committee served as the auditor of the qualitative analysis. The auditor simultaneously evaluated the parent interview transcripts to verify the results.

After all Activity Page Logs, Student Reading Logs, and End of Project Surveys were returned and the final DRA was completed on August 4, this data was entered into and analyzed by SPSS. It was this researcher’s responsibility to enter the necessary data into SPSS and maintain its confidentiality. This researcher continued to meet with his dissertation committee after the data had been analyzed, to review the findings of this study and to act upon their recommendations. Additional recommendations by this researcher were also made to educators based on the findings in this research to help them increase parental involvement to improve oral reading accuracy levels.

Data Analyses

Descriptive Statistics were run using SPSS in order to organize, summarize and better understand the data collected in this study. In order to test the significance (p < .05) of the null hypothesis, an independent samples $t$ test was used to determine “whether there [was] a difference between two separate groups on a particular dependent variable” (George & Mallery, 2001, p. 280), in this study’s experimental and control groups. An independent samples $t$ test was used because it is the most effective way to demonstrate the control and experimental groups’ DRA mean growth score and whether or not the interventions had a significant effect. In this study the goal was to reject the null hypothesis that there was not a significant difference in the oral reading accuracy gains based on the DRA scores between students who use School-Home Links Reading Kit and parents who listen to their child read at home. Using the Independent Samples $t$-test the analysis was conducted with the dependent variable (DRA growth) and the independent
variables (gender, grade level, group type and total amount of time completing interventions).

Since a DRA pretest was given to determine the oral reading accuracy level of all students by the beginning of the tutoring sessions, it could be determined whether a significant difference in the mean score, as measured by levels of the DRA, existed between the control and experimental groups. This was important because the control group coincidentally had a higher DRA mean score at the beginning of the tutoring sessions and it could have unjustly caused the null hypothesis to be rejected or accepted.

Therefore, with these reports and analyses this researcher was able to analyze and prioritize the various factors to render the following conclusions:

1. Did students whose parents used the explicit activity pages in the School-Home Links Reading Kit have a significantly higher level of oral reading accuracy growth than those students who read often to their parents?

2. Was there a significant difference in the total amount of minutes from each of the total weekly times between the Activity Pages Log and the Student Reading Log, and if so, did it make a significant difference in the students’ DRA oral reading accuracy growth level?

3. Did the different perceptions parents have about the effectiveness of the interventions between those who use the Activity Pages Log and the Student Reading Log have a significant effect on the students’ level of oral reading accuracy?
4. What were the similar and different perceptions parents had in the experimental and control groups regarding parental involvement to improve oral reading accuracy?

The examples above are the research questions answered when comparing the independent variables using independent samples t-tests, Pearson Correlation, and the qualitative results from parent interviews.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

This researcher was able to collect the needed data during the 19 days of the summer tutoring sessions in order to report the results in this chapter. In this study, two specific parental involvement activities were compared in which both have previously had a positive effect on student reading development. The foremost objective in the selection of this topic was to research whether using the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* activity pages helped at-risk elementary students improve their DRA oral reading accuracy levels more than students who read often to their parents. The results of the research questions (Appendix Y) are given in the remaining parts of this chapter.

Results

*Oral Reading Accuracy Growth*

Table 3 shows the amount of DRA growth between the pretest and the posttest. Although the control group’s pretest DRA mean score was 4.6 points higher than the experimental group, it was not considered significant ($p = .178$). Part of the reason the control group had a higher mean score was because the two fifth graders and one sixth grader were placed in the control group because the School-Home Links Activity Pages do not extend beyond the third grade level. The final difference in the pretest and posttest scores showed that the control group’s score was 3.1 points higher, which was not considered significant ($p = .128$).
Table 3

*DRA Growth Statistics for t-Test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Mean</th>
<th>Posttest Mean</th>
<th>Difference in Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>t</em> value</td>
<td>1.377</td>
<td>2.143</td>
<td>1.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Gender and Grade Level Analysis*

Table 4 shows the statistics for gender and grade level of the students whose parents participated in this research project. In both groups there were more boys in the group than girls. There was not a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of the gender and grade level of the students.

Table 4

*Gender and Grade Level Statistics for t-Test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th><em>t</em></th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>.516</td>
<td>1.224</td>
<td>.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>.452</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.457</td>
<td>1.266</td>
<td>.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.831</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Minutes Entered on Weekly Logs

Table 5 shows the statistics for the total (mean average) and weekly number of minutes entered on the logs for both intervention groups. The control group spent an average of only 31 more total minutes completing their reading intervention than the experimental group. The difference was not considered significant ($p = .453$).

Table 5

Minutes on Log Statistics for t-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weekly Mean</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>101.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>139.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>$t$ value</td>
<td>.759</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>.453</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlations of Variables

Table 6 shows the correlations between gender, grade level, total time on the logs and DRA growth. The Pearson Correlations are different from the independent samples t-test because they do not separate the total time spent on the logs or DRA growth scores according to the experimental or control groups. Instead, all the total times on logs or the DRA growth present a single range of scores from the lowest to the highest. Out of the 6 correlations, only two of them were at a significant level, $p < .05$. The two variables with
a significant correlation were total time on logs and DRA growth. These two variables had a Pearson Correlation of .355 and a level of significance (2-tailed) of .039.

Table 6

*Correlational Statistics for Pearson Correlation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>DRAgrowth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.592</td>
<td>.289</td>
<td>.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade</strong></td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.592</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.953</td>
<td>.607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>-.011</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.289</td>
<td>.953</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DRAgrowth</strong></td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>-.091</td>
<td>.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.531</td>
<td>.607</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Parent Survey Results*

Table 7 indicates the results of the parent survey, which was given to parents the third Friday of the tutoring sessions. Copies of the parent surveys can be found in Appendix P for the experimental group and Appendix Q for the control group. All 34 parent surveys were returned. It was only necessary to ask a couple of parents for an answer to one specific question they inadvertently overlooked. There were no significant differences in the mean scores for questions 1, 3, 4 or 5. A significant difference was apparent in the mean scores for questions 2, 6, 7 and 8. In the four questions with significant differences, all favored the control group, except question seven.
### Parent Survey Statistics for t-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Control</td>
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<td>.21</td>
<td>.545</td>
<td>.590</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>2.410</td>
<td>.022</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>-.38</td>
<td>-1.283</td>
<td>.209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Control</td>
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<td>.05</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>.903</td>
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<td>Experimental</td>
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<td>.022</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Control</td>
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<td>-2.975</td>
<td>.006</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>2.044</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative Research Findings

**Oral Reading Accuracy Growth**

The intention of the first research question was to determine if the students using the School-Home Links Activity Pages would have a significantly higher level of oral reading accuracy growth than those students who read often to their parents. The first research question was not based on the pretest or posttest DRA levels, but on whether the
amount of growth by the experimental group (activity pages) was significantly higher than the control group (reading). Based on the results from the independent \( t \)-test in table 2, the experimental group did not have a significantly higher amount of DRA growth. In fact, the opposite was almost true. The control group was very close to having a significantly higher DRA growth than the experimental group. Although the control group DRA growth rate was almost twice the rate of the experimental group (6.3 versus 3.2), the \( p \) value was .128, close to but not below the .05 threshold needed to be considered significant. Therefore, question one of the null hypothesis was retained. The difference in the amount of DRA growth between the two groups was not considered statistically significant and it could have been due to sampling variability. It would be risky to assume the difference in the DRA growth would occur in a general population.

*Minutes Entered on Weekly Logs*

The second research question was to determine whether there was a significant difference in the total number of minutes spent on the two types of intervention, and if so, did the difference in the minutes have a positive effect on the amount of DRA growth. The \( p \) value for the total amount of minutes spent on the weekly logs was .453, which means the differences in the total time spent on the logs did not reflect a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. Therefore, the second question on the null hypothesis was also retained. The independent samples \( t \)-test proved there was not a significant difference in the total amount of minutes between those who did the Activity Pages Log and the Student Reading Log and it did not make a significant difference in the students’ DRA oral reading accuracy growth levels.
A Pearson Correlation analysis demonstrated another aspect of the relationship between the total time spent on logs and DRA growth. Table 5 indicates a positive correlation of .355 between total time on logs and DRA growth. These two variables’ level of significance was .039, which was less than the threshold of \( p < .05 \), a significant finding in this study because it draws attention to an important factor for DRA growth; the total amount of time parents spent on the interventions, regardless of reading versus activity pages. The correlation between the total time spent on the logs and DRA growth indicates that overall, the more minutes parents spent on the intervention the higher level of DRA growth for children. The opposite was also true; the fewer minutes recorded on the logs, the smaller the increase in their children’s DRA growth.

**Parental Perceptions from Surveys**

The third and last research question asked, “Will the different perceptions parents have about the effectiveness of the interventions between those who used the Activity Pages Log and the Student Reading Log have a significant effect on the students’ level of oral reading accuracy?” The parent surveys dealt with the perceptions parents had about the specific intervention each used with their children. The questions were not based on factual standardized evidence, but were based on the way parents perceived or felt about how well their child was doing. Four out of the eight questions indicated a significant difference between the means of the experimental and control group based on an independent samples \( t \) test run on SPSS.

Only on one survey question did the significant difference favor the experimental group. This question had the largest mean difference (-1.23) of any parent survey question and it was also at the most significant level with the value of \( p = .006 \). This
indicated that parents in the experimental group were more likely to read or listen to their children read compared to the parents in the control group who also completed some other type of workbook activity pages with their children. While this question was statistically significant, it did not indicate that the parents preferred using the activity pages more than listening to their children read. It did imply that parents were more naturally inclined to read with their children than do activity pages with them.

Three out of the four questions on the parent surveys had significant differences between the means and favored the control group. One of these significant differences indicated the children’s level of anticipation in completing the activity pages or reading to their parents. The level of significance on this was \( p = .022 \), which was below the threshold score of \( p = .05 \). Neither group of parents were of the opinion that their children were strongly in favor of doing additional interventions at home with their parents, but the control group parents gave a more favorable response. It was an important finding that the parents in the control group thought their children looked forward to reading to them at home more than the experimental group parents thought their children had no or little interest in doing the activity pages with them at home.

Another area that had a significant mean difference favoring the control group was in how parents thought they gained a better understanding on how their children learned to read. This was a significant finding \( (p = .022) \) because it helps us understand the parents’ perceptions concerning these two interventions. A significant difference in scores points out that parents in the control group thought they learned more about how children learn to read than the experimental group parents learned.
The third significant area favoring the control group was how much the parents would recommend their reading intervention to a friend who had a child struggling with reading. The parents in both of the groups had an overall favorable response. This finding is significant because a very high percentage of the parents in the control group strongly agreed, or would highly recommend the approach of listening to their children read to their friends. Even though the parents in the experimental group had an overall favorable score, a significantly higher number of control group parents gave this question a more favorable response.

The third research question in this study had two parts. The important areas discussed above showed significant differences in parent perceptions about the effectiveness of the activity page intervention versus the students reading to their parents. The second part of the third research question linked any significant differences in perceptions parents had with the interventions to having a significant difference in the students’ level of oral reading accuracy. As mentioned in the first part of the findings of this chapter, the first null hypothesis was retained because of the insignificant difference in the oral reading accuracy growth between the experimental and control groups based on an independent samples t test. Also, a 2-tailed, Pearson Correlation was run between each of the eight parent survey questions in both the experimental and control groups with the DRA growth amount and there were not any significant correlations. Therefore, even though there were some significant differences in the parents’ perceptions concerning the effectiveness of the two interventions, the third null hypothesis was also retained because the differences did not have a major impact on the students’ level of DRA oral reading accuracy growth.
Qualitative Parent Interview Results

The responses to the parent interviews, which were done during the last week of the tutoring sessions, can be found in their entirety in Appendix T. Seven parents were interviewed in both the experimental and control groups. Table 8 shows the eight parent interview questions in order and after each of them the similarities and differences between the experimental and control groups are reported. The similarities go across the entire width of the page, while the differences are split into two columns. School-Home Links differences are in the left column with the differences of the parents listening to their children read in the right column.

