

8-2017

Exploring the Nature of Teacher-Student Reading Conferences during Independent Reading Time

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**EXPLORING THE NATURE OF TEACHER-STUDENT READING
CONFERENCES DURING INDEPENDENT READING TIME**

**A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctorate of Philosophy
Literacy, Language, and Culture**

**by
Erin McClure
August 2017**

**Accepted by:
Dr. Linda Gambrell, Committee Chair
Dr. Celeste Bates
Dr. Susan Fullerton
Dr. Jacquelynn Malloy**

ABSTRACT

In elementary classrooms, a variety of approaches and frameworks are used to support students as they develop their reading comprehension abilities and independently read increasingly complex texts. This multiple-case study embedded design described teacher-student reading conferences conducted in the context of independent reading time by four exemplary second grade teachers whose primary method of reading instruction is the reading workshop approach as described by Calkins (2001). This study described feedback and scaffolds provided by four exemplary reading workshop teachers during 207 teacher-student reading conferences within a nine-week period. In addition to investigating how four exemplary reading workshop teachers conducted teacher-student reading conferences, this study also described how twenty-four students responded to the teachers' feedback and scaffolds during the teacher-student reading conferences.

Based on twelve 90 minute observations and the audio recordings of 207 teacher-student reading conferences, specific routines and resources the teachers used to support teacher-student reading conferences are described. Each teacher utilized their classrooms and resources in similar ways to support students reading self-selected texts during independent reading time. The use of student folders, which included resources and goal setting sheets, was critical in teacher-student reading conferences in three of the four classrooms. The four teachers utilized Teachers College Reading and Writing Project curriculum guides and resources to support their teacher-student reading conferences.

The findings from the present study highlighted the multifaceted and complex nature of teacher-student reading conferences as they occurred during independent

reading time. Even though the findings described differences in how the four second grade teachers structured their teacher-student reading conferences, each of the cases described the importance of knowing students and the reading process to flexibly provide feedback and scaffolds to meet the needs of readers during teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. The individual case studies revealed the teachers utilized a consistent structure for conducting their teacher-student reading conferences. However, the structure varied by teacher based on their stated purpose for teacher-student reading conferences within their instructional literacy time. One of the teachers expressed teacher-student reading conferences were a time for her to provide explicit, targeted instruction whereas another teacher viewed reading conferences as a time to informally assess how students were applying learning from whole-group literacy instruction. Throughout this study, the teachers' purpose for teacher-student reading conferences influenced the feedback and scaffolds they provided and, as a result, determined the way students responded during teacher-student reading conferences. Despite differences in implementation of teacher-student reading conferences and differences in students' responses, 22 out of 24 participating students read at least one reading level higher by the end of the study.

Each of the teachers expressed that despite challenges of scheduling, they gained so much information about individual student's reading and interests through teacher-student reading conferences. Each teacher stated that teacher-student reading conferences were a priority and they devoted an hour every day for teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am incredibly grateful for the many individuals who have helped me along my doctoral journey. Many have influenced me over my career and made me the person I am today. I cannot begin to thank all of the individuals who have positively impacted my understandings, thoughts, and perspective on education. However, there are key individuals who have had a major impact on this particular study.

To my committee, Drs. Linda Gambrell, Celeste Bates, Susan Fullerton, and Jacquelynn Malloy, thank you for always providing invaluable feedback and encouragement throughout this process. I am so thankful for your continued support and guidance. Thank you for inspiring me to be a more thoughtful educator!

Thank you to my fellow graduate students who have truly enriched my learning experiences. I thank you for your sharing your perspectives and your experiences. I am so appreciative of your support and encouragement throughout the program.

To my family, thank you so much for your help and inspiration. To my parents, thank you for your hospitality, your encouraging conversations, and entertaining Grace and Jack on numerous occasions. I am beyond grateful for the weekly opportunities to spend time with you and I so appreciate your willingness to help in anyway possible. Mom, thank you for sharing your perspective, your rich knowledge, and your diverse experiences. I also appreciate your willingness to talk through practical applications on many occasions. Thank you to my in-laws for being my cheerleaders throughout the process. Stephen and Kathryn, thank you for the thoughtful and supportive conversations about my work. Pam, thank you for all of your help with Grace and Jack.

To my husband, you have been so supportive and encouraging throughout this entire process. Your love and support are immeasurable and I am blessed to spend my days with you. I love and appreciate you more than you could ever imagine. To my children, Grace and Jack, thank you for being an inspiration to me. Thank you for sharing your excitement and curiosity about the world.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
VITA.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
CHAPTER	
1. DEFINING THE STUDY	1
Background and Context	2
Reading Workshop	4
Independent Reading	4
Teacher-Student Reading Conferences.....	7
Problem Statement	8
Purpose	9
Research Questions	9
The Researcher	10
Rationale and Significance	11
Definitions of Terms	12
Summary	14
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	16
Introduction	16
Theoretical Foundation	17
Distinguishing Features of Scaffolded Instruction	19
Scaffolding Comprehension for Young Children	27
Strategies Approach to Supporting Comprehension	28
Summary	34
3. METHOD	36
Introduction	36
Research Design –Multiple- Case Study	
Embedded Design	36
Participants	42
Data Collection	44

Table of Contents (Continued)

	Page
Data Analysis	49
Ethical Considerations	52
Issues of Trustworthiness	52
Credibility	53
Dependability	54
Transferability	55
Codes	55
Summary	62
4. FINDINGS	64
Introduction	64
Sara	65
Emma	100
Olivia	116
Sophia	133
Cross-case Analysis	154
Summary	168
5. DISCUSSION	169
Introduction	169
Discussion of the Findings	171
Directions for Further Research	186
Limitations	188
Conclusion	190
APPENDICES	193
A: Teacher Questionnaire	194
B: Teacher Interview Questions.....	195
C: District Expectations for Independent Reading Time	196
D: Exemplary Teacher Observation	198
E: Characteristics of Effective First Grade Teachers	199

Table of Contents (Continued)

	Page
F: mClass®: <i>Reading 3D™ Text Reading and Comprehension</i> (TRC) Expectations	201
G: Sample from Coding Matrix	202
H: Daily Schedules	206
I: Reading Level Descriptors	207
J: Questions Provided by District	210
K: Sample of District Goal Sheet	212
REFERENCES	213

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1.1 Key Characteristics of Independent Reading in Traditional SSR and Reading Workshop.....	6
3.1 Levels of Analysis	41
3.2 Teacher Participants	43
3.3 Feedback Codes	56
3.4 Type of Scaffold Codes	58
3.5 Focus of Scaffold Codes	60
4.1 Sara’s Feedback of Things Students Were Doing Well Across Nine Weeks.....	75
4.2 The Types of Scaffolds Sara Provided Across Nine Weeks.....	82
4.3 The Focus of Scaffolds Sara Provided Across Nine Weeks	84
4.4 Emma’s Feedback of Things Students Were Doing Well Across Nine Weeks	108
4.5 The Types of Scaffolds Emma Provided Across Nine Weeks	111
4.6 The Focus of Scaffolds Emma Provided Across Nine Weeks.....	112
4.7 Olivia’s Feedback of Things Students Were Doing Well Across Nine Weeks .	124
4.8 The Types of Scaffolds Olivia Provided Across Nine Weeks.....	126
4.9 The Focus of Scaffolds Olivia Provided Across Nine Weeks	129
4.10 Sophia’s Feedback of Things Students Were Doing Well Across Nine Weeks	137
4.11 The Types of Scaffolds Sophia Provided Across Nine Weeks.....	143
4.12 The Focus of Scaffolds Sophia Provided Across Nine Weeks.....	145
4.13 Average Teacher-Student Reading Conference Time by Teacher	158

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
3.1 Multiple-case study embedded design	38
4.1 Sara’s Classroom Library	70
4.2 Student Folder and Self-Selected books	70
4.3 Student Goal Sheet.....	71
4.4 Sara’s Reading Charts at Beginning of Study	71
4.5 Sara’s Reading Charts at End of Study	71
4.6 Sara’s Conference Notes.....	76
4.7 Example of Emma’s Reading Charts.....	101
4.8 Emma’s Classroom Library	101
4.9 Student Goal Bookmark.....	106
4.10 Olivia’s Teaching Point	117
4.11 Reading Chart with TCRWP Resources.....	118
4.12 Student Book Boxes.....	134
4.13 Reading Chart	156

CHAPTER 1

This study sought to explore teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. This multiple-case study was designed to describe the nature of teacher-student reading conferences conducted by exemplary second grade teachers. In addition, the study sought to identify the feedback and scaffolds these teachers provided during teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. The study also examined student responses to feedback and scaffolds during teacher-student reading conferences. There are numerous practitioner-oriented books describing teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, however, there is limited research on how teacher-student reading conferences are being conducted in classrooms. It was anticipated that the knowledge generated from this inquiry would afford new insights and inform reading workshop teachers as they plan and provide scaffolds and feedback during teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. This research employed qualitative multiple-case study methodology to describe the practice under examination. Participants in this study included a purposefully selected group consisting of four second grade teachers recognized as exemplary reading workshop teachers by school district literacy leaders and twenty-four students, six from each of the selected teachers' classrooms.

This chapter begins with an overview of the context and background that frames the study. Following this is the problem statement, the statement of purpose, and accompanying research questions. Also included in this chapter is discussion of the research approach and the researcher's perspective. The chapter concludes with a

discussion of the rationale and significance of this research study and definitions of some of the key terminology.

Background and Context

Teachers have a tremendous responsibility to provide students with targeted, supportive literacy instruction to assist them in reading increasingly complex texts. Based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results, 64% of America's fourth graders were below the proficient level in reading (US DoE, 2015). These results indicate a need for increased early literacy support that helps children self-regulate their reading. According to the *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade: IES Practice Guide* report, "students who read with understanding at an early age gain access to a broader range of texts, knowledge, and educational opportunities, making early reading comprehension instruction particularly critical" (Shanahan, Callison, Carriere, Duke, Pearson, Schatschneider, & Torgesen, 2010, p. 5). Increased early support in literacy has the potential to lead to an improvement in the proficiency rates of fourth graders (US DoE, 2015).

One way to support young students' reading abilities is to teach students when, how, and why to use reading strategies. In their position paper *Literacy Implementation Guidance for the ELA Common Core State Standards*, The International Literacy Association (ILA) emphasizes, "students need to learn how to use strategies independently, so they can eventually interpret text on their own" (p. 2, 2012). In order to support students in this way, ILA recommends teachers provide instruction on "research-proven reading comprehension strategies using gradual release of responsibility

approaches” (p. 2). In their 2012 position statement, the ILA also claims teachers should be able to provide appropriate scaffolds and supports for readers in grades 2-12.

In elementary classrooms, a variety of approaches and frameworks are used to support readers as they develop their reading abilities and read increasingly complex texts. Through reading workshop, as described by Calkins (2001) and Graves (1994), teachers deliver targeted literacy instruction and then provide time for students to independently read self-selected texts. Many authorities have advocated for students to be actively involved in their learning through the implementation of uninterrupted blocks of independent reading time, ongoing strategy instruction, and engagement in literate conversations (Calkins, 2001; Cunningham & Allington, 2016; Graves, 1994; Reutzel, Fason, & Smith, 2008; Fountas & Pinnell, 2016). Hiebert and Martin (2009) stressed that blocks of independent reading time are a critical component of a reading curriculum while Shanahan (2016a, 2016b) has criticized independent reading time, specifically SSR and DEAR. In multiple blog posts and comments posted to his blog, Shanahan (2016a, 2016b, 2016c) argued that he supported independent reading within instruction which he described as the teacher having a role in selecting the reading material for content and demand level, holding kids accountable through questioning and conversation, and having kids writing about the text. In several posts, Shanahan (2016a, 2016b, 2016c) also stated that he believed more research was needed on how the reading workshop model is implemented in classrooms. Despite Shanahan’s statements about independent reading, there are researchers who have claimed that when provided time to read, “students practice and consolidate the skills and strategies they have been taught, and thereby come

to ‘own’ them” (Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzoni, 2011, p. 24). As readers practice being strategic using authentic texts, teachers can provide explicit instruction on strategies the student can use to successfully comprehend the text (Almasi & Hart, 2011).

Reading Workshop

The reading workshop, as described by Calkins (2001), begins with the teacher delivering a brief minilesson followed by time for students to read self-selected texts. The teacher-delivered minilesson follows a predictable structure, which includes a connection to previous learning, a brief explanation and demonstration of a strategy or concept, guided practice for the students, and a restatement of the strategy or concept previously introduced (Calkins, 2001). During the reading time, students independently read self-selected texts while the teacher conducts reading conferences and/or meets with small groups of readers. The reading workshop concludes with a time for a student or the teacher to share students’ successes during the independent reading time.

Independent Reading

Independent reading has been referred to in a variety of ways: *Sustained Silent Reading* (SSR), *Drop Everything and Read* (DEAR), *Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading* (USSR), *individualized reading*, *recreational reading*, *voluntary reading*, and *independent reading*. Independent reading, for this study, refers to time students spend reading self-selected texts (Gambrell, Marinak, Brooker, & McCrea-Andrews, 2011). Miller and Moss (2013) stated that, “Independent reading is an essential practice, one that develops background knowledge, improves fluency and comprehension, heightens motivation, increases reading achievement, and helps students broaden their vocabulary”

(p. 11). When students received in-school independent reading time, the students made greater gains than national averages in reading rates and comprehension (Reutzel, Fason, & Smith, 2008). In two studies of effective teaching, one of the indicators of effective teaching was time provided for independent reading, with less effective teachers' students spending more time on worksheets, answering literal questions, or completing activities (Pressley, Allington, et al., 2001; Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, & Rodriguez, 2003). In addition to the importance of providing time for independent reading, Gambrell, Malloy, and Mazzoni (2011) stressed that the role of the teacher is to ensure students are appropriately matched to texts so students enjoy and benefit from the time spent reading. Independent reading time has been shown to be an important component of effective reading instruction (Allington, 2009; Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Hiebert & Martin, 2009). The implementation of independent reading time can vary in several ways. To share some of the various implementation expectations, Table 1 (adapted from Miller & Moss, 2013) presents key characteristics of independent reading time during traditional sustained silent reading (SSR) (McCracken, 1971) compared to the key characteristics of independent reading time situated within a reading workshop model as described by Calkins (2001).

Table 1.1

Key characteristics of Independent Reading in Traditional SSR and Reading Workshop

Key Characteristics	Traditionally Implemented SSR	Independent Reading within a Reading Workshop
Teacher instructional role	Model for students silent reading of self-selected books	Teach and scaffold students' appropriate book selection strategies
Classroom library	Books are stored and displayed in variant ways across classroom contexts	A variety of genres are stored and displayed within designated levels of reading difficulty
Characteristics of reading motivation/engagement	Student free choice of reading materials is encouraged	Student choice within the genre of study is encouraged
Level of text difficulty	Students freely choose the level of difficulty of reading materials	Students choose texts at their independent reading levels
Scaffolding and feedback	None	Teacher initiates brief individual teacher-student reading conferences
Student accountability	None	Students read aloud to the teacher, discuss their reading with the teacher, and set personal goals for their reading

Adapted from Miller & Moss (2013)

As displayed in Table 1.1, traditionally implemented SSR and independent reading within a reading workshop have similarities, however, there are key differences to note. While both SSR and independent reading within a reading workshop include choice, the choice provided through SSR is less constrained than the choice provided for independent reading within a reading workshop. Independent reading within a reading workshop includes direct teaching and scaffolding of appropriate book selection and

individual reading goals. During independent reading within a reading workshop, students are encouraged to read texts at their independent reading level and the classroom library is designed to easily allow students to access books at their reading level.

Teacher-Student Reading Conferences

Teacher-student reading conferences within the independent reading time of reading workshop allow teachers to deliver individualized reading support by providing feedback and scaffolds in a one-to-one setting. Boreen (1995) suggested teacher-student reading conferences offer occasions to 1) provide students an opportunity to discuss a book in a situation where they do not have to compete with others for the teacher's attention; 2) promote student choice in literature to motivate continued reading; and 3) individualize instruction by modeling or supporting the student's understanding of a concept or his/her ability to discuss texts in an academic manner. During teacher-student reading conferences, students have an opportunity to read a self-selected text aloud, discuss their thoughts and understandings about the text, and seek guidance from the teacher, a more proficient reader. To support students' reading, teachers can provide both feedback on their reading performance (Hattie & Temperly, 2007) and scaffolds on how to capitalize on their own knowledge and problem solving abilities.

This multiple-case study embedded design research explored teacher-student reading conferences conducted in the context of independent reading time by four exemplary second grade teachers whose primary method of reading instruction is the workshop approach as described by Calkins (2001). This study describes how four exemplary reading workshop teachers conducted teacher-student reading conferences

individually with twenty-four students during independent reading time during a nine-week period. In addition to studying how the four exemplary reading workshop teachers conduct teacher-student reading conferences, this study also describes how twenty-four students, eight students reading on-grade level, eight students reading below-grade level, and eight students reading above-grade level, responded to the teachers' feedback and scaffolds during the teacher-student reading conferences.

Problem Statement

Teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time can offer teachers time and space to gain insight into individual students' strengths and needs and then provide personalized instruction. With initiatives like Response to Intervention (RTI) and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) drawing attention to individual students' needs and more rigorous expectations, teachers may benefit from guidance on how to best capitalize on teacher-student reading conferences to promote students' reading achievement. According to Berne and Degener (2015) teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time are intended to provide scaffolds for readers so they are able to read in more complex ways even when the teacher is not there to provide guidance and support. While the current literature appears to be clear that teacher-student reading conferences are recommended as an important element of independent reading time, there are gaps in the literature about how teachers are conducting teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. Many researchers acknowledge the need for additional information about teacher-student

reading conferences during independent reading time (see Berne & Degener, 2015; Bryan, Fawson, & Reutzel, 2003; Miller & Moss, 2013; Bigelman & Peterson, 2016).

The limited literature on teacher-student reading conferences fails to provide an adequate description of how teacher-student reading conferences are being conducted in classrooms, therefore, this study provides descriptions of how four exemplary second grade reading workshop teachers conduct teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time and how twenty-four students, eight students reading above-grade level, eight students reading on-grade level, and eight students reading below-grade level respond to the teachers' feedback and scaffolds during the teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe the nature of teacher-student reading conferences conducted by exemplary second grade reading workshop teachers. In addition, the study sought to identify the feedback and scaffolds these teachers provided during teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. The study also examined how students responded to the teacher's feedback and scaffolds when reading from their self-selected text or discussing their ideas about their self-selected text during teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study in an effort to describe the nature of teacher-student reading conferences and the type of help reading workshop teachers provide during these conferences. Specifically, the following questions were

explored: (1) What occurs during teacher-student reading conferences conducted during independent reading time with above grade-level, on grade-level, and below grade-level readers? (2) In teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, what types of feedback and scaffolds do second grade teachers provide for above grade-level, on grade-level, and below grade-level readers, and how do the feedback and scaffolds change over time? (3) In teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, how do students respond to teachers' feedback and scaffolds and do their responses change over time?

To answer the research questions, the study was designed as a multiple-case study embedded design using qualitative research methods to collect data from multiple sources. A comprehensive review of the literature shaped and refined the data collection methods used which included audio recordings, observations, interviews, and questionnaires. With the approval of the university's institutional review board, the researcher studied how four exemplary second grade reading workshop teachers conducted teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time with a total of twenty-four second graders. In order to gather information on a range of students, the twenty-four second graders consisted of eight students reading above-grade level, eight students reading on-grade level, and eight students reading below-grade level.

The Researcher

The researcher formerly worked as the Elementary Literacy Specialist in the participating district for four years. As the Elementary Literacy Specialist, the researcher led the district in implementing a balanced literacy approach based on the work of the

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) at Columbia University in New York City. The TCRWP balanced literacy framework includes reading workshop, which contains time for daily teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time with the goal of meeting with every child at least once a week.

The researcher brings to the inquiry process practical experience with teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, having both knowledge and understanding of the environmental context. The researcher acknowledges that the same experiences that are so valuable in providing insight could serve as a liability, biasing judgment regarding research design and the interpretation of findings.

Rationale and Significance

The rationale for this study emanates from the researcher's desire to uncover ways to support teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time for reading workshop teachers. There are gaps in the literature about what actually occurs during teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time (Berne & Degener, 2015; Bryan, Fawson, & Reutzel, 2003; Miller & Moss, 2013; Bigelman & Peterson, 2016) therefore, information is needed about what is happening during teacher-student reading conferences and what feedback and scaffolds teachers are providing during teacher-student reading conferences.

This study is significant in that it describes a classroom practice that is promoted in curriculum materials, practitioner texts, and professional development sessions; however, there is limited research available on how teacher-student reading conferences are conducted in classrooms. The descriptions of what occurred during teacher-student

reading conferences provides educators and researchers more information about this widely-recommended literacy practice (Berne & Degener, 2015; Miller & Moss, 2013; Bigelman & Peterson, 2016), implemented in reading workshop classrooms. Increased understanding of how exemplary reading workshop teachers scaffold student reading and how students respond to specific feedback and scaffolds during teacher-student reading conferences could support how other reading workshop teachers provide feedback and scaffolds to support readers during teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time.

Definitions of Key Terms

The following terms are defined to further clarify and explain the purpose of this study.

Reading workshop describes a 30 minute to 60 minute session that includes an explicit minilesson, with demonstration and guided practice, followed by students reading self-selected texts at their independent reading level to enjoy books, practice reading strategies, develop fluency, and improve comprehension. Teachers discuss with students their independent reading level based on formal assessments and progress monitoring data. Students are encouraged to select books on their independent reading level from the classroom's library where books are typically grouped by reading level. During the independent reading time, teachers confer with individual students to support their reading growth. Teachers may also conduct strategy groups or guided reading groups during independent reading time (Calkins, 2001).

Independent Reading is time spent silently reading self-selected texts (Gambrell, Marinak, Brooker, & McCrea-Andrews, 2011). Gambrell, Marinak, Brooker, & McCrea-Andrews (2011) highlight two well-recognized goals of independent reading: 1) to promote positive attitudes toward reading and 2) to provide students with practice for reading proficiency.

Teacher-student reading conferences occur during independent reading time. During a teacher-student reading conference, the teacher typically listens to the child read and/or asks the child questions about what they are working on as a reader. After gathering information about the reader, the teacher provides a compliment on something the reader is doing well. After highlighting a strength, the teacher teaches the reader something new with an explicit explanation and, if appropriate, a demonstration. This instruction is specific to the reader. The teacher may choose to have the student practice the new strategy while the teacher observes. In order to maintain records of what has been taught, the teacher makes notes about the compliment and teaching point (Calkins, 2001). The teacher's records of compliments and teaching points are often referred to as *conferring notes*.

Compliments are individualized, specific statements provided by the teacher to demonstrate recognition of a student's strengths. Compliments are generally provided at the beginning of a conference in order to set a positive tone and encourage risk taking. Compliments are an opportunity to encourage a student's consistent use of strategies they are already able to do or just beginning to approximate (Serravallo & Goldberg, 2007). In this study, the teachers' compliments are categorized as feedback.

Feedback is information provided by the teacher “regarding aspects of one’s performance and understanding” (Hattie & Temperley, 2007).

Reading strategies are defined by Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris (2008) as “deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader’s efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings of text” (p. 368) A strategy is a technique a reader can use to perform a reading skill (determine the most important ideas and themes in a text, activate prior knowledge, retell and synthesize, etc.). Reading strategies are dependent on the kind of texts a person is reading, and the reader’s own prior knowledge and reading processes (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012).

The mClass®: *Reading 3D™ Text Reading and Comprehension* (TRC) is an individually administered assessment using level texts to determine a student’s instructional reading level (Amplify Education, 2016). The mClass®: *Reading 3D™ TRC* provides information about a student’s oral reading accuracy and comprehension using a set of benchmark texts. The mClass®: *Reading 3D™ TRC* results produce a student’s instructional reading level at three benchmark periods throughout the school year (Beginning of Year, Middle of Year, and End of Year). In the present study, this assessment was only be used to group students for selection to participate in the study.

Summary

Given the limited research and importance of understanding more about teacher-student reading conferences, the purpose of this study was to describe the nature of teacher-student reading conferences conducted by exemplary second grade reading workshop teachers. In addition, the study sought to identify the feedback and scaffolds

these teachers provided during teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. The study also examined student responses to feedback and scaffolds provided by the teacher during teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time.

This study was designed to address the following questions: (1) What occurs during teacher-student reading conferences conducted during independent reading time with above grade-level, on grade-level, and below grade-level readers? (2) In teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, what types of feedback and scaffolds do second grade teachers provide for above grade-level, on grade-level, and below grade-level readers, and how does the feedback and scaffolds change over time? (3) In teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, how do students respond to teachers' feedback and scaffolds and do their responses change over time?

The following chapter focuses on the theoretical perspective of the study and a review of the literature exploring the strategic reading behaviors of young readers and how teachers provide scaffolding and feedback to support young readers.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of books have been written that describe teacher-student reading conferences (e.g., Allen, 2009; Miller & Moss, 2013, Serravallo & Goldberg, 2007). In their book, *No More Independent Reading Without Support*, Miller and Moss (2013) suggested that teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time are a time for the teacher and student to discuss texts and how to use reading strategies. According to Miller and Moss (2013), these discussions are intended to help the student better understand the text and how they can use reading strategies for specific types of texts. Despite a clear endorsement of teacher-student reading conferences in many texts, there is limited research on teacher-student reading conferences (Berne & Degener, 2015). The literature reviewed in this chapter includes studies from a variety of settings such as one-to-one interventions and small group instruction. Even though studies investigating how teachers conduct teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time in a general education setting is minimal, the studies explored in this literature review can inform the practices and implementation of teacher-student reading conferences

A common element of teacher-student reading conferences described in the available literature is that students need explicit instruction about what, why, and how readers read (Berne & Degener, 2015; Goldberg, 2015; Allen, 2009; Miller & Moss, 2013, Serravallo & Goldberg, 2007). Another element prevalent in the available literature on teacher-student reading conferences is the expectation that teachers are appropriately

scaffolding this explicit instruction based on their in-depth knowledge of the reading process and the individual reader. These common expectations for teacher-student reading conferences as described in practitioner-oriented books are grounded in theory and research. The theoretical underpinnings of teacher-student reading conferences draw on teachers providing individualized feedback and scaffolding matched to the readers' abilities and needs in a one-to-one setting.

Theoretical Foundation

In order to effectively examine how teachers scaffold young children's comprehension during teacher-student reading conferences, it is important to consider the background conceptualizations of scaffolding. The concept of "scaffolding" evolved from the work of Vygotsky (Meyer, 1993). Vygotsky (1978) stressed that social construction of meaning was pivotal to developing higher-level thinking. Vygotsky (1978) explained when a more knowledgeable other, such as a parent or teacher, provided support or instruction matched to the child's developmental level, the child was able to accomplish more than they were able to accomplish on their own. Vygotsky (1978) described this feature of learning as the zone of proximal development, "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level as determined through problem solving under adult guidance" (p. 86). Knowing a child's zone of proximal development can support learning, as a child can imitate a variety of behaviors that are well beyond the limits of their own proficiencies or abilities (Vygotsky, 1978).

To describe how an adult assists a child with learning, Wood and Middleton (1975) introduced the metaphor of scaffolding by describing how mothers provide support for their child based on their understanding of what their child is capable of doing. The mothers studied by Wood and Middleton demonstrated that if they were not able to provide the appropriate level of support, they engaged in problem-solving; “trying out various instructional hypotheses, relinquishing initiative to the child when he succeeds and taking over more task operations when he fails” (1975, p. 182). Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) explained that this interaction enables a child to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal, which would be beyond his unassisted efforts. This scaffolding consists of the adult controlling or altering the elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner’s capacity. This allows the child to concentrate on and complete the elements within his range of competence (Wood et al., 1976; Wood, 2003). An important feature of scaffolding is the gradual transfer of responsibility from the adult to the child (Meyer, 1993). In an education setting, teachers scaffold instruction to help students attain skills necessary for learning (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991; Paliscnar, 1986; Reis et al., 2008). Scaffolding is now a widely used term in education to represent how teachers support students (van de Pol, Volman, & Beishuizen, 2010).

Based on and inspired by Vygotsky’s theory of development, Diaz, Neal, & Amaya-Williams (1990) expanded Vygotsky’s theory by explaining how a child’s behavior moves from self-control to self-regulation. Self-control is described as a rigid response to a certain stimuli, like a command, where as self-regulation is described as a child’s ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate his own behavior (Diaz et al., 1990). Diaz

and colleagues (1990) postulated that individual differences in self-regulation could be expected from differences in the quality of adult-child interactions.

Distinguishing Features of Scaffolded Instruction

During instruction within an educational setting, the teacher often serves as the more knowledgeable other and is responsible for constructing the scaffold to support the child. However, what it means to scaffold instruction is represented in a variety of ways throughout the literature. With an abundance of educational research on scaffolding, comes many different descriptions or perspectives on scaffolding (van de Pol et al., 2010).

Pressley (2002) provided the following metaphor to describe scaffolding in academic settings:

The scaffolding of a building under construction provides support when the new building cannot stand on its own. As the new structure is completed and becomes freestanding, the scaffolding is removed. So it is with scaffolded adult-child academic interactions. The adult carefully monitors when enough instructional input has been provided to permit the child to make progress toward an academic goal, and thus the adult provides support only when the child needs it. If the child catches on quickly, the adult's responsive instruction will be less

detailed than if the child experiences difficulties with the task” (pp. 97-98).

There are many features to effective instructional scaffolds utilized during teacher-student interactions. Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) described how “well executed scaffolding” starts off by engaging the child into actions that result in recognizable-for-him solutions (p. 96). Once the child is engaged, the teacher can offer additional support based on the child’s identified discrepancies. Scaffolds can take many forms such as modeling a strategy, demonstrating a strategy, or explicitly teaching a strategy (Rupley, Blair, Nichols, 2009, Paris & Oka, 1986; van de Pol et al., 2010). Finally, the teacher confirms the child’s strategic actions until the child is able to complete the action on his own (Wood et al., 1976). Scaffolds are unique in that they are designed for particular student-text-expert transactions, rather than “one size fits all” lessons (Clark & Graves, 2005; Hedin & Gaffney, 2013; Wood, 2003). The communication and interaction between teacher and student can be well structured or less structured in nature depending on the desired learning outcome and reader characteristics. The desired learning often requires differing degrees of directness and structure, and it is this dynamic and interactive relationship that mandates flexible and responsive instruction (Rupley et al., 2009). Gill (2000) described the role of the teacher as collaborator, demonstrator, and observer/assessor. The desired learning outcome and the specific characteristics of the reader determine the best role for the teacher.

