

Self-Assessing Towards Increased Student Ownership in a Third Grade Classroom

2015 Action Research

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Question: What happens when students take increased ownership over what they learn, how they learn, and when they learn it?

Subquestions:

- ⑥ How does it impact the extent to which students can accurately and specifically reflect on their strengths and weaknesses?
- ⑥ How does it impact student growth towards individual literacy goals?
- ⑥ How does it impact the extent to which they can independently use and apply strategies?
- ⑥ How does it impact student agency and choice?

Rationale:

A visitor to my third grade departmentalized literacy classroom would likely see students working hard as a community to tackle complex questions like, “How does the author use secondary characters to reveal important themes in this book?” Students invite their lower-reading peers into the conversation, and most students work urgently in order to maximize the time they know they’ll get to confer with a peer about their responses. The magic of this particular group of students is not lost on me; I looped with these 26 students after seeing the incredibly supportive and motivated community they built in second grade. Our deep shared knowledge about what great readers do and how they work together has allowed us to dive in to complex, collaborative work very early on as we start our second year together.

However, as I wrote our curriculum this year, I struggled to identify ways to differentiate our new learning from what we did in second grade. This is the highest group of readers I’ve worked with, and we addressed many of the third grade learning standards in second grade. While the transition from second to third grade certainly means applying reading strategies in more complex texts and in more rigorous ways, the underlying standards that I teach are the same. This means that students are already very familiar with what we would learn in third grade and the methods by which we would learn it.

Still, this challenge presented a unique opportunity: Building my students’ capacity for self-regulated learning would help to provide more differentiated content in a way that gives students increased ownership over their learning and our community. In fact, Scott (2009) says, “If students do not feel they own their education – that they can open the horizons of their own futures – student engagement, as envisioned by the educational community, cannot exist. Students receive a complete package and are seen as the product – a product shaped by a system they have no say in constructing (p.36).”

Likewise, because of their high engagement and motivation and some of the experiences we had last year together, this group has excellent behavior and work ethic. Last year, as part of the research I did around peer teaching and conversation in math, students gained experience reflecting on their work and self-identifying areas for growth.

Additionally, many students gained experience “teaching” others as part of reciprocal teaching.

I also knew that I could leverage my class schedule to pursue this research question. I teach two sections of students and am extremely limited in the time I have – just two hours with each class, and certainly not much time for self-directed or differentiated learning. However, twice a week I have an hour of extended learning time with each class, in which my principal hopes teachers are helping students work towards their individual goals. This research question supported me in a focused, goal-oriented way as I make this time purposeful for students.

For these reasons, I sought to explore what happens to students when I give them input into what they are learning, how they learn it, and when they learn it.

School Context

This year marked my fourth year teaching my CPS neighborhood school located in the Back of the Yards neighborhood on the Southwest side of Chicago. I'd previously taught second grade, but this year was my first year teaching departmentalized third grade literacy. Our school serves pre-kindergarten through eighth grade students, though we are currently located in three separate buildings.

The area around Chavez is a busy place that reflects the culture of most of our students. Many small businesses line Ashland, though a few larger chains such as Walmart and Marshalls have recently moved in. While violence in the area surrounding the neighborhood persists, it is packed with students and their families visiting many of the local small businesses after school. Back of the Yards has a great deal of community organizations and family supports, as well as a very strong neighborhood council.

Our school serves 984 students, and though enrollment at many CPS schools is in flux, our school maintains high enrollment. Our students are about 95% Hispanic, with the rest being African American or white. Additionally, 95% of our student body qualifies as being from a “low income” family. 49% of our population is classified as having limited English proficiency, though most students speak Spanish at home as a first language. Our school has a transitional bilingual program and all teachers grades PK-3 are bilingual certified, with most teachers in 4-8 having their bilingual certification or ELA endorsement.

While a late transitional model typically means that students phase from Spanish to English around fourth grade, our students begin English literacy in pre-school. In part due to the language demands of English language high-stakes testing, teachers work extremely hard in small groups and tutoring and integrate bilingual teaching best practices to support academic English and English literacy. In my own experience, this also means that many students do not become literate in their home language, though many parents do support Spanish reading at home.

My school continues to see both strong growth and strong attainment of goals on important assessments. This past year, we fell in the 97th percentile in literacy growth and the 96th percentile in math growth on the NWEA assessment. For as long as I have worked at this school, we have been considered a Level 1+ school.

Some of these outcomes may be attributed to additional academic programming and supports at the school. Our school has an extra hour of learning four days a week (totaling 25 extra days of instruction) as a part of our Additional Learning Opportunities program. Many teachers stay after school to tutor, and most students who are below grade level in grades 3+ attend some kind of weekend programming (through Supplemental Educational Services Tutoring or our partnership with the Rasheed Davis Charity program).

Our school also has many community partnerships that make it feel equal part community center. Each week, our families participate in the Healthy Kids Market, in which each family receives about thirty pounds of fresh produce. We also provide ongoing parent workshops, family literacy instruction, and parent volunteer opportunities. Our school also partners with the Kitchen Community, WITS, Common Threads, and the Latino Bar Association to provide enrichment opportunities to students. Additionally, after school programs like dancing, yoga, track, basketball, and others are offered throughout the year.

The school was deemed "Well-organized" by the Five Essentials report. In my experience, teachers are very happy to be working there, and have established strong relationships. While it is difficult to collaborate across three buildings, I have always felt a strong sense of teamwork at this school. It has also been my experience that teachers get the resources and support they need from our administration. Teachers are given a great deal of trust in their planning decisions, and while this sometimes results in a lack of consistency across grade levels, it also allows teachers to be innovative in their teaching.

