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Parental Involvement and Improved Reading

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND IMPROVED READING

Parental Involvement and Improved Reading

Abstract

This project was created as a way for parents to assist their child in improving reading ability by employing a Running Record and an audio voice recorder to engage the child in self-monitoring reading techniques. Typically, a Running Record is used by classroom and special education teachers for assessment purposes only, and parents are rarely given the opportunity to fully understand the purpose of a Running Record. The focus of this project is to explain to parents what a Running Record is, and how a Running Record can be used for reading involvement in the home.

Research has proven time and time again that reading fluency and oral language development in a child can improve dramatically when a parent has read with their child. However, although parents are often willing to assist their child in reading development, they many times do not have the strategies to properly do so. By providing parents with a technique which can be employed with ten simple instructions, parents are given the opportunity to assist their child in gaining valuable self-monitoring techniques which can be transferred to the academic setting.

The Parent Handbook of Instructions consists of the following: A letter to the parents containing valuable information; the definition of a Running Record and how it can be used for reading with their child; a clear and easy to understand chart of the definitions and symbols used for the Running Record; a list of materials and resources for the reading strategy; a concise list of ten easy-to-use instructions; and finally, a sample text and sample Running Record to be used as a reference tool.
Parental Involvement and Improved Reading

Chapter 1: Definition of Problem

Parent involvement continues to challenge practitioners engaged in school reform despite being a required component of many school improvement initiatives – from Title I schoolwide programs to federally mandated school improvement plans. And yet, the benefits of parent involvement are clear; a growing body of research shows that successful parent involvement improves not only student behavior and attendance, but also positively affects student achievement, for example, improved development in reading ability (Reading Rockets, 2011).

Successful parent involvement can be defined as the active, ongoing participation of a parent in the education of his or her child. Parents can demonstrate involvement at home in many ways, with one major example being reading with their children. Schools with involved parents engage those parents, and incorporate them into the learning process. Schools successful in engaging parents start by going beyond narrow definitions of involvement. They start with the belief that student success is a shared interest of both school and family: they envision parents as partners in the learning process, and they identify concrete ways that partnership can be activated (Reading Rockets, 2011).

Many times, parents simply do not know how to be involved in their child’s learning process. There are a variety of ways in which parents can be involved in their child’s education, one of which is providing time at home to read with their child. The benefits of parental involvement during reading were proven in a recent review of parent involvement research which found that parent-child reading activities produce a significant improvement in children’s language and reading skills from preschool through high school (Reading Rockets, 2011). In this
project, the Parent Handbook of Instructions was created to be used as a tool to provide parents with a way to engage in the development of their child’s reading ability. By providing parents with the handbook of instructions, parents are able to actively participate and take part in the improvement of their child’s education. The question has been asked, “Can children improve their reading abilities after their parents have taught them self-monitoring techniques by using a Running Record and an audio voice recorder?”

**Purpose of Project**

The purpose of this project is to provide parents with a strategy to be used to assist their child in developing self-monitoring techniques. This project has been developed with the hopes that if given a useful and practical guide, parents can help their child improve in reading by using a Running Record and audio voice recorder to develop self-monitoring techniques. The question which guides this project is, “Can children improve their reading ability after their parents have taught them self-monitoring techniques by using a Running Record and audio voice recorder?”

Research shows that while there are many methods and strategies to assist parents in tutoring their child in reading, none are identical to the parent handbook developed for this project. Generally speaking, Running Records are used in the classroom for the sole purpose of assessment, not for the purpose of training parents how to read with their child to develop self-monitoring reading skills. Based on personal experience, the guiding question has been asked as a way to solve the mystery of why Running Records are used only for the purpose of assessment, with the results shared with parents, rather than being utilized as a tool to guide parents when they spend time reading with their child. Again, based on personal experience, it seems that the Running Record is an assessment instrument only to be used by well-trained staff, instead of being a tool to be used by parents after the proper skills have been put into place.
The research previewed in this document proves that if given the opportunity and proper training, parents are extremely capable of implementing techniques which could essentially help their child become a better reader. For example, research shows that most parents are highly interested in helping with the schooling of their children, and in general, they want to cooperate with their child’s school and assist their child’s teacher in developing strong educational programs for their children. When parents get involved, not only do schools reap the benefit of improved student performance, but children also build confidence and develop reading skills which stay with them for their lifetime (Fitton & Gredler, 1996).

**Preview Literature**

After performing extensive research on the subject of parental involvement in regards to reading intervention, patterns regarding literacy and the participation of parents emerged. It became very clear there is an abundant need for parents to be directly involved in the reading development of their child. For example, a major component of the emergent literacy process – the development and maturation of oral language – occurs in the home. Because literacy learning begins in the home, not the school, instruction at school should build on the foundation for literacy learning established in the home (Faires et al., 2000). That is where the parents come in.

Parents play a major role in the life of their child, whether it be as caretakers, providers, or as tutors. According to Fitton and Gredler (1996), in order for parents to contribute in the best way possible (i.e. as tutors), parents should be taught specific techniques for reading with their children. Fitton and Gredler go on to say that although studies have demonstrated improvement in children whose parents read with them at home *without* specific training, more recent studies have shown increases in reading improvement which can be expected if parents are taught more precise methods for reading involvement with their child (1996).
Just as the parent plays a major role in the reading development of the child, so does the child himself. Learning how to self-monitor during reading is a major component in the development of literacy skills. According to Joseph and Eveleigh (2011), self-monitoring involves a two-step process of managing one’s own behavior. The first step in the process involves observing one’s own behavior, and the second step involves recording some aspect of that behavior. By providing a handbook for parents to use with their child, the goal of this project is to provide strategies which allow the parent to document the errors made during reading aloud for the child to analyze at a later time, and for the child to observe this behavior from listening to the audio voice recording being played back. Once the child is able to observe the errors made during reading, the goal is for the child to transfer that understanding into self-monitoring skills.

After performing extensive research in the area of literacy, it was determined that no other models of parental involvement directly resembled the current project. However, research shows there are similar models, and that review of those models can indeed provide beneficial examples to assist the current project. For example, SPOKES (Supporting Parents on Kids Education in Schools), provided a literacy strand which included parents as the tutors and provided training on how to use the strategy Pause Prompt Praise (PPP). With PPP, parents are trained to help children via one-to-one instruction. The goal of PPP is to increase the child’s ability to independently read texts of an appropriate level of difficulty.

Just as the goal of PPP is for the child to eventually achieve reading independence, ACT-REACT has the same goal in mind. According to author Marcia Rock (2005), the ACT-REACT strategy is a strategic self-monitoring intervention which employs a mnemonic device to represent a six-step self-monitoring strategy. According to Rock, this self-monitoring strategy was developed in an effort to help disconnected students self-manage their learning using
strategies and skills during independent seatwork activities. After conducting the necessary research, the ACT-REACT self-monitoring intervention showed the intervention to be an effective procedure for increasing productivity, because students were able to establish and monitor goals which essentially lead to improved decision-making throughout the day. Just as the goal of ACT-REACT was to help students improve decision-making, the goal of this project is to hopefully transfer those same skills in order to improve reading ability.

Because no exact models were found during the extensive research for this project, samples and results of similar methodologies have been provided instead. Three methodologies were chosen to be discussed in the Literature Review, with the decision focusing on the fact that the methodologies directly include parents as participants in the development of their child’s literacy. The goals which came out of the projects reviewed can be described as follows:

1) Assisting parents in instructional strategies can be beneficial to low-level readers; 2) Results were consistent in that improvements were seen in oral reading rates in the home setting, proving that parent tutoring is a promising intervention to improve students' reading performance; and 3) Clear qualitative gains were demonstrated in communication between parents and children during book reading.

**Preview Methodology**

The product developed for this project is a parent handbook which can be used to teach parents how to assist their child during reading development by using a Running Record and an audio voice recorder. The methodologies used to create this handbook were developed to provide parents with an effective, yet easy-to-use, method to help their child develop their reading ability. The handbook is written so it can be used in the general population with a child of any age, any grade level, or any reading ability. The handbook is also designed so it can be used with
any book or text. The handbook contains four pages to include: 1) A letter to parents explaining
the need for the handbook and how it works; 2) Definitions of what a Running Record is and
how a Running Record is used; 3) A list of clearly written instructions which outline how to
properly use the Running Record and audio voice recorder together for reading with the child;
and 4) A sample text and sample Running Record for purpose of clarification.