Wood (2003) stressed that teachers must know about the knowledge and skills that go into competent task performance, as well as, how to interpret and react to the

various difficulties or sequences that learners may go through as they develop that knowledge and master those skills. Wood also cautioned that the teacher cannot say too much during the interaction without the risk of losing or boring the learner. The teacher must also be prepared to fade their role in the interaction, ultimately remaining mute and inactive (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Wood, 2003). The teacher's fading needs to be done strategically in an effort to balance students' control of their own learning with the need for teacher support (Wood, 2003). As the challenges of the task increases with respect to the learner's skills, teacher control of the learning task increases and student control decreases. "As students demonstrate mastery of the task or skill, teachers withdraw support, expanding students' control of the learning activities. Thus, teachers balance the need to leverage the complexity of students' reading with students' independent problem solving" (Hedin & Gaffney, 2013, p. 210).

Providing the most effective scaffolds require active, reflective teaching in which the teacher recognizes that reading is an interactive process and that students can be effectively taught to become strategic and reflective in their comprehension of text. To provide scaffolds to support students' skills development, teachers hypothesize about the learner's cognitive processes while they are reading a text. The hypotheses, based on students' reading behaviors, guide teachers' decisions about when and how to intervene (Hoffman, 1979; Hoffman, O'Neal, Kastler, Clements, Segel, & Nash, 1984).

Instructional methods used will depend on students' capabilities, the text being read, the purposes for reading, and the context in which reading occurs, teachers can provide effective scaffolds in the critical areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency,

vocabulary, and comprehension by concentrating their efforts (Duffy, Roehler, Meloth, Polin, Rackliffe, Tracy, & Vavrus, 1987; Rupley et al., 2009). Readers develop their ability to strategically use different kinds of information provided in the text as they read more complex texts (McGee, Kim, Nelson, & Fried, 2015). Teacher scaffolding can increase readers' progress or hinder readers' processing. Hoffman and Clements (1984) studied teacher scaffolding on student miscues to explore the relationship between the qualities of the support and the developing patterns in readers' self-correction strategies. In addition to the identification of detrimental forms of scaffolding (i.e., immediately "giving words"), they explored specific ways in which scaffolding could be adjusted to benefit the reader. In order to best support readers, a teacher's decision making requires metacognitive activity, concurrently observing, evaluating, and adjusting interactions with students (Hedin & Gaffney, 2013). Based on meta-analyses of 74 studies on teacher feedback and support, Hattie and Timperley (2007) claimed effective teaching involves assessing and evaluating students' strengths and abilities so the next teaching act can be matched to what the child currently understands.

The teacher's understanding of the student is crucial to the transactional nature of scaffolding. The effectiveness of the scaffolding depends upon the teacher and student adjusting their behavior over time to fit the perceived expectations and/or recommendations of the other. Wood and colleagues (1976) explained that the effective teacher must attend to at least two theoretical models during student-teacher interactions. One is a theory of the task and how it may be completed. The other is a theory of the student's current processing, as well as, their strengths and areas of weakness.

Considering readers bring different strengths and weaknesses to the reading process (Duke, Pressley, & Hilden, 2004; Taboada, Tonks, Wigfield, Guthrie, 2009) and there are many different ways to comprehend a text (Pressley & Gaskins, 2006) instructional needs could be different for each reader. By understanding the diversity in how readers approach the reading process and that reading strategies can be taught (Clay, 2001; Brown, Pressley, Van Meter, & Schuder, 1996; Duffy et al., 1987; Pressley & Wharton-McDonald, 1997), teachers can scaffold learning for young readers specific to their individual needs and provide opportunities to engage in comprehension strategies (Ruddell & Unrau, 2013). Ruddell and Unrau also stressed that when a teacher considers the “text content, text difficulty, and the student’s interests and reading ability” they can affect a student’s reading motivation and engagement (2013, p. 1041).

Considering both the theory of task and the theory of the student’s current processing, the teacher can generate an applicable scaffold and devise situations in which his feedback will be more appropriate for *this* student in *this* point in task mastery (Wood, 2003). The actual pattern of effective instruction, then, will be both *task* and *student* dependent, the requirements of the instruction being *generated* by the interaction of the teacher’s two theories (Wood et al., 1976). Scaffolded lessons require that teachers plan how they can support the learner(s) but also spontaneously adjust the way they support individual students based on students’ reading strengths, needs and experiences (Hedin & Gaffney, 2013).

Scaffolding plays a crucial role in supporting students’ strategy use. The teacher explicitly explains and/or demonstrates reading strategies, engages students in supported

practice with multiple texts over time, and gradually transfers responsibility for reading strategy use as students become increasingly able (Clark & Graves, 2005). In order to support students in developing self-regulation of strategic reading behaviors, teachers can encourage readers to seek and welcome external and internal feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). To promote student's problem-solving strategy use, teachers can make explicit how and why they are utilizing a particular strategy as they prompt, coach and demonstrate strategic actions of reading at the point of error or self-correction attempt.

Teaching and learning opportunities occur most readily within the reader's attempt to fix a miscue (Cole, 2006; Forbes, Poparad, & McBride, 2004). Through Cole's (2006) observations of seven first-grade teachers, he identified multiple scaffolding techniques provided to students during independent reading and identified the significance of the teacher's timing. Forbes and colleagues (2004) found that teachers who make informed decisions about which miscues provide the best openings for instruction could teach self-monitoring behavior directly to the student by calling his/her attention to the sources of information he/she might be neglecting and prompt the reader to take a strategic action. The teacher had to make decisions on the spot as to what to do and say to capitalize on this powerful teaching time for a student (Brown, 2003; Cole, 2006; Fried, 2013).

Although a stated goal of effective reading scaffolds is to provide varied, meaningful practice to ensure student mastery and transfer of a skill to other meaningful reading situations (Rupley et al., 2009). Hedin and Gaffney's (2013) analysis of 71 transcripts revealed teachers appeared to adhere to preferred patterns of scaffolding rather

than contingently interacting with students or using the full range of prompts and strategies available to them.

The model of contingent teaching, or being responsive to the current level of the student, consists of four steps: (1) using diagnostic strategies to establish students' understanding, (2) checking the diagnosis with the student, (3) using intervention strategies (helping students), and (4) checking students learning after providing help (van de Pol & Elbers , 2013, p. 34). The investigation of the association between contingency and subsequent student understanding revealed a significant association. Van de Pol and colleagues found that contingency was positively associated to student learning when the student's initial understanding was poor. The findings also revealed that teachers more often overestimated the students' understanding than underestimated their understanding. When a teacher underestimated a student's understanding, the teacher provided too little challenge. Too little challenge resulted in no further learning because the support given was too easy and may prevent students from processing other, more elaborate information. However, a non-contingent decrease of control indicated a teacher's overestimation of a student's understanding, whereas, the teacher provided too much challenge. The scaffold given was too complex and may have caused comprehension breakdowns. Contingent support was a correct estimation of a student's understanding and resulted in the teacher providing the right amount of challenge (van de Pol & Elbers, 2013).

Rodgers, D'Agostino, Harmey, Kelly, and Brownfield (2016) found that teachers were instructionally contingent about 61% of the time. Examining small groups and one-

to-one interactions of a middle-school teacher, Belland, Burdo, and Gu (2015) found more than half (54.8%) of the teacher-student interactions were contingent. Of the contingent interactions, most of the interactions (41.5%) were the teacher indicating important task elements. The teacher relied on questioning for 30.4% of the scaffolds and provided feedback for 14.7% of the scaffolds (Belland et al., 2015). While these percentages may seem low, these findings supported earlier research findings indicating that it is difficult to achieve and maintain instructional contingency (Rodgers et al., 2016). Even though their findings support Wood and Wood's (1996) conclusion that less than contingent instruction is adequate to ensure learning in most cases, Rodgers and colleagues (2016) concluded that simply providing one-to-one assistance is not sufficient to ensure progress on complex tasks such as learning to read and write.

Based on their investigation of the schoolwide enrichment model-reading (SEM-R) reading program, Reis, McCoach, Little, Muller, and Kaniskan (2011) suggested that teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time could assist students' fluency and comprehension. Through teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, teachers could ensure students are selecting appropriate texts, provide scaffolding to support the students' use of reading strategies, and engage students in conversations about texts (Reis et al., 2011).

Contingent interactions may not be a very frequent occurrence in student's everyday life (Belland et al., 2015; van de Pol et al., 2010). Contingent scaffolding is a description of an ideal that could be challenging to achieve in practice because the complexities and the intellectual demands on the teacher are immense (Wood, 2003).

Another factor is that many teachers may struggle to conduct the required continual analysis during the one-to-one interaction. Belland and colleagues explain that this could be challenging because students often (a) did not respond accurately to questions about whether they understand, (b) did not have shared understanding of ideas being discussed, and (c) mistakenly appeared to understand (2015, p. 266).

Scaffolding Comprehension for Young Children

The ability to decode words and read with fluency is necessary for successful reading, especially for comprehension; however, the ability to decode by itself is not sufficient to ensure successful comprehension. Comprehension is critical for successful reading (Almasi & Hart, 2011). Successful reading is complex. Complexity is reflected in the sources of knowledge the reader draws from, the processes needed to pick up information from the print, the strategic actions used to combine or check information, and the flexibility with which a reader uses what they know in different ways and contexts (Paris & Jacobs, 1994). When a child reads, they are considering multiple sources of information within a text to decode the words and make meaning of how these words come together to tell a story or teach something new.

Many researchers have studied how students learn to read and how the reading process impacts learning and teaching. Rumelhart (1994), Singer (1994) and Stanovich (1980) illuminated the reading process through the working systems of the brain and how an individual coordinates complex actions and patterns of information in order to read. These perspectives claimed reading was not just influenced by visual input from a text as presented in Automatic Information Processing Models (e.g., LaBerge & Samuels, 1974)

but also from higher-level thinking (Rumelhart, 2004; Stanovich, 1980; Tracey & Morrow, 2006). Based on the perspectives that the reading process is interactive, a shift in teaching comprehension as strategic processes rather than skills to be acquired occurred and led to the development of interventions aimed first at teaching single strategies to enhance literal and inferential comprehension (e.g., visualization, comprehension monitoring, story grammar, theme, and summarization) and eventually to teaching strategic processing as self-regulated sets of strategies used flexibly as needed (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

Strategies Approach to Supporting Comprehension

The National Reading Panel (NRP) report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000) concluded that research appears to support instruction of reading strategies. From the perspective of the strategies approach, effective reading teachers can help their students develop into strategic, active readers (Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011).

Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris (2008) described strategies as “deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader’s efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings of text” and characterizes strategic readers as a reader “who selects a particular path to a reading goal” (p. 368). One way teachers helped readers was by teaching them why, how, and when to apply certain reading strategies shown to be used by effective readers (Brown, 2008; Duke & Pearson, 2002). Studies of various integrated approaches to strategy instruction, such as reciprocal teaching (Palinscar & Brown, 1984), suggested that teaching students comprehension routines that

include knowing a repertoire of strategies from which to draw during independent reading tasks could lead to increased understanding (Brown, 2008; Guthrie, Wigfield, Barbosa, et al., 2004; Sporer, Brunstein, & Kieschke, 2009). Depending on the research study, the reading strategies identified as worth teaching to improve reading comprehension varies (Duke & Pearson, 2002; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000), however, the following are often included:

- setting purposes for reading
- previewing and predicting
- activating prior knowledge
- monitoring, clarifying, and fixing
- visualizing and creating visual representations
- drawing inferences
- self-questioning and thinking aloud
- summarizing and retelling

In order for students to use these strategies in appropriate and flexible ways, strategy instruction should be dynamic, adaptive, and responsive (Duke et al., 2011; McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009; Wilkinson & Son, 2011). Strategy instruction should provide authentic experiences in strategy use that help students learn: (1) when, why, and how to apply strategies, and (2) how to use just the right tool to overcome a challenge at just the right moment (Brown, 2008; Duke et al., 2011). Brown (2008) also found effective teachers introduce individual strategies while moving students toward coordinated use of several strategies.

Understanding that comprehension is an active and often collaborative process of making meaning, effective reading teachers employ discussion of reading strategies (Duke et al., 2011). When studying teacher-student interactions, Branden (2000) found when the teacher supported the students' meaning making processes and engaged the student in conversation around the texts, the student had higher comprehension than students who did not collaboratively make meaning of the text. Higher comprehension may result from the challenges of explaining oneself to others or the collaborative effort to repair breakdowns in comprehension (Auckerman, 2007; Branden, 2000). By supporting readers' problem solving, by providing scaffolds based on the readers' contributions, by putting students back on the right track when they fail to solve comprehension problems, and by explaining new information teachers could improve readers' comprehension (Braden, 2000). Sailors and Price (2010) found when teachers offered more opportunities to engage in comprehension strategies, students constructed explanations around those strategies and had positive changes in their reading achievement.

When discussing reviews of studies on strategy instruction, Almasi and Hart (2011) offered a caution about an inadvertent outcome that may have emerged as a result of these studies. With many studies focused on teaching students the strategy rather than teaching students how to be strategic, "teachers have come to focus on strategies as things to be taught, rather than actions to be fostered" (Almasi & Hart, 2011, p. 253). In order to be strategic, a reader must actively process the text and make decisions (Afflerbach et al., 2008; Paris et al., 1991; Pressley, Borkowski, & Schneider, 1989). In

order to make decisions, readers need to know a range of strategies (Bereiter & Bird, 1985; Paris & Oka, 1986; Duffy et al., 1987). When interventions taught students how to flexibly use multiple strategies and to develop metacognitive awareness of the task and self, research has shown that these interventions have been successful with readers at various age levels, and some have shown that they lead to sustained and significant growth in comprehension over time (R. Brown, Pressley, Van Meter, & Schuder 1996; Reutzel, Smith, & Fawson, 2005)

In their 2009 study on comprehension approaches, McKeown, Beck and Blake described strategy instruction as one approach to comprehension instruction, and a content approach as another. They describe the content approach as focusing on “keeping students’ attention directed toward the content of what they are reading and working through the text to build a representation of the ideas through discussion” (p. 220).

While both the content and strategies approach aim to actively engage students with reading, a major distinction between the content approach and the strategies approach is that strategies approach encourages students to think about their mental processes and to execute specific strategies to interact with text (McKeown et al., 2009). Whereas, the content approach attempts to engage students in the “process of attending to text ideas and building mental representation of the ideas, with no direction to consider specific mental processes” (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 220).

The content approach is rooted in models developed to explain how a reader processes text. From a text-processing perspective, a reader moves through text identifying each new piece of text information and deciding how it relates to information

already given and to background knowledge (Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978). This approach can lead teachers to focus on striving for meaning throughout the reading of the text rather than considering when and how to utilize specific routines to deal with new information (McKeown et al., 2009).

When McKeown, Beck, and Blake (2009) compared the two approaches in a whole-class setting, they found no difference between the outcomes on a comprehension monitoring task or a strategies task. However, there was a difference in terms of what students and teachers talked about and how much students said; suggesting that students do what is asked of them. McKeown and colleagues state, “If questions directly prompt students to talk about text content, they talk about text content, and thus remember more text ideas than they do if questions prompt them to access text content through strategies” (p. 243). They also explained that strategies prompts might split the student’s focus between talking about strategies and talking about content. McKeown and colleagues results differed from the results of the instructional study conducted by Dole, Brown, and Trathen (1996) which indicated that at-risk readers who received strategy instruction made superior gains in comprehension performance over their peers who received either story content instruction or traditional basal instruction. Dole and colleagues (1996) reported that the differential and superior performance by the strategy group was demonstrated when students read texts on their own without the teacher’s instructional support. While Dole and colleagues (1996) were unable to isolate specific characteristics of the strategy treatment that may have led to superior performance, they do claim that

the students appeared to benefit from direct teacher explanation, coaching, and scaffolding and from tasks that required them to actively participate.

The goal of scaffolding is to support student's processing of increasing complex texts, whether that is through explicit strategy instruction or facilitated conversations as Aukerman (2007) suggested. With this goal in mind, a key component of the scaffolding process is the student's internalization of the support provided (van de Pol et al., 2010). The student internalizes the support structure associated with the scaffolding and, as a result, teacher scaffolding is no longer needed as the learner can provide his or her own support. van de Pol and colleagues (2010) explained that the learner does not literally internalize the scaffolding interchange; rather they appropriate the essence of the scaffolding interchange. Scaffolding could allow teachers to provide expert guidance while gradually transferring the responsibility for learning to students (Rupley et al., 2009).

Self-regulation can occur when readers are provided with how to integrate demands within the text, how to choose appropriate strategies, and how to monitor their reading (Souvignier & Mokhlesgerami, 2006). Pointed and precise coaching can scaffold the development of self-regulation. Teachers who notice, encourage, and teach self-monitoring and self-correcting behaviors could create occasions for their students to develop effective reading processes (Brown, 2003; Forbes et al., 2004; Souvignier & Mokhlesgerami, 2006). Dole and colleagues (1996) found that students were more likely to self-regulate strategy use when teachers informed them of its benefits and showed them evidence of how it contributes to improved performance.

Although we cannot know exactly what information a reader uses to make meaning from a text, we can gain insight when observing their oral reading and their responses to questions about texts. By noticing what information students are using, teachers can support students in using a variety of information to read and understand increasingly complex texts. Clay (2001) expressed that scaffolding students' reading could offer quality learning experiences by providing opportunities for readers to notice their own reading processing and for teachers to support readers.

Summary

Throughout the research reviewed, it is evident that a teacher's feedback on the student's current performance and the teacher's instructional scaffolding to reduce the gap between the student's current performance and the desired goal can greatly affect a student's comprehension when independently reading. To account for diversity in students' reading processes teachers can provide personalized reading instruction and support through teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. The literature suggests scaffolding can be effective because it enables a teacher to keep a task whole, while the students learn to understand and manage the parts. Effective scaffolding presents the learner with just the right challenge by integrating multiple aspects of a task into manageable chunks (Clark & Graves, 2005). While the literature is clear that scaffolding learning by offering individualized feedback and support for readers facilitates students' ability to read increasingly complex texts, there is limited research on how teachers actually provide scaffolds during teacher-student reading conferences in a general education setting. The lack of research on teacher-student

reading conferences necessitated the expansion of the literature review to include research on feedback, scaffolding, and supporting comprehension for young readers which are common underpinnings of teacher-student reading conferences as described in practitioner-oriented literature.

Studying teacher-student reading conferences could be helpful in informing reading workshop teachers of best practices in supporting students' reading progress through teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. Therefore, this study was designed to provide needed information on an increasingly common classroom practice.

The following chapter presents the study's research methodology and includes discussions around the following areas: (a) research design, (b) description of participants, (c) method of data collection, and (d) analysis and synthesis of data.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The purposes of this multiple-case study embedded design was to describe the nature of teacher-student reading conferences conducted by exemplary second grade teachers, describe the feedback and scaffolds these teachers provide during teacher-student reading conferences, and to describe how students respond to the feedback and scaffolding provided during the teacher-student reading conferences. This study describes teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time conducted by four exemplary reading workshop teachers with a total of twenty-four students, eight students reading above-grade level, eight students reading on-grade level, and eight students reading below-grade level over a nine-week period. The researcher believed that a better understanding of teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time would allow reading workshop teachers to conduct teacher-student reading conferences from a more informed perspective in terms of the feedback and scaffolds offered to readers during teacher-student reading conferences. In seeking to understand teacher-student reading conferences, the study addressed three research questions:

1) What occurs during teacher-student reading conferences conducted during independent reading time with above grade-level, on grade-level, and below grade-level readers?

2) In teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, what types of feedback and scaffolds do second grade teachers provide for above grade-level, on grade-level, and below grade-level readers, and how does the feedback and scaffolds

change over time?

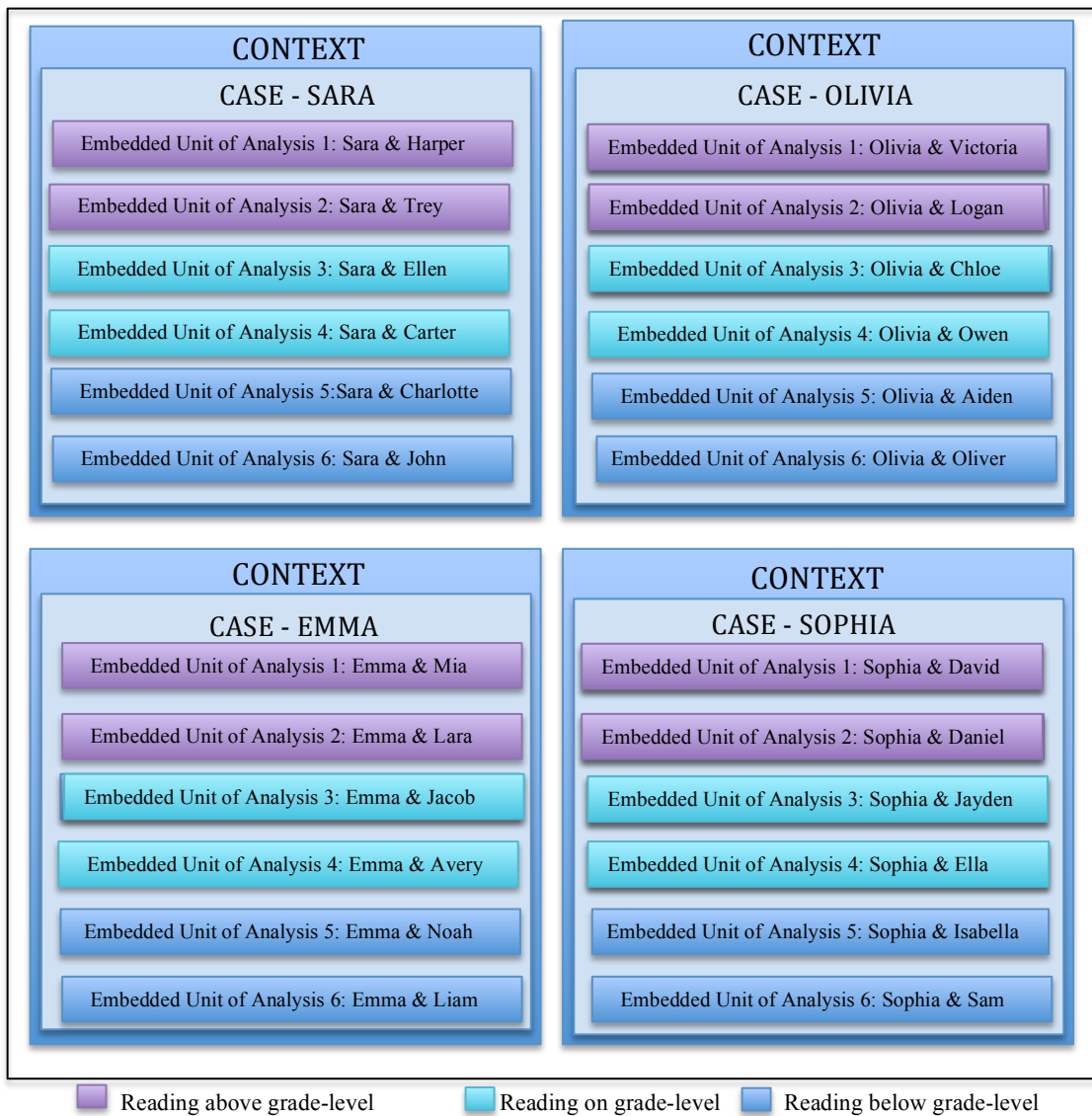
3) In teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, how do students respond to teachers' feedback and scaffolds and do their responses change over time?

This chapter describes the study's research method and includes discussions around the following areas: (a) research design, (b) description of participants, (c) method of data collection, and (d) analysis and synthesis of data.

Research Design –Multiple-Case Study Embedded Design

This study was organized as a multiple-case study embedded design providing in-depth inquiry within and across the cases of four exemplary reading workshop teachers and six of their students (Yin, 2014). The questions for this study guided the description of operational links traced over time leading to multiple-case study embedded design (Yin, 2014). Figure 3.1 depicts the multiple-case study embedded design of this study.

Figure 3.1. Multiple-case study embedded design.



The qualitative multiple-case study embedded design was selected because the case study method is an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon, social unit, or system bounded by time or place (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). Stake described case studies as the “experience of real cases operating in real situations” (Stake, 2006, p. 2). Merriam (1998) described qualitative case study as an

ideal design for understanding and interpreting educational phenomena. As she stated,

A case study design is employed to gain an in depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research” (Merriam, 1998, p. 19).

The National Research Council (2004) described the importance of case studies in examining how a K-12 education curriculum works in actual classroom setting. The National Research Council described that case study descriptions based on field evidence, such as classroom observations, teacher interviews, student interviews, and data about potentially relevant school and community conditions could be valuable for informing practices for other teachers and schools.

An important reason for studying multiple cases, as in a multiple-case study embedded design, was to “examine how the program or phenomenon performs in different environments” (Stake, 2006, p. 27). Each case was studied individually to gain understanding of that particular case. In addition to studying each case, the similarities and differences between cases was also studied to understand the program or phenomenon better. The collection of cases was “understood differently and better because of the particular activity and contexts of each case” (Stake, 2006, p. 40).

Understanding the program or phenomenon being studied required knowing not only how it worked and did not work, but also how it worked under various conditions (Stake, 2006, p. 40).

Each case was carefully selected as a literal replication meaning each teacher selected was recognized by district literacy leaders to be an exemplary reading workshop teacher (Yin, 2014). The literal replication was used to determine how four exemplary second grade teachers conduct teacher-student reading conferences. The single cases and the cross case analyses were conducted in order to better understand the collection of cases (Stake, 2006).

In order to address the research questions, the multiple-case study embedded design had multiple levels of analysis of the selected cases. Each teacher-student dyad was analyzed as an embedded case informing the individual teacher cases. The teachers' cases were examined for similarities and distinctions across the four cases. See Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Levels of Analyses

Embedded Unit of Analysis	Case Analysis	Cross-case Analysis
Sara and Ellen Sara and Harper Sara and Carter Sara and Trey Sara and Charlotte Sara and John	Sara	Exemplary Second Grade Reading Workshop Teachers
Olivia and Aiden Olivia and Logan Olivia and Victoria Olivia and Owen Olivia and Chloe Olivia and Oliver	Olivia	
Emma and Mia Emma and Noah Emma and Liam Emma and Avery Emma and Jacob Emma and Lara	Emma	
Sophia and David Sophia and Jayden Sophia and Daniel Sophia and Sam Sophia and Isabella Sophia and Ella	Sophia	

The limited research on teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time fails to provide an adequate description of how teacher-student reading conferences are being conducted in classrooms. Therefore, this study was designed to describe the nature of teacher-student reading conferences occurring in four second grade

classrooms and describe the feedback and scaffolds teachers offer during these teacher-student reading conferences.

Participants

The study was conducted in four second grade classrooms in a large urban district in the Southeast. Second grade teachers and students were the focus of this study because a review of the literature revealed many of the studies described one-to-one scaffolding and feedback with first graders (see Rodgers et al., 2016) or students in fourth grade or older (see Hattie & Temperly, 2007). Second grade was also chosen because of the benefits of studying younger readers when literacy processing can be labored, observable and sequential allowing educators to determine how readers are approaching, processing, and problem-solving within texts (Doyle, 2013). In order to answer the research questions, the four teacher participants and twenty-four student participants that they conferred with individually were selected based on specific criteria.

Teacher participants. For this study, teacher participants met the following criteria: (1) teach second grade, (2) work within the selected school district, (3) have participated in training by Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), and (4) have implemented reading workshop, as described by Calkins (2001). To select the teacher participants for this study, school-district literacy specialists were asked to identify highly effective literacy teachers. The elementary school principals who work with the nominated teachers were asked to confirm the recommendation and that the nominated teacher met the teacher participant criteria. Once the recommendation from the principal was received, the teacher was invited to participate. Each nominated teacher

was observed during the literacy block. The classroom observation was analyzed by comparing the teachers' observed practice (Appendix D) to the characteristics identified by Pressley's and colleagues' (2001) national study of 30 highly effective first grade teachers (Appendix E).

The teacher selection criteria and the observations ensured that each teacher participating in the study had TCRWP training in implementing teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. The training on reading workshop from TCRWP included instruction on the structure of reading workshop, delivering minilessons, conducting teacher-student reading conferences, and using tools, such as charts, notebooks, and post-it notes. Table 3.2 describes the four teacher participants.

Table 3.2

Teacher Participants

Teacher	Years teaching	Years teaching second grade	Teacher-student reading conference professional development
Sara	4	2	Received Masters degree in literacy from TCRWP, attended several TCRWP institutes, conducted district-level training on teacher-student reading conferences
Emma	18	2	Attended week long TCRWP institute and worked with TCRWP trainer at her school (5 days), attended district provided PD
Olivia	15	2	Attended one day TCRWP reading workshop professional development, attended district provided PD
Sophia	17	3	Attended one day TCRWP balanced literacy professional development which included reading workshop, attended district provided PD

Student participants. Twenty-four second grade students were selected to participate in the study of teacher-student reading conferences. For this study the participating students met the following criteria: (1) student in one of the participating second grade teacher's classrooms, (2) parent permission to participate, and (3) student permission to participate. All students who agreed to participate in the study were sorted into three groups: (1) students reading above-grade level, (2) students reading on-grade level, and (3) students reading below-grade level (See Figure 1). The students reading achievement was determined from their Middle of Year *Reading 3D Text Reading and Comprehension* scores (Appendix F). In each classroom, two students were randomly selected from each of the three groups, which resulted in two students reading above-grade level for each participating teacher, two students reading on-grade level for each participating teacher, and two students reading below-grade level for each for each participating teacher. The total number of students participating in the study equaled twenty-four: eight students reading above-grade level, eight students reading on-grade level, and eight students reading below-grade level. The students were sorted in these three groups to gather information about how the participating exemplary reading workshop teachers adjusted their instruction based on the students' achievement and needs. Sorting the groups ensured the students participating in the study represented a range of readers.

Data Collection

Multiple data collection sources were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected. The study included teacher questionnaire responses, teacher interviews,

participant observations, transcripts of audio recordings, and document collection. Each data source is described below in the order the data were collected.