This has been my first year working as a third grade literacy teacher. I teach two sections of reading, writing and social studies to 56 students total. One section of these students is the group of students I taught in second grade. So far, the looping experience has been extremely productive. About two thirds of my students have been labeled as English language learners, but nearly all speak Spanish as a first language. As mentioned above, we are a bilingual program but the majority of instruction – including literacy – occurs in English. I do use Spanish to support different students, as well as to build context for lessons. This year, I have students ranging from kindergarten reading all the way to level V (a sixth grade level), and their math skills range significantly. This leads us to teach in small groups for much of the day. I teach along with a student teacher who is spending the semester with us, which allows more students to have much more differentiated instruction. We compose our own literacy units rooted in great children's books that reflect our students' backgrounds and experiences.

Literature Review

Self-Regulated Learning

Butler (2002) describes student ownership over learning as a form of self-regulated learning, in which students "engage recursively in a cycle of cognitive activities as they work through a given task (p.82)." This cycle first asks students to build and activate metacognitive knowledge of task or learning demands. This stage implies that students must independently set goals for their work or performance. Next, self-regulated learners must select or create strategic approaches to meet the task objectives. Finally, students must monitor their own progress towards their goals and self-assess toward the completion of task criteria. Butler states that, "Therefore, to promote student self-regulation teachers must assist students to engage flexibly and adaptively in this cycle of cognitive activities (p.82)." Furthermore, she states that these skills are just as important as content-related objectives, and calls for, "explicit attention to how students adapt strategies reflectively and flexibly within recursive cycles of task analysis, strategy use, and monitoring (p.82)." While the *outcome* of self-regulated learning could occur in multiple contexts, I hope to use this approach to frame my goal of giving students greater input into and ownership over our their learning.

Student Self-Assessment

Prior to purposeful goal setting or self-monitoring, students must build skill in accurate

and thorough self-assessment. McDonald (2012) found that most high-performing students underestimated their own performance, while low-performing students overestimate their achievement, making systematic teaching of self-assessment crucial. She notes that timely teacher feedback is the first step to empowering students to take positive action. Secondly, Butler (2002) calls for teachers to facilitate students' abilities to "to self-evaluate performance by comparing outcomes to task criteria, rather than relying on teachers to make judgments about the adequacy of their work (p.89.)" In my own classroom, this might include whole-class discussions in which students and I co-construct criteria for excellent work. It could also mean that my students analyze a task individually or in small groups in order to propose criteria for assessment. According to Butler, this process increases student ownership and choice, while giving me insight as to what misconceptions students might have about a task or strategy. Additionally, McDonald found that "students formally trained in self assessment outperformed their untrained counterparts, and that they tend to be "divergent thinkers, creative individuals, assertive communicators, and cooperative individuals (p.12)." These are exactly the traits I hope to instill in students by giving them increased ownership in our second year together.

Conferencing and Goal Setting

Student self-assessment should be followed by opportunities to confer with a teacher around assessment, goal-setting, and strategy selection. A great deal of research supports student-led conferences as a tool for building student ownership over learning outcomes. Students can be trained to lead individual conferences with their teacher during the reading and writing workshops. In my classroom, I currently lead these conferences by identifying an individualized teaching point and then providing quick practice to one student at a time. However, Kinney (2012) says that encouraging students to own this process "shifts the focus of accountability to the student," leading students to "become more reflective learners who are capable of setting realistic, attainable goals and, therefore, are more apt to accept responsibility for their actions as they work to achieve those goals (p.55)." Kinney examined the power of student-led conferences in the context of quarterly parent-teacher conferences, and found that students became increasingly reluctant to attribute "failures" to their teachers, and became "focused on their personal responsibility to make changes (p.56)." McDonald (2012) found that these conferences allow "for the development of life long skills to realistically assess one's own performance, plan future goals, and enhance academic achievement (p.6)." In my own classroom, conferences within the readers' and writers' workshop will provide *daily* – not quarterly – opportunities for students to hone their self-assessment skills in a supported conversation.

Goal setting is a crucial portion of these conferences. Kober and Usher (2012) state that "Control is maximized when students set goals for themselves," as this ownership can "foster interest and value (p.2)." Furthermore, they encourage teachers to allow students to define their goals after self-assessment because, "The most motivational goal is one that is not too difficult but also not too easy, and aligns with students' own personal interests and goals (p.5)." This certainly resonates with my experiences in the readers' and writers' workshops. I note that when I articulate what I'd like students to work on, they frequently forget, or cannot articulate why it is important. Conversely, when students independently identify a goal, they are much more able to recall what they are working towards and keep it as a focus during independent work.

Monitoring and Making Plans

The final stage of self-regulated learning involves creating opportunities and structures through which students can monitor their progress towards goals. Okwilagwe, E. & Oyediji (2015) say, "The advantage of self directed-learning, which is a paradigm shift from teacher to learner-centredness, is that it removes the passive role students play and thus gives room for effective participation during the classroom teaching and learning process (p.40)." They argue that students should use the monitoring period as time to think independently, brainstorm their own learning activities, request feedback on their work, and set criteria for assessment.

Kober and Usher (2012) state , "To feel in control, students must be able to see a clear path to achieving the goal, through means they can control rather than through luck or chance (p2)." In my classroom, these "paths" could include structures such as student-requested conferences, student choice about activities, or student input into feedback. I found great success with student-selected learning groups with this section of students in second grade. When students used data to inform their decisions about what activities they most needed to participate in, the motivation and purpose that fueled their work was significantly higher. Douglass and Morris (2014) explain this motivation with self-determination theory, stating that "The more control students have in their learning process, the more they sharpen their ability to sort through presented information as well as critically reflect and analyze their performance (p.14)."

