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First graders identify sight words in self-selected texts during independent reading

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FIRST GRADERS IDENTIFY SIGHT WORDS IN SELF-SELECTED TEXTS DURING INDEPENDENT READING

by

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Dedications

This thesis work is dedicated to my loving boyfriend, Max, who has provided me with endless support and encouragement throughout this journey. Thank you for your patience and understanding of the sacrifices taken to help me achieve my goals. I dedicate this thesis to my first-grade students who have helped me grow as an educator.

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Abstract

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2018-2019
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The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how first-grade students recognize sight words in self-selected texts during independent reading. The context of the study was a suburban school district in South Jersey involving four first-grade students below grade level in at least one reading area. The four first-grade students, two boys and two girls, selected texts during independent reading. The participants engaged in pre-assessment and post-assessment surveys and initial participant interviews and exit participant interviews. The purpose was to analyze how first graders approach sight words in texts using metacognitive strategies. The students were audio recorded reading self-selected texts during the independent reading sessions. All participants grew in the recognition of regular and irregular sight words from the Dolch list, Fry list, and *Pearson Reading Street* list. The results revealed that first-graders identify sight words in self-selected texts using a combination of metacognitive strategies. The metacognitive strategies included self-monitoring, self-correcting, and using a reading strategy bookmark. Therefore, first-graders can become metacognitive readers to recognize sight words in self-selected texts.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

After writing instruction, the teacher announces, “Purple group, please get your book bins.” The first-grade students know it is time for Daily 5 Read to Self. The teacher reminds the students to choose a spot on the carpet. The children walk over to carefully unlock their numbered book bin and carry it closely in front with two hands. In the background, the students are happily conversing about reading.

The students eagerly disperse within minutes to find a personal space to read. Four students walk up in front of the SMART board to fill the open area. One girl sits down on a multi-colored patterned cushioned, crated seat. A small group of others lie on their stomachs while the majority sit up cross-legged on the carpet. Five students sit around the perimeter of the student desk arrangement. Eleven are spread out and comfortably nestled surrounding the back area of the classroom. Most students revisit a familiar spot on the carpet or gravitate toward the same flexible seat. Other students find adventure identifying a different spot each time. The students show their readiness for independent reading.

The search begins as curious students peruse their selection of fiction and nonfiction books. The students quickly place the book flat on their lap or upright to read at eye level on their stomach. The SMART board digital timer displays twelve minutes. The teacher exclaims, “Let’s build our stamina! Open your book! Begin!” The timer descends from the twelve-minute starting point. The instantaneous sound of books opening is present.

Eyes shift downwards scanning the words and pictures in the book. Twenty students take out the whisper phone and hold it up to the left or right ear. Soft whispers of sight words permeate the room. The three different ways of reading are apparent. Reading techniques are present as children track words with the index finger and use the illustrations to tell the story. Learners decode words by sounding out or tapping out the words visible in the text. Students flip through the pages from the beginning of the book to retell the story. The eyes move left to right on the next page and expressive voices of readers are heard. The joy of beginning readers exudes positive energy.

The attention of the room is evenly shared to award each student individual reading time. The instructional aide and teacher circulate the classroom sitting next to each student on the carpet to inquire about the selected book. The teacher remarks, "Tell me what book you are reading." One girl responds, "*Pete the Cat: Play Ball*." The child turns the page at the bottom right corner. She points underneath each word in the sentence. The student pauses in the middle of the sentence to decode the unknown word. She recalls the importance of the reading strategy bookmark. Just then, she picks up the bookmark from the book bin and points to the designated animal picture. The specific decoding strategy is to get her mouth ready to say the first sound. "I'm going to use Lips the Fish," she articulates. BEEP… BEEP…BEEP. The independent reading time has ended. The reading groups are announced. The remaining students attend to the Daily 5 reading center or meet with the instructional aide to practice sight word poems.

Story of the Question

The story of my research question evolved from five years of teaching experience as a former second-grade teacher. I observed students exhibit a weaker foundation and understanding of reading. Students struggled to decode unknown words and resorted to guessing or substituting the word. As a result, the problem of miscues posed a fake sense of accomplishment for students reading the sentence. The task for struggling readers became mundane as the words pronounced remained different than the text. The purpose to read for meaning was absent and thus affected the confidence of the reader. Even though the struggling learners worked diligently and displayed effort, a habit was established to guess the word based on the beginning letter.

The way the reader approaches unknown words is rooted in Ehri's research. Ehri (2014) identified three different strategies named decoding, analogy, and prediction to read unknown words. Ehri (2014) defined the process of decoding by "transforming graphemes into a blend of phonemes, or transforming spelling patterns into a blend of syllabic units" (p.6) and recalling a well-known word from memory that fits. Additionally, Ehri (2014) explained how the analogy strategy "involves finding in memory the parallel spelling of a known word and adjusting its pronunciation to match letters in the unknown word" (p. 6). The prediction strategy is present as readers use only the initial letters as opposed to including context cues (Ehri, 2014). Therefore, this provides insight into miscues deemed contrary to the grapheme-phoneme pattern in the word. Overall, the three strategies inform my study to help me understand the different approaches readers use during reading.

The origination of the current inquiry also comes from the desire to understand my students' reading miscues. For example, the high-frequency component on *Pearson Reading Street* weekly assessments presented a struggle for students who guessed the wrong multiple-choice option to fit the sentence. I conducted sight word interventions in isolation and using controlled texts to focus on specific skills. After extensive practice, students increased the sight vocabulary on flash cards but demonstrated inconsistent application in context. Students inaccurately read *when* in place of *where* or *was* instead of *went* without monitoring the meaning of the sentence. These inaccuracies lead to a further curiosity of the strategies readers use to identify sight words in texts. I continue to ask why readers substitute a word when it does not fit the grapho-phonemic pattern or guess words based on the first letter (Ehri, 2014).

The problem occurred when students demonstrated a lack of self-monitoring reading the sight word in context. Comparatively, Bradfield (2017) conducted a study investigating fourth graders reading strategies during independent reading. Bradford (2017) found purposeful discussions between the teacher and student provided information about the reader's needs. The results from the study inform my current study to analyze the conversations readers have about sight words. Moreover, Bradfield (2017) examined the impact of self-monitoring to develop comprehension strategies and a deeper understanding of the text. The study allowed me to reflect upon previous experiences of students reading without self-monitoring. The research question of the current study also focuses on the awareness in identifying unknown words.

As a current first-grade teacher, I am fortunate to see the development of beginner's sight word vocabulary. Additionally, it is important for learners to talk about

the miscue and recognize the regular or irregular pattern of the word. Considering the patterns of struggling readers, future research is needed to understand *how* beginning readers understand their miscues when reading unknown words. The present research question looks at the process of identifying unknown sight words in self-selected texts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to gain additional insight into the application of reading strategies first graders use to identify sight words of self-selected texts during independent reading. Ehri (2014) supported this by arguing that "children are taught to read words in multiple ways, by applying strategies to read words that are unfamiliar in print, and by retrieving from memory words that have been read before and stored in memory" (p. 6). Sight words from well-researched lists, such as the Fry list, the Dolch list, and the *Pearson Reading Street* list are identified through repeated reading in self-selected texts. It is expected that first graders expand sight word vocabulary as a result of strategies used and the repetition of sight words in a variety of self-selected texts.

The current study is categorized into three cohesive components. The components are sight words; grapheme-phoneme relations; and metacognitive strategies. Each of the three components have been individually researched and yet all relate to the development of sight word acquisition. In order to attain automaticity reading sight words, the reader needs to understand grapheme-phoneme relations (Ehri, 2014). The development of sight word vocabulary is also a process where whole words are read from memory (Ehri, 2014). Metacognitive strategies allow students to reflect on decision-making to read unknown sight words. Wilson & Conyers (2016) advocate the purpose of

teaching students metacognition "is to guide them to consciously, and with increasing independence, recognize when and how to employ cognitive strategies" (p.9) with intent for different situations. The three components are observed in the current study to analyze the use of strategies and development of sight word reading in context of self-selected texts.

Sight words. The automaticity of the sight word "activates its pronunciation and meaning immediately in memory and allows readers to focus their attention on comprehension rather than word recognition" (Ehri, 2014, p. 5). Researchers have implemented sight word interventions in isolation and in context (Ardoin et al., 2013; Hayes, 2016; Marvin et al., 2010; Temple, 2015; January, Lovelace, Foster, & Ardoin, 2017). Effortless access to sight word vocabulary ensures easier reading and improvement in comprehension (Murray, McIlwain, Wang, Murray, & Finley, 2018). Ardoin, Eckert, Christ, White, Morena, January, & Hine (2013) contended that first and second-grade students, at this stage, build decoding and sight vocabulary skills to develop into fluent readers. Proficient readers depend on sight word knowledge to read fluently and attend more focus on comprehension (Ehri, 2014).

Grapheme-phoneme relations. Research indicates that understanding the patterns in words supports beginning readers (Ehri, 2014; Murray, McIlwain, Wang, Murray, & Finley, 2018; Miles, Rubin, & Gonzalez-Fry, 2017; Ardoin, Eckert, Christ, White, Morena, January, & Hine, 2013). The sight word process begins with decoding to make connections between graphemes and phonemes, correcting a decoding attempt in context, mental marking odd letters in memory, and rereading to consolidate the orthographic map (Murray, McIlwain, Wang, Murray, & Finley, 2018). An additional

sight word intervention used controlled-materials with the results showing that learners benefit from specific decoding strategies to read unknown words in the text (Broz, Blust, & Bertelsen, 2016). This research also presented links the connection between sight words and identifying the grapheme-phoneme relations.

Metacognitive strategies. Research (McGee, Kim, Nelson, & Fried, 2015; Mokhtari, 2017) suggests self-monitoring has a critical place in understand the reading process. Consequently, it should follow that exploring the awareness of building sight vocabulary during reading is imperative. McGee, Kim, Nelson, & Fried (2015) conducted a two-year study observing first graders apply an error-correction procedure including single action chains or action chains. Single action chains resulted in the participant's miscue not to monitor and inaccurately read the rest of sentence, whereas the action chains showed the participant used monitoring and self-correcting. The goal of the current study is to observe how self-monitoring provides learners with tools to understand if the sentence makes sense.

A metacognitive perspective claims the change in students' oral reading errors involves the development of strategies, including monitoring and self-correcting (McGee, Kim, Nelson, & Fried, 2015). The results from the study demonstrated both self-monitoring and self-correcting strategies the first graders employed reading leveled text. Mokhtari (2017) claimed instruction using metacognition should begin as young as preschool. Thus, further research is necessary to better understand the growth of beginning reader's sight word vocabulary from isolation to application.

Research (McGee, Kim, Nelson, & Fried, 2015; Mokhtari, 2017) discussed in this section relates the concept of self-monitoring to the current study of identifying sight words in self-selected texts. Regardless of the research on sight words, there exists a scarcity of research analyzing sight word recognition in context. The gaps in the research exist in the application of metacognitive strategies used to read sight words in context. Therefore, this gap supports further inquiry to explore how first graders identify sight words in context during independent reading.

Statement of Research Problem and Question

The problem the current study addresses is how first-graders develop sight word acquisition in context. Miles, Rubin, & Gonzalez-Fry (2017) findings connected the misunderstanding that a list of sight words should not or cannot be decoded to be stored in memory and instead attend to the grapheme-phoneme relations. Miles et al. (2017) believed a gap in instruction existed between understanding the research of grapheme-phoneme relations yet teaching the whole word.

The current study will address the problem of students substituting words due to a limited bank of sight word vocabulary and strategies to read the word. Miles, Rubin, and Frey (2017) suggested informing students that words should not or could not be sounded out contradicts the intentional focus of identifying the grapheme-phoneme relations to make sense of patterns in the word instead of using less efficient strategies. The learner's ability to spell, pronounce, and understand the meaning of the word is needed to retain sight words in memory (Ehri, 2014). Understanding the process of learning sight words is important in the current study.

Additionally, two types of irregular sight words include temporarily irregular and permanently irregular (Miles et al., 2017). For example, readers struggle to learn sight words that are irregular; not following the traditional letter-sound relationship. Miles et al. (2017) explained temporarily irregular words become regular words after the vowel patterns have been taught to students. Miles et al. (2017) contended permanently irregular words are "violations of typical grapheme-phoneme relations" and are unable to become regular words (p. 718). Therefore, the current study will support the identification of both regular and irregular patterns in sight words.

The problem poses significance for education due to the complexity of sight word development. Reading comprehension is influenced by vocabulary, word knowledge, and memory for text (National Reading Panel, 2000). It is hoped that the results of the current study will better explain the gap between the application of skills from sight word interventions and focus on sight word recognition in self-selected texts. Bradfield (2017) discovered how reading strategies and metacognitive strategies impacted fourth graders' growth and awareness during independent reading. The current study argues that it is also important to study the connections between self-monitoring and sight word recognition for beginning readers.

As a literacy researcher, I am focused on how learners identify sight words in context to gain meaning from the text. The research discussed throughout this chapter aligns with my current study to explore how beginning readers identify the grapheme-phoneme relations to read and store the whole word in memory (Ehri, 2014). Recognizing the different vowel patterns in words is an area of focus to develop sight word vocabulary. Most importantly, readers need to understand why it is important to

understand the patterns within the word. This current study looks at ways that first-graders to identify both regular and irregular sight words through exposure of self-selected texts during independent reading.

The research question is *How do first graders identify sight words in self-selected texts during independent reading?* The sub-questions go into more depth. The first sub-question focuses on the conversations first graders have about sight words during independent reading. The second sub-question explores how first graders improve sight word acquisition using a reading strategy bookmark during independent reading. The third sub-question observes the metacognitive strategies students use to self-monitor their understanding of a text.

Organization of Thesis

Chapter two presents a review of the literature that defines sight words and explores studies connecting grapheme-phoneme patterns and metacognitive strategies to improve sight word development for beginning readers. Chapter three describes the methodology, design, and context of the study. Chapter three includes the procedures of the study and how data was collected and analyzed. Chapter four presents an analysis of the data collected and specific findings of the study. Chapter five presents conclusions of the study, implications for further teaching, and suggestions for further research using the grapheme-phoneme relations and metacognitive strategies to build sight vocabulary in context.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

"Children are taught to read words in multiple ways, by applying strategies to read words that are unfamiliar in print, and by retrieving from memory words that have been read before and stored in memory"

(Ehri, 2014, p. 6)

Introduction

Chapter two presents a review of the literature that addresses the research in the areas of sight words, grapheme-phoneme relations, and metacognitive strategies to support beginning readers. The first section outlines the research unpacking the various definitions of sight words and perspectives to attain sight word knowledge. It is followed by a discussion of sight word interventions taught in isolation and in context. The next section examines the importance of instructing learners to identify the grapheme-phoneme relations to read unknown sight words. It is followed by a discussion of how the individual phase of the learner affects the development of sight word development. The emphasis is on first learning grapheme-phoneme patterns before committing the meaning of sight word read in memory. Finally, the role of metacognitive strategies focuses on self-monitoring to support reading sight words in context. It is followed by a discussion of studies and research exploring the benefits of

teaching metacognitive strategies in reading. The purpose of the literature review is to analyze the current research on sight words focusing on the grapheme-phoneme relations. The chapter ends with a summary of the literature explaining how the present study contributes to the current research on the identification and growth of sight word development in self-selected texts during independent reading.

Theoretical Framework

Rooted in decades of research, there are different theories contributing to the understanding of the reading process with a focus on sight word development. Goodman (1967) proposes the Psycholinguistic Theory that focused on semantic cues, syntactic cues, and graphophonic cues. Ehri (1980) posits two different theories about reading, such as to the phases of learning and orthographic mapping. Perfetti (1985) proposes the Verbal Efficiency Theory, which explains the importance of strong word identification to allow for attention to be spent on developing fluency. Theorists (Goodman, 1967; Ehri, 1980; Perfetti. 1986) profess a deeper understanding of the word identification process to read and store words in memory through the action of automaticity to gain meaning of the text. Each of these theories contribute to the development of sight word acquisition and its significance of the reader's process in making sense of the text. The next section discusses the empirical studies and research focused on sight words and metacognitive strategies.

Defining a Sight Word

Although it may presume a simple definition, there are complex views regarding the definition of sight words (Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Ardoin, Eckert, Christ, White,

Morena, January, & Hine, 2013; Broz, Blust, & Bertelsen, 2016; Ehri, 2014; Murray, McIlwain, Wang, Murray, and Finley, 2018). The National Reading Panel (2000) explains the "method" meaning and "process" meaning of sight words. The method refers to high-frequency, irregularly spelled words students are taught to read as whole words, whereas the process involves storing the words automatically in memory. All words readers practice become sight words, not just high-frequency words (National Reading Panel).

Ehri & McCormick (1998) also define a sight word as a word read from memory but focus on the role of spelling, pronunciation, and meaning. Ardoin et. al. (2013) viewed sight words as two separate entities to include repeated exposure of high-frequency words and decodable words. Ehri (2014) expands a previous definition from Ehri & McCormick (1998) that sight words are read by sight from memory and are high-frequency or irregularly spelled words. Broz, Blust, & Bertelsen (2016) contend the definition of a sight word is any word read sufficiently from memory. High-frequency irregularly spelled words are assumed unable to decode or any word read automatically (Murray, McIlwain, Wang, Murray, and Finley, 2018). Thus, it is crucial to identify the process of learning both the regular and irregular patterns of sight words to commit to memory.

The complex definition, then, of sight words suggests that regular words are decodable and irregular words are not, yet both require the automatic recognition of spelling, pronunciation, and meaning from memory (Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Ardoin et al., 2013; Ehri, 2014; Broz, Blust, & Bertelsen, 2016; Murray et al., 2018). Understanding the extent and application of defining sight words gives purpose to

develop a bank of sight word vocabulary. A bank of sight word vocabulary is necessary for the learner to grow as a reader. Learners need exposure to sight words through multiple instructional methods in isolation and in context.

Implementation of Sight Word Interventions

The purpose of reviewing the research on sight word acquisition is to understand the connection between interventions and strategies implemented. Three studies explored the use of flashcards for sight word interventions. Marvin, Rapp, Stenske, Rojas, Swanson, & Bartlett (2010) conducted a Response Repetition study using flashcards to provide a systematic form of immediate feedback after sight and sound of the word followed by repetition of the word. Ehri (2014) confirmed the need to identify sight of the word through "*articulatory gestures* produced by mouth movements in saying words" (p. 10). The empirical research of Ehri (2014) proves the importance of teaching students the strategies to understand the breakdown of sight words.