Teacher questionnaire. Each teacher participant was asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix A) to provide information about how she views and plans for literacy instruction, as well as, information about her training and background. The teacher questionnaire also asked about the resources the teacher uses during reading workshop. The researcher developed the initial teacher questionnaire and added the final two questions on the final questionnaire (Appendix A) after receiving feedback on the questionnaire from literacy experts. Once the questionnaire was finalized, the researcher sent the questionnaire to each participating teacher via email. The teachers were given two weeks to complete the questionnaire. Two of the teachers returned the questionnaire to the researcher via email and two of the teachers returned the questionnaire during their first teacher interview. The researcher analyzed each teachers' responses to the questions in order to understand what and how materials are used for teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. This data also provided context for how the teacher conducts teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. This data was collected before the first literacy observation occurred.

Literacy observations. In order to gather information about the context of teacher-student reading conferences, three observations of the entire reading workshop were conducted in each of the four classrooms for a total of twelve observations. Each of the twelve observations lasted 90 minutes and included the reading workshop minilesson and independent reading time with teacher-student reading conferences.

The researcher did not know any of the students prior to entering the classroom for the first observation. During each observation, the researcher was as unobtrusive as possible in an effort to describe what was occurring in teacher-student reading conferences conducted by exemplary second grade teachers. The twelve reading workshop minilessons observed by the researcher were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

During each observation, the researcher recorded field notes on the books and resources, such as charts, bins, and folders, used during the reading workshop minilesson and during each teacher-student reading conference. Throughout each ten to fifteen minute reading workshop minilesson, the researcher observed for a five-minute block and then noted the teacher's actions and the students' actions. This observation pattern continued for the duration of the minilesson observations and the teacher-student reading conference observations. The researcher recorded field notes on each teacher's position and the students' positions in the room during the reading workshop minilesson. Prior to the first teacher-student reading conference, the researcher wrote notes on the students' positions and actions during the independent reading time. Once the first conference began, the researcher focused on observing the teacher-student reading conferences.

The recorded notes and the transcriptions of the audio recordings from the 1,080 minutes of reading workshop observations were used to describe and interpret the context for teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time (Stake, 2006).

Teacher-student reading conference audio recordings and observations. Each teacher was asked to audio record each teacher-student reading conference they

conducted with the two above-grade level readers, two on-grade level readers, and two below-grade level readers over a nine-week period resulting in nine teacher-student reading conferences for each student participating in this study. This resulted in 2,167 minutes of audio recordings for a total of 207 teacher-student reading conferences.

Each teacher was observed during three teacher-student reading conferences with each of the students participating in the study. During each observation, the researcher collected field notes and audio recorded the teacher-student reading conference. Each audio recording was transcribed verbatim. The researcher wrote notes on the teacher's actions and position, as well as, the student's actions during each of the sixty-nine teacher-student reading conferences that were observed. The researcher also wrote the scaffolding and feedback provided by the teacher during each of the observed teacher-student reading conferences. The title of the book the student and teacher discussed during each teacher-student reading conference was also recorded.

The desired outcome of the participant observation was to understand the setting, the activities taking place in that setting, the people who participate in the activities and the meanings of what was observed (Patton, 2015). During each observation, the researcher was as unobtrusive as possible so as not to alter the interactions between the students and teachers.

Conference notes. In addition to the observations and audio recordings from each of the teacher-student reading conferences, any conference notes the teacher recorded during the teacher-student reading conferences were collected for analysis. The

conference notes provided information about each teacher's planning for conferences, decision-making during conferences, and reflections about the conferences.

Teacher interviews. Semi-structured interviews with each of the teachers were conducted on weeks one, five, and nine of the study. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed.

During the first teacher interview, the researcher asked the teacher to talk through their responses on the teacher questionnaire. Teachers were asked if they wanted to share any additional information. These interviews lasted 25-45 minutes and occurred during each teacher's planning period.

The researcher developed questions for the interviews during week five of the study. The questions were developed to gain additional information about the resources and actions observed during the teacher-student reading conferences. The questions were sent to each teacher electronically so they could think about their answers before the interview (Appendix C). Each interview lasted from 30 minutes to 75 minutes. Three teachers asked to meet with the researcher during their planning period and the fourth teacher met the researcher at a coffee shop on a teacher workday.

For the final interview, the teachers were asked to talk about the benefits and challenges of teacher-student reading workshop. These final unstructured interviews lasted 10 to 20 minutes and occurred during the teacher's planning time.

The interviews provided an opportunity for the teacher to share their thoughts and reflections about the conferences they conducted with each of the participating students. The interviews provided additional information about each teacher's planning for

teacher-student reading conferences, decision-making during teacher-student reading conferences, and reflections about the teacher-student reading conferences.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began during the data collection process and was ongoing throughout the data collection. Through the simultaneous data collection and analysis, the researcher was able to identify emerging themes and investigate them further (Merriam, 1998).

The verbatim transcriptions of the audio recordings, observations, and interviews were read and reread multiple times. Annotations were made by writing key words in the margins of field notes and transcripts. These annotations denoted common patterns and topics related to the research questions. These annotations then became the basis for the inductive codes and subcodes that emerged during first cycle coding (Miles, Huberman, Saldana, 2014; Saldana, 2016).

During first cycle coding, process coding and InVivo coding were used to analyze the transcripts. Process coding was chosen to indicate “observable and conceptual action in the data” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 75). Identifying things that “emerge, change, occur in particular sequences, or become strategically implemented” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 75) through process coding, helped to answer question one of the study. InVivo coding was also utilized to “prioritize and honor the participant’s voice” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 74) to answer each of the research questions. Definitions were created for each of the codes. The definitions were improved and amended as the study proceeded. This initial first cycle coding generated a range of individual codes. Each of the process codes and InVivo

codes were entered into a matrix display. The matrix display organized the material in a condensed “format for reflection, verification, conclusion drawing, and other analytic acts” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 91). Samples of the matrix are included in Appendix G.

During second cycle coding, codes were combined through pattern coding (Miles et al., 2014). Patterns were identified and compared across data sources to confirm findings. A search for and an analysis of discrepant cases were also conducted (Miles et al., 2014). The data was combed for negative cases or cases that did not fit with the themes or assertions that the other data revealed. The findings were written in a narrative interpretation that described what the findings uncovered, as well as the meaning gained from the analysis (Merriam, 1998). The coding of the spreadsheet identified the feedback, scaffolds, and student responses for each teacher-student dyad.

Using cross-case analysis procedures, the six dyad cases for each teacher were analyzed to construct a teacher-level case. The matrix for each teacher-student dyad was used to identify patterns for each teacher across the teacher-student dyads. Recurring actions, topics, and structures were identified in the matrix and color-coded to track the rate of occurrence of each for each of the teachers. The teacher interviews, conference notes, and observation notes were used to provide additional information about the teacher’s literacy training, beliefs, and approaches that may have influenced the feedback and scaffolds provided during each teacher-student reading conference. All of the collected data was used to construct a teacher-level case for each of the four participating teachers. Studying each case led to understanding that particular case in the specific context.

Once each teacher-level case was constructed, a cross-analysis of teacher cases was conducted. Each case then contributed to the understanding of the collection of cases (Stake, 2006). The matrix, including data from each teacher-student dyad across the nine weeks, was analyzed using a color-coding system to identify patterns across the individual teachers' cases. Using the color-coding from the matrix, three spreadsheets were created. One spreadsheet contained all of the feedback codes for each conference. One spreadsheet contained all of the scaffold type codes and another spreadsheet included each of the scaffold focus codes. The information from each of these spreadsheets has been included in tables presented in Chapter Four. Studying multiple cases allowed the researcher to see processes and outcomes across the cases and to understand the local conditions, which can lead to "more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanations" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 101).

In addition to coding, the researcher wrote analytical memos to capture thoughts that occurred during data collection, data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, conclusion testing, and final reporting. According to Miles and colleagues, "coding triggers analytic thought and memoing captures the thoughts of the analyst 'writing out loud'" (2014, p. 99). A running list of assertions was kept and revised as fieldwork continued and evidence appeared that confirmed or disconfirmed them. Throughout the study, the statements in progress were used to guide the analysis and additional data collection.

Ethical Considerations

As in any research study, ethical issues related to the protection of the participants were of vital concern (Merriam, 2009). Even though no serious ethical threats to the participants or their well-being were anticipated, this study employed various safeguards to ensure the protection and rights of participants.

First, informed consent remained a priority throughout the study. Written consent to voluntarily participate in the study was received from each participant. Second, participants' rights and interests were considered primary importance when choices were made regarding reporting and dissemination of data. The researcher was committed to keeping the names and any other significantly identifying characteristics confidential. Research-related records and data were stored in a secure location to maintain confidentiality.

Issues Of Trustworthiness

Throughout this study, the researcher made all attempts to control for potential biases that might be present through the design, implementation, and analysis of the study. In addition to coding, the researcher employed jotting to capture “reflections and commentary on issues that emerge during fieldwork and especially data analysis” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 94). These jottings, in the form of reflective remarks, were added when writing and when expanding raw field notes. Through jottings, the researcher was simultaneously aware of the actions during teacher-student reading conferences and my own feelings, reactions, insights, and interpretations. By recognizing and describing

personal beliefs, experiences, and assumptions, the researcher bracketed beliefs to minimize the researchers influence on the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Credibility

Credibility suggests whether the findings are accurate and credible from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants, and the reader. This criterion was a key component of the research design (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009).

In order to address credibility, the methodological validity and interpretive validity were considered. Methodological validity involved asking how well matched the logic of the method was to the kinds of research questions that were being posed and the kind of explanation that the researcher was attempting to develop. This type of validity involved considering the interrelationship between the study's purpose, research questions, and methods. Interpretive validity involved asking how valid the data analysis is and the interpretation on which it is based. The researcher remained committed to engage in ongoing critical self-reflection by way of dialogue with professional colleagues and advisors.

To address subjectivity and strengthen credibility of the research, the researcher checked codes and categories with other literacy experts to ensure what was occurring in the classrooms of the participating exemplary second grade reading workshop teachers was accurately portrayed. The researcher employed member checking (Creswell & Miller, 2000) by checking with each of the teachers, to ensure the descriptions and analyses truly represented the nature of reading conferences in their classroom.

To enhance the methodological validity of the study, the researcher triangulated data sources as well as data collection methods. Gathering data by multiple methods and from multiple sources provided a richer and fuller depiction of the phenomenon being studied. To enhance the interpretive validity of this study, the researcher used peer review and searched for discrepant evidence. This included looking for variation in the understanding of the phenomenon and identifying instances that might challenge the researcher's expectations or emergent findings (Stake, 2006). Reviewing and discussing findings with professional colleagues was an additional way of ensuring accuracy of the findings.

Dependability

In an effort to present findings that were consistent and reliable with the data collected, the researcher documented procedures and made all attempts to demonstrate that codes and categories have been used consistently. The researcher maintained documentation that chronicled the evolution of thinking and documented the rationale for all choices and decisions made during the research study. Additionally, inter-rater reliability (Patton, 2015) was established by asking colleagues to code several transcripts. Each colleague coded transcripts of nine teacher-student reading conferences. The nine teacher-student reading conference transcripts were from three teacher-student dyads, three conferences from each teacher-student dyad. Differences were discussed until the categories were distinct and the codes were well-defined. Agreement was reached on 94% of the codes.

Transferability

Generalizability was not a goal of this study, however, the issue of transferability was addressed. Transferability is providing sufficient detail to enable the reader to determine the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied to their context (Merriam, 1998). In this study, rich description of the data collected is provided so that readers are able to apply the findings to their own relevant situations (Merriam, 1998).

Codes

Based on open-coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), the following codes were developed to describe the feedback and scaffolds offered throughout the study. Based on the analysis of the feedback provided during the 207 teacher-student reading conferences with 24 second grade students, the codes displayed in Table 3.3 were developed.

Table 3.3

Feedback Codes

Type of Feedback	Definition	Example
Explicit, positive feedback	The teacher explaining what the student is doing well by naming and/or describing the students' action(s)	“Something that I noticed that you did is you did do a lot of rereading and you are making your words sound so smooth when you are reading. Good job! because you know what, you have been working on that for awhile, like scooping up more words as you read and you are sounding like a storyteller when you are reading, so keep working on that. High five, I am so proud of you”
Instructive feedback	The teacher explaining what the student is doing by naming and/or describing the students' action(s) that need to change.	“And you know what we are going to have a conference about your reading log instead of one of your books because you were doing a really great job picking up how much you were reading in workshop and last time we met, it was about here and I can see about five more books that doesn't show me a lot of reading going on. And how do we get to be better readers?”
Nonspecific feedback	The teacher providing phrases that do not describe anything specific	Saying “good job” or “excellent” without indicating what they were referring to.

Two categories for scaffolding emerged, the type, or method, of scaffolding and the instructional focus of the scaffold. As the audio recordings and observations were analyzed, the scaffolding codes displayed in Table 3.4 were developed to describe the type of scaffolding offered throughout the study.

Table 3.4

Type of Scaffolding Codes

Type of Scaffold	Definition	Example
Describe	The teacher is telling a student about a reading strategy	“One thing that readers do is after they read a page that teaches them facts, they stop and they tell, what did this page teach me about”
Indicating elements to consider	The teacher telling the student to focus on a particular aspect of the text.	“This is called a speech bubble. So in the illustration when you see a speech bubble, it shows who is talking or what they are saying”
Modeling	The teacher taking the student’s role and demonstrating a problem-solving action.	“The next step for you is to start thinking about what is happening in the story and what will happen next. Let me show you what I mean by that in Mercy Watson. So if I were here, right, and I am reading about where the police officer saw Mr. Watson and Mercy go down the road, I’m thinking about what’s going to happen next. I’m thinking what’s going to happen next is he’s going to go chasing after it because that is not normal to have a pig in the car. Do you see how I am thinking about what is going to happen next?”
Guided student practice	The teacher observing the student try something new and offering prompts or questions as needed	“What’s that word? What could you do to figure it out? What else could you do?”
Questioning	The teacher asking the student a question or questions	“What’s the problem in the story?”

Through the analysis of audio recordings, observations, and the teacher-student reading conference notes the scaffolding codes displayed in Table 3.5 were developed to describe the instructional focus of the scaffolding offered throughout the study.

Table 3.5

Focus of Scaffolding Codes

Focus of Scaffolding	Definition	Example
Understanding characters	The student identifying characters' feelings, characters' traits, or characters' motivations	"Readers can form opinions about characters. Remember your opinion is like what you think about a character and what you think about what they are doing in the book. Let me tell you what I mean by that. I know that Mercy is funny, right. That's her character trait, I see that from the book. But my opinion about some things that Mercy does is, I think Mercy is a little bit crazy because I don't know that she is, I think she is a nice character but she also causes a lot of trouble. I think she is kind of a trouble maker"
Retelling	The student telling about the text or the portion of the text they read	"You are doing a really great job telling me all of the details in Corduroy. Retell is when you tell all the details in the book like when he went down the escalator and when the guy found him and all the different places that he went."
Making connections	The student relating the text or a portion of the text to another text, their background knowledge, or a personal experience	"So you made connections to your parents. Is there an example from the text that tells why you think he is kind and generous?"
Making predictions	The student stating what they think will happen in the text based on their understanding of the plot, characters, or similar texts.	"You know that good readers make predictions of how the book is going to end. What do you, how do you think the book is going to end? What is going to happen?"
Word solving	The student figuring out a word that is	"You could get your lips ready at the beginning of the word, say some of the

	not automatically read.	sounds and then reread to get a running start. When you get to a tricky word you don't know, I want you to reread and get a running start to see if it helps you. Can you keep reading on and see if we can use that strategy again?"
Utilizing text features	The student paying attention to elements of the text, such as maps, table of contents, and images, to better understand the text	"Now look at some of these as I just flip through the book, I noticed a map of some sort and that is a text feature we want to take a look at. Because remember, details will be in our maps and, look right back here, look at what I noticed, a timeline. This timeline is going to tell you lots of information so as you are reading and you have questions about Disney's life, this might help you. You look back and say 'hmm, he was born here in 1901 and what happened next' It gives you like the guide to his life."
Fluency	The student reading with automaticity, expression, and accuracy	"So we want to focus on stopping at what? What mark on the page? the period and sometimes the period is not at the end of each line is it. Sometimes the period is on the next line, we have to scoop up all these words."
Monitoring for meaning	The student noticing when something doesn't make sense as they are reading and attempting to fix the misunderstanding	"I'm listening to you read and something that sometimes happens to me when I am really focused on understanding what the book is teaching me, sometimes I read words and it doesn't look right. Has that ever happened to you? Sometimes you read a word and it doesn't look right. Let me show you what I mean. [read line from the text] Do you see how the word that I read is not really the word that is there? You see how that almost looks right but not quite? That doesn't really make sense does it? I can't keep reading if that happens, I need to stop and I have to go back and fix up the word, so watch me. [reread portion correctly] Do you see how that matches and makes sense? So when you are reading, I want you to think does it look right and does it make sense

[using hand gestures].”

Understanding events	The student understanding the major events in the text and how it affects the progression of the text	“As we are reading, we want to think about why things are happening, how they fit into the book. We don’t want to read each chapter and think that they are all separate things. All the chapters go together in a book, right? So we want to be thinking about how the things in our books go together.”
Reading behaviors	How the student manages their reading, such as taking notes to track their thinking about a text, recording books in a reading log, or selecting texts closely matched to their current reading abilities	“So I am noticing when I look at your books that I don’t see many sticky notes at all. Are you feeling like maybe that’s something we can work on? Because then it becomes easier to talk about your books because you can flip right to the evidence and talk about it. So we are going to keep this goal, jot about your characters and your thoughts.”

Summary

This chapter describes how the study was organized as a multiple-case study embedded design providing in-depth inquiry into the cases of four exemplary reading workshop teachers and six of their students. Each of the data sources collected were described in an effort to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected. This chapter also described the analysis and synthesis process for the data collected for each participant throughout the nine week study.

The following chapter presents the findings from this multiple-case embedded design research to describe the nature of teacher-student reading conferences conducted by exemplary second grade teachers, identify the feedback and scaffolds these teachers

provide during teacher-student reading conferences, and how students respond to the feedback and scaffolding provided during the teacher-student reading conferences.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this multiple-case study embedded design was to describe the nature of teacher-student reading conferences conducted by exemplary second grade teachers, identify the feedback and scaffolds these teachers provided during teacher-student reading conferences, and how students responded to the feedback and scaffolding provided during the teacher-student reading conferences. This study described teacher-student reading conferences conducted by four teachers with twenty-four students; eight students reading on-grade level, eight students reading below-grade level, and eight students reading above-grade level over a nine-week period. The researcher believed that a better understanding of teacher-student reading conferences would allow reading workshop teachers to conduct teacher-student reading conferences from a more informed perspective in terms of the feedback and scaffolds offered to readers during teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. The researcher also believed the descriptions of the student responses from this study would provide teachers with examples of how they could structure teacher-student reading conferences to encourage and support specific types of responses from students during teacher-student reading conferences.

This chapter presents the findings from each teacher case study and the cross-case analysis of the four exemplary second grade teachers. The first section of this chapter describes the major findings for each teacher case to answer the three research questions guiding this study. Following the four teacher case studies, the cross-case analysis

findings are presented. The cross-case analysis findings are organized by research question. In order to gather information about teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, the following research questions were investigated: (1) What occurs during teacher-student reading conferences conducted during independent reading time with above grade-level, on grade-level, and below grade-level readers? (2) In teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, what types of feedback and scaffolds do second grade teachers provide for above grade-level, on grade-level, and below grade-level readers, and how does the feedback and scaffolds change over time? (3) In teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, how do students respond to teachers' feedback and scaffolds and do their responses change over time?

Sara

Sara, one of the exemplary second grade teachers participating in this multiple-case embedded study, has been teaching for four years, the last two of which have been teaching second grade. This study took place during Sara's second year teaching second grade. Sara shared that as an undergraduate, she learned about the Teachers College reading workshop framework and became so intrigued about supporting readers through a workshop approach that she pursued and received her Masters degree at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY. Sara claims that at Teachers College her philosophy and approach to literacy "blossomed" going on to say that she believes "all kids are readers and writers and capable of so much" [questionnaire 1/18/17]. One of Sara's goals as a second grade teacher is to help her students understand that "reading

and writing are enjoyable and also important for their future” [questionnaire 1/18/17].

Sara shared that she believes that a balanced literacy approach allows kids to “learn strategies that will apply to them even when they are adults- it is so applicable and engaging!” [questionnaire 1/18/17].

During Sara’s observed literacy blocks, immediately after the reading workshop minilesson, Sara provided the students with independent reading time. Initially, Sara commented that during the independent reading time, she incorporated both small group and teacher-student reading conferences to meet the student’s individual needs [questionnaire 1/18/17]. In a later interview, Sara stated that she has moved small group reading instruction to a later time in the day that is devoted to enrichment and only holds conferences during independent reading because she believes reading conferences are “a special time to sit and talk to someone about their reading and you don’t get that in small group” [interview 2/19/17]. Sara’s belief about the importance of this “special time” was evident in the hour devoted to teacher-student reading conferences in her daily schedule (see Appendix H for sample schedules). During observations, Sara demonstrated her beliefs about this special one-to-one time by positioning herself close to the student, leaning her body close to the student, appearing to listen intently to the student, and responding respectfully and directly to the student during each teacher-student reading conference. In her interview, Sara also stated that reading workshop involves partner sharing and celebration. According to Sara,

Reading workshop builds a love of reading and learning.

Independent reading is an adventure. Kids are juggling so much as they read independently, especially in the primary grades. Independent reading is a time of setting goals and applying strategies learned from both peers and teachers. It is a time where students refer to resources such as anchor charts and goal sheets. It is also a time of enjoyment and excitement as students can see themselves improving everyday as they try new things [questionnaire 1/18/17].

Through observations and audio recordings of Sara's teacher-student reading conferences, Sara demonstrated how she prioritized goal setting and strategy application as she provided scaffolds and feedback focused on strategies and goals students learned from her, as well as, their peers. For example, in week five of the study, Harper, a student reading above-grade level, described to Sara how she was using a strategy she learned from a peer by stating, "When I am reading chapter books, I decided to get a sticky note like Claire and just like her, I write the lesson on one side and what the story is about so far on the other side" [audio 2/15/17]. Sara celebrated that the students were learning from one another by stating, "I really like that you guys worked together to improve your reading. Did you see her doing that and you thought, that was a good idea? That's pretty cool. Readers can learn from each other too" [audio 2/15/17].

Sara describes reading workshop as a "time where children learn new strategies to help them become stronger readers" by reading "their just right books (and some high

interest books) independently for a substantial amount of time as they work towards goals that meet their needs at their just right level” [questionnaire 1/18/17]. In order to best support her students, Sara claimed the most important things are “knowing the child really well” [interview 2/19/17] and knowing the reading levels well. The reading levels Sara used are the A to Z Guided Reading levels described by Fountas and Pinnell (2011). Sara stated that it is important to know the expectations and demands of the student’s current reading level and the expectations and demands of the next level to know what the student needs to be able to do next. In order to know the levels well, Sara said that she studies Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) documents describing the levels and the Continuum of Literacy Learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 2011), in addition to “being with the kids and learning from them” [interview 2/19/17]. Through audio recordings and the observations, Sara demonstrated one way she learned from her students by asking questions about how they were overcoming challenges. For example, in a conference with John, a student reading below-grade level, Sara asked him to explain how he was trying to figure out a word several times:

Sara: What’s that word? What could you do to figure it out?

John: [pointing to the post-it on his goal sheet with the goal
of looking for smaller words in a larger word]

Sara: Ok, do you see any small words in there?

John: No

Sara: Is that going to work?

John: No

Sara: So we have to try something else. What else could you do?

John: Skip it

Sara: Ok, try it, skip the word

John: [reading]

Sara: Did that help?

John: No

Sara: What are we going to do now?

John: [paused] empty

Sara: How did you figure that out?

John: I don't know

Sara: Show me what you just did

John: I chunked half of the word and then I said it

Sara: You chunked half and then you said it. You see how

we had to try a lot of different strategies? [audio

2/3/17]

She also stated that she studies texts at each level to look for specific characteristics of the texts at that level and potential areas for instruction. Sara says that she shares her understanding of the levels with students [interview 2/19/17]. Sara explicitly stated that the reading level is not the goal; the goal is understanding how the levels progress to help students know what kind of work they need to do to become a better reader.

Environment. In Sara’s second grade classroom, she had bookshelves set up with multiple bins for each reading level (Figure 4.1) and areas for students to sit around the room as they read their self-selected

texts during independent reading time. A book shopping schedule was displayed near the bookshelves to show which day of the week students could trade the books in their book baggies for new books from the



Figure 4.1. Sara’s Classroom Library

classroom library. Students exchanged their eight to ten self-selected texts once a week. Throughout the study the series book bins were showcased to reflect the current reading unit of study.

Students have a designated spot in the classroom for their book baggies which



Figure 4.2. Student Folder and Self-Selected Books

each contain the student’s self-selected books and the student’s reading folder. Throughout the observations, each student’s reading folder contained a personal word wall, small versions of some of the classroom charts and the

student’s goal sheet (Figure 4.2). At the

end of the whole-group minilesson, Sara

dismissed students to collect their book baggies, move to their self-selected spot in the classroom, open up their folder to their goal sheet, and begin their reading time. During

each observation, students had their goal sheet in front of them the entire independent reading time.

One side of the goal sheet is for the student's current reading goals and the other side is for the student's reading habits. The goal side of the sheet has space for four post-it notes so students typically have three or four goals at a time (Figure 4.3). When Sara's students demonstrated that one of their reading goals has become more of a habit, that particular post-it note was moved to the habit side of the sheet. Sara stated that a goal is moved to the habit side of the sheet when a

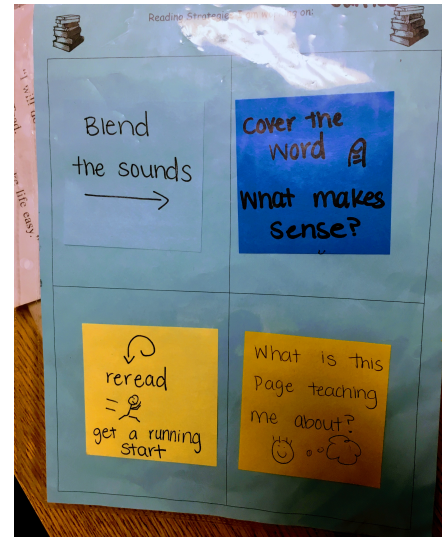


Figure 4.3. Student Goal Sheet- Goal Side

student can articulate how and why they use the goal and appropriately demonstrate the strategy in their self-selected texts several times.

Throughout the study, Sara had a specific place on one of her walls devoted to reading charts (Figures 4.4 & 4.5). She displayed three reading charts, all of which changed over the course of the study to reflect the current strategies students were

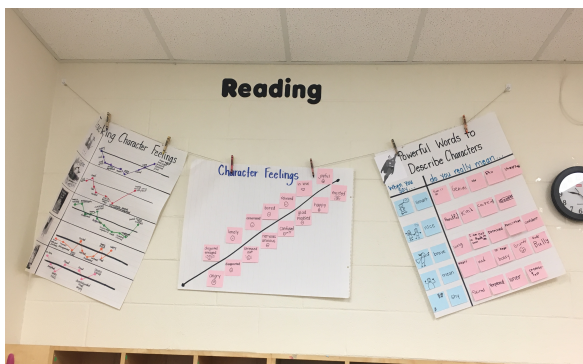


Figure 4.4. Sara's Reading Charts at Beginning of Study

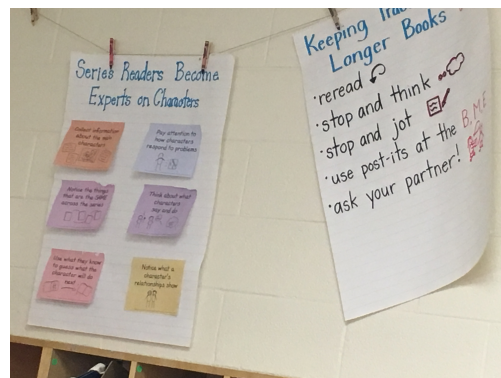


Figure 4.5. Sara's Reading Charts at End of Study

working on. The charts were references for the students representing the strategies Sara was emphasizing in the interactive read alouds and reading workshop minilesson (Figures 4.4 & 4.5). Both Sara and several students referred to the anchor charts during the teacher-student reading conferences.

Students independently read in self-selected places throughout the classroom. Some students read at their desks, some students read on the large carpet in the front of the room, and others read near the classroom library. During each of the observations, Sara traveled to each student to conduct teacher-student reading conferences. For each of the observed conferences, Sara carried her notebook containing her conference notes, demonstration texts, post-it notes, and copies of TCRWP documents describing reading levels.

Structure of Sara's conferences. Before Sara began each teacher-student reading conference, she stated that she reread her notes to “check back in on how students are doing on the goals we set the last time” [interview 3/15/17]. During each observed conference, Sara flipped through two to three conference note sheets prior to beginning each teacher-student reading conference. At each observed conference, Sara also glanced at the student's goal sheet, the book the student was currently reading, and the other self-selected books in the students book baggie. Sara stated that this information helped her think about what kind of strategies the student might need for the level and genre of the texts they were reading.

Sara started each recorded conference with, “What are you working on?” Sara shared that, based on her professional reading and her experiences, she thinks “this

[question] is so valuable and holds the students accountable” [interview 2/19/17]. Sara stated that the student’s response helps guide the conference and allows her to “really hear how the reader is doing” [interview 2/19/17]. During 53 of Sara’s 54 conferences, when asked this initial question, the student referred to a strategy or strategies on their goal sheet. Once the student responded with the goal they were working on, Sara asked the student to describe what the goal means, to show her where in their text they were working on the goal, or how they were working on the goal.

Explicit, positive feedback. Before teaching the student anything in each of the recorded teacher-student reading conferences, Sara provided explicit, positive feedback. She indicated that in each teacher-student reading conference, she “brags about how proud she is of them for the work they are doing” [interview 2/19/17]. Sara stated she also takes the time to state why the work they did is important for readers. She described that stating why the work is important could help students continue to try the strategy in other texts or at other times [interview 2/19/17]. She also shared that she believes in being honest with students about their current abilities and how they can continue to improve [interview 2/19/17]. This was evident in each observation and audio recording of her teacher-student reading conferences. For example, Sara shared with Carter, a student reading on-grade level, “You did a great job telling me about the main part of the chapter, because guess what, you were very clear this time when you told me the main part. In the past it has been hard for you to tell me the main part of the chapter but this time I feel like I really understood it. So give me a five! You made huge improvements on that!” (observation 2/15/17). In another conference on that same day, Sara told Trey, a student

reading above-grade level, “Oh, I like the way that you picked a word that describes them. I love that you thought about how the characters were reacting to the problem and then you thought of a word that would describe the character” (observation 2/15/17).