According to Galluzzo and Johnson (2014), one structure that supports self-directed learning is study groups, or small groups directed by a peer to help students master academic material. They state that "achievement is positively correlated when students received content-related explanations (from peers) and listened to others (p.12)," and that teachers must "provide direct training on how to lead discussions in small groups so a trained peer tutor can lead productive verbal exchanges (p.12)." Their conclusions are largely drawn from Vygotsky's explanations that one essential feature of learning is for students to "interact with people in their environment and in cooperation with their peers (p.9)." Alderman, Green, and Liechty (2004) also support the use of small group peer tutoring, stating that it is a "practical, cost-effective intervention that has positive effects on student reading achievement (p.11)." Furthermore, Douglass and Morris (2014) note that when students have the opportunity to make choices about the work they pursue, "students' grade point average and intent to persist were positively and significantly related to students' focus (p.14)."

To support the implementation of self-directed learning, Platz (1994) says that teachers should use the strategy in only one area initially. In my own classroom, I will begin by using the structure of literacy conferences to build students' capacity for self-assessment, goal-setting, and self-monitoring. He also lays out a sequence by which teachers should build students' independence in self-directed learning:

1. Teachers provide selected activities aligning with student goals and provide high levels of support for structured practice.
2. Students use planning guides to choose from a list of teacher-selected activities. The teacher reviews student plans and provides feedback.
3. Students – with teacher support – brainstorm possible activities for meeting goals and choose from student-created or teacher-identified activities.
4. Students suggest their own learning activities for teacher review *and* provide their own plan for being assessed.

Teacher reflection is crucial during each stage. In the third quarter of my own research, when I hope that students are independently opting into review groups that they plan and

organize, I will have to gauge which activities are meaningful and providing positive outcomes for students. In fact, McDonald (2012) says, "The learner has to be able to have some measure of responsibility and autonomy on his assessment and operate in a collaborative manner with the teacher or facilitator. Mutual respect for each other's assessment is mandatory (p.4)."

Currently, I work to integrate components of student self-assessment and choice into my curriculum and classroom structures; However, Butler's self-regulated learning cycles (2002) provide a framework through which I can build consistent student ownership into my classroom in meaningful ways.

Summary of Data Collection Methods:

Research data was collected in a third grade departmentalized literacy class. This group of 25 students spends two hours with me daily and receives literacy and writing instruction. Three inclusion students also push in to the classroom, but as they are working on differentiated goals, are not included in this research. Thirteen of these students are still a part of the bilingual program at our school. However, 21 speak Spanish as their native language. (Others are not labeled as bilingual because parents chose to opt out of the bilingual program or because students have tested out based on language proficiency.) Additionally, I taught 21 of these students as second graders in 2014. Within the larger class, my research focuses on six students who serve as a sample of the larger class. These students were chosen to represent a cross-section of reading achievement levels as well as perceived motivation levels:

	Low Reader	Average Reader	High Reader
High Motivation	Lila	Yael	Cassie
Low Motivation	Rodimiro*	Eduardo	Daniela

**Initially, Chris represented the low reader, low motivation subgroup of students. However, his attendance became so poor in the second quarter of school (he attended about one day a week) that collecting reliable data became extremely difficult. He was therefore switched with Rodimiro, who is consistently in school.*

Student Subgroups

Rodimiro is a somewhat low reader. He began the year reading at grade level (level N), but his fluency and accuracy are so precarious that I knew it would be a challenge for him to meet his end of year goals. Though he has phenomenal comprehension, his motivation is low. He consistently turns in work that is low quality. Rodimiro typically perceives that he has higher achievement levels than he actually does.

Daniela is a high reader with somewhat low motivation. She began the year reading at level R, and has outstanding comprehension, so I meet with her individually and in small groups less frequently. However, this year she's struggled to work at her potential and has recently been turning in work that shows minimal effort.

Lila is a low reader with exceptionally high motivation. She began the year reading at level L, a mid second grade level, but it should be noted that she has grown about three years in 15 academic

months. She is among the most motivated of my sixty students, and actively speaks about her strengths and challenges, and independently solicits feedback.

Eduardo is an average reader with low motivation. He began the year reading at level Q (a mid-fourth grade level) and has outstanding comprehension, but the quality of his work is very poor. Most days, he stays in for extra support on his homework or reading responses because he tends to rush through work quickly.

Yael is a high reader with very high motivation. He began the year reading at level R (an end of fourth grade reading level), has very strong comprehension, and accepts feedback very well.

Cassie is an average reader with exceptional motivation. She began the year reading at level N (just below grade level at this point in the year), and has wonderful fluency and accuracy, but struggles with comprehension. However, Cassie is one of the hardest working, most reflective students I've worked with. The quality of her work is outstanding, and she integrates feedback so intelligently.

Data was collected within several contexts:

- ⑥ **Goal setting conferences:** I frequently confer with students about their goals, particularly around the times when we conduct testing, or when students are showing decreased engagement. These goal conversations typically solicit input from students about meaningful goals, and students and I co-determine next steps. Several of the interviews conducted in this research took place during goal setting conferences.
- ⑥ **Guided reading:** I meet with several guided reading groups daily in order to observe and coach students while they read books at their instructional reading level. While coaching individual students, I am able to gather information about their perceived and actual strengths and weaknesses, as well as determine their ability to solicit feedback and show ownership over their next steps.
- ⑥ **Readers' Workshop Conferences:** In the readers' workshop, students independently apply learned strategies while reading books on their independent reading level. I frequently confer with students during this time, and like during guided reading, gather data about strengths and weaknesses. Likewise, this time provides valuable information about whether students are applying learned strategies and coaching points on their own.