Page one is a letter to parents which describes the need for literacy intervention, and how
the handbook is used for literacy intervention. Page one explains that research has proven
parental involvement to be effective, but only if the parents are first trained to use the
intervention properly. Page two provides a brief definition of a Running Record, and how a
Running Record is used. Within page two, a clearly designed chart of the symbols (or markings)
used for a Running Record is also provided. The chart contains short definitions and examples of
seven reading behaviors observed from the child, and includes the markings which should be
used to label the reading behaviors. Page three of the parent handbook provides a list of the
materials needed (i.e. lined paper, a book or text, the handbook instructions, and an optional
audio voice recorder), and a description of resources of where to find an inexpensive audio voice
recorder. After the list of materials on page three, ten clear and concise instructions are given to
the parent of how the Running Record should be used to guide the child in developing self-
monitoring strategies during reading. Lastly, page four provides a sample text from the book The
Lion King, in addition to a sample of how the Running Record is used to document the reading
behavior of the child. The text and Running Record samples provide examples which match the
markings of the Running Record and include symbols to indicate the reading behavior of the
child. The samples on page four are carefully designed so the numbers on the text match the lines
on the paper, and the Running Record symbols match the reading behavior of the fictitious child.
Significance of Project

This project is significant because as far as research indicates, there are no other projects or parent handbooks similar to this. Although many other reading intervention methods have been developed which include parental involvement as a major component, methods which include the use of a Running Record and an audio voice recorder have yet to be discovered. Typically, Running Records are used as a form of assessment to indicate a child’s current reading level, and the information is shared among the parents, classroom teachers, or special educators. At the point when research was conducted for the purpose of this project, Running Records have not been viewed as reading intervention tools, but rather as assessment instruments only.

Because the development of reading proficiency in children is perhaps the highest-ranking educational objective of legislators, administrators, teachers, parents, and the community, this project not only serves as a tool to assist children in such development, but it also acts as an instrument which will enable parents to become the much-needed component in the advancement of their child’s reading skills and abilities. There is no doubt that parental involvement in their child’s literacy program is vital to the improvement of the child’s reading skills (Faires et al., 2000).

Conclusion

As the research in Chapter Two proves, parents who actively participate in their child’s literacy development play a crucial part when they are given the opportunity to apply a literacy intervention. The purpose of this project was to create a handbook for parents which could serve as a tool in order to provide parents the chance to partake in their child’s reading progress. As the research also shows in Chapter Two, no models have been found which duplicate the parent
handbook, although there are many methods which act as a model to develop parent strategies for involvement and student strategies for self-monitoring. By using the parent handbook, parents will be able to actively engage in the improvement of their child’s reading ability, and the child can increase awareness needed to develop self-monitoring strategies while reading. In the end, by helping parents assist their child in the progress and development of reading achievement, not only do the parent and child benefit, the entire community benefits, as well.

**Definitions**

**Dyad** – Pair; specifically two individuals maintaining a sociologically significant relationship (i.e. parent/child). Retrieved from [http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dyad](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dyad)

**Intervention** – Specifically reading intervention. A program, supplementary to an existing literacy curriculum, that is provided to students for the primary purpose of increasing reading levels. Such programs can be administered both in and out of the traditional classroom environment. Retrieved from [http://www.ehow.com/facts_6166835_definition-reading-intervention.html](http://www.ehow.com/facts_6166835_definition-reading-intervention.html)

**Literacy** – The ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential. Retrieved from [http://nces.ed.gov/NAAL/fr_definition.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/NAAL/fr_definition.asp)

**Manipulatives** – Items or objects used (manipulated) by the student to reinforce a lesson. Retrieved from [http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/manipulatives](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/manipulatives)

**Metacognition** – One’s knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes, or anything related to them; thinking about one’s own mental processes. Retrieved from [http://www.instructionaldesign.org/concepts/metacognition.html](http://www.instructionaldesign.org/concepts/metacognition.html)
Methodology – A body of methods and rules employed by a discipline; a particular procedure or set of procedures. Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/methodology

Parental Involvement – Any interaction between a parent and child that may contribute to the child’s development or to direct parent participation with a child’s school in the interest of the child (Fitton and Gredler, 1996).


Qualitative – A method of inquiry employed in many different academic disciplines where researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior (i.e. the why and how of decision making). Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qualitative_research

Quantitative – Refers to a type of information based in quantities or quantifiable data (objective properties) —as opposed to qualitative information which deals with apparent qualities (subjective properties). Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantitative

Running Record – A method which enables a parent or teacher to assess a child’s reading ability by marking accuracy and types of errors made while the child is reading. The Running Record provides evidence of a child’s understanding of letters, sounds, and word recognition. Retrieved from http://www.readinga-z.com/guided/runrecord.html

Treatment – The act, manner, or process of behaving toward or dealing with a person or thing (e.g. a student). In science or medicine, administration or application of remedies to a patient; therapy. Retrieved from http://www.thefreedictionary.com/treatment

T-test – Assesses whether the means of two groups are statistically different from each other. This analysis is used to compare the means of two groups. Retrieved from http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/stat_t.php
According to Faires, Nichols, and Rickelman, “the development of reading proficiency in children is perhaps the highest-ranking educational objective of legislators, administrators, teachers, parents, and the community. There is an intense interest in the development of proficient readers, and strict criticism against education for its failure to bring all students up to acceptable literacy levels. While much of the responsibility for improving reading proficiency has fallen on the shoulders of the classroom teacher, research has indicated that parental involvement in a child’s learning to read is critical” (Faires et al., 2000, p. 195).

Parental involvement can be seen in many forms, one example being parent-directed academic interventions. Parent-directed academic interventions provide opportunities to extend the learning environment beyond the school walls and academic calendar. However, children can benefit only if their parents are guided in the selection and application of appropriate reading interventions for their children (Gortmaker, Daly, McCurdy, Persampieri, & Hergenrader, 2007).

According to Reutzel and Cooter (2009), it has been said that 80% of what students learn occurs outside of school. Research has shown time and time again that children who have been read to on a daily basis before entering Kindergarten have a much stronger language base, and are far more likely to succeed in reading. Parents and other family members are often interested in helping children develop their reading abilities – if they know what to do. Thus, teachers can add great power to a child’s literacy learning program by educating the adults in their lives in reading development strategies that are proven to be effective (Reutzel & Cooter, 2009, p. 18).

Based on previous research, there is a strong chance that parents can help their children improve their reading fluency after the parents have been trained to properly use a Running
Record and audio recorder to implement the intervention. Once the parents have properly utilized the intervention to assist their children, the children can in turn learn the skills necessary to employ self-monitoring strategies which can be transferred to the classroom for developing reading ability.

When children have difficulty developing emergent literacy skills and oral language abilities, the need for intervention becomes more important than ever. By using research-based strategies which have been documented as being effective, parents and students are able to play a major role in helping the student become a better reader. Methodologies similar to that of the present article show that after parents partook in studies which utilized a variety of reading intervention strategies, studies showed that the strategies had a positive effect on improving the children’s reading ability.

**Emergent Literacy and the Need for Intervention**

In their peer-reviewed journal article titled, *Effects of Parental Involvement in Developing Competent Readers in First Grade* (2000), Faires, Nichols, and Rickelman noted the following:

Early literacy development is supported by a variety of experiences in many types of settings. A major component of the emergent literacy process – the development and maturation of oral language – occurs in the home. Research suggests that literacy learning begins in the home, not the school, and that instruction at school should build on the foundation for literacy learning established in the home. Even before entering preschool or kindergarten, children have many experiences with print that can provide the foundation for further growth in reading and writing. Children raised in environments where oral language is encouraged and where their parents foster a love for literature by
exposing them to nursery rhymes and simple stories, are provided the building blocks for becoming lifelong readers and successful learners. The concept of early literacy suggests that all children come to school with certain experiences and interests in literacy. Parents must be viewed as partners in the learning process because their role in their child’s early learning is crucial. This involvement can range from meeting the basic needs of their child to involvement in school committees and decision-making processes. All forms of involvement can motivate children’s interest in learning and facilitate the development of partnerships between parents and teachers that ultimately lead to gains in student literacy achievement. Parents and teachers who are eager to foster growth of early literacy skills need to be encouraged to challenge children by exposing them to varied experiences with print (p. 196).

The context of shared book reading is increasingly gaining attention as a powerful context for language learning. Reading books together may facilitate oral language development, as well as develop emergent literacy skills. Experimental research has provided converging evidence for the potential role of shared book reading as a powerful technique for facilitating oral language development. A study by B.D. DeBaryshe in 1993 found that picture book reading experience was significantly correlated with language development, especially receptive language development, in a group of 2-year-olds (Dale, Crain-Thoreson, Notari-Syverson, & Cole, 1996, pp. 214-215).

Research has indicated a significant positive relationship between the child’s attitude toward reading, based on home experiences, and achievement in reading in the schools. Parents’ reading to their child is one practice that has shown to be significantly related to this improvement. Specifically, this practice has shown to improve children’s receptive and
expressive vocabulary, literal and inferential comprehensive skills, sentence length, letter and symbol recognition, basic conceptual development, extension, and expansion, and general interest in books (Faires et al., 2000).

According to Dale et al. (1996), systematic changes occur more in parental language during book reading as compared to other conversational contexts. Parents provide more complex and sophisticated language during story time than during caretaking or free play. Parents tend to emphasize the informational function of language and engage in vocabulary teaching while reading aloud. Shared book reading facilitates the establishment of joint attention by parent and child, a context that aids language development. Having a clear, shared topic makes it easier, for example, for parents to understand and respond appropriately to their children's statements and questions, and responding to the child's topic facilitates language development. Because parents may not automatically adopt a facilitative style of book reading, an intervention focused on joint book reading may be needed, appropriate, and effective in helping young children with language or reading impairments (Dale et al., 1996, pp. 214-215).