Expanding upon the former study by Marvin et al (2010), Temple (2015) used both sight word flashcards and word rings as tools to support first-grade learners during reading. The results from Temple (2015) showed students increased the number of sight words from the pre-test to the post-test getting closer to the goal of ten total words. Therefore, having additional tools to practice sight words during independent reading supports readers. January, Lovelace, Foster & Ardoin (2017) present arguments to emphasize the difference between two flashcard strategies: Strategic Incremental Rehearsal (SIR) and Incremental Rehearsal (IR) for beginning readers. Despite the effectiveness of both interventions, SIR was more effective than IR (January, Lovelace,

Foster & Ardoin, 2017). These findings confirm the importance of focusing on a select set of words, thus connecting to the current study of developing sight word recognition through repeated reading of self-selected text.

The results from the three studies show the impact on the growth of sight word knowledge in isolation through a practice of flashcards and word rings. Therefore, the use of the flashcard intervention shows a positive result to build the learner's sight word bank in isolation. Despite the research on interventions in isolation, the research to apply the sight words in context remains limited.

Broz, Blust & Bertelsen (2016) implemented a SWIFT (Sight Word Instruction is Fundamental to Reading) intervention, using controlled materials of highlighted decodable and nondecodable words on flashcards. The authors categorized and coded decodable or nondecodable sight words from an intentionally blended list of the Dolch list and Fry list to align with the school's reading program sequence. The intervention included the word on the front of the flashcard and a sentence on the back. The results of the intervention showed an increase in sight vocabulary in isolation by adding 72 to 120 known high frequency words (Broz, Blust, & Bertelsen, 2016). Promising results from the study came from explicit instruction of the regularities within high frequency words allowing learners to recognize the word quickly with less repetitions. The data shows the benefit of identifying regular and irregular high frequency words.

The connection between sight words in isolation and sight words in context is represented in two separate studies (Ardoin et al. 2013; Hayes, 2016). Ardoin et al. (2013) conducted a study using both first-grade and second-grade students to compare

two interventions measuring the growth and development of sight words in response to the intervention in context versus out of context. Consequently, the study yielded positive results in favor of identifying sight words in context. Ardoin et al. (2013), claim first and second-grade students are at the stage of building decoding and sight vocabulary skills to become fluent readers.

Grapheme-Phoneme Relations

Three different studies identify the need to focus on grapheme-phoneme relations to support learners. Murray et al. (2018) declared the process to decode sight words starts with connections between graphemes and phonemes, followed by cross-checking to correct a decoding in context, committing odd letters in memory, and rereading a few times to consolidate the orthographic map. Similar to Broz, Blust, & Bertelsen (2016), Miles, Rubin, & Gonzalez- Fry (2017) found an inventive way to categorize sight word lists using both the Dolch list and the Fry list to identify the use of grapheme-phoneme relationships in words.

Miles, Rubin, & Gonzalez-Fry (2017) viewed the sight word process as repetition of the whole-word and then analyzing the grapheme-phoneme relations focusing on the spelling and pronunciation in memory. Therefore, this aligns with the expectation that readers must identify the patterns in words before whole-word memorization. Furthermore, future implications suggest focusing on the pattern of the sight word (Murray, McIlwain, Wang, Muray, & Finley, 2018; Ehri, 2014; Miles, Rubin, & Gonzalez-Fry, 2017).

Orthographic Mapping of Sight Words

Ehri (2014) defines orthographic mapping as a process for the reader to make connections between the written word and the pronounced word to store the words in memory. Empirical studies and research (Ehri, 2014; Mokhtari, 2017; Murray et. al, 2018) expand upon the use of orthographic mapping in reading new words. Orthographic representations of the word attribute to sight word reading, spelling, and vocabulary learning (Mokhtari, 2017). Murray et. al (2018) posited similar theories as Ehri (2014) discussed the need for orthographic mapping. The understanding and connection of orthographic mapping in words changes with development of the reader (Ehri, 2014).

Murray et al. (2018) conducted a study with kindergarten and first-grade participants learning irregular sight words through the mental marking of letters. The experiment identified two different types of decoders to include sequential or hierarchical and encouraged the identification of letters that did not match the regular sound in irregular words. The results of the study show how hierarchical decoders, learners who recognize vowel patterns, digraphs, and silent-e words have increased the reading of irregular words learned after identifying vowel patterns and digraphs (Murray et al., 2018). The content of the study supports the literature in reviewing decoding strategies learners use to read sight words.

Metacognitive Strategies for Beginning Readers

"Students must actively employ cognitive and metacognitive strategies to manage the meaning-making process" (Gaskins & Gaskins as cited in Mokhtari, 2017, p. 133). Metacognitive strategy research supports the development of the reader in making

meaning. Bradfield (2017) concluded from the research that "student practice should be continuously monitored and discussed during reading conferences to further promote metacognition of student strategy use" (p. 18). Therefore, it is important to engage in student conversation during reading. According to Smith (n.d.), equipping students with metacognitive strategies in reading can begin at a young age (Mokhtari, 2017). Metacognition involves the reader's awareness of thinking while reading and monitoring one's own thinking (Brown, 2002 as cited in Mokhtari, 2017). Additionally, the importance of teaching learners metacognitive strategies is well known and connected to reading comprehension (Smith, n.d. as cited in Mokhtari, 2017).

McGee, Kim, Nelson, & Fried (2015) analyzed first-graders strategies of an error-correction procedure and the development of the strategy. The strategies analyzed in the study included both "single-actions and complex error episodes." (p. 275). The single-action error that occurred did not interrupt the student's reading, and the student proceeded to read. Contrary to the single-action, the reader engaged in combination of three or more actions using strategies to read the word to self-correct (McGee, Kim, Nelson, & Fried, 2015). The results from this study inform the current study focusing on the miscues and the process of beginner readers to use strategies to read sight words in self-selected text.

"Self-monitoring one's own understanding and making adjustments to the approach to reading a new text is crucial for students" (Brokenshire, 2014, p. 24). Brokenshire (2014) engaged in self-monitoring response sheets for the high-school reader to demonstrate understanding of the text. Therefore, the results of the study show the impact self-monitoring has on reading comprehension. The current study seeks to

identify the relationship between self-monitoring and sight word development. "Thus, metacognitive strategies involve not only awareness of factors affecting the completion of a learning task, but the ability to take control of those factors by implementing and monitoring a plan for learning (Brown, 1985; Flavell, 1985; Gaskins & Gaskins, (n.d.) as cited in Mokhtari, 2017).

Conclusion

After careful review of the literature, it is apparent that interventions and strategies have been explored to better understand the development of sight words for beginning readers (Marvin et. al, 2010; Temple, 2015; January, Lovelace, Foster & Ardoin, 2017; Broz, Blust, & Bertelsen, 2016; Ardoin et. al, 2013; Hayes, 2016). Ehri (2014) highlights the importance of orthographic mapping to recognize patterns in words for spelling and reading to support students in learning sight words. Murray et al. (2018) too identified the importance of recognizing patterns to read irregular sight words. It is anticipated to observe the recognition of regular and irregular sight words in self-selected texts. The purpose of the literature review is to analyze studies and research conducted based on defining sight words and the need to identify grapheme-phoneme relations present in metacognitive thinking.

The research presented confirms the need for additional research to focus on sight word acquisition in context. The significance of the present study is to use existing research on sight word knowledge to study how first graders identify sight words of self-selected texts during independent reading. Chapter three will explain the research design and methodology of the present study.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

The focus of this study is to understand how first graders identify sight words of self-selected texts during independent reading. A qualitative design affords the opportunity to look closely at the small sample of four participants. Chapter three describes this study as a naturalistic qualitative study of participant interviews, surveys, teacher journal, and audio recordings. Chapter three discusses the context, methodology, and design of the study.

Context of the Study

Harrison Township Elementary School is the second elementary school located in Harrison Township School District in South Jersey. Harrison Township is 19.84 square miles located in Gloucester County. Harrison Township School District received recognition and is named Google Education Reference District and a 2017 Certified Future Ready School. Harrison Township is 19.84 square miles located in Gloucester County. Harrison Township is located 23.5 miles from Philadelphia and 28.0 miles from Wilmington, Delaware.

According the to the 2017 Census, Harrison Township has a population of 13, 015 residents with a median household income of $130, 491. The racial makeup of the town's population is predominantly white. As taken from the 2017 Census, 93.8%

residents are Caucasian, 2.6% are African American, 1.5% are Asian, 2.9% are Hispanic or Latino, and 1% are other races.

The median age of residents living in Harrison Township is 39.6 years of age. 28.2% of the population are under the age of 18. 10.3 % of the population is between 20 and 39 years of age. 26.5 % of the population is between 30 and 49 years of age. 16.3% of the population is between 50 and 59 years of age. 10% of the population is between 60 and 69 years of age. 6.9 % of the population is 80 years of age or older.

School

Harrison Township Elementary School is known for leadership in technology and overall instruction. Harrison Township Elementary School is home to the district's preschool through third grade students. Harrison Township Elementary School offers a Preschool Inclusion Program to support children with special needs. According to the New Jersey State Department of Education, the 2017-2018 school year enrollment showed 67 preschool children, 162 kindergarten students, 175 first-grade students, 170 second-grade students, and 202 third grade students. Harrison Township Elementary School housed a total of 776 students. 48 % of the student population are female and 52 % of the student population are male. The racial makeup of the school is 84. 7 % White, 3.4 % Black or African American, 3.4 % Asian, 6.2 % Hispanic, and 2.3 % are two or more races. 98.5 % of students primarily speak English in their home. Of the 776 students, 16.5% of the students are considered students with disabilities, 12.5 % are considered economically disadvantaged, and 0.9 % are English Language Learners.

Harrison Township Elementary School provides before and after school care for students from kindergarten to sixth grade. Children can attend All Children Smile or Adventure Club. Harrison Township implemented full-day kindergarten in the 2018-2019 school year. Harrison Township Elementary School implements curriculum aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Special education services are available through a series of assessments conducted by the Child Study Team. Harrison Township Elementary School follows the Response to Intervention Model (RtI) to provide in-class support and supplemented pull-out instruction. During the school day, students who qualify for services engage in speech therapy, occupational therapy, and counseling.

Classroom

Room 87 is a first-grade classroom consisting of twenty first-grade students. The classroom contains one general education teacher who is present the entire school day. The classroom instructional aide is present for forty-one minutes a day, five days a week, to support reading and/or writing instruction. The instructional aide meets with two groups of students during the Daily 5 literacy block. An additional instructional aide conducts interventions with at-risk students during the WIN (What I Need) period.

Students. The class consists of eleven boys and nine girls. The age range of the students varied at the start of the 2018-2019 school year. Most students were six years of age turning seven years of age. Two of the students were five years of age and turned six years of age throughout the month of September. Three of the students were six years of age at the start of the school year and turned seven years of age by December 2018. Ten

students started the school year at six years of age. The remainder of the class started the school year at seven years of age. Ninety percent of the students are of the Caucasian race and ten percent are Asian. One hundred percent of the students speak English as their primary language. Nineteen of the students live in a single-family household with one parent or two parents. One student qualifies for free and reduced lunch.

The students entered first grade ranging in academic abilities. According to the DIBELS Next categories of Need for Support, students are grouped as Intensive, Strategic, or Core. The results of the phoneme segmentation fluency portion of the assessment resulted in a class mean score 47.6 phonemes identified in the CVC word. The beginning of the year benchmark goal is 40 phonemes or sounds pronounced in the word. Three students scored at-or-below the benchmark goal. Thus, two students are grouped as Strategic and the remainder of the students are Core.

The second portion of the assessment is nonsense word fluency. The class mean score of correct letter sounds in nonsense word fluency is 42. 6 correct letter sounds. Sixteen students, identified as Core, met or exceeded the beginning of the year benchmark goal of 27 correct letter sounds. Four students identified as Intensive or Strategic scored below the benchmark goal. The class mean of nonsense word fluency of whole words resulted in a mean of 11.2 words with a beginning of the year benchmark goal of 1 whole word read. Six students scored at-or-below the benchmark goal. Four of the students grouped as Strategic, and the remainder of the class identified as Core. Thus, six students and fourteen students exceeded the benchmark goal. The composite score of the assessments only identified two students as Strategic.

The data from *Pearson Reading Street* Unit Review high-frequency words in isolation showed Dan recognized 27/28 words. Amy recognized 26/28 words. Gina recognized 21/28 words. Mike recognized 17/28 words. This collection of data contributed to those who had a stronger or weaker recognition of review words from kindergarten. Therefore, it is important to see how the words are recognized in context of self-selected text in the study.

The NWEA MAP score is one of the factors supporting identification of forming small groups for instruction. The national mean score of MAP Reading for the Fall MAP Reading score in first grade is 167. Twelve students scored at or above 167. Eight students scored below 167. Based on the beginning of the year benchmark data, zero students qualified for basic skills (BSI), but four students receive nonsense word fluency or sight word interventions by an instructional aide.

Focus group. Based on the collection of data and observations, a small sample of four students were selected from the class of 20 students. The four chosen students identified as needing additional support in reading for one or more of the skills identified from the assessments. The four students in the focus group were assigned pseudonyms Amy, Dan, Mike, and Gina. Each participant exhibits his or her own unique personality. The eagerness to learn is evident and the students are helpful to each other. Students enjoy independent reading, partner reading, or sharing composed pieces from the writing journal.

Research Design and Methodology

The framework for this study is centered around qualitative research. Qualitative research affords "a process of discovering essential questions, gathering data, and analyzing it to answer those questions" (Shagoury & Power, 2012, p. 2). The data collected is used to gain insight into the learners' strengths and areas of focus. Shagoury & Power (2012) note how "understanding learning from the students' perspectives is central to teacher research" (p.4). Cochran-Smith & Lytle (2009) contribute to Shagoury & Power (2012) view of research to show how practitioners "also systematically document from the inside perspective their own questions, interpretive frameworks, changes in views over time, dilemmas, and recurring themes" (p. 44). The results from the research yield further inquiry to support the learner.

This type of qualitative teacher research allows the opportunity to examine a specific area in reading worthy of inquiry. "Teacher research is research that is initiated and carried out by teachers in their classrooms and schools" (Shagoury & Power, 2012, p. 2). The goal is to gain a deeper perspective of how students learn to read sight words in self-selected texts. Several factors contribute to this deeper understanding throughout the study. Therefore, the data collected offers the opportunity to examine the process of learning sight words through independent reading.

Procedure of the Study

After receiving approval from the electronic Institutional Review Board (eIRB), an announcement of the study was sent via email. The following day all parents received a detailed copy of the study and parental consent forms for audio recording. Parental

consent was signed and received within the week. Feedback of encouragement was kindly received.

The study took place over the course of five weeks including audio recordings and journaling observations of the four participants. The study is divided into five sequential weeks to describe the introduction of the study, audio-recording, sight word development, and teaching and application of metacognitive strategies. The final week of the study captivates the growth of sight words and strategies present through audio-recordings and observations. Additionally, it is warranted to see how an increase in sight word vocabulary is correlated to an improved attitude towards academic reading and recreational reading on the exit survey. The results from the exit interview serve a purpose to compare new insight of the learner's perception of learning sight words.

Throughout the course of the five-week study, independent reading took place during Daily 5 before meeting for small group instruction. The instructional aide monitored independent reading of the other sixteen students outside of the study. The sixteen students read using their whisper phones independently on the carpet, and the instructional aide circulated the room to check-in with each student.

The four participants read with me at individual times throughout the designated reading period each week. The students held the self-selected book and used the reading strategy bookmark as needed to read an unknown word. The students read a combination of decodable and non-decodable words. It was important for them to recognize when a word can or cannot be sounded out. Students used self-monitoring and self-correcting when a miscue of reading the word occurred. Thus, the purpose was to increase the

development of sight word vocabulary. I engaged in ongoing conversation about the decoding strategies and metacognitive strategies to read unknown words in the text. The exit interview and exit survey were administered at the end of the study.

Week 1. The first week of the study began on November 12, 2018 through November 16, 2018. On Day 1, the four participants were called to the small group instruction table to be informed of the study. The students were told about practicing reading strategies and practicing our sight words using chosen books from the book bin. Most importantly, the four students were informed of the study and made aware of the audio-recordings to take place during independent reading.

On Day 2, the class received information regarding the Elementary Reading Attitude survey and the purpose of how it helps me learn more about them as readers. Moreover, I let them know it helps to plan more reading activities that they would enjoy. I shared how it helps me learn about their own feelings towards reading for fun and at school. I administered the survey to the entire class. I communicated to the students there are a total of twenty statements about reading. I pointed to the different pictures of Garfield. Some students were familiar with the character and others were not familiar. Then, I explained how each statement shows Garfield with a different emotion. Step-by-step the students followed along by pointing to each number #1- #20. I reminded the students their job is to listen to the statement and think about how it makes them feel, not how they think Garfield feels. Moreover, the students were told there is not a right or wrong answer.

On Day 3, I called one participant at a time to the small group instruction table for the interview. The brief four-question participant interview was conducted one-on-one to understand the participants' perspective and understanding of sight words. The interviews each lasted one to two minutes. Again, the participants were reassured it is not a test, and there is not a right or wrong answer. Participants were informed of our brief conversation about sight words. I reassured the participants it allows me to learn what they know about sight words and what we will continue to practice. The question, "How do you feel reading a sight word you do not know?" resulted in two different forms of interpretation.

By the end of Week 1, the reading strategy bookmark was introduced along with modeling of each decoding strategy during small group instruction. The different strategies offered on the bookmark are the following: Eagle Eye, Lips the Fish, Stretchy Snake, Chunky Monkey, Tryin' Lion, Skippy Frog, and Flippy Dolphin. Students obtain the reading bookmark for support during small group instruction and a resource to keep in their book bin. During independent reading, the students were either prompted by the teacher or automatically used the reading strategy bookmark to read unknown words.

Week 2. The second week of the study occurred from November 19, 2018 to November 21, 2018. This was a shorter week due to Thanksgiving break. All four participants were recorded throughout the week. Two participants were recorded twice, and two participants were recorded once. The participants recorded twice were the same participants not recorded in Week 1. Therefore, this compensated for the lack of the recording from Week 1.