Sara stated that she makes every attempt to vary her feedback to let the students know she is really listening to them. It also helps students “continue to practice the amazing things they are already doing” [interview 2/19/17]. Sara’s feedback was specific to each student and varied across the nine weeks of the study (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

Sara's Feedback of Things Students Were Doing Well Across Nine Weeks

Week	Feedback to Trey Above-grade level reader	Feedback to Harper Above-grade level reader	Feedback to Ellen On-grade level reader	Feedback to Carter On-grade level reader	Feedback to Charlotte Below-grade level reader	Feedback to John Below-grade level reader
1	Choosing a goal	Describing character feelings vs. character traits	Visualizing	Retelling	Cross-referencing information	Word-solving – compound words
2	Identifying problem, solution, and lesson	Recognizing character traits	Jotting important ideas about each chapter	Summarizing	Monitoring word solving	Choosing a goal
3	Identifying patterns across a series – Character actions	Identifying character traits	Jotting important ideas about each chapter	Telling main thing	Word solving – smaller words within a word	Self-correcting
4	Using illustrations to support understanding	Noticing patterns in a series	Identifying big problem versus little problems	Goal setting with a partner	Word-solving - chunking	Rereading for fluency
5	Describing character responses to problems	Describing importance of the problem in the story	Identifying important problem	Jotting about the lesson in the story	Persevering – trying multiple word solving strategies	Reading a balance of interest and “just-right” books
6	Connecting goals: Character responses and character traits	Jotting important information about characters	Getting ready to read chapter books	Jotting about the characters	Word-solving – flipping the vowel sound	Rereading for fluency
7	Comparing characters across texts	Understanding the problem in the story	Rereading to understand	Describing character responses	Rereading for understanding	Paying attention to punctuation
8	Forming opinions about characters and their actions	Describing character responses to problems	Stopping and jotting after each chapter	Identifying patterns in a series	Thinking about what’s happened to make predictions	Paying attention to punctuation
9	Summarizing	Identifying lesson in the story	Word solving by thinking about a similar word	Changing voice to sound like character	Describing characters’ feelings	Persevering – trying multiple word solving strategies

As demonstrated in Table 4.1, Sara varied her feedback based on the student's current reading level. For the two students who were reading above-grade level, 50% of Sara's feedback was focused on describing character traits of the main character(s) of the students' self-selected text, which was a major focus of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) reading unit of study during the nine weeks of the study. Some of Sara's feedback for the two students reading on-grade level was focused on understanding characters (22%), however, most of the feedback she provided for the students reading on-grade-level was focused on the main problem or lesson of the text (44%). For the two students who were reading below-grade level, the majority of the feedback Sara provided during the recorded teacher-student reading conferences was focused on word-solving (45%) or fluency (17%).

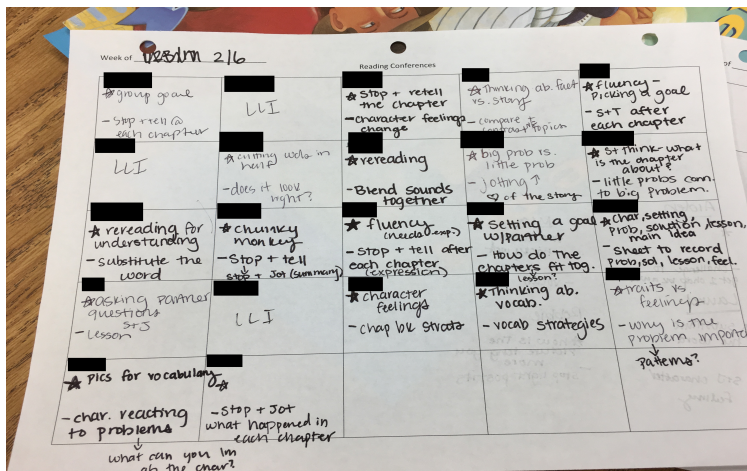


Figure 4.6. Sara's conference notes.

In an interview, Sara stated that she sees the feedback she provides as a way to reinforce what students are doing well so she can continue to build on the work they are doing

[interview 2/19/17]. Sara's conference

notes collected during the study show how her feedback was connected to the scaffolds she provided (Figure 4.6). For example, in Figure 4.6, Sara provided feedback on how the student stopped at the end of each chapter and identified what happened and then,

through scaffolding, asked the student to think about how the little problems in each chapter fit together as part of the bigger problem in the story [conference notes & audio 2/6/2017].

The recordings of Sara's teacher-student reading conferences demonstrated how her feedback during teacher-student reading conferences built on feedback provided during previous teacher-student reading conferences (Table 4.1). For example, Sara's feedback to Trey, a student reading above grade level, during week three of the study focused on identifying patterns in the main character's actions and during week five, Sara praised Trey for describing how characters responded to problems. Building on that feedback, during week six, Sara applauded Trey for thinking about how characters respond to problems as a way to learn about their character traits. During week seven, Sara complimented Trey on comparing characters across multiple texts and during week eight, Sara's feedback was on how Trey was forming opinions about the characters based on the character's traits and the character's actions across texts.

Sara's scaffolding over time. Following the explicit, positive feedback, Sara's stated intent is to teach the reader one specific strategy [interview 3/15/17]. Sara stated that she tries, as much as possible, to build on the student's goal they are working on "so that things are streamlined and make sense to them" [interview 2/19/17]. During each conference, Sara began her teaching by asking the student if she could provide a "tip" to make their reading better. Sara stated that she learned about using the phrase "Can I give you a tip?" instead of "Can I teach you something?" in her undergraduate program and feels that students are more receptive when she uses that language [interview 2/19/17]. It

was observed that the tip was often connected to the feedback she provided. In the observed and audio recorded teacher-student reading conferences, Sara consistently focused her scaffolding on one specific reading strategy.

During a teacher-student reading conference in week four of the study, Sara offered the following tip to Carter, an on-grade level reader,

As we are reading, we want to think about why things are happening, how they fit into the book. We don't want to read each chapter and think that they are all separate things. All the chapters go together in a book, right? So we want to be thinking about how the things in our books go together. How do the chapters in our books go together? (observation 2/15/17)

In each conference, after stating what Sara wanted the student to think about and/or try in their reading, she modeled the steps of the strategy with a demonstration text she carried in her record-keeping notebook. Sara described that she has several nonfiction and fiction text she uses for demonstrations [questionnaire 1/18/17]. For these demonstration texts, Sara stated that she selects texts with many characteristics typical of the books her students are independently reading [interview 2/19/17]. She also stated that she tries to select books her students are familiar with and have heard before [interview 2/19/17]. During the observations, each time Sara presented a demonstration text during a teacher-student reading conference, the student stated that they were familiar with the text. Sara shared that she uses her own text to model so that she doesn't take "ownership

away from the child” and so she doesn’t take away an opportunity for the student to try the strategy in their own text [questionnaire 1/18/17]. Following the tip shared above, Sara offered Carter the following demonstration:

Let me show you what I mean in this Houndsly and Catina book. Ok, so you remember this story right? So in the first chapter Catina shares her writing, right? And Houndsly does not think it's a good story. Houndsly does not think it's a good story and its really long but she wants to be a famous writer. And then in the second chapter, that's when Houndsly goes in his cooking contest and that's kind of a big deal. So the first and the second chapter go together because the first chapter is about Catina and the really awesome thing that she wants to do and the second chapter is about Houndsly and the awesome thing he wants to do which is be on a cooking show. See how those go together? And then in the third chapter, they talk about what happened to them, they talk about how Catina doesn't really want to be a famous writer any more and how Houndsly doesn't really want to be on TV, that being friends was more important. Do you see how those things go together? So now what I want you to do is go back to

chapters one and two and see how they go together. How does what happens go together? (observation 2/15/17).

During each observation, after Sara provided a model with the demonstration text, Sara asked the student to try the strategy in a self-selected book they were reading. Sara supported the student as they attempted the strategy by providing questions and prompts when needed and feedback after the student's attempt. For example when Carter responded with, "so in chapter one, so Horrible Harry likes to, introduces Horrible Harry and how he likes to be horrible. The second chapter, he starts to put these little figures all around to try to scare people." Sara responded with

So the first chapter, he is like planning it out and the second chapter he starts to do it. Do you see how that makes more sense? Do you understand the book a little bit better? I understand the book better. What do you think?

[observation 2/15/17]

After the student had success with the strategy, Sara left the student with a visual reminder by writing the strategy on a post-it note or adding to an existing post-it note on their goal sheet. If the student was continuing to work on an existing goal, she simply reminded the student where it was on their goal sheet.

Based on audio recordings and teacher-student conference notes, Sara provided several types of scaffolds during most of her conferences (Table 4.2).

In an interview, Sara stated that she felt it was important to describe a reading strategy, show the student how they could apply the reading strategy in a text, and offer them support as they tried the strategy [interview 2/19/2017].

Table 4.2

The Types of Scaffolds Sara Provided Across Nine Weeks

Week	Scaffold-Trey Above-grade level reader	Scaffold-Harper Above-grade level reader	Scaffold- Ellen On-grade level reader	Scaffold- Carter On-grade level reader	Scaffold- Charlotte Below-grade level reader	Scaffold- John Below-grade level reader
1	Described, modeled	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice
2	Described, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Questioned, indicated elements to consider	Questioned, indicated elements to consider, described
3	Described	Described	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described	Described, modeled	Described, modeled
4	Described, shared example	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described
5	Asked student questions, modeled	Described, connected to a familiar text	Questioned, indicated elements to consider	Described, connected to a familiar text	Questioned, indicated elements to consider	Questioned, described
6	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Questioned, indicated elements to consider, modeled	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled	Described, modeled, guided practice
7	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice
8	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, connected to a familiar text	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice
9	Guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice	Described, modeled, guided practice

As seen in Table 4.2, the format of most of Sara’s teacher-student reading conferences (61%) followed the same pattern. Even though the focus of the feedback and scaffolds Sara offered varied from conference to conference, Sara typically:

- engaged the student in a conversation about their reading by asking “What are you working on today?”
- listened to the reader’s response and sometimes asked the student to read
- provided explicit, positive feedback
- taught or reinforced a strategy
- modeled within a demonstration text
- supported the student as they tried the strategy
- provided reinforcement or additional explanation

When asked about the structure of her teacher-student reading conferences, Sara stated she maintains a consistent structure for her conferences based on the many professional texts she has read and her own reflections on which conferences have been successful. She indicated that using this structure consistently helps her students focus on the reading work she is asking them to do [interview 2/19/17].

While the structure of Sara’s scaffolding during teacher-student reading conferences were consistent, the focus of Sara’s scaffolds varied across the nine weeks of the study (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

The Focus of Scaffolds Sara Provided Across Nine Weeks

Week	Scaffold-Trey Above-grade level reader	Scaffold-Harper Above-grade level reader	Scaffold-ElLEN On-grade level reader	Scaffold-Carter On-grade level reader	Scaffold-Charlotte Below-grade level reader	Scaffold-John Below-grade level reader
1	Understanding events	Understanding characters	Understanding events	Understanding events	Monitoring	Fluency
2	Understanding events	Understanding characters	Understanding events	Understanding events	Word-solving	Word-solving
3	Word solving	Understanding characters	Understanding events	Word solving	Retelling	Reading behaviors
4	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Reading behaviors	Understanding characters	Retelling	Word-solving
5	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Word solving	Understanding characters	Word-solving	Word-solving
6	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Word solving	Fluency	Monitoring	Fluency
7	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Monitoring	Text features	monitoring	Retelling
8	Summarizing	Understanding the events	Understanding characters	Understanding the events	Understanding characters	Summarizing
9	Summarizing	Understanding the events	Understanding characters	Fluency	Understanding characters	Word-solving

As demonstrated in Table 4.3, the focus of Sara's scaffolds had some variance across the nine weeks for each student. For example, Sara's scaffolds for John, a student reading below-grade level, focused on fluency, word-solving, reading behaviors, retelling, and summarizing. Even though Sara offered multiple word-solving focused scaffolds, the expectations were increasingly complex. For example, during Sara and John's week two teacher-student reading conference, Sara told John,

I love that you were looking for little words inside of
big words right away. That was really awesome. Can I

give you a tip about your reading? We were using your goal sheet and trying lots of different strategies. We tried this one and it didn't work, we tried this one and it didn't work, finally this one worked. So I want you to keep practicing that. When you get to a tricky word, try all of the strategies that you know and think about which one might help you figure out that tricky word. Does that make sense? [audio, 2/3/17].

In a reading conference during week five, when Sara asked John how he figured out a challenging word, he stated, "I reread and I made it smooth" [audio 2/15/17].

Sara responded by stating,

So wait a minute, could that be another reading strategy when you get to a tricky word, you could get your lips ready at the beginning of the word, say some of the sounds and then reread to get a running start. I like to do this, [motions] reread get a running start. oh, do it again with me, reread, get a running start. One more time, get a running start. Does that help you figure out tricky words? OK, John, when you get to a tricky word you don't know, I want you to reread and get a running start to see if it helps you. Can you keep reading on and see if we can use that strategy again? [audio 2/15/17]

Sara continued to describe different strategies John could use to solve words as he read increasingly complex texts ranging from reading level H at the beginning of the study to reading level K at the end of the study (see Appendix I for sample descriptions). This building on scaffolds was consistent with Sara's expressed goal of supporting students to independently read increasingly complex texts [interview 2/19/17].

For some of Sara's students, like Harper who was reading above-grade level, there was little variance in the focus of the scaffolds Sara provided. However, while seven out of the nine teacher-student reading conferences with Harper focused on understanding characters, how Sara asked Harper to think about the characters varied. For example, during week one, Sara described and modeled, with a demonstration text, the difference between character traits and character's feelings. During Harper's week two teacher-student reading conference, prior to modeling with a demonstration text, Sara stated,

I want to compliment you for thinking about that,
because this is a really tough thing character traits,
its like a third grade thing so you are working on
something that's very grown-up so I'm proud of
you. Give me a high-five. Nice work! Will you keep
working on that for me? Now, I would love for your
next step, if you could, at the end of the book, write
down that character trait that you are thinking about

your characters. What do you think about that? Can

I show you what I mean? [audio 2/3/17].

During week three, Sara asked Harper to look for patterns across books in a series to learn more about the main characters. During week four, Sara asked Harper to consider the problem of the story and then think about how characters handle the problem to understand the character even more. Sara offered the following feedback and scaffolds to Harper during their teacher-student reading conference in week seven of the study,

So you are really good at thinking about how characters react to the problem now I want you to think, why are they acting that way? kind of like, can I give you an example in the Pinky and Rex book? You know how Pinky is acting really rude to Rex? Right, that's how he is responding because he didn't get the part in the play that he wanted. But I think he is doing that because he is jealous that Rex got the part he really wanted. Does that make sense? So can you tell me, why do you think she acts like that? oh, I see you are adding to your post-it [audio 3/2/17].

These examples from Sara and Harper's teacher-student reading conferences demonstrate how Sara's scaffolds varied from conference to conference based on the

kinds of texts Harper was reading. At the week two conference, Harper was reading a level M text and at the week seven teacher-student reading conference, she was reading from a series consisting of level P texts. The variance in scaffolds also show Sara's responsiveness to what Harper was working on at the time; particularly since Harper stated that learning more about her characters was the goal she wanted to work on at the beginning of each teacher-student reading conference.

After each observed conference, Sara quickly jotted down notes about the feedback and the specific strategy she provided during the teacher-student reading conference. Sara's teacher-student reading conference notes (Figure 7) were brief. After gathering a full week of teacher-student reading conference notes, Sara stated that she looks for trends to see if there are any students who may benefit from additional support in a small group [questionnaire 1/18/17]. Sara's conference notes were compared to the feedback and scaffold matrix containing codes from the audio recordings of the teacher-student reading conferences. There was 98% agreement between Sara's conference notes and matrix. For the conference that did not match, Sara did not record a scaffold.

Students' responses over time. At the beginning of each conference, Sara's students were able to articulate which goal they were working on in their self-selected texts during the independent reading time. They each referenced a goal on their reading goal sheet often pointing to the post-it note on the sheet. For example, when Sara asked Ellen, a student reading on-grade level, what she was working on, she provided the following response, "I'm working on stop and jots" [audio 2/3/17]. Writing stop and jots at the end of each chapter "to help them remember what happened in the story"

[observation 1/18/17] was the focus of Sara and Ellen's teacher-student reading conference the previous week. When Ellen stated that she was working on stop and jots, Sara probed with additional questions:

Sara: When do you do that?

Ellen: I normally do that when I am at the end of my
chapter

Sara: Hey, that's pretty good because guess what last time we met we talked about stopping and jotting at the end of each chapter. Do you remember why that was important?

Ellen: Yes, because if you forget what happened in the last chapter then you can go back to that part and read it and you can remember what happens [audio 2/3/17].

Across the conferences, when the student was provided with a scaffold from Sara, they attempted to try out the strategy during the teacher-student reading conference. In the following example, Sara described how she considered why a character responded to a problem in a certain way with her demonstration text and then Harper, a student reading above-grade level, jotted on her post-it note her idea about a character in her self-selected text:

Sara: Does that make sense? So can you tell me, why do you think she acts like that? oh, I see you are adding to your post-it

Harper: For example, [writing] she is jealous. I did it. I said: for example, she saw a new puppy and she was telling Charles what to do

Sara: Mmhmm, I like that, why do you think she was doing that?

Harper: I think she wanted all the responsibilities so instead of the parents saying that Lizzy, instead of saying that they both were doing a good job, she probably was doing that so the parents would praise her instead of saying they both were doing a good job [audio 3/2/17].

Each student appeared to be excited to meet with Sara during the teacher-student reading conferences. The students eagerly shared what they were working on and beamed when Sara gave them positive, specific feedback. Charlotte, a student reading below-grade level, was excited to share with Sara how she was working on her goal during week one of the study:

Sara: So tell me what you were doing just then.

Charlotte: I was writing a post-it.

Sara: Tell me what you were jotting

Charlotte: Umm. right here, I can't tell what it is but I'm drawing it. I think that the twister is an F2 because an F1 is nothing and an F2 is something.

Sara: Hmm, what's an F1 and an F2?

Charlotte: An F1

Sara: Can you show me? Is it in the book?

Charlotte: Mmhmm

Sara: You can show me, you don't have to do it from your memory. You can show me in the book, if you'd like.

Charlotte: This F1 is really weak and an F2 is strong.

Sara: Oh, so now, show me that picture. [shows book] so you, whoa Charlotte, so you were, so you saw this chart and you read this chart in your book and you went back to the picture and you thought about what kind of tornado that could be??

Charlotte: Mmhmm

Sara: Wow, that is something very fancy. That is something called cross-referencing. Do you know what that is?

Charlotte: No

Sara: Cross-referencing. Have you ever heard that word before? It's so fancy. That's when you are looking

at something in your book and it makes you think about something else and you go back and you look at them together. That's a really grown-up reader thing to do. High five. I'm really proud of you. Would you like to put that post-it on this page so you can share this with your reading partner?

Charlotte: [places post-it] [observation 1/18/17].

Students did not appear shy about sharing what they were working on or when they were facing challenges in their texts. For example, during the first week of the study, Trey, a student reading above-grade level, shared that he was working on identifying the lesson in the story, however, he stated that it wasn't going well "cause it's a lot harder with one main character and the main character is gone. It changed the whole book and made it a lot harder" [observation 1/18/17]. Sara was able to capitalize on his response and offered him another way to consider the lesson in a text. Using a demonstration text, Sara described how she thought about the problem and the solution in order to determine what the lesson of the story could be.

Most students were able to explain their reading goals and how they were thinking about the reading goal in their self-selected text. Over time, the student's explanations became more detailed and specific. Charlotte, who was reading below-grade level at a reading level K at the beginning of the study, stated that she was working on "checking does it look right or does it make sense" during her week two teacher-student reading conference. Charlotte was able to show Sara where in her self-selected text she

figured out a challenging word by checking the picture and thinking about what would make sense in the sentence. By week eight, Charlotte stated she was working on “what’s happening in the story and what happens next” [audio 3/8/17]. Charlotte demonstrated within her self-selected text where she made a prediction about how the main characters would solve their problem. During the week nine teacher-student reading conference, Charlotte, who was then reading level L texts, stated she was working on “how the characters feel and why” and showed Sara where in the text she was thinking about the character’s feelings and why she might be feeling that way.

Trey, an above-grade level reader, began his week four teacher-student reading conference by stating that he was working on checking the picture for vocabulary. When Sara asked him to show a place where he had done that, he replied

Yes, I did that in here. I checked the picture and I got really good details. Right here. It said that there was a castle in the book and this helped me understand what the castle looks like and where they were and like what they were doing in the tree house [audio 2/24/17]

During week eight of the study, Trey stated that he was working on “how do the characters react? How are the characters reacting to the problem in the story? How do the characters change or is there a pattern in how the characters act?” [audio 3/15/17]. When Sara asked him how he was working on that he stated,

Oh, I am going to take *Magic Treehouse: Merlin Mission and the Evil Emperor Penguin*. What I

think about Jack is that he is a little serious when he does kind of like, we need to do this before we do that. He is like the chain reaction machine, basically. He wants Annie and him to get out of things before they set off a chain reaction and a bunch of things happen. And Annie is like let's do this now and Annie is like let's hurry up and do it. Annie is like more fun [audio 3/15/17].

John, another student reading below-grade level, had a more challenging time explaining his reading goals at the beginning of the study. At the beginning of the study, John, who was reading text at reading level H, stated that he was working on trying his best [audio 1/25/17] or simply pointed to a post-it. When he was prompted to explain what he was working on, John was able show how he was “reading like a story-teller” [audio 2/3/17]. By week six, John described that he was working on his fluency goal of “reread and get a running start” which he described as “if you read slow, you can reread and get a running start” [audio 2/24/17]. During his teacher-student reading conference during week nine, he articulated that he was working on reading “a balanced diet” which he explained by stating “it means you read your just-right books first and then you read your choice books [audio 3/15/17].

Students also demonstrated ownership with their goals by deciding which post-it notes they wanted to keep on the goal side of their sheet and which goals they were ready to move to the habit side as evidenced by the following exchange between Sara and Trey:

Sara: Here is what I am thinking, we have two post-its about the lesson in the story. Do you need those as reminders still? Would you like to keep one as a reminder and move the other? or what about the one with the details for vocabulary?

Trey: I want to keep that one

Sara: Ok so this one you still feel like you need reminders about.

Trey: Mmhmm

Sara: Ok, this one you don't feel like you need reminders about. That's what you are saying?

Trey: Mmhmm

Sara: Ok, so let's take these and move these to the habit side and we will put these here.

Trey: And its next to it so I will know what I have to do with that

Sara: Nice, I am glad that you made that connection.

Major findings from Sara's cases. Several patterns emerged from Sara's 54 conferences. A major finding from the questionnaire, interviews, observations, and audio recordings of Sara's teacher-student reading conferences is that Sara conducted each teacher-student reading conference with a consistent structure. As Sara stated in an interview, the consistent structure allowed the students to focus on the reading goals and the support they needed [interview 2/19/17]. At the beginning of each of Sara's teacher-student reading conferences, students were able to quickly name the goal they were working on and explain how they were working on their goal in their self-selected text.

Each student appeared to understand expectations and quickly pointed to their goal-setting sheet as they described their goal and how they were working on the goal in their self-selected text. Sara maintained a clear focus on reading goals during each of the recorded teacher-student reading conferences.

Another finding that emerged across Sara's interviews, questionnaire, and observations was the importance of knowing the demands of the reading levels and knowing students well. Sara shared she felt the success of teacher-student reading conferences depended on her knowledge of her students and her knowledge of her students' reading levels. Sara expressed that knowing her students really well and studying the reading levels represented in her class allows her to provide explicit feedback and scaffold student's learning in a specific and supportive way [interview 2/19/17]. For example, with John she stated that she knew he needed more support in identifying the work he was doing as a reader. Sara provided more descriptive feedback for John as shown in her week seven feedback:

What do you think? Does it look like wash? Does it sound like wash? Does it make sense? Awesome! Can I stop you for a second, I love the way that you are really stopping at the period. You stopped right here and then, even in this sentence, this sentence went on to the next line and you read smoothly all the way to where the period was. Good job, high five. That's an awesome thing for you to keep practicing [audio 3/4/17].

Sara's scaffolding for John were also more descriptive, as shown in the scaffold from the week seven teacher-student reading conference:

So now, can I give you a little tip about your reading? You've been working really hard on fluency and I am really proud of you for that and now I think you are ready to work on your comprehension a little bit. Comprehension is how well you understand your books, right? You know what you can do, John, one thing that readers do is after they read a page that teaches them facts, they stop and they tell, what did this page teach me about. Do you think you could try that? Let me show you what I mean by that. Look I have this nonfiction book about teeth. So I am going to read this page and I am going to think, what is this page teaching me mostly about. Actually, I am going to borrow this book, Frogs instead. This looks more like the type of book you are reading. Ok ready, [reading about frog croaking] So this page is teaching me about the different noises that frogs make. Did you see how I did that? What is this page

teaching you about? Can you try that in your book?

[audio 3/4/17].

Sara did not provide as much explanation for Trey, a student reading above-grade level. For example, Sara provided less description for her feedback and scaffolds during Trey's week seven teacher-student reading conference.

Sara: So Trey, I feel like you are really good at coming up with character traits for your characters. Is this something that is easy for you that you do without being reminded of it, would you say this has become a habit for you?

Trey: Yeah

Sara: So let's move this post-it. That's great, Trey. So sometimes our characters don't change in a series and sometimes characters will learn things and their traits will change. So maybe

Trey: kind of like Jack and Annie, they have the Merlin mission and then the regular.

Sara: So tell me more about that, what do you mean, how do their traits change in those books?

Trey: In the Merlin missions they are more cautious with what they are going to do but Annie stays the same but Jack get's different and he is especially

cautious because bad things can happen with
potions and stuff

Sara: Mmm, so he's even more cautious in those books

Trey: Mmhmm

Sara: So he is more cautious in those books than in the
regular books and is Annie still wild and
adventurous in all the books

Trey: Yeah, there is an elephant that is out of control and
she was yelling at someone who killed, if you
don't bow to him or if you speak to him, he kills
you or if you don't bow to him right, he kills you.
And Annie was yelling at him so he decided to
give the elephant to Annie. She is still the crazy
wild Annie

Sara: So, she is still the crazy wild Annie. So I am
wondering if you could keep track of, if your tip
for you today could be, to look and see if
characters change at all through a series. For
example, you know in the Pinky and Rex book we
are reading right now how Pinky doesn't get the
part that he wants so he is like mean to Rex. He is
mean

Trey: He's like grumpy.

Sara: Yeah, grumpy, mean, rude, even. Um, but because I
know they are best friends, I have a feeling

Trey: That he is going to change

Sara: He might change. Exactly. So if you can keep a
lookout in your books for how the characters
change, think about that.

Trey: That will be easy tomorrow since our whole group is
going to change to a different series.

Sara: Right go to a different series so you can explore that a
little bit more

The recordings of Sara's teacher-student reading conferences reflected her interview statements about varying her scaffolds based on her knowledge of her students. She also stated that her knowledge of the levels allowed her to build her feedback and scaffolds so they were more complex and built over time to support students in independently reading more complex texts.

Emma

Emma, who has been teaching various grade levels for eighteen years, described her approach to literacy as based on her desire to "teach a love of reading that will make [her] students want to read whenever they can" [questionnaire 1/17/17]. Emma stated she tries to foster this love of reading by selecting texts for read aloud, mini lessons and shared reading that will engage her students so that when she uses pieces of the text for a

lesson, “the students are eager for more because it’s a text they love” [questionnaire 1/17/17].

Environment. During the course of this study, the walls of Emma’s classroom were filled with reading charts for students to reference during their independent reading (Figure 4.7). Emma added several charts over the course of the study. Reading charts were not grouped together; they were dispersed throughout the room. The charts appeared to be placed in the room according to where students might need them. For example, charts for partner reading behaviors were hanging by the classroom

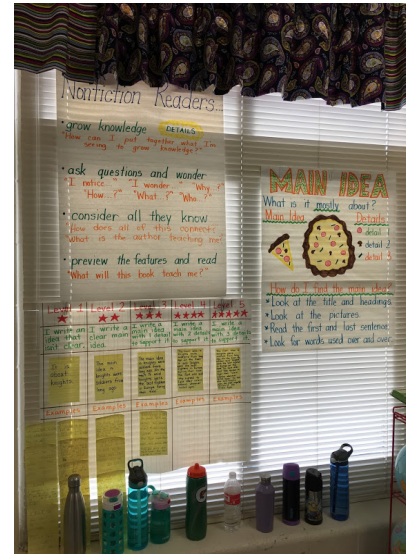


Figure 4.7. Examples of Emma’s Reading Charts

library where many students read during independent reading time (Figure 4.8), whereas charts that were referenced during the whole-group minilesson were located closer to the front of the room where students met on the carpet for whole-group instruction.

Emma’s classroom library was located in the back corner of the room and consisted of five bookshelves displaying baskets of books (Figure 4.8). The baskets were labeled with book levels. Most of the books in the classroom library appeared to be typical second grade reading levels. There were several baskets of books that



Figure 4.8. A Portion of Emma’s Classroom Library

were labeled by genre or interest. Students were able to select texts from the classroom library once a week. Students each had a book box with five to seven books they selected from the classroom library. The student's book box also contained a folder for keeping the student's reading log, goals, and supportive tools such as a personal word wall, a retell outline, and a strategy sheet.

After the observed whole-class minilessons, Emma provided students with independent reading time to read texts from their book bins. Students were allowed to read in self-selected reading spots. During each observation, Emma's students seemed to understand the routine as they quickly and quietly got set up for their independent reading time with little direction from Emma. Students seemed to handle the responsibility of being allowed to sit in chosen spots around the classroom, as they appeared focused on their book and minimized conversations with their classmates. However, toward the end of the study, two students were not showing evidence of their reading in their reading logs, so Emma selected spots for them where she could more closely observe their reading behaviors.

Throughout the study, Emma's daily schedule included time for reading workshop. Emma stated her approach to reading workshop is to balance the amount of "*I do for, I do with and I expect from* my students in both reading and writing" gradually moving to expecting more independence from her students [questionnaire 1/17/17]. Emma's reading workshop began with a whole group minilesson. Emma's minilessons followed the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) minilesson format. Emma stated that she relies on the TCRWP units of study to plan her minilessons.