In their peer-reviewed journal article, Taverne and Sheridan (1995) describe a number of studies which conclude that child engagement in activities such as print awareness, self-monitoring when recalling a story (i.e., metacognition), and modeling of adult behaviors with printed materials were important contributors to emergent literacy. Parent-child interactions appear to be a major stimulus to the development of early reading skills. Supportive behavioral accommodations on the part of adults, such as matching their behaviors and verbalizations to their child's abilities, have been translated into strategies of interactive teaching that stress the reciprocal and interpersonal nature of learning (Taverne & Sheridan, 1995, pp. 50-51).
Another parent–child activity that has received attention is parents listening to their children read. Senechal and Young (2008) describe two reviews of studies that examine the positive effect of parents listening to their child read. One review included studies in which schools sent books home along with general information about how to encourage children to read, in addition to specific techniques for how parents could coach their children during reading. In the review, evidence showed that providing parents with simple, but specific, techniques illustrated greater benefits for children at risk of reading failure, compared to providing parents with general information. Another review examined studies that used a specific technique for listening to children read. This technique, called paired reading, is one where the parent reads along with the child, providing corrective feedback and praise, until the child feels sufficiently confident to read alone. In the latter review, positive effects were again reported (Senechal & Young, 2008, pp. 889-890).

Faires et al. (2000) state that parents and teachers who are eager to promote growth of early literacy skills need to be encouraged to challenge children by exposing them to a variety of experiences with print. Many educators offer parents hands-on opportunities to become actively involved in the literacy programs of their child’s school. However, large numbers of parents, particularly those in low-income, urban environments, are not being actively recruited or actively engaged in school-wide literacy efforts. This distancing of low-income families from the schools is frequently perceived by educators to be a lack of parental interest. However, according to Faires et al., evidence has shown that these parents often make a consistent effort to help their children with homework, and are willing to work hard to support their children’s reading and writing development. Research suggests that low-income families, like all other families, desire for their children to succeed in school. Data from the most economically depressed communities
reveal that low income parents want their children to succeed, and that they need the school’s help to know what to do with their children at each grade level (Faires et al., 2000).

**The Role of the Parent as Tutor**

Recent research has focused on classroom-based interventions, in addition to classroom-based interventions combined with parent training and home support (Sylva, Scott, Totsika, Ereky-Stevens, and Crook, 2008). According to Sylva et al. (2008), results of an evaluation of Head Start children enrolled in 32 different Head Start Centers demonstrated that the children’s home environment was a stronger predictor of language development than the quality of the Head Start Center in which they were enrolled. In their peer-reviewed journal article, Sylva et al. (2008) suggest that the home environment can be the most powerful platform because dialogic (shared) reading targets expressive language skills through the use of probing, practice, teaching, feedback, and repetition. Because this intervention takes place in a one-on-one setting rather than a small group setting, parents’ use of questions and feedback can be tailored more suitably to each child and situation (2008).

The research-based option to involve parents more directly in the education of their children is growing worldwide. According to Fitton and Gredler (1996), research supports the involvement of parents in children’s education. Parental involvement has been defined as “any interaction between a parent and child that may contribute to the child’s development or to direct parent participation with a child’s school in the interest of the child.” As stated above, research shows that most parents are highly interested in helping with the schooling of their children, and in general, they want to cooperate with their child’s school and assist their child’s teacher in developing strong educational programs for their children. When parents get involved, schools
reap the benefit of improved student performance with minimal time demands on school personnel (1996).

In their peer-reviewed journal article titled, *Parental Involvement in Reading Remediation with Young Children* (1996), Fitton and Gredler discuss a study conducted by Tizard, Schofield, and Hewison in 1982 which included 240 children between the ages of six and eight. According to Fitton and Gredler, half of these students had originally experienced increased parent involvement, and half had received extra reading help from a reading specialist within a small group format. At the three-year review, the benefits of parent involvement were still apparent. These students were reading above the national average and the proportion of low-end readers was reduced compared to the national proportions. However, students who had read with the specialist in groups had still made no significant gains over their peers in the control group. This follow-up study suggests that parental involvement can improve student performance more efficiently and effectively than extra small group reading time at school (1996).

Parents noted that they believed their participation in their child’s schooling was important, but that they considered their role to be more of a supportive one, such as checking homework, rather than an active teaching role (Fitton & Gredler, 1996). Although half the teachers said they sent instructions home, the parents felt under-supported because they did not have enough guidance on how to read to their children. Clearly, these parents want to be involved in their children’s education, but do not feel confident that they can play an active role. According to Fitton and Gredler (1996), although studies have demonstrated improvement in children whose parents read with them at home without specific training, more recent studies have shown increases in rates of reading progress which can be expected if parents are taught more precise instructional methods that go beyond the provision of increased opportunities to
practice enhanced interest and reinforcement. In order for parents to contribute optimally, they should be taught specific techniques for reading with their children (1996).

Based on studies reviewed in detail in their peer-reviewed journal article, Fitton and Gredler (1996) have determined that the above research points toward three key conclusions. First, reading at home has benefits for the child’s school performance. Second, parents are invaluable components in children’s learning. Finally, parents are more helpful tutors if they have specific guidelines to follow when reading to their children. Given these clear messages regarding home-based reading programs, schools must be prepared to employ a systematic approach to including parents in reading instruction (1996).

**The Role of the Student as Self Monitor**

According to Rhodes and Shanklin (1993), the students themselves, their parents, and other individuals who interact with students may all see aspects of a student’s literacy that teachers don’t see or see in a different light. Their perspectives on students’ literacy development, the literacy environment, and instruction are also helpful in gaining a more complete and richer understanding of students as literacy users (1993).

Rhodes and Shanklin (1993) go on to further state that involving students in self-assessments can have many benefits. When students are asked to assess their own progress, they are challenged to reflect on the strategies they use, as well as the strategies good readers use. As part of this metacognitive self-assessment, students are often able to clarify the reasons behind their reading behaviors, which can in turn help teachers make decisions regarding how to assist students in their literacy development. Self-assessment encourages students to monitor their own efforts in implementing new literacy behaviors, and to set their own goals in becoming better
readers. When students can see their own progress, their self-esteem increases, in addition to their level of confidence in believing they can become proficient readers (1993).

In their journal article titled, *A Review of the Effects of Self-Monitoring on Reading Performance of Students with Disabilities* (2011), Joseph and Eveleigh define self-monitoring as being classified as one of the most common types of self-management interventions among others, such as self-evaluation, self-instruction, goal setting, and strategy instruction. Specifically, self-monitoring involves a two-step process of managing one’s own behavior. The first step in the process involves observing one’s own behavior, and the second step involves recording some aspect of that behavior. Typically, the behavior that is observed is one that has been targeted by either the students themselves or their teacher. When students exhibit a particular behavior, they record its occurrence on a sheet or chart. When students realize that the behavior has occurred, they record it in some manner, such as on a chart with rows and columns. When students self-record their behavior, they are in a better position to evaluate their goals, possibly set new goals, and make changes in their behavior. Furthermore, having students self-record their behaviors helps teachers determine which students are engaging in self-monitoring activities. Stated another way, teachers can account for students’ self-monitoring behaviors by gathering and examining students’ self-recordings of their behavior (2011).

According to Schwartz (1997), monitoring strategies involve checking one's attempts to coordinate the variety of cues found in texts. These monitoring strategies develop gradually, often over a period of years, and play a critical role in learning to read. Self-correction is an observable behavior from which we can infer that the reader has engaged in monitoring and searching strategies. Self-correction means that the reader has used some cues from the text to generate an attempt, then either immediately, or after reading on in the text, the student monitors
a conflict among the cues. If the print cues generate an accurate response, a skilled reader usually
notices that this does not fit the meaning. In a normal text, monitoring an error would lead the
reader to search for additional cues to resolve the conflict. If this effort is completely successful,
an error would be replaced with an accurate response, or self-correction. It is more important to
promote the development of monitoring strategies in beginning readers than to stress highly
accurate responding (1997).

Many of the early studies examining the effectiveness of self-monitoring focus on
increasing on-task behaviors. Generally, findings from those early studies revealed that students’
engagement in academic tasks improved when students recorded the occurrence or non-
ocurrence of their on-task behaviors. According to Rhodes and Shanklin (1993), recording data
involves students in understanding the process of reading and viewing themselves critically.
Students can benefit from looking carefully at what they do and how they do it. If students can
learn to observe themselves, they can learn how to change the ways they read in increasingly
flexible and effective ways (1993).

Reading is a fundamental academic behavior that students are expected to engage in
across multiple contexts for the purposes of obtaining information from text. Findings from
earlier studies that examined the effects of self-monitoring on reading performance revealed that
when students engage in self-monitoring behaviors, they are more likely to engage in reading
behavior and complete reading assignments, reduce the need for teacher assistance, and increase
their academic performance (Joseph & Eveleigh, 2011).
Model Interventions for Improving Reading Fluency

SPOKES – Supporting Parents on Kids Education in Schools

In their peer-reviewed journal article titled, *Training Parents to Help Their Children Read: A Randomized Control Trial* (2008), Sylva et al. give a complete description of the SPOKES program, including details of the Pause Prompt Praise (PPP) approach to reading.