The independent oral reading recordings occurred during the reading block before small group reading instruction. Students demonstrated application of the reading strategy bookmark. Observations of using the reading strategy bookmark took place and focused on teacher prompting or student choice. Additionally, it was recorded on a chart which reading strategy was used. The specific attempts to read the unknown word were recorded. Furthermore, students began to demonstrate self-monitoring and self-correcting.

By the end of Week 2, participants are attending to the grapheme-phoneme relations in words and reading irregular words contributing to the development of individual sight vocabulary. Participants are reading more of the self-selected text compared to Week 1.

Week 3. The third week of the study occurred from November 26, 2018 to November 30, 2018. The teacher engaged in less prompting with hope of continued independence using the reading strategy bookmark. The audio recordings increased to at least two for each participant. The conversation of decisions made during reading miscues as well as support for known words.

Week 4. The fourth week of the study occurred from December 3, 2018 to December 7, 2018. The teacher encouraged participants to explain reasoning for choosing specific reading strategies. Additionally, participants demonstrated the use of self-monitoring and self-correcting. Mike received additional attention of audio-recordings due to his areas of weakness. The teacher used the small white board at the

table to provide a visual of decoding words. Sight vocabulary growth extends beyond the Pearson *Reading Street*, Dolch, and Fry lists.

Week 5. Week 5 of the study occurred from December 10, 2018 to December 14, 2018. Week 5 was the conclusion of the study. By the end of the week, each of the participants were re-interviewed with the original four questions from the beginning of the study. The purpose of using the same questions was to note any change in view or perception of learning sight words. Additionally, students took the same Elementary Reading Attitude Survey to note any change in attitude toward academic reading, but also interested to see recreational reading.

Data Sources

Participant interview. A brief four-question participant interview was conducted one-on-one at the start of the study. Students were informed it was not a test but only a few questions to share what is known about sight words. The purpose of the interview questions was to gain insight as to how the student perceives the purpose of learning sight words and the personal feeling towards reading sight words. The intention was to observe the participant's attitude towards knowing the sight word compared to not knowing the sight word.

The four participant interview questions included:

What is a sight word?

Why do we practice sight words?

How do you feel reading a sight word you know?

How do you feel reading a sight word you do not know?

Elementary reading attitude survey. The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1999) was administered to all twenty students in a whole group setting. Even though this study focused on a group of four participants, the surveys were an informal assessment of classroom data. Students listened and responded to a total of twenty statements. The students were informed the survey was not a test and was used to help the teacher see how students feel about reading. The survey was administered at the beginning and the end of the study.

The directions provided informed each student to reflect upon how the individual statement read affects themselves. Students received instructions to circle the expression of Garfield that he or she felt described themselves the most. The four pictures of Garfield demonstrated four different facial expressions and body language. The twenty statements were comprised of ten statements regarding the attitude toward recreational reading and ten statements regarding the attitude toward academic reading. The purpose is to see if the results coincide with the behaviors present during reading instruction, assessments, and independent reading.

Teacher journal. The purpose of the teacher journal was to identify observations of the participant reading self-selected texts. It was noted the types of reading and metacognitive strategies used during reading. Moreover, the conversations about reading the sight words were documented.

Audio recording. The audio recordings were conducted one-on-one with each participant during the reading block. The purpose of the audio recordings was to attend to the participant as opposed to writing during the session. The teacher researcher later reviewed the recordings to analyze the data and identify sight words recognized from the Fry list, Dolch list and *Pearson Reading Street* list.

Sight word lists. The use of the Dolch list, Fry list, and *Pearson Reading Street* list were to assess the participant's ability to recognize sight words in context of the self-selected texts. The teacher used the list to track to see if the word was read in context. The Dolch list consists of forty-one words. The Fry list consists of one hundred words. The *Reading Street* Unit Review list consists of twenty-eight words. The *Reading Street* review words were taught in the kindergarten curriculum and repeated prior to *Pearson Reading Street* Unit 1 taught in first grade. Unit 1 consists of thirty words. The purpose of the three different sight word lists is for the teacher identify which words are recognized most often and which present as a common difficulty. Ultimately, the goal is to determine the automaticity of sight words in self-selected texts.

Data Analysis

The data collected throughout the study was analyzed to understand the strategies first graders applied to read unknown words. The purpose of the participant interviews, both initial and exit, demonstrated an understanding of why learners practice sight words. The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, pre-assessment and post-assessment, allowed me to see how the individual viewed recreational reading and academic reading. The development of sight word vocabulary grew from words recognized from the Dolch list,

Fry list, and *Pearson Reading Street* list in context. I analyzed to see the most common reading strategy chosen and the success of the reading strategy or strategies. Additionally, I analyzed the reading strategy chosen by the student compared to teacher prompting. The teacher journal allowed me to find trends between the development of sigh word growth among the individual as well as the four participants.

Moreover, I analyzed the total amount of time spent recording each student and the total number of sight words recognized from the self-selected texts. The identification of words from the Dolch list, Fry list, and *Pearson Reading Street* allowed me to see the growth of sight words. The data was organized and presented in the form of tables and graphs. Overall, the data was triangulated to identify patterns across the several data sources. Chapter four presents the analysis of data sources and discusses the findings of the study.

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter discusses four case studies. The purpose of the case studies was to select a sampling of students that fit the criteria of below-level readers or strategic readers based on reading assessment data. The findings in this chapter relate to the original research question and sub-questions. The research question inquires: "How do first-graders identify sight words of self-selected texts during independent reading?" The sub-questions focus on conversations about sight words, usage of the reading strategy bookmark, and application of metacognitive strategies.

Each of the four participants' data is discussed and analyzed individually to identify four themes and connections across the case studies. This chapter highlights the metacognitive strategies used to recognize sight words in self-selected texts. This includes the decoding strategy from the animal reading bookmark each participant used to read the unknown word. Evidence of each participant's ability to self-monitor and self-correct to read unknown sight words from the Dolch list, Fry list, and *Reading Street* list is analyzed. The triangulation of results suggests a connection between the application of metacognitive reading strategies and the growth of sight words of self-selected texts.

Dan

Dan is a six-year old boy who displays impulsive-like and attention seeking behaviors. Dan attends to the task at hand with redirection and positive reinforcement. At times, his performance on certain assessments does not match his true ability. Dan scored in the 19th percentile below the benchmark goal on the Fall MAP Reading assessment. On the *DIBELS Next* (2010) assessment, Dan's score of Nonsense Word Fluency was twenty-nine correct letter sounds and four whole words read in October 2018. Dan's score identified as above the benchmark score of twenty-seven correct letter sounds and one whole word read ranked as core level instructional support. Additional data represented areas of Dan's weaknesses. Dan scored below-grade level on the *Pearson Reading Street* assessments for high-frequency words and comprehension. Therefore, Dan received instruction using below-level texts from *Pearson Reading Street* during small group reading. Dan is a below-level reader based on his low recognition of high-frequency words and limited reading comprehension. Overall, Dan's strengths and weaknesses in reading deemed him an appropriate participant for the study.

Influence of Positive Attitude Towards Reading

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey is comprised of ten recreational reading statements and ten academic statements. Each of the items are assigned a score of 4, 3, 2, 1 point(s) designating "4" to the first, happiest Garfield (McKenna & Kear, 1990). The points from each of the ten recreational questions and ten academic questions are added up. The total is out of forty points for recreational reading and forty points for academic

reading. Informally, both the recreational and academic scores were ranked on a scale (McKenna & Kear, 1990).

For the initial Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, Dan circled his response in a whole group setting. Dan scored thirty-one out of forty points for recreational reading and twenty-three out of forty points for academic reading. For the exit Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, the same questions were reviewed. Dan was asked to point to the picture, and I circled it for him. Dan scored thirty-six out of forty points for recreational reading and forty out of forty points for academic reading. The results from the pre-assessment survey and the post-assessment survey are explained below.

Dan's attitude towards specific statements of academic reading changed from a score of 1 to a score of 4.

Q: "How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?"

A: Very Upset Garfield to Happiest Garfield

Q: "How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?"

A: Very Upset Garfield to Happiest Garfield

The results from the data suggest a connection to Dan's behaviors. Instead of being reluctant to participate or engaging in avoidance behaviors, he laid down on his stomach reading his book. When it was Dan's turn to read with me, Dan eagerly stopped in his place and started from the beginning of the text to show his progress (Teacher Journal, December 14, 2018).

Table 1

Dan's Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment Survey

	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Change
Recreational Reading	31	36	+5
Academic Reading	23	40	+17
Total Points	54	76	+22

Growth of Sight Word Vocabulary

The purpose of identifying the growth of sight word vocabulary is to recognize how often Dan recognized the sight words each week and the sight words recognized across the study. Three different sight word lists named Dolch, Fry, and *Reading Street* were used as a basis to identify the sight words recognized in self-selected texts. Throughout the course of the study, Dan self-selected a total of five books: four fiction and one nonfiction. Dan's oral reading was recorded a total of eight times resulting in fifty minutes and ten seconds of oral reading. During the recording, Dan engaged in conversations to discuss his personal interest of the text, and he participated in conversations to build understanding of the text.

Various self-selected texts were evaluated to identify the sight words recognized during independent reading. The collection of sight words was identified from the five-weeks of the study from November 12, 2018 to December 14, 2018. After Dan read the five self-selected texts, the total number of sight words from the following texts were evaluated: *Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes*, *Froggy Gets Dressed*, *Why Can't I Fly?*, *Following the Rules*, and *Let It Snow*.

Dan chose to read an above-level text for first grade, *Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes*. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes* is considered a Level K text. Level K is ranked at the beginning of second grade. Dan chose to read this text three times during Week 1 on November 13, 2018, Week 2 on November 19, 2018, and Week 4 on December 3, 2018. The first reading of the text, Dan recognized zero Dolch sight words; five Fry sight words; and four *Reading Street* sight words. The second reading of the text, Dan recognized two Dolch sight words; eighteen Fry sight words; and nine *Reading Street* sight words. The third reading of the text, Dan recognized four Dolch sight words; twenty-one Fry sight words; and twelve *Reading Street* sight words.

Dan chose to read an above-level text for first grade, *Froggy Gets Dressed*. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *Froggy Gets Dressed* is considered a Level K text. Level K is ranked at the beginning of second grade. Dan chose to read this text two times during Week 2 and Week 5. The first reading of the text, Dan recognized two Dolch sight words; twenty-one Fry sight words; and thirteen *Reading Street* sight words. The second reading of the text, Dan recognized two Dolch sight words; twenty-two Fry sight words; and fourteen *Reading Street* sight words.

Dan chose to read an on-level text for first grade, *Why Can't I Fly?* According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *Why Can't I Fly?* is considered a Level G text. Level G is ranked at the middle of first grade. Dan chose to read this text two times during Week 3 of the study. The first reading of the text, Dan recognized seven Dolch sight words; nineteen Fry sight words; and six *Reading Street* sight words. The second reading of the

text, Dan recognized eight Dolch sight words, thirty-two Fry sight words, and thirteen *Reading Street* sight words.

Dan chose to read an above-level text for first grade, *Following the Rules*. Even though there is not a level for this book, the grade level of interest is K-3. Dan chose to read this text once during Week 5 of the study. Dan recognized four Dolch sight words, seventeen Fry sight words, and nine *Reading Street* sight words.

Dan chose to read an above-level text for first grade, *Let It Snow*. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012*), Let It Snow* is considered a Level I text. Level I is ranked at the end of first grade. Dan selected this text once for the final recording during Week 5 of the study. Dan recognized three Dolch sight words, five Fry sight words, and four *Reading Street* sight words.

The first figure below shows a collection of sight words read from the total amount of texts each week. During Week 1, Dan read *Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes*. During Week 2, Dan read *Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes* and *Froggy Gets Dressed* for two audio-recordings. During Week 3, Dan read *Why Can't I Fly* for two audio-recordings. During Week 4, Dan read *Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes* for one audio-recording. Week 4 appears to have the least amount of growth; however, Dan was only recorded reading one text during the week. During Week 5, Dan read *Following the Rules, Froggy Gets Dressed,* and *Let It Snow* for three audio-recordings. Overall, the most repetitive and recognized sight words across five self-selected texts were the following: and, know, his, in, the, I.

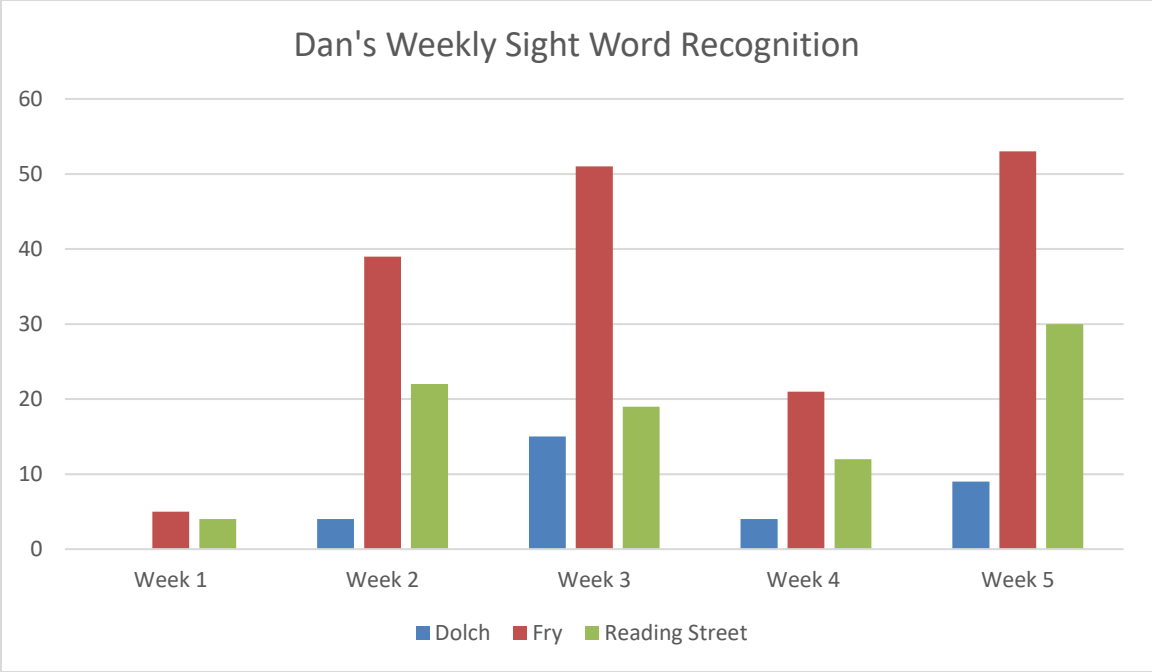

Figure 1. Dan's Weekly Sight Words

The second figure below shows the number of sight words read from each text. The data suggests Dan read the most Fry sight words in *Why Can't I Fly*. Dan read this text twice in Week 3 of the study. He continued reading where he left off and demonstrated recognition of familiar sight words and additional sight words (Teacher Journal, November 29, 2018). Dan read the least amount of sight words in *Let It Snow*. Dan read this text once in Week 5 of the study. There were more descriptive words read, such as lazy, rosy, glowing, cozy as opposed to the types of sight words from the three lists.

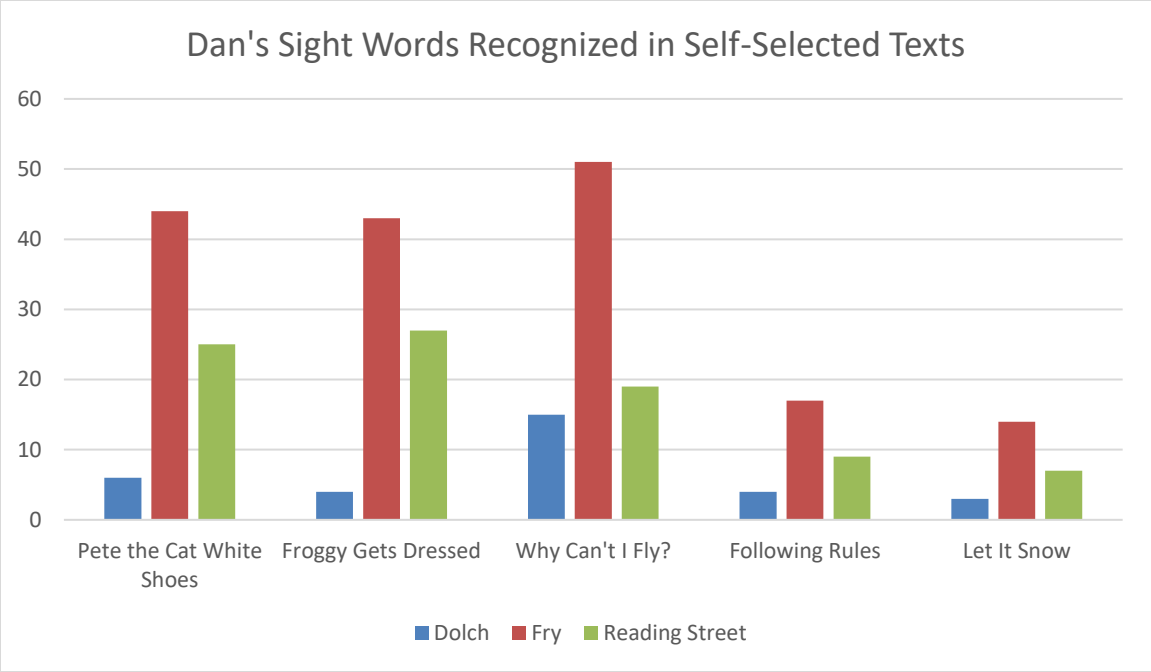

Figure 2. Dan's Sight Words in Self-Selected Texts

Identified Sight Words Across Three Lists

The third figure below shows the recognition of sight words in two categories. The data shows the total sight words recognized from the list and the total recognition of sight words of the five texts read. By the end of the five-week study, Dan identified sixty-four out of one hundred sight words from the Fry list. Out of the sixty-four words, Dan recognized each sight word at least once in context resulting in a total of one hundred sixty-nine Fry sight words. Dan identified twenty-six out of forty-one sight words from the Dolch list. Out of the twenty-six sight words, Dan recognized each sight word at least once in context resulting in a total of thirty-two Dolch sight words. Dan identified thirty-six out of fifty-eight *Pearson Reading Street*: Unit R and Unit 1 sight words from the list. Out of the thirty-six sight words, Dan recognized each sight word at

least once in context resulting in a total of eighty-seven *Pearson Reading Street* sight words.

