Parent’s Perceptions of their Children’s
Attitudes to Reading, their Reading Habits and their Frequency of Reading
Before and After the Reading Recovery Program

L. Karen Soiferman
University of Manitoba

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Abstract

This study involved parents talking about their children’s experience with the Reading Recovery Program. Reading Recovery is a short term remedial reading tutoring program that has proven to be an effective intervention program for meeting the needs of at risk first graders (Bradshaw, 2001). Three parents were interviewed and asked to comment on their children’s attitudes toward reading, their out of school reading habits, and the frequency in which their children engaged in reading at home both before and after completing the program. The findings of the study showed that parents perceived no noticeable difference in these three areas. However parental attitude, positive or negative, was observed to make a difference in how children viewed reading activities.
Parent’s Perceptions of their Children’s Attitudes to Reading, their Reading Habits and their Frequency of Reading Before and After the Reading Recovery Program

This study involved parents talking about their children’s experience with the Reading Recovery Program. Reading Recovery is a short term remedial reading tutoring program that has proven to be an effective intervention program for meeting the needs of at risk first graders (Bradshaw, 2001). Goals of Reading Recovery are to promote literacy skills and reduce the number of first-grade students who are struggling to read. In Reading Recovery, teachers who are trained to deliver the program provide one-on-one tutoring in 30-minute daily sessions to children in first grade who are having trouble learning to read (Grossen, Coulter & Ruggles, 1997). Many researchers believe that “Reading Recovery is the best available program for preventing reading failure” (Grossen, Coulter & Ruggles, 1997, p.1). Reading Recovery advocates claim that after 20 weeks of lessons, the program brings children up to the average of their local class by the end of first grade (Bradshaw, 2001).

McKenna and Kear (1990) believe that children who have trouble learning to read often exhibit negative attitudes to reading. They further suggest that understanding the role of attitude in developing readers is important for two reasons. First, attitude may affect the level of ability ultimately attained by a given student; second, even for the fluent reader, poor attitude may lead a child not to read when other options exist. Mullen (1998) believes that children with positive reading attitudes tend to be willing to read, enjoy reading, and become lifelong readers. She further states that children with poor attitudes toward reading may read only when they are
required to read, may tend to avoid reading, and may even refuse to read altogether. Parents need to be aware that a child’s attitude toward reading may have a profound impact on his/her overall academic progress and success in life. Children who become fluent readers early in life have a definite advantage over children who do not.

Cunningham and Stanovich, in *To read or not to read* (2007), state that “children who start reading for pleasure at an early age are exposed …to greater opportunities to develop literacy skills than children denied early reading experiences” (p.68). The authors go on to say “we believe that independent reading may help explain the widening achievement disparities between the educational have and have-nots” (p.68). The importance of attitude to reading and the habits of leisure reading appear to signal success not only in academic settings but also in job situations.

Reading Recovery purports to help those children who are considered the lowest achieving in grade one learn to read. This study was conducted to determine if the program helps those students, not only with reading, but also with a desire to read outside of the school system. Noyes (2008) defines aliteracy as the lack of desire to read and she goes on to say that alliterate children can read, but they tend to avoid the activity. She feels that aliteracy is potentially as alarming as illiteracy and that teachers need to be aware of the importance that attitude plays in helping to create lifelong positive attitudes to reading. In the National Endowment Report, *To read or not to read*, the authors state that “Whatever the benefits of newer electronic media, they provide no measureable substitute for the intellectual and personal development initiated and sustained by frequent reading” (p. 5).
Given the literature on the benefits of Reading Recovery and the importance of attitude towards reading, the purpose of this study was to interview three parents whose children had taken part in the Reading Recovery program at their home school and ask for their perceptions both before and after the program regarding the following three areas: (a) their children’s reading attitudes; (b) their children’s out of school reading habits, and (c) their children’s frequency of engaging in reading at home. These three areas are important indicators of reading success for children.