Several different data collection tools were used within these contexts:

1. **Teacher Journal:** I wrote in a teacher journal several times a month as a means of reflecting on student outcomes, documenting the interventions and structures I implemented, and analyzing their effectiveness.
2. **Transcriptions of Conferences:** I conferred with a few students every day in both writing and reading workshops. During this time, I took anecdotal notes and audio recordings of the extent to which students can identify what they are working towards and solicit specific feedback and help. While this began within the short, somewhat surface-level conferring conversations, it was later collected during peer teaching groups, and while gathering student input on what we study as a class.
3. **Student Survey:** I administered a student survey three times this year that gauged several things:
 - ⑥ Students' understandings of their areas of strength and weaknesses
 - ⑥ Students' perceptions of how well they are able to pursue learning in their areas of weaknesses
 - ⑥ Students' perceptions of the kind of input they have in their own learning.

Over time, this data should reveal whether students can become more specific and accurate, and that their responses to the second and third kinds of questions demonstrate increased ownership and choice in the classroom.

4. Literacy Data: I tracked student data based on running records that measure reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Using last year's data, I not only tracked whether students were on track towards their individual goals, but whether the introduction of choice and ownership helped them to grow at a *faster* rate than they did last year. I also tracked mastery over specific standards and strategies. This data helped me to:

- ⑥ Analyze how student choice and ownership affects learning over time by gauging whether student mastery actually increased as a result of the choices students made. (For instance, if a student used a low self-assessment to opt into a review group, did their mastery actually improve as a result?)
- ⑥ Analyze whether students grew increasingly accurate in their self-assessment over time, as compared to my own assessment of their work.

Implementation

Initially, I knew that I needed to strategically build a culture in which my students valued taking more ownership over their work. As mentioned previously, our year in second grade together had built a strong culture of goal setting, data tracking, and reflection. However, I was disturbed by low the quality of work some students, particularly Daniela, Rodimiro and Eduardo, were turning in. To this end, I spent September teaching eight mini-lessons focused on building a culture of growth mindsets. Students who demonstrate growth mindset believe their intelligence is not fixed, and that with hard work, they can take tangible steps towards improving academic outcomes and strengths. Below is a sample of objectives and experiences we had as a class to build this mindset:

- ⑥ Students can articulate the difference between growth and fixed mindsets: *Students watched a video about how the brain builds neurons while taking risks and experiencing challenges*
- ⑥ Students can identify language that demonstrates a growth vs. a fixed mindset: *Students role-played supporting their peers and engaging in self-talk when facing challenges and setbacks*
- ⑥ Students will articulate the role of productive struggle in building intelligence: *Students engaged in a problem solving activity in small groups, pausing to reflect on their mindset and practice growth mindset language throughout*
- ⑥ Students will identify general next steps they can take in our classroom to demonstrate ownership over challenges: *Students brainstormed independent, peer-supported, and teacher-supported actions they could take while struggling.*

While building a growth mindset was a year-long effort that required constant maintenance and

reflection, I quickly shifted my focus to building students' ability to accurately self assess their strengths and areas of challenge. However, I dramatically underestimated how long this would take, and quickly realized that students did not have a strong baseline understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. While all students could articulate their goals and reading levels, I found that they had a very limited understanding of what led them to be at a particular reading level, or what caused them to receive a particular score on an

assessment. A journal entry discussing student reflection during parent teacher conferences reads:

I was really disappointed at their lack of specificity. Many comments I heard sounded like, "I'm good at reading," "I'm good at reading quietly," "I'm good at working hard." The same thing was true for sharing their weaknesses. Even when I prompted, "What are some of the specific strategies that you have for understanding a book," they were still general or just named what we'd been working on that week because it was fresh in their memory. This highlighted a few things for me. First, while my kids are so smart, they really do not have the skills or knowledge yet to be metacognitive about what we're learning. To get them there, I have to be so much more explicit with telling them what we are learning. I've assumed that they can infer that if we work on main idea all week, for example, then they know that's a strategy good readers use – but that's clearly not the case. Additionally, I need to give my kids a deeper understanding of the things a good reader does besides "work hard" and "read quietly" – thinking back, I don't think any of them could tell about the three major components of strong reading, or define them clearly.

So, we spent much of October and November unpacking what makes a reader strong and dissecting the areas of accuracy, fluency and comprehension in reading. I shifted the focus of my guided reading groups and literacy conferences to being very reflection-based, in that after I gave students teaching points, we reflected on what that implied for their areas of strength and struggle as readers.

In October, I also focused heavily on building students' abilities to develop criteria for their work, as I realized that teacher created criteria was neither meaningful nor useful for all students. We practiced using rubrics, checklists, rating scales, and exemplar work scales. This took a tremendous amount of time in each lesson, but students slowly began to gain independence in translating excellent work models to actionable steps they should take and criteria they should look for in their own work. At this point, the majority of lessons had some sort of student-created assessment tool as a major component.

Still, just because they had the tools did not mean that students accurately used them. I noticed several trends throughout November and December: First, several students were simply not invested in the assessment tool – it was one more part of an assignment to be completed. Additionally, others saw that tools like rubrics were used to assess, but did not understand they could be used to improve their work. Instead, they would rate themselves, accurately identifying areas where they did not meet expectations, and simply turn in the assignment instead of making changes. This, in turn, led to a group of students who consistently rated themselves at the highest levels (often incorrectly), having learned that if a rubric had less than excellent scores, they'd be required to do more work! A journal entry during this time reads:

When I gave the assessment yesterday, I was shocked to see that every single student gave himself or herself a 100% on the rubric, fully meeting all the criteria. Now, they did very well on this assessment overall. So technically they were closer to being accurate than normal. However, I'm worried that I pushed students towards being afraid to acknowledge places in the rubric where they might not know how to improve their work. There might be a few explanations:

- 1) Students aren't actually clear on the criteria, and are potentially confused about what meeting expectations looks like.*

- 2) *Students don't know how to improve their work further, so they marked it as meeting expectations regardless. Meaning that students knew if they turned in work that was not marked as perfect on a rubric, I would ask them to correct it further.*
- 3) *Students don't know that it's ok to mark a rubric as less than perfect because that can be a tool for getting further support. (i.e. I'm at a level 2 vs. 3 in this area of criteria, but I'm not sure how to make it a 3 and I need help.)*