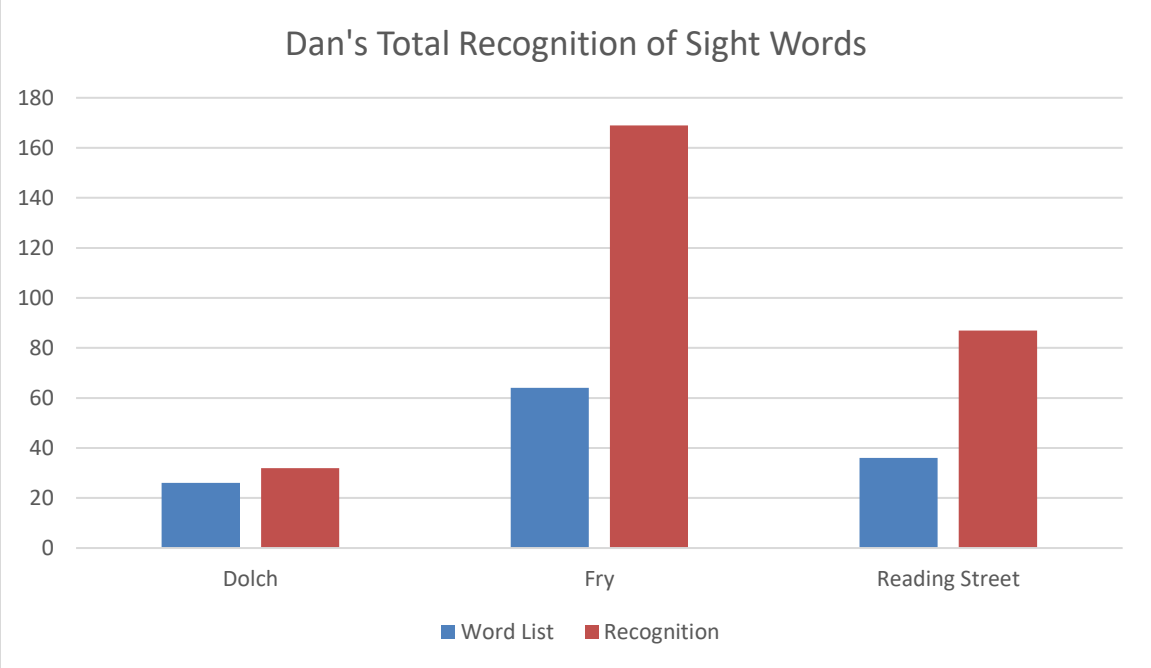

Figure 3. Dan's Total Recognition of Sight Words

Becoming Metacognitive Readers

The application of three metacognitive reading strategies were explored during the reading of unknown sight words of self-selected texts. The use of metacognitive strategies included: self-monitoring, self-correcting, and use of the reading strategy bookmark. A combination of metacognitive reading strategies supported Dan's growth of sight words recognized in self-selected texts. After five weeks of the study, Dan decreased his miscues of substitutions, omissions, and insertions using self-monitoring

and self-correcting. Dan used the reading strategy bookmark to provide himself with support to approach the unknown sight word.

Self-monitoring. At the beginning of the study, Dan was prompted often and encouraged to reread the sentence. Dan self-monitored after being prompted to look back at the text and reread his sentence. During Week 1, Dan inserted the word *and* in the sentence that he orally read "Pete loved his white shoes so much (and) sang this song." (Audio-Recording of Pete the Cat, November 19, 2018). When Dan was asked to go back and explain how he knew the word *and* was not in the sentence, he said, "Uhm...because if it had a little space we could put *and* there."

During the Week 3 of the study, Dan demonstrated self-monitoring by expressing his reasoning. Dan read the sentence, "I can jump so...jump up so high." I asked Dan how he changed what he originally read. Dan shared, "I went back in the text and saw I skipped it." (Audio-Recording, Personal Conversation, November 29, 2019).

By the end of the study, Dan not only used self-monitoring, but his reasoning was clearly articulated. Dan read, "Swirling, whirling, first snowflakes, skating, spinning, on <u>(the)</u> frozen lakes" (Audio Recording, December 14, 2018). He then repeated the phrase "on frozen lakes." Dan was asked how he knew it was on frozen and not the frozen. "If it was *the,* then it would be t-h-e" (Audio Recording, December 14, 2018). This is evidence of how Dan was able to self-monitor his reading to make meaning of the sentence read.

Self-correcting. Dan demonstrated the use of self-correcting during his independent reading. Dan was encouraged to correct his miscue of omitting words. Dan read, "And all (the) brown, and all (the) blue, and all (the) red washed away" (Conversation, Teacher Journal, November 13, 2018). Dan was asked to look back at the sentence and count how many words in the first phrase. Dan counted the words. Then, I repeated what he had originally read and asked how many words there were. Immediately, he responded, "Three." Dan reread the sentence and self-correcting to include omitted word, *the* (Conversation, Teacher Journal, November 13, 2018).

Reading strategies bookmark. During the study, Dan used the reading strategy bookmark. Some of the strategies were used more often than others. At times, Dan was prompted to use a strategy. Each time a strategy was chosen or prompted, the name and purpose of the strategy was recited by the teacher. "You chose Skippy Frog, skip the unknown read and read to the end of the sentence." The student was told to start at the beginning of the sentence and try the difficult word again.

Dan used the reading strategy bookmark for support to read unknown sight words that extended beyond the Dolch list, Fry list, and *Reading Street* list. "No, no _____ Froggy" (Audio-Recording, November 21, 2018). Dan chose Skippy Frog and Stretchy Snake to read an unknown word, *cried*. Dan read the word as *crowd* and then tried pronouncing *creed*. The teacher interjected by identifying the vowel team of /ie/. Therefore, the teacher prompted Dan to use Flippy Dolphin. Dan read the word with a short vowel /i/ and a long vowel /i/. After hearing both ways, Dan confirmed it is read with the long vowel /i/ and recited the word, *cried*.

Dan did not rely heavily on the usage of the reading strategy bookmark. Dan utilized self-monitoring and self-correcting more than the application of the reading strategy bookmark. Some of the miscues Dan made were a result of remembering the pattern of the text from other parts. "Pete stepped in a large puddle (pile) of mud" (Audio-Recording, November 21, 2018). Dan corrected the word puddle for pile of mud after he read the word.

The fourth figure below shows the application of decoding reading strategies across the five weeks of the study. Out of the five uses of the reading strategy bookmark, four were student chosen and one was teacher prompted. The ability to read the unknown word was successful when at least more than one strategy was chosen. Dan did not always use the animal reading strategy bookmark, but the strategies he chose were both Skippy Frog and Stretchy Snake. When the teacher suggested a strategy to read the unknown word, it was Flippy Dolphin.

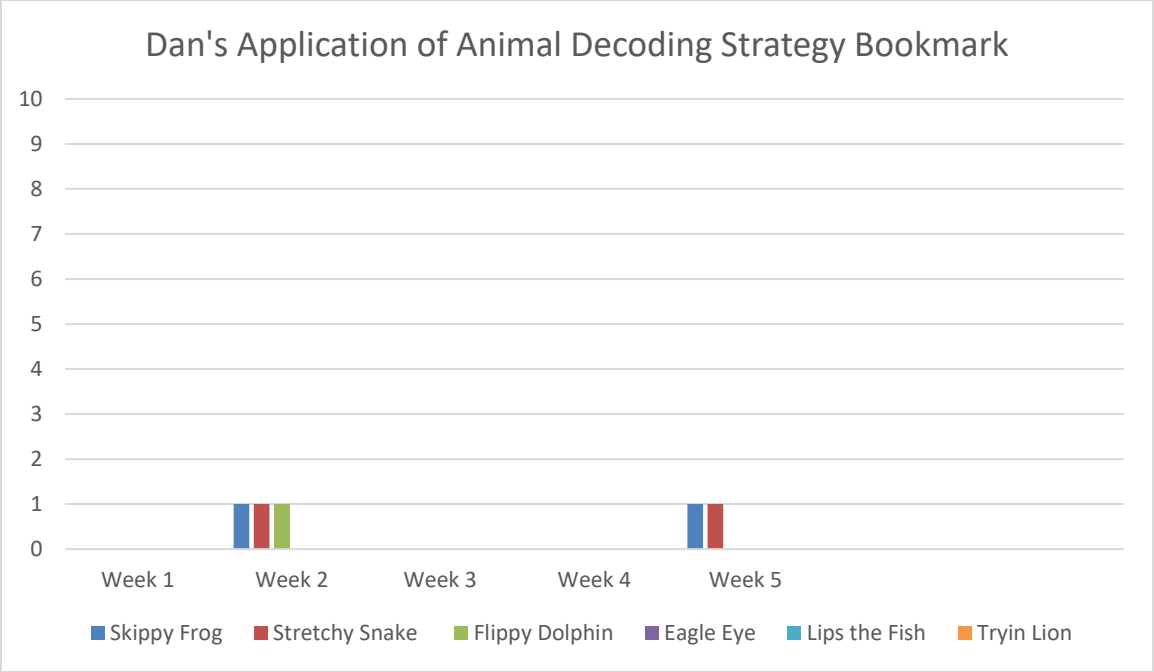

Figure 4. Dan's Bookmark Usage

Changing Beliefs About Sight Words

Dan exhibited signs of nervousness and frustration throughout the initial participant interview. Dan was asked, "*What is a sight word?*" He abruptly responded, "I don't know." Dan squirmed in his seat and displayed a lack of interest responding to the question. I prompted further to see if Dan could recognize hearing the words "sight word" before, and he shook his head left to right (Teacher Journal, November 12, 2018). For the exit interview, he demonstrated an optimistic behavior (Teacher Journal, December 11, 2018). After restating the same question for the exit interview, Dan responded, "It has a vowel and following the rules." Dan's response is evident of the vowel pattern identified when he was taught the long vowel /i/ pattern in *cried* and recalled the word *tried* (Audio Recording, November 21, 2018). His former beliefs of

defining a sight word did not revert to saying, "I don't know." This suggests that Dan gained a new insight in understanding sight words.

The second participant interview question asked, "*Why do we practice sight words?*" Dan responded, "Because it's letting us learn." His tone of voice demonstrated he was stressed or frustrated responding to the question (Teacher Journal, November 12, 2018). For the exit interview, he responded in a similar manner. Dan declared, "Because they help us learn." His change in beliefs from *letting* to help demonstrates an understanding that recognition of sight words is needed for support.

The third participant interview question asked, "*How do you feel reading a sight word you know?*" Dan simply responded, "Happy." For the exit interview, Dan shared an identical response to the initial question. Therefore, Dan's beliefs of reading known sight words elicits a positive feeling. Most importantly, this suggests that Dan enjoys reading sight words he can recognize.

The final participant interview question asked, "*How do you feel reading a sight word you do not know?*" Dan's initial response to the question suggested negative feelings, looking down at the table and putting his head down. Dan mumbled, "Sad. I don't know." For the exit interview, Dan exhibited awareness that not knowing a sight word elicits a pessimistic view. Even though Dan responded, "Sad." Dan's responses and body language during the exit participant interview moved towards a positive direction. Dan did not show signs of disinterest when he responded to the questions nor did he appear hesitant or frustrated (Teacher Journal, December 12, 2018).

Amy

Amy is a seven-year old, shy, hard-working girl. Amy is soft spoken in conversations and during reading. Amy scored in 54th percentile the Fall MAP Reading benchmark score. On the *DIBELS Next* (2010) assessment, Amy's score of Nonsense Word Fluency was thirty correct letter sounds and zero whole words read in October 2018. Amy's score identified as above the benchmark score of twenty-seven correct letter sounds but below the benchmark of the one whole word read ranked as strategic level instructional support. Additional data represented areas of Amy's weaknesses. Amy scored on the cusp of on-grade level on the *Pearson Reading Street* assessments for high-frequency words and comprehension. Amy received instruction using on-level texts from *Pearson Reading Street* during small group reading. Amy is an on-level reader based on her recognition of high-frequency words and satisfactory reading comprehension. Overall, Amy's strengths and weaknesses in reading deemed her an appropriate participant for the study.

Influence of Positive Attitude Towards Reading

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey is comprised of ten recreational reading statements and ten academic statements. Each of the items are assigned a score of 4, 3, 2, 1 point(s) designating "4" to the first, happiest Garfield (McKenna & Kear, 1990). The points from each of the ten recreational questions and ten academic questions are added up. The total is out of forty points for recreational reading and forty points for academic reading. Informally, both the recreational and academic scores were ranked on a scale (McKenna & Kear, 1990).

For the initial Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, Amy circled her response in a whole group setting. Amy scored thirty-seven out of forty points for recreational reading and thirty-seven out of forty points for academic reading. For the exit Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, the same questions were reviewed. Amy was asked to point to the picture, and I circled it for her. Amy scored thirty-five out of forty points for recreational reading and thirty-five out of forty points for academic reading. The results from the pre-assessment survey and the post-assessment survey are explained below.

Amy's attitude towards specific statements of academic reading remained the highest score of 4.

The five academic questions included:

Q: "How do you feel about reading in school?"

Q: "How do you feel about reading your school books?"

Q: "How do you feel about learning from a book?"

Q: "How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?"

Q: "How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?"

The results from the data suggest a connection to Amy's behaviors. Instead of being hesitant, she chose a variety of texts to read. When it was Amy's turn to read with me, she chose a different book each time (Teacher Journal, December 12, 2018).

Table 2

Amy's Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment Survey

	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Change
Recreational Reading	37	35	-2
Academic Reading	37	35	-2
Total Points	74	70	-4

Growth of Sight Word Vocabulary

The purpose of identifying the growth of sight word vocabulary is to recognize how often Amy recognized the sight words each week and the sight words recognized across the study. Three different sight word lists named Dolch, Fry, and *Reading Street* were used as a basis to identify the sight words recognized in self-selected texts. Throughout the course of the study, Amy self-selected a total of seven fiction books. Amy's oral reading was recorded a total of seven times resulting in thirty-nine minutes and forty-seven seconds of oral reading. During the recording, Amy engaged in conversations to share her personal interest of the text, and she participated in conversations to build understanding of the text.

Various self-selected texts are evaluated to identify the sight words recognized during independent reading. The collection of sight words is identified from the four weeks out of the five-weeks of the study from November 12, 2018 to December 14, 2018. After Amy read the seven self-selected texts, the total number of sight words from the following texts were evaluated: *I Saw You in the Bathtub and Other Folk Rhymes, The*

Fat Cat Sat on the Mat, Bears on Wheels, Clifford's Halloween Parade, Pete the Cat: Too Cool for School, Don't Cut My Hair, and Why Can't I Fly?

Amy chose to read an above-level text for first grade, *I Saw You in the Bathtub and Other Folk Rhymes*. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *I Saw You in the Bathtub and Other Folk Rhymes* is considered a Level J text. Level J is ranked at the end of first grade. Amy chose to read this once during Week 2 of the study on November 19, 2018. Amy recognized zero Dolch sight words; five Fry sight words; and eight *Reading Street* sight words.

Amy chose to read an on-level text for first grade, *The Fat Cat Sat on the Mat*. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *The Fat Cat Sat on the Mat* is considered a Level G text. Level G is ranked at the middle of first grade. Amy chose to read this text once during Week 2 of the study on November 21, 2018. Amy recognized three Dolch sight words; eleven Fry sight words; and nine *Reading Street* sight words.

Amy chose to read a below-level text for first grade, *Bears on Wheels*. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *Bears on Wheels* is considered a Level D text. Level D is ranked at the end of kindergarten. Amy chose to read this text once during Week 3 of the study on November 28, 2018. Amy read the entire text accurately from the beginning to the end. Amy recognized one Dolch sight word; three Fry sight words; and five *Reading Street* sight words. Most of the words were repetitive in the text and did not allow exposure to more than naming the number of bears on wheels.

Amy chose to read an on-level text for first grade, *Clifford's Halloween Parade*. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *Clifford's Halloween Parade* is considered a

Level G text. Level G is ranked at the middle of first grade. Amy chose to read this text one time during Week 3 of the study on November 30, 2018. Amy recognized two Dolch sight words, fourteen Fry sight words, and eight *Reading Street* sight words.

Amy chose to read a slightly below-level text for first grade, *Pete the Cat: Too Cool for School*. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *Pete the Cat: Too Cool for School* is considered a Level E text. Level E is ranked at the beginning of first grade. Amy chose to read this text one time during Week 4 of the study on December 6, 2018. Amy recognized two Dolch sight words; sixteen Fry sight words; and fourteen *Reading Street* sight words.

Amy chose to read an on-level text for first grade, *Don't Cut My Hair*. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *Don't Cut My Hair* is considered a Level G text. Level G is ranked at the middle of first grade. Amy chose to read this text one time during Week 5 of the study on December 10, 2018. Amy recognized two Dolch sight words; twenty Fry sight words; and nineteen *Reading Street* sight words.

Amy chose to read an on-level text for first grade, *Why Can't I Fly?* According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *Why Can't I Fly?* is considered a Level G text. Level G is ranked at the middle of first grade. Amy chose to read this text one time during Week 5 of the study on December 12, 2018. Amy recognized six Dolch sight words, thirteen Fry sight words, and eleven *Reading Street* sight words.

The first figure below is a collection of sight words read from the total amount of texts each week. During Week 1, Amy was not observed reading. During Week 2, Amy read *I Saw You in the Bathtub* and *The Fat Cat Sat on the Mat* for two audio-recordings.

During Week 3, Amy read *Bears on Wheels* and *Clifford's Halloween Parade* for two audio-recordings. During Week 4, Amy read *Pete the Cat: Too Cool for School* for one audio-recording. During Week 5, Amy read *Don't Cut My Hair* and *Why Can't I Fly?* The results from Week 5 appear to have the most amount of growth. Overall, the most repetitive and recognized sight words across seven self-selected texts were the following: the, to, I, a, me, my.