Table 8

Comparing and Contrasting Qualitative Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School-Home Links</th>
<th>Listening to Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do you think the School-Home Links Activity Pages/listening to your child read, helped your child regarding reading improvement?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Made a positive difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helped children become more independent and confident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One parent in each group who did not like doing the reading intervention because their child viewed it as homework.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Also helped their writing</td>
<td>• Good way to practice reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Got children into a routine of doing schoolwork</td>
<td>• Helped children sound out their words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helped children understand sentence structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What did you think about filling out the Activity Page/Student Reading Log forms?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fine or Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A good way to keep track of what their child was completing each day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There were not any parents who thought it was too difficult or time consuming to complete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not a big deal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One parent said it did not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
benefit her or her child and she already had an effective way of getting homework completed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. How did your child respond to you helping them with the activity pages/listening to them read independently?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• There were several neutral responses in each group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There were not any positive responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Two parents responded negatively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Three parents stayed with their children while they were doing the activity pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Three parents helped as needed but the children usually did the activity pages by themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One parent was frustrated that their child did not want any help at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fine or good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Very positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most parents thought their children enjoyed reading to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Children looked forward to reading to their parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enthusiastic, excited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All the parents stayed with their children almost all of the time while they were listening to them read</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. What did your child say about doing the activity pages together/listening to them read?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• One parent in each group thought the activities/reading was fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parents used a variety of strategies to motivate their children to complete the activity pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most of the students wanted to discuss the stories with the parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Two parents said their children got excited about reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Very positive interactions between students and parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. What types of changes did you experience in how you view reading instruction as you worked through the activity pages with your child/listened to your child read?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Most parents in both groups thought doing the reading interventions either helped them minimally or not at all in regards to how they view reading instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Only two or three parents in each group expressed a positive change in their thinking concerning reading instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One parent in each group learned to give more positive feedback/reinforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One parent realized it was the simple things that made a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Two parents began using specific strategies to help their children pronounce difficult words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. What type of frustrations did you experience as you worked through these activity pages together with your child/listened to your child read?

- Great amount of frustration with five parents in either finding the time to do the activity pages or getting started
- Five of the students lacked motivation to do the activity pages
- No frustration mentioned in finding the time to read
- Main frustration for four parents was not knowing how to help their children pronounce difficult words without them becoming upset

7. What did you like best about doing these activity pages together with your child/listening to your child read?

- All the parents responded positively
- Parents enjoyed helping their children with the reading interventions
- Parents enjoyed seeing their children succeed and experience a sense of accomplishment
- Easy to implement
- Well organized
- Parent liked that her child could choose which page to complete
- Two parents liked being actively involved in improving their child’s reading ability
- No comments about children having fun or being enthusiastic to do activity pages
- The activity pages gave parents ideas about how they could help their children
- Children making progress pronouncing words correctly
- Enthusiasm of students about reading
- Fun and enjoyable time reading together
- Children wanting to read to a parent

8. What additional comments would you like to make?

- Interventions were a positive and helpful experience
- Positive experiences with university tutors
- Positive experiences with the overall tutoring program
- Most of the parents had no additional comments

- Next time parents should do both the activity pages and listen to their children read
- One mother wished someone could bribe her son into doing the activity pages
Qualitative Research Findings

Parent Perceptions on the Effectiveness of the Interventions

Parent comments were primarily positive about both methods, regarding the improvement of their children’s oral reading accuracy levels. The parents in the experimental group mentioned more explicit ways the activity pages were helping their children with reading. A mother commented, “I think it pointed things out to her in sentences and different things the way words are structured in sentences…” A father remarked, “It kind of got them a head start for school and kind of got them into a structure and got them interested in reading more.” Parents in the control group remarked most about their children’s responses to the reading strategies being used for pronouncing difficult words. A mother said, “One, it builds his confidence up and two, if I’m able to read with him and he struggles on a word then I can tell him or help him sound that word out.” Another mother responded, “It has. I think he’s pronouncing words a lot better. Sometimes I just want to tell him the word, but then I have him pronounce it out.”

The parent responses did not show any major areas of differences favoring one group over the other. Answers from both sets of parents were well balanced; neither the experimental group parents nor the control group parents expressed areas of concern. A key finding was that both groups of parents recognized that the intervention methods were effective and made a positive difference with their children.

Time Entered on Weekly Logs

Excluding one parent, there was a unanimous positive response to recording information in the weekly log forms. One father in the experimental group explained, “I think it was kind of beneficial because it gave us a goal for the kids to accomplish so they
had a goal to meet at the end of the week,” while a mother in the control group provided another positive insight saying, “I think that’s a good idea because it forces you more to make sure you get that quality time with him, one on one.”

There were no major differences in the way parents from both groups responded. While there was no key differences in the weekly log results, there was a key finding in the similarities between the two groups. With the exception of only one of the 14 parents, there was either a neutral or positive response to using the weekly log forms, establishing a significant point: parents found the weekly log forms easy to keep and beneficial. This record also allowed them to see the amount of time they devoted to the intervention.

*Children’s Responses to Parental Assistance*

There were not any major similarities in the parent responses regarding the children’s reaction to the parent’s assistance with either of the interventions. Several key differences were apparent in the way parents responded to this question between the experimental and control groups.

The first difference was not a direct response to the question, but a pattern developed with the parent responses in the experimental group with the parents not actually staying with their children as the activity pages were worked. These parents were available if their children needed help and would check the activity pages for accuracy when completed. One mother said, “She does them on her own and if she needs help she’ll come to me, but then I will go over them with her afterwards just to make sure.” A father revealed, “Usually, they go off by themselves and if they have a problem they’ll ask.”
Another difference in the responses between the two groups was the either neutral or even a couple of times the negative responses parents gave in the experimental group when asked how their children responded to their help with the intervention. One mother pointed out, “He doesn’t want me to help him with them at all.” A mother of a second grade boy believed, “He just fought me every step of the way. He didn’t want to do anything. That was my struggle with him. But, once we got into it, he enjoyed the activities. They weren’t too hard or too easy.” Another mother gave a more neutral response by emphasizing, “As long as I kept it a routine; we have baths, we do this. So it has had to be a regular routine.”

The control group parent responses ranged from neutral to very positive responses. There was only one parent who had some difficulties for only a few days, but most of the days were fine. One mother elaborated, “Very, very positive. I believe that since he’s started this, and not so much the increase in the levels, but he’s very proud of himself.” The mother of a first grade boy exclaimed, “He was excited. He wants me to listen to him read more.”

In addition, all the parents interviewed in the control group almost always did the reading intervention with their child. One mother described,

She actually waits for me. Every once in a while she’ll say, “I’ll just sit over her and do my reading.” Most of the time she wants to read with me; until I come and sit down and I can listen to her. So, I guess it does give them some one on one attention and they like books.

It was a key finding to discover that in the experimental group there were not any positive responses to how children responded to parents helping them with the activity
pages. It was also a key finding that only three out of seven parents stayed with their children while they were doing the activity pages. Parents were asked to do these activity pages with their children, but only three out of the seven interviewed actually did the activity pages with their children. With the control group it was a key finding that overall parents reported mainly positive responses from their children when they listened to them read. In addition it was a key finding that parents remained with their children while they were reading to them and the children looked forward to reading to their parents.

*Parental Interactions with Children*

The most significant finding in this research study was the positive impact the parent/child interactions seemed to have on the improvement of oral reading accuracy levels in students. The parents in the control group reported more positive interactions, enthusiasm and enjoyment with their children about the stories they were reading than the parents in the experimental group had with their children completing the activity pages. One mother mentioned, “Sometimes before we got started reading or we read, he would flip to the next page just to see what was coming up tomorrow. “This is about such and such.” So he got a little excited about reading the next day.” Another mother explained, “Yeah, about the story. He has exclamations; he has thoughts about what people are doing in the story, whether they’re smart or (pause) dumb.”

Parents interacted very differently with their children between the two groups. Most of the parents interviewed in the experimental group elaborated more about what they said to their children than what the children said to them. These parents described some strategies they used when their children got frustrated or did not want to do the activity pages. One mother stressed, “Then he’ll say, “Well, I can’t do it,” when he gets
to a harder page. We don’t say can’t; say I’ll try. If you can’t do it, then, you’ll try harder.” Another mother reflected,

I noticed that a little bit of praise goes a long way. Once I can get him into it and get him settled and said, “I can’t believe you knew that. That was so good.” Then it was like, “OK, what’s the next one?” You know, but then if it got to something that was too hard then he would get bored again and like, “I’m done.” That’s how he responds to me so I know, go to the next page and give him something he would really be able to do and then he’d have a good attitude again, but it’d take some time.

There were major differences in the way parents responded to what the children said to their parents about doing the reading interventions together. It was a key finding to discover the parents in the experimental group spent a large amount of time trying to motivate or talk their children into starting or completing the School-Home Links Activity Pages. Parents in the control group did not have to spend time talking their children into reading to them. They were able to focus on discussing and enjoying the story together along with other types of positive interactions.

**Parental Growth in Reading Instruction**

Most of the parents in both groups did not think the reading interventions helped them experience any changes personally in how they viewed reading instruction. Two mothers in the experimental group expressed a positive change they had made as a result of using the activity page packets. The first mother indicated, “A little bit. I think one of the biggest things is not pointing out every fault...Positive reinforcement is always important.” The second mother remarked,
I didn’t realize it was the simple things that make a difference. You know we always think, “I have to do this elaborate, whatever, study with my child to help him.” These are basic things I could do. So I realized it doesn’t take a lot and 15 minutes can make a difference.

One mother explained what she learned, “I have encouraged him more and given him more positive feedback. Probably showed more interest with one on one reading and sitting down with him.” Another mother described,

I noticed changes based on the paper you guys gave me. The comments you can make; I try to use them a lot more. Before it was more like a sigh and I would lose patience. I’ve started using strategies. They’ve helped.

Another mother who expressed a positive change she had experienced responded, “Yeah, I let him pronounce the words more than me pronounce the words. I notice I do that a lot cause I just try to tell him the words so he’ll just read the story.”

There was not any major differences in the responses parents in the two groups gave in regards to the types of changes they experienced in how they viewed reading instruction. Most of the parents in both groups thought that doing the interventions with their children either helped them (the parent) minimally or not at all. The only key finding from this question was that parents felt fairly confident in helping their children at home with the reading interventions. There were not any parents who expressed they thought the reading interventions were too difficult for parents to implement with their children.
Parental Frustrations with Implementing the Interventions

There were not any major similarities between the parents in the experimental and control groups. The parents in the experimental group mainly expressed frustration in getting their children to do the activity pages. One mother responded, “No, just getting him to do them. I usually just tried to get one in every couple of hours. Well, we usually did like five a day.” Another mother reiterated, “Mostly the infringement on his time I think was real frustrating. He did not want to do it with me at all.” A father reinforced, “Just finding the time sometimes is the only thing.” A mother commented, “Getting down to it. He’s like, “I’m done for the day.””

The parents in the control group did not express any frustrations about finding time to listen to their child read, but four of the seven parents interviewed claimed to have frustrations with what to do when their children could not pronounce a word in a story. A mother remarked,

Sometimes he gets frustrated and don’t want to do it and yells at me. Then if he don’t get it after two seconds or so, then I will tell him the word. Then I tell him to say it or go back and read the sentence, which most the time he does it, but he gets a spell where, well, he don’t want to cooperate. He’s just a boy.

One mother expressed, “The frustration I think is she’s not always doing it properly and I try to weigh when I jump in and when I don’t jump in and then if I do jump in she gets a little frustrated.” A mother remarked,

Yes, because sometimes (son’s name) will look at the first letter, instead of looking at the whole word. Sometimes he might just focus on the pictures searching for something in the pictures and it’s not there and my frustrations lie
with him in that area because I want him to look at the word. I know that pictures can help; but for him to look at the word and try it before either giving up or guessing away at it.

The last frustration expressed by a parent in the control group was by a mother of a first grade boy. She acknowledged,

Yeah, he gets kind of like, I don’t know how to explain it; he gets frustrated when he starts missing a few words and stuff and he’s like, “I just don’t want to read this anymore.” And I don’t know how to get him back on track there. When he comes to that word it just seems he misses that word and then I try to get him to say it five or ten times so he’ll remember it. I didn’t know what to do. It seems like we get stuck on certain words and it’s like how do you get him to learn those?

There was a great amount of differences in the types of frustrations parents experienced between the experimental and control group. It was a key finding that the parents in the experimental group’s greatest frustration were finding the time to do the activity pages or getting started on them. It was also important that parents had to spend more time motivating their children to complete the activity pages. It was an important finding that parents in the control group did not mention having frustrations on finding time to listen to their child read. It was a key finding that the major frustration parents had in the control group was how to help their children pronounce difficult words without their children becoming upset.

Parents’ Favorite Aspects of the Interventions

All the parents had positive remarks when asked what they liked best about the reading intervention they were doing with their children. The experimental group parents
presented a greater variety of effective responses as to what they liked about working with the activities than the control group parents. A key finding, which supports another important finding, was that there were two parents in the control group who said their children were enthusiastic about reading to them and one parent mentioned it was fun to read together. However, in the experimental group there was no mention of parents having fun or children being enthusiastic about doing the activity pages together.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Many schools, that have made significant improvements in their students’ reading achievement form meaningful partnerships with parents (Cairney & Munsie, 1995; Pena, 2000; Warren & Young, 2002). According to LeTendre (1997, p. 3), “When schools work together with families to support learning, children are inclined to succeed not only in school but throughout life as well. Three decades of research show that parental participation in schooling improves student learning.”