Sylva et al. states the following:

The SPOKES intervention was designed to address both the behavioral and literacy problems of children at the start of primary school, using behaviorally based techniques combined with a more cognitive literacy program. Emotional understanding and support of the parents were also important. The intervention was delivered between 2001 and 2002, and extended over the course of three terms. In the first term, parents were offered 12 sessions on behavior management; in the second term, 10 sessions of the literacy program; and in the third term, 6 sessions combining elements from both. Each session lasted approximately 2.5 hours. The structure of both elements of the program was similar, combining center training with home visits. Detailed manuals and videotapes of both programs were created to facilitate replicability and a number of professionals have already been trained to deliver the program around the UK. (p. 438)

According to Sylva et al. (2008), the program has been independently replicated in the UK in a clinical context, where children ages three to eight were referred for problems of anti-social behavior. It was found that after an average attendance of nine group sessions, parents reported significantly fewer behavior problems compared with the waiting-list group. In the SPOKES program reported here, the group sessions followed a structure similar to the Webster-
Stratton program, including work with videos, role play, homework, and structured activities (2008).

The literacy strand of this intervention was based on the Pause Prompt Praise (PPP) approach to reading as developed by McNaughton, Glynn, & Robinson in 1987 (Sylva et al., 2008). The PPP was initially developed in New Zealand during the 1970s as a way to train parents as tutors, and was then extended to a range of other contexts and settings. Parents or peers are trained to help school-age children below expected progress levels via one-to-one instruction. The goal is to increase the child’s ability to independently read texts of an appropriate level of difficulty. The program has been replicated in many countries, including the UK, demonstrating significant gains in reading age for every month of training. It has been suggested that parent-training programs such as the PPP and Paired Reading, can improve the reading abilities of poor readers in a more effective way than parent listening programs (2008).

The PPP program requires the adult to pause the reading after an error, prompt the child, and praise the reading behavior. One of the main principles is that, when a child encounters an unknown word, the parent pauses for five seconds, thus giving the child the opportunity to work it out on his/her own. If the child does not succeed, the parent then gives specific prompts which are designed to help the child find the correct meaning of the word, or decoding prompts which are designed to help the child decode the sounds in the word. Also during the literacy sessions, parents were encouraged to praise the child by acknowledging his or her efforts and being specific in the praise that they give, e.g. “Well done!” To learn and practice these PPP techniques, parents were shown videotaped reading sessions, and took part in role play and discussions. In addition, parents received feedback on their use of the PPP techniques when reading with their child. This was done on the basis of audio records they made of their reading
sessions with their child at home along with observation visits to the home by the tutor (Sylva et al., 2008).

To summarize, the SPOKES intervention offered parents an innovative program which combined behavior management and literacy training. The SPOKES program was innovative because the approach was preventive; it took place in an urban community of children with multiple high-risk factors (as identified by screening); randomization was done at the individual level; intervention staff were supervised weekly to ensure high fidelity to the program; and the intervention was delivered to parents by trained group leaders with backgrounds in clinical or educational interventions (Sylva et al., 2008).

**ACT-REACT**

In her peer-reviewed journal article titled, *Use of Strategic Self-Monitoring to Enhance Academic Engagement, Productivity, and Accuracy of Students with and without Exceptionalities* (2005), author Marcia Rock describes the ACT-REACT strategy for self-monitoring intervention. The ACT-REACT strategy is a strategic self-monitoring intervention which employs a mnemonic device to represent a six-step self-monitoring strategy. The steps are as follows: 1) Articulate your goals; 2) Create a work plan; 3) Take pictures; 4) Reflect using self-talk; 5) Evaluate your progress, and 6) ACT again. According to Rock, this self-monitoring strategy was developed based on a thorough review of the literature in an effort to help chronically disengaged students self-manage their learning using critical strategies and skills during independent seatwork activities. Academic goal orientation elements are embedded into the ACT-REACT self-monitoring process to promote self-monitoring performance. Findings indicate ACT-REACT is a vigorous self-monitoring strategy used to enhance academic
engagement and productivity, while maintaining the accuracy of students with differing exceptionality labels in general education classrooms (2005).

Overall, research performed using the ACT-REACT self-monitoring intervention showed the intervention was an effective procedure for increasing academic engagement and productivity, as well as for maintaining accuracy in students with and without exceptionalities in inclusive classrooms. Students using ACT-REACT established and measured their self-monitoring goals, thereby exercising choice and executing decision-making skills each day (Rock, 2005).

Strategies to Assist Parents in Supporting School Reading Programs

In their peer-reviewed journal article, Faires et al. (2000) describe how Reutzel and Cooter suggest that in order to train parents in effective tutoring strategies, teachers need to conduct periodic seminars to introduce effective strategies used in classroom reading instruction. Evening sessions, open houses, and classroom newsletters are all effective ways to inform parents about how their children learn to read and write. Faires et al. (2000) go on to suggest several ideas for supporting school reading programs at home to include encouraging parents to work with their children in keeping a family journal; encouraging parents to make audio or videotapes of their children’s reading; encouraging parents with young children to obtain wordless picture books; sending home activities for parents and children to complete with certain books that they are reading in the classroom; sending home holiday reading and writing projects that extend the classroom reading and writing program; and inviting parents to read books to or with the class (2000).

According to Frey and Fisher (2007), no matter where a child is in regards to their reading ability, parents can use the following tips to help their child in their journey to becoming
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND IMPROVED READING

a better reader: 1) Talk to the child’s teacher about reading instruction. The teacher may have suggestions for good books, reading games and activities. If your child is struggling with reading, ask what supports might help your child. 2) Read in front of your child. This could include letters, newspapers, magazine, e-mail messages, etc. Studies have shown that children who see family members read become better readers themselves. It is important for your child to see that reading is important and fun. 3) Read to your child. All children benefit from listening to a parent reading out loud. Not only is it a great bonding activity, but it teaches concepts about letter shapes and sounds, words, grammar, books and print. 4) Encourage your child to read to you. Let your child read a character’s name or a simple word every time you point to it. Listening to your child read builds your child’s confidence and desire to read. 5) Talk to your child about reading. When reading a book together, have your child tell you about their favorite character or ask what they think is going to happen next. Tell them what you liked about a story, or how it reminds you of something in your own life. By doing so, you are helping your child build comprehension skills which can also be used in the classroom. 6) Find the best books for your child. Keep your child’s age, interests, and experiences in mind when choosing books. Ask a librarian for book ideas. 7) Build a library of favorite books. Children benefit from reading and re-reading books. Having a library of your own is important, and can be done by buying inexpensive books at garage sales, used bookstores, discount stores, or on the internet. 8) Play games and activities that support reading. Games and activities make reading fun. Use the internet to search for reading games and activities online. And finally, Frey and Fisher emphasize that parents should always enjoy the reading journey with their child. As a parent, parents are the first teacher and can set the course for success to ensure their child becomes a strong and accomplished reader (Frey and Fisher, 2007, pp. 36-37).
Samples and Results of Similar Methodologies

Faires, Nichols and Rickelman, 2000

In a study conducted by Faires et al. (2000), eight students from a first-grade urban classroom in a major city in the Southeastern United States were chosen to participate with their parents. Based on the results of a mid-year running record assessment required by the school district to assess students’ word recognition skills, the eight students were identified as reading below grade level. Four parents expressed interest in taking part in this study. The four children of these interested parents became the experimental group for this study to include Rhonda, Mark, Tonya, and Mike (all names have been changed). Each of the students was assessed as reading below grade-level expectations. The remaining four students, who shared similar demographic backgrounds and reading levels with the experimental group, were selected as the control group in order to compare progress obtained in reading during the treatment period that could have been attributed to classroom instruction rather than parent interactions (2000).

As described by Faires et al. (2000), the parents were trained to conduct the components of the home lessons during two 45-minute training sessions. During the first session, the parents were introduced to the Reading Recovery model. They learned the components of the lesson and basic procedures. The classroom teacher modeled a sample lesson. Components of a sample lesson included the following activities: **Reread two or more familiar books** – The goal is to have the child read books with approximately 90% accuracy. The child selects at least two familiar books to read, and the parent interacts with the child in a noncritical way, supporting the effective strategies that the child is using. **Letter identification** – Magnetic letters are used on a magnetic board to construct words and engage in word analysis. This activity may occur at various times in the lesson as the child writes words in his or her writing book, or as he or she
completes reading a book. Write a sentence or story - The child dictates or writes a sentence or short story. Unknown words are attempted with the help of the parent. The child learns to analyze words and make links between sounds and letters. Cut-up story - After the sentence or short story is written, the parent quickly writes it on a sentence strip and then cuts the words apart in order to reassemble. This activity provides the child the opportunity to search, check, and take note of visual information. New book – During each lesson, a new book is introduced. In the introduction, the parent and the child look at and talk about the pictures in the book. This oral language practice provides the child with the opportunity to become familiar with the pattern of the book. The child then reads the book. Other (optional) - An optional activity such as describing and/or drawing the setting, characters, etc., might be incorporated into the lesson (2000).

According to Faires et al. (2000), parents were also trained to incorporate the Helping Hand strategy to aid their children in determining unfamiliar words. This strategy was modeled in the sample lesson. The Helping Hand strategy consists of the following actions: Think about the story; Look at the story; Go back and read it again; Get your mouth ready for the beginning sound; Make a guess and check it. The second training session was conducted individually with the parent and the child. The teacher modeled a complete lesson with the child while the parent observed, and time was allowed to answer questions and for the parent to model components of the lesson for the teacher. Activities were referred to as “Books in Bags,” which contained lesson plans, books, manipulatives, etc., and were placed in plastic bags for the students to take home three times a week (2000).