As a result, I spent far more time than planned trying to shift my students' mindsets about the power of self-assessment. For a time in November and December, I stopped using the rubric as my grading tool. (Previously, students had assessed themselves, and then I used the same rubric to provide them feedback and a grade.) This helped to shore up gaps in honest reflection from some students. I also provided students a specific part of the day to *revisit* their work and reflections and spend time using the criteria to improve this work. This was crucial; It took out the feeling of punishment that some students associated with needing to revisit their assignment. It also simply gave them a break from the work (versus working intensely, giving themselves a low self-assessment score, and then needing to increase their focus even more). Perhaps most importantly, I reflected on how frustrating it must have been for some students to self-assess as less than perfect, and feel trapped between a) not knowing how to improve their work and b) not wanting to lie about their performance. This led me to do a lot more conferring one on one with students who fell into this group, as well as have dedicated discussions with the whole class, about steps hard workers took when they knew they had to improve.

The most time and energy-consuming portion of this research followed (January through March), when I had to commit to providing students the supports to actively improve on their work. I tried many things, and failed at nearly all of them. In the previous year, I had set up very effective peer-teaching groups, in which high students took responsibility for remediating gaps in math with lower students. However, this presented as significantly more difficult in literacy, as reading is not a set of skills to be mastered, and the students who struggle most often have deep underlying issues that are difficult for even experienced teachers to find the root of. I then transitioned to planning teacher-led review groups that students signed up for daily. This proved to be a tremendous amount of work for several reasons. First, I had to provide students *immediate* daily feedback. This turnaround time was not always possible, and it led to disruption of the review structure if I didn't have students' work prepared by the next day. Likewise, I had to prepare materials for review groups daily, which entailed writing new texts and carefully aligning practice that was appropriately leveled for any student needing review. Additionally, I found this structure took significant time away from other important structures, like guided reading and conferencing.

Finally, I worked towards weekly reflection and remediation. Students used a weekly reflection template (see Appendix A) in which they evaluated their strengths and weaknesses over the course of the week, using the criteria we discussed. This gave me more time to provide better feedback, and for students to get a deeper sense of what their work was building towards throughout the week. This also led students to more deeply understand specifically what held them back throughout the week, and ask for feedback directly in that area. For instance, instead of saying, "I didn't meet this objective of inferring the audience for a non-fiction text," students were able to say things like, "I am able to infer the audience but I struggle to provide text evidence to support my idea." This allowed me to tailor review groups the following week. I could use all the same review materials (cutting down

significantly on preparation time), but provide even more tailored support that ultimately came from more meaningful student self-assessment.

Initially, I'd planned to spend the entire fourth quarter exploring the sub question of student ownership. However, since I spent so much time strengthening student accuracy in self-assessment and testing strategies for remediation, we were only able to focus on this for the latter part of April and all of May. During this time, I worked to give students more choice and control in the classroom based on their self-assessments throughout the week. This took the form of "Choice Fridays", in which students were given the entire lesson's time to choose the best way to present their learning for the week. As an example, after a week of studying narrator's perspective, students could choose to:

- 1) **Illustrate** two posters advertising two different perspectives about the same event
- 2) **Write** about the same topic from two different perspectives
- 3) **Teach a lesson** to a third grader about how to compare two perspectives (this included writing the texts that students would use to compare perspectives)
- 4) **Read** two texts about the same topic and **design** a graphic organizer that would compare certain elements of the two perspectives.

Of course, we developed criteria for each project, including demonstrating perspectives with facts and opinions, leaving clues in the writing about the author of each text, etc. Initially, I heavily guided them in identifying possible choices for assessment, but as the month went on, students were more able to suggest ways that they could show their learning, and these were incorporated into the list of options each Friday.

Choice Friday 5/20 Name: Cassie

This week we studied advertisements. We paid attention to:

- The audience of advertisements
- The purpose of advertisements
- The claims, or promises that advertisements make
- The techniques, or strategies that advertisers use

Reflection

This week my strengths were:

- The purpose of an advertisement.
- The audience is easy.
- _____

This week I struggled with:

- I think the claim was the hardest.
- _____
- _____

How will I show my learning? (Pick the choice that will show your strengths!)

I want to work on finding the audience: Create two of the same advertisement. For each advertisement, decide on a different audience. Depending on the audience, you should have different pictures, different claim and different details included that will appeal to that audience.

I want to work on finding the claims: Look at a collection of advertisements. For each one, find the claim that the author is giving to the audience.

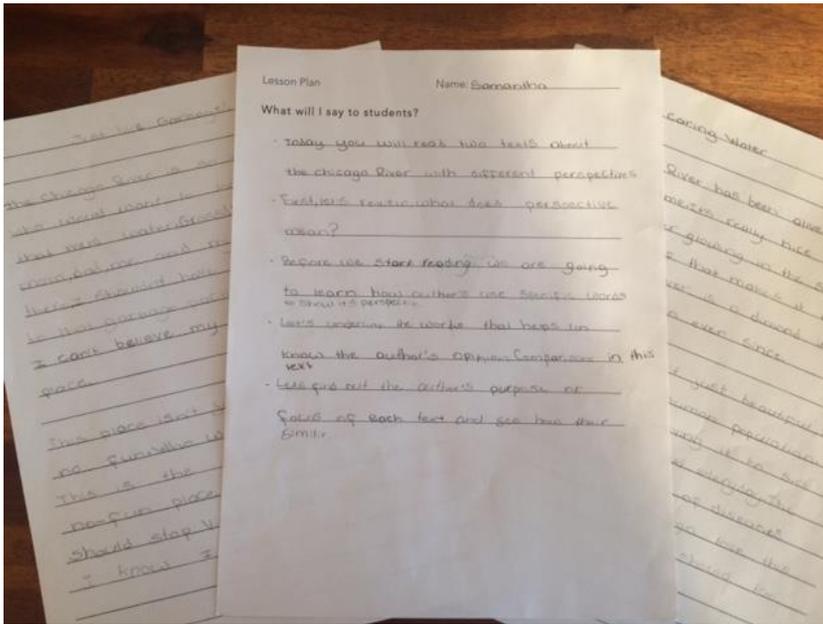
I want to work on finding the techniques: Create two of the same advertisement. For each advertisement, use a different technique to persuade your audience.