Conceptual Framework

I have chosen to use Lev Vygotsky’s (1978) constructivist theory as my framework. According to Vygotsky all learning is mediated between the child and a knowledgeable other. His theory is often referred to as social constructivism, because he believed that teachers and older or more experienced people, like parents, play important roles in teaching children in a social setting. Vygotsky’s concept of the zone of proximal development theorized that students can, with help from adults, master concepts and ideas that they cannot understand on their own. The role of the parent is to facilitate cognitive growth as do teachers and other members of the child’s community. Adults such as parents and teachers are the ones who provide the tools of the culture, including language, and it is their responsibility to nurture early language and literacy in young children. These knowledgeable others play a powerful role in preparing young children for future school success.

Vygotsky further believed that school learning should occur in meaningful context and not be separated from out of school experiences. Thus the parent’s role, out of school, takes on greater importance if they are to scaffold the experiences of their child in school with what they
provide out of school. This becomes increasingly important for those children who are experiencing difficulty in school with such activities as learning to read.

Methodology

This article reports on the findings of a study that sought to determine the personal viewpoints of parents regarding their children’s attitudes, habits, and proficiency to reading both before and after the completion of the Reading Recovery program. Participants were asked questions related to these three areas because they have been found in the literature to be important indicators of reading success in children.

In order to address the research questions three parents, two female and one male, were interviewed individually for one hour each to obtain data related to their children’s experience with Reading Recovery. Interview appointments were set up by phone call and/or e-mail message. All interviewees were asked to comment on how their child responded to reading before the intervention and how and if the responses changed after their child’s completion of the Reading Recovery program. Parents were asked to provide examples that would corroborate their responses in an attempt to address the limitations of self-response. To ensure validity of the data collected all interviews once transcribed were returned to the parents, via e-mail, for verification purposes before analysis began.

Field notes were also used to collect data on the participants’ environment, mannerisms and expressions in an attempt to shed light on how the parents might affect their children’s attitudes to reading. The field notes were jotted down immediately after the interview and observer comments were recorded while transcribing.
All interviews were tape recorded and data were transcribed and analyzed according to qualitative research guidelines. Reductive analysis (the identifying, coding and categorizing of data into meaningful units) was used to identify themes and patterns in the data. —

In the final report no names were used and direct quotations were attributed to a pseudonym.

Findings

Parents were asked in the interview to respond to questions regarding their children’s attitudes to reading, their reading habits and their frequency of reading. The narrative responses are organized below.

Children’s Attitudes to Reading

I wanted to find out from the parents how they viewed their children’s attitudes to reading to see if that could be a reason why these children were struggling with learning to read. I have identified the parents as A’s Mother, J’s Dad and M’s Mother.

A’s Mother said that her daughter “never took that much of an interest in reading on her own” before Reading Recovery and after Reading Recovery found that “it was like she [her daughter] was turned off reading.” The mom further stated that “when she [A] came home [from school], reading was the last thing that she wanted to do.” Although the parent did find after Reading Recovery, “that’s the difference I’m finding, right now, well she still doesn’t relish reading a book, she does have much more interest in books [to read, not just listen to].” A’s mother’s perception was that her daughter’s attitude, manifested in a greater interest in books, had improved after Reading Recovery.
When asked if his daughter enjoyed picking up a book before Reading Recovery, J’s dad said, “Oh definitely. Yeah, yeah, flip through them.” And in answer to the question if she [J] tried to read before Reading Recovery he responded that she “could memorize stuff really so that we would think she was reading.” After Reading Recovery J’s Dad said “No or maybe she is just not that interested [in reading]” when asked if he had noticed a change in her attitude to reading. Although he did say, “…it was awhile after Reading Recovery…she was very excited to tell me a story that she had read in a book…it was the first time I had seen her so excited about something that she had gotten out of a book herself.” J’s Dad believed that his daughter was interested in books before Reading Recovery because she had flipped through them. After Reading Recovery he thought she was not that interested but then mentioned that she had recently read a book in school that she had been excited about. So his perception was that her attitude did not change; she was not interested in books. But then he remembered that she had read a book and been interested in the story so this is a bit of a contradiction.

