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The Unique Literacy Profile of a Teen with Multiple Disabilities

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Introduction

While considerable research has explored adolescent literacy instruction for struggling readers (Franzak, 2006), examinations of literacy practices in older teenagers with intellectual disabilities are less evident. Research demonstrates that emphasis on vocational and daily living skills has taken precedence over literacy skills for young adults with intellectual disabilities (Morgan, Moni, & Jobling, 2006), although previous studies have explored the potential of particular practices with older struggling readers, including adults (Pershey & Gilbert, 2002) and adolescents with intellectual disabilities. A review by Joseph and Schisler (2009) suggests that 'corrective' reading programs, particular strategies, and strategy practice protocols, are valuable tools in increasing the literacy levels of adolescents, and their review recommends explicit skill and strategy lessons, provided as a matter of course with younger students and repeated as a review with older learners.

Current models of instruction in English Language Arts offer various vantage points from which to consider educational practice. Reader response, a theory established by Rosenblatt (1968) to address the transaction that occurs between readers and texts, encourages teachers to support their students in making personal connections to what is read. Strategy-based pedagogy delineates particular skills and strategies that can be reinforced with direct instruction and practice (Miller, 2003). For example, children's metacognitive knowledge regarding comprehension strategies has previously been explicitly explored (Baker & Brown, 1984; Brenna, 1995a; Brenna,1995b; Brown, 1982; Flavell,1979). More generally, Cantrell, Almasi, Carter, Rintamaa, and Madden (2010) outline that reading comprehension relies on a plethora of skills and strategies that include text-based decoding and lexical skills, domain knowledge, topic knowledge and interest, and cognitive monitoring and strategy use. Contemporary pedagogical models of reading instruction also include critical literacy alongside pragmatic, semantic, and coding competence (Bainbridge, Heydon, & Malicky, 2009; Freebody & Luke, 1990).

In educational pedagogy, traditional cycles of testing are linked to future practice, especially where literacy skills and strategies are concerned. Typical assessment protocols may or may not have value when applied to older readers whose disabilities have influenced patterns of development towards the atypical. According to a study done by Wei, Blackorby, and Schiller (2011), children with disabilities demonstrate a deceleration in reading growth over time, and a faster deceleration of reading growth occurs for students with speech-language impairments—their reading growth trajectories flattening out sharply in high school. In addition to a potential for the Matthew effect (Stanovich, 1986), where capable readers read more often and further boost their reading abilities, with the converse evident for struggling readers, other factors may relate to slower development. Practices commonly used for typically developing readers may not offer the gamut other practices could provide in supporting readers with exceptionalities.

Research questions driving this study were:

1. What developing reading skills and strategies might a struggling teen reader display within a profile of strengths and weaknesses?

2. What benefits do song lyrics have in their dual role as reading materials for struggling readers as well as performance texts?

3. What effects do interest-based texts have on the independent reading of a reluctant teen reader with multiple disabilities?

4. What lessons related to supporting literacy development might we learn from an older teen reader with multiple disabilities?

Research Methodology and Methods

Qualitative research methodology was selected on the basis of the study's broad and exploratory research questions (Berg, 2009), and because qualitative research has been cited within discussions of special education as an extremely important way to systematically understand phenomena within a particular context (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005). Within the qualitative framework, an empirical case study design was used to support action research exploring the research questions. The actualization of the research involved weekly home- tutoring sessions provided by a *Reading Buddy*–a research assistant known to the researcher who, while at the time attending a teacher education program, was also a certified teacher from the United Kingdom with a wealth of experience working with teenagers. The participant in the study was a sixteen-year-old male diagnosed with cerebral palsy and related challenges.

Sixteen-year-old "Jeremiah" was known to the researcher from connections with a local school division, and he had spent a number of years singing with a local choir familiar to the researcher. His previous testing pinpointed intellectual and visual disabilities, speech-language impairments, as well as mild to moderate motor challenges, and in terms of personality he can be described as a warm-hearted and pleasant young man. He had recently been appointed ambassador for a local community camp, and had been enjoying the public attention that role conjured, especially related to speaking engagements for large audiences. At the time of the study it was not known whether Jeremiah would thrive in the world of work following high school, or if he would be able to live independently.