I want to practice everything: Look at three funny products. Write a persuasive text that will make someone buy the product.

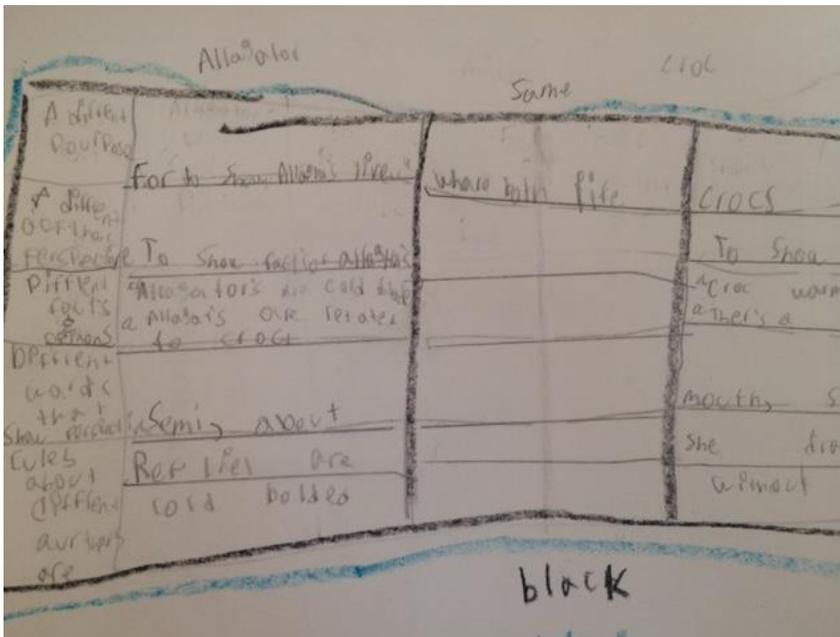
Why did you choose this way to show your learning?

I think that it will help me with finding claim because I struggled on the claim

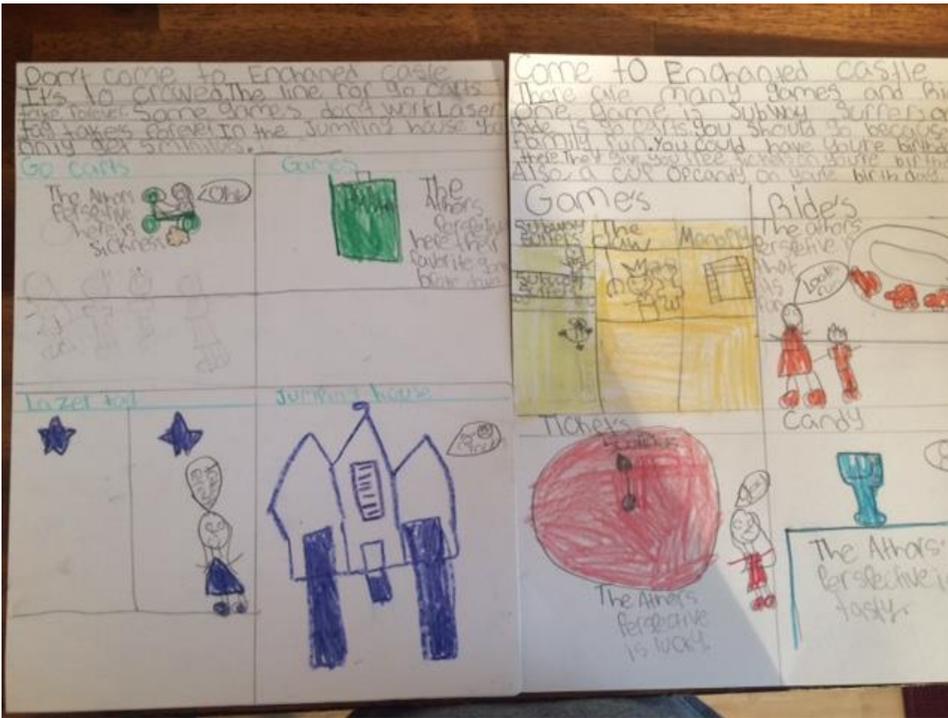
Cassie used her reflection sheet to identify strengths, areas for growth, and a way to demonstrate her learning during "Choice Friday"



Samantha demonstrated learning by "planning a lesson, including writing practice texts and questions for her "students".



Jesse demonstrated learning by designing his own graphic organizer to compare two authors' purposes, genres, perspectives, etc.



Giselle demonstrated learning by creating two different advertisements for the same place, illustrating two different author's perspectives.

Initially, I'd hoped to give students broader input over what we learned as a class, choosing, for instance, the major reading strategies we should focus on in our last unit of literacy. However, I realized later in the research that to do this meaningfully, students would have had to have historical data on their achievement throughout the school year. This would have allowed them to identify true areas of strengths and weakness. However, we didn't reliably track the standards at the yearly level. In hindsight, this would be an important addition to this research process.

Data Collection & Analysis

The following data and analysis are organized first by research sub question, and then by student. Some sections include more than one table to support the subquestion. Following each section, an overall analysis will present trends, conclusions, and further hypothesis.

How does increased ownership impact the extent to which students can accurately and specifically reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses?