M’s mother said that “she thought her son’s attitude to reading was good’ before Reading Recovery” but that “he did not want to read aloud.” When asked if he had shown an interest in books when he was younger, M’s mother said, “Absolutely.” After her child had completed the Reading Recovery program the mom said, “I don’t think that he didn’t like reading. I think he didn’t like the frustration [of trying to read]. She also found that “he liked going there and doing it [Reading Recovery]. I’m not so sure it actually made a difference [in ability or attitude].” She attributed this to “his recognition [that he was different] and didn’t feel positive about it.” After Reading Recovery she found that he would still “get frustrated and not want to do it [read].” She thought this was because “he didn’t like not doing well.”
This parent, like the other two, saw her son’s attitude as being good before Reading Recovery but not as good after because he found reading frustrating. She still felt that his overall attitude to reading was positive although he did not like being seen as different when he had to go for the Reading Recovery program.

From their perspective these three parents did not notice a change in their children’s reading attitudes from before or after participating in the Reading Recovery program. The children did not want to read before the program and showed little interest in reading by themselves after the program.

Children’s Reading Habits

When discussing her daughter’s reading habits before Reading Recovery A’s mom said, “well she would just avoid it [reading].” And “you know she never really sat down to read a book for pleasure.” A’s mom went on to say, “but often times she’ll do something else [besides reading], she’d rather do something else or she’ll start some colouring…” According to this parent her child’s reading habits before and after Reading Recovery were not positive ones. Her daughter did not enjoy reading and would not pick up a book and read on her own.

J’s dad said this about his daughter’s reading habits before Reading Recovery “she was not really willing to put a lot of effort into it” or “she might get interested [in a book] and bring it to us to read to her” rather than reading it herself. But he did notice that, “I think there were some things, ummm, a game she plays quite often with her stuffed animals, and she’s reading to the stuffed animals…and yeah, I can kind of remember her going through books like that” which was in answer to the question if the dad had noticed his daughter reading by herself.
After Reading Recovery J’s dad said that “I would say that she’d look at them [books] and look at the cover but I don’t see her actually cracking them open to see what’s written there.” He also said that “I’ve never really seen her sit down and just start a book by her self” and “I don’t see her taking the initiative to pick up a book.” This father is giving conflicting perceptions of his daughter and her reading habits. On the one hand he said that she read to her stuffed animals and on the other hand he said that he did not see her opening a book to see what was inside.

When speaking about her son M’s mom said, “we had a habit at home of reading…we had a bedtime reading ritual” before Reading Recovery. In answer to the question of whether her son would pick up a book himself, “No, he didn’t, it was more structured evening time, a quiet time” and that the habit of reading “was more adult driven.” She also said, “it wasn’t something that her child would have initiated to do himself.” She found after Reading Recovery that “he wouldn’t read at all as opposed to picking a different book” because “when he was little he would [get frustrated and then] he wouldn’t get back to reading.” For M, reading was a frustrating experience when he was younger and his attitude did not change after Reading Recovery.

For these three children reading was something to be avoided, it was not something they initiated on their own, and they would rather have their parents read to them than read for themselves. These habits were the same before and after the Reading Recovery Program.

*Children’s Frequency of Reading*

When discussing her daughter, A’s mother said that before Reading Recovery, “it was a real effort to have her read at home” and that, “before that [Reading Recovery] I didn’t really
know where she was at because she didn’t really want to read.” After the program A’s mom said that reading “would not be her first choice, she loves to play and that would be her first choice rather than reading.” She also went on to say, “it was just such an effort for her to read that she just wanted to give up” and “she wanted to avoid it [reading], there was a period when she was bringing a book home and she just did not want to read it.” In this instance the parent’s opinion was that her child avoided reading when she could and her frequency of reading had not changed noticeably after the intervention.