Data Collection

Data collection was primarily comprised of field notes. These were written by the research assistant in an on-site reflective journal. Collaborative retrospective field texts were created through discussions between the research assistant and the researcher (Brantlinger et al., 2005) during regular meetings scheduled throughout the study period. Discussions held between the researcher and research assistant served to tease out noteworthy themes as well as develop and select ongoing materials to use on site with the participant. Semi-structured questionnaires (see Appendix A) were used with the participant and his parents before, midway through, and following the six month study period. Questions attempted to pinpoint understandings about reading in terms of self, text, and task knowledge (Brenna, 1991), and the researcher compared responses to explore any changes which might have occurred throughout the study.

Weekly reading sessions between the research assistant and the teen participant were 30–45 minutes in duration and involved reading and rereading familiar song lyrics, demonstrating tracking skills and 1:1 word matching. Making and breaking words—Elkonin practice—occurred with individual words using the *Making Words* program (Cunningham & Hall, 1994), and an emphasis was placed on having the participant self-select reading materials about which he was interested. The sessions also involved word games and shared reading as well as researcher read-alouds where strategies could be modelled and practiced. As the study continued, Jeremiah was encouraged to dictate stories and these stories were then used for rereading. The research assistant also cut up some of these stories for Jeremiah to rebuild based on meaning.

Details Regarding the Study Participant

School background

At the time the study began, Jeremiah was attending grade 10 in a congregated (segregated within the structure of a regular secondary school) classroom for students with IQs within the range of mild to moderate disability. Alternate curricula were utilized for students in required subject areas (Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Life Skills, Work Education, Family Studies, and Aesthetics) and, in addition, students were integrated into technical classes such as woodworking, a favourite with Jeremiah. In terms of school instruction in Language Arts, teacher read-alouds took precedence over independent reading, and there was an emphasis on practical reading applicable to recipes and work experiences.

Jeremiah's mother reported that no spelling program was used in his grade 10 classroom, and indicated that minimal school reading was perhaps at the heart of what she saw as a "regression" in Jeremiah's reading skills. This contrasts with his experiences in elementary school, when direct literacy support seemed to underpin a very slow but steady increase in sight word development. Such deviation from literacy instruction follows a general pattern related to lack of literacy training at the senior level for students with intellectual disabilities (Morgan et. al., 2006).

Prior to support with sight words at school, Jeremiah participated in oral reading experiences with a teacher associate classroom helper, using levelled books with large print. Common practice was for him to read aloud and be told words as he required them. Jeremiah has always used a computer at school, as it provided him with the enlarged texts required by his visual disability as well as the opportunity to write with computer assistance—a conventional support for physical challenges associated with cerebral palsy.

Family literacy activities

Family time has always included parent read-alouds and shared reading, but at the beginning of the study Jeremiah was demonstrating reluctance for at-home reading of any type and did not read independently for pleasure. Books typically used for shared reading included the *Magic Tree House* series, written at about a grade three level. Jeremiah did not report using the library, either at school or in the community, and he informed the research assistant that there was no classroom library—a statement corroborated by his mother. In terms of public library use, his parents have consistently chosen books for him based on their estimation of his reading level. Strategy emphasis at home had been on sounding out words, although an elementary program based on sight words was attributed to his previous successful literacy development. His parents indicated that Jeremiah's writing has received far less attention at school and home than his reading; his difficulties with blends and vowel combinations, and his speech difficulties, continue to impact his writing, which he generally accomplishes on a computer with the aid of spell-check.

Jeremiah's participation and skills

The research assistant reported that during their sessions together, Jeremiah was enthusiastic; his mother emphasized that he really looked forward to the Reading Buddy time and at a point midway through the study, when he was invited to decide to continue or not, Jeremiah wholeheartedly elected to go on. In terms of Jeremiah's ability to spend time on task, about five to seven minutes seemed an optimal time for engagement in a literacy activity. His speech, slow and effortful as a residual effect of his cerebral palsy, was another one of his challenges in addition to visual, motor and intellectual disabilities. Quite possibly his speech issues were connected to his tendency to tire during the Reading Buddy language arts sessions developed for this study.

Informal assessments of Jeremiah's reading ability suggested his instructional level was at grades three and four and somewhat dependent on topic. This instructional level was determined by trial and error using a number of found materials at various levels of difficulty. Jeremiah's bank of sight words included many, but not all, of the Dolch words from grades one to three, although some of the words in these lists were not quickly identified when he came across them in the context of reading material, suggesting that he was sometimes or possibly relying on context and phonemic cues rather than actual sight vocabulary. His listening comprehension rates were higher than his independent reading comprehension, as evidenced by diagnostic teaching strategies. When the research assistant asked Jeremiah to

continue reading aloud from where she left off, Jeremiah sometimes began his oral reading by re-reading something, verbally acknowledging the repetition, and then skimming to the correct starting place.