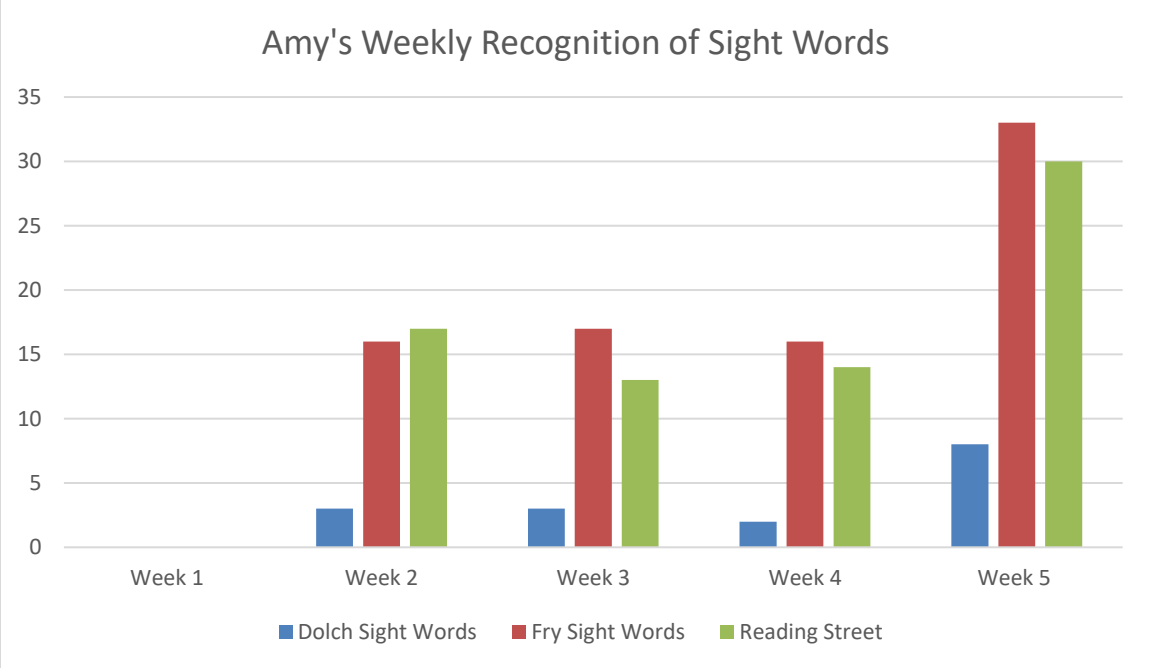

Figure 5. Amy's Weekly Sight Words

The second figure below shows the number of sight words read from each text. The data suggests Amy read the most Fry sight words in *Don't Cut My Hair*. Amy read this text once in Week 5 of the study. She read the entire text from the beginning to end

and recognized the sight words from the Fry list multiple times in the text (Teacher Journal, December 10, 2018). The data shows Amy read the least amount of sight words in *Bears on Wheels*. Amy read all the words, but the sight words were often repeated in the repetitive text. Amy also read this text from the beginning to the end in Week 3 of the study. The sight words in the text were all recognized but in a repetitive nature of reading words such as, on, one, two (Teacher Journal, November 28, 2018).

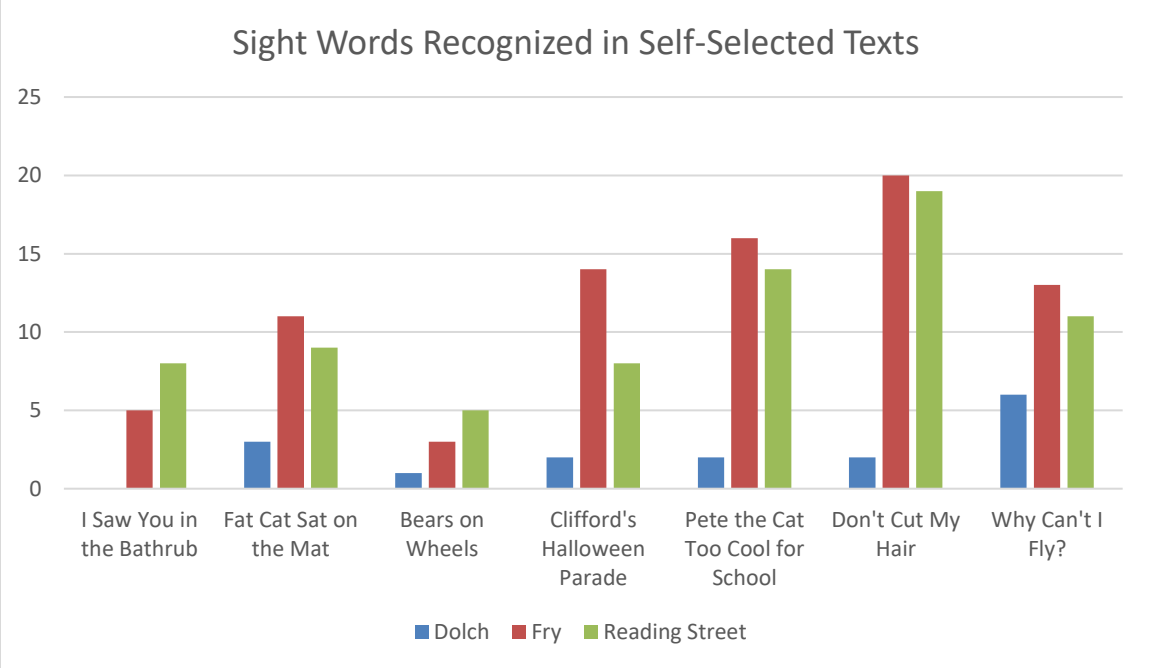

Figure 6. Amy's Sight Words in Self-Selected Texts

Identified Sight Words Across Three Lists

The third figure below shows the recognition of sight words in two categories. The data shows the total sight words recognized from the list and the total recognition of

sight words of the seven texts read. By the end of the five-week study, Amy identified forty-nine out of one hundred sight words from the Fry list. Out of the forty-nine words, Amy recognized each sight word at least once in context resulting in a total of sixty-six Fry sight words. Amy identified fourteen out of forty-one sight words from the Dolch list. Out of the fourteen sight words, Amy recognized each sight word at least once in context resulting in a total of sixteen Dolch sight words. Amy identified forty-three out of fifty-eight *Pearson Reading Street*: Unit R and Unit 1 sight words from the list. Out of the forty-three sight words, Amy recognized each sight word at least once in context resulting in a total of seventy-four *Pearson Reading Street* sight words.

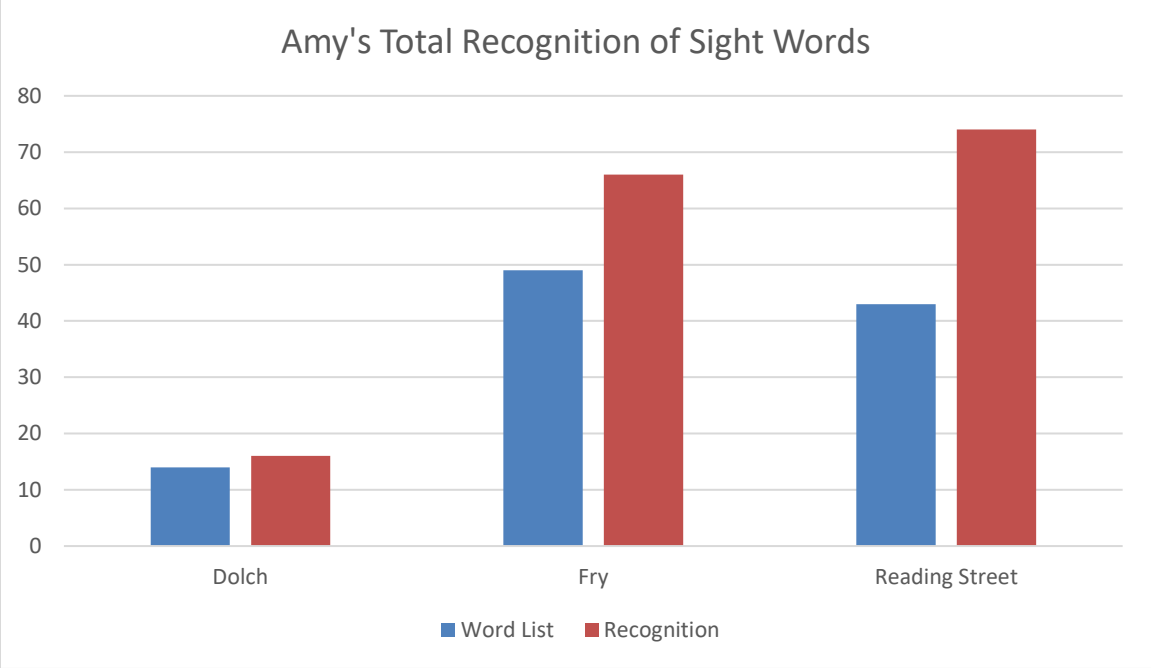

Figure 7. Amy's Total Recognition of Sight Words

Becoming Metacognitive Readers

The application of three metacognitive reading strategies were explored during the reading of unknown sight words of self-selected texts. The use of metacognitive strategies included: self-monitoring, self-correcting, and use of the reading strategy bookmark. A combination of metacognitive reading strategies supported Amy's growth of sight words recognized in self-selected texts. After five weeks of the study, Amy decreased her miscues of substitutions and insertions using self-monitoring and self-correcting. Amy used the reading strategy bookmark to provide herself with support to approach the unknown sight word.

Self-monitoring. At the beginning of the study, Amy was prompted often and encouraged to reread the sentence. Amy self-monitored after being prompted to look back at the text and reread her sentence. Amy pointed to the word *the* in the sentence above the one she previously read (Teacher Journal, November 19, 2018).

> Amy: I saw you in the street. I saw you in the….in a tree.
>
> Teacher: I noticed you originally said *the* and then you corrected the word to *a*. Can you tell me why?
>
> Amy: I saw *the* here.

During the middle of the study, Amy began to self-monitor with slightly less prompting (Audio Recording, November 30, 2018).

> Amy: A boy…a girl brings a hose.
>
> Teacher: I noticed first you said a *boy* and then you changed it to a *girl*. You're right. Can you tell me why?

Amy: I said boy because the other sentence said boy.

By the end of the study, Amy used self-monitoring to provide reasoning as to why it made sense in the sentence she read (Audio Recording, December 12, 2018).

Amy: I can jump up to…up so high.

Teacher: I noticed how you changed what you read. How did you know?

Amy: It wasn't the word in the sentence.

The use of metacognitive strategies includes: self-monitoring; self-correcting; and the reading strategy bookmark to support the success of reading sight words in self-selected texts. After three weeks of recording, Lips the Fish was used to get the mouth ready to say the first sound.

Amy demonstrated hesitation by pausing before reading an unknown word. Amy self-monitored reading the word *a* and *the* when she pointed to the word *the* in the sentence above the one she was currently reading (Teacher Journal, November 19, 2018). At times, she was able to pause before reading and found success. Whereas other times, she guessed any word.

Self-correcting. The examples discussed below show how Amy was able to self-correct reading articles, nouns, pronouns, and adverbs.

"I saw you in the…in a tree" (Audio Recording, November 19, 2018).

"Here comes the girl in the...in a raincoat, hat and boots" (Audio Recording, November 30, 2018).

Reading strategies bookmark. The data from the graph below shows the usage of specific reading strategies during three weeks of the study.

Amy explored four different reading strategies from the reading strategy bookmark to read unknown sight words. Amy used the reading strategy bookmark for the following words: saw, witch, also, brat, and shall. Amy relied heavily on Lips the Fish by using this strategy five times. Amy chose Skippy Frog three times during the beginning of the study. Amy also used Stretchy Snake and Chunky Monkey to read decodable words.

Amy only relied heavily on the usage of the reading strategy bookmark during Week 2. Amy utilized self-monitoring and self-correcting more than the application of the reading strategy bookmark. Some of the miscues Amy made were a result of remembering the pattern of the text from other parts. "She calls the rat my little *bat*" (Audio Recording, November 21, 2018). Amy realized bat has three letters, but the unknown sight word had four letters. Therefore, Amy chose to use Lips the Fish to get her mouth ready to read the word. Amy was able to read the word *brat*, and we discussed the meaning of the word brat and how it was used in context.

The fourth figure below shows the application of decoding reading strategies across the five weeks of the study. Out of the eleven uses of the reading strategy bookmark, ten were student chosen and one was teacher prompted. The ability to read the unknown word was successful when at least more than one strategy was chosen. Amy did not always use the animal reading strategy bookmark, but she did use self-correcting more often. The reading strategies Amy chose the most was Lips the Fish.

When the teacher suggested a strategy to read the unknown word, it was Chunky Monkey.

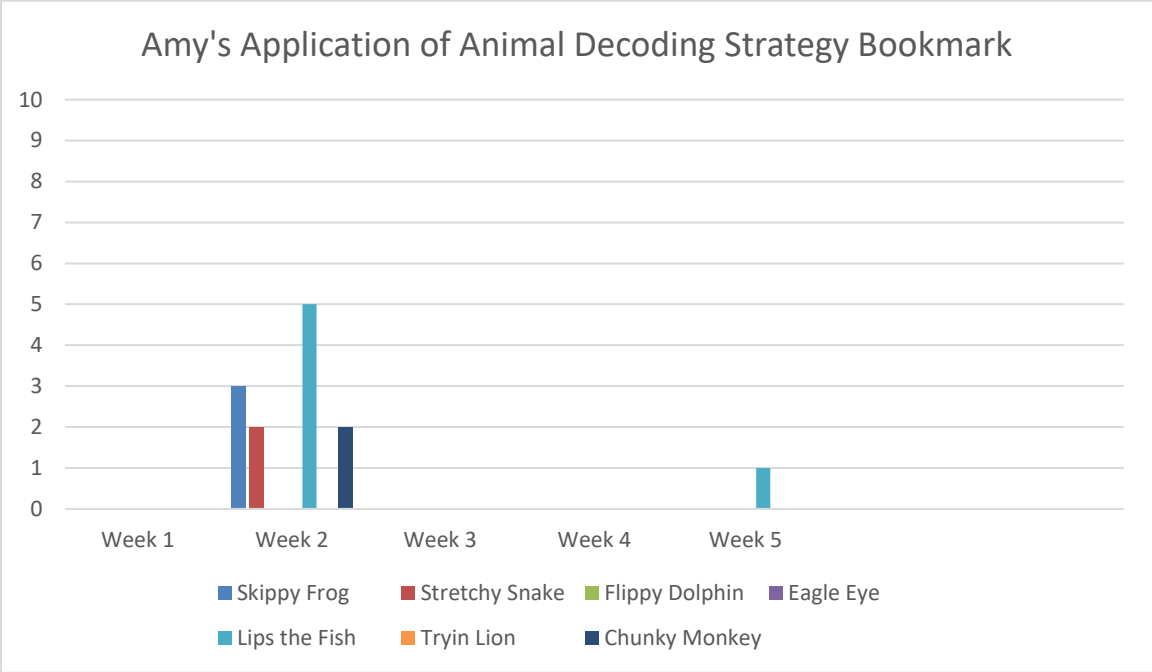

Figure 8. Amy's Bookmark Usage

Changing Beliefs About Sight Words

Amy exhibited shy behavior by responding with brief answers throughout the initial participant interview. During Week 1, the initial participant interview was conducted one-on-one. For the first interview question I asked, "*What is a sight word?*" Amy whispered with a two-word response, "A word." I recorded her brief response on the interview participant form. For the exit interview, Amy responded, "A word that has letters in it." Amy listed specific sight words recalled from memory. Amy

named the following known sight words: I, and, a, then, family, also. The only two sight words mentioned that are not found on the Dolch list or Fry list are the following: family; also. The other sight words Amy recalled were recognized from recordings over the course of the study. As a result, Amy's view of defining a sight word extending beyond a simple two-word response. Amy made the connection of defining a sight word by reflecting upon the sight words recognized in the self-selected texts. Based on Amy's ability to recall specific sight words identified, she demonstrates automaticity of recognizing sight words.

The second participant interview question asked, "*Why do we practice sight words?*" Amy tilted her head to the side and responded in a fragmented sentence. Amy responded, "To know them." Her tone of voice demonstrated she was hesitant responding to the question, and I recorded her response. For the exit participant interview, Amy extended her former beliefs about sight words. Amy promptly shared, "To make us learn." Amy's change from *know* to *learn* suggests she has an understanding that sight words are connected to learning.

The third participant interview question asked, "*How do you feel reading a sight word you know*?" Amy simply responded with a one-word answer, "Happy." For the exit interview, Amy did not change her response, and it remained the same one-word answer. Therefore, Amy demonstrates she is pleased being able to read sight words she knows. Even though Amy does verbally share she is happy after reading sight words she knows, her body language and observations are also evident of her feelings.

The final participant interview question asked, "*How do you feel reading a sight word you do not know*?" Amy responded by saying, "Happy." This response suggests Amy feels a sense of accomplishment reading a sight word she did not know before. Amy's response during the exit interview was the complete opposite. Amy changed her beliefs to viewing an unknown sight word differently. Amy's response to the question was that she felt "angry." I inquired deeper to find out why it makes her feel angry. Amy responded, "Because I don't know the word." It is possible that Amy feels defeated if she does not recognize the word right away, however, we discussed what she can do if she does not know the word. This response shows further support is needed to recall different strategies to read unknown sight words.

Mike

Mike is a seven-year old boy who appears to demonstrate a lack of confidence and benefits from additional wait time to respond to questions. Mike scored in the 28th percentile on the Fall MAP Reading assessment. Mike reads below grade level text during small group instruction. Mike scores below grade level on the reading assessments. On the *DIBELS Next* (2010) assessment, Mike's score of Nonsense Word Fluency was twenty-six correct letter sounds and zero whole words read in October 2018. Mike's score identified as below the benchmark score of twenty-seven correct letter sounds and one whole word read ranked as strategic level instructional support. Additional data represented areas of Mike's weaknesses. Mike scored below-grade level on the *Pearson Reading Street* assessments for high-frequency words and comprehension. Therefore, Mike received instruction using below-level texts from *Pearson Reading Street* during small group reading. Mike is a below-level reader based

on his low recognition of high-frequency words and limited reading comprehension. Mike tends to guess unknown words based on the first letter of the word. Overall, Mike's strengths and weaknesses in reading deemed him an appropriate participant for the study.