J’s father said that “without prompting she doesn’t go and pick up a book and start reading it” and if we ask her, “do you want to read a book now…and she might say no, she wants to play a game instead.” After Reading Recovery J’s father said, “I wouldn’t say frequency more but I would say better reading definitely” in answer to the question if his daughter read more. In this parent’s viewpoint his daughter was not reading more but her overall reading skill had improved.

When asked if her child read at home before Reading Recovery, M’s mother said, “No, I don’t remember him doing that.” And “it was not something that he would have initiated to do himself.” After Reading Recovery when asked if her child brought home books from school to read, “no, he read books there [at school or at Partners for Learning] and that “it was more he was there he had to work and at home it was just play time.” This parent’s perception was that her child’s frequency of reading had not changed at all but then she would not have noticed since the child only read at school or with his tutor.

There was no noticeable change in reading frequency for these children from before Reading Recovery to after Reading Recovery. A’s mom found that it a real effort to get her
daughter to read at home; while J’s father noted that his daughter avoided reading. J’s father did, however, note that his daughter was a better reader after Reading Recovery but still did not engage in reading at home unless prompted by her parents. M’s mother did not notice her son reading at home either before or after the Reading Recovery program perhaps due to the fact that reading was something he did with his tutor and not at home.

Discussion

There are some themes that are similar to all three parents’ perceptions of their children both before and after Reading Recovery. As we shall see these themes all contribute in some way to children’s literacy development and may in fact be predictive of later reading proficiency.

**Enjoyed Listening To Books**

A major component of young children’s literacy is their attitude to reading (Collins & Svensson, 2008). The authors’ go on to say that “children’s engagement with books and the enjoyment of narrative is the key to young children’s reading development” (p. 82). Stanfield (2008) says that there is “evidence that reading attitudes and behaviour are linked to reading achievement” (p. 3).

For the children in this study the data showed that they enjoyed listening to books and they liked being read to but they would rather let someone else do the reading for them than read for themselves. This attitude was noticeable before and after the Reading Recovery program. When looking at this trend through the eyes of a social constructivist it makes sense that children like to have their parents read to them. Since learning is a social activity, the learning that the children are engaged in provides them with a connection to other human beings including their
parents, teachers and more knowledgeable friends. But it may also be a way of avoiding reading, particularly if they are having difficulty, OR it may be the comfort of past family rituals.

A’s Mom said that when she asked her child, “Why don’t you try reading this to mom,” “A” says, “No mommy, I want you to read these to me.” A’s mom also said, [before Reading Recovery] “you know she never really sat down to read a book for pleasure. We would read to her, she would go and get a book for us to read to her.” It is obvious that the child was more interested in having books read to her than in reading books for herself.

J’s father said that his daughter “would rather have someone read to her” and “that she prefers us to read them to her.” He also said that “she might get interested in a book and brings it to us to read to her.” J’s father then said, “I don’t know if it’s the vision thing or just a habit but she’d rather have someone read to her than her just sit by herself and read a book.” The child in this case had one eye stronger than the other and the parent wondered if this was causing her to have some problems with reading.

When commenting on her son picking up a book to read to himself, M’s mom said, “[No] I think because he didn’t read himself it was something that was done [for him].” Also she said, “we just knew that he didn’t want to read but he just loved to sit and read stories with us” when discussing their bedtime ritual of storybook reading. This follows the pattern of the other two interviews where the parents said that their children liked being read to but did not want to read for themselves.
Looking at Pictures

All three of the parents spoke of their children attending more to the pictures than to the text. Young children’s first book experiences typically involve picture books; these are books that contain pictures either alone or with very limited text (Ganea, Pickard & DeLoache, 2008). The authors state that “with advancing language and knowledge, children’s participation increases, but it continues to be scaffolded by their parents for some time” (p. 47). All three parents revealed that even after Reading Recovery their children still attended mostly to pictures.