In terms of specific reading skills, Jeremiah actively used first-letter cues, but demonstrated weaknesses in identifying consonant blends and medial sounds. He was aware that capital letters meant the start of a sentence, and tracked text with his finger, although in May—allergy season—he began to skip whole sentences without awareness of meaning loss—something his mother reported common at that time of the year and possibly related to his allergy medication. He preferentially tended towards reading aloud over silent reading, a habit possibly ingrained from years of oral reading to a teacher associate who supported his elementary schoolwork. His oral reading demonstrated a marked absence of comprehension related to main ideas. Similarly, Jeremiah was unable to give fluent retellings of stories and offered instead brief information in response to literal comprehension questions.

Within Jeremiah's strategy repertoire he exhibited, early in the study, the ability to respond personally when he read topics related to his own experiences, a marked example in the context of Rosenblatt's (1968) reader response theory. For example, a particular story about camping elicited excited connections: "I go camping when I go to Camp XYZ and we camp in the woods and it's really fun. I am the Student Ambassador for Camp XYZ." In this vein, Jeremiah preferred texts that related to his interests, and constantly stopped to discuss those interests even when losing sense of the text at hand—certainly reading for enjoyment rather than for information or even a sense of story. Jeremiah demonstrated strengths in navigating non-fiction books, and knew how to use a table of contents to search out a particular topic or section.

Findings and Discussion

Reading as a Bridge to Personal Experiences

When given the opportunity to self-select reading materials, Jeremiah demonstrated a strong ability to connect himself to what he was reading. This indicates one purpose of reading—an exploration of self through the mirrors reading might offer (Galda, 1998). Jeremiah would often stop and talk about a topic inspired by a section of text, and even when he was not comprehending the entirety of the book he was exploring, the enjoyment he got from re-living the personal connections was evident. A story about camping inspired his memory of a summer camp he had been attending that was designed for students with special needs. When reading a section aloud from a book chosen because he knew the wife of the book's author, he read enthusiastically. Although not understanding the full storyline, he persevered. When he came to a passage about lightning, he turned to the research assistant and made the following personal connection: "Would you like to be in a tree when it's lightning?"

Jeremiah demonstrated a growing knowledge of task throughout reading endeavours where content connected to personal experiences. In terms of reading for enjoyment, developing relationships with text and sharing these

relationships with others seemed a prime motivator for reading. During writing activities with the Reading Buddy, he presented avid interest in the language experience stories derived from walks in the neighbourhood, appearing to engage with the idea that writing can be both meaningful and personal.

Reading as a Pleasurable Activity

At the close of the study, both Jeremiah and his mother reported a change in how Jeremiah viewed reading. "He is definitely reading more!" said his mother enthusiastically. "Reading was never something he wanted to do before," she continued. "Now he enjoys it." Jeremiah agreed, indicating that in addition to reading particular books, he also liked the word game activities provided by the researcher, and the language experience activities where he wrote about things after they had a walk.

The read-aloud framework in which the research assistant began her work with Jeremiah slowly shifted towards a greater emphasis on Jeremiah's own silent reading instead of solely oral reading. It is important to note that this shift occurred gradually over the six month period, and that it was Jeremiah who initiated when he wanted to take over and read to himself. There is potential in this context to summarize Jeremiah's increase in reading for pleasure as a developing knowledge of self with respect to reading. While at the beginning of the study he expressed little desire to read, by the end of the study Jeremiah was beginning to see himself as a more interested reader and as someone who could read silently to himself for pleasure.

Song Lyrics' Context as a Strategy for Abstract Word Work

Jeremiah's ability to tolerate the abstract nature of word work seemed to increase when the words were taken from song lyrics with which he was familiar. Although the words weren't within his sight vocabulary, he was able to play games with them on cards and otherwise explore parts of them anticipated to be beyond his ability level. For example, he considered the composition of words, with a focus on graphemes, and placed these words into categories of his own devising. He was also able to select cards based on first-letter cues; and he was able to string phrases into meaningful sentences, even without comprehending all of the words involved—syntax getting a workout here—and utilize aspects of print, such as capital letters, to group the phrases into sentences. In addition, Jeremiah tracked consistently well when working with song lyrics, even during allergy season—a time when he tended to miss whole lines of text. Similar activities conducted with other words, such as those in the context of a published kit of word games provided by the research assistant, did not fare as well, and Jeremiah had little patience for them.