The purpose for this dissertation project was to study how the School-Home Links Reading Kit activity pages could be implemented to help meet the challenge of improving the oral reading accuracy levels of at-risk reading students. The selection of this topic encompassed the implementation of a comparison of two groups of at-risk elementary students: one experimental group using the Home-School Links Reading Kit activity pages and a control group of students reading to their parents, thereby documenting the effect of the activity pages in improving the oral reading accuracy levels of at-risk students. Additional research with the School-Home Links Reading Kit was also needed to help determine which factors “either promote or hinder the effectiveness of the School-Home Links once they are implemented” (Wong and Shen, 2001, p. 20). This research study was conducted to confirm or negate the advantages of employing the activity pages in the School-Home Links Reading Kits.
Statement of the Problem

It is vital for students to experience success in reading because poor reading skills have lasting effects and may cause students to continue to have poor reading achievement (USDOE, 2003). The USDOE stated that reading is the key to life-long success. However, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), “Only 32 percent of the nation’s fourth-graders performed at or above the proficient achievement level [in reading]… And, while scores for the highest-performing students have improved over time, those of America’s lowest-performing students have declined” (United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2003, p. 15).

As federal expectations in school performance rise under NCLB, educators must go beyond the traditional status quo, utilizing every effective resource available to instill proficient reading skills in their students. Even though many of the required components for reading are comprised within the school, educators are realizing components exist outside the school setting, which help students become proficient readers. Schools are only a part of a complex system, and parents play a key role in aiding their children to achieve reading proficiency. Early intervention is urgent because “children who do not learn to read well in first grade usually continue to do poorly in subsequent grades” (Invernizzi, Rosemary, Juel and Richards, 1997, p. 277). Without the major elements in place, at-risk reading students are unable to progress satisfactorily.

Problems escalate when parents fail to actively participate in their child’s reading. First, without valuable parental involvement, 100% student reading proficiency will be virtually impossible to attain. Second, teachers have a limited amount of time to devote to remediation and/or individualized instruction. With the appropriate training and support,
volunteers (i.e. parents) can provide the remediation and individualized instruction at-risk children need (Invernizzi et al., 1997). Similarly, Edwards & Warin (1999, p. 3), contended, “Parental involvement matters for any kind of school program success and for any individual child’s school achievement, especially in reading and language arts.” Enlisting parent participation in reading must be a priority for all schools.

Discussion and Interpretations

Null Hypotheses Retained

All three of the null hypotheses were retained in this research study. However, important lessons were still learned from this research study. The first null hypothesis was retained because there was not a significant difference in the growth of the DRA oral reading accuracy levels between the students who completed the School-Home Links Activity Pages with their parents and the students who read appropriately leveled books to their parents. Table 3 in Chapter IV showed the $p$ value for the DRA growth was .128. This was above the required level of significance of $p < .05$. Based on this statistical analysis, no conclusion could be reached regarding a better approach to improving the students’ oral reading accuracy levels between the two groups.

This result was almost the antithesis of this study’s hypothesis. It was expected that the students who completed the activity pages would significantly outpace those students who read to their parents in their DRA growth. Thus, a logical question arises, “Why did the School-Home Links Activity Pages not produce the significant and positive expected results?”

One contributing factor was that the second null hypothesis was also retained. The difference in time spent by students completing the two interventions was insignificant.
The total amount of minutes entered on the weekly logs revealed a difference of an additional 31 more minutes for the students who read with their parents during the four weeks of the tutoring program. That was only approximately 10% more time reading than working the activity pages and the *p* value was only .453. Additionally, the Pearson Correlation analysis also showed the DRA growth was not due to gender or grade level of the students.

*Parent Survey Insights*

Even though the first part of the third hypothesis was not rejected, the third null hypothesis was retained since the second part of the hypothesis, the corollary, required a significant difference in the DRA growth levels. Several questions in the parent survey revealed significant differences between the two groups, which helps explain why the control group reached a higher level of DRA growth. Three areas in which the control group indicated significantly higher mean scores are examined below.

First, control group children looked forward to reading with their parents more than children in the experimental group looked forward to completing the activity pages with their parents. According to Baker (2003, p. 90), “Children who have more opportunities to engage in literacy-relevant activities at home have more positive views about reading, engage in more leisure reading, and have higher reading achievement.” Baker’s research supports the findings in this research study that children look forward to, or have a positive view about, reading appropriate leveled books to their parents.

Second, the parents in the control group thought that listening to their children read aided them in better understanding how children learn to read more than the parents
in the experimental group. The control group’s DRA growth level nearly doubled the
growth of the experimental group because of this contributing factor.

Third, control group parents would recommend the reading intervention they used
with their children to a friend more often than parents in the experimental group would
recommend doing the activity pages as a parent-child team. While both groups of parents
had positive responses to this question, the parents in the control group were much more
favorable about recommending their reading intervention method to a friend. Therefore,
it could be interpreted that if parents enthusiastically recommended for other parents to
listen to their children read, then they also thought listening to their children read was a
better reading intervention than doing the activity pages.

On the remaining four parent survey questions, no statistically significant
differences existed between the experimental and control groups. The answers to these
questions indicated parents were just as likely to prefer one type of parent reading
intervention as the other. Therefore, there were no questions in the entire parent survey
where parents preferred using the activity pages more than listening to their children read.

*Parent Interview Insights*

The most convincing reasons students in the control group had an oral reading
accuracy rate almost two times as much as the experimental group was clarified when the
parent interviews were analyzed. A key finding in the parent interviews was that the
majority of parents in the experimental group did not work with their children on the
activity pages, but simply supervised their children instead. A primary goal of this
research project was to increase parental involvement. Conversely, the parents in the
control group not only supervised their children reading, but also interacted with them
while they read. These parents sat down beside their children, listened to them read and used the “Important Reading Strategies” (Appendix I) to help their children read the appropriately leveled books successfully. It seems that a major reason why the DRA growth was greater in the control group was because the parents were actively involved and spent more quality time with their children enjoying the intervention. It appeared to be much easier for parents doing the activity pages with their children not to give the intervention their full attention, but only get their children started with the activities and then return to check the answers when they were completed. Parents who listened to their children read were much more likely to sit down next to them, give it their full attention and remain with them during the entire time they were being read to by their children.

The comments parents and children made while doing the interventions also affected the DRA growth scores. Parents in the experimental group spent a majority of their time trying to motivate their children to complete the activity pages. However, the parents and students in the control group did not respond similarly. Motivation was not a problem expressed by the control group. Their comments mainly addressed the interaction factors concerning stories their children were reading to them. The experimental group parents failed to mention any degree of pleasure, fun or enthusiasm observed while doing the activity pages together. A radical contrast existed between parents in the experimental group trying to motivate their children to complete the activity pages and the parents in the control group having meaningful conversations with their children. Not only did the control group parents remain with their children, listening to them read, but they also enjoyed a more meaningful, interactive and positive experience. The positive interactions between the parents and children in the control
The group seemed to have caused the greatest impact on improving oral reading accuracy levels of students in this research study.

The final result gleaned from the parent interviews concerning the reason that the DRA control group scores were higher dealt with the types of frustrations parents experienced with their children throughout the process of the interventions. Parents in the experimental group found it difficult to devote time to complete the activity pages. The control group parents did not mention frustrations concerning the time factor while listening to their children read. Instead, their frustrations centered around choosing the best reading strategy when their children tried to read difficult words.

The Synergy of Combined Effects

While some of the single findings were important, they were not impressive by themselves. However, when the DRA growth from each group was combined with the parent survey and interview results, the reason the control group’s DRA growth scores were higher became evident. The total effect of the findings in conjunction with each other created a synergy that was greater than the effect of the findings when considered individually. Using just one of the significant or key findings alone was not enough to produce an understanding of the whole picture. However, when the analyses were viewed from the parents’ perspectives, the bigger picture came into focus. This triangulation of data analyses allowed key findings to be made from this research study despite few statistically significant findings. The results garnered from the qualitative analyses were critical in helping to explain the reasons for the null hypotheses being retained.
Perhaps the foremost finding from this research study that explains the bigger picture was the reasons the DRA control group growth was approximately twice that of the experimental group. The most likely reasons were:

- There were more positive interactions between parents and children in the control group.
- Parents in the control group remained more involved with their children while listening to them read.
- The students in the control group appeared to be more motivated intrinsically to spend the time needed to complete the intervention.
- The students in the control group seemed to look forward to the time spent reading to their parents.
- Control group parents thought they developed a better understanding of methods for helping their children learn how to read.
- Parents thought listening to their children read was a more meaningful reading intervention than working activity pages.
- Control group parents presented more positive comments about their form of intervention than the parents in the experimental group.
- It appeared that control group students and parents thought their reading intervention was more fun, interesting and exciting than completing activity pages.

Finally, there were several other notable findings from this research project that were also interesting. While both groups of parents made mistakes and had frustrations, both groups still had positive DRA growth rates and benefited from the extra parental
involvement. Parents in both groups also thought both types of interventions were effective and wanted to help their children to improve in reading. Possibly, the parents in the experimental group were more accustomed to worksheets and thought this more traditional method of parental involvement was worth the extra effort to motivate their children to do the activity pages. Even in cases where the parents thought the interventions were not effective, their children still showed oral reading accuracy growth. For example, a student in the control group whose mom thought listening to her daughter read was not making a difference, had close to the highest DRA growth rate of any student. This was important because parents sometimes rely too heavily on their feelings and need to know that if they listen to their children read while following proven reading strategies, then their children can still improve their oral reading accuracy levels.

Educational Implications

This research study will assist educators in a variety of ways. First, educators must involve parents in helping them with their children’s reading in the most productive ways (Baker, 2003; Berger, 2000; Cairney & Munsie, 1995; Edwards & Warin, 1999; Faires, Nichols & Rickelmen, 2000; Heath, 2004; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; LeTendre, 1997; Mattingly et al., 2002; Pena, 2000; Redding; Russo et al., 1998; U.S. DOE, 2001; Walker et al., 2004; Warren & Young, 2002; Wong & Shen, 2001). The amount of time parents have to help their children with reading is a limited resource and needs to be used wisely. In choosing a parental involvement intervention educators should assure that daily student reading at appropriate levels is the primary element. Educators need to hold parents responsible for this daily reading time through signed weekly “Student Reading Logs” (Appendix O). Such logs provide parents a subtle reminder of the importance of
daily reading as well as keeping them focused on the 60 minute weekly reading goal. Also, before the parent intervention begins, a meeting with educators and parents must occur to explain the reasons for listening to their child read and to review the “Important Reading Strategies” handout (Appendix H). This meeting will reduce the questions or misunderstandings parents may have about the reading intervention, thereby reducing their frustration and establishing a better potential for the intervention to be implemented consistently and successfully.

This research study also holds positive implications for parents. Parents will struggle less with a reading intervention at home if educators establish clear guidelines similar to the ones used with this research study’s control group. As a result, parents will have more positive interactions with their children, enjoy the reading intervention more and their children will score higher on their oral reading accuracy levels.

Implications for Further Research

Because of the findings in this research study, additional research in a related area of parental involvement and reading strategies appears to be advisable and could prove to be quite valuable. Because children enjoy reading to their parents, and parents enjoy listening to their children read, as indicated by this research study, additional research needs to be conducted concerning parent perceptions of such an approach and its effects on DRA oral reading accuracy growth levels. Further research could help facilitate identification of the reasons why listening to children read contributes to such positive attitudes and results in improving students’ oral reading accuracy levels.

Another idea for further research could be to replace the activity pages intervention used in this research study with an intervention considered more interesting
and motivating for students and parents to do together at home. This approach would also need to be research based and have shown in previous studies to be successful in improving oral reading accuracy levels. For example, an engaging computer-assisted program may be more enticing for students to work on at home. Students and parents may be more motivated to do this type of intervention together than the activity pages. Such a study could help determine whether a more entertaining computer-assisted reading intervention where students work on specific skills at home might more effectively improve oral reading accuracy levels than children reading appropriately leveled books to their parents.

A third future research possibility might replicate this study, with the exclusive use of control group to determine if there is a correlation between weekly log times and higher DRA growth levels. Based on the results of this study, the control group’s intervention with the parents listening to their children read would be maintained. The experimental group’s intervention in this current study with the parents using the activity pages would be dropped. There could still be two randomly assigned groups. The first group’s parents would listen to their children read. The second group would just be a comparison group, not employing any extra parental interventions. In the current study there was a direct correlation between the higher number of logged minutes and the higher DRA growth levels. Educators would value knowing whether a similar positive correlation could be achieved again under a slightly different situation.