During the first session, the four parents were trained to implement a reading lesson and to incorporate the strategies of the Helping Hand. During the second session, a Reading
Recovery lesson was modeled. The parents observed the lesson and had the opportunity to practice the lesson and to ask questions. At the conclusion of the five weeks, each participant in the experimental and control groups was given another running record assessment. Pre- and post-reading levels of the target and control groups were compared using a simple t-test. The teacher used the t-test results, along with the reflections in the teacher journal, to determine if parental training and involvement in the teaching of reading lessons significantly increased first-grade students’ reading levels (Faires et al., 2000).

According to Faires et al. (2000), results from the running record were determined using the above-mentioned independent t-test by examining effect size which stated that no difference was indicated between the control and experimental group for the pretest and the posttest scores. Analysis using a dependent t-test reflected that there was not a significant improvement from the pretest to the posttest for the control group, yet there was a significant level of improvement for the experimental group. This analysis indicates that a significant difference occurred in the amount of growth in reading levels for students receiving treatment. The average control-group improvement was two points from the pretest to the posttest, while the increase for the experimental group was more than twice that (i.e., 4.5 points). Mike’s reading ability increased from Level 6 to Level 8. Mark’s reading ability increased three levels from Level 8 to Level 11. Rhonda’s reading increased from Level 4 to Level 8, and Tonya made the greatest growth with her reading ability increasing a total of seven levels from Level 8 to Level 15 (2000).

As witnessed from the results of their study, Faires et al. (2000) explain how the results of this study suggest that parental training and involvement in teaching reading lessons and strategies can increase first grade students’ reading levels. The students who received extra help from their parents significantly increased their reading level when compared to the students who
did not receive additional help at home. Results of this study support the research that suggests that when parents are given the skills and opportunities to help their children academically, they can become active and resourceful. For example, during the first conference with Mark’s dad earlier in the school year, it was apparent that he recognized Mark’s reading weaknesses. However, he did not know how to help him. During the training session, Mark’s dad remarked that he really did not understand the strategies until he observed them being demonstrated (2000).

Based on the results of this study, Faires et al. (2000) suggest that while planning the reading curriculum for first-grade students, it could be advantageous to plan a training program for interested parents to assist with home reading instruction. Assisting parents in instructional strategies such as those mentioned in “Books in Bags” can be beneficial to low-level readers. Additional training for parents could be scheduled as needed. It is important to insure that parents are confident in their ability to work with their child in the area of literacy to help foster successful first-grade readers (2000).

Hook and DuPaul, 1999

For the purpose of their study, four children, three in grade 2 (all age 7) and one in grade 3 (age 8), participated in the study conducted by Hook and DuPaul (1999). Three of the four children (Joey, Susan, and Thomas) attended the local public school district, which was a county-wide system located in the coastal area of the southeastern United States. The fourth student (Scott) attended a private Christian school within the county. The three participants who attended public school were being instructed in the Heath reading series, and the teachers described instruction as being a combination of whole language and phonics-based instruction. The fourth participant was being instructed through the Bob Jones (BJU) Curriculum and with
Dolch word lists. Students exhibited difficulties in the subject of reading as defined by an average grade of 70% or below, which was determined by his or her teacher. After further assessment, students who were reading below instructional level as defined by Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) probes (i.e., less than 40 words correct per minute for grade 2 or less than 70 words per minute for grade 3) were included (Hook & DuPaul, 1999).

According to Hook et al. (1999), the parent tutoring procedure described in this study was implemented in the participants' homes. Training was provided for the parents and students in the home or at school, and data were collected on reading performance in the students' homes and classrooms. The material upon which the students were tutored was the same story (or stories) being covered in school that week. At the end of each day, teachers completed a home/school communication form (which included the name of the story being read in class as well as any other relevant comments), and sent it home with the student with a copy of the passage currently being read in class. Parents were provided with a tape recorder and audiotapes, and tutoring sessions were taped for the purpose of random treatment integrity checks. Each tutoring session included time to warm up, meaning that parent and child had a few minutes to discuss events of the day or other topics before starting the formal tutoring procedure (1999).

The tutoring session began when the parent marked a starting point in the book and set a timer for 5 minutes. Students began reading orally and parents intervened when the child made one of the following errors: Substituted one word for another; omitted a word in the printed material; or hesitated longer than 4 seconds during reading. The parent used an error correction procedure that consisted of pointing to the place of error, correctly stating the error word, having the child pronounce the error word, and directing the child to reread the sentence correctly. The
parents also were instructed to praise their children when they correctly read an entire sentence that previously contained one or more errors (Hook et al., 1999).

After tutoring for 5 minutes, the parent marked the book to indicate the farthest point of progress. Children were directed to return to the beginning of the passage and continue reading between the beginning and the end marks until the conclusion of the 10-minute tutoring session. This provided an opportunity for repetition and increased practice on that particular section of the passage. Parents then instructed the child to read from the beginning, without error correction, and timed them for one minute. These were referred to as Parent Checks, and were used to provide oral reading rates. Passages were scored at a later time by the first author. Parents completed and returned the home/school communication form to the teacher. At the conclusion of the session, the parent and child spent a few minutes to cool down and talk about the tutoring or other topics (Hook et al., 1999).

According to Hook et al. (1999), results of the present study were consistent in that improvements were seen in oral reading rates on tutored stories in the home setting. Parent tutoring is a promising intervention to improve students' reading performance, although more research is needed on the generalization of improvements to school performance, the relationship between student and family characteristics to success of the procedure, and optimal length of time for tutoring to be implemented (i.e., number of sessions per week and number of weeks in intervention phase). The intervention's focus upon repeated practice, immediate reinforcement, and parental feedback suggests it may be well-suited for students who have difficulty in reading (1999).
**Senechal and Young, 2008**

In order to conduct their study, Senechal and Young (2008) chose subjects consisting of six mother/child dyads who were recruited from low-income, urban neighborhood schools. All dyads were enrolled in the school district's *Even Start*, an early intervention and literacy program designed for educationally at-risk families. A defining characteristic of *Even Start* families was that parents had not completed a North American high school degree. Norm-referenced parent reading ability was assessed using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), and the typical reading ability of the parents chosen was approximately fourth grade (2008).

According to Senechal and Young (2008), the specific intervention goal of this study was to increase interactive book reading in low-literacy homes. The primary research questions included: a) Will parent-training in interactive book reading techniques result in increased quantity and quality of reading interactions between parent and child? b) Will target children's measures of receptive vocabulary increase following the practice of interactive book reading? and c) Will parents consider skills training acceptable and effective? This study demonstrates the use of a structured parent-training model for at-risk families. It follows recommendations for intervention research by including outcome measures for treatment acceptability and integrity of implementation. Likewise, the study design includes a follow-up condition to determine maintenance effects (2008).

As defined by Senechal and Young (2008), interactive book reading is a parent-child activity during which a parent a) examines a storybook and points out its main parts, b) labels and discusses picture content, c) reads aloud the story to the child, and d) pauses to question the child about his or her understanding. Likewise, the parent might engage the child in discussion about experiences the book brings to mind, or possibly school-related concepts such as colors,
shapes, and numbers. During each reading of a book, the parent was to teach identification of book components (author, title, and story theme), in addition to encouraging child identification of print characteristics. Specific target behaviors were developed based upon descriptive studies of preschool children's emergent literacy skills (2008).

According to Senechal and Young (2008), five of six subjects (83%) reported treatment gains in both number of days read, and number of minutes engaged in interactive book reading. The average increase across subjects was 1.93 days per week, and 54 minutes per week. Based on analysis of the data, Senechal and Young determined that four of six subjects exhibited significant changes in level with the implementation of treatment, and the same four subjects demonstrated a treatment effect rather immediately with the onset of treatment (2008).

During treatment, five of the six parents improved in regularity of interactive book reading occurring at home, as indicated by parent self-reports. Consistent with individual parent goals, number of days read per subject hovered around three days per week. Likewise, inspection of Parent Logs revealed a trend towards targeting a regular time and place for reading (i.e., establishing a pattern). Based on self-report data, four subjects also demonstrated a statistically significant increase in the amount of time spent reading in treatment sessions. For four of six subjects, total minutes read per week increased immediately with the onset of treatment. Interactive book reading data indicate that the strategies were easily understood by subjects and readily implemented at home. Across all subjects, a strong immediacy effect with onset of treatment was noted, as demonstrated by the occurrence of codes in reading transcriptions (Senechal & Young, 2008).

Reading transcriptions demonstrated clear qualitative gains in responsive communication between parents and children during book reading. Before treatment, parents tended to start with
the first line of text and read through the story, largely ignoring children's comments about the book. During treatment, the parents made use of the book to structure verbal interaction and exchange of ideas with their children. Based upon transcription statements, it appeared all dyads demonstrated improvement in maternal ability to structure a learning activity, including obtaining children's cooperation and sustained focus for the book at hand (Senechal & Young, 2008).