The Necessity for "Age Appropriate" Reading Materials

The only negative thing Jeremiah expressed throughout the study was in regards to the age level of particular resources. When exploring the Dolch sight words, he asked pointedly for sight words "for grade eleven." He often requested "a book for kids my age," although he did not discern that picture books were traditionally intended for younger children.

In fact, he demonstrated avid reading of particular picture books that contained subject matter of interest to him, as well as humour. One of the favourite texts Jeremiah listed from study was the picture book *Chester* (Watt, 2007), a comical story with a large cat as its narrator. "Where did you find this?" he eagerly asked the research assistant after they perused it for the first time. He appeared unaware that many other texts like this one were available at the public library, albeit in the children's section.

Jeremiah's mother expressed frustration with some of the reading expectations for school, particularly school content that was contextualized in life/work skills. "The food safety material—a lot of it is way over his head. So when he's reading it, he skips over words and misses the content. When his father or I would sit down and study with him, we'd get him to read a portion and discuss...but there were a lot of words he didn't know, and some words I didn't know...so we'd stop and explain and figure it out. The food safety book was all text, supplemented by a few cartoons that Jeremiah couldn't read because of the quality of the print." Both clarity and size of text reportedly made cartoons difficult for him to decode and comprehend.

Jeremiah's mother also responded that she had discussed other reading materials with the teacher in the special program he attended. At that time the teacher had said, "There really aren't that many books in the library that are suitable for Jeremiah." When her son took some books from home to school, his mother was glad to find a temporary solution to the absence of appropriate reading material, but commented that "he's in a special program for a reason.... why aren't his needs being addressed?" The classroom teacher had confirmed that Jeremiah wasn't finding material interesting to him at in the classroom: "The books in the program... are more girly books," she had told Jeremiah's mother.

When asked about library visits, Jeremiah's mother sighed. "We go to the library and Jeremiah wants to go to the adult section. He can't read those books. He is not comfortable anymore going to that primary area and picking out a book. He's changing into an adult. He's sixteen...he's got his own ideas about self respect." This comment elaborates on earlier evidence suggesting that the family selected books on Jeremiah's behalf, and offers a rationale for why Jeremiah is not an independent library user.

A knowledge of himself as a reader was clearly important to Jeremiah's book selection strategies. He wanted to read books that were age-appropriate and, in his mother's words, he wanted to select from adult sections of the library because of his own "self respect."

Shifts in Participant's Understandings about Reading

Prior to the study, Jeremiah reported that not knowing some of the words was his greatest problem in terms of comprehension. Midway through the study, he indicated that not knowing what some of the words *mean* was his greatest problem. While perhaps not evident in the product of his reading, this subtle shift indicates that Jeremiah was beginning to pay attention to the meanings of words as important to his overall comprehension. An increase in task

knowledge here—understanding that reading should be meaningful—is important when one considers how critical this idea is to comprehension.

In early May, the fifth month of the six-month research period, Jeremiah was reading orally and stopped, looked at the research assistant, and said, "That doesn't make sense." This is the first time she had noticed him independently questioning the text, although they had discussed this strategy many times. A knowledge of text—that it should make sense—was coupled here with the idea that the reading task can be manipulated in order to achieve sense, key understandings in readers who read for meaning. That Jeremiah would stop and acknowledge difficulty comprehending, and then question the research assistant, was a breakthrough for him in his concept of what reading really was—an act of meaning-making.

Reading Materials Jeremiah Best Comprehended

What made reading easy for Jeremiah was context. Reading songs with which he was familiar, and reading his personally generated language experience stories, allowed him to present fluent reading, experiencing the kind of comprehension expected from ability-appropriate reading tasks. Similarly, reading particular picture books that interested him made reading comprehensible. Fluent reading here contradicted much of his past oral and silent reading, where disfluency and lack of comprehension were hallmarks of his reading product.

The idea that experiences could be translated into writing, and writing could be read, seemed to be very motivating for Jeremiah and he began to ask the research assistant whether they could include this series of activities in future sessions. The following is a language experience story dictated by Jeremiah:

We walked to my old school. And then we went inside to see some of my old teachers. We saw my Grade 8 graduation photo. And then we walked by the little kids' part of school. We walked by the After School Club and the Infant Room.