The social constructivist believes that all learning is contextual so it makes sense that children need to use the pictures to understand the text. Children do not learn isolated facts and theories in some abstract way, they learn in relationship to what they know. When they are beginning readers they know about pictures and in order to learn about text they have to attend to the pictures. The parents in this study did not seem to appreciate the learning that was going on when their children looked at only the pictures. Also it is difficult to assimilate new knowledge without having some structure developed from previous knowledge to build on (Hein, 2001). It appeared that the structure and knowledge of the pictures was needed for these children to begin to read for themselves but the parents did not see this step as necessary or did not realize that their children still needed the pictures.

When talking about her child A’s mother said, “and she loves pictures, that’s the other thing too, she loves books to look through for the pictures but the actual text she wasn’t interested in” and “’no, she likes the pictures” when asked if she looked at the text. And “she used to complain that we would turn the page and she would say “There’s no pictures. She didn’t want me to read the book because there were no pictures.” After Reading Recovery the mom
noticed that now, “there doesn’t necessarily have to be pictures in the book. Now she is starting to enjoy books without pictures.” This indicates that this child has now moved into a new zone of proximal development that allows her to engage in books that have more text. Perhaps she is learning more words and feeling more confident about her ability so does not have to rely on only pictures to get the meaning.

When asked about his child’s interest in books J’s dad said, “I would say more the picture” and “I think she is concentrating more on the pictures than following along with the words that I am reading.” J is not ready for the next stage of development which would see her attending to text.

In keeping with the trend that developed regarding pictures, M’s mom said that her son “looked at the pictures” and again “he would look at the pictures and flip the pages.” She also said, “he was picture driven” and [if he had to choose a book] he would choose “the littler picture books. This parent did not notice a difference in her child before or after Reading Recovery in terms of looking only at the pictures.

Looking at or attending to the pictures is a theme that runs through all three interviews and points to the difficulty that these children have with text. The three children in this study all liked looking at pictures before Reading Recovery and only one appeared ready to move on to more abstract ideas after Reading Recovery. For the other two the program did not move them along to the next level and they still got their sense of story from the pictures. All of the children enjoyed books according to their parents but they could not read for themselves so they liked to look at the pictures. Perhaps this is a trend for children who have difficulty learning to read
Familiar Books

Children have to practice reading to become fluent readers (Johnson & Giorgis, 2001). The authors note that keeping kids reading involves getting them to read popular books, old favourites and introducing selections from all genres. They state that teachers and librarians share the common goal of getting children interested in books and reading and I would add parents to this list. According to the constructivist theory, it takes time to learn. For significant learning to take place people need to revisit ideas, try them out, play with them and use them (Hein, 1991). The need to re-read familiar books would certainly provide the practice that is needed for learning to take place.

The children in this study all enjoyed reading familiar books or having their parents read familiar books over and over. A’s parent said that, “I notice that she sometimes brings home the same book for her home reading book” and “sometimes she brings the same book home for three days in a row.” This parent noticed that when her daughter brought home the same book, “the first time she brings it home, she struggles through it and then we read it the next night, she is reading it quicker and more fluent.” Even when this mom saw the evidence for herself, she still did not understand her daughter’s desire to re-read books with which she could be successful.

“She likes reading the same stories over and over again,” said J’s father and he believed that [reading stories over again] “gives a bit more confidence [to his daughter].” When asked if she looks at books in the book store, the dad said, “and she might tend to go and grab something that she already has seen, something she already knows…she likes the familiar.” Later on he said, “I find she reads them fairly well because she has already read them at school. It’s not a brand new book, often it is already something that they would have gone through” when
discussing books his daughter brings home from school. This child likes reading familiar books and her father picked up on the fact that reading familiar books gave her more confidence.

When talking about her son, M’s mom also mentioned that her child liked familiar books. She said, “because we had so many of them at home so he would recognize them so he would go to them” when discussing the book choices her son made at school for silent reading. She also said that “he loved them because we had them at home.” This mom is not bothered by the fact that her son liked to read books that he already knew. She saw nothing wrong with him reading familiar books again.

Reading familiar books provided these three children with the confidence to read by themselves. All the parents talked about how their child tended to go for the books that were familiar to them rather than choosing books that they did not know.