Limitations

1. The study was limited to elementary at-risk reading students who were not proficient in reading, excluding seventh grade level or higher students.
2. The duration of this study was only 19 days during the summer vacation. This was a shorter time-period for the School-Home Links Activity Pages to be implemented and it was not during the regular school year. A longer period of time may be required for the activity pages to show more positive results. The participants in this brief summer study may have been less seriously involved than students in a similar study during the school year.

3. Because the project exclusively included elementary at-risk reading students and their parents from rural, south-central Pennsylvania, generalizations must be made with caution concerning students either already proficient in reading or those who live in urban, suburban or other parts of the country.

4. The participants in the study were only public school students and their parents.

5. The study analyzed the findings of only at-risk reading students who were selected by their school to receive reading instruction during a summer tutoring program provided by university students pursuing their reading master’s degree at a local state university.

6. For purposes of this study, the students’ DRA oral reading accuracy level determined their independent oral reading accuracy level. This particular score is just one part of students’ overall reading ability. This study did not measure the students’ reading fluency and comprehension levels.

7. Parental factors (i.e. socio-economic and education levels) that could influence their child’s oral reading accuracy level were not considered in this study, making it more difficult to eliminate competing hypotheses or explanations.
8. There was no response from parents asked to be in a comparison group in this study. This would have allowed the DRA student growth results in the experimental and the control groups to be compared with students who did not have any extra reading intervention with their parents.

9. In an ideal educational setting, the activity pages would be sent home by a Title I teacher who is working with a small at-risk student reading group, allowing the teacher to closely match the activity pages with the in-class lesson content. In this study, the researcher sent home a reasonable estimate of activity page packets that would be best suited to each student based on beginning DRA oral reading accuracy levels and informal parent comments concerning the current activity pages progress.

10. The benefits of the school-home links’ activity pages may require longer than the 19 day tutoring sessions in order to demonstrate significantly improved benefits in oral reading accuracy levels.

11. The DRA is more closely aligned instructionally with the control group’s intervention of the parents listening to their children read. The DRA assesses students’ oral reading accuracy levels by having students read a story to an adult.

Recommendations

This study used a small number of parents whose children (N = 34) were brought in for 19 one-hour tutoring sessions during the summer by graduate level university students. There are several changes that would make a future study more robust. Conducting a similar study with larger numbers of public school Title I students from a single school district may affect the study results. Increasing the sample size along with the expectations for parents by using a Compact for Reading (Appendix A) in another
study could increase the chance of significant findings and possible rejection of the null hypotheses.

Additional suggestions to enhance replication of this research study are as follows:

• Increase the length of the intervention from 19 days to a month or longer
• Include a survey or interview with the tutors or students’ teachers
• Other student variables such as socio-economic status or race could be considered
• Focus on just one or two grade levels
• Additional parent variable: level of education
• More detailed parent survey or interview
• Additional reading assessments in addition to the DRA
• Provide a detailed parent training workshop before the intervention starts

Conclusion

The best way to help children improve their oral reading accuracy level is for them to daily read independently and to others (Moats, 1999). Parents can be a valuable resource when trained properly to listen to their children read appropriate leveled books. Parental involvement in improving oral reading accuracy levels is at its best when using authentic literature that is interesting, meaningful and interactive (Carbo, 2003). Listening to children read provides parents the best opportunity to accomplish these positive goals and ultimately help their children become better readers. Edwards & Warin (1999, p. 3) advocated, “Parental involvement matters for any kind of school program success and for any individual child’s school achievement, especially in reading and
language arts.” Parents can make a dramatic difference in their children’s oral reading accuracy levels, and educators must make enlisting their participation in reading a priority.

According to Wong and Shen (2001, p. 20), additional research was needed to help determine which factors “either promote or hinder the effectiveness of the School-Home Links once they are implemented.” Additional research has now been conducted to give insight to factors that hindered the effectiveness of the Home-School Links. Factors such as student motivation, quality parent interactions and enjoyment of the intervention were all factors in this study, which were shown to “hinder the effectiveness of the School-Home Links once they [were] implemented” (Wong and Shen, p. 20). By comparing the effectiveness of the two reading parent interventions in this study, educators have another stone to add to the mountain of parental involvement knowledge. This will help them adjust, or maybe even replace, a few more spokes on the wheel of reading and therefore assist more students in becoming proficient readers.
References


APPENDIX A

COMPACT FOR READING (SAMPLE)
COMPACT FOR READING (SAMPLE)

Our school has established this Compact for Reading in order to foster the improvement of reading and other language arts objectives. The goal is to better support the success of our students, so they may all read well and independently. We believe this can be done with the planned partnership of parents, families, students, teachers and the principal. This compact is based on scientific research of the best practices for improving reading achievement.

Parent’s and Family’s Responsibilities
We will:
• Make sure your child attends school regularly, on time, prepared to learn with homework completed.
• Encourage positive attitudes about school.
• Have high expectations for your child in reading and other language arts skills.
• Establish a place for your child to read and do homework each weeknight.
• Attend parent-teacher conferences and communicate frequently with your child’s teacher through notes and conversation, about how your child is doing in reading.
• Limit the amount of time our child watches television to less than two hours a day.

Parent’s signature: _____________________________

Student’s Responsibilities
I will:
• Come to school on time and be ready to learn.
• Pay attention to my teachers, tutors and other school employees.
• Complete my homework on time in a thorough and legible way.
• Welcome help from my family on my homework and papers.
• Return homework that needs to be signed.
• Follow school rules and be respectful to others.
• Believe that I can and will learn how to read well.

Student’s signature: _____________________________

Student’s name printed: _____________________________
Teacher’s Responsibilities
I will:
• Provide quality teaching and instructional strategies to my students.
• Communicate each grading period with families about the progress students are making in reading.
• Assign an appropriate amount of homework.
• Communicate with parents about how to help their child improve in reading.
• Provide a positive learning environment.
• Give students strategies to increase their reading achievement level.
• Prepare for meaningful parent-teacher conferences each fall.
• Meet with parents individually as needed to discuss reading achievement.

Teacher’s signature: ______________________________

Principal’s Responsibilities
I will:
• Coordinate a balanced, high quality reading curriculum.
• Provide teachers the necessary district approved reading instructional materials.
• Support the teachers and parents in providing a positive learning environment.
• Monitor reading achievement.
• Provide the proper instructional materials
• Help coordinate the proper training teachers need to provide quality reading instruction.
• Provide a safe a supportive learning environment.

Principal's signature: ______________________________
APPENDIX B

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR READING AND LITERACY SKILLS
Table of Contents for Reading and Literacy Skills

Kindergarten School-Home Links Reading Kit (1999)

1. Knows the Parts of Books and their Functions.
2. Begins to Track Print
3. Recognizes and Names All Uppercase and Lowercase Letters
4. Understands That Words Consist of a Sequence of Sounds
5. Learns One-to-One Letter/Sound Correspondence
6. Recognizes Some Words by Sight
7. Connects Information and Events in Text to Real Life
8. Listens to/Retells Stories or Parts of Stories
9. Listens Attentively to Books Read
10. Identifies Words that are Similar or Different
11. Identifies Words that Share the Same Sound
12. Merges Sound Segments into Words
13. Rhymes
14. Uses Sounds and Letters to Spell
15. Writes to Express Own Meaning
16. Builds a Vocabulary of Words
17. Writes Own Name
18. Writes Most Letters and Some Words
19. Knows that Words Join Together to Make Sentences
20. Follow Directions
APPENDIX C

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR READING AND LITERACY
Table of Contents for Reading and Literacy Skills

First Grade School-Home Links Reading Kit (1999)

1. Knows the Parts of Books and their Functions.
2. Reads and Comprehends Fiction and Nonfiction
3. Identifies Sentences
4. Differentiates Letters, Words, and Sentences
5. Blends and Distinguishes Sounds in One-Syllable Words
6. Recognizes and Names All Upper and Lower-case Letters
7. Decodes Words
8. Reads Common Sight Words
9. Sounds Out Words
10. Reads Aloud with Accuracy and Comprehension
11. Recognizes Words by Sight
12. Builds Vocabulary
13. Creates Own Written Text
14. Follows Directions
15. Forms Letters
16. Uses Punctuation and Capitalization
17. Produces Sentences
18. Produces Stories
19. Organizes Ideas
20. Engages in Literacy Activities
Dear Family, Your child is learning what a letter is and how to find letters on a page. Please read this page to your child.

- Find the letter “w” in the story below and point it out four times.
- Find a “p” in this story.
- Find all the “m’s” in the story.
- Find all the “o’s” in the story.

On the Farm
I saw a pig on the farm.
I saw some chickens on the farm.
I saw a dog on the farm.
I saw a horse on the farm.
I liked the farm.

Child’s name: ____________________________

Parent’s signature: _____________________

K/Recognizes and Can Name All Uppercase and Lowercase Letters/1
APPENDIX E

SCHOOL-HOME LINKS
Dear Family, Your child is learning that words are read from left to right. Please read this page to your child.

Circle the beginning of the word.  \( f o x \)
Circle the middle of the word.  \( c a t \)
Circle the ending of the word.  \( h a t \)
Circle the beginning of the word.  \( b o x \)
Circle the middle of the word.  \( c u p \)
Circle the ending of the word.  \( s i x \)
Circle the beginning of the word.  \( b e d \)
Circle the middle of the word.  \( j e t \)
Circle the ending of the word.  \( p i g \)
Circle the beginning of the word.  \( b u s \)

Child’s signature: ______________________

Parent’s signature: _____________________
Dear Family,

Your child is learning how to sound out letters in order to read words.

- A letter or a group of letters makes a sound.
- Say each sound slowly.
- Read the word.

1. /sk/ /i/ /p/   skip
2. /sl/ /i/ /p/   slip
3. /tr/ /a/ /p/   trap
4. /pl/ /a/ /y/   play
5. /tw/ /i/ /g/   twig

- **More Fun:** Write as many words beginning with the letters /tr/ that you can think of below.

Child’s name: _________________________________

Parent’s signature _____________________________

1/Accurately Decodes Words/1
APPENDIX G

SCHOOL-HOME LINKS
SCHOOL-HOME LINKS

Dear Family, Your child is learning to put two sounds together to make a new sound.

Each letter has at least one sound. Sometimes you can put two letters together and make a new sound.

Examples:
a + w = “aw” as in paw
a + u = “au” as in saucer

• Read the following silly sentences.
• Circle the two letters that make a new sound.
• Write the two letters on the lines.

I saw a fawn sitting on the lawn. a w
We can’t do the laundry or wash the saucers because the faucet is broken.
It was hard to draw the paw, the claw, and the jaw of the bear.

• More Fun: Write a sentence using “aw” words.

Child’s signature: _____________________________
Parent’s signature _____________________________

2/Uses Knowledge of Print-Sound Mappings/3
APPENDIX H

SCHOOL-HOME LINKS
Dear Family, Your child is learning to read contractions.

Contractions are formed when two words are put together to make a new word. In a contraction, one or more letters are left out and an apostrophe ( ’ ) takes their place.

Here are some contractions:

can’t (can + not)    he’ll (he + will)    I’ve (I + have)

• Practice reading these contractions:
  we’re      (we + are)
  she’ll     (she + will)
  couldn’t  (could + not)
  I’m       (I + am)
  doesn’t   (does + not)
  here’s    (here + is)

• More Fun: Next to each contraction above, write the letters that have been left out when the contraction is formed.

Child’s signature:________________________________________

Parent’s signature: ____________________________

3/Shows Evidence of Expanding Language Repertoire/2
APPENDIX I

IMPORTANT READING STRATEGIES
**Important Reading Strategies**

Please wait five seconds after you use the following strategies to give a child a chance to say the word correctly. Use only three of these strategies at a time when your child makes a mistake, then, if necessary, point to the letters in the word as you pronounce the word slowly the first time and then say it a second time at a regular pace. Use a variety of these strategies while a child is reading.

- Make your finger match the word.
- Look at the picture to help you figure out what the word could mean.
- Reread the sentence and skip the word you’re working on. Now what do you think that word could be?
- Get your mouth ready to start the word.
- What word would make sense?
- Look at how that word begins. Start it out and keep reading.
- Does it look right?
- Does it sound right?

Most of us were taught to “sound out” words that we didn’t know. While it is important to use phonics (“Make your finger match the word.” “Get your mouth ready.” “Does it look right?”) in reading, it should not be the only strategy used. It is also important to use meaning when trying to figure out words. Meaning comes from using the pictures, the content of the story and the structure of the sentence. (“Look at the picture.” “What word would make sense?”) Another important reading strategy for a child to use is the sound of the language. (“Does it sound right?”)

Choose books that are not too easy or too hard. A book is too easy if a child reads all or almost all of the words accurately. Books that are too easy do not give a child chances to practice the strategies. A book that is too hard will frustrate a child. If the child misses more than one word out of ten, then the book is too difficult. Choosing the right book for a child to read is essential! You may ask the librarian or Mr. Jenkins if you need help.