Table 1: Initial Reading Self-Assessment and Attitudes Survey

The following table shows data taken from a survey administered in September. The survey was designed to assess several things: 1) The extent to which students could accurately self-assess their general areas of strength and weakness in a literacy classroom; 2) The strength or weakness of student 'growth mindsets' about the extent to which their hard work would translate to success; and 3) The extent to which they believed they take action to improve on their work and areas of growth. The questions pertaining to growth mindset and student action were loosely based on research used to develop the Becoming Effective Learners Student Survey created by the Consortium on Chicago Schools Research at the University of Chicago. Individualized questions have been consolidated in the table below to reflect general question types (see survey in Appendix B).

*All questions were placed on a 1-5 scale, with 1 being 100% disagree and 5 being 100% agree

	Perceived Achievement: Questions 1-4			Perceived Student Ownership: Questions 5-6			Growth Mindset: Questions 7-10			Self-Advocacy: Questions 11-13		
	BOY	EOY	CHANGE	BOY	EOY	CHANGE	BOY	EOY	CHANGE	BOY	EOY	CHANGE
Class Average	3.28	3.69	+0.41	3.25	4.04	+0.79	3.08	3.81	+0.73	3.32	3.74	+0.43
Daniela	2.5	4.25	+1.75	3	4	+1	1.5	5	+3.5	2.33	4.67	+2.33
Yael	2.75	3.75	+1	2.5	4	+1.25	3.75	2.5	-1.25	3	4	+1
Cassandra	3.75	3.5	-0.25	3.5	4	+0.5	2.25	4	1.75	3	2.67	-0.33
Eduardo	2.25	2.25	0	3	4	+1	3.25	4.75	+1.5	2	3.33	+1.67
Lila	3.5	4	+0.5	4	4	0	3.5	3.5	0	3.33	4	+0.67
Rodimiro	3.5	2.25	-1.25	4.5	3.5	-1	1.5	3	+1.5	4	3	-1

Table 2: Perceived vs. Actual Achievement

I very frequently asked students to self-assess their work using co-constructed rubrics or checklists. This chart denotes the difference between how students' rated their own work and how I rated their work (actual). The difference columns represent a percentage difference in the student's perceived achievement versus their actual achievement. A negative difference indicates the student rated himself or herself higher than they actually were. A positive difference indicates the student under-rated himself or herself.

	December/January			February/March			April/May			Overall	
	Actual	Student	Difference	Actual	Student	Difference	Actual	Student	Difference	Average Difference	Change December - May
Group Average	8.1	8.6	-0.5	7.2	6.9	+2	9.1	9.5	-0.4	-.2	0.1
Daniela	7.6	9	-1.3	7.5	5.9	+1.6	9.6	10	-0.4	.0	0.9
Yael	9.7	9	+0.7	6.3	7.5	-1.2	9.3	10	-0.7	-.6	1.4
Cassandra	10	9.3	+0.7	10	7.5	+2.5	10	10	0	1.6	0.7
Eduardo	6.3	8.3	-2.0	5	6	-1	8.3	8.9	-0.6	-1.8	1.4
Lila	8	6.7	+1.3	9.7	7.5	+2.2	9.6	9.1	+0.5	2.0	0.7
Rodimiro	6.7	9	-2.3	4.5	7.2	-2.7	7.5	8.8	-1.3	-1.3	1.0
All Students	6.4	7.9	-1.5	7.2	7.7	-.5	9.4	8.5	.9	-.4	2.4

Individual Students

Rodimiro: Of the six students studied, Rodimiro most consistently and dramatically over-rates his achievement (about 25% higher than his actual achievement). While this did improve over the course of the year (from 25% overrating himself to 10% overrating himself, the trend was consistent.

In our initial reading self-assessment and attitudes survey, Rodimiro rated his strengths as comprehending reading (accurate) and using new writing strategies (inaccurate), and his weaknesses as reading books on his level (accurate) and sounding out new words (accurate). By the end of the year, he became only slightly more accurate. His responses initially showed a very fixed mindset, but this improved an average of 1.5 points (of five), indicating that his beliefs about his own ownership and intelligence became more growth-oriented.

In reading conferences, Rodimiro showed the lowest overall score (9 of 16 points) in February, as well as the least growth of the six students. His goal was very general ("To get to level Q") and he could not articulate smaller goals he would need to take to reach level Q. This goal also isn't feasible in the short term, as it represents about a year of growth from his current level. He wasn't able to identify a strength, and his next steps were very vague. Like a few other students, he asked that I test his reading level, though this isn't a means of coaching or support as much as it is assessment. For his own next steps he said he would "grow".

Daniela: Daniela's self-assessment trends have changed over time. In December, she typically over-rated her achievement. Using classroom rubrics, she scored herself an average of 13% higher than her actual achievement showed. However, this has improved. Daniela has moved closer to more accurately self-assessing. Her most recent two self-assessments showed a 33% under-rating of her work, and then a completely accurate self-assessment.

At the beginning of the year, Daniela accurately acknowledged that she often doesn't read books at her level or attempt new writing strategies, but accurately said that her strength was reading comprehension. However, by the end of the year, her self-assessments were completely accurate (she excels in reading comprehension and decoding, and typically does attempt new writing strategies.) Her growth mindset also grew dramatically. Initially, she showed a very fixed mindset, and also accurately acknowledged that she doesn't often fix up her work or ask for feedback or support. However, by the end of the year she rated herself a 5 of 5 for all mindset related questions. This qualitatively matched the shift I saw in her attitude and effort in the classroom as she became much more focused and driven to improve her work.

Daniela showed moderate growth and overall scores in her conferring conversation from December to February (from 6 points to 12). She had a very specific goal (to be able to better understand text structure) and had an accurate reflection on her strengths and weaknesses. However, like Rodimiro, she requested that I test her more often, and her own next steps were to "read and try to understand". Neither of these are actionable steps that will influence her goal.