**Parental Attitude**

The importance of a positive parental attitude to foster children’s reading attitudes and behaviours can not be overlooked. Just as parents can positively influence their children they can also negatively influence them. Parents who enjoy reading, who provide rich literacy environments and resources for learning and who display positive parental attitudes can promote literacy in their children (McKenna & Kear, 1990). On the other hand parents with negative attitudes have difficulty in fostering children’s reading abilities and often see reading as a functional tool rather than something to participate in for pleasure (Chiu & Ko, 2005).

A’s Mom talked about what a chore it was to listen to her daughter read. She said, “We would try to help her along with it and just get her a little bit further but you know it was like a
chore” to get her to read. This same parent felt under pressure to get the reading completed in a timely fashion. She said, “because I would be sitting here and thinking are we ever going to finish that book because I have things to do as well, like make supper.” Reading also caused pressure for the parent, “I think that pressure [to get her to read]…I feel more relaxed if we do it right after school.” And “if we do it in the morning…then I’m in a rush and so then there’s that sensation I feel like I’m putting this pressure on her…we have to read now, we have 10 minutes.” The mom also talks about trying not to show her daughter she is stressed, “I try to make it where I can sit down and just be relaxed and not think of the 10 other things that I have to do.” But “I feel rushed, I get a rushed feeling.” The mom is very busy and she finds it difficult to sit down and listen to her daughter. This is a good example of a parent that sees reading as strictly functional. She seemed to be saying that “The reading has to be completed so let’s just complete it so we can both get on to other more enjoyable activities”. It is no wonder that her daughter has picked up on this attitude as well.

On the other hand J’s father said that his child was probably just lazy when it came to reading. The father said of his daughter, “she is not really willing to put a lot of effort into it, “and “I just noticed she is just kind of lazy [when it comes to reading].” And again, “if she comes to me with something to read to her and I would force her to do it, she can actually do it, she’s just kind of lazy.” If J heard her father refer to her as being lazy about reading then that would not leave her with a very positive feeling about reading.

Despite J’s father talking about his daughter being lazy about reading, I found that he was still extremely supportive of his daughter’s reading. He said, ”I was surprised and delighted when she could actually recognize a word by herself.” He also bought her books, he noticed
that his daughter liked a particular author so “I found him [an author] on line and he had other books that are right around her age.” When discussing his daughter’s fluency he said, “Yes, sometimes it impresses me and I’m like wow.” So despite his initial conclusion that his daughter might just be lazy about reading, it is obvious that he is trying very hard to enrich her literacy experiences at home. The fact that he is supporting her learning to read is an example of a positive parental attitude so the negative and the positive are both in evidence here but we are not sure which one exerted more influence.

M’s mother appeared to abdicate responsibility to the professionals when it came to helping her child with his reading. She also focused a lot on the idea of a person being special which in her view meant someone who needed extra help in school or someone who had severe behavioural problems. She says when talking about her son’s classroom, “[there were] heavy needs students, there seemed to be a preponderance of them in his year.” Her son “equated himself with special needs” but the mom pointed out that her “son was not [one of] the particularly high special needs kids.” She seemed to be very happy reporting that he just had some reading problems but nothing compared to other children in the classroom. This child obviously picked up on negative parental attitudes by asking his mom, “if he was special.” This topic must have been discussed at home because how else would he have thought of himself as special just because he was experiencing difficulty with reading.

This mom’s way of handling the notion of special needs was to get her son help outside of the school system so that he would no longer be seen as requiring special help in school. She said, “Her son went through lots of tutoring and getting extra help and he went to Partners for Learning and he did their summer reading program as well as some on going work and he went
for individual work, for tutoring and now he reads like a fish.” The parent seemed happy that after all of this extra work, “he caught up three grade levels so he had phenomenal growth and caught up.” As she was telling me this I could tell that she was very proud of his accomplishment and she was also relieved that he had caught up to the regular students. For this mom reading was seen as a functional activity much like A’s mom. Her child could not read, he needed to read, she got him help and now he could read. Reading was not something enjoyable in which to engage, it was a matter of getting her son up to speed so that he would no longer have to go for special help.