**Encouraging Comments:** It is extremely important for parents to have a positive attitude when helping a child practice their reading. Children need encouraging comments, patience and their parent’s full attention to excel in reading. Please use several of the following types of comments when helping a child to read.

- “Good job! I like the way you tried to work it out.”
- “Awesome! I like the way you figured out that difficult word.”
- “That was a good try. Yes, that word would make sense there.”
- “I like the way you went back to the beginning of the sentence and tried to read it again. That’s what good readers do.”
- “Thank you for reading to me tonight. I enjoyed hearing you read.”
- “You are becoming such a good reader. I’m proud of you.”

**Good readers are like outstanding athletes; they must be diligent in practicing daily.**
APPENDIX J

PARENT PARTICIPATION LETTER
June 20, 2005

Dear Parent,

In addition to the extra tutoring your child will be receiving starting on July 12, there will be an additional way you can help your child improve in reading this summer. You will also be given the opportunity to support your child with a reading intervention strategy at home while your child attends the four weeks of tutoring sessions at Shippensburg University.

The purpose of conducting this research during the summer tutoring sessions is for educators to better understand the effect parents can have when they help their child at home for fifteen minutes a day with a reading intervention. Parents will be randomly assigned to one of two different reading interventions to complete with their child. Both of these reading interventions have had favorable results in the past with parents.

Also included in this mailing is a consent form to participate in a research study. Please read it, sign it on the back and mail the signed consent form along with the information slip at the bottom of this page in the preaddressed envelope by July 7. This will allow me enough time to get your parental involvement folder ready for your child’s first day of tutoring on July 12. On the first day of tutoring you will need to come to the parental involvement table in the lobby of Grace B. Luhrs to get your parental involvement folder. A letter inside the folder will explain the reading intervention for you to do with your child for at least 15 minutes a day after each tutoring session.

Thank you for considering this additional way to have a positive impact on your child’s oral reading accuracy level this summer and helping the field of education grow in its knowledge of how to use parental involvement to improve oral reading accuracy levels with at-risk elementary students. If you have any questions you may call me at 530-2783. I am looking forward to getting to know you better this summer. It would be an honor for me if you would participate in this research project.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Jenkins

Parental involvement Information Slip

| Child’s name: ___________________________ | Grade level: ____________ |
| Parent’s name: __________________________ | Phone number: ___________ |
APPENDIX K

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE: The effects of parental involvement strategies on elementary at-risk reading students’ oral reading accuracy

INVESTIGATOR: Kenneth Jenkins
609 Westover Road
Shippensburg, PA 17257
Phone: 717/530-2783
E-mail: kenneth.jenkins@ship.k12.pa.us

ADVISOR: Dr. Denise Anderson
Shippensburg University
717/477-1266

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Educational Doctorate degree in educational leadership at Duquesne University.

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate how parents can help their child with reading interventions for 15 minutes after each summer tutoring session to improve their child’s oral reading accuracy. Each Friday during the four weeks of tutoring you will be asked to turn in a weekly log at the parental involvement table. Parents will record on the weekly log the date, activity and number of minutes completing the reading intervention. The activity pages or books will be provided to parents at the setting of the tutoring sessions. In addition, you will be asked to complete a one-page survey at the end of the study and also may be asked to have a brief
interview while waiting for your child the last week of the tutoring sessions. The interviews will be taped and transcribed. Master level university students are already planning on assessing the oral reading accuracy levels of students participating in the “Shippensburg University Summer Reading-Writing Program for Elementary Students.” Their assessment scores will be used to measure growth in students’ oral reading accuracy levels.

These are the only requests that will be made of you.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are no risks involved in participating in this research project. The interventions you will be asked to do at home with your child for 15 minutes after each tutoring session this summer are designed to help your child improve their level of oral reading accuracy. This research project will also contribute to the research literature on the effects of parental involvement reading strategies and at-risk reading students’ oral reading accuracy levels.

COMPENSATION: You will not be compensated for your participation. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your name will never appear on any survey or research instruments. No identity will be made in the data analysis. All written materials and consent forms will be stored in a securely locked file and destroyed five years after the completion of the research. Your responses will only appear in statistical and descriptive data summaries. If you are selected for an interview at the end of the project, it will be recorded on an audiocassette and transcribed. The audiocassette will be destroyed immediately after it is transcribed to protect and ensure confidentiality. Any identifiers, either direct or indirect of people and/or locations will be deleted when information is being transcribed from the audiocassette to protect and ensure confidentiality.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to
participate at any time. There will not be any adverse consequences to the participants who withdraw from this research project.

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS:**
A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT:**
I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

Please contact Kenneth Jenkins at 717/530-2783 if you have any questions, or you may speak to him in person during your child’s tutoring session at the parent involvement table in the Luhrs’ foyer.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board (412-396-6326).

________________________________________   __________________
Participant's Signature      Date

________________________________________   __________________
Researcher's Signature      Date
APPENDIX L

PARENT PARTICIPATION LETTER, COMPARISON GROUP
July 14, 2005

Dear Parent,

You are being asked to participate in a research project in a different and much simpler manner than you were asked originally. The research project seeks to investigate how parents can help their child with reading interventions for 15 minutes after each summer tutoring session to improve their child’s reading accuracy. However, even though you choose not to participate in the extra reading interventions at home you can still play an important role in this study. There would not be any expectations for you to do any additional reading interventions at home with your child.

Master level university students are already planning on assessing the reading accuracy levels of all students participating in the “Shippensburg University Summer Reading-Writing Program for Elementary Students.” Their assessment scores will be used to measure growth in students’ reading accuracy levels. I am requesting to use these reading accuracy scores the university students get from your child and compare them to other students who had extra parent reading interventions. Your name or your child’s name will never appear on any research instruments. No identity of parents or students will be made in the data analysis.

If your child shows above average reading growth during the summer tutoring sessions I may ask to interview you briefly to find out if there were any other home factors that could have contributed to this growth. The interviews would take about 10 – 15 minutes and they would be taped and transcribed. Any identifiers, either direct or indirect of parents or students’ names will be deleted when information is being transcribed from the audiocassette to protect and ensure confidentiality. There would not be any additional request made of you.

It is very important in research to have a control group that does not have an intervention to compare it to the other group or groups that do have interventions. It adds to the validity of a research study to have this type of control group. Without it, researches are not for certain if the changes they are measuring are due to their intervention or some other variable. I would greatly appreciate it if you would read and sign the modified “Consent to Participate in a Research Study” form.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Jenkins
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE: The effects of parent involvement strategies on elementary at-risk students’ reading accuracy

INVESTIGATOR: Kenneth Jenkins
609 Westover Road
Shippensburg, PA 17257
Phone: 717/530-2783
E-mail: kenneth.jenkins@ship.k12.pa.us

ADVISOR: Dr. Denise Anderson
Shippensburg University
717/477-1266

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Educational Doctorate degree in educational leadership at Duquesne University.

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate how parents can help their child with reading interventions for 15 minutes after each summer tutoring session to improve their child’s reading accuracy. Even though you choose not to participate in the extra reading interventions at home you can still play an important role in this study. There would not be any expectations for you to do any additional reading interventions at home with your child. Master level university students are already planning on assessing the reading accuracy levels of students participating in the “Shippensburg University Summer Reading-Writing Program for Elementary Students.” I am requesting to use the reading accuracy scores the university students get from
your child and compare them to students who had extra parent reading interventions at home. If your child shows above average reading growth during the summer tutoring sessions I may also ask to interview you briefly to find out if there were any other home factors that could have contributed to this growth. The interviews would be taped and transcribed.

These are the only requests that will be made of you.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:**
There are no risks involved in participating in this research project. This research project will also contribute to the research literature on the effects of parent involvement reading strategies and at-risk students’ reading accuracy levels.

**COMPENSATION:**
You will not be compensated for your participation. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**
Your name will never appear on any survey or research instruments. No identity will be made in the data analysis. All written materials and consent forms will be stored in a securely locked file and destroyed five years after the completion of the research. Your responses will only appear in statistical and descriptive data summaries. If you are selected for an interview at the end of the project, it will be recorded on an audiocassette and transcribed. The audiocassette will be destroyed immediately after it is transcribed to protect and ensure confidentiality. Any identifiers, either direct or indirect of people and/or locations will be deleted when information is being transcribed from the audiocassette to protect and ensure confidentiality.

**RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:**
You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time. There will not be any adverse consequences to the participants who withdraw from this research project.
SUMMARY OF RESULTS: A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT: I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

Please contact Kenneth Jenkins at 717/530-2783 if you have any questions, or you may speak to him in person during your child’s tutoring session at the parent involvement table in the Luhrs’ foyer.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board (412-396-6326).

___________________________________    __________________
Participant's Signature      Date

___________________________________    __________________
Researcher's Signature      Date
APPENDIX N

READING INTERVENTION LETTER, SCHOOL-HOME LINKS
July 12, 2005

Dear Parent,

Thank you for agreeing to help your child at home with an additional reading intervention. In this folder is a packet of School-Home Links Activity Pages and four Activity Pages Logs. These activity pages will help you work on specific reading skills with your child to help them improve in reading. Each Friday another packet of additional reading activity pages with your child’s name on it will be ready for you to pick up at the parental involvement table. These take-home activity pages reinforce the basic skills children need to know to become good readers.

Please help foster your child’s reading development by completing several of the activity pages for 15 minutes a day with your child after each tutoring session. There should be more activity pages sent home than you can complete in a week. You may save the extra activity pages for the following week or spend more time than the expected 15 minutes a day working on them with your child. If you need more activity pages before Friday, you may get some additional ones at the parental involvement table during your child’s tutoring session. Four Activity Pages Logs are included in your folder for you to keep track of the time your child works with you on completing the activity pages each of the four weeks during the summer tutoring program. Please fill out the activity pages log each time your child works with you on the activity pages. Each Friday please turn in your completed Student Reading Log to me at the parental involvement table in the Grace B. Luhrs’ foyer.

While your child is in their tutoring session feel free to let me know how your child is doing with the activity pages and if there is anything I can do to help. I am glad to have the opportunity to help coordinate this reading intervention for you to complete with your child. Helping your child at home with these activity pages will reinforce what they are learning and help them improve in reading. When we work together we can maximize the opportunity for your child to become a better reader. I appreciate your help and support.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Jenkins
APPENDIX O

READING INTERVENTION LETTER, READING
July 12, 2005

Dear Parent,

Thank you for agreeing to help your child at home with an additional reading intervention. In this reading folder is a handout on “Important Reading Strategies” and four Student Reading Logs. The library at Grace B. Luhrs will be open from 8:30 to 12:30 during the dates of the tutoring sessions for you to select books with your child to read to you at home. The goal in selecting these books is to choose appropriately leveled books your child can read at home and to select books related to their interests. A general rule of thumb when selecting books with your child is for them to select books in which they can read at least 90 percent of the words on a given page. If your child misses more than one out of 10 words on a page then the book is too difficult. The books selected at the Luhrs library will also give your child valuable practice time reading and to utilize the reading strategies learned at school and in tutoring. You will be given your child’s DRA oral reading accuracy level to help you select books at or near this level in the Luhrs’ Library.

Please help foster your child’s reading development by having your child read their books to you at least 15 minutes or more after each tutoring session. Using the strategies on the “Important Reading Strategies” handout will help you use appropriate strategies when listening to your child. You will want to use the cueing strategies on the handout to help your child read words he/she cannot pronounce. Your child may read previously read books over again if he/she has not spent at least 15 minutes reading a new one on a given day. Four Student Reading Logs are included in your folder for you keep track of the time your child reads to you each of the four weeks of the summer tutoring program. Please fill out the reading log each time your child reads to you. Each Friday please turn in your completed Student Reading Log to me at the parental involvement table in the Grace B. Luhrs’ foyer.

While your child is in their tutoring session feel free to let me know how your child is doing with reading independently at home and if there is anything I can do to help. Helping your child read at home will reinforce what they are learning and help them improve in reading. When we work together we can maximize the opportunity for your child to become a better reader. I appreciate your help and support.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Jenkins
APPENDIX P

SCHOOL-HOME LINKS’ DETAILS
School-Home Links’ Details

1. **CORRECT LEVEL**: If several worksheets in your School-Home Links’ packet are too difficult or too easy, please let Kenneth Jenkins know during the next tutoring session and he can get you an appropriate packet. Students are not expected to be able to read the activity pages, only to complete the directions with a *reasonable* amount of help from their parents.

2. **BALANCE**: If there is too much repetition in the School-Home Link’s packet, you may skip ahead to another type of worksheet and come back and finish the previous ones the following day/s. This may especially be necessary when there are several worksheets that involve student writing.