Influence of Positive Attitude Towards Reading

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey is comprised of ten recreational reading statements and ten academic statements. Each of the items are assigned a score of 4, 3, 2, 1 point(s) designating "4" to the first, happiest Garfield (McKenna & Kear, 1990). The points from each of the ten recreational questions and ten academic questions are added up. The total is out of forty points for recreational reading and forty points for academic reading. Informally, both the recreational and academic scores were ranked on a scale (McKenna & Kear, 1990).

For the initial Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, Mike circled his response in a whole group setting. Mike scored thirty-one out of forty points for recreational reading and thirty-two out of forty points for academic reading. For the exit Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, the same questions were reviewed. Mike was asked to point to the picture, and I circled it for him. Mike scored twenty-nine out of forty points for recreational reading and thirty-seven out of forty points for academic reading. The results from the pre-assessment survey and the post-assessment survey are explained below.

Mike's attitude towards specific statements of academic reading changed from a score of 3 to a score of 4.

Q: “How do you feel about learning from a book?”

A: Slightly Smiling Garfield to Happiest Garfield

Mike’s attitude toward specific statements of academic reading changed from a score of 1 to a score of 4.

Q: “How do you feel when you read out loud in class?”

A: Very Upset Garfield to Happiest Garfield

The results from the data suggest a connection to Mike’s behaviors. Instead of appearing disinterested, he smiled and was excited during his reading. When it was Mike’s turn to read with me, he shared where he left off and would either tell me what happened in the book or reread from the beginning (Teacher Journal, December 14, 2018).

Table 3

Mike’s Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment Survey

	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Change
Recreational Reading	31	29	-2
Academic Reading	32	37	+5
Total Points	63	66	+3

Growth of Sight Word Vocabulary

The purpose of identifying the growth of sight word vocabulary is to recognize how often Mike recognized the sight words each week and the sight words recognized across the study. Three different sight word lists named Dolch, Fry, and *Reading Street* were used as a basis to identify the sight words recognized in self-selected texts. Throughout the course of the study, Mike self-selected a total of two fiction books. Mike's oral reading was recorded a total of nine times resulting in sixty-four minutes and forty-nine seconds of oral reading. During the recording, Mike engaged in conversations to discuss his personal interest of the text, and he participated in conversations to build understanding of the text.

Various self-selected texts are evaluated to identify the sight words recognized during independent reading. The collection of sight words is identified from the five weeks of the study from November 12, 2018 to December 14, 2018. After Mike read two self-selected texts, the total number of sight words from the following texts were evaluated: *Pete the Cat and the Bad Banana* and *Pete the Cat and the Lost Tooth*.

Mike chose to read an on-level text for first grade, *Pete the Cat and the Bad Banana*. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *Pete the Cat and the Bad Banana* is considered a Level G text. Level G is ranked at the middle of first grade. Mike shared his reason for why he chose this text once during Week 1 of the study on November 14, 2018. Mike stated, "It looks cool." Mike recognized zero Dolch sight words, seven Fry sight words, and seven *Reading Street* sight words. The long vowel team patterns and consonant blends were not yet taught in the *Fundations* curriculum but were discussed

during the reading of the text. For example, the word *sweet* has a consonant blend and vowel team /ee/ of long vowel e. The teacher supported the student to tap out the word as it is a skill taught and practiced in *Fundations*.

Mike chose to read an on-level text for first grade, *Pete the Cat and the Lost Tooth*. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *Pete the Cat and the Lost Tooth* is considered a Level G text. Level G is ranked at the middle of first grade. Mike selected this text eight times during Week 2 through Week 5 of the study. Again, Mike shared his reason for selecting the text, "It's cool."

During Week 2 on November 20, 2018, Mike recognized two Dolch sight words; nine Fry sight words; and four *Reading Street* sight words. Some of the words that presented a challenge included words with consonant blends and long vowel patterns with a silent-e pattern and suffix, such as *closes*. (Teacher Journal, November 20, 2018).

During Week 3 on November 26, 2018, Mike recognized one Dolch sight word; seven Fry sight words; and seven *Reading Street* sight words. On November 28, 2018, Mike recognized two Dolch sight words, five Fry sight words, and four *Reading Street* sight words. On November 30, 2018, Mike recognized two Dolch sight words, four Fry sight words, and four *Reading Street* sight words.

During Week 4 on December 4, 2018, Mike recognized two Dolch words; seven Fry sight words; and seven *Reading Street* sight words. During Week 4 on December 7, 2018, Mike recognized two Dolch sight words, ten Fry sight words, and eight *Reading Street* sight words.

During Week 5 on December 12, 2018, Mike recognized two Dolch sight words; fourteen Fry sight words; and eleven *Reading Street* sight words. On December 14, 2018, Mike recognized six Dolch sight words, twenty Fry sight words, and fourteen *Reading Street* sight words.

The first figure below is a collection of sight words read from the total amount of texts each week. During Week 1, Mike read *Pete the Cat and the Bad Banana* for one recording. During Week 2 through Week 5, Mike read *Pete the Cat and the Lost Tooth*. The number of recordings that Dan read *Pete the Cat and Lost Tooth* varied each week. During Week 2, Mike was audio-recorded one time. During Week 3, Mike was audio-recorded three times. During Week 4 and Week 5, Mike was audio-recorded twice each week. Overall, the most repetitive and recognized sight words across two self-selected texts were the following: the, a, he, is, and, to, take.

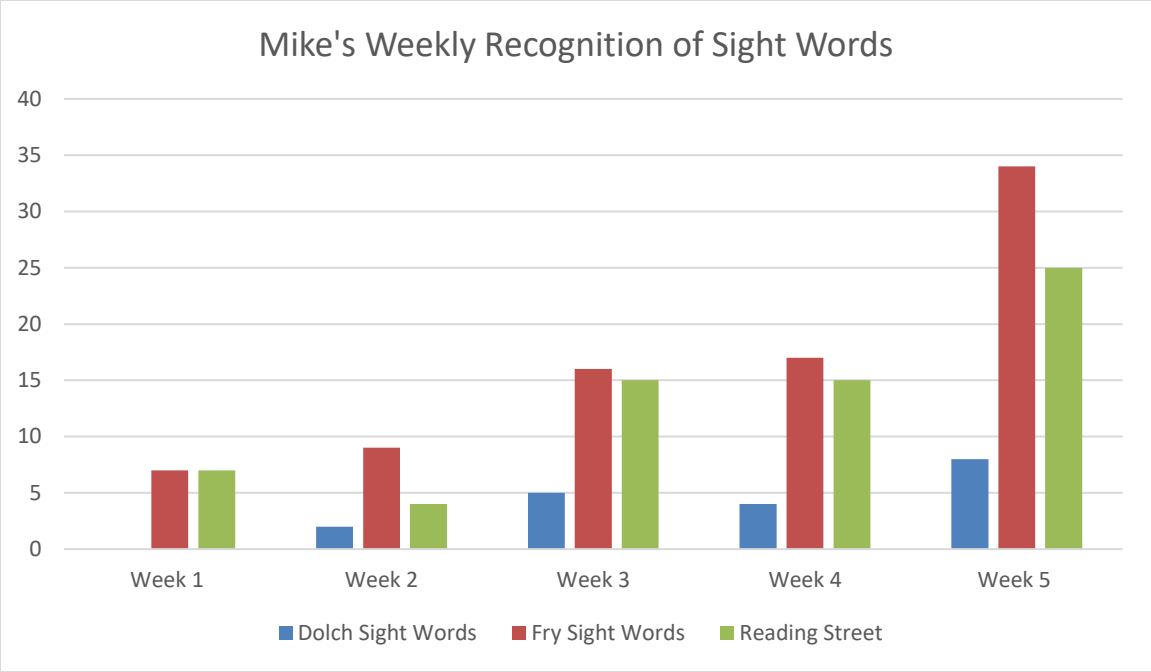

Figure 9. Mike's Weekly Sight Words

The second figure below shows the number of sight words read from each text. The data suggests Mike read the most Fry sight words in *Pete the Cat and the Lost Tooth*. Mike read this text each time from Week 2 through Week 5 of the study. Mike often reread the text from the beginning to end and by the last week read more than halfway of the book (Teacher Journal, December 14, 2018). The data shows Mike read the least amount of sight words in *Pete the Cat and the Bad Banana*. Mike only read a few pages from the text. Mike focused on other irregular words and vowel team patterns. (Teacher Journal, November 14, 2018).

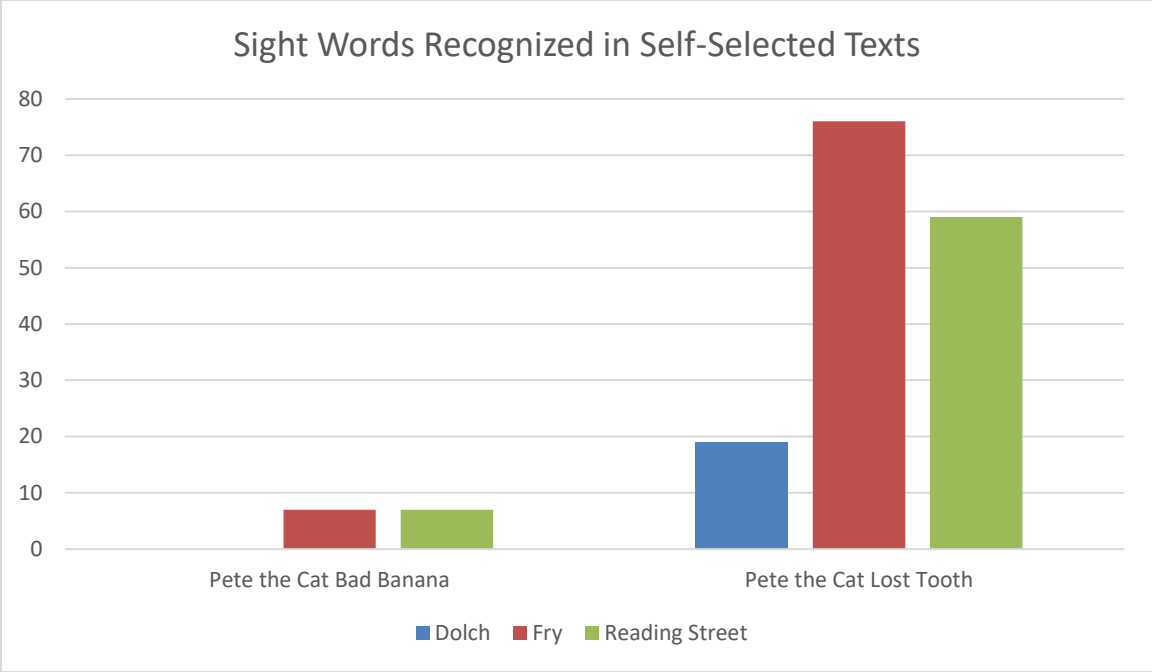

Figure 10. Mike's Sight Words in Self-Selected Texts

Identified Sight Words Across Three Lists

The third figure below shows the recognition of sight words in two categories. The data shows the total sight words recognized from the list and the total recognition of sight words of the two texts read. By the end of the five-week study, Mike identified twenty-five out of one hundred sight words from the Fry list. Out of the twenty-five sight words, Mike recognized each sight word at least once in context resulting in a total of eighty-three Fry sight words. Mike identified six out of forty-one sight words from the Dolch list. Out of the six sight words, Mike recognized each sight word at least once in context resulting in a total of nineteen Dolch sight words. Mike identified twenty out of fifty-eight *Pearson Reading Street*: Unit R and Unit 1 sight words from the list. Out of

the twenty sight words, Mike recognized each sight word at least once in context resulting in a total of sixty-six *Pearson Reading Street* sight words.

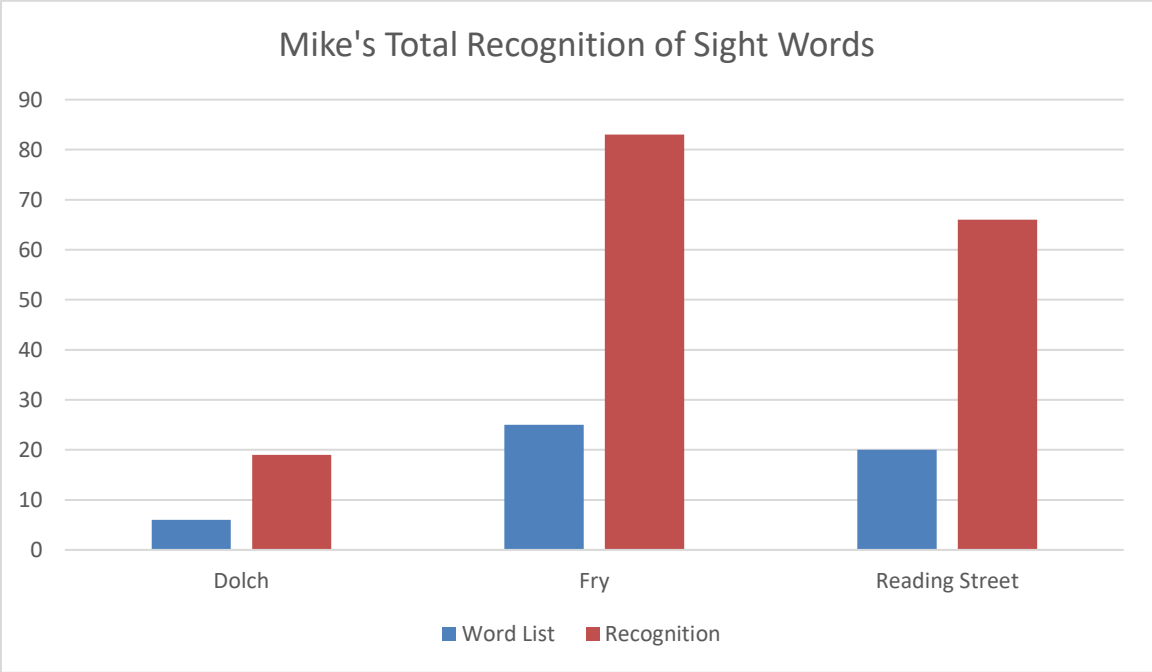

Figure 11. Mike's Total Recognition of Sight Words

Becoming Metacognitive Readers

The application of three metacognitive reading strategies were explored during the reading of unknown sight words of self-selected texts. The use of metacognitive strategies included: self-monitoring; self-correcting; and use of the reading strategy bookmark. A combination of metacognitive reading strategies supported Mike's growth of sight words recognized in self-selected texts. After five weeks of the study, Mike decreased his miscues of substitutions and insertions using self-monitoring and self-

correcting. Mike used the reading strategy bookmark to provide himself with support to approach the unknown sight word.

Self-monitoring. Mike demonstrated the ability to move towards automatic recognition of the word stored in memory. Mike paused before reading the sight word (Audio Recording, November 26, 2018).

> Mike: "Pete lost a tooth. Put it under your pillow, his mom says. The Tooth Fairy will come. Pete puts the tooth under his pillow. He (pauses)"
>
> Teacher: You got it! Use your strategies.
>
> Mike: "He closes his eyes."
>
> Teacher: Very good! How did you know?
>
> Mike: "We did that word before."

Self-correcting. Mike began to self-correct his original miscue by guessing the word based on the first letter and not correcting. Mike demonstrated the use of self-correction in this area (Audio Recording, November 28, 2018).

> Mike: "She gets/gives Pete magic wings."
>
> Teacher: You're right. How did you know to change the word?
>
> Mike: "It makes more sense."

Reading strategies bookmark. Mike explored seven different reading strategies from the reading strategy bookmark to read unknown sight words. Mike used the reading strategy bookmark for the following words: tasty, closes, jingle, hears, busy, tonight, great, and these. Mike relied the most on Stretchy Snake and Lips the Fish by using this

strategy three times. Mike used the most strategies during Week 2 of the study. Mike used Skippy Frog and Lips the Fish to read irregular words.

The fourth figure below shows the application of decoding reading strategies across the five weeks of the study. Out of the twenty-three uses of the reading strategy bookmark, seventeen were student chosen and six were teacher prompted. The ability to read the unknown word was successful when at least more than one strategy was chosen. Mike used the animal reading strategy bookmark the most during Week 2 of the study. The reading strategies Mike used the most were Stretchy Snake and Lips the Fish. When the teacher suggested a strategy to read the unknown word, it was Lips the Fish, Flippy Dolphin, Stretchy Snake, or Chunky Monkey.

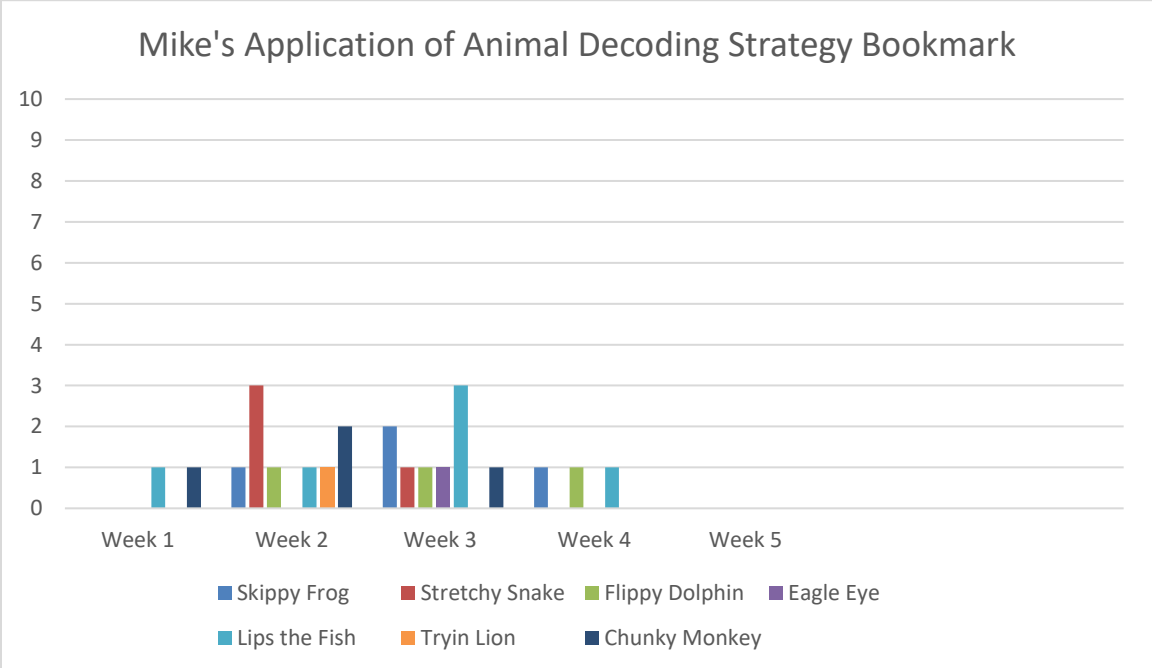

Figure 12. Mike's Bookmark Usage

Changing Beliefs About Sight Words

Mike exhibited a lack of interest throughout the initial participant interview. I asked Mike, "*What is a sight word?*" Mike shared, "It's one of our words. We work on it." Mike was prompted to list any sight words. Mike recalled the following words: you, we, and, where, is, the on, in, to, it (Teacher Journal, November 12, 2018). For the exit interview, Mike's attitude became optimistic and confident of his response. Mike vocalized, "It is when you read, so you can learn how to read." Again, Mike was asked to share any known sight words. He turned to the front of the room and read the words: to, very, also, too, the, he, and, on, in, him (Teacher Journal, December 11, 2018). Mike recalled ten different sight words and connected sight words to reading. Thus, Mike seem to be making the connection of defining and identifying a sight word.