During each observed minilesson, Emma provided students with a rich description or model of a strategy and the opportunity for students to try out the strategy in a provided text. Emma stated that she often refers back to the minilesson during teacher-student reading conferences [interview 2/24/17]. She shared that her reference to the minilesson text is important in helping students see that they can use the same strategy in multiple texts [questionnaire 1/17/17].

Teacher-student reading conferences. Each of Emma's recorded teacher-student reading conferences began with reviewing the student's reading goals on their reading bookmark. Once the goals had been reviewed Emma asked the students to read and she looked for evidence the student was working on their goals. Unlike Sara who focused on one of the student's reading goal, Emma checked for all of the reading goals on the student's reading goal bookmark. Each student's reading goal bookmark had at most three reading goals. She also asked questions of the reader to gain additional evidence, as needed. Emma provided the student with feedback, which was frequently based on the goals listed on their reading goal bookmark. For example, in the second week of the study Emma said to Mia, a student reading above-grade level,

Ok, so I'm looking at your goals here and I am looking at this first one, know character traits and evidence of the traits and I can put a check mark here because I see that you are beginning to do that about the principal. So next time, I'm going to look again to see if you are doing this

again, looking for character traits, and making it a habit

[audio 2/3/17].

Emma provided feedback during each teacher-student reading conference. Her feedback mostly occurred at the beginning of the teacher-student reading conference as Emma listened to the student read or as the student answered Emma's questions about their individual reading goals.

Emma's feedback varied throughout the study. At times, Emma's feedback was nonspecific, meaning that she made comments such as "Good job!" or "That's great!" and it was unclear what she was referring to. Some of Emma's feedback was instructive, meaning that she provided feedback on an action the student should do such as selecting appropriate books for their book bin or recording their reading in their reading log.

Periodically during the teacher-student reading conferences, Emma referenced the teaching point from the whole class minilesson and asked the student if they attempted the strategy introduced to the class during the minilesson. After a brief conversation about what the student was focused on, Emma asked questions based on her current teaching points and/or questions based on "skills in a student's current reading level" [interview 2/24/17]. Emma was observed referencing questions from a district-provided document during several teacher-student reading conferences. When asked about the document, Emma stated that the document provided reading-level specific questions such as, "What is the problem in this story and how is it solved?" Appendix I includes one of the district provided question documents.

Emma's teacher-student reading conferences were mostly text-based conversations (72%), however, 63% of the teacher-student reading conferences with students reading below-grade level focused on reading behaviors. The reading behavior conferences were centered on reading appropriate books and increasing the volume of books read during independent reading time. These conferences were often brief and she followed up with the student at the following conference to see how they were progressing with their reading behavior goal. In order to help the student to be successful, Emma helped the student organize their book boxes and their reading folders. She also talked with them about their reading log and set a reading goal with the student. Emma offered to help each student and often asked the students what they thought might help them accomplish their goals. Emma explained in an interview that she had not thought about conducting teacher-student reading conferences on reading behaviors until she attended a TCRWP institute where she learned about conducting teacher-student reading conferences focused on reading behaviors [interview 2/24/17].

At the end of each recorded conference, Emma set a goal for the student to work on and recorded the goal on a post-it to add to the student's reading goal bookmark. Emma shared that she determined the goals by considering the student's reading level and their needs [interview 3/6/17]. Emma stated a student reading at a lower level "may need more 'how-to' read goals (think about what makes sense, does it sound right?) whereas a higher level child may need more comprehension-related goals" [interview 3/6/17].

Keeping track of student responses. Even though Emma is an experienced teacher and considered in the district to be an exemplary second grade teacher, she stated she still considers teacher-student reading conferences an area for improvement. One of the specific areas Emma was working on is her record-keeping. She stated she has tried a variety of record-keeping methods and claimed that they never seem to “stick” for various reasons.

Throughout the course of this study, Emma utilized bookmarks where students attached up to three post-it notes with their current reading goals. After each observed conversation about a reading strategy or reading behavior, Emma provided the student with a visual reminder by writing the strategy or behavior on a post-it note or adding to an existing post-it note on their bookmark (Figure 4.9). During the observed teacher-student reading conferences, Emma placed a checkmark on a post-it if she saw evidence that the student was meeting that particular goal. When the goal had three checkmarks, Emma removed the goal from the bookmark and placed it in her records to indicate the student had made it a habit. There was no evidence these post-it notes were revisited or seen again by the student once they were removed from the bookmark.

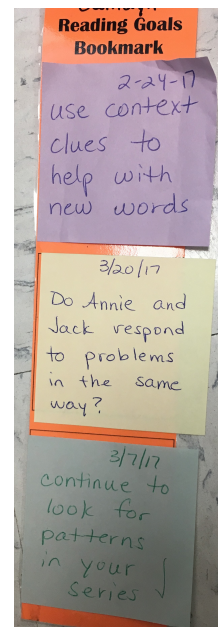


Figure 4.9.
Student Goal
Bookmark

Immediately after Emma conducted a teacher-student reading conference, she typed her observations from the teacher-student reading conference. She noted her

observations within pre-determined categories she set up in an Excel spreadsheet on her laptop computer. Emma stated she selected the categories from the TCRWP curriculum and her knowledge of what her students should be working on within the unit and when reading at a particular reading level [inter 1/26/17]. The spreadsheet contained columns for a) accuracy, b) fluency, c) comprehension, d) getting to know characters and their stories, and e) short term goals for each student. Emma recorded the student's goals by writing phrases such as "look for patterns across the series" and "jot about behaviors you expect/don't expect about your characters" [notes 3/20/17]. She also typed a brief plan for necessary next steps.

Feedback over time. During 32 of the 46 recorded teacher-student reading conferences, Emma gave students specific, positive feedback during many of the conferences. The specific feedback was provided after the student described their text, described the reading strategy they were working on, or read a portion of the text. For example, Emma told Lara, a student reading above-grade level,

That's an important connection to what was happening in the real world at the time of his life. Before the time of Martin Luther King, people with black skin were not treated with equality. I like how you backed up your description of him being brave with specific examples from the text. You told about how to not use his fist, to use his voice, you used specific examples of bravery. Those are the types of things I want you to continue to jot down as you

read because sometimes it is hard to remember all of those details. I love how you just described that [audio 2/17/17].

Emma provided feedback during each teacher-student reading conference.

Emma’s feedback included positive feedback, instructive feedback and nonspecific feedback (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4

Emma’s Feedback of Things Students Were Doing Well Across Nine Weeks

Week	Feedback to Mia Above-grade level reader	Feedback to Lara Above-grade level reader	Feedback to Avery On-grade level reader	Feedback to Jacob On-grade level reader	Feedback to Noah Below-grade level reader	Feedback to Liam Below-grade level reader
1	Word solving- using synonyms	Identifying change in characters’ feelings	Making predictions	Being interested in the text	Choosing appropriate books	<i>Instructive feedback on book selection</i>
2	Identifying character traits	NA	Nonspecific	Nonspecific	Choosing appropriate books	Describing characters
3	NA	Making connections	Making predictions	Making predictions	Being interested in the text	Choosing appropriate books
4	Word solving – using context clues	Using text evidence to support ideas	Nonspecific	Nonspecific	Reading more	Jotting
5	Making connections	<i>Instructive feedback on lack of post-it notes</i>	Nonspecific	<i>Instructive feedback on lack of post-it notes</i>	Paying attention to setting	<i>Instructive feedback on reading log</i>
6	Making connections across texts	Paying attention to characters’ actions/ likes/dislikes	Recognizing patterns in a series	<i>Instructive feedback on reading log</i>	Reading more texts	<i>Instructive feedback on reading log</i>
7	Describing character traits	Jotting	Monitoring reading	Nonspecific	Reading appropriate books	<i>Instructive feedback on reading log</i>
8	Making connections	Jotting	Recognizing patterns in a series	Selecting interesting texts	<i>Instructive feedback on book selection</i>	Meeting reading log goal

*Emma was out sick for an entire week and a half resulting in 8 weeks of conferences in the study

Across the nine weeks of the study, Emma's feedback was mostly positive (70%). Emma's students who were reading above-grade level received positive feedback during thirteen of fourteen (93%) teacher-student reading conferences. Instructive feedback was only provided once to a student reading above-grade level. Whereas the two students reading below-grade level received positive feedback during eleven of sixteen (69%) teacher-student reading conferences and instructive feedback during five of the sixteen (31%) teacher-student reading conferences.

Some feedback provided during the teacher-student reading conferences was nonspecific. For example, several times Emma said "excellent" or "good job" without referring to what she was commenting on. The two students reading on-grade level received the most nonspecific feedback (38% of their feedback).

Some feedback Emma provided during the teacher-student reading conferences described actions a student was not doing such as jotting their thoughts and information about the text. This feedback on what the student was not doing well such as selecting appropriate books to read during independent reading time or not recording their reading in their reading log was categorized as instructive feedback. An example of instructive feedback was Emma's feedback to Liam when she said,

Ok, so when I look at your reading log, what's concerning me is I'm not seeing very many books in a day. The level book you are reading you should be able to read 5-8 books in one day. So for one day, I should see 5-8 books written down. I don't see any written down for today yet. I don't

see any written down for yesterday. That concerns me. So I am going to put a line here, this is today and I am going to put a line here. And your goal, before we meet next time, is to have read books and filled in all of those spots so I can see that you have read more and more and more because that's how we become better readers by reading more and more and more. And not always reading the same book over and over and over. Sometimes we can reread but I want you to explore new books too. So when I look at your sticky we are going to put a new goal on there, and I'm going to write the word MORE really big to remind you. Read MORE and record in your log. Because I want to see that you are doing the reading that is going to help you get better [audio 3/2/17].

Overall, most of the feedback Emma provided was explicit and positive (70%).

Scaffolds over time. Across the nine-weeks of the study, Emma's scaffolding consisted of questioning, describing, making connections to familiar texts, and indicating elements of the text for students to consider. The recorded teacher-student reading conferences indicated Emma used questioning for the majority (73%) of the scaffolds provided (Table 4.5). Questioning was Emma's most used scaffold for all students regardless of the student's reading level. For example, questioning was used for 86% of

the scaffolds for the students reading above-grade level, 81% for the students reading on-grade level, and 63% for the students reading below-grade level.

Table 4.5

The Types of Scaffolds Emma Provided Across Nine Weeks

Week	Scaffold-Mia Above-grade level reader	Scaffold-Lara Above-grade level reader	Scaffold-Avery On-grade level reader	Scaffold-Jacob On-grade level reader	Scaffold-Noah Below-grade level reader	Scaffold-Liam Below-grade level reader
1	Indicated elements to consider, questioned	Questioned, described	Described	Questioned, described	Questioned, described	Questioned, described
2	Indicated elements to consider, questioned	NA	Indicated elements to consider, questioned	Questioned	Questioned, described	Described
3	NA	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned, described	Described
4	Described	Questioned, described	Questioned, described	Questioned, described	Questioned, provided student practice	Questioned, indicated elements to consider, described,
5	Questioned	Described	Questioned, described	Questioned	Described	Described
6	Questioned, described, connected to familiar texts	Questioned, described	Questioned	Described	Questioned	Described
7	Questioned, described	Questioned, described	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned, provided student practice	Described
8	Questioned, described, connected to familiar texts	Questioned, described	Questioned	Described	Questioned, described	Questioned, described

*Emma was out sick for an entire week and a half resulting in 8 weeks of conferences in the study

During the teacher-student reading conferences, Emma often provided scaffolds for several of the student’s goals, however, the majority of the conference was focused on one particular reading goal. The reading goal Emma focused the majority of the conference on is indicated in Table 4.6. During the nine weeks of the study, the focus of Emma’s scaffolds varied from student to student.

Table 4.6

The Focus of Scaffolds Emma Provided Across Nine Weeks

Week	Scaffold- Mia Above-grade level reader	Scaffold- Lara Above-grade level reader	Scaffold- Avery On-grade level reader	Scaffold- Jacob On-grade level reader	Scaffold- Noah Below-grade level reader	Scaffold- Liam Below-grade level reader
1	Word-solving	Understanding characters	Fluency	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Word-solving
2	Retelling	NA	Word-solving	Understanding characters	Retelling	Reading behaviors
3	NA	Understanding characters	Making predictions	Understanding characters	Reading behaviors	Reading behaviors
4	Word-solving	Understanding characters	Word-solving	Understanding characters	Reading behaviors	Reading behaviors
5	Word-solving	Reading behaviors	Understanding characters	Retelling	Reading behaviors	Reading behaviors
6	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Understanding events	Reading behaviors	Understanding characters	Reading behaviors
7	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Reading behaviors
8	Word-solving	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Reading behaviors	Reading behaviors	Understanding characters

*Emma was out sick for an entire week and a half resulting in 8 weeks of conferences in the study

The scaffolds Emma provided for the two students reading above-grade level were mostly focused on word-solving (29%) and understanding characters (57%). The scaffolds provided to the two students reading on-grade level mostly focused on

understanding characters (56%). The majority of the Emma's student-teacher reading conferences with the two students reading below-grade level mostly focused on reading behaviors (63%). The students reading below-grade level also received some scaffolds focused on understanding characters (25%). Many of Emma's conferences focused on understanding characters (46%) and reflected the TCRWP reading unit of study.

During the first week of the study, Emma asked Lara to “think about what you just read, what does that tell you about the character? Think about her actions or some of the words to describe her or her actions. What are you thinking about her right now?” Later in the conference, after Emma and Lara discussed the main character, Emma set the following reading goal for Lara: “When you are reading, can you keep an eye out, like a detective, to look for when your characters change?” [observation 1/26/17]. During the week four conference, Emma asked Lara to identify a moment a character changes in the story and what made the character change [observation 2/24/17]. In week six of the study, Lara's self-selected text had two main characters. During their teacher-student reading conference, Emma asked Lara to think about the character traits of both characters and predict how they both will react to situations [audio 3/10/17]. Each of the scaffolds Emma provided is focused on understanding character traits at an increasingly complex level. As Emma stated in her questionnaire (1/17/17) and interview (2/24/17), her goal is to support and encourage independence by providing tools the students can use when independently reading.

Student responses over time. Throughout the study, Emma's students demonstrated they were working on a variety of reading goals with a variety of self-

selected texts. For example, during Emma's week two teacher-student reading conference with Avery, a student reading on-grade level, Emma asked her to describe the characters. Avery described the characters and provided some text evidence to support her ideas about the characters [audio 2/3/17]. By week five, Avery described her characters in greater detail, citing evidence across the text [audio 3/2/17]. By week six, Avery was articulating patterns she noticed in the characters actions [audio 3/10/17]. During the week eight conference, Avery was comparing how two characters responded differently to problems they encountered in books in a series [observation 3/20/17].

Emma stated she enjoys seeing the progress students make during teacher-student conferences. She expressed without teacher-student reading conferences, she may not notice some of the students' successes, as well as some of their needs [interview 3/20/17]. One instance Emma highlighted was her conversations with Noah, a student reading below-grade level, about his reading volume. Emma had conversations with Noah about recording his reading in his reading log during teacher-student reading conferences during weeks three, four, and five. During the week six teacher-student reading conference, Emma and Noah both enthusiastically cheered to celebrate when Noah accomplished the reading log goal they set.

Emma highlighted the knowledge she gains from talking with her students during teacher-student reading conferences when she shared her surprise at the misconceptions her students had about the genre of the Magic Tree House Series. Three of her students expressed that they thought the Magic Tree House books were fairytales because they had some of the elements common to fairytales. Emma shared elements of fairytales

during the minilesson that day and the students recognized some of the elements in their self-selected texts.

Emma shared she would have never thought students would have had that misconception and without having teacher-student reading conferences, she may not have known students had this misunderstanding [interview 3/20/17]. Once she learned about the misconception, she shared she was going to rewrite her minilesson plans for the following day so she could clear up this misconception that seemed to be common among several of her students. She said that particular experience “shows the importance of taking the time to meet with students” in teacher-student reading conferences [interview 3/20/17].

Major findings from Emma’s cases. Several patterns emerged from Emma’s 43 conferences. A major finding from the questionnaire, interviews, observations, and audio recordings of Emma’s teacher-student reading conferences is that Emma utilized teacher-student reading conferences to learn more about how her readers are implementing teaching from the reading workshop minilesson. At the beginning of many of the teacher-student reading conferences, Emma often asked students how they were applying the strategy from the reading workshop minilesson. As Emma listened to the reader’s explanation of how they were applying what they learned in the reading workshop minilesson, she coached her students on how they could apply the work in their self-selected text. As she indicated in her questionnaire (1/17/17), Emma used teacher-student reading conferences to move students from dependence to independence. To support

students' independence, she asked questions such as "What can you use that might help you?" [observation 3/20/17].

During the nine weeks of this study, Emma's scaffolding focus extended beyond reading comprehension. Emma focused on reading behaviors with her students who were reading below-grade level. She expressed concern that these students were not making progress because they were not reading enough texts to get the practice they needed to continue to improve their reading [interview 3/20/17]. Emma shared she appreciated the flexibility to tailor her teaching to the needs of her students during teacher-student reading conferences [interview 3/20/17].

Olivia

Most of Olivia's fifteen years of teaching experience was in kindergarten, however, at the time of this study, Olivia was teaching second grade for the second year. Like the other teachers in the study, Olivia stated that she implements the components of a balanced literacy framework to support her students who have diverse needs as readers [questionnaire 1/18/17]. Olivia shared she believes in giving students large amounts of time to read as a part of daily literacy opportunities. She shared, "if they can find a book to connect with then they will truly love the gift of reading" [questionnaire 1/18/17]. Olivia stated that she utilizes her learning from reading workshop professional development experiences provided at her school and a one-day Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) workshop [questionnaire 1/18/17]. Olivia conducted reading workshop daily consisting of a minilesson, independent reading time and time for

students to work with reading partners or their book club groups. Olivia used the TCRWP curriculum materials to plan her reading workshops.

Environment. As with each of the other teachers, the students sat on a large carpet in the front of the room to participate in the whole-class minilesson. Olivia used an interactive white board to display images to support the teaching point in the minilesson, she also displayed the teaching point verbatim (Figure 4.10). The teaching point was displayed on the interactive white board throughout the entire independent reading time.

She modeled how students can try out the strategy with a mentor text. The students were able to turn and talk to a partner to practice the strategy she presented during

the minilesson. Olivia was incredibly animated in her expressions and her enthusiasm about the mentor text. Throughout the three observed minilessons, Olivia provided multiple occasions for students to participate with opportunities to talk with their partner or provide a physical response such as showing a facial expression to show a character's feelings or giving a thumbs-up or thumbs-down in response to a question about the text. The students paid close attention and were eager to discuss the book when given the opportunity.

In each of the observations, Olivia displayed specific reading strategies or habits they discussed in the reading workshop minilesson on large chart paper around the room. During the third observation, Olivia added descriptors to one of the reading charts to

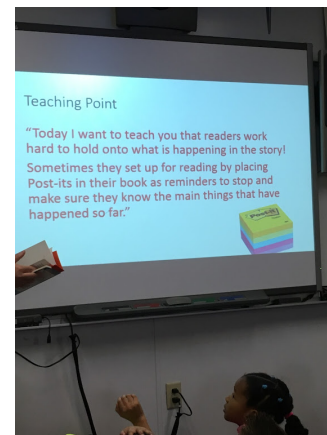


Figure 4.10. Teaching Point

show students an additional strategy for thinking about characters in their series books (Figure 4.11). As shown in this example, sometimes TCRWP curriculum resources were used to build the reading chart. Sometimes Olivia added to the chart during the reading minilesson, as observed during Olivia’s third observation, and sometimes she simply referenced the chart, which occurred during the second 90 minute observation. The chart was an additional resource for students to use during their independent reading time.

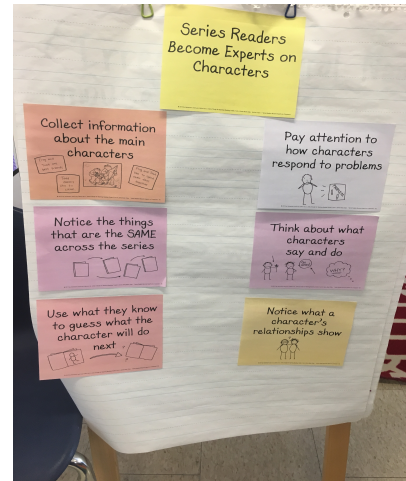


Figure 4.11. Reading Chart with TCRWP Resources

As in the other classrooms, Olivia allowed students to sit in self-selected “cozy” spots around the room. Some students chose to read in the classroom library area where books were stored in book bins labeled with the text level, series title, topic, or author. It appeared that seventy-five percent of Olivia’s texts were stored by reading level while the other texts were stored in bins labeled by series, topic, or author.

Students’ book boxes contained their self-selected texts, most of which were on their current reading level and a few others that were texts that piqued the student’s interest. Students had a designated shopping day each week. During independent reading time, students were silently reading a text from their book box, writing on a post-it note, or writing in their reading journal. While students were independently reading, Olivia conducted teacher-student reading conferences by calling a student over to a table where

she kept a variety of resources and materials students may need when reading. At this table, post-it notes and examples of class charts were available.

Olivia used reading goal sheets for each student. The reading goal sheets were reading level specific and based on the Continuum of Literacy Learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 2011). The form had space to record the student's goals, what the student was doing well, the genre of the text, and additional notes about the teacher-student reading conference (Appendix K). These forms were provided by the school district. In order to prepare for each observed teacher-student reading conference, Olivia glanced at previous conference notes. Then Olivia began each teacher-student reading conference with the student sharing about the text they were reading. In an interview (2/24/17), Olivia stated that as the student read and/or discussed their reading, Olivia listened to see if the student demonstrated evidence of the last goal discussed, while also listening for new goals to work on with the student. During observations, Olivia appeared to be paying attention to these things while she listened to the student and looked at the student's goal sheet, her conference notes, and the district provided document with level-specific questions. Olivia provided feedback for the reader and discussed what reading goal the student should work on. Sometimes the student practiced the goal during the teacher-student reading conference and other times, the student returned to their "cozy" spot to work toward their reading goal.

Gathering information about the reader. In order to construct her feedback and scaffolds, Olivia expressed that she pays attention to

- a) the information the student is sharing,

- b) the levels of the books in the student's book boxes,
- c) the variety of genres in the student's book box,
- d) the volume of reading recorded in the student's reading log,
- e) the student's reading goal sheet, and
- f) the student's journal and/or post-it notes.

Olivia stated that she takes the information she gathers and thinks about whether or not the child is transferring information from the lessons and “what does the student need to do at this given point to grow as a reader” [interview 3/6/17]. In each of the recorded teacher-student reading conferences, Olivia referred to one or more of the above listed points of information she gathered during the teacher-student reading conference.

Olivia began each recorded teacher-student reading conference by greeting the student and asking how they were doing. After the initial exchange, the conversation focus turned to the student's reading. Olivia began each reading conversation by looking at the students' goals on the students' personal goal sheet and then asking them to share about the book they were reading. As she listened to the student talk about their book, she asked guiding questions and provided word-solving support, if needed. In some recorded conferences, Olivia asked the student to demonstrate their progress on their goal as shown in these comments to Oliver, a student reading below-grade level,

So our goal last time was paying close attention to the words and self-checking or self-correcting the words that we recognize. So let's take a look. I'm going to have you

read. Go ahead and read this page for me and let's see how you are self-checking [audio 2/3/17].

While the student was reading, Olivia looked for evidence the student was working on their goal. Olivia often asked follow-up questions to gain additional evidence from the reader.

Feedback and scaffolds over time. After Olivia gathered information from the reader, she often described a reading strategy or reading behavior the student could try and when applicable, she coached the student as they attempted the strategy. For example, in week seven, Olivia coached Oliver by saying, “So, do you know of a way that could help you remember what is happening in the story? What do you think you could do?” When Oliver responded “stop and jot,” Olivia stated,

“Ok, so I have some [post-it notes] right here and what I do as a reader, so I don't forget, I put them in different places, even sometimes, I kind of make a goal for myself. Today, I want to read one chapter and I am going to jot down some things that have happened in the story so that way I don't forget it. Especially when I go to meet with my book club. So how about, do you want to take these post-it notes that I have and you want to put them in different spots, put them in different spots in the book so that way when you see the post-it note, when you see the post-it note it will remind you to stop and

jot. So where do you want to put it first? You want to put one right there? Let it stick out this is a good way to do it. So that way before you start reading this chapter, that's a good stopping point, you can say, alright what just happened here and write down some of the important events, ok? If you run out of room, your reading journal or you can get another sticky. Ok? So let's go ahead and out, where's the next post-it note so you will be ready to go when you get to your cozy spot. Where do you want to put the post-it note? That one. Ok? Let's put it at the next chapter and let's make that a habit, stop and jot at the end of each chapter or as you are reading the chapter and something cool comes up, you can go ahead and get a post-it note and jot down there. Ok? But these will at least help you because these chapters have a lot of information. So where do you want to put the next one? [audio 3/10/17].

Olivia offered this explanation and support during week seven of the study to encourage Oliver to stop and jot his thoughts about the text to prepare for book club conversations and teacher-student reading conferences. The following week, she provided an additional reminder to stop and jot throughout the text. However, the next week, which was week nine of the study, Olivia praised Oliver for having multiple post-it

notes in his book indicating that he stopped and jotted while independently reading his self-selected text.

Olivia's feedback varied across the 53 recorded teacher-student reading conferences (Table 4.7). 96% of Olivia's feedback was explicit and positive. For Aiden, who had just moved to the United States and was reading English significantly below grade level, Olivia's feedback centered around word-solving (75% of his conferences) and using illustrations to support his understanding (25% of his conferences). Whereas Olivia's feedback to the two students reading above-grade level consisted of making connections and predictions based on what they knew about specific characters and/or patterns in a series.

Table 4.7

Olivia's Feedback of Things Students Were Doing Well Across Nine Weeks

Week	Feedback to Logan Above-grade level reader	Feedback to Victoria Above-grade level reader	Feedback to Owen On-grade level reader	Feedback to Chloe On-grade level reader	Feedback to Oliver Below-grade level reader	Feedback to Aiden Below-grade level reader
1	Jotting about characters and setting	Making connections	Making connections	Identifying character roles in the story	Summarizing	Using illustrations to understand the text
2	Recognizing character feelings	Recalling details	Making connections	Identifying the problem in the story	Self-correcting	Self-correcting
3	Fluency	Jotting events in story and predictions	Retelling	Reading with expression	Making connections	Recognizing sight words
4	Making connections	Making inferences	Making connections	Word-solving – replacing the word and then figuring it out	Identifying character's feelings	Using illustrations to understand characters
5	Nonspecific	Identifying the problem in the story	Making predictions	Identifying character feelings	Identifying the problem in the story	Rereading to understand, jotting
6	Making predictions	Making predictions	Selecting new books	Making predictions	Making connections	NA
7	Recalling details in story	Recognizing patterns in a series	Making predictions	Reading behaviors	Revisiting a previously read text	Fluency
8	Making connections and predictions	Jotting	Making connections across a series	Jotting	Nonspecific	Word solving with multiple strategies
9	Jotting	Recognizing author's word choice	Selecting another series	Recognizing patterns in a series	Jotting	Persevering – trying multiple word solving strategies

Olivia provided scaffolds during each of the 53 recorded teacher-student reading conferences. As seen in Table 4.8, the most common type of scaffold Olivia provided was questioning (87%). Olivia also described a reading strategy during 43% of the 53 teacher-student reading conferences. One other type of scaffold Olivia used for 36% of the teacher-student reading conferences was indicating a specific element in the text that could support the student's understanding of the text.

Table 4.8

The Types of Scaffolds Olivia Provided Across Nine Weeks

Week	Scaffold- Logan Above-grade level reader	Scaffold- Victoria Above-grade level reader	Scaffold- Owen On-grade level reader	Scaffold- Chloe On-grade level reader	Scaffold- Oliver Below-grade level reader	Scaffold- Aiden Below-grade level reader
1	Questioned, indicated elements to consider, described, guided practice	Indicated elements to consider	Questioned, indicated elements to consider	Questioned, indicated elements to consider, described, guided practice	Questioned, described	Questioned, indicated elements to consider, described, guided practice
2	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned, described	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned, indicated elements to consider
3	Indicated elements to consider, questioned	Indicated elements to consider, questioned	Questioned, described, indicated elements to consider	Indicated elements to consider, questioned	Indicated elements to consider, questioned	Described, modeled
4	Questioned	Indicated elements to consider, questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned, described	Described
5	Described, connected to familiar text	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Described	Questioned, described
6	Questioned, described	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Indicated elements to consider	NA
7	Described, questioned	Questioned	Questioned, indicated elements to consider, described, guided practice	Questioned, described	Described	Questioned, indicated elements to consider
8	Described, questioned	Described, questioned	Questioned, indicated elements to consider	Described, questioned, connected to familiar text	Questioned, described	Questioned, indicated elements to consider
9	Questioned, indicated elements to consider, described	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned, indicated elements to consider, described

The type of scaffold Olivia provided did not appear to be affected by the students' reading level as questioning was used in 89% of teacher-student reading conferences with the two students reading above-grade level, in 100% of the teacher-student reading conferences with the two students reading on-grade level, and in 71% of the teacher-student reading conferences with the two students reading below-grade level. Olivia's other scaffolds were also used at similar rates for all students. Olivia described a strategy for 39% of the teacher-student reading conferences for the two students reading above-grade level and 33% of the teacher-student reading conferences for the two students reading on-grade level. Olivia described strategies more often for the two students reading below-grade level (59%). The other type of scaffold Olivia used on a frequent basis was indicating elements within the text the student should consider to better understand the text. Olivia often pointed out text features and illustrations to support students' understanding. Indicating elements to consider was evenly used across the teacher-student reading conferences: the above-grade level students received this type of scaffold during 33% of their conferences, the students reading on-grade level received this type of scaffold during 33% of their conferences, and the students reading below-grade level received this type of scaffold during 41% of their conferences.

While Olivia had a major focus for each of the teacher-student reading conference, she also provided additional scaffolds for other reading goals. Unlike Sara's teacher-student reading conferences where she only provided scaffolds on one reading goal, Olivia supported several reading goals but spent most of her time on one reading goal. The goal she focused on was the goal she recorded on a post-it for the student at the

end of the teacher-student reading conference. Her conference notes were compared to the feedback and scaffold matrix to confirm if her recorded focus matched the observed focus of the scaffold. Table 4.9 shows that Olivia provided some word-solving scaffolds (11%) and text feature scaffolds (6%) to the two students reading above-grade level. Most of the scaffolds provided for the two above-grade level students were focused on understanding characters (44%) and understanding events (17%). This did not significantly differ from the students reading below-grade level who also received scaffolds focused on understanding characters (24%), understanding events (18%), and word solving (12%); however, the students reading below-grade level received more scaffolds focused on text features (29%).