During a session held approximately three months following intervention, Senechal and Young (2008) reported gains in child subjects' Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R) scores. Five of the six subjects scored within the average range or better at follow up. Before treatment, only one subject scored within the average range on this measure, and all other subjects scored in the below-average range or below. This is contrasted to no gains in PPVT-R scores between administrations six months prior to the study and at pretest for three subjects. A study conducted in 1988 reported that children attending Head Start programs were observed to make average increases on the PPVT-R of up to 16 points, and results for the reading intervention presented in this study mirror such findings (2008).

**Conclusion**

According to Senechal & Young (2008), the interventions, strategies and methods included in this report (SPOKES, ACT-REACT, Reading Recovery, Helping Hand and parent strategies) “suggest that training parents to tutor their children using specific literacy activities can have a large effect on children’s reading performance. The global effectiveness of parent tutoring has been demonstrated in this review, and the results from a sample of studies have proven that parent tutoring can make a vast difference in the improvement of reading abilities in children. Indeed, encouraging and training parents to listen to their children read books can be
effective in promoting reading acquisition” (2008). By training parents to participate in shared book reading activities with their children, children are able to acquire oral languages skills which are crucial in the development of emergent literacy.

In evaluating the success of a school’s literacy program, the sense of responsibility for reading and writing improvement needs to be elevated to the level of the community, and not be the sole responsibility of the school and the classroom teacher. It is important to reiterate the crucial role of parents as tutors, as well as students as self monitors, in the development of literacy. Research indicates that parent involvement positively affects children’s development and education in ways that are insurmountable. Only when goals for improved literacy are accomplished, can schools truly become communities of proficient readers and writers (Faires et al., 2000).
Parental Involvement and Improved Reading

Chapter 3: Project Methodology

For the purpose of this project, a question was asked: Can children improve their reading ability after their parents have taught them self-monitoring techniques with the use of a Running Record and an audio voice recorder? According to Reutzel and Cooter (2009), “research has shown time and time again that children who have been read to on a daily basis have a much stronger language base, and are far more likely to succeed in reading. Parents and other family members are often interested in helping children develop their reading abilities – if they know what to do. Thus, teachers can add great power to a child’s literacy learning program by educating the adults in their lives in reading development strategies that are proven to be effective” (Reutzel & Cooter, 2009, p. 18).

Based on this research, and on the desire to help children in the process of becoming better readers, a handbook was created which provides the steps necessary for parents to use a Running Record to help their child develop self-monitoring techniques while reading. The handbook was designed to include a letter to the parents, the definition of and use for a Running Record, symbols used in a Running Record, materials needed, resources for obtaining an audio voice recorder, and clear instructions with a sample text and sample Running Record. The handbook was created in a way that it can be used for any age, grade, or reading level, and can be used with any text.

Design

In order to answer the above-mentioned question explicitly, a handbook was designed to be used by parents who wish to help their children improve their reading ability and increase their self-monitoring techniques with the use of a Running Record and an audio voice recorder.
The development of the handbook for parents contained four focus areas: 1) To explain in a letter to parents the need for the handbook and how it works; 2) To teach parents what a Running Record is and how a Running Record is used; 3) To give parents a list of clearly written instructions which outline how to properly use the Running Record and audio voice recorder together for reading with their child; and 4) To provide parents with a sample text and sample Running Record for purpose of clarification.

If asked, most parents today would state that they are busier than ever between working and caring for their family. With that in mind, this handbook was designed in a way to provide effective reading intervention techniques within a short amount of time. The handbook was developed as a means for parents to spend time reading with their child in order to assist the child in developing self-monitoring strategies which could be used at a later time. Additionally, the handbook was designed to be used as a resource which could be referred to at a moment’s notice because of its simplicity and functional design.

Although similar methods have been designed to assist parents in tutoring their child in literacy, none were found which modeled this method exactly. Based on the research found, Running Records are generally used by the classroom teacher or special education teacher in order to assess a student in the areas of reading fluency and comprehension. In regards to Running Records, parents typically do not have access to or training in the use of a Running Record, and only the results of the assessments determined by a Running Record are shared with the parent. By developing a literacy intervention which included the use of a Running Record, the goal of this project was to not only inform parents of the process of using a Running Record, but to also hopefully enlighten parents of the potential effects of assisting their children in the literacy process.
Setting

Based on personal experience, children from all backgrounds and all walks of life need help developing reading strategies which can assist them past elementary education. Whether the children are in first grade or sixth grade, and no matter what their reading level in school, all children can benefit from reading aloud to further their reading ability and develop strategies for self-monitoring during reading.

The parent handbook was specifically designed for the general population. Because of the format of the handbook, parents from any background can use the intervention to read with their children. The format of the handbook is simple, and can be used with only a book (or text), a piece of paper, and the instructions for using a Running Record. Although it is highly recommended, parents are not required to use an audio voice recording unless they have access to one. Because the handbook is efficient and concise, parents can read with their children anywhere they desire once they understand how to use a Running Record while reading with their child.

Instrument

The handbook for parents consisted of four pages. Page one was a letter to parents which described the need for literacy intervention, and how the handbook is used for literacy intervention. Page one explained that research has proven parental involvement to be effective, but only if the parents are first trained to use the intervention properly. Page one also provided a description of the intervention as being timely (fifteen minutes), and being appropriate for any age, grade level, reading level, or style of text.

Page two provided a brief definition of a Running Record, and how a Running Record is used. Within page two, a clearly designed chart of the symbols (or markings) used for a Running
Record was also provided. The chart contained short definitions and examples of seven reading behaviors observed from the child, and included the markings which should be used to label the reading behaviors. The symbols to be used as markings for the seven behaviors were as follows: A check-mark for accurate; a capital letter “O” for omission; parentheses for an inserted word; a capital letter “R” for repetition of a word; the capital letters “SC” for self-correction; and the capital letter “P” for pausing. Additionally, although no marking was provided, instructions were provided to indicate that the child had substituted one word for another.

Page three of the parent handbook provided a list of the materials needed (i.e. lined paper, a book or text, the handbook instructions, and an optional audio voice recorder), and a description of resources of where to find an inexpensive audio voice recorder. After the list of materials on page three, clear and concise instructions were given to the parent of how the Running Record should be used to guide the child in developing self-monitoring strategies during reading. There were ten instructions in all, and the instructions were designed to be as clearly understood as possible.

Lastly, page four provided a sample text from the book *The Lion King*, in addition to a sample of how the Running Record was used to document the reading behavior of the child. The text and Running Record samples provided examples which matched the markings of the Running Record and included symbols to indicate the child read the word correctly, the child omitted a word, the child repeated a word, the child inserted a word, the child substituted one word for another word, the child self-corrected after reading the word incorrectly, or the child paused during reading to indicate difficulty in reading the word. The samples on page four were carefully designed so the numbers on the text would match the lines on the paper, and the Running Record symbols would match the reading behavior of the fictitious child.
Procedures

Just as Faires et al. stated in the opening paragraph of Chapter 2, “the development of reading proficiency in children is perhaps the highest-ranking educational objective of legislators, administrators, teachers, parents, and the community” (2000). With this belief in mind, the parent handbook was developed in order to give parents the skills necessary to use a Running Record to assist their child in reading improvement. After performing extensive research on the subject of parents using Running Records as a reading intervention, it was concluded that similar methods to the parent handbook had not yet been developed. Therefore, it would be appropriate to develop a method where a Running Record could be used by parents for the purpose of intervention, rather than only being used by teachers for the purpose of assessment. The following paragraphs describe each step as it was developed.

Step 1: Outline

To get a clear idea for the format of the project, and to have ideas written in advance, a project outline was created. Within the outline was the guiding question, the goal of the project, and five initial steps which were frequently referred to throughout the process. With the exception of the ordering of the five steps of the outline, the steps essentially remained the same throughout the creation of the handbook. Below is a replica of the outline as it was initially created:

GUIDING QUESTION:

Can children improve their reading fluency after their parents have taught them self-monitoring techniques by using a Running Record for assessment and a tape recorder to listen to themselves read aloud?

MY GOAL:

I want to teach parents how to use a Running Record (RR) so they can assist their children in using a tape recorder to self-monitor their own reading fluency while also using a RR.
**STEPS:**

1. Explain to parents what a RR is and how it works.

2. Explain to parents how to use a RR.

3. Outline the steps needed for the parents to teach the kids how to use a RR by providing a clear format which will give the parents the tools needed. Ensure that the parents understand they are providing guidance to the children while teaching the children how to use the RR. Emphasize how important it is that the parent and child are working TOGETHER.

4. Explain to parents how to use a tape recording device for the children to record themselves reading aloud. Provide examples of books for the children to use.

5. Outline the steps needed for the parents to guide the children through the process of self-monitoring. The children will read aloud into the recorder, and then with the guidance of the parents, they will try to see where they made mistakes by using the RR format.

**Step 2: Draft of the Handbook**

A draft was created which outlined the information and instructions to be included in the handbook. The handbook draft contained ideas to be included in the parent letter, which were the following: 1) The importance of parental involvement in reading intervention; 2) In just fifteen minutes a day, parents can help their children improve reading ability by using self-monitoring techniques; 3) The importance that for the methods to be most effective, parent and child should work together as a team; 4) Even if the method is not used correctly, it can still prove to be effective; and 5) This method can help a child of any age, any grade, or any reading level, and can be applied using any text.