The second participant interview question asked, "*Why do we practice sight words?*" Mike responded, "So we can get better at it. So, everyone can learn to read." For the exit interview, Mike responded in a similar manner. Mike shared, "Know it in your head." Mike's response remained similar to his former beliefs. Even though his response was a fragmented sentence, it suggests Mike is making the connection that sight words are from memory. Fortunately, Mike's positive beliefs suggest a connection between views of sight words and automaticity.

The third participant interview question asked, "*How do you feel reading a sight word you know?*" Mike responded, "Happy." For the exit interview, Mike responded in the same manner. Mike expressed his opinion of reading the text from the beginning and showing the words he knows. "I think we should read all of it!" (Teacher Journal,

December 14, 2018). Thus, it is evident that Mike is optimistic about reading sight words that he knows.

The final participant interview question asked, "*How do you feel reading a sight word you do not know?*" Mike hesitantly responded, "A little bit happy." He motioned a thumbs-down gesture. Then, he changed his response and said, "It means…I'm not really sure." For the exit interview, Mike responded in an opposite way as originally stated. Mike changed his response to "Grumpy. It feels too hard." Therefore, Mike demonstrated a view of defeat if he felt if he was unable to read a sight word. Mike elicits strong feelings towards not knowing a sight word.

Gina

Gina is a seven-year old girl who exhibits a lack of confidence in reading. Gina is reading below grade level during small group instruction. Gina scored in the 69th percentile on the Fall MAP Reading assessment. On the *DIBELS Next* (2010) assessment, Amy's score of Nonsense Word Fluency was twenty-three correct letter sounds and zero whole words read in October 2018. Gina's score identified as below the benchmark score of twenty-seven correct letter sounds and one whole word read ranked as strategic level instructional support. Additional data represented areas of Gina's weaknesses. Gina scored below-grade level on the *Pearson Reading Street* assessments for high-frequency words and comprehension. Therefore, Gina received instruction using below-level texts from *Pearson Reading Street* during small group reading. Gina is a below-level reader based on her low recognition of high-frequency words and limited

reading comprehension. Overall, Gina's strengths and weaknesses in reading deemed her an appropriate participant for the study.

Influence of Positive Attitude Towards Reading

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey is comprised of ten recreational reading statements and ten academic statements. Each of the items are assigned a score of 4, 3, 2, 1 point(s) designating "4" to the first, happiest Garfield (McKenna & Kear, 1990). The points from each of the ten recreational questions and ten academic questions are added up. The total is out of forty points for recreational reading and forty points for academic reading. Informally, both the recreational and academic scores were ranked on a scale (McKenna & Kear, 1990).

For the initial Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, Gina circled her response in a whole group setting. Gina scored thirty-four out of forty points for recreational reading and thirty-one out of forty points for academic reading. For the exit Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, the same questions were reviewed. Gina was asked to point to the picture, and I circled it for her. Gina scored thirty of forty points for recreational reading and twenty-three of forty points for academic reading. The results from the pre-assessment survey and the post-assessment survey are explained below.

Gina's attitude toward a specific statement about academic reading improved from a score of 1 to a score of 3.

Q: "How do you feel when you read out loud in class?"

A: Very Upset Garfield to Slightly Smiling Garfield

The results from the data suggest a connection to Gina's behaviors. Gina tracked the print and sounded out patterns of unknown words. When it was Gina's turn to read with me, Gina was excited to back to where we left off and continue reading (Teacher Journal, December 5, 2018). Gina demonstrated behaviors of engagement and excitement to read and reread texts.

Table 4

Gina's Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment Survey

	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Change
Recreational Reading	34	30	-4
Academic Reading	31	23	-8
Total Points	65	53	-12

Growth of Sight Word Vocabulary

The purpose of identifying the growth of sight word vocabulary is to recognize how often Gina recognized the sight words each week and the sight words recognized across the study. Three different sight word lists named Dolch, Fry, and *Reading Street* were used as a basis to identify the sight words recognized in self-selected texts. Throughout the course of the study, Gina self-selected a total of five fiction books. Gina's oral reading was recorded a total of seven times resulting in forty-nine minutes and forty-four seconds of oral reading. During the recording, Gina engaged in conversations to discuss her personal interest of the text, and she participated in conversations to build understanding of the text.

Various self-selected texts are evaluated to identify the sight words recognized during independent reading. The collection of sight words is identified from the five-week study from November 12, 2018 to December 14, 2018. After Gina read the five self-selected texts, the total number of sight words from the following texts were evaluated: *Lily's Purple Plastic Purse*, *Pete the Cat: Play Ball!*, *If You Give a Pig a Pancake*, *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Some Leaves*, and *Mouse's First Christmas*.

Gina chose to read an above-level text for first grade, *Lily's Purple Plastic Purse.* According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *Lily's Purple Plastic Purse* is considered a Level N text. Level N is ranked at the beginning of third grade. Gina chose to read this text one time during Week 1 of the study on November 15, 2018. Gina selected this book, because she thought it looked funny (Teacher Journal, November 15, 2018). Gina recognized zero Dolch sight words, two Fry sight words, and two *Reading Street* sight words.

Gina chose to read an above-level text for first grade, *Pete the Cat: Play Ball!* According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *Pete the Cat: Play Ball!* is considered a Level J text. Level J is ranked at the end of first grade. Gina chose this text during Week 2 and Week 4 of the study. During Week 2 on November 20, 2018, Gina recognized two Dolch sight words, fourteen Fry sight words, and eight *Reading Street* sight words. During Week 4 on December 6, 2018, Gina recognized three Dolch sight words, thirteen Fry sight words, and eleven *Reading Street* sight words.

Gina chose to read an above-level text for first grade, *If You Give a Pig a Pancake*. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *If You Give a Pig a Pancake* is considered a Level K text. Level K is ranked at the beginning of second grade. Gina chose this text twice during Week 3 and once during Week 4 of the study. During Week 3 on November 27, 2018, Gina recognized six Dolch sight words; sixteen Fry sight words; and twelve *Reading Street* sight words. During Week 3 on November 29, 2018, Gina recognized five Dolch words, eleven Fry sight words, and ten *Reading Street* words. During Week 4 on December 5, 2018, Gina recognized five Dolch sight words, fifteen Fry sight words, and ten *Reading Street* sight words.

Gina chose to read an above-level text for first grade, *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Some Leaves*. According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Some Leaves* is considered a Level K text. Level K is ranked at the beginning of second grade. Gina selected this text once during Week 4 of the study on December 6, 2018. Gina recognized four Dolch sight words, six Fry sight words, and three *Reading Street* sight words.

Gina chose to read an above-level text for first grade, *Mouse's First Christmas.* According to Fountas & Pinnell (2012), *Mouse's First Christmas* is considered a Level I text. Level I is ranked at the end of first grade. Gina selected this text during Week 5 of the study on December 10, 2018. Gina recognized one Dolch sight word, eight Fry sight words, and eight *Reading Street* sight words.

The first figure below is a collection of sight words read from the total amount of texts each week. During Week 1, Gina read *Lily's Purple Plastic Purse* for one audio-

recording. During Week 2, Gina read *Pete the Cat: Play Ball!* for one audio recording. During Week 3, Gina read *If You Give a Pig a Pancake* for two audio-recordings. During Week 4, Amy read *If You Give a Pig a Pancake, There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Some Leaves,* and *Pete the Cat: Play Ball!* for three audio-recordings. During Week 5, Amy read *Mouse's First Christmas* for one recording. The progression of sight word growth is steady until Week 5. The reason why Week 5 is the lowest is because Gina chose to read a new text above her level. Overall, the most repetitive and recognized sight words across five self-selected texts were the following: the, a, she, and.

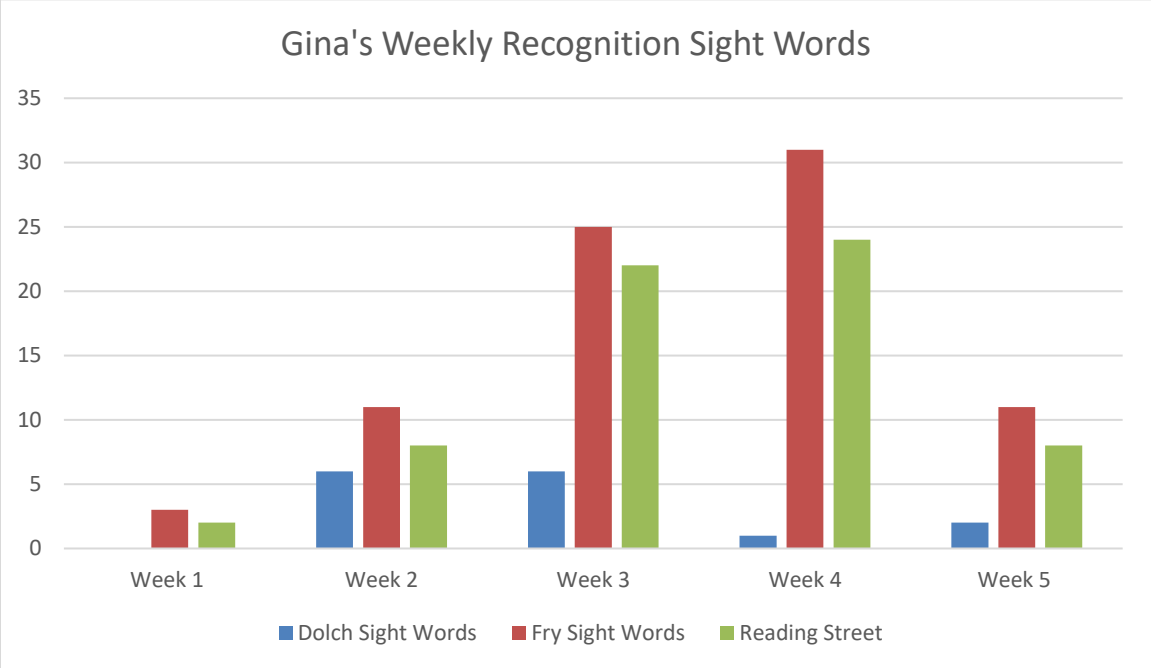

Figure 13. Gina's Weekly Sight Words

The second figure below shows the number of sight words read from each text. The data suggests Gina read the most Fry sight words in *If You Give a Pig a Pancake*. Gina read this text twice in Week 3 and once in Week 4 of the study. Gina continued reading where she left off from the first reading and demonstrated recognition of familiar sight words and additional sight words (Teacher Journal, December 5, 2018). Gina read the least amount of sight words in *Lily's Purple Plastic Purse* as the text was above her reading level. Gina read this text once in Week 1 of the study. There were more descriptive words read, such as pointy and squeaky as opposed to the types of possible sight words from the three lists.

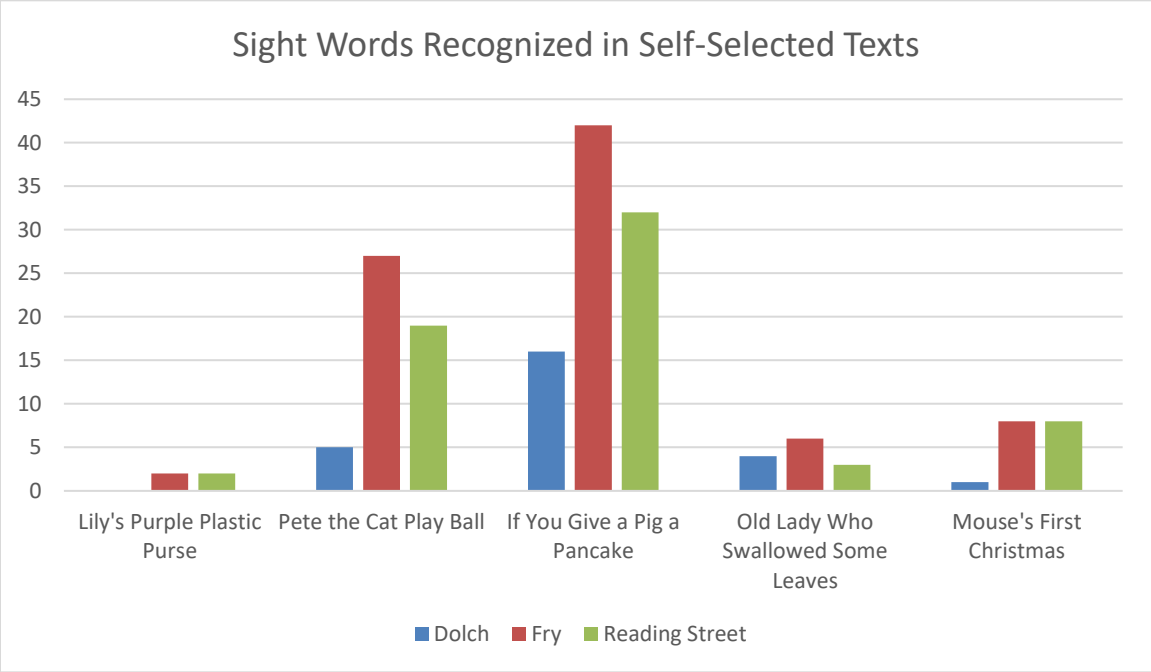

Figure 14. Gina's Sight Words in Self-Selected Texts

Identified Sight Words Across Three Lists

The third figure shows the recognition of sight words in two categories. The data shows the total sight words recognized from the list and the total recognition of sight words of the five texts read. By the end of the five-week study, Gina identified thirty-nine out of one hundred sight words from the Fry list. Out of the thirty-nine words, Gina recognized each sight word at least once in context resulting in a total of eighty-five Fry sight words. Gina identified thirteen out of forty-one sight words from the Dolch list. Out of the thirteen sight words, Gina recognized each sight word at least once in context resulting in a total of twenty-six Dolch sight words. Gina identified twenty-eight out of fifty-eight *Pearson Reading Street*: Unit R and Unit 1 sight words from the list. Out of the twenty-eight sight words, Gina recognized each sight word at least once in context resulting in a total of sixty-four *Pearson Reading Street* sight words.

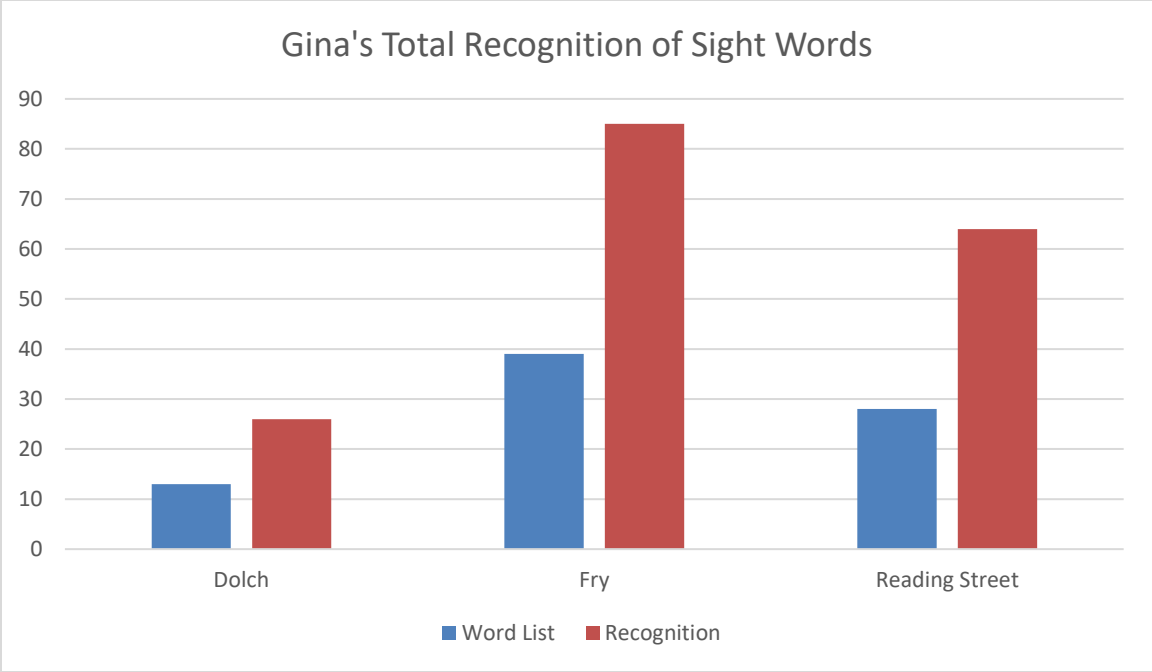

Figure 15. Gina's Total Recognition of Sight Words

Becoming Metacognitive Readers

The application of three metacognitive reading strategies were explored during the reading of unknown sight words of self-selected texts. The use of metacognitive strategies included: self-monitoring; self-correcting; and use of the reading strategy bookmark. A combination of metacognitive reading strategies supported Gina's growth of sight words recognized in self-selected texts. After five weeks of the study, Gina decreased her miscues of substitutions using self-monitoring and self-correcting. Gina used the reading strategy bookmark to provide herself with support when approaching the unknown sight word.