> *We walked through the park and we saw moms and kids playing. Then we walked by the paddling pool and then to the mall to buy licorice. Then we came home.*
> *(Jeremiah, language experience story, May 19, 2011)*

One important aspect of this language experience story is Jeremiah's ability to learn and apply new vocabulary. During their walk prior to the story's dictation, the research assistant had used the term "Infant Room," drawing on her own experiences in the United Kingdom. Jeremiah had internalized this phrasing and applied it in his own writing. His deliberate use of language that was new to him supports the use of modelling to nudge Jeremiah forward in other vocabulary usage. A learning target at this time in the study one was to temper the consistent "and then" he used as a bridge word in his experience stories.

Potential Relationship Between Technology Supports and Current Reading Challenges

Jeremiah's particular difficulties with medial sounds and

consonant blends in words bear consideration. In connection with the idea that such phonics knowledge is a consequence of reading and spelling (Foorman, Jenkins, & Francis, 1993), it can be conjectured that Jeremiah's elementary reading experiences at school may have been limited to online texts as well as shared reading experiences that did not contain much trial and error. In addition, his independent writing was structured within the bounds of a computer equipped with spell-check, and invented spelling was not a stage Jeremiah had experienced. As Bainbridge and Heydon (2013) state, "Learners' early spellings can be thought of as approximations or experimentations with the sounds, patterns, and meanings of words" (p. 421). Perhaps the supports Jeremiah received for some of his challenges inadvertently created an absence of language play and independent problem solving that connects to current phonics difficulties.

It is unknown whether older readers, through practice with invented spelling, might increase their application of phonics knowledge in reading situations. There is research to suggest that young children encouraged to use invented spelling improve in phonic knowledge and application in reading as well as writing (Clarke, 1988). Pershey and Gilbert's (2002) study with Christine, an adult with developmental disabilities, offered results indicating that an older non-reader can move from holistic recognition of print to an ability to respond to instruction about analysis of some features of print, gaining insights into decoding and spelling from whole to part. It is clear that much is to be learned about reading development in older populations, especially where disabilities have prevented typical development of early emergent literacy skills.

Implications

Continued Growth for Older Struggling Readers

While less literacy instruction may currently be offered to teen readers with disabilities who engage in work experience programming than what is offered to their typical peers, it is possible that shifts in the literacy development of older students can still occur through concerted encouragement. Teaching at this stage is thus still important. Critical to note is that these shifts may not be evident through traditional standardized testing procedures that focus on the product rather than the process of reading. While acknowledging previous testing that indicates reading growth may plateau over time (Wei et al., 2011) research is needed to further delineate the challenges and successes in supporting continued literacy development in older students with intellectual disabilities. In particular, tracing back to aspects of the child's own strengths, challenges, and school programs might offer the opportunity for refined programming tailored to the student's individual needs.

In the course of this study, Jeremiah demonstrated subtle shifts in his knowledge of self, task, and text. He became a more interested reader and advocated for himself in terms of reading age-appropriate texts. He increased the connections he shared between book topics and personal experiences, perhaps facilitating a developing strength in aesthetic reading that will further encourage independent reading for pleasure. He also exhibited self-monitoring for meaning in addition to

consistent tracking of lines of highly motivating text. Added to this is what seemed to be an enhanced understanding that text should make sense.

Possible Negative Influences of School Support

In Jeremiah's case, because of the visual impairment and physical disabilities related to cerebral palsy, computer technology was acquired for him early in his school career to assist with expressive language production as well as enlarge texts to support his receptive language development. Such computer use relied on spell-check and may have prevented him from particular aspects of spelling production including invented spelling—an activity known to support phonics development. In addition, the supports he received related to reading instruction—in particular the emphasis on fluent oral reading—may have replaced the supports other children were receiving that emphasized trial and error and aesthetic enjoyment. The absence of independent problem-solving in his early reading activities may have inhibited the development of active meaning making strategies still remain as weak areas in his reading profile. As educators consider literacy development strategies in young children, an examination of the rich body of work related to emergent reading may be especially pertinent when applied to children with special needs whose contingent supports may be inhibiting some avenues of development while facilitating other avenues of growth.

The Importance of Meaningful Texts

Utilizing materials with which students are familiar, be these television commercials, popular songs, or, in the case of this participant, texts from known song lyrics, may reduce the abstractions placed on learners as they engage in the necessary word work to increase phonic skills. Similarly, utilizing personalized texts, such as those composed by the student through language experience activities, can provide a comprehensible context in which fluent reading can take place. Such fluent reading is important as it models what we strive for as readers—the opportunity to produce something we understand—and works against situations where students' difficulties with reading promote word calling rather than comprehensible meaning making.