Table 4.9

The Focus of Scaffolds Olivia Provided Across Nine Weeks

Week	Scaffold- Logan Above-grade level reader	Scaffold- Victoria Above-grade level reader	Scaffold- Owen On-grade level reader	Scaffold- Chloe On-grade level reader	Scaffold- Oliver Below-grade level reader	Scaffold- Aiden Below-grade level reader
1	Text-features	Understanding characters	Text features	Understanding characters	Monitoring	Retelling
2	Making connections	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Understanding events	Text features
3	Understanding characters	Word-solving	Understanding events	Retelling	Text features	Word-solving
4	Understanding events	Understanding events	Retelling	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Text-features
5	Understanding events	Understanding events	Making predictions	Retelling	Understanding characters	Understanding events
6	Making predictions	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Text features	NA
7	Reading behaviors	Understanding characters	Word solving	Understanding characters	Reading behaviors	Text features
8	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Text features, making predictions	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Understanding events
9	Word-solving	Understanding characters	Understanding events	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Word-solving

Although the type and focus of the scaffolds seemed similar across the six students participating in the study, Olivia’s questions to scaffold understanding of characters differed. For example, when discussing the characters with the students reading above-grade level, Olivia asked questions about how multiple characters in a story help to solve the problem [observation, Victoria, 1/26/17] or about character traits [audio, Victoria, 2/3/17]. With the two students reading below-grade level, she asked

questions about how the character might be feeling [audio, Oliver, 2/9/17] and if the student could make a connection to the character [audio, Oliver, 2/17/17].

Olivia's scaffolds increased in complexity over time. For example, during the week one teacher-student reading conference with Aiden, a student reading below-grade level, Olivia prompted Aiden to pay attention to the illustrations to support his understanding of the story in a picture-book with few words [observation, 1/26/17] and by week three, Olivia was prompting Aiden to use illustrations to decode challenging words [audio, 2/17/17]. For Logan, a student reading above-grade level, Olivia asked him to make connections to the main character's actions to better understand the main character [audio, 2/9/17]. Later in the study, Olivia asked Logan to think about the main character's traits and make predictions about how the character will react to the problem in the story [audio, 3/10/17].

Student responses. Across the nine weeks of the study, the students appeared to be excited about their texts and gladly showed what they were learning from the text. Some students eagerly described how they were attempting the strategies shared in minilessons. For example, after a minilesson on precise words, Logan, a student reading above-grade level, readily showed Olivia three descriptive words he found in his text.

Olivia: Good, Ohhhh, do I see post-it notes in there???

Logan: I already got one yesterday, *crunch*

Olivia: You found an extraordinary word already?

Logan: And then obnoxious and then *coax*

Olivia: Wow, you have been busy. Last time I saw this book there weren't any post-its. Our goal was to stop and jot. Right? [observation 3/21/17]

Often students were so excited about their text that even when Olivia attempted to end the conference, the student still wanted to talk about the text and what they were thinking as evidenced by the end of Victoria's conference during week four of the study.

Olivia: Excellent. I am going to let you finish reading this story. I think you are doing an excellent job thinking about characters and their feelings. I'm going to move this over here.

Victoria: I don't know if I can take anymore.

Olivia: I know you are so busy. You keep growing and growing as a reader. So let's think. I know what we can do for the rest of the story. I think you should see, we know she is frustrated, she is mad. As you finish reading the text, and see if her feelings change or if she just stays mad

Victoria: At the end she takes a few pumpkin seeds that somebody left and maybe she wanted to plant next year. maybe she is starting to like them

Olivia: I was wondering, do you think she might changing and actually liking and maybe love pumpkins

Victoria: Maybe not love because I don't think she ate any

Olivia: Let's look at the rest of the story and see if anything changes

Victoria: It's November so I have a good idea for the lanterns and the pies, but look at here. I couldn't do that.

Olivia: I couldn't either. Thanks for reading with me today. I like how excited you are about your books. [observation 2/17/17]

Olivia shared, "Reading conferences help you get to know your students so well. You see how much they grow and change. It's tough to fit it all in but reading conferences are a priority. It's so important for students to get that one on one time" [interview 3/21/17]. The knowledge Olivia gained about her students was not only about their reading ability, she also learned more about their interests and their reasons for selecting certain texts as shown in the following example with Oliver, a student reading below-grade level:

Olivia: What do you already know about this topic?
anything?

Oliver: So there is this one thing that I really want
to do when I grow up, be an air traffic
controller and go in that big tower.

Olivia: That would be so cool, I didn't even know
you wanted to do that when you grow up. I
am so proud of you for picking out at the
library something you are interested in
because that is what good readers do!
[audio, 3/2/17].

Major findings from Olivia's cases. Several patterns emerged from Olivia's 53 conferences. A major finding from the questionnaire, interviews, observations, and audio

recordings of Olivia's teacher-student reading conferences is that she is excited about spending one-to-one time with her students. In addition to showing the student she was actively listening by leaning in and nodding in response to their statements, Olivia used excited tones, hand gestures, and positive phrases throughout the 53 teacher-student reading conferences to show her enthusiasm about the texts each student was reading, as well as, how the student was thinking about their reading. As Olivia stated in her questionnaire, she believes that teacher-student reading conferences are a way that she can foster and support students' love of reading [questionnaire 1/18/17]. The observations and audio recordings revealed her evident enthusiasm and excitement about the students' reading. Olivia's students responded positively with excited tones and smiles that stretched from ear to ear when Olivia shared her feedback with them. Olivia expressed that she appreciated this individual time with students and how well she got to know them [interview 3/21/17]. During each of Olivia's teacher-student reading conferences she flexibly adapted her instruction to meet what she perceived to be the most important needs of the student in that moment with their self-selected text.

Sophia

This year is Sophia's seventeenth year of teaching and her third year implementing reading workshop in second grade. As with each of the other teachers, Sophia stated that she uses a balanced literacy approach on a daily basis and that through reading workshop "students learn to ask questions and use prior knowledge to make connections" [questionnaire 1/18/17]. She also stated that "independent reading allows

students to practice the strategies they have learned” through whole-group and small-group literacy instruction [questionnaire 1/18/17].

Environment. Sophia’s classroom was arranged in similar ways to the other teachers participating in this study. Her room had a designated space for students to meet for the whole-group reading workshop minilesson, a classroom library displayed books by reading level, and reading charts were displayed around the classroom walls.

Students’ book boxes were organized on a large bookshelf at the front of the classroom (Figure 4.12). Sophia described that on students’ weekly book shopping day, students select approximately



Figure 4.12. Student Book Boxes

six to ten books from the classroom library which is organized mostly by reading level, with some books sorted by series and some books placed in bins without labels. Sophia shared that in order to support students’ ability to practice reading strategies, it is important to have a “classroom library that is full of a variety of levels and topics” so “they can select the books they wish to read and have greater control over what they want to learn” [questionnaire 1/18/17].

Structure of reading workshop. As with each of the other teachers, Sophia began her reading workshop with a whole group minilesson. Her observed minilessons followed the TCRWP suggested format of providing a connection to previous learning, a brief explanation and demonstration of a strategy or concept, guided practice for the students, and a restatement of the strategy or concept previously introduced (Calkins, 2001). However, Sophia’s minilessons often provide a very clear assignment she wanted

students to complete in their reading log by the end of the independent reading time. During the first observation in Sophia's classroom, Sophia modeled how she wanted students to complete a summary form. The summary sheet expected students to identify the main character, the problem, the solution, and the resolution. Sophia modeled exactly how she wanted the assignment completed with the text she was reading during the whole class read aloud that occurred at another point in the day.

Another observed minilesson consisted of Sophia modeling how to graph a character's feelings. After the demonstration, she told students that she expected each of them to choose a character from one of their self-selected texts and graph the character's feelings. Students were expected to complete the activity during the independent reading time. For this kind of activity and previous lessons, Sophia used large chart paper to display important information provided during whole class reading workshop minilessons. These charts were displayed around the room for students to reference during literacy instruction and practice.

Immediately following the reading workshop minilesson, Sophia provided students with independent reading time. Students read in self-selected spots, however, most of the students read at their desks. During the first observation, Sophia traveled to the students to conduct the teacher-student reading conferences, however, during the other observations, Sophia stayed in one spot in the classroom and called students over to her for their teacher-student reading conferences.

Feedback. Unlike the other teachers who provided feedback toward the beginning of each teacher-student reading conference, Sophia provided her feedback at

the end of each teacher-student reading conference. As shown in Table 4.10, Sophia's feedback typically centered on retelling, which was the focus of her teacher-student reading conferences, or jotting, which she explained to students, was a way to support their retelling of the text. There was some variation in the feedback provided during Sophia's recorded teacher-student reading conferences, however, the variation was minimal. For example, how well students were retelling was the feedback for 37% of the conferences for the two students reading below-grade level, 21% for the two students reading on-grade level, and 32% for the students reading above-grade level. The students reading below-grade level did receive feedback on fluency and paying attention to illustrations while the two students reading above-grade level did not receive feedback in those areas.

Table 4.10

Sophia's Feedback of Things Students Were Doing Well Across Nine Weeks

Week	Feedback to David Above-grade level reader	Feedback to Daniel Above-grade level reader	Feedback to Jayden On-grade level reader	Feedback to Ella On-grade level reader	Feedback to Sam Below-grade level reader	Feedback to Isabella Below-grade level reader
1	Making connections	Jotting	Retelling	Making connections	Fluency – paying attention to punctuation	Fluency – paying attention to punctuation
2	Jotting events in the story	Jotting	Retelling	Retelling	Retelling	Retelling
3	Retelling	Making connections	Jotting	Making connections	Retelling	Jotting
4	Retelling	Retelling	Nonspecific		Making connections	Retelling
5	Jotting	Jotting	Nonspecific	Citing evidence in the text	Paying attention to illustrations	Paying attention to illustrations
6	Retelling	Jotting - more details	Citing evidence in the text	Retelling	Retelling	Identifying problem and solution
7	Jotting – more details	Retelling and jotting	Making connections to other versions	Jotting	Retelling	Jotting with evidence from the text
8	Jotting	Jotting more	Jotting	Nonspecific	Retelling, jotting	Jotting
9	Retelling	Jotting	Nonspecific	Nonspecific	Jotting	Jotting with evidence from the text

Sophia provided feedback on jotting during twenty of the 54 conferences (37%).

For example during week two of the study, Sophia said to Daniel, “OK, so you did a great job, much better with the sticky notes. I want you to keep working on that because

it helps to look back in the book and as we stop and continue the next we can go back and quickly remind ourselves what we read” [audio 2/3/17].

Sophia provided feedback on retelling during seventeen of the 54 audio-recorded teacher-student reading conferences. Sophia’s feedback to David in week seven demonstrated her focus on jotting and retelling when she said, “Well, I can tell you liked it and your sticky notes have definitely improved and your retell has definitely improved so I think you need to stay with these kind of chapter books more on your level than reaching up to some that are higher. You did a really good job today. Thank you!” [audio 3/10/17].

Some feedback provided during the teacher-student reading conferences was nonspecific. For example, several times Sophia said “excellent” or “good job” without referring to what she was commenting on.

Purpose of teacher-student reading conferences. Sophia stated, “Independent reading allows students to practice the strategies they have learned from interactive read alouds, guided reading groups, and shared reading” [questionnaire 1/18/17]. Throughout each of Sophia’s recorded conferences, she asked students questions to guide their retelling of the story. An example of Sophia’s questioning comes from her conference with David, a student reading above-grade level, during week six.

David: The Rough Faced Girl. Two twin sisters are making
her all day and night in their teepee. They keep
throwing sticks in the fire to keep it going

Sophia: So they are indians

David: Yes

Sophia: And they live in a teepee

David: Mmhmm

Sophia: Ok, so with their tribe.

David: And a lot of people want to marry the invisible being and the invisible being and her sister have the biggest teepee and everybody who goes there, she asks two questions and if they can get both of them right then they can marry the invisible being.

Sophia: Oh, interesting

David: And then the invisible being will become visible

Sophia: Ohhhh, so here at the beginning of the story. Oh, I like how you have that labeled on your sticky note-beginning. two sisters are keeping the fire,

David: No, their younger sister, the rough-faced girl, they're making her

Sophia: Oh, they are making her

David: That's how all the little pieces that fly off

Sophia: The ashes?

David: Yes, they fly off and they go on to her face.

Sophia: Oh, ok, I can see it now. So you have an understanding of that. Good. What happens next?

David: One day, two older sisters went to their father and they wanted like beads and jewelry, a lot of beautiful stuff like that. Then they walked through the village and all the village people said, look at those beautiful girls, surely they shall marry the invisible being.

Sophia: So do we know if the invisible being is a man or a woman?

David: Well, I think it is a man so far because

Sophia: It's the women Indians that are interested?

David: Yes, none of the men are interested and when they get to, when the invisible being's sister asked the two sisters of the rough faced girl wanted, what they wanted, they said they wanted to marry the invisible being. Then she said what is his boat made of and its made out of the curve of the rainbow but they said, they said it is the great oak tree.

Sophia: So they couldn't answer it correctly.

David: No and then when she asked, what is the runner of his sled made of? They said, it is the stars like

Sophia: Yeah, I can see it in the illustration, thank you for showing me that.

David: And they said the great willow branch and that's when they say, just tell us fairly they screamed, we've seen him just don't ask us all these silly questions.

Sophia: So were they trying to trick the sister?

David: Yeah

Sophia: Ok.

David: And then they go into a cave and see the invisible being, not visible but they see him invisible.

Sophia: Mmhhh

David: And then the younger sister asks her father to have all those beads and jewelry and stuff and he says he doesn't have any

Sophia: Oh, no

David: So she uses all she can find and when she goes through the village all the people say, they pointed their arms and said 'look at that ugly girl, look at her strange clothes, hey, hey, go home you ugly girl, you will never marry the invisible being. [audio 3/2/17].

Her questions encouraged students to include information about the characters, events, and any connections they could make with the text. For example, Sophia asked

questions like, “So what happens at the end of the story then?” [audio 2/3/17]. Questions were the most common type of scaffold Sophia provided during the 54 recorded teacher-student reading conferences. As shown in Table 4.11, Sophia scaffolded students by asking guiding and clarifying questions during 53 of the 54 recorded teacher-student reading conferences. Sophia also scaffolded students with descriptions (19%) and indicating specific elements or features in the student’s self-selected text that could support their comprehension (15%). The two students reading below-level were encouraged to pay attention to specific elements in the text (34% of their conferences) more often than the other four students who received this type of scaffold during 6% of their conferences.

Table 4.11

The Types of Scaffolds Sophia Provided Across Nine Weeks

Week	Scaffold-David Above-grade level reader	Scaffold-Daniel Above-grade level reader	Scaffold-Jayden On-grade level reader	Scaffold-Ella On-grade level reader	Scaffold-Sam Below-grade level reader	Scaffold-Isabella Below-grade level reader
1	Questioned	Questioned, described	Questioned	Questioned	Indicated elements to consider, questioned	Indicated elements to consider, questioned
2	Indicated elements to consider, questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned
3	Questioned	Questioned, described	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned
4	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Indicated elements to consider, described, questioned	Indicated elements to consider, described, questioned
5	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Indicated elements to consider, described, questioned	Indicated elements to consider, described, questioned
6	Questioned, described	Questioned, described	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned
7	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Described	Questioned	Questioned
8	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned, described	Questioned	Questioned
9	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned, indicated elements to consider	Questioned	Questioned	Questioned

Sophia expressed that her questions checked for how well the student understood the text [interview 2/17/17]. Sophia noted on her teacher-student reading conference notes whether or not the student understood the text well and whether or not she felt they

included enough details in their retelling. During each of the classroom observations, Sophia was observed using a district-provided document that offered specific questions for each reading level. The questions on the district-provided document were similar to the questions on the mClass®: *Reading 3D™ Text Reading and Comprehension* (TRC) assessment. Sophia also expressed that she observes the students to see if the “questioning and teaching is not too hard and not too easy, it is just right for their level” [interview 2/17/17]. Sophia did not demonstrate or explicitly explain any strategies during the observed teacher-student reading conferences.

Sophia stated that it is important for her to be “aware of the instructional level that the students are on” [questionnaire 1/18/17]. She shared she uses the Continuum of Literacy Learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 2011) and the district provided Reading Goals packet for each reading level to support her questioning throughout the conference [interview 2/17/17]. Sophia did not use student goal sheets during teacher-student reading conferences.

The support Sophia provided during teacher-student reading conferences was mostly in the form of questions and focused on the students’ retelling of their self-selected text (Table 4.11 & 4.12). During the nine weeks of the study, 65% of the scaffolding Sophia provided to the six students was focused on retelling and 30% of the scaffolding was focused on understanding characters. There was little variation in the focus of Sophia’s questions. For example, Sophia often asked questions like “What happened next?” or “How would you feel if [that] happened to you?” or “Did she learn a lesson?”

Table 4.12

The Focus of Scaffolds Sophia Provided Across Nine Weeks

Week	Scaffold-David Above-grade level reader	Scaffold-Daniel Above-grade level reader	Scaffold-Jayden On-grade level reader	Scaffold-Ella On-grade level reader	Scaffold-Sam Below-grade level reader	Scaffold-Isabella Below-grade level reader
1	Retelling	Retelling	Retelling	Retelling	Retelling	Retelling
2	Retelling	Retelling	Retelling	Retelling	Retelling	Understanding characters
3	Retelling	Retelling	Retelling	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Understanding characters
4	Retelling	Retelling	Understanding characters	Understanding events	Retelling	Retelling
5	Retelling	Understanding characters	Retelling	Retelling	Text features	Understanding events
6	Retelling	Retelling	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Understanding characters	Understanding characters
7	Retelling	Retelling	Understanding characters	Retelling	Retelling	Retelling
8	Retelling	Understanding characters	Retelling	Understanding characters	Retelling	Understanding characters
9	Retelling	Understanding characters	Retelling	Retelling	Understanding characters	Retelling

As she asked questions and listened to the student's responses, she stated that she "takes notes on their strengths and what they need to work on" [interview 2/17/17].

Sophia then provides a compliment and then gave the student a goal to work on for the next time. Unlike the other three teachers, Sophia briefly stated the goal and did not write the goal on a post-it note for the student.

Student responses over time. Students were eager to share their learning and their thoughts about the text with Sophia during the teacher-student readings conferences.

During the third observation, students positioned themselves in the room so that as soon as Sophia finished a teacher-student reading conference they were positioned close to her so they could start their teacher-student reading conference as soon as possible.

The students appeared to listen and consider Sophia's questions and feedback provided during each teacher-student reading conference. As the study progressed, the students included more details in their retelling with less prompting from Sophia. For example, at the beginning of the study, Sophia guided Isabella's teacher-student reading conference:

Sophia: Ok, so tell me about the book that you're reading.

Isabella: Umm

Sophia: What's the title?

Isabella: Mercy Watson Fights Crime. It's basically about
Mercy waking up in the middle of the night and
hearing things like screeches.

Sophia: So she's hearing things?

Isabella: Yeah and she doesn't know what they are.

Sophia: So she hears all of these noises and she doesn't
understand what they are yet.

Isabella: No, and then she goes downstairs to figure out
what it is

Sophia: Ok, so looking at our sheet. Somebody, the main character is Mercy Watson. So what is the goal of Mercy?

Isabella: Mercy's goal is to find out what is there. To see what's going on, to see what's downstairs so she would know if its criminals.

Sophia: Oh, that's a big word. Gosh, I hope its not. And so what is the *but* part?

Isabella: But she falls asleep and left the top to the middle of the night to see what is happening.

Sophia: Ok, so what kind of character is Mercy? [looking at book] Is this Mercy?

Isabella: Yeah

Sophia: So Mercy's a pig?

Isabella: [nods yes]

Sophia: OK, so how are Mercy's, what are her feelings throughout the story.

Isabella: She is excited to see, like sometimes, her parents can be downstairs trying to give her buttered toast-that's her favorite food. And she hears that toaster so it could be it. When she went down, she couldn't see them and she didn't hear the voice of her father

or her mom. So, she got kind of scared and she got super super tired so she just closed her eyes and sat in the middle of the room.

Sophia: Oh my goodness, that's interesting how you made, how you were telling me about the connection to when Mercy hears the toaster and automatically thinks of her parents making buttered toast. Do you have a connection? Does anything ever jog your memory?

Isabella: One time, when I was, I usually stay up mostly all night, but I don't on school nights. I do sometimes, one time after I fell asleep, around the middle of the night I asked my brother if he wanted to get some snacks and then I just sneaked in. Sometimes my parents don't know. [observation 1/26/17]

Isabella, a below-grade level reader, included more details from the text and her personal connections when she shared about her self-selected text during her teacher-student reading conference in week eight of the study. The following example also shows how Sophia provided feedback that highlighted the improvement she noticed in Isabella's reading conferences.

Isabella: So they first start out as best friends, they introduce themselves. They wear their pink

tutus to school, roller skating and the shops they go to. And they go to ballet with their pink tutus. They will be performing the Nutcracker, I've been wanting to see for a long time. Dad promised me over the winter we would go but he never took us.

Sophia: Oh, I bet this coming Christmas season he will take you.

Isabella: Then they, the little girl who gets the Nutcracker, Amanda and Emily want to do it but then they are like begging to do it and she says that she is going to let everybody try and show their best dance in the costume. And then, they, Emily wanted to be Marlene and Amanda did. And then

Sophia: What does your sticky note say?

Isabella: The problem in the story is that there is a dress and Amanda wants it but so does Emily.

Sophia: Oh, they both want the same part?

Isabella: Yeah, well at this part I kind of got mixed up with Marlene and Amanda so I accidently wrote Marlene.

Sophia: That's ok, you know the difference now?

Isabella: Yeah

Sophia: Ok

Isabella: She's saying that only one person can be Marlene.

So Amanda and Emily are like I want to be her,
no I want to be her. And this is where the
problem comes up because they don't know
whose going to be Marlene because they are
both fighting. And then if Emily, I mean
Amanda, is in the dress Amanda will be sad
and then if Amanda is in the dress Emily will
be sad. Then they don't want to make each
other sad and then they say being best friends
can be hard sometimes. Which is true.

Sophia: Do you have a connection of one of your best
friends? Have you ever been in as a situation
where you didn't want to hurt their feelings?

Isabella: I don't think so. There was one time last year. I
was playing one of my favorite games, XX and
I was playing the game and I kept on winning
every single round because I was super good at
the game and she was like, can we do just one

more round even though I keep winning, it was
tough

Sophia: Mmm, did you let her win?

Isabella: Yeah, she won one round

Sophia: You are a good girl

Isabella: And for the next period they tried not to look at
each other but they couldn't help it because
they were best friends before and they were
always like, we're together. And then the
person whose like Marlene, because they
hadn't decided her yet was going to be dancing
around the Nutcracker. Emily was dancing
around the Nutcracker and didn't realize that
Amanda was behind her and she pretended to
be dizzy and fell over and I knew that she did it
on purpose because she didn't want her to be
sad because I don't think people look dizzy
when they go like that, I just like lay on the
couch and

Sophia: What in the picture you makes you think she's
dizzy? What in the illustration is showing you
that?

Isabella: There is a loop around her foot which makes her like that and it says Emily was dizzy and wobbly and it makes her go like ahh. So she is probably just doing it because she doesn't want her to be sad. And then her, Amanda tries and then she accidently kicks the Nutcracker and goes oops it's not time for the Nutcracker to loose his head. Cause like the Nutcracker does lose his head in the middle of it. And then another person named Nicole decided to dance and she did pretty good. And then Amanda and Emily were snowflakes. She decided they were snowflakes because they are always together, they could still be together in the dance as snowflakes. Then they asked, together? She yes of course. The dance teachers always say, yeah you can do it. So they are super happy and then they were, and this was the only time they actually took off their tutus to be a snowflake and then at the end they performed the Nutcracker. They actually put the tutus back

on. I didn't know it was going to happen. So they

Sophia: So how was the problem solved then?

Isabella: The problem was solved when the teacher said you guys can be snowflakes because you are always together. They said that's a great idea. Then that is going to be the only show that probably has two snowflakes that have pink tutus on. Which I have never seen.

Sophia: Good job. And as I mentioned last week, your sticky notes are getting better and better and you are always going back into the text to show the evidence you found and connecting to the emotions of the characters. So thank you. Good job! Keep it up [audio 3/14/17].

Major findings from Sophia's cases. Several patterns emerged from Sophia's 54 conferences. A major finding from the questionnaire, interviews, observations, and audio recordings of Sophia's teacher-student reading conferences is that Sophia focused her teacher-student reading conferences on checking that the students understood their self-selected texts. Throughout the teacher-student reading conferences, Sophia asked students questions about the text and how the students were making connections to the characters in their self-selected texts.

Sophia expressed that teacher-student reading conferences were something she was trying to work on [interview 1/18/17]. She also stated she wasn't really sure how to support her student reading on a fourth-grade reading level, reading level Q books (Appendix I). She stated that she looked at several practitioner-oriented resources, but she didn't find them very helpful in knowing how to adjust her instruction for him [interview 2/17/17]. Her questioning was not different for the student who was reading books at level Q from the student who was reading books at level L (Appendix I). For both students she asked questions like "How do you think the baseball player feels?" [audio 2/17/17] and "what kind of character is Mercy?" [audio 1/26/17].

Throughout the course of the study, students seemed to be familiar with the pattern of the teacher-student reading conferences. As the study continued, each of the students' retellings included more details and students became more consistent with referencing their jottings on post-it notes as they met with Sophia. The students appeared excited to share about the text they were reading.

Cross-case Analysis

The data collected from the four teacher questionnaires, twelve interviews, 207 teacher-student reading conference transcripts, and twelve observations for the four exemplary second grade reading teachers were analyzed for patterns across the cases. The patterns that emerged across the cases are presented in this section and organized by research question.

Question One: Describing the Nature of the Teacher-student Reading

Conferences. Each of the exemplary second grade teachers participating in this study placed teacher-student reading conferences as a priority in their literacy instruction. Each teacher stated that they scheduled a student-teacher reading conference with each student each week. Each teacher expressed that they tried to follow-up with a student later in the week in a small group or a less structured teacher-student reading conference. Based on the teachers' statements during interviews (mid-study) and references made during teacher-student conferences, these follow-ups occurred when the teacher wanted to check to see how a student was progressing on a challenging goal. During the course of this study, the four second-grade teachers met with each student for the same number of teacher-student reading conferences unless there was a prolonged absence. While several of the teachers expressed that the conferences could be challenging to fit into their day, they felt the time was well spent and valuable for students.

The priority of reading workshop and reading conferences was evident in the structures in each classroom and how the classroom was organized. In every classroom the classroom library was centrally located and well maintained. Student book boxes or baggies were stored in a central location and easily accessible.

To answer question one, field notes and photographs of each teachers' classroom were analyzed to describe the environment teachers provided to support teacher-student reading conferences. Throughout the study, all of the teachers displayed reading anchor charts (Figure 4.13). Sara had a designated section for her reading charts and only displayed three charts at a time. Her charts changed throughout the study. The other three

teachers displayed reading charts around the classroom.

No reading charts were removed during the study;

however, several were added in each of their classrooms.

The charts displayed around the rooms were references for the students representing the strategies emphasized in the interactive read alouds and reading workshop

minilessons. Some of the reading charts displayed

reading behavior expectations such as expectations for

talking with a reading partner. The reading charts displayed during the study were

colorful and many contained images or icons to represent the content of the chart. Each

teacher used TCRWP anchor chart recommendations and materials for the majority of

their reading charts available during the nine week study.

The routine of reading workshop including teacher-student reading conferences appeared evident as students followed procedures and managed materials with minimal direction from the teachers. Each teacher began the observed reading workshops with a minilesson where she shared a reading strategy through a concise, explicit description, which was often followed by a demonstration of how the strategy could be used in a text. In each classroom the students sat on a large carpet in the front of the room to participate in the whole-class minilesson. The teachers often used technology such as an interactive white board or document camera to support the minilesson by showing images of other texts, the text they are using for the demonstration, or other visual supports. During the

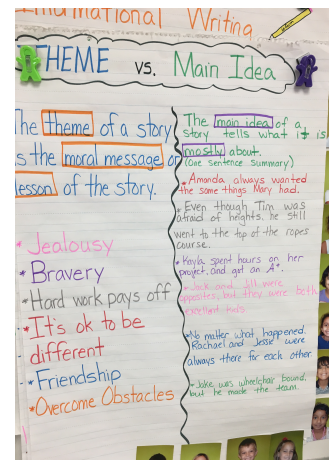


Figure 4.13. Reading Chart

observations, Olivia was the only teacher to display the teaching point for the minilesson on the interactive white board.

In three of the classrooms, students were encouraged to try out the strategy during independent reading time; however, it wasn't presented as an assignment. During Sophia's minilessons, she often provided a very clear assignment she wanted students to complete in their reading log by the end of the independent reading time. Immediately after the reading workshop minilesson, each teacher provided the students with independent reading time. During each observation, students were given 40 to 50 minutes of independent reading time in all of the classrooms. Each teacher stated that they fully support the reading workshop model in their classroom by implementing it daily [questionnaires].

While students were independently reading their self-selected texts, the teachers conferred with individual students. Each teacher stated that she met with each student individually in a teacher-student reading conference once a week. The 207 teacher-student reading conferences were brief (Table 4.13) ranging from two minutes to fourteen minutes and each teacher stated that she typically meets with five to six students each day during independent reading time within the reading workshop.