Following the draft of the letter to parents, a list of materials was written out, to also include possible resources for inexpensive audio voice recorders. The original list of materials remained the same, with the only change being that the reserved time of fifteen minutes was added to the list of materials.
Next, a basic list of the necessary components of the Running Record was created based on information provided by www.readinga-z.com, in addition to personal experience. The list was put into alphabetical order, although the list did not remain alphabetical once the handbook was created. The list was a basic shell which could be referred to during the process of creating the handbook, but did not provide definitions for the individual markings used in a Running Record. The list of markings remained the same throughout the process to include accurate, insertion, omission, pause, repetition, self-correction, and substitution. Finally, the list of ten instructions for how to use the intervention was drafted, and with the exception of a few minor technical corrections, essentially remained consistent through the creation of the handbook (refer to the handbook for the list of instructions).

**Step 3: Creation of the Handbook**

Once the outline and the draft had been created, the process was easier to manage and put into context in handbook form. The need for a letter to the parents came about because there was additional information to be communicated which did not fit into the areas of instructions or Running Record information. It was decided that the entire handbook would be created in a table format to allow for easier formatting and functionality.

In order for the parents to properly understand the definition of and use for a Running Record, the previously mentioned website was used not only for research to provide the definition and use of a Running Record, but also as a future resource for the parents. The website has been provided in the handbook. Based on information given from the website and personal experience, the list of reading behaviors and markings was created. The symbols to be used as markings for the seven behaviors were as follows: A check-mark for accurate; a capital letter “O” for omission; parentheses for an inserted word; a capital letter “R” for repetition of a word;
the capital letters “SC” for self-correction; and the capital letter “P” for pausing. Additionally, although no marking was provided, instructions were provided to indicate that the child had substituted one word for another. The symbols and directions for the Running Record were provided in a chart using a table format for easy formatting. Although the chart mimicked the information given in the cited website, some information was altered to better suit the goal of this project.

The list of materials was created out of the necessity for an easy-to-use method which could be used with basic supplies often found in the home. The primary goal of this project was to create a method which could be used by parents with a child of any age, grade, or reading ability. Because all information and instructions are provided within the context of the four concise pages of the handbook, the parents need only supply the lined paper, a book or text, and fifteen minutes of reserved time for reading. It was clearly stated in the handbook that the audio voice recorder is optional, although the recorder is highly recommended. In the event that parents are not currently equipped with a voice recorder, a list of resources was provided so the parents could provide the additional support as outlined in the instructions.

Based on personal experience and exposure to intensive teaching methods, the list of ten instructions was created to provide parents a simple and easy to follow method of using the Running Record while reading with their child. The instructions were written to offer clear, step-by-step directions of each activity which should take place to implement the method. Within the instructions are “tips” to be followed, so the parent understands the process and is able to proceed correctly. Much like a recipe, if a step is skipped or not followed correctly, there is a chance the method will not be implemented properly. By providing parents with concise, individual steps in a one-page format, a successful outcome should ultimately be achieved.
Finally, a sample text and sample Running Record were provided as a resource for the parents. As Gardner’s *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983) demonstrates, people oftentimes learn by first receiving visual information, and then applying that information in a hands-on approach. In the event the instructions provided were not clear and comprehensible, the parents could also refer to the sample text and Running Record for further clarification.

**Conclusion**

Based on the declaration that there is an intense interest in the development of proficient readers, and that education systems need to bring all students up to acceptable literacy levels (Faires et al., 2000), a handbook was created with the intention of providing parents a way to help their child develop their reading ability after being taught how to use a Running Record to develop self-monitoring strategies. Because 80% of what students learn occurs outside of school (Reutzel and Cooter, 2009), the focus of developing the handbook was to teach parents what a Running Record is and how to use it, and to provide clearly defined instructions of how to properly use the reading intervention. In order for parents to contribute optimally, they should be taught specific techniques for reading with their children (Fitton and Gredler, 1996). The goal of designing the parent handbook was to do just that.
Parental Involvement and Improved Reading

Chapter 4: Project Presentation

The parent handbook presented in Chapter Four was developed as a way to provide parents with a tool to assist them in the development of their child’s reading abilities. By providing a practical tool for parents to utilize, great effort has been made to assist children in improving their reading skills after their parents have taught them self-monitoring techniques with a Running Record and an audio voice recorder. Parent-directed academic interventions provide opportunities to extend the learning environment beyond the school walls and academic calendar, but children can benefit only if their parents are guided in the selection and application of appropriate reading interventions for their children (Gortmaker, Daly, McCurdy, Persampieri, & Hergenrader, 2007).

In order to guide parents through the process and application of a chosen reading intervention, the handbook below includes the following: A letter to parents with valuable information; the definition of and use for a Running Record; a chart detailing the symbols of a Running Record; a list of materials and resources; instructions for use of the method; and a sample text and sample Running Record for reference. All information is provided within the context of the handbook, and only a short list of easy-to-find materials is needed beyond the parent handbook.
The Parent Handbook of Instructions:

How to Use a Running Record to

Develop Strategies for Self-Monitoring

Created by Mona C. Flick

California State University San Marcos

San Marcos, CA
Dear Parents,

Research studies have proven time and time again that direct parental involvement helps children develop better reading strategies and improve their reading fluency. Research has also shown that in order for parents to become involved, parents need to be taught a method they can use to help their children in the literacy process.

I believe the method I have developed is simple and easy to follow, and can be accomplished by reading with your child 15 minutes a day. This method not only encourages parents to become involved in their children’s literacy development, it also supports children in the development of self-monitoring strategies.

This method works best when the parent and child work together as a team, but can also be used by the child alone after the child understands the importance of using self-monitoring techniques. It is important to understand that if this method is not used in a completely accurate way, the act of reading with your child and supporting their literacy development can still prove to be beneficial in the long run.

This method has been developed so that it can be used with a child in any age group, any grade level, or any reading level. It can also be used with any type of book or text.

This reading intervention strategy works best when used with an audio voice recorder. However, if no voice recorder is available, the method can still be implemented. Please see below for examples of inexpensive voice recorders which may already be available in your home.

I would like to thank you in advance for your participation and assistance in the development of your child’s literacy skills. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

With Best Wishes,

Mona C. Flick
What is a Running Record? (Also known as RR)

A Running Record is a method which enables a parent or teacher to assess a child’s reading ability by marking accuracy and types of errors made while the child is reading. The Running Record provides evidence of a child’s understanding of letters, sounds, and word recognition. For more information on Running Records, please visit the following website:

www.readinga-z.com/guided/runrecord.html

How is a Running Record Used?

A Running Record is used by observing the child read a chosen text while making marks to indicate whether the child has read the word correctly or has made a specific type of error. The symbols used for a Running Record are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Observed</th>
<th>Recorded Marking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accurate:</strong> A check-mark is used to document that the child has read the word correctly.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Omission:</strong> When a word is skipped and not read at all, a circle is used to indicate the word has been omitted.</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Substitution:</strong> When one word has been substituted for another word, the substitution word is written in place of the correct word.</td>
<td>Brave for Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insertion:</strong> When an additional word is inserted into a sentence, the word is written in parentheses. Ex: The sentence reads: “The big dog.” But the child reads “The big (brown) dog.”</td>
<td>(Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repetition:</strong> When the child reads a word two or more times, the letter “R” is used to mark the repetition.</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Correction:</strong> If the child reads the word incorrectly the first time, but then goes back and reads the word correctly, the letters “SC” are used to mark the behavior.</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pause:</strong> If the child pauses for several moments because s/he has difficulty reading the word, the letter “P” is used to mark the behavior.</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Materials for the Reading Session:

- Lined notebook paper.
- The chosen book or text.
- Running Record instructions and format.
- Audio voice recorder – optional. See below for resources.
- 15 minutes of reserved time.

Resources for Audio Voice Recorders:

Thanks to modern technology, there are many places where an audio voice recorder can be located, sometimes for no charge at all. For example, many cellular phones are now equipped with a built-in audio voice recorder which can be located under “Tools” in the main menu, and may be labeled “voice memo.” Portable digital music players, commonly referred to as MP3 players, also provide users with a built-in audio voice recorder (see your user manual for details). Additionally, most operating systems on personal computers contain software for voice recording, and a desktop microphone can be purchased for less than $10.00 at many discount retail stores.

Instructions:

1) Using lined paper, number the spaces from 1-20, according to a good place to stop in each page of the book. A sample has been provided below.

2) Open the book to be read, and count the first 1-20 lines to be read to match the numbered spaces on the lined paper.

3) If using an audio voice recorder (optional but highly recommended), turn recorder on when the child is ready to read.

4) Following the above directions for the RR, make the proper mark for each word read.

5) The lines from the book should match the numbered lines on the paper.

6) The RR marks should match each word read from the corresponding numbered line.

7) Make sure the child focuses on reading, and is not worried about the RR marks.

8) If a voice recorder was used, play the recorder back to the child. Working together, listen to the words read and discuss any errors while sharing the RR marks with the child. If a voice recorder was not used, discuss errors made without the use of the recorder.

9) Have the child re-read the same lines in the book, while the parent continues to make the RR marks. If using a voice recorder, erase the recorder and start again.