3. **REDUCE FRUSTRATION**: If your child becomes frustrated while completing an activity page then offer some extra support and encouragement. If the frustration continues, stop working on that page and take a break. Later, move onto the next page or a page your child can be more successful at completing.

4. **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**: Sometimes in the “More Fun” section of the School-Home Links, it asks for you to get a book or a magazine and use it to reinforce the lesson. You **do not** have to do this part if you do not have the materials to complete this part of it or if it does not seem meaningful.

5. **TEAMWORK**: The School-Home Links are designed for parents to complete with their children and not for children to complete by themselves. Many activity pages may be too difficult for children to do by themselves and could lead to a negative experience if done alone.

6. **REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS**: The activity pages are meant to be a positive and meaningful experience between you and your child. The goal is to complete 15 minutes of the activity pages packet after each tutoring session. For many children it is too stressful to do more than this in one day, especially for younger children. If you are not able to get 15 minutes done on a given day please do not expect your child to do 30 minutes the following day to make it up. It is OK if a day is skipped.

7. **ENCOURAGING COMMENTS**: It is extremely important for parents to have a positive attitude while helping their child with their activity pages. Please use several of the following types of comments when helping your child:
   - “Good job! I like the way you are working so hard.”
   - “Awesome! I like the way you figured out the answer.”
   - “Very good answer! That makes sense.”
   - “You’re such a smart kid. You must get that from your parents.”
   - “Thank you for working with me tonight on these activity pages. I’m proud of you.”
APPENDIX Q

ACTIVITY PAGES LOG
ACTIVITY PAGES LOG

Student’s Name: __________________

Parent’s Name: __________________

Week of: _______________________

Students should work at least 15 minutes after each tutoring session completing the School-Home Links activity pages with their parent’s assistance.

EACH FRIDAY, PLEASE RETURN THIS ACTIVITIES PAGE LOG TO MR. JENKINS AT THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT TABLE WITH THE DATE, ACTIVITY PAGE NUMBERS AND NUMBER (#) OF MINUTES FILLED OUT.

If you need additional activity pages or if the activity pages are too easy or too difficult please see Mr. Jenkins at the Parental involvement Table. Please let Mr. Jenkins know if you have any questions or concerns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ACTIVITY PAGE NUMBERS COMPLETED TODAY</th>
<th># OF MINUTES Rounded to nearest five minutes.</th>
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TOTAL # OF MINUTES FOR THIS WEEK: _________________
(Enter Total # of minutes doing the activities this week and give to Mr. Jenkins each Friday.)

Parent’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________
APPENDIX R

STUDENT READING LOG
STUDENT READING LOG

Student’s Name: _______________________

Parent’s Name: _______________________

Week of: ______________

Students should spend at least 15 minutes after each tutoring session reading books independently to their parents.

EACH FRIDAY, PLEASE RETURN THIS STUDENT READING LOG TO MR. JENKINS AT THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT TABLE WITH THE DATE, TITLE/S OF BOOK/S AND NUMBER (#) OF MINUTES READ FILLED OUT.

Students can read previously read books out loud to their parents when additional time is needed to complete 15 minutes of reading. Please let Mr. Jenkins know if you have any questions or concerns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TITLE OF BOOK</th>
<th># OF MINUTES Rounded to the nearest five minutes.</th>
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TOTAL # OF MINUTES READ THIS WEEK: ______________________

(Enter Total # of minutes read this week and give to Mr. Jenkins each Friday.)

Parent or Guardian’s Signature: ________________________ Date: __________
APPENDIX S

PARENT SURVEY, SCHOOL-HOME LINKS
Parent Survey
School-Home Links Activity Pages

Student’s Name: _______________________

Parent’s Name: _______________

I appreciate your cooperation on completing the weekly Activity Pages Log with your child. This information will help guide our parental involvement practices for future elementary students. Your help is also needed in completing this survey so we can better understand the advantages and any possible disadvantages of using the School-Home Link Activity pages with elementary students who are at-risk in reading.

Using a number scale of 1 – 5, please circle the number that best describes your answer. A 1 is the lowest score and would mean you strongly disagree with the statement. A 3 would mean it is a neutral statement and a 5 would mean you strongly agree with the statement. Please make any additional comments you would like on the bottom of this survey form.

1. Completing the School-Home Links Activity pages with my child is helpful in improving my child’s reading skills.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

2. My child looks forward to the time we spend together completing the activity pages.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

3. My child thinks the activity pages are often too easy to complete.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

4. My child thinks the activity pages are often too difficult to complete.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

5. The activity pages have helped my child become a better reader.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

6. Helping my child complete the reading activity pages has helped me better understand how children learn to read.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

7. In addition to these activity pages, I have also read to my child or listened to my child read during these summer tutoring sessions.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

8. I would recommend this approach of using activity pages to a friend who has an elementary age child who is struggling with reading.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

Comments:
APPENDIX T

PARENT SURVEY, READING
Parent Survey
Reading at Home

Student’s Name: _______________________

Parent’s Name: ______________________

I appreciate your cooperation on completing the weekly Student Reading Log for your child. This information will help guide our parental involvement practices for future elementary students. Your help is also needed in completing this survey so we can better understand the advantages and any possible disadvantages of using the Student Reading Log with elementary students who are at-risk in reading.

Using a number scale of 1 – 5, please circle the number that best describes your answer. A 1 is the lowest score and would mean you strongly disagree with the statement. A 3 would mean it is a neutral statement and a 5 would mean you strongly agree with the statement. Please make any additional comments you would like on the bottom of this survey form.

1. Listening to my child read is helpful in improving my child’s reading skills.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

2. My child looks forward to the time I spend listening to him/her read.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

3. My child thinks the books read at home are often too easy.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

4. My child thinks the books read at home are often too difficult.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

5. Listening to my child read has helped my child become a better reader.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

6. Listening to my child read has helped me better understand how children learn to read.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

7. In addition to listening to my child read, my child has also completed reading activity pages from a workbook or computer reading program during these summer tutoring sessions.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

8. I would recommend this approach of reading to a friend who has an elementary age child who is struggling with reading.
   (strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

Comments:
End of Project Interview
School-Home Links Activity Pages

1. How do you think the School-Home Links Activity pages helped your child regarding reading improvement?

2. What did you think about filling out the Activity Page Log forms?

3. How did your child respond to you helping them with the activity pages?

4. What did your child say about doing the activity pages together?

5. What types of changes did you experience in how you view reading instruction as you worked through the activity pages with your child?

6. What type of frustrations did you experience as you worked through these activity pages together with your child?

7. What did you like best about doing these activity pages together with your child?

8. What additional comments would you like to make?
APPENDIX V

INTERVIEW, READING
End of Project Interview
Listening to my Child Read Often

1. How do you think listening to your child read often helped your child regarding reading improvement?

2. What did you think about filling out the Student Reading Log forms?

3. How did your child respond to you listening to them read independently?

4. What did your child say about listening to them read often?

5. What types of changes did you experience in how you view reading instruction as you listened to your child read often?

6. What type of frustrations did you experience as you listened to your child read?

7. What did you like best about listening to your child read?

8. What additional comments would you like to make?
APPENDIX W

DRA READING ABILITY LEVELS
### Developmental Reading Assessment Reading Ability Levels
(Beaver, 2001, p. 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levels A – 2</td>
<td>Highly patterned with simple illustrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One or two lines of text on left-hand page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Familiar animals and objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels 3 – 8</td>
<td>Simple stories with repetitive words, phrases and actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Predictable language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highly supportive illustrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One to three lines of text below pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels 10 – 14</td>
<td>Stories about children and problems to which children can relate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repetition of events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More complex book, oral language structures and high frequency words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supportive illustrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two to five lines of text below the illustrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels 16 – 28</td>
<td>Imaginary or animal characters with human characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some literary language structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some description of characters and setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate to minimum picture support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three to twelve lines of text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels 30 – 44</td>
<td>More complex stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Characters, settings, problems and resolutions described in greater detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Different genres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum of picture support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some full pages of text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX X

TRANSCRIBED PARENT INTERVIEWS
1. How do you think the School-Home Links Activity pages helped your child regarding reading improvement?

Mother #9 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was –4; 300 total minutes on logs):
I think it pointed things out to her in sentences and different things the way words are structured in sentences, you know what I mean, regarding reading and I think just making her observe, that helps her read better.

Mother #22 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 240 total minutes on logs):
They have a lot. He’s always been trying to read, but before he always was saying, ”Well mom, what’s this word?” And he’ll spell it out. Now he’s to the point where he’ll try to figure it out before asking me. He didn’t do that before. So it’s helped him that way. His writing’s improved.

Mother #2 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 260 total minutes on logs):
It has helped just because he’s reading at night. Like, doing something to refresh what he’s doing in the day. I can’t think of anything specific.

Mother #5 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 250 total minutes on logs):
I’m hoping it helped. He views it a lot like infringement on his summer vacation and it’s considered homework. I express, “It’s suppose to be fun. We’re supposed to be doing it together, you know, get excited about it,” but, he’s not playing it. It’s a chore to get him; it’s supposed to be 15 minutes a day. He’d rather just sit down and do it all in one day and get it over with. He doesn’t want to have to drag it on to the whole week. “OK, you said 15 minutes a day, so I’ll just do, you know, 45 minutes today and that will be good for the week.”

Father #32 of a 2nd grade girl (DRA growth was 4; 120 total minutes on logs)
Father #33 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 8; 115 total minutes on logs):
It kind of got them a head start for school and kind of got them interested in reading more.

Mother #3 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 230 total minutes on logs):
It has helped him to realize he knows more than he thought he did because he does things and is surprised he knew that. It keeps him on task, too.

Mother #18 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 257 total minutes on logs):
I believe it has. I didn’t notice it so much until last night and he had to read a story. He read it so fluently the first time and like, “Wow! This has made a marked improvement on his reading skills. It has made a big difference on his ability. I’m not sure if he realizes it. Maybe it will hit him when he picks up a book and can read it.
2. What did you think about filling out the Activity Page Log forms?

Mother #9 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was –4; 300 total minutes on logs):
I guess I didn’t actually sit there and show her the log; I just filled it out on my own. I guess that would have been a good thing or maybe, I’ll do that this week so she will see what she’s done instead of just keep doing the papers. It may be more of an incentive. It helps me keep track of what she’s doing.

Mother #22 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 240 total minutes on logs):
I don’t think it’s helped us keep on track. He’s used to doing his homework. You know, I think it’s more for your reference than for ours. We use a kitchen timer and I try to make a little game out of it. “We’re suppose to do 15 minutes of work. Let’s see how many pages you can get done in 15 minutes.” “OK we did that many in 15. How many do you think you can do in 25?” We’ll do stuff like that. But, uh, I thought if I do the timer he would think I need to rush and do this. I was afraid of that, but, I found he actually takes his time. I sit right there while he’s doing it.

Mother #2 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 260 total minutes on logs):
It was fine.

Mother #5 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 250 total minutes on logs):
It helps him see his progress, too and you know, what he needs to catch up on, I guess, even though we’re not supposed to make him do 15 minutes every single day. It was a good way to keep track and to show him he’s either not doing his 15 minutes a day; and the end of the week he sees only three days filled out and there should have been four. He still thinks life should be one big party. Everything should be fun no matter what.

Father #32 of a 2nd grade girl (DRA growth was 4; 120 total minutes on logs)
Father #33 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 8; 115 total minutes on logs):
I think it was kind of beneficial because it gave us a goal for the kids to accomplish so they had a goal to meet at the end of the week.

Mother #3 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 230 total minutes on logs):
Not a big deal. It helped me realize how many pages he was doing so it helped us together.

Mother #18 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 257 total minutes on logs):
That’s easy.

3. How did your child respond to you helping them with the activity pages?

Mother #9 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was –4; 300 total minutes on logs):
She does them on her own and if she needs help she’ll come to me, but then I will go over them with her afterwards just to make sure.

Mother #22 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 240 total minutes on logs):
I mainly read the directions and then he does the rest. Some of them seem a little harder, but I want him to push himself.

Mother #2 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 260 total minutes on logs):
He wouldn’t be able to do them if I wasn’t really showing him what to do with them.

Mother #5 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 250 total minutes on logs):
He doesn’t want me to help him with them at all.

Father #32 of a 2nd grade girl (DRA growth was 4; 120 total minutes on logs)
Father #33 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 8; 115 total minutes on logs):
They seem to like it. Usually, they go off by themselves and if they have a problem they’ll ask.

Mother #3 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 230 total minutes on logs):
He just fought me every step of the way. He didn’t want to do anything. That was my struggle with him. But, once we got into it, he enjoyed the activities. They weren’t too hard or too easy. I tried to pick out the activities I thought that he could do. It wasn’t anything about them in particular. It was, “I’m done with tutoring, mom. I want to go play now.” And I don’t know if in the school year it would be different cause I struggled in the school year, too.