Table 4.13

Average Teacher-Student Reading Conference Time by Teacher

Teacher	Above-Grade Level Readers Conference Times (in minutes:seconds)	On-Grade Level Readers Conference Times (in minutes:seconds)	Below-Grade Level Readers Conference Times(in minutes:seconds)
Sara	Trey: 3:00-6:31 (average 5:32)	Ellen: 5:48-9:00 (average 7:22)	Charlotte: 4:42-9:00 (average 5:56)
	Harper: 5:04-6:40 (average 5:39)	Carter: 5:17-8:31 (average 6:30)	John: 4:41-8:00 (average 6:30)
Emma	Mia: 3:48-10:04 (average 5:47)	Avery: 2:31-7:12 (average 5:18)	Noah: 4:40-6:56 (average 6:25)
	Lara: 2:00-6:04 (average 4:29)	Jacob: 2:18-6:48 (average 4:11)	Liam: 2:26-9:48 (average 5:34)
Olivia	Logan: 5:42-9:48 (average 7:37)	Owen: 5:23-8:00 (average 6:59)	Oliver: 4:54-10:04 (average 7:06)
	Victoria: 6:19-11:08 (average 8:26)	Chloe: 4:50-10:55 (average 7:18)	Aiden: 5:27-13:25 (average 8:37)
Sophia	David: 7:16-11:24 (average 10:09)	Jayden: 3:57-11:20 (average 5:59)	Sam: 5:03-11:09 (average 7:31)
	Daniel: 4:12-6:53 (average 5:54)	Ella: 4:20-8:38 (average 6:35)	Isabella: 4:56-11:00 (average 7:34)
Average for all conferences: 6:35			

Of the 207 teacher-student reading conferences, 9% were less than five minutes, 21% were approximately five minutes, 28% were approximately six minutes, 15% were approximately seven minutes, 7% were approximately eight minutes, and 14% were nine minutes or longer.

Sara mentioned that she typically meets with each student in teacher-student reading conferences Monday through Thursday and leaves Friday to follow-up with a student who may need more support or she meets with a small group of readers to provide additional support [interview 2/19/17]. The other teachers described that they conduct teacher-student reading conferences daily. Each of the teachers stated they conduct small groups and if needed follow-up with individual students during another portion of the day designated for enrichment.

Sara's teacher-student reading conferences were more consistent ranging from three minutes to nine minutes. Emma's teacher-student reading conferences ranged from two minutes to ten minutes. Olivia's teacher-student reading conferences ranged from five minutes to thirteen minutes. Sophia's teacher-student reading conferences ranged from four minutes to fourteen minutes. Each of the second grade teachers' teacher-student reading conference times did not significantly vary between the students reading above-grade level, on-grade level, and below-grade level.

During the observations, Sara consistently traveled to confer with the students in their self-selected reading spots. Olivia, Emma, and Sophia called students to a specific spot in the room where the teacher had a table set up with materials for supporting teacher-student reading conferences. For example, at Olivia's table she had a variety of

post-it notes, small charts, reading logs, writing utensils, and her conferring notebook which included her teacher-student reading conference notes.

In sum, the context of the teacher-student reading conferences had many similarities. The structure and focus of the teacher-student reading conferences also had similarities, in addition to some distinct differences as described in the next section on the teachers' feedback and scaffolds.

Question Two: Teacher Feedback and Scaffolds Over Time. Each teacher expressed that they provided specific feedback and scaffolds based on their knowledge of the student, their knowledge of the unit, and their understanding of the demands of the text [interviews 1/26/17 (Sara), 2/19/17 (Olivia, Sophia, & Emma)]. Each of the teachers stated that they paid attention to the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) curriculum and the formal and informal data they had for each reader, but remained responsive to the readers within the teacher-student reading conferences [interviews 2/19/17 (Sara), 3/6/17 (Olivia, Sophia, & Emma)].

Each of the teachers structured teacher-student reading conferences differently, however, each teacher used a consistent structure across all of their conferences. For example, Sara typically engaged the student in a conversation about their reading, listened to the reader's response and sometimes asked the student to read, provided explicit, positive feedback, taught or reinforced a strategy, modeled within a demonstration text, supported the student as they tried the strategy, and provided reinforcement or additional explanation. Whereas, Sophia consistently asked questions to support the student's retelling of their self-selected text and then provided feedback at the

end of the teacher-student reading conference. While there were differences in structure, each teacher conducted each teacher-student reading conference in a conversational manner. Each teacher faced the student and leaned in to the student as the student shared their thoughts. All of the teachers showed interest in the texts the students selected and verbalized interest in what the students had to say.

The analysis for question two indicated that during each of the teacher-student reading conferences, the teachers provided feedback to the student after listening to the student discuss their text and/or read from their self-selected text. After categorizing the feedback provided, 82 % of feedback provided during teacher-student reading conferences positively described something the student was doing well. The specific feedback was provided after the student described their text, described the reading strategy they were working on, or read a portion of the text. Some feedback provided during the teacher-student reading conferences was nonspecific (6%). For example, several times the teachers said “excellent” or “good job” without referring to what they were commenting on. Some feedback provided during the teacher-student reading conferences was instructive feedback (4%). For example, Emma shared her disappointment when a student was not recording their reading in their reading log. She explained why the student needed to record their reading and how it will benefit the reader. For the 207 teacher-student reading conferences in this study, Emma was the only teacher who provided instructive feedback.

Once the teachers listened to the reader describe the text they were reading or the work they were attempting, each teacher decided on a goal for the student. Each teacher

stated that they think about the best way to support the student and how to support the student's work toward a reading goal [mid-study interviews]. Olivia (3/6/17) and Sara (2/19/17) both expressed during their interviews that once they decide on a focus or goal, they thought about the amount of support the student needs and how to present the information. During each teacher-student reading conference, Sara, Olivia, and Emma wrote the student's goal on a post-it note to remind the student of the reading goal the teacher and student discussed during the teacher-student reading conference.

To answer question two, the transcripts of the audio recordings of the 207 teacher-student reading conferences were analyzed for patterns in the ways the four teachers scaffolded the reading for the 24 students across nine weeks. The following patterns emerged: 1) teachers described a reading strategy, 2) teachers indicated elements in the text to consider, 3) teachers modeled a reading strategy, 4) teachers guided the student through practicing the strategy, 5) teachers asked questions, and 6) teachers made connections to familiar texts. The type of scaffolds provided during teacher-student reading conferences varied, however, questioning appears to be the most common form of scaffolding provided by the exemplary second grade reading workshop teachers over time. Questioning was a type of scaffolding used for 140 out of 207 conferences (68%). For 113 (55%) of the teacher-student reading conferences, questioning was the primary or only form of scaffolding provided.

In addition to finding variation in the types of scaffolds provided by the four exemplary reading teachers, there was also variation in the focus of the scaffolds provided during the 207 teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading

time. Teachers focused scaffolding on 1) understanding characters, 2) making connections, 3) making predictions, 4) word solving, 5) understanding and using text features, 6) retelling, 7) summarizing, 8) understanding events in the text, 9) monitoring reading, 10) fluency, and 11) reading behaviors. During most of the recorded teacher-student reading conferences, the focus of the scaffolds provided by the teacher coordinated with the reading unit, which was focused on learning about characters in a book series.

Each teacher stated that they approach a teacher-student reading conference thinking about what they know about the student and the current reading unit [mid-study interviews]. Each teacher followed the TCRWP units of study and the district-suggested pacing for the TCRWP units of study. The teachers stated that even though they have an idea about what they will need to focus on before the teacher-student reading conference even begins, they remain flexible to adjust to what the student wants to focus on and what they believe the student needs in that moment. In order to decipher what the student needs in that moment, they each began the teacher-student reading conferences by asking the student to tell about their text and what they are thinking about the text. If the student responded that they were working on a word-solving strategy or a fluency strategy, the teacher asked them to read a portion of the text.

The teachers also asked the student to read a portion of the text if it was unclear what the student was working on or if they expressed confusion about their self-selected text. Each teacher stated that they pay attention to what the student said and/or how the student read their self-selected text to determine the focus of the student-teacher reading

conference. As much as possible, Sara stated that she tries to build on the child's goal they are working on "so that things are streamlined and make sense to them" [interview 2/19/17] Sophia also shared that her supportive questions are based on the information the student provides [interview 3/6/17]. Each of the teachers shared that in each conference they are trying to think of what will be most beneficial for the student. Olivia expressed that she is always thinking, "What does this child need to do at this given point to grow as a reader?" [interview 3/6/17].

Once the teachers have decided on a goal to focus on, they stated that they think about the best way to support the student and how to share the information. Emma shared that she bases the goal on the child's level and needs. Emma said, "A lower level child may need more "how-to" read goals (think about what makes sense, does it sound right?) whereas a higher level child may be needing more comprehension-related goals" [inter 3/6/17].

As shared in the individual case studies, each of the teachers maintained a consistent structure for their scaffolding and feedback over the nine weeks of the study, however, there was variation between the teachers and how they structured the feedback and scaffolds provided during their teacher-student reading conferences. Throughout the study, Sophia scaffolded students' reading of their self-selected texts by asking them questions about the text and their understanding of the text. Sophia offered the students feedback at the end of each teacher-student reading conference. Olivia and Emma varied their scaffolding based on the focus of the conference. For example, in the conferences that were text-based, Emma included more questioning and opportunities for the student

to read, whereas during her conferences focused on reading behaviors, Emma provided more explanations. Olivia and Emma often described the reading strategy or reading behavior the student could try and when applicable, they coached the student as they attempted the strategy. Emma's scaffolding was mostly focused on one reading goal, whereas, Olivia provided scaffolding for multiple goals and focused more of the conversation on one goal. The scaffolding provided during each of Sara's recorded teacher-student reading conferences followed the structure of teaching or reinforcing a strategy, then modeling within a demonstration text, then supporting the student as they try the strategy and then, providing reinforcement or additional explanation. Olivia, Emma, and Sara each provided feedback toward the beginning of the conference and often used the feedback to scaffold reading strategies for the remainder of the conference. Sophia provided her feedback at the end of the each teacher-student reading conference prior to describing the student's reading goal.

Question Three: Student Responses to Teacher Feedback and Scaffolds.

Students responded directly to the structure and emphasis of each conference. In each of the classrooms, the teacher-student reading conferences seemed to have a slightly different focus. Students in this study responded to the expectations for teacher-student reading conferences in each classroom and modeled their own talk about texts based on what the teachers said and asked about during teacher-student conferences. The teacher's questions and/or demonstrations facilitated the conversations to focus on the text or reading strategies.

As stated in her interview and evident in each observation, Sophia's conferences were focused on students retelling the text they read, therefore, students worked to include as much information as possible as they told Sophia about what they read. Over the course of the study, students' retellings became lengthier and more detailed. The students were eager to share about their texts and have individual time with Sophia. During each observation, students were eager to start their time with her and prepared their materials and their talking points for the conversation with her.

Olivia's conferences were centered more around the minilesson provided at the beginning of the reading workshop. Often students attempted the strategy shared in the minilesson. For example, on the day Olivia introduced noticing descriptive words, four of the six students shared the words they found in their self-selected texts. While the words were interesting, it may not have been the best goal for the students to work on during that time. The students were more focused on the minilesson teaching point than their personal goals. While the students were focused on the reading workshop minilesson, they also readily responded to the questions and prompts Olivia offered during each teacher-student reading conference.

Emma's conferences addressed the student's goals but they weren't always the focus of the teacher-student reading conference. Emma began almost every conference by visiting the student's goals on the goal bookmark, however, as the conversation continued the student's specific goals were not always the focus of the conference. The students seemed to have difficulty keeping up with and referencing their goal setting bookmarks. Even though, Emma began each conference with a review of the goals, it didn't appear

that the students were referencing them during their independent reading time as they weren't always able to locate their bookmark or describe how they were working toward the reading goal(s). This differed from Sara's students who had their folder out and goal sheet visible during each observed independent reading time.

Students in Sara's classroom referenced a goal or goals on their reading strategies sheet at the beginning of each conference. When asked how they were working on that specific reading strategy each of the students were able to describe the meaning of the reading strategy and the steps they were taking to try the specific reading strategy in their self-selected text. Sara provided feedback specific to the strategy the reader was describing. She then offered the student another reading strategy, which she thought of as the next step, to apply to their reading or another way to think about the strategy they were working on. Each student had a chance to try the new strategy with Sara's support before working on the reading strategy independently. If the student needed more guidance, Sara offered more support and encouraged the student to try the strategy again in their self-selected text. When the student was successful, Sara encouraged the student to continue working on that specific reading strategy when reading independently.

With respect to question three, throughout the study, all students seemed engaged in the teacher-student reading conference conversations and appeared excited to share what they were reading about. Most students began the teacher-student reading conferences prepared to share about their reading and their thoughts. The teacher-student reading conferences invited students to share their ideas and build on their prior knowledge. For example, many of the students were encouraged to craft their ideas and

opinions about characters across books in a series during this study. By sharing their ideas with the teacher during the teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time and with their peers during the share portion of the reading workshop, students were able to refine their ideas and make connections to the characters in the series they were reading. Many of the students shared their excitement and enthusiasm for sharing their ideas about the text through teacher-student reading conferences and book club groups. Several students even asked to continue to meet with the teacher and other students reading the same text even though the book club/series unit of study had ended.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings from the data collected from four exemplary second grade reading teachers' teacher-student reading conferences conducted with twenty-four students. The findings were organized first by the teacher case studies followed by the cross-case analysis organized by research question. Data from the teacher questionnaire, 207 teacher-student reading conference transcripts, teacher conference notes, observations, and teacher interviews were used to describe what occurred during the teacher-student reading conferences, the feedback and scaffolds the teachers provided and how students responded to the scaffolds and feedback.

Common to multiple-case study research, extensive samples of quotations were included. By using the participants' own words, the researcher aimed to accurately represent the nature of the individuals and the situations studied.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this multiple-case study was to describe the nature of teacher-student reading conferences conducted by exemplary second grade teachers, identify the feedback and scaffolds these teachers provided during teacher-student reading conferences, and how students responded to the feedback and scaffolding provided during the teacher-student reading conferences. This study explored teacher-student reading conferences conducted by four teachers with two students reading on-grade level, two students reading below-grade level, and two students reading above-grade level over a nine-week period. The findings from this study provide a better understanding of teacher-student reading conferences to inform reading workshop teachers of ways to conduct teacher-student reading conferences from a more informed perspective in terms of the feedback and scaffolds offered to readers during teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time.

This multiple-case study embedded design used observations, audio recordings, interviews, questionnaires, and teacher conference notes to collect information about the nature of teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. Participants in this study included four exemplary second grade teachers and twenty-four general education second grade students. The study was based on the following three research questions:

- 1) What occurs during teacher-student reading conferences conducted during independent reading time with above grade-level, on grade-level, and below grade-level readers?
- (2) In teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, what types of feedback and scaffolds do second grade teachers provide for above grade-level, on grade-level, and below grade-level readers, and how does the feedback and scaffolds change over time?
- (3) In teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time, how do students respond to teachers' feedback and scaffolds and do their responses change over time?

The previous chapter presented the findings from each individual teacher's embedded case study and then the findings from the cross-case analysis of twelve teacher interviews, transcripts of 207 teacher-student reading conferences, and twelve 90 minute observations. The purpose of this chapter is to provide interpretive insights into these findings.

This chapter takes into account the research on how teachers provide scaffolding and feedback to support reading comprehension of young readers. The implications of the findings of this study expand the understanding of teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. The description of how expert teachers conduct teacher-student reading conferences can inform teacher implementation practices and offer potential foci for reading professional development. The chapter concludes with a final reflection on this study.

Discussion of the Findings

Upon careful analysis of the data collected, themes and patterns emerged. The overriding finding in this study revealed the supportive and specific nature of teacher-student reading conferences in the four second grade classrooms studied. Examining teacher-student reading conference transcripts for four teachers and twenty-four students over nine weeks, in conjunction with teacher interviews and a teacher questionnaire revealed the importance the exemplary teachers placed on knowing readers well and providing them with specific feedback and scaffolds on a consistent basis. A discussion of the analysis of the findings is presented by question.

Question One: Describing the Nature of the Teacher-student Reading

Conferences. With respect to question one, each of the exemplary second grade teachers participating in this study stated that reading workshop and teacher-student reading conferences were a priority in their literacy instruction. The priority of reading workshop and reading conferences was evident in the structures in each classroom and the way the classroom was organized. As described in previous research, (Hiebert & Martin, 2009; Reutzel, Fawson, & Smith, 2008) each of the teachers participating in this study provided access to a variety of books by maintaining a well-organized and easily accessible classroom library with a large quantity and variety of books. Students had designated times to choose books in addition to, extended amounts of independent reading time. By providing extended amounts of independent reading time and focusing teacher-student reading conferences on students' self-selected texts, students were given time to engage

with print in authentic ways to encourage lifelong readers (Hiebert & Martin, 2009; Reutzel, Fawson, & Smith, 2008). The teachers each expressed that they conducted teacher-student reading conferences in a conversational manner to make the experience feel authentic and to encourage the student to discuss their thoughts about the text and their reading (mid-study interviews). The observations and audio recordings confirmed the conversational nature of the teacher-student reading conferences.

To answer question one, the analysis of each of the 207 recorded teacher-student reading conferences indicated that teacher-student reading conferences followed much of Calkins (2001) recommendations for conducting teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. Calkins (2001) suggests before the teacher-student reading conference begins, the teacher thinks about what he/she knows about the reader and makes a tentative instructional plan for the teacher-student reading conference. When the teacher sits side-by-side with the student, she listens to the reader read a portion of the text, retell what they are reading, and/or talk about their reading goals and/or challenges with the text. The teacher may also ask the student questions about their reading to gain additional information. Based on this brief observation and conversation and the teacher's knowledge of the student's reading abilities and habits, the teacher first provides the student with specific feedback on something the reader is doing well. In the present study, all of the teachers included these components in their teacher-student reading conferences.

However, there were differences in the implementation of the final component of teacher-student reading conferences described by Calkins (2001). The final component of

teacher-student reading conferences described by Calkins (2001) is the teacher provides specific, scaffolded instruction to teach the student something new or build on the reader's current abilities. As described by Calkins (2001), this scaffolded instruction typically includes description, modeling, and guided student practice. Sara consistently provided specific, scaffolded instruction whereas, Emma and Olivia provided specific, scaffolded instruction during some of the teacher-student reading conferences. Sophia did not provide specific, scaffolded instruction during the observed teacher-student reading conferences. While Sophia did not provide scaffolded instruction, she did scaffold students' retelling by asking questions throughout each teacher-student reading conference. The differences in implementation of this final component could be attributed to the teacher's identified purpose of teacher-student reading conferences. For example, Sara's stated purpose for teacher-student reading conferences was to provide targeted, specific instruction whereas Sophia's stated purpose of teacher-student reading conferences was to check to see how students were implementing instruction provided during interactive read alouds, shared reading, and the whole-group minilesson (teacher questionnaires & mid-study interviews). The differences in the teachers' purposes for teacher-student reading conferences seemed to affect implementation practices and could alter the types of professional development support teachers need and want.

Throughout the nine weeks of the study, some conferences were more specific than others, however, based on the teacher interviews, literacy block observations, and transcripts of the teacher-student reading conferences, teachers were actively listening to students, paying attention to reading behaviors, and reflecting on their teaching. The

teachers reflections and close attention to the students' reading led to the teachers providing scaffolding they felt was what the student needed with a particular self-selected text at a particular moment in time. The teachers and students back and forth conversation about the reading indicated that each teacher recognized that reading is an interactive process and that students can be effectively taught to become strategic and reflective in their comprehension of text (Hedin & Gaffney, 2013). To provide appropriate scaffolds to support students' skills development, the teachers stated that they based their decisions about when and how to intervene by hypothesizing about the student's reading abilities while they are reading a text (Wood, 1976). During each observation, the four second-grade teachers looked closely at their previous teacher-student reading conference notes and the students' self-selected texts, reading goals, reading log to gain additional information about what the student was working on at that time. The information gathered by looking at these information sources appeared to be considered as the teacher listened to the student read and discuss their reading. The teachers often referred to the information they had about previous conferences and connected it to what the student was currently working on. One example, is from week three of the study when Olivia described the following to Chloe, a student reading on-grade level:

So last time we talked about the main characters and analyzing the main characters' actions and feelings and I did notice that you put post-it notes, especially where you saw that there is, when you

made a prediction. Once we started reading it together, you noticed that with the problem we needed to change the wording a bit. Let's see, I'm going to get a post-it. And finding the solution was hard in this book. I think I will put, where you have been writing post-its over, because you've made that a habit now. I love to see those post-its in there, especially that prediction. So the goal, when you are reading, let's look for connections with the story. I know it was kind of, last time we talked quickly about connections but let's see how we can connect with the story. So I am going to write that as your new goal. [audio, 2/9/17]

While each of the teachers expressed the value of conferences, they also expressed the challenges of providing the best and most timely support. Recognizing both the value and challenges of teacher-student reading conferences could influence a teacher's choices for the schedule, room arrangement, classroom management and routines. To answer question one, the present study describes some of the organization, management, and routines used by four exemplary second grade teachers. The descriptions in this study can be used by reading workshop teachers to inform how they develop their literacy schedule, how they establish classroom routines, and how they utilize resources.

Question Two: Teacher Feedback and Scaffolds Over Time. Throughout this study, the teachers provided individualized feedback and scaffolds to students. Each teacher stated that they based their feedback and scaffolds on their knowledge of the student, their knowledge of the unit, and their understanding of the demands of the text. As evidenced in the literature review and this study, the teacher's understanding of the student is crucial to the transactional nature of scaffolding. As described in the previous chapter Sara studied her students, her teaching, and the demands of specific text levels. Sara stated she capitalized on her studies to craft feedback and scaffolds that explained reading strategies step-by-step for each of her students. Her strategies appeared to be closely matched to the student and built on the expressed goals of the student.

One major difference between the four exemplary teachers was the number of reading goals addressed in each teacher-student reading conference. For Sophia, the focus was on students improving their retelling of their self-selected texts so her scaffolds, which were mostly in the form of questions, probed students to think about the setting, events, and characters in their self-selected text. Emma and Olivia provided scaffolds for several reading goals and emphasized one major reading goal. In contrast, Sara focused on one reading goal for each teacher-student reading conference. Focusing on only one reading goal per teacher-student reading conference could have contributed to Sara's succinctly delivered description, model, and guided practice of a reading goal and could also have contributed to the students' ability to describe their reading goals.

The analysis for question two indicated the effectiveness of the scaffolding depended upon the teacher and student adjusting their behavior and contributions during

the teacher-student reading conferences. While each of the teachers paid attention to the TCRWP curriculum and the formal and informal data they had for each reader, they also stated that they remained responsive to the readers within the teacher-student reading conferences. The teachers' responsiveness was evident in the variety of feedback and scaffolds observed during the recorded teacher-student reading conferences. This instructional flexibility is similar to the claim made by Hedin and Gaffney (2013) that scaffolded lessons require that teachers plan how they can support the learner(s) but also spontaneously adjust the way they support individual students based on students' reading strengths, needs and experiences.

Across the nine weeks of the study, the teachers varied the amount of support they provided according to what they perceived the student needed during the teacher-student reading conferences rather than gradually handing over the responsibility to the student. For example, the focus of Olivia's scaffolds for Logan, a student reading above-grade level, shifted from making connections to understanding characters to understanding events while the focus for her scaffolds for Aiden, a student reading below-grade level shifted from understanding text features to word-solving strategies to utilizing text features. These shifts in focus demonstrated her attention to the student's perceived need during that particular teacher-student reading conference. As described in Rodgers (2004), adjusting the level of support requires teachers to expertly balance how much control they maintain during the teacher-student reading conference and how much control they release to the student. In the present study, teachers expressed that they were always trying to increase their students' level of independence (mid-study interviews).

Emma and Sara admitted that sometimes their scaffolds felt like the perfect fit for the student and sometimes they needed to regroup and try something different [interview 2/19/17 & 3/20/17].

As shared by Wood and colleagues (1976), the effective teacher must attend to the task and how it may be completed, as well as the student's current processing, their strengths, and their areas of weakness. As expressed by each of the teachers in this study and reflected in the review of the literature, the pattern of effective instruction, needs to be both *task* and *student* dependent (Wood et al., 1976). With respect to question two, the amount of explicit instruction varied from teacher to teacher in the study. In this study, when the teacher paid more attention to the process of reading, they focused more on scaffolding specific reading strategies.

In each of her interviews, Sara was very confident about her understanding of the demands of texts at specific reading levels. As she stated in her interview, when she first began conducting teacher-student reading conferences, she didn't recognize how important it was to know the reading levels. As she began to gain experience and read more professional texts she realized the importance of knowing reading levels "inside and out" [interview 2/19/17]. Sara expressed that she spends a great deal of time reading about the levels and reading texts on each reading level. She stated that she concentrates on the levels represented in her classroom. When reading texts at the specific levels, she stated that she looks for challenges in the text or places where students might have difficulty. She specified that she compares the levels to see what changes from level to level to better understand what a student will need to do to successfully read more

complex texts. It seems that since Sara concentrated on knowing the reading levels of the students in her classroom and what behaviors to notice and teach at each level, she expressed more confidence in supporting her students and, as a potential result, her conferences are more focused on supporting students' process of reading. In each conference, Sara listened to what the student wanted to work on and then provided a "tip" or scaffold to help them accomplish their goal in a more complex way.

Her confidence was evident in her teacher-student reading conferences when she was able to quickly select a mentor text and model a reading strategy in a step-by-step manner. Her knowledge and understanding of the task seemed to focus her feedback and scaffolds so that her instruction was well defined and understandable. Her clear, concise articulation of the reading goals she crafted with her students most likely led to the students ability to explain the goals they were working on when independently reading their self-selected texts. On the other hand, Sophia mentioned being familiar with many professional texts but there was not evidence that she studied the text reading levels or ways to support students' reading comprehension in the way that Sara did. As a potential result, her teacher-student reading conferences were devoid of specific strategy instruction.

As previously described, professional learning seemed to play a role in the feedback and scaffolds provided during teacher-student reading conferences. The amount of trainer-led professional development also seemed to factor into how teachers conducted teacher-student reading conferences. Even though Sara was the least experienced teacher, she had the most professional development experiences around

teacher-student reading conferences. In her questionnaire and each of her interviews, Sara stated that her training and professional development highly influenced her structure for her teacher-student conferences and the feedback and scaffolds she provided during the teacher-student reading conferences. In contrast, Sophia has much more experience teaching, however, she had the least amount of professional development for conducting teacher-student reading conferences. Her limited professional development could be the reason why her conferences were less structured and relied mostly on questioning to support the student's retell.

Professional resources could also impact the types of scaffolds teachers used. For example, during each observation, Emma, Olivia, and Sophia consistently referenced a district-provided document with questions to ask the students based on the student's current reading level. Emma, Olivia, and Sophia described using the document to focus their questioning (mid-study interviews). The use of this document, which was aligned with the mClass®: *Reading 3D™ Text Reading and Comprehension* (TRC) assessment, could have influenced these teachers to ask more questions throughout teacher-student reading conferences.

Another important factor that appeared to affect how teachers provided feedback and scaffolds during teacher-student reading conferences was how teachers viewed the role of conferences within the entire literacy block. Sophia made statements that indicated she views conferences from a content approach as described by McKeown, Beck and Blake (2009) and centers them around "keeping students' attention directed toward the content of what they are reading and working through the text to build a

representation of the ideas through discussion” (p. 220). Even though Sophia’s conferences seemed less focused and intentional, her students continued to read texts at increasingly higher levels. However, due to the narrow focus of this particular study, it is unclear if the students’ progress can be attributed to literacy instruction provided in other parts of the day.

Sara’s patterns of instruction followed similar patterns of contingent teaching described by van de Pol and colleagues (2010). She used diagnostic strategies to establish students’ understanding and then checked the diagnosis with the student. Sara then described and demonstrated a step-by-step process for the student to implement the reading strategy. After providing the description and demonstration, Sara then checked the student’s learning by supporting their attempts within the teacher-student reading conference. Sara acknowledged that the scaffolds she offered were not always the best fit, however, she was always striving to target the highest leverage reading strategy to support the student’s current abilities. When students didn’t respond the way she anticipated, she reflected on why and then made another attempt to best support the student. Sara stated that her in-depth knowledge of the reading levels and reflecting on her own reading was critical for being able to provide targeted instruction for her students.

With respect to question two, the findings in this study suggest that the teachers were more contingent when they considered the challenges of the student’s self-selected text and how the student could approach the challenges. Wood (1976) described contingent teaching as a result of considering two theories, the theory of task and the

theory of the student's current processing, the student's strengths, and the student's areas of weakness. While contingent scaffolding is challenging (Wood, 2003) and not consistently present in each of the teacher-student reading conferences in this study, each of the teacher-student reading conferences engaged students in conversations about their texts and may have resulted in higher comprehension of the self-selected texts students were reading during independent reading time (Auckerman, 2007; Branden, 2000). This study describes what four exemplary second grade teachers consider when providing scaffolding and feedback. By describing these considerations, this study can provide a focus for reading workshop teachers as they plan for and reflect on their own teacher-student reading conferences. The description of Sara's preparation for feedback and scaffolds can provide reading workshop teachers with a focus for their own professional learning and/or planning.

Question Three: Student Responses to Teacher Feedback and Scaffolds Over Time. A key component of the scaffolding process is the students' internalization of the support provided by the teacher (van de Pol et al., 2010). Students responded directly to the structure and emphasis of each conference. As described by McKeown, Beck, and Blake (2009), students in this study responded to the expectations for teacher-student reading conferences in each classroom and modeled their own talk about texts based on what the teachers said and asked about during teacher-student conferences. Degener and Berne (2017) described that the "complexity of intellectual engagement with the text is not held within the text itself but, instead, in the demands placed on the reader by the teacher's questions" (p. 596). Based on their observations, Degener and Berne (2017)

claimed that the teacher's questions could cue higher or lower levels of consideration and understanding of the text. When analyzing students' responses in regard to question three, Sophia's students' retells became more detailed and included information Sophia asked about in previous teacher-student reading conferences indicating her questions were cuing higher levels of consideration and understanding of the text. As described by McKeown, Beck and Blake (2009), Sophia's questions prompted students to talk about text content and encouraged more student talk. This could encourage students to remember more text ideas than they would if questions prompted them to access text content through strategies and could have contributed to all of Sophia's students reading increasingly more complex texts as the study progressed.