For individual readers, whatever their age, familiar subjects may assist them in developing a similarly supportive reading context. Another recommendation arising from this study, that addresses a goal of increased comprehension, is to continue to seek books written at, or slightly below, a reader's independent reading comprehension level. Jeremiah needs further experiences with meaningful reading, to reinforce the idea that reading should make *sense* in terms of the larger main ideas, rather than the idea that reading is simply getting one word right after another—his original definition of what good reading would entail, and a definition that shifted through the course of this study towards reading as meaning making.

Considerate Content for Classroom Libraries

Classroom libraries that contain a variety of ability-appropriate texts are thus very worthy of consideration as supports for all students. In particular, the position of

picture books in libraries for older struggling readers is something to ponder. These books allow exploration of print and meaning within a time frame supportive for students with memory difficulties. Books such as Watt's *Chester* and Donaldson's *The Gruffalo* were motivating for Jeremiah, and did not contain flags, such as childish human protagonists, suggestive of reader age. Supportive visuals, large print, and spare sentences increase the accessibility of these texts to struggling readers as well as readers with a variety of disabilities, and further exploration with other case studies is recommended to support the availability of picture book materials for older readers in diverse classrooms and communities.

An important question to ask related to age appropriateness of texts seems to be, *How is something defined to be at one's own age level?* While the response used to be *form*, in that picture books were designed to be read and enjoyed only by young children, this response has changed due to an influx of modern picture books suitable for enjoyment by various ages. An additional response to this question might simply be, *availability*. If intergenerational picture books are made available to adults and young adults, in a public section of the library rather than a *children's* section, these particular texts might then be seen as age appropriate. Sections of the library labelled *Quick Reads*, in conjunction with previously existing areas where magazines are housed, may serve to respectfully widen the resources available to adult readers of various abilities. Various websites are available suggesting picture book titles for adult audiences, and these can be located by Googling *picture books and adults*.

While not geared toward successful measurement on traditional testing protocols, the subtle changes that occurred in Jeremiah's literacy development support the idea that it is never too late to learn literacy strategies. Although classroom programs for students with intellectual disabilities may be shifting towards vocational and life-skills contexts, a continued focus on literacy, particularly recreational literacy, is an important target as it applies to lifelong learning. Further research in this area is necessary to delineate strategies and services that schools, homes, and communities should consider in order to provide the best possible supports for literacy development including supports for young adults and adults with special needs

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Appendix A
Study Questionnaire: Young Adult's Version (Pre/Midway/Post) (adapted from Burke, 1980)

Name   _____

Pseudonym _____

The following questions are to find out more about how you read.

1. How do you understand what you read?

2. What causes you the greatest problem understanding what you read?

3. What could you do to be better at understanding what you read?

4. What do you do when you come to a word whose meaning you do not know?

5. What kinds of reading materials are the easiest for you to understand?

6. What kinds of reading materials are the hardest for you to understand?

7. Do you ever say in your own words what you are reading?

8. Do you ever reread something when it does not make sense?

9. Do you ever ask yourself questions when you read?

10. Is there anything that you need to know in order to be a better reader?

11. What makes you a good writer?

12. What gives you problems when you are writing?

   ***Additional questions used post study:

13. What do you think you have learned to do better as a reader during the time the Reading Buddy has worked with you?

14. How have your reading interests or habits changed?

Study Questionnaire: Parents' Version (Pre/Midway/Post) (adapted from Burke, 1980)

Child's Name _____

Child's Pseudonym _____

Parent's Name _____

Pseudonym _____

The following questions are to find out more about how your child reads.

1. Please tell me any relevant background about how your child learned to read.

2. How do you rate your child's reading now? What skills and strategies are used to read?

3. What causes your child the greatest problem in reading?

4. What could your child do to be better at understanding what he or she reads?

5. What does your child do when he or she comes to a word whose meaning is unknown?

6. What kinds of reading materials are the easiest for your child to understand?

7. What kinds of reading materials are the hardest for your child to understand?

8. Does your child ever say in his or her own words what he/she is reading?

9. Does your child ever reread something when it does not make sense?

10. Does your child ever ask himself or herself questions when he/she reads?

11. Is there anything that your child needs to know in order to be a better reade

12. What kinds of writing does your child find easier to do?

13. What gives your child problems when he or she is writing?

14. Please summarize your child's journey as a reader and writer, listing particular stumbling blocks or helpful resources along the way.

    **Additional Question used post study:

15. How have your child's reading attitudes, habits, skills, and/or strategies changed (if they have) during the time he has worked with the Reading Buddy? Please be as detailed as you can with the info provided.

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