10) If using a recorder, play the audio recording again for the child to hear. This time, without discussing the RR marks, check to see if the child can find the errors according to the marks made during the second reading. It is very important during this time to give less guidance so the child can initiate self-monitoring techniques. Whether using a recorder or not, count the number of errors from the first reading in order to compare them to the errors from the second reading.
Sample Text

Excerpt printed from The Lion King.
Disney Enterprises, 2011.
Published by Dalmatian Press, LLC.

1) As the morning sun rose high over the African plain, animals and birds
2) gathered at the foot of Pride Rock. This was a very special day!
3) The animals bowed when they saw the new prince, Simba.
4) King Mufasa and Queen Sarabi watched as Rafiki, the wise baboon,
5) presented their new-born son to the kingdom.
6) Simba grew into a playful and curious cub. Early one morning, Mufasa
7) brought Simba to the top of Pride Rock.
8) “Everything the light touches is our kingdom,” he told his son. “One day,
9) Simba, the sun will set on my time here, and will rise with you as the new
10) king. We are all connected in the great Circle of Life.”

Sample Running Record

| 1)  ✓✓ O ✓ rise high ✓✓ Artifan plan R ✓✓    |
| 2)  ✓✓✓✓ the ✓✓✓✓ O ✓✓                 |
| 3)  ✓(little) R bored ✓✓✓✓ O ✓ P          |
| 4)  ✓ SC ✓✓ P watch ✓ P ✓✓ SC          |
| 5)  ✓ presents ✓✓✓✓✓ king                |
| 6)  ✓✓ (up) ✓✓ played ✓ P ✓✓ SC ✓✓ P      |
| 7)  ✓✓✓✓✓✓ the ✓                       |
| 8)  SC O ✓ touch ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓              |
| 9)  ✓ O ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ O ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓        |
| 10) ✓✓✓✓✓ connect ✓✓ R SC ✓✓               |
Parental Involvement and Improved Reading

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Lessons Learned

The Parent Handbook of Instructions was created to provide a reading intervention to parents that is easy-to-use and cost effective. The parent handbook provides parents with instructions on how to use a Running Record and audio voice recorder to assist their child in developing skills which can be used for self-monitoring during reading.

After conducting a thorough review of the research currently available, the methods and information examined were used to create the parent handbook. Ideas based on information gathered for the Literature Review were used for the initial draft of the handbook, although some ideas were also gained from personal experience. The parent handbook created for the purpose of this project is a preliminary sketch, and further studies will need to be implemented to ensure the success and effectiveness of the reading intervention.

Although further evaluation is needed to guarantee the reading intervention has been properly constructed, the very creation of such a tool for parents to use ensures that past and future research will continue to be utilized for the purpose of literacy improvement. The parent handbook was created with the belief in mind that parents are valuable tools in regards to their child’s education, provided they are given the guidance and education needed to implement structured reading interventions.

Lessons Learned

Through the development of this project, it became clearly apparent early on that literacy is a well-researched topic not only in America, but all over the world, as well. In order to narrow down the references to the working amount presented on the References page, hundreds of unwanted articles had to be removed before the chosen articles could be read thoroughly.
Through this process, it was discovered that there is definitely no shortage of literature available on the topic of literacy, and it can actually be quite overwhelming if one does not understand how to look for keywords within an article.

After all articles were examined and the chosen articles were studied thoroughly, the Literature Review naturally fell into place after the notes were organized. The headings for the Literature Review were developed based on focus areas which emerged from the notes, only after the notes had been read repeatedly in order for the heading to materialize. In the end, the headings selected for the Literature Review seemed appropriate to convey the desired messages of the project.

Once the Literature Review was complete, it was time to draft the actual project. The drafting of the parent handbook was actually quite enjoyable, as this would be the most creative part of the project. Ideas for the parent handbook were based mostly on personal experience, with some assistance from the articles read for the Literature Review. Because no other reading interventions were found which exactly modeled this project, even more opportunity was provided to be creative in order for the project to develop. The parent handbook was developed with two main ideas in mind: That the intervention can be used with any child, and that the handbook would be inexpensive and easy-to-use.

The focus of using a Running Record to implement the reading intervention materialized based on the effectiveness of using a Running Record for assessment within the classroom. Based on this knowledge, it was decided that not only should teachers understand the effectiveness of a Running Record, but that parents should also know how to use a Running Record for the purpose of reading intervention. The format of the Running Record should be available for all persons involved in the education of the child, not just the educators.
Because the parent handbook is still considered a draft and has not yet been implemented, it is clearly understood that issues may arise during the execution of the project. That being said, the parent handbook was developed in such a way that even in the event the format of the handbook is not perfect, parents and their child will still be provided the opportunity to read and work together as partners.

Project Implementation

The goal in creating the parent handbook is for the handbook to be circulated to parents in any number of settings. For example, the handbook can be distributed during Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings; the handbook can be provided to parents during Open House Night at the beginning of the school year; the handbook can be placed within the classroom and offered at any time throughout the school year; the handbook can be offered to parents during Parent-Teacher conferences; or the handbook could be given to parents during special education meetings.

The implementation of the parent handbook can take place at any time deemed appropriate for the parents. Because the reading intervention can take place within a fifteen-minute time period, and the method does not require substantial preparation, parents can choose any time period during the course of the day that they are available for fifteen minutes. The handbook does not specify a specific setting, although because the parents are reading with their child, the home setting would be most appropriate for implementation of the intervention. However, the parents can execute the method in any desired setting within the home, i.e. wherever they are the most comfortable reading with their child.

Because the parent handbook was developed as the initial draft for the purpose of this project, a survey given to parents to complete would be satisfactory in evaluating the success of
the parent handbook. Further research to indicate whether the child who utilizes the method has increased in reading level or ability would require extensive planning and preparation, and would have to be developed separately from the primary draft of the parent handbook.

Global Implications

The Literature Review from Chapter Two proves that extensive research has been performed in the area of parental involvement and how it assists children in their development of language and literacy skills. By creating a parent handbook which utilizes a Running Record and an audio voice recorder to help children learn self-monitoring techniques, a reading intervention has been developed which can maintain previous efforts to include parents in the expansion of their child’s literacy growth. However, because the parent handbook is only an initial draft, studies would need to be developed to test the actual effectiveness of the product.

Once the initial draft of the parent handbook is implemented and utilized, further research can be conducted regarding parent satisfaction of the method, as well as the effectiveness of the parent handbook. Assessments can be given regarding the child’s reading ability before and after use of the Running Record and audio voice recorder to determine whether or not the child increased in reading level and ability. Comparisons would need to represent elements such as how many minutes per day the intervention was used, how many days or weeks the intervention was used, and whether the intervention was used properly. Further studies developed would need to include elements generated by a team of educators well-versed in the creation of such research.

As Reutzel and Cooter (2009) stated, “teachers can add great power to a child’s literacy learning program by educating the adults in their lives in reading development strategies that are proven to be effective.” In order to do so, the parent handbook provides parents with a relatively
simple and easy-to-use method which can be utilized by reading with their child fifteen minutes per day. Because the parent handbook is short in length and is relatively inexpensive, teachers can incorporate the parent handbook into the list of parent resources provided within the classroom. The parent handbook can be made available via a computerized copy, and can be printed upon request for the parents. Additionally, the parent handbook can be saved in the computer database to be sent out to parents electronically via e-mail for the parents to print at home.

**Limitations**

The major limitation of this project is that although the parent handbook has been drafted, it has not been utilized or tested for effectiveness. There is a strong chance that after the draft of the parent handbook is utilized, the draft will change and improvements will be made. Because the parent handbook has not been previously used by parents and their child, there is simply no way to determine whether or not the handbook is as simple and easy-to-use as the author felt it would be, or that the handbook will be effective in assisting children in developing self-monitoring strategies. Until the parent handbook can be printed and distributed for use, and parents and teachers can participate in further surveys or research to determine satisfaction with and usefulness of the product, the effectiveness and value of the parent handbook is nothing more than theoretical in nature.

**Conclusion**

The parent handbook with instructions on how to use a Running Record and audio voice recorder was created with the intention to not only encourage parents to read with their child, but to also hopefully provide parents with a tool which could eventually increase the child’s reading ability. The development of the parent handbook was significant in that many educators,
including the present author, are extremely passionate about literacy, and are willing to do whatever it takes to ensure that students are as successful as possible in the areas of language development and literacy. The Literature Review of Chapter Two proves that many educators and researchers also feel the same way in regards to literacy.

Educators are not the only people passionate about helping children improve in the area of literacy. As the research in Chapter Two proves, parents are more than willing and often have a great desire to help their children in reading, as long as they are given the proper training. The parent handbook was created with the intention to provide parents with a concise and inexpensive reading intervention which can be used in just fifteen minutes per day. The parent handbook was created based on personal experience and similar methods found during the process of writing the Literature Review.

Although the methods developed for the purpose of this reading intervention were carefully planned and thought out, the greatest limitation of this project is that the parent handbook has yet to be utilized and tested. However, based on the research presented in Chapter Two, there is a strong belief that any amount of time a parent can spend reading with their child will prove to be beneficial and productive no matter what the outcome. If nothing more, by providing the sketch for a possible reading intervention, there is a greater chance that educators and researchers will continue their quest to provide parents and their children the opportunity to read together.
References