In answering question three, one difference that emerged between the four exemplary teachers was their decisions around when a goal became a habit. Sara, Emma, and Olivia each used a goal sheet to display three to four post-it notes with the students' personal reading goals. During Olivia's conferences, if a student demonstrated the goal once, that particular goal post-it was moved to the back of the sheet which contained the post-it notes the student had made a "habit." This differed from Emma's conferences. When Emma observed a student demonstrating one of their reading goals, she placed a checkmark on the post-it note. When a student received three checkmarks on a post-it note, the post-it note was removed and placed in Emma's notebook to track the student's progress. Both Emma and Olivia determined when a student demonstrated the goal and therefore, when the goal became a "habit". During Sara's teacher-student reading conferences, the students were expected to demonstrate a goal multiple times in a variety

of texts. Before a goal was moved to the “habit” side of the student’s reading goal sheet, Sara and the student discussed whether or not they still needed the post-it note as a reminder. Sara and the student shared their opinions about whether or not a goal had become a habit and a consensus was reached. Sometimes the post-it note was moved to the habit side, sometimes the post-it note remained on the goal side and sometimes the post-it note was slightly revised by adding an icon or underlining a specific word to add emphasis. In each of these conversations, Sara made sure the student was comfortable with the outcome of where the specific post-it note should be placed. The differences among the teachers may have influenced the students’ ownership over their goals. In Sara’s case the student was able to participate in the process of deciding when a goal became a habit. For Emma and Olivia, they controlled when a goal was perceived as a habit for each student. Sophia did not use a goal-setting sheet with her students. Sophia did provide feedback about each student’s progress; however, there were no visuals or recording of personal goals for the student as a part of her teacher-student reading conferences. The differences between the teachers’ emphasis and conversations about reading goals appeared to impact the students’ articulation of their reading goals at the beginning of each teacher-student reading conference.

The goal of teacher-student reading conferences is to support students’ processing of increasingly complex texts, whether that is through explicit strategy instruction or facilitated conversations (Auckerman, 2007; Calkins, 2001). As students engaged in the teacher-student reading conferences during this study, they were supported in their reading and understanding of increasingly complex texts over the course of the nine

weeks of the study. With respect to question three, at the end of the study, twenty-two of the twenty-four students successfully read and understood texts at least one reading level higher than they were reading at the beginning of the nine-weeks of the study. The two students who maintained the same reading level were students who had difficulty with choosing appropriate texts and reading throughout the independent reading time. At least three of their nine conferences were centered around reading behaviors such as selecting texts on their current reading level, recording the texts they read in their reading log, and keeping track of their goal sheet. Due to the selective focus of this study, it is unclear if the teacher-student reading conferences were a contributing factor to the students' progress in reading texts at increasingly higher reading levels, however, it is clear that the teacher-student reading conferences provided students an opportunity to discuss their thoughts about their self-selected texts and receive specific feedback and scaffolds as they read increasingly, complex texts.

Throughout the study, all of the students seemed engaged in the teacher-student reading conference conversations and appeared excited to share what they were reading about. Most students began the teacher-student reading conferences prepared to discuss their reading and their thoughts. Clay claimed, "relative independence is present when the child controls the performance and is therefore actively engaged in learning. Such independence does not just 'arise'; it is an outcome of the learning events created by teachers, and of negotiations between teachers and learners which foster and make room for such independence" (2001, p. 197). Throughout this study, Sara's students demonstrated that they were able to set and articulate goals and plans for their reading.

As Ruddell and Unrau (2013) described the goals and plans readers set contribute to their understanding of the text. It is possible that even though Sara's students may have been reading on similar reading levels as the other teachers, her students may have understood their self-selected texts at a deeper level because of their demonstrated ability to describe their reading goals and their plan for achieving their reading goals. However, additional research is needed to determine how students' articulation of their goals during teacher-student reading conferences affects their reading comprehension.

In regard to question three, through teacher-student reading conferences, students were engaged in authentic literacy conversations designed to focus on communicating ideas rather than complete an assignment. Gambrell, Malloy, and Mazzone (2011) stated "teachers can raise the value of literacy learning by making reading, writing, speaking and listening authentic tools for learning in their classroom" (p. 22). In each of the participating classrooms, teachers were "warm, caring, and flexible, while having high expectations of themselves and their students" (Ruddell & Unrau, 2013, p. 1040). The descriptors of the four exemplary second grade teachers in this study can be used by reading workshop teachers to reflect on their current teacher-student reading conference practices and learn ways they could enhance or alter their current practices. The descriptions in the present study can also provide foci for professional development on teacher-student reading conferences.

Directions for Further Research

The present study provides a description of teacher-student reading conferences in four exemplary second grade classrooms. Based on the findings of this study, there is a

need for additional research on teacher-student reading conferences. One need is to broaden the research base by studying additional grade levels to see how teacher-student reading conferences are conducted in other grade levels, as well as observe the specific scaffolds and feedback provided during independent reading time by teachers in other grade levels. Capturing this information would provide a vertical snapshot of how teachers are supporting students' independent reading.

The research also needs to be expanded to include a larger sample size working with different demographics. The schools participating in this study were similar in that they served mostly upper-middle class families. Studying teacher-student reading conferences in schools serving students from lower income families as well as higher-income families would provide additional information to support reading workshop teachers. Despite diverse populations in the schools participating in this study, the English language did not seem to be a barrier. Aiden, who recently moved from Germany, was the only student who was receiving additional services in English Language Learning. Including schools with larger populations of English language learners would add to the understanding of how students are being supported and how students could be supported through teacher-student reading conferences.

Another line of inquiry that could be beneficial in understanding the nature of teacher-student reading conferences is studying how teachers establish conferences at the beginning of the year. Routines and procedures seemed to play a large role in this study; therefore, studying how routines and procedures are established could provide valuable information.

Recognizing that teacher-student reading conferences in this study often capitalized on instruction delivered in other parts of the literacy block, it would be beneficial to study how reading workshop teachers present and support strategic comprehension throughout the literacy block over time.

Limitations

This study contains certain limiting conditions, some of which are related to the common critiques of qualitative research in general and some of which are inherent in this study's research design. Careful thought has been given to ways of accounting for these limitations and to ways of minimizing their impact.

In general qualitative studies are limited by researcher subjectivity because data analysis ultimately rests with the thinking and choices of the researcher. One of the key limitations of this study is the issue of subjectivity and potential bias regarding the researcher's own participation in reading workshop professional development and teaching experiences. To enhance the validity of the study, and minimize subjectivity and potential bias, the researcher triangulated data sources as well as data collection methods. Gathering data from multiple sources and by multiple methods provides a fuller and richer picture of the phenomenon or practice under review. To enhance the interpretive validity of this study, the researcher employed various strategies. First, the researcher searched for discrepant evidence by looking for variation in the understanding of the phenomenon and sought instances that might challenge the researcher's expectations or emergent findings.

A related limitation was that participants may have participant reactivity (Patton, 2015) because a few of the participants knew the researcher's previous role in the district and their responses may have been influenced or affected. They may have tried overly hard to cooperate with the researcher offering responses they perceived the researcher was seeking or might be helpful to the researcher. Alternatively, because of familiarity with the researcher, these participants may have been guarded and therefore less candid in their responses.

Recognizing these limitations, the researcher took the following measures. First, the researcher acknowledged the research agenda. Coding schemes were scrutinized by advisors and through peer review, as were coded documents and transcripts. To reduce the limitation of participant reactivity, the researcher continued to reflect on how and in what ways the researcher might be influencing participants. The researcher also made a conscious attempt to create an environment that was conducive to honest and open dialogue to reduce participant reactivity.

In addition to issues pertaining to bias and reactivity, a further major limitation of this study was that the research sample was restricted. Therefore, a critique of this research might be the limited possibility of generalizing this study to other teachers and other reading practices. Although generalizability was not the intended goal of this study, what the researchers addressed is the issue of transferability (Patton, 1990). Considering transferability, Patton (1990) promotes thinking of "context-bound extrapolations" (p. 491), which he defines as "speculations on the likely applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but not identical, conditions" (p. 489). By including thick, rich

description, as well as detailed information regarding the context and background of the study, it was anticipated that information presented from this study could be assessed for its applicability and applied appropriately in other contexts.

Conclusion

This study described teacher-student reading conferences of a sample of exemplary second grade reading workshop teachers. The description highlighted the multifaceted and complex nature of teacher-student reading conferences as they occurred during independent reading time in four second-grade classrooms. This study described how four exemplary second grade reading workshop teachers paid attention to individual students' needs and provided appropriate individual instruction (Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzoni, 2011). The findings revealed the importance of knowing students and the reading process to best meet the needs of readers during teacher-student reading conferences during independent reading time. An additional finding was that participating teachers believed strongly that teacher-student reading conferences helped them know their students much better than if they did not have the focused individual time of teacher-student reading conferences. According to Gambrell, Malloy, and Mazzoni (2011), "the teacher who is knowledgeable and adept at combining and adjusting various methods, practices, and strategies to meet the needs of a particular set of students with a differentiated set of needs is most likely to lead students to higher levels of literacy achievement and engagement." The teachers in this study demonstrated how four exemplary teachers adjust their instruction during teacher-student reading conferences to support their students' reading abilities. The teachers also demonstrated

how teacher-student conferences could be implemented to address varied purposes such as Sara's focus on providing specific teaching for her students to Sophia's focus on checking for student's understanding of the self-selected text they were independently reading.

Similar to previous descriptions of exemplary teachers (see Pressley et al., 2001; Taylor et al., 2003), students in these classrooms were engaged in authentic and strategic reading conversations within the context of a literacy approach offering support and instruction to the whole-group, small-groups, and individual students. This study offers a description of common implementation practices and what may impact students' understanding and utilization of reading strategies.

The findings from this nine-week study of 207 teacher-student reading conferences were analyzed to produce a multilayered and holistic synthesis of how teacher-student reading conferences are conducted by four exemplary second grade teachers. The challenge throughout data collection and data analysis was to make sense of large amounts of data, identify significant patterns, and effectively communicate the essence of what the data reveal given the purpose of the study. Presenting an analysis of the findings from this study necessitates a degree of caution. First, the research sample was small, comprising of student-teacher conferences in four second grade classrooms. Second, the focus of the study was on teachers who were seen as exemplary by the district and their principal. Thus, the implementation of teacher-student reading conferences in classrooms of teachers who do not meet exemplary standards may differ.

For these reasons, it is important to stress that the implications that can be drawn are specific to the experiences of the sample group under study.

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Teacher Questionnaire

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. What grades have you taught?
3. How long have you taught second grade?
4. Describe your approach to literacy.
5. What is your definition of reading workshop?
6. How do you define independent reading?
7. Describe your training or professional development for conducting reading workshop.
8. Describe your instructional process for teacher-student reading conferences. What do you think about and what actions do you take before, during, and after teacher-student reading conferences?
9. Describe the kinds of texts used during reading workshop. How are the texts selected?

Appendix B

Questions for Teacher Interview Conducted During Week Five of the Study

1. What about your training has contributed the most to your reading instruction?
2. What was most beneficial in your training to scaffolding students' reading?
3. How do you plan your instruction for each student?
4. What are some things you think about when you are sitting with a student?
5. How do you know when the scaffold fits the child?
6. Do you prioritize strategies?

Appendix C

Independent Reading Overview from the district's literacy handbook highlighting the district's expectations for reading workshop.

Independent Reading Overview

Every day every student should have the opportunity to read appropriate and accessible self-selected texts for an extended amount of time.

Reading Workshop is a supportive structure which includes:

- **Minilesson**
 - o Connection
 - Talk about how the specific topic fits with the work the class has been doing together and about how it fits with students' lives as readers and writers. (An overview of what's to come)
 - o Teaching Point
 - Demonstrate a technique or retell and reenact something others have done
 - o Active Engagement/Guided Practice
 - Students work individually or with a partner to try something out orally, practice a strategy for a moment, or plan what they might do later.
 - o Link
 - Connect the minilesson to ongoing work and the students' reading and writing lives.
- **Independent Reading Time**
 - o Teacher confers with individuals, partners, and small groups
 - Conferences can follow a predictable pattern:
 - Research, Decide, Teach
 - Coaching
 - Proficient Partner Conference
 - Inquiry
 - o Teacher may pull a strategy group and/or guided reading group
- **Mid-workshop Teaching Point**
- **Partner/Book Club Reading Time**
 - o Students meet with a partner or group of students who read at the same or a similar level to discuss their reading.
- **Share**

It is important to maintain a simple, predictable structure because it is the work children do that will be changing and complex. (Calkins, 2001)

Tools that support independent reading time:

- **Classroom libraries**
 - o Libraries should offer a wide variety of high-interest texts representative of the students' reading levels.
 - o 50% of classroom libraries should be leveled
 - o 50% of classroom libraries should be organized by topic, genre, author, and/or series.
- **Book baggies/boxes**
 - o Students will need to have access to more than one book during their independent reading time. Baggies or boxes allow students to organize their reading for the week.
 - o Suggestions for the number of books in a book baggie/box:
 - Levels A-G: 10 books per week
 - Levels H-J: 8-10 books per week
 - Levels J-K: 6-8 books per week
 - Levels L-N: 4-6 books per week
 - Levels O and up: 2-4 books per week
 - o 50% of classroom libraries should be leveled with Fountas and Pinnell Levels
 - o 50% of classroom libraries should be organized by topic, genre, series, and/or author
- **Reading logs for students to track their reading behaviors and growth**
- **Individual Supportive Reading Tools**
 - o alphabet charts
 - o individual word walls
 - o Strategies to Habits sheet
 - o bookmarks
 - o self-stick notes
 - o other supportive tools

Appendix D

Exemplary Teacher Observation

Name:

School:

Date:

Time:

Indicator	Evidence
<i>Instructional balance</i>	
<i>Instructional density- integrates multiple goals into a single lesson.</i>	
<i>Extensive use of scaffolding</i>	
<i>Encouragement of self-regulation</i>	
<i>Thorough integration of reading and writing activities-</i>	
<i>High expectations for all students</i>	
<i>Masterful classroom management</i>	
<i>Awareness of purpose</i>	

Appendix E

Pressley, M., Wharton-McDonald, R., Allington, R., Block, C. C., Morrow, L., Tracey, D., & Woo, D. (2001). A study of effective first-grade literacy instruction. *Scientific studies of reading*, 5(1), 35-58.

Characteristics of high-achieving first grade teachers identified by Pressley and colleagues:

Instructional balance- high-achieving first grade teachers deliberately integrated a combination of high-quality literature with many opportunities for authentic reading and writing in addition to explicit instruction in the basic skills of reading and writing.

Instructional density- high-achieving first grade teachers integrated multiple goals into a single lesson.

Extensive use of scaffolding- high-achieving first grade teachers carefully monitored students' learning and provided just enough assistance to facilitate learning.

Encouragement of self-regulation- high-achieving first grade teachers encouraged students to monitor their understanding and taught students what to do when they faced challenges.

Thorough integration of reading and writing activities- high-achieving first grade teachers frequently used writing to support reading and reading to support writing.

High expectations for all students- high-achieving first grade teachers had consistently high expectations for all students.

Masterful classroom management- high-achieving first grade teachers expertly managed student behaviors, time, activities, student interactions and resources.

Awareness of purpose- high-achieving first grade teachers are aware of purposes for practices and activities.

Appendix F

mClass®: Reading 3D™ Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC) Expectations

Table 1: Text and Performance Levels for Amplify Atlas by Grade and Time of Year

Grade	TOY	Far Below Proficient	Below Proficient	Proficient	Above Proficient
K	BOY	< PC	PC	RB	A and above
	MOY	RB or below	A	B	C and above
	EOY	A or below	B	C to D	E and above
1	BOY	A or below	B	C to D	E and above
	MOY	C or below	D to E	F to G	H and above
	EOY	E or below	F to H	I	J and above
2	BOY	E or below	F to H	I	J and above
	MOY	H or below	I	J to K	L and above
	EOY	J or below	K	L to M	N and above
3	BOY	J or below	K	L to M	N and above
	MOY	K or below	L to M	N	O and above
	EOY	L or below	M to N	O to P	Q and above
4	BOY	L or below	M to N	O to P	Q and above
	MOY	N or below	O to P	Q	R and above
	EOY	P or below	Q	R to S	T and above
5	BOY	P or below	Q	R to S	T and above
	MOY	Q or below	R to S	T	U and above
	EOY	S or below	T	U to V	W and above
6	BOY	S or below	T	U to V	W and above
	MOY	U or below	V	W to X	Y and above
	EOY	V or below	W to X	Y to Z	*

* No cut point set; no books available to classify students at this administration period and performance level.

Appendix G
Sample from Coding Matrix

(See next page)

Olivia and Logan				Olivia and Victoria			
Conf., Time, Book Info	FEEDBACK	SCAFFOLD	STUDENT RESPONSE	Conf., Time, Book Info	FEEDBACK	SCAFFOLD	STUDENT RESPONSE
1 9:02 Library Mouse	Positive: Identifying main characters & setting, and jotting down things that were happening in the story (previous goals) "we are going to pull that over to here because you've made a habit of that now I think both of these are good things that you've already made habits of."	Questions - "what made you think that was important" / describing reread to notice illustrations "I want you to read it again and I want you to, I noticed that the illustrator in the story has a lot, a lot of details in these pictures so I'm wondering if we could get a lot of information right from these pictures. So as a reader what I even do when there are pictures in my story are this vivid, I like to look at the pictures and kind of see what the feelings and what the characters are doing in each of these things [pointing to the illustration]; Student practice: "So practice right now, with me, what's happening in this picture because you know more about the story but now let's really focus on the pictures and what the author is trying to do with that"; describing the kind of information a reader can get from the illustration (character's feelings) goal setting, coaching: Providing visual: I'm going to write really big, check out their feelings by their facial expressions, ok.	Practiced looking at the pictures, quickly at first and with more prompting he looked at the images longer and began pointing out things he saw, writing main character of story on post-it	1 10:16 Great Kapok Tree	Positive: getting ready to read and making connections: "go back through the entire story, look at the back, look at the front and think about the things you can kind of connect with the story"/ making text-to-text connections; making connections with the story before even reading it.	Thinking about multiple characters and the problem/solution: "how multiple characters are going to help with the problem and any of the ways they solve the problem. let's take a look at all the different characters, the main character and the secondary characters let's take a look at the role they take in the story to help with the problem and solution"	Answers questions and able to articulate the goal: They tell him to stop cutting down the tree and just at the end the child and the animals made a, told him to stop that and it affects the world and it leaves animals homeless and you leave.

2 8:02 Stink and the Shark Sleepover (M)	Positive: "looking at the characters' feelings and how they've changed. I think you've made that a habit" Describing what he did, why habit: "You told me how Stink's character was happy, and then he got angry, so I am going to move this over into your habit column"	asking questions about connections to get to character feelings; encouraging jotting so student can refresh memory and easily locate info (p. 6)	Identifying author's purpose, identifying text features. Struggled to find problem and solution but then determined he may not have read enough of the text	2 9:54 Great Kapok Tree and Magic Treehouse	Following-up on previous goal, positive, describing: "right, I think you did an excellent job. There are a lot of different animals in this story. I like how you, have zoomed in to the animals that were close to the main character and how you referred back to the dialogue, and it does look, paying close attention to the illustration that this is probably the animal that is whispering in his ear because it does in the text show the dialogue, the quotation marks / retelling: "You don't have post-it notes in here but you recall so much from the stories. Which is excellent. It is hard to do as a grown-up reader. You are remembering and really you just have your post-it as a book mark so all of this, you are remembering so much of the story which means you are really understanding the story"?	Clarifying questions; asking questions about character traits of Jack and Annie	Retelling, identifying character traits, providing evidence of character traits (when prompted); compared characters
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3 7:55 Betcha (I)	Positive: fluency (paying attention to punctuation and rereading) positive: looking at illustrations on the cover to see what text is about.	Pointing things out in the illustration and asking "What else do you notice on this page?" also asking about who is telling the story by looking at the illustrations, reminder: even though we want to get right to reading the text, make sure that we look at the details in the illustrations because it told us a lot, especially who was telling us about the estimating at Planet Toys and some of the characters and how they think and you can get a lot by looking at their faces and their character traits. Ok, because it will probably not just come out and tell you how they are feeling. I'm going to put this one in your reading folder. I am going to move these habits that we have on the back of your reading goal sheet so we can make room for new habits. I am going to leave problem and solution here and I am also going to make a new goal for us. To make sure you stop and really check out those illustrations and get all those details.	Describing illustrations, identifying how the illustrations connect to the words read	3 7:37 Magic Treeho use Tiger at Twilight (M	Positive description: looking at the illustrations toward the end of the book to make your predictions and using text features (back blurb)	Supporting word solving (p. 7), asking clarifying questions, asking her to make predictions	Retold text, highlighted specifics from illustrations and text features (back blurb), made a prediction
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Appendix H
Daily Schedules

Classroom Schedule Example 1 – Olivia

8:45 – Arrival and Morning Work
8:50 – Reading Workshop (including independent reading time and teacher-student reading conferences)
9:50 – Writing Workshop
10:30 – Special Area Classes (Music, Art, PE, Technology)
11:20 – Lunch
11:45 – Math Workshop
1:15 – Word Work
1:40 – Read Aloud
1:45 – Enrichment/Remediation/Small group instruction
2:10 – Social Studies/Science
2:50 – Recess
3:20 – Interactive Read Aloud
3:45 – Dismissal

Classroom Schedule Example 2 – Sophia

8:45 – Arrival/School News Broadcast
8:50 – Interactive Read Aloud
9:15 – Word Work
9:40 – Special Area Classes (Music, Art, PE, Technology)
10:25 – Reading Workshop (including independent reading time and teacher-student reading conferences)
11:35 – Writing Workshop
12:25 – Lunch
12:50 – Math
2:10 – Enrichment/Remediation/Small group instruction
2:30 – Physical Activity
3:00 – Science
3:45 – Dismissal

Appendix I
Reading Level Descriptors from District's Literacy Handbook
based on Literacy Continuum (Fountas & Pinnell, 2011)

Level I

At level I, readers will be processing texts that are mostly short (eight to sixteen pages) as well as some easy illustrated chapter books (forty to sixty pages) that require them to sustain attention and memory over time. They will meet some long sentences of more than ten words that contain prepositional phrases, adjectives, and clauses. They will also encounter compound sentences. They can effectively process complex sentences when required by a text. In addition to automatically recognizing a large number of words, they are using word-solving strategies for complex spelling patterns, multi-syllable words, and many words with inflectional endings, plurals, contractions, and possessives. They read many texts silently, following the text with their eyes and without pointing. In oral reading, they reflect appropriate rate, word stress, intonation, phrasing, and pausing.

Level J

At Level J, readers process a variety of texts, including short informational texts on familiar topics, short fiction texts, and longer illustrated narratives that have short chapters. They adjust their reading strategies to process not only realistic fiction and informational texts but to read very simple biographies. In fiction, characters generally do not change since the plots are relatively simple and texts are not long. Readers process an increased number of longer and more complex sentences (those with more than ten words containing prepositional phrases, adjectives, clauses, and many compound sentences). Readers are able to automatically recognize a large number of words, and can quickly apply word-solving strategies to multi-syllable words with inflectional endings, suffixes and prefixes. They can read a wide range of plurals, contractions, and possessives. In oral reading, they reflect appropriate rate, word stress, intonation, phrasing, and pausing, (recognizing and using a range of punctuation). They read silently in independent reading and while reading individually in guided reading.

Level K

At level K, readers process a wider range of genres (realistic fiction, animal fantasy, traditional literature, some simple biographies, and more informational texts). They read many illustrated chapter books (including some series books). Most fiction texts have multiple episodes related to a single plot but the demand on the readers' memory is higher than previous levels. They read about characters that change very little but are at the same time more complex; texts have multiple characters. Readers process a great deal of dialogue, some of it unassigned, and are challenged to read stories based on concepts that are distant in time and space and reflect diverse cultures. Readers solve many content-specific words and some technical words in informational texts. They automatically recognize a large number of words and quickly apply word-solving strategies to multi-syllable words with inflectional endings, and to words with suffixes and prefixes. They can read a wide range of plurals, contractions, and possessives. They read silently in independent reading, but when reading orally they demonstrate all aspects of fluent reading.

Level L

At level L, readers process easy chapter books including some series books, with more sophisticated plots and few illustrations, as well as shorter informational and fiction books. They adjust their reading to process a range of genres (realistic fiction, simple fantasy, informational texts, traditional literature, and biography, as well as some special types of texts, for example, shorter series books, very simple mysteries, and graphic texts). They understand that chapters have multiple episodes related to a single plot. They learn some new content through reading and are required to bring more prior knowledge to the process; but the content is usually accessible through the text and illustrations. At this level, readers are beginning to recognize themes across texts (friendship, courage), and they understand some abstract ideas. They see multiple perspectives

Level P

At Level P, readers can identify the characteristics of a full range of genres, including biographies on less well-known subjects and hybrid genres. They read both chapter books and shorter informational texts; also, they read special forms such as mysteries, series books, books with sequels, or short stories. Fiction narratives are straightforward but have elaborate plots and multiple characters who develop and change over time. Readers are able to understand abstract and mature themes and take on diverse perspectives and issues related to race, language, and culture. Some nonfiction texts provide information in categories on several related topics, many of which are well beyond readers' typical experience. Readers can identify and use underlying structures (description, compare and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect). They can process sentences that are complex and contain prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives. They solve new vocabulary words, some defined in the text and others unexplained. Word solving is smooth and automatic in both silent and oral reading. They can read and understand descriptive words, some complex content-specific words, and some technical words. They read silently; in oral reading, they demonstrate all aspects smooth, fluent processing with little overt problem solving.

Level Q

At level Q, readers automatically read and understand a full range of genres, including biographies on less well-known subjects and hybrid genres. They read both chapter books and shorter informational texts; also, they read special forms such as mysteries, series books, books with sequels, and short stories. Fiction narratives are straightforward but have elaborate plots and many complex characters who develop and change over time. As readers, they understand perspectives different from their own as well as setting and people far distant in time and space. They can process sentences that are complex, contain prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives, and they solve new vocabulary words, some defined in the text and others unexplained. Most reading is silent, but fluency and phrasing in oral reading are well established. Readers are challenged by many longer descriptive words and by content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and readers' tools, such as glossaries. They can take apart multi-syllable words and use a full range of word-solving skills. They read and understand texts in a variety of layouts as well as fonts and print characteristics and

Appendix J

Sample of Questions Provided by District based on mClass®: *Reading 3D™ Text Reading and Comprehension* (TRC)

First grade and early second...		Second grade...	Third through fifth...	
Levels F, G, H	Levels I, J, K	Levels L, M, N	Levels O, P, Q	Levels R, S, T, U
Draw a picture and use words to describe the setting of the story. Use details from the story in your response.	Describe a character from the story using details from the text.	How did ____ feel at the end of the story? Why? Use details from the text to support your answer.	Name a character trait that describes ____ and how that trait supports the story.	Explain the following phrase as it relates to this story...
Describe the problem in the story. Use details from the story in your answer.	Draw a picture and use words to describe the setting of the story. Use details from the story in your response.	What lesson does this story teach? Use details from the story in your answer.	Describe the meaning of the sentence from the story.	Do you consider this story a current or historical event? Use details from the text to justify your answer.
Explain how ____ solved the problem. Use information from the story to explain your answer.	Describe how ____ feels at the end of the story and why he felt that way. Use details from the story.	Identify two text features used in the text. Explain how they helped your reading.	Identify two reasons why the characters agree or disagree. State if you agree or disagree.	Identify the main idea and details from the story. Use information from the text to support your thinking.
Draw a picture and use words to show how the problem was solved. Use details from the story in your response.	What lesson did ____ learn from this story? Use details from the text to support your answer.	What might be another good title for this story? Use details from the book to support your answer.	Describe the relationship between the characters using details from the text.	Compare one character's reaction to another. Use details from the text in your response.
What do you think ____ will do next time? Use information from the text to support your thinking.	Using a picture on page ____, describe how ____ feels.	Describe the main idea of this text. Use three key details to support your answer.	Describe what the character meant when he said ____.	Explain what the author was trying to convey in the phrase _____. Explain your thinking.
Explain why ____ is a good	Describe the events at the	What was the effect when	In the story it states _____.	What is the relationship

title for this story. Use details from the book to support your answer.	end of the story that solved the problem. Use details from the story.	_____ happened? Use details from the story to explain your answer.	Explain the meaning of that phrase.	between _____ and _____? Use information from the text to support your answer.
What does _____ do that a real _____ can't do? Explain using an example from the story.	What problem does _____ need to solve. Use details from the text in your answer.	Identify the main idea of the story. Use details from the text in your answer.	Write a brief summary of the text.	Identify two character traits that describe _____. Use information from the text in your answer.
Describe how _____ and _____ were alike. Use details from the text to support your thinking.	Explain why _____ is a good title for this story. Use details from the book to support your answer	Complete the cause and effect chart. Use information from the text in your answers.	What was the author's purpose? Use details from the story in your answer.	Create another title for the story. Explain why yours is a good title using information from the text.
Describe how _____ and _____ were different. Use details from the text to support your thinking.	What words in the text help the reader understand the meaning of the word _____?			Identify three text features used in the text. Explain how they helped your reading.
What might happen if _____? Why do you think so? Use details from the story or your experiences to explain your answer.	Where did the story happen? Use details from the story in your answer.			Comment on the organization of the paragraphs. Indicate if you would change the order and why.
What did you learn about the main character? Use details from the text to support your answer.	In the section _____, how does the picture help you understand _____?			Why did the author state _____? How did that impact the story?
	What lesson does this story teach? Use details from the story in			

	your answer.			
Find and record parts of the text that show how ____ felt ____ (excited, scared).	What might have happened if ____? Why do you think so? Use details from the text or your experiences to support your answer.			

Appendix K

Sample of District Goal Sheet

Reading Goals LOG:

<p>Goal: longer books take time to read no rush choppy He</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; transform: rotate(-5deg);"> sticky notes help </div>	<p>Goal: Candy Smash series</p> <p>Good sticky notes Keep using because it is helpful in larger books. Summarizing</p>	<p>Goal: Geronimo</p> <p>Summarizing Beg to end in order</p>	<p>Goal: toward Eyes</p>
<p>Conference notes: Date: 1/26/17 Problem for Geronimo Can't get away from other character Mystery Retell story (use sticky notes to help)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MET GOAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Still Working on Goal</p>	<p>Conference notes: Date: 2/3/17 Summarizing Poem - Ever Sticky notes are good and show highlights of story picking vocabulary words wanted to keep telling me story</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MET GOAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Still Working on Goal</p>	<p>Conference notes: Date: 2/16/17 Flips back & forth Seems to jump around book to retell using sticky notes vocab - reflecting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MET GOAL <input type="checkbox"/> Still Working on Goal</p>	<p>Conference notes: Date: 2/17/17 Flashbacks edwards feelings about family brother was mad</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MET GOAL <input type="checkbox"/> Still Working on Goal</p>

Text I Read:
(Color in once read and conferred with teacher)

Informational Text	Simple Fantasy	Realistic Fiction
Traditional Literature	Biography (mostly on well-known subjects)	Simple Mysteries
Chapter Books	Informational Text	Simple Fantasy
Realistic Fiction	Simple Mysteries	Chapter Books

Readers

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