Mother #18 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 257 total minutes on logs):
As long as I kept it a routine; we have baths, we do this. So it has had to be a regular routine.

4. What did your child say about doing the activity pages together?

Mother #9 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was –4; 300 total minutes on logs):
Sometimes she likes them so much that I have to make her stop cause she’ll just keep going. Sometimes she gets in a mode and wants to do the whole packet in one day.

Mother #22 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 240 total minutes on logs):
It depends on the page. “Mom, this is too easy. This is simple.” Then he’ll say, “Well, I can’t do it,” when he gets to a harder page. “We don’t say can’t; say I’ll try. If you can’t do it, then, you’ll try harder.” Or then I’ll tell him, or he’ll make comments like that and then after he’s done like 5 pages done in 15 minutes he gets all excited. “Wow! I’ve done that many!” He gets verbal praise from his father and I. It’s very positive for him this program.

Mother #2 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 260 total minutes on logs):
He thought the last ones were more fun. I mean, you know, the ones with the index or whatever, rhyming and all that, you know. He liked those a lot more. Like the writing ones he didn’t like at all. Oh, it was tolerable, but he would rather never write.
Mother #5 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 250 total minutes on logs): He would tell me he can do it himself. I’d go and review the activity pages and review the ones; and I’d tell him, “OK, well since you did 40 of them in one day, you did most of them right, but you need to go back and look and two or three pages, still.” He was adamant about he could do it himself. He’d go back just to get it done and to shut me up for a while.

Father #32 of a 2nd grade girl (DRA growth was 4; 120 total minutes on logs)
Father #33 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 8; 115 total minutes on logs): Not much. They’re not too hard or easy. It kind of keeps them occupied.

Mother #3 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 230 total minutes on logs): I noticed that a little bit of praise goes a long way. Once I can get him into it and get him settled and said, “I can’t believe you knew that. That was so good.” Then it was like, “OK, what’s the next one?” You know, but then if it got to something that was too hard then he would get bored again and like, “I’m done.” That’s how he responds to me so I know; go to the next page and give him something he would really be able to do and then he’d have a good attitude again, but it’d take some time.

Mother #18 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 257 total minutes on logs): I try to make it fun and we joke about it or whatever. We might say the words silly-like and then we do it the right way, but I’ve tried to incorporate fun into it so I could get him to do it. He’s a typical kid.

5. What types of changes did you experience in how you view reading instruction as you worked through the activity pages with your child?

Mother #9 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was –4; 300 total minutes on logs): A little bit. I think one of the biggest things is not pointing out every fault. Just trying to point out, you know what I’m saying, so that she picks up on this and picks up on that a little bit here and there. Positive reinforcement is always important.

Mother #22 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 240 total minutes on logs): Yes, but we’ve worked with home activity pages before with (name of a Title I teacher) at Nancy Grayson. It’s not exactly what you’re giving, but similar types of papers. I think it helped that he was used to doing the pages.

Mother #2 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 260 total minutes on logs): I don’t know. Uh, yeah, like, you know with some of the headings on some of the pages, I could see where they were going with and why they were doing this or whatever, so yeah, I guess.

Mother #5 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 250 total minutes on logs): Well, as far as him, I’ve always known what his dilemma for reading is and it’s just his lack of paying attention and; so it’s not so much that I need to learn reading instructions. I
probably need to learn how to refocus him. I keep telling him he doesn’t have to do a lot of things in life, but he does have to know how to read. And he doesn’t want to take the time to actually read. He misses the s’s off the end of words. He’s just kind of carefree about it and if he gets it he gets it and if he doesn’t he moves on to the next sentence. He is very carefree. He just takes it as it comes and if it doesn’t make sense he just discards it and moves on. It doesn’t really bother him. I know he can focus on things he really is into, but the reading just doesn’t interest him. I know he can read if he will just take the time because he’s not a stupid kid. I just can’t get him to slow down. Everything; he just wants to get it done and move on. He doesn’t want to; does that make sense?

Father #32 of a 2nd grade girl (DRA growth was 4; 120 total minutes on logs)
Father #33 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 8; 115 total minutes on logs):
I guess it does. If I see a problem, a small problem like if they can’t read a certain thing, then I understand more about how they do their homework and what they’re reading and I can help them later on. Kind of know more of where they’re at.

Mother #3 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 230 total minutes on logs):
I didn’t realize it was the simple things that make a difference. You know we always think, “I have to do this elaborate, whatever, study with my child to help him.” These are basic things I could do. So, I realized it doesn’t take a lot and 15 minutes can make a difference. So I mix it up. Go back and skip a few pages. I think that makes a difference, too.

Mother #18 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 257 total minutes on logs):
No, I think I pretty much knew the basic reading, fundamental steps to take. So, no, I just tried, you know, to use those steps.

6. What type of frustrations did you experience as you worked through these activity pages together with your child?

Mother #9 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was –4; 300 total minutes on logs):
I wouldn’t say she had a lot of frustration. I guess the biggest thing was when she would do the extra activities. Because if she had to go through the magazines or newspaper and find words with “i-o” in them sometimes it would be very difficult because she would sit there a long time. When it was an option it was much better for her.

Mother #22 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 240 total minutes on logs):
Sometimes, because (son’s name) has ADHD. So, he has mood swings. Especially, if he don’t take his medicine. It don’t have anything to do with the work. It’s him personally and we work around that cause if we find he starts throwing a fit, OK, let’s stop, we’ll take a break and let’s go back to it now. It’s once or twice a week we take a five or ten minute break.

Mother #2 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 260 total minutes on logs):
No, just getting him to do them. I usually just tried to get one in every couple of hours. Well, we usually did like five a day.

Mother #5 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 250 total minutes on logs):
 Mostly the infringement on his time I think was real frustrating. He did not want to do it with me at all. I mean, I’d sit down with him and he’d turn and you know, “I can do this myself, I don’t need your help.” You know, to a degree that’s fine so I’d always double check his work. It’s just that he didn’t want to play the game. He just wanted to get the work done and get it over with.

Father #32 of a 2nd grade girl (DRA growth was 4; 120 total minutes on logs)
Father #33 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 8; 115 total minutes on logs):
Just finding the time sometimes is the only thing.

Mother #3 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 230 total minutes on logs):
Getting down to do it. He’s like, “I’m done for the day.”

Mother #18 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 257 total minutes on logs):
No.

7. What did you like best about doing these activity pages together with your child?

Mother #9 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was –4; 300 total minutes on logs):
Seeing her accomplish things, which is she gets such a kick out of it when she does something and she does it well. You can see the smile on her face. “Look mommy! I’m done!”

Mother #22 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 240 total minutes on logs):
What I like best is that he can choose what pages he wants to do. He’s not having a teacher saying, “OK, these pages is what needs to be done.” He got to choose the pages he wants to do. He gets a little break from the writing.

Mother #2 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 260 total minutes on logs):
I was planning on getting him books for the summer anyway to do. So I liked it. It was refreshing. We had time together.

Mother #5 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 250 total minutes on logs):
Well, I think he got a sense of accomplishment when he did it himself and he did so many pages you know, he got something out of it. Right or wrong, he accomplished it and maybe a couple of days went above what he’s supposed to do, so it kind of gave him a sense of he could do that. It’s easy. Every now and then you need that kind of motivation. The first couple of pages that were easy so that probably helped him.

Father #32 of a 2nd grade girl (DRA growth was 4; 120 total minutes on logs)
Father #33 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 8; 115 total minutes on logs):
I guess the way it was laid out. It was organized good. It was easy to do, just open it up and do it.

Mother #3 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 230 total minutes on logs):
I enjoyed the time together. I felt that I was part of his learning process. And, like I said, it gave me knowledge of things I could do; little quick pages of spelling words and consonant blends and picking them out and one page said, “Next story you read try to find compound words and pick them out.” We do that when we drive we see who can see the most campers. So I thought that would be really fun to do in stories, “Oh, I saw a compound word!” Make a game out of it. I found the little fun things you can do make a difference. He likes that kind of things. Who can spy the most?

Mother #18 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 257 total minutes on logs):
I think it really gave me; I didn’t have to feel like I was bringing him here and it was a teacher helping him, but I didn’t play a part in it. I felt that, you know, that gave me an inlet to helping him, so I felt really positive about it.

8. What additional comments would you like to make?

Mother #9 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was –4; 300 total minutes on logs):
None I can think of, I think that everything you’re doing so far is working for my child so I can’t really think of anything to do.

Mother #22 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 240 total minutes on logs):
No, I love the program. I would want if he can next year, I would put him through next year, too.

Mother #2 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 260 total minutes on logs):
It was fine. I mean, you know, the papers, there were good instructions on the top, you know. It was easy to figure out how to do them. It was fine.

Mother #5 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 250 total minutes on logs):
Not that I can think of unless it’s bribery or money. They can fund him so he’ll sit down and learn and I don’t know; it’s just a concept he has to grasp. It’s just something you have to do; you just do it and quit gripping about it and it’s over.

Father #32 of a 2nd grade girl (DRA growth was 4; 120 total minutes on logs)
Father #33 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 8; 115 total minutes on logs):
I can’t think of anything.

Mother #3 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 230 total minutes on logs):
I would do a combination of the activity pages and reading. Make it a half hour or 20 minutes. Until you get settled in you’re spending more than 15 minutes with your child anyway. So I would say, “Do some activity pages and here is a book that’s his level to read with him.” Cause that’s what I struggle with. Find the book at the appropriate level.
You go to the public library and there is not a book with a level 12 or level 14, so I don’t know which book to pick that will challenge him yet still be at his level. He enjoys going to the library and choosing books, but I don’t know which ones to get. I think he would enjoy the split, too. Like, we would do a few minutes of the activity pages and then we’ll read a story.

Mother #18 of a 3rd grade boy (DRA growth was 2; 257 total minutes on logs):
No, I can’t think of anything because I thought it was a wonderful program. I really did.

**Listening to Child Read**

1. How do you think listening to your child read helped your child regarding reading improvement?

Mother #23 of a 6th grade boy (DRA growth was 0; 242 total minutes on logs):
I think it helps him because he tries to, uh, if he don’t know a word I make him try to work it out. The most at this level he is doing pretty good.

Grandmother #27 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 350 total minutes on logs):
Oh yes, because it’s practice. If he didn’t do it he could lose it, you know. He just keeps practicing and gets better.

Mother #8 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was 12; 162 total minutes on logs):
I think that the practice is helpful, it’s just that she doesn’t always, there’s frustration involved in it too, cause she doesn’t always want to do it and sometimes I get frustrated and sometimes I don’t think it’s the experience it should be between me and her and that’s part of the reason I bring her to somebody else. Sometimes I think I’m not as patient as letting her sound things out. Sometimes, I think she wants to get it over and be done with. Like she’s not really focusing on what she needs to focus on. I don’t know if our time at home is really that positive other than she is doing it. As I try to get her to pause at the periods and stuff, cause she’s sorda at home she’s doing it because, sometimes she wants to. That’s always sporadic when she wants to and when she doesn’t want to. Other than getting some practice, I can say she does that, I don’t think it’s the positive experience it’s meant to be all the time.

Mother #29 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 237 total minutes on logs):
A lot. Big time, a lot. Before he would read a page and we would read a page and he would tell us what we read.

Mother #1 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 385 total minutes on logs):
I do. One, it builds his confidence up and two, if I’m able to read with him and he struggles on a word then I can tell him or help him sound that word out. Where as before if I wasn’t listening well with him he was probably reading his words incorrectly.

Mother #15 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 235 total minutes on logs):
I’ve walked through the positive reinforcement and stuff has helped build his confidence. He attempts, he actually tries instead of just giving up.

Mother #34 of a 1st grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 199 total minutes on logs):
It has. I think he’s pronouncing words a lot better. Sometimes I just want to tell him the word, but then I have him pronounce it out.

2. What did you think about filling out the Student Reading Log forms?

Mother #23 of a 6th grade boy (DRA growth was 0; 242 total minutes on logs):
It helped him keep on track cause he would say; “I don’t want to do this today!” I’d say you have to read at least 15 minutes. Some days we’d get started reading and he’d read a little more because we’d get interested or want to finish that page we were on.

Grandmother #27 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 350 total minutes on logs):
It kind of keeps us both on track that he’s doing it. I don’t forget and he doesn’t forget.

Mother #8 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was 12; 162 total minutes on logs):
I think it’s a motivator for her because she feels bad, because like the one week she didn’t really read that much, she was sick and I don’t think she can read when she’s sick, but she made sure to write on the form for you that she was sick. So, I think it’s more of a motivator for her. And actually it helped me like during the regular school year because they do that, too, track the reading, practice the math facts. I had another column for math facts. It keeps me accountable, too. She does like to please, she’s very much into pleasing.