She also mentioned that because he was going to the out of school programs that there was no need to listen to him read at home. When the interviewer asked if her son brought home books to read with her or her husband she said, “no, he read books there [out of school program] and it was more he was there to work and at home it was just play time.” The fact that he did not have to read at home would contribute to his negative attitude to reading for pleasure.

These three parents obviously did not perceive learning to be a social activity as conceptualized by social constructivist theory. All the parents read to their children usually as a bedtime ritual but it was just another thing that they had to do as parents. There was no mention of the shared experiences that they could have with their children when reading. Family members have to share, discuss and interact with each other for learning to take place (Hein, 2001). This did not seem to be happening for these children and their parents where learning was more passive rather than active and was a function that had to be completed.
Conclusions

A funny thing happened on the way to my conclusion; the road took an unanticipated turn. I had fully expected to give insights into the Reading Recovery program and how participating in the program helped shape students’ reading attitudes, habits and frequency of reading. But the data did not allow me to draw that conclusion. Instead I discovered much to my surprise that what made the biggest difference to how children view reading was the attitude exhibited by their parents. I never saw that conclusion coming when I first began my research. To be honest it was quite a shock to realize the difference parental attitude made for these three children.

I chose to interview parents about Reading Recovery because I thought they were in the best position to notice any change in their children’s attitudes to reading, their at home reading habits and their frequency of reading out of school. I wanted to find out if these three areas had undergone a change or if they had stayed the same after their children participated in the Reading Recovery program. I concluded based on the data that I analyzed that from the parents’ perspective they did not notice a change in their children after Reading Recovery with regards to the three questions about attitude, habits and frequency of reading.

But I discovered that the real conclusion had nothing to do with the Reading Recovery program at all. I do not think that these children would have undergone a change no matter what program in which they were involved. As a matter of fact, one of the children did attend an out of school program that was very similar to the Reading Recovery program and no change was noted after the completion of that program either. Another one of the children was taught by her retired elementary school grandmother in a one-on-one tutoring format that mimicked Reading
Recovery and again this child did not exhibit any behavioural changes. Therefore I concluded that the programs had little or no bearing on the children’s attitudes, habits and frequency of reading.

What made the biggest difference was the attitude displayed by the parents with regards to their children’s at home reading. The negative parental attitudes were very noticeable in all three parents and seemed to be deeply ingrained in them. Although one of the parents did balance his negative attitudes with more positive ones; I still felt that his daughter must have picked up on the negative ones which could have impacted her own attitudes.

The children’s attitudes, habits and frequency of reading could not change as a result of the Reading Recovery program because the attitudes of their parents had not changed. For these children reading was a functional tool; something to be completed before they could do something they really enjoyed. It was the same for the parents; listening to their children reading was something that they had to do but it was not something that they enjoyed so how could their children see reading as enjoyable.

This research needs to be conducted with more participants to see if the findings hold true for a larger population and if the results would compare to the findings from this study. More research is needed to find out the role that parental attitude plays in terms of reading acquisition in children. I think that in order to get a complete picture of the children and their reading attitudes, habits and frequency of reading, a case study would work better. In a case study one could interview all of the significant others in the children’s daily lives. The interviews would include the children’s teachers, grandparents, sitters, daycare workers, and any other adult with whom these children came in contact. If reading is a social activity then all the players need to
be interviewed about their attitude toward the children and their reading. The children would also need to be interviewed. I wonder what data would be collected from the children in these three instances.

A program such as Reading Recovery can only help children learn to read but it can not change their behaviour with regards to reading. A program is only as good as the teachers who teach it, and the same applies to parents. Children learn a lot from the modeling that parents do at home and in these cases I found that though the parents meant well; the modeling they were doing was not positive. Their attitude needed an adjustment before they could help their children adjust their own behaviour to reading.
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