Self-monitoring. Gina was able to self-monitor her reading as she realized when a word was read in correctly and did not fit the context of the sentence. Gina demonstrate the use of a think-aloud to that show she was aware of her miscue.

> **"**She has … (I mean) She loves the (long pause)" (Audio Recording, November 15, 2018).
>
> **"**I see an a in it. I think I'm having trouble with the a" (Audio Recording, November 20, 2018).

Self-correcting. Towards the middle of the study, Gina began to use self-monitoring and self-correcting more frequently to make meaning of the sentence. (Audio Recording, November 29, 2018).

> Gina: "You'll have to first you'll/your... (Original sentence: You'll have to find your rubber duck).
>
> Gina: "Wait! Let's go back to this word because first your does not make sense."

Reading strategies bookmark. At the start of the study, Gina was ready to use her animal strategy bookmarks but was not automatic with the name and purpose. The teacher supported Gina to read the word, *squeaky*. Many of the grapheme-phonemes were taught in context of reading this word. For example, the teacher reminded Gina how the buddy letters, qu, make one sound. Then, the teacher discussed the vowel team of /ea/ makes the long e sound. Finally, the teacher shared how the letter y is sometimes a vowel. At the end of this word, it makes a long e sound. Aside from the buddy letters,

these vowel team patterns were not yet taught in the *Fundations* program (Teacher Journal, November 15, 2018).

Teacher: "Which strategy do you want to use?"

Gina: "The snake?"

Teacher: "Slowly stretch each letter sound to make a word." The teacher supported making the sounds.

Gina & Teacher: "sss-qu"

Gina & Teacher: "s-qu-eeea-k

Gina & Teacher: "s-qu-ea-k-y

After one recording, Gina demonstrated her confidence in identifying which strategy she wanted to use to read the unknown word (Audio Recording, November 20, 2018).

Gina: The... (Gina pauses to get bookmark)

Teacher: Great job using your strategies!

Gina: I want to use Lips the Fish (Gina points to the picture of the strategy).

Teacher: "Get your mouth ready. Say the beginning sound"

Gina: r-o-ck-s... rocks!

Gina explored six different reading strategies from the reading strategy bookmark to read unknown sight words. Gina used the reading strategy bookmark for the following words: pointy, squeaky, rocks, rolls, catch, bubbles, visit, was, take, want. Gina chose Flippy Dolphin the most. Gina began to choose a different reading strategy for different

sight words in context. The teacher interjected with specific strategies when the participant demonstrated the need for additional support. Gina was aware of different strategies to use for sight words.

The fourth figure below shows the application of decoding reading strategies across the five weeks of the study. Out of the sixteen uses of the reading strategy bookmark, all were student chosen and none were teacher prompted. The ability to read the unknown word was successful when at least more than one strategy was chosen. Gina used the animal reading strategy bookmark steadily throughout the study. The teacher only prompted the use of a strategy, but Gina always chose the strategy to read the unknown word.

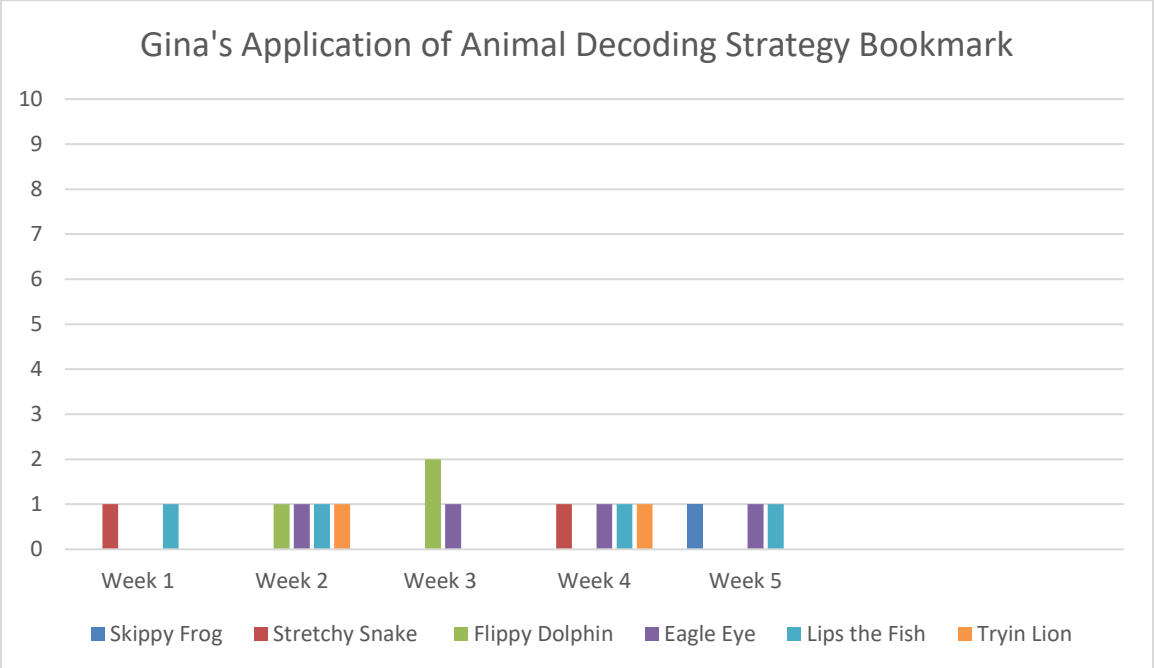

Figure 16. Gina's Bookmark Usage

Changing Beliefs About Sight Words

Gina exhibited signs of nervousness throughout the initial participant interview. I asked Gina, "*What is a sight word?*" She responded, "It's something that you can't sound out." She shared examples too. Gina shared that she could tell me some words. Gina responded, "a, little, the, I." For the exit interview, her attitude was positive and eager to respond. After asking the same question for the exit interview, she responded, "It's something that you can't sound out." Gina was able to tell me more sight words. Gina named the following words: "you, I, your, was, one, to, into, four, see, he, be, we." Even though her view of defining a sight word was the exact same, Gina was able to provide additional examples of sight words. This response shows me she did gain a new insight in understanding sight words.

The second question asked, "Why do we practice sight words?" She responded, "So we can remember them." I recorded her response. For the exit interview, she responded in a similar way. Gina told me, "So we remember them." Her slight change in response shows that the sight words are remembered. This shows that she understands sight words need to be remembered. Therefore, she did demonstrate the ability to identify more sight words in the exit interview.

The third question asked, "How do you feel reading a sight word you know?" She responded, "Happy." For the exit interview, her response was similar. Gina stated, "OK." This shows she still has positive feelings toward reading sight words she can recognize.

The final question, “How do you feel reading a sight word you do not know?” She responded, “Proud.” Gina responded with a smile. For the exit survey, she responded the same way, “Proud.” Gina still felt the same way if she was unable to read a sight word. Overall, the evidence of growth is presented in the extended response of defining sight words from the first interview question.

Conclusion

The themes that emerged across all case studies included: Influence of Positive Attitude Towards Reading, Growth of Sight Word Vocabulary, Identified Sight Words Across Three Lists, Becoming Metacognitive Readers, and Changing Beliefs About Sight Words. The positive attitude towards academic reading was present in different areas from each participant. The growth of sight word vocabulary shows the improvement of sight word recognition throughout each week over the course of the five-week study. The importance of identifying sight words across the Dolch list, Fry list, and *Reading Street* list show the significance of learning the Fry words in self-selected texts. The most impactful theme of the study was demonstrating how children are becoming metacognitive readers. The participants used at least one metacognitive strategy to include: self-monitoring, self-correcting, and the reading strategy bookmark. This suggests that readers need to have several different strategies available to solve unknown words. The participants changed their beliefs about sight words by either connecting the purpose to reading or identifying specific sight words recalled from memory. Chapter five discusses the overall findings, conclusions, and implications of how first graders identify sight words of self-selected texts.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, Limitations, and Implications

Summary

Chapter five discusses the themes that emerged across all four case studies. The three themes include: defining the purpose of sight words, recognizing sight words in self-selected texts, and using metacognitive strategies to read sight words. The three themes connect to the research question about how first graders identify sight words in self-selected texts. Chapter five discusses the findings, conclusions, limitations, and implications of the study.

Findings

There were three significant findings from the study. The first finding addresses how first graders define a sight word and the purpose of learning sight words. The complex definition of sight words includes that regular words are decodable and irregular words are not, yet both require the automatic recognition of spelling, pronunciation, and meaning from memory (Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Ardoin et al., 2013; Ehri, 2014; Broz, Blust, & Bertelsen, 2016; Murray et al., 2018). The four participants defined the components of a sight word in different ways.

Dan defined a sight word by the vowel and rules of the word. This suggests Dan understands the importance of learning the vowel patterns and following the rules to read regular words. Amy struggled to provide a definition of a sight word, however, she listed

examples naming regular and irregular words. This suggests that even though Amy is unable to define a sight word, she grasped the concept of sight words read and remembered. Gina identified that a sight word cannot be sounded out and also listed examples of irregular sight words. Gina recalled from memory examples of sight words that could not be sounded out as the examples were irregular words. Mike connected the relationship of defining sight words to reading. Gina, Mike, and Amy gave specific examples of known sight words read from the self-selected texts. The responses from the participants collectively show the purpose of practicing sight words is to "remember, know, and learn." Even though the participants defined sight words in different ways, each understood parts of the complex sight word definition and the importance of recognizing sight words.

The second finding that emerged from the data showed which sight words were recognized in a range of self-selected texts. The four participants selected a range of texts below, on, and above their individual reading level. Despite the level of difficulty, sight words were recognized from every text. Even though some texts yielded more repetition of sight words, the participants recognized both regular and irregular sight words.

Dan selected one on-level text and the remaining were above his level, yet he recognized the most Fry sight words in both on-level and above-level texts. This suggests the recognition of sight words from one text was applicable to another. Amy's selection of text difficulty ranged from one below-level, five on-level, and one above level. Amy had a high recognition of *Pearson Reading Street* sight words. This suggests the types of sight words vary in the different texts. Mike selected two on-level texts for

first grade, but the texts were above his reading level. Mike recognized a high level of Fry sight words and demonstrated a steady progression of recognizing sight words. Every text Gina selected was either above-level in first grade or extended to second and third grade levels. However, due to the repetitive texts, Gina found success reading sight words. Gina had the highest recognition of Fry sight words. Therefore, despite the level of text difficulty, the four participants found success increasing their sight word vocabulary.

The third finding explains the metacognitive strategies used to read regular and irregular sight words during independent reading. Dan, Amy, Mike, and Gina either used self-monitoring, self-correcting, or the reading strategy bookmark to decrease substitutions, omissions, and insertions. Often, self-monitoring was used in unison with self-correcting. The participants used self-monitoring to make meaning of the sentence. When the word did not fit in the context of the sentence, the participants reacted and either self-corrected immediately or returned to the beginning of the sentence to use a strategy. The participants articulated which strategy to use in different situations, such as reading a regular or irregular word. Even though the participants did not name the word as regular or irregular, the approach of reading the wording was suitable. Often Mike tried to sound out irregular words but realized it did not make sense. Therefore, he used other strategies to skip the unknown word or use the context of the sentence.

The use of the reading strategy bookmark was inconsistent among all four participants. Dan scarcely used the reading strategy bookmark, however, he used self-monitoring and self-correcting to read the unknown word in the sentence. Amy used the reading strategy bookmark the most in Week 2, which was her first recording of the

study. The books she chose a book high in irregular words and the other book high in regular words. Mike used the reading strategy bookmark the most at the beginning and middle of the study, and he used self-monitoring and self-correcting towards the end of the study. Gina relied heavily on the bookmark throughout the five-weeks, however, she mostly used more than one strategy at a time. Dan, Gina, Mike, and Amy used the reading strategy bookmark to decrease substitutions, frequently articulating which strategy they used and why. This suggests that they were learning learn to apply self-monitoring strategies when they read, thus moving towards becoming metacognitive thinkers.

Conclusions

The current study about first-graders identifying sight words in self-selected texts is important in the reading world. The National Reading Panel (2000) explains that students are taught the method of high-frequency, irregularly spelled words as whole word recognition through the process of storing words automatically in memory. Ehri (2014) indicated that students identify and store sight words in memory, which validates the findings of the current study. Learners benefit from specific decoding strategies to read unknown words in the text (Broz, Blust, & Bertelsen, 2016). The application of strategies to recognize patterns within regular words supports learners in developing sight words. Thus, based on the current findings of the study, three conclusions are developed to understand the method and process of learning sight words by the four participants.

The three conclusions were synthesized from former research and the findings of the current study. Sight word development occurs through exposures of the word and the

recall from memory. Reading and rereading regular and irregular sight words in self-selected texts holds a signification position in sight word growth. Using a combination of metacognitive strategies helped to determine the unknown word and achieve automatic recognition. The current study validates and contributes to research on sight words and metacognitive strategies (Broz et al., 2016; Miles et al. 2017; Hayes, 2016; Ardoin et al., 2013; Murray et al., 2018; Cheatham, Allor, & Roberts, 2016; Brown, 1985; Flavell, 1985; Gaskins & Gaskins, (n.d.) as cited in Mokhtari, 2017; Bradfield, 2017).

Sight word development occurs through exposures of the word and the recall from memory. Broz, Blust, & Bertelsen (2016) contend the definition of a sight word is any word read sufficiently from memory. Miles, Rubin, & Gonzalez-Fry (2017) viewed the sight word process as repetition of the whole-word and then analyzing the grapheme-phoneme relations focusing on the spelling and pronunciation in memory. The participants in the current study defined the need to learn and remember sight words. The learners moved through the process of identifying the sight word by spelling the letters of the word and understanding how to pronounce regular and irregular sight words. Moreover, the participants demonstrated recall from memory by voicing recognition of the familiar word or reading the sight word with automaticity.

Reading and rereading regular and irregular sight words in self-selected texts supports sight word growth. The importance of identifying sight words across the Dolch list, Fry list, and *Reading Street* list show the significance of exposure to a variety of sight words. Three participants from the study recognized Fry words the most. Hayes (2016) found that "teachers need to provide students with a literacy rich environment in order for students to have multiple opportunities to read sight words in context and not

just in isolation" (p. 58). The participants were exposed to the same sight word in the text often and recognized decodable words (Ardoin et al., 2013). This study contributes to the research (Ardoin et al. 2013) as regular and irregular sight words were often repeated and recognized in the same self-selected text. Similar to Murray et al. (2018), the participants recognized vowel patterns, digraphs, and silent-e words as well as irregular words. This study validates that different categories of sight words (Miles et al. 2017) include regular words, temporarily irregular words, and permanently irregular words. Cheatham, Allor, and Roberts (2016) intentionally created decodable text with an increasing level of high-frequency words. Even though the texts from the study were not all decodable texts, the selection of texts contained a combination of regular and irregular words.

Using a combination of metacognitive strategies helped to determine the unknown word and achieve automatic recognition. The first graders in this study used metacognitive strategies to read sight words. This study awarded students the opportunity to choose a variety of metacognitive strategies to develop recognition of sight words. The current study contributes to the research on metacognitive strategies (Brown, 1985; Flavell, 1985; Gaskins & Gaskins, (n.d.) as cited in Mokhtari, 2017) regarding self-monitoring and self-correcting to read unknown sight words. Different strategies, such as self-monitoring and self-correcting are useful depending upon the reading situation (Bradfield, 2017). The participants of the study found success using metacognitive strategies to read unknown words.

Limitations

There were several limitations in this study. The study took place during a twelve-minute reading block between writing instruction and reading instruction. The number and length of recordings were not consistent across all four participants. The audio recordings were not the same time limit as some participants required additional time or other factors such as extended lessons took time. Dan was recorded eight times for a total of fifty minutes and ten seconds. Amy was recorded seven times for thirty-nine minutes and forty-seven seconds. Gina was recorded seven times for forty-nine minutes and forty-four seconds.

Other limitations involved the amount of self-selected text and the level of text. Some participants chose two texts compared to other participants who chose up to seven texts. The level of text was a factor as some participants chose texts above their reading level but based on high interest. Additional limitations involved the participants starting new books each session compared to participants finishing books before a starting a new one.

Implications

The implications of this study suggest future research to identify self-selected texts of high interest to continue the development of sight word recognition. Even though the texts were not at their independent level, the ability to recognize more sight words enabled the participants to continuously recognize sight words from memory and apply it to reading various texts. Thus, when building a classroom library, it is important to support students in choosing a book of interest and encourage the use of strategies to

read unknown words. Beginning readers learn to identify sight words in self-selected texts.

Another implication is that learners can choose different metacognitive strategies to read unknown sight words. "Self-monitoring one's own understanding and making adjustments to the approach to reading a new text is crucial for students" (Brokenshire, 2014, p. 24). At the beginning stage of reading, learners can understand how to recognize their own miscues as opposed to guessing words during reading. Additionally, learners can benefit from having discussions with the teacher to explain the decision-making of correcting the word. The current study extends (Bradfield 2017) using metacognitive strategies at the primary level. Bradfield (2017) concluded that "student practice should be continuously monitored and discussed during reading conferences to further promote metacognition of student strategy use" (p. 18). Learners need to receive feedback when self-monitoring and self-correcting occurs.

Overall, the study taught me the importance of exposing learners to texts of high interest. I learned how beginning readers can be taught metacognitive strategies to read unknown words in context. The participants elicited positive emotions when a new sight word was recognized. The learners become part of the process to recognize sight words. The demonstration of self-monitoring and self-correcting validated the ability to decrease insufficient reading habits, such as substitutions or guessing the word and continuing to read through the sentence. Educators are encouraged to allow students to self-monitor and self-correct their own reading. Therefore, the role of the educator is to prompt questions about the decisions made from the reader to correct the unknown word. Exploring the different types of sight words and understanding patterns within the words

is necessary to move forward with sight word development. The research conducted validates the connection between metacognitive strategies and sight word development. In conclusion, sight word vocabulary of regular and irregular words grows through metacognitively reading self-selected texts.

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Appendix

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

School_____ Grade_____ Name_____

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?

2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?

3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?

4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?

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Survey designed by Dennis J. Kear, Wichita State University