Mother #29 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 237 total minutes on logs):
That was fine. We do that at school. He would bring home a monthly one and we have to write the books he read.

Mother #1 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 385 total minutes on logs):
I think that’s a good idea because it forces you more to make sure you get that quality time with him, one on one. We did that in his first grade. He had reading logs to fill out daily or at least he had 15 books to read a month, but I think this forces you to make that one on one time daily when you fill that out and also it lets them know how many minutes they have read for a weeks time.

Mother #15 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 235 total minutes on logs):
I don’t mind I just forget. You know I need to go back and fix it.

Mother #34 of a 1st grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 199 total minutes on logs):
It was pretty good. I thought it was very informative.

3. How did your child respond to you listening to them read independently?
Mother #23 of a 6th grade boy (DRA growth was 0; 242 total minutes on logs):
Most days, pretty good. Some day, uh, or sometimes, I should say, I’d tell him, after he figures the word out, if he doesn’t say it quite right, I tell him. He gets mad and says, “No! That’s not right.” That’s not how you say it, (child’s name). We’d argue a little bit that way of how you say the words. We have a problem with him arguing with me because he thinks I don’t know.

Grandmother #27 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 350 total minutes on logs):
Fine. There’s no problem. When he gets stuck he just looks at me. I just help him break it down. He gets impatient if you don’t give it to him shortly.

Mother #8 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was 12; 162 total minutes on logs):
She actually waits for me. Every once in a while she’ll say, “I’ll just sit over here and do my reading.” Most of the time she wants to read with me, until I come and sit down and I can listen to her. So, I guess it does give them some one on one attention and they like books; I’ve always read to them, it’s just my kids are hard to please so they tend to like me to read to them. I’m not gonna to fight with her. I’m trying to not make it a negative thing. She’s actually being very cooperative and enjoying coming, so that’s a positive. We have tons of books so I sorda let her pick something she likes. She doesn’t always stop and make sense, no a lot of times she’s just reading.

Mother #29 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 237 total minutes on logs):
Good! If we weren’t paying attention or drift off he would say, “Mom, did you hear what I said?” “Yes, we heard.”

Mother #1 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 385 total minutes on logs):
Very, very positive. I believe that since he’s started this, and not so much the increase in the levels, but he’s very proud of himself. “Mommy! I’ve moved up more levels. I’ve moved up four more levels.” But, also because he has; I think in the beginning of the year when he was assessed in first grade he was below the class average and then he was in the Title I program and I think that helped him build more confidence, but, this has really, you know he says, “I’m almost gonna be able to read chapter books.” He’s so excited!

Mother #15 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 235 total minutes on logs):
Sometimes, he gets a bit nervous and then he doesn’t want to mess up. It depends on his attitude; how he begins. If he thinks it’s going to be too hard then he obviously runs into a wall. If he goes into it saying, “OK, I can do this.” You know what I mean? Then, it’s a little easier for him. But, he enjoys reading to me sometimes.

Mother #34 of a 1st grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 199 total minutes on logs):
He was excited. He wants me to listen to him read more.

4. What did your child say about listening to them read?
Mother #23 of a 6th grade boy (DRA growth was 0; 242 total minutes on logs):
Uh, like sometimes before we got started reading or we read, he would flip to the next page just to see what was coming up tomorrow. “This is about such and such.” So he got a little excited about reading the next day.

Grandmother #27 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 350 total minutes on logs):
Nope, he’s always quiet.

Mother #8 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was 12; 162 total minutes on logs):
She’ll stop every once in a while and chat a little bit.

Mother #29 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 237 total minutes on logs):
The one book I can remember it was about cars and he went, “I didn’t know this, that’s neat!” And something about the first racetrack, or something, he really enjoyed that.

Mother #1 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 385 total minutes on logs):
I do know that with the more difficult books that he was reading and as he progressed through this program he would, it wouldn’t; the comprehension, the stories wouldn’t interest him if they weren’t something he was interested in. And I think at that age level I think that would still be important to them to find books their interested in. And he would pick out more books that dealt with animals, beaches and things like that, that he’s more interested in. But, I think that what he’s telling me is; some of those books that had questions at the bottom and he would always say, “Don’t turn the page until you answer me the question.” That would tell me that he is starting to comprehend the stories in the books. He would say, “Don’t turn the page until I answer,” to see if I have the right answer, cause the next page would give you that answer.

Mother #15 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 235 total minutes on logs):
Yeah, about the story. He has exclamations; he has thoughts about what people are doing in the story; whether they’re smart or (pause) or dumb.

Mother #34 of a 1st grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 199 total minutes on logs):
Not really. He just; he likes me to listen to him read. He gets excited about it and I’ve noticed him pronouncing words a lot better since the beginning of the summer.

5. What types of changes did you experience in how you view reading instruction as you listened to your child read?

Mother #23 of a 6th grade boy (DRA growth was 0; 242 total minutes on logs):
I notice he is doing more fluently. I can tell a big difference from last year to this year. The teacher told me not to fight with him at home; we’d deal with it at school. I wouldn’t make him read at home last year, just his homework. He’d have to read that. I would let him do what he could do and I would help him with what he couldn’t do.

Grandmother #27 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 350 total minutes on logs):
I’m used to listening to him read. Since he’s been in school we’ve worked with him.

Mother #8 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was 12; 162 total minutes on logs):
We do it during the school year, too. You know I’m counting more on the experts to take care of her. She’s in learning support and SOARS and all that stuff. Actually she’s not in learning support she’s in Title I. We’ve had these strategies. It’s not really anything new to me.

Mother #29 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 237 total minutes on logs):
Umm, well we notice he’s not putting; when he reads he likes to put in words that’s not there, that he thinks sound better than is actually in the book and he’s not doing that as much.

Mother #1 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 385 total minutes on logs):
I would just probably; I have encouraged him more and given him more positive feedback. Probably showed more interest with one on one reading and sitting down with him.

Mother #15 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 235 total minutes on logs):
I noticed changes based on the paper you guys gave me. The comments you can make; I try to use them a lot more. Before it was more like a sigh and I would lose patience. I’ve started using strategies. They’ve helped.

Mother #34 of a 1st grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 199 total minutes on logs):
Yeah, I let him pronounce the words more than me pronounce the words. I notice I do that a lot cause I just try to tell him the words so he’ll just read the story.

6. What type of frustrations did you experience as you listened to your child read?

Mother #23 of a 6th grade boy (DRA growth was 0; 242 total minutes on logs):
When he’s trying to figure out a word, he pretty much knows the strategies he can use now, and he tries it, and sometimes he’ll say, “No, that’s not a “c” it’s a “k”, or the other way around, and try to make him try it again. Sometimes he gets frustrated and don’t want to do it and yells at me. Then if he don’t get it after two seconds or so, then I will tell him the word. Then I tell him to say it or go back and read the sentence, which most the time he does it, but he gets a spell where, well, he don’t want to cooperate. He’s just a boy.

Grandmother #27 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 350 total minutes on logs):
No, very easy; very comfortable.

Mother #8 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was 12; 162 total minutes on logs):
The frustration I think is she’s not always doing it properly and I try to weigh when I jump in and when I don’t jump in and then if I do jump in she gets a little frustrated.
Well, I want her to read properly and I want if she’s not pausing the way she should be or not getting the word, she’s not getting anything from the reading, other than reading most of the words correctly, which is something, but it’s not really the jist of reading. I want her to enjoy reading and she’s not going to understand the enjoyment of reading if she doesn’t do it, so I don’t argue with her because I don’t want to make it a negative experience, but on the same token I know she’s not getting it.

Mother #29 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 237 total minutes on logs):
Since he’s been in this program? No, before at the end of the year he was being really slow about it, but now he’s reading and he wasn’t stopping at the periods. He’d just read right through them and he’s doing that now.

Mother #1 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 385 total minutes on logs):
No, none at all. Very positive. Saw a big change just from the beginning of first grade until now. And I think that one on one time for a solid hour really helps with his instructor. One on one with one instructor.

Mother #15 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 235 total minutes on logs):
Yes, because sometimes (son’s name) will look at the first letter, instead of looking at the whole word. Sometimes he might just focus on the pictures searching for something in the pictures and it’s not there and my frustrations lie with him in that area because I want him to look at the word. I know that pictures can help; but for him to look at the word and try it before either giving up or guessing away at it.

Mother #34 of a 1st grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 199 total minutes on logs):
Yeah, he gets kind of like, I don’t know how to explain it; he gets frustrated when he starts missing a few words and stuff and he’s like, “I just don’t want to read this anymore.” And I don’t know how to get him back on track there. When he comes to that word it just seems he misses that word and then I try to get him to say it five or ten times so he’ll remember it. I didn’t know what to do. It seems like we get stuck on certain words and it’s like how do you get him to learn those?

7. What did you like best about listening to your child read?

Mother #23 of a 6th grade boy (DRA growth was 0; 242 total minutes on logs):
How he has improved. I told him you’re doing a really good job. There are some words I thought, there is no way he’s going to get it. He popped that off like nothing. Some of the easier words he gets mixed up on. That was surprising he got some of the harder words. He got it! Some of them were pretty long words.

Grandmother #27 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 350 total minutes on logs):
He’s a grandson and I enjoy him. I enjoy being with him.

Mother #8 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was 12; 162 total minutes on logs):
I like when she wants me to listen to her and I actually like when she wants to cooperate, because one of my concerns is I think she is much brighter than what she shows at school and everything, but I don’t know if she is just doing it for me. I don’t know if she is actually using her skills. I think she is much brighter than what she shows at school and everything, but I’m not sure if that’s because she is doing it to please me. That’s the main thing. Every once in a while I see little signs of that.

Mother #29 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 237 total minutes on logs):
Hearing him actually able to do it without correcting himself and compared to what his teacher was saying. We always seen he did it for us, but he wasn’t doing it for her.

Mother #1 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 385 total minutes on logs):
Just understanding the words as he’s learning them.

Mother #15 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 235 total minutes on logs):
I enjoy hearing him succeed, seeing him grow and how far he has come. His confidence has grown. It’s no longer a fight. He will pick up a book and says, “Oh, can we read this?”

Mother #34 of a 1st grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 199 total minutes on logs):
How he gets tickled on some of the stories. He’s so funny and then he turned around and says, “Mom, I read this book already.” And I was like, “Alright, then you should know all the words.” So he likes to read the books he’s already read.

8. What additional comments would you like to make?

Mother #23 of a 6th grade boy (DRA growth was 0; 242 total minutes on logs):
I think it’s a good thing that they have this. I appreciate the extra help he can get (in tutoring) that’s not me.

Grandmother #27 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 4; 350 total minutes on logs):
Not really.

Mother #8 of a 4th grade girl (DRA growth was 12; 162 total minutes on logs):
I think it’s been a positive experience. She enjoys the teacher she’s working with. She’s really great. I could not of matched her up with somebody better that she would really like. I think that’s been a very positive.

Mother #29 of a 4th grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 237 total minutes on logs):
It really helped. It’s a good program.

Mother #1 of a 2nd grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 385 total minutes on logs):
No, I would definitely continue it and I think it was very helpful for my son. I know he was struggling in the beginning of last year and how it helped him progress. I think it will help him have a higher confidence level going into 2nd grade.
Mother #15 of a 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade boy (DRA growth was 10; 235 total minutes on logs):
It would be good if I could watch a tutoring session more than once. I think it was all pretty well done.

Mother #34 of a 1\textsuperscript{st} grade boy (DRA growth was 6; 199 total minutes on logs):
I like this tutoring because I went to Sylvan Learning Center and they were going to charge me $150 just to test him and an hour of tutoring for $36. What happened was _____ Elementary School, they didn’t really help and I was really irritated. And when we moved here in October he was behind. I kept asking at the end of kindergarten if something was wrong here. He’s doing really well (now). The math I need to practice a little on that now. I guess if you read better, the math will come along. I want him to be smart. I have three girls that are smart and I want four kids that are smart and to be “A” students.
APPENDIX Y

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Quantitative Research Questions

Research questions that were addressed in this study are as follows:

1. Will students whose parents use the explicit activity pages in the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* have a significantly higher level of oral reading accuracy growth than those students who read often to their parents?

2. Will there be a significant difference in the total amount of minutes from each of the weekly times between the Activity Pages Log and the Student Reading Log, and if so, will it make a significant difference in the students’ DRA oral reading accuracy growth level?

3. Will the different perceptions parents have about the effectiveness of the interventions between those who use the Activity Pages Log and the Student Reading Log have a significant effect on the students’ level of oral reading accuracy?

Qualitative Research Question

1. What are the similar and different perceptions parents have in the experimental and control groups regarding parental involvement to improve oral reading accuracy?