Lila: Lila has consistently under-rated her achievement. Over time, she's begun to rate herself lower than her work deserves, going from a 13% under-rating in December to a 22% underrating average in February. However, she became more accurate over time, ultimately only under rating herself by about 5%.

Lila became much more accurate in her self-assessment of reading. By the end of the year, she correctly identified comprehension and writing strategy use as her strengths, and identified her area of struggle as decoding. I believe conferences around goals significantly supported Lila in becoming more accurate. Lila's mindset related questions were very inconsistent over time; She highly agreed that she can change how smart she is (increasing from a 1 to a 5 on a five point scale), but went down when prompted whether challenges would make her smarter or whether she could learn everything in our class.

In both December and February, Lila had the highest overall scores on her conferring rubric (14 of 15 possible points). Lila initiated all parts of her conference in February, and her goals, strengths and weaknesses were extremely accurate. She asked me for specific feedback ("to listen to me and

to give me feedback on how I chunk words) and her own next step was to “not waste time with all the strategies when I find a word I don’t know. I should chunk it fast.”

Eduardo: Eduardo’s self-assessment has become more accurate over time. In December, he averaged a 20% higher self-assessment than his work merited. However, in January, this has changed to a 10% lower self-assessment and in April and May to a 6% difference. He is become more accurate over time and does not often perceive his achievement as higher than it is.

Though he knows he can read at high levels, Eduardo interestingly self-assessed low in all areas, including things that are clearly skills of his, like sounding out words. This made me wonder if he has trouble discriminating between doing poorly on his work due to lack of effort (and how his grades have suffered as a result) and his actual skill level. However, by the end of the year, his self-assessment was nearly completely accurate. He did acknowledge reading books below his level, but he quite accurately recognized his skills in decoding and comprehension. Initially, he skewed towards the middle in mindset related questions but leaned more towards a growth mindset, disagreeing that he can’t change how good he is at reading. However, like Daniela, I saw a tremendous change in Eduardo’s attitude throughout the year, and this was reflected in his much higher ending growth mindset scores. In class, he still needs support to meet learning criteria, but he takes significantly more ownership over his work than in the fall. He actively seeks feedback and is eager to revisit his work to make improvements; This was reflected in almost every growth mindset score growing from the beginning to the end of the year.

Eduardo grew the most from December to February’s conference, scoring 13 of 15 points in February. However, his perceived strengths (“fluency”) and weaknesses (“comprehension”) were quite vague. He identified a very specific strategy for himself to try out, stating he would, “Not skip pages when I’m not understanding, and I will retell each page after I read it.”

Yael: Yael’s self-assessment has been consistently the most accurate. In December, he only showed a 7% average difference between his self-assessments and my assessment of his work. In February, he was only 12% average difference, though he started to over-rate his work near the end of the year.

Yael became more accurate in his self-assessment in some areas, including knowing that using new writing strategies is a strength of his. However, continued to underrate himself in certain areas like decoding and comprehension. Yael’s mindset related questions surprisingly became somewhat lower over time; In the beginning of the year, he agreed that challenges make him smarter but he responded as neutral mid year. Likewise, he went from highly agree to neutral when asked whether he can change how “good” he is at reading.

Despite Yael’s high achievement, he continues to struggle in his conferences, scoring only 9 points in February and showing little growth. He had a very specific goal of working to better identify the main idea, but he could not articulate why it was important at all. However, he did specifically request that I give him additional practice work during choice time, which was a very concrete and aligned next step.

Cassie: Cassie initially always under-rated her work, which is consistent with some of the mindsets revealed below. In December, she averaged a 7% difference between actual and perceived work, and this difference grew to 25% in February. However, by the end of the year she was significantly more accurate and did not show a difference with my assessment of her.

As in other areas of self-assessment, Cassie continued to under-rate her abilities, even at the end of the school year. For instance, she rated herself at 3 of 5 for comprehending reading, and 3 of 5 in independently using reading strategies; I would rate both of these things as a 5. Cassie did show high growth on mindset related questions, moving from 2 points to 4 points (of 5) in response to the question “I can change how smart I am” and from a 1 to a 5 when prompted “Challenging myself will make me smarter”.

Cassie tends to get very nervous in her conferences, which may be the cause of her low February conference rubric score. Her goal was somewhat arbitrary (visualizing the story), and her

next steps (practice understanding text features) were not at all aligned. However, she did identify concrete strengths and weaknesses.

Whole Class Trends

Quantitatively, I did not see students becoming significantly more accurate over time with their self-assessment on assignments, despite spending a tremendous amount of time here (see table 2). As a whole class, students began by over-rating their work by an average of about 15%, and ended the year under-rating themselves by about 9%. I would prefer that they under-rate themselves, as it hopefully led more of them to work on improving their work.

Whole class trends very closely supported the trends I saw within the subgroup of students, in that students with low motivation were most likely to over-rate themselves, and students with high motivation were most likely to under-rate themselves. This did not hold true when dividing the data by low, high, and average readers. For instance, Lila (a low reader) significantly under-rated herself, while Rodimiro (also a low reader) significantly over-rated himself.

When surveyed (see table 1), students perceived that they had grown in every area of literacy, moving from an average 3.3 to a 3.7 by the end of the year. Interestingly, eight students rated themselves as overall the same lower at the end of the year than in the beginning of the year. These students included Cassandra, Rodimiro and Eduardo, along with several of my other lower students. Still, it should be noted that this was because some students became more accurate, and therefore lowered some scores and raised others. (For instance, Eduardo correctly changed his self-assessment of reading books on his level from a 2 to a 1, but raised his rating for comprehending reading from a 3 to a 5. Eventually, he did not have overall change.) Conversely, the students who grew the most in their self-assessment over time were many of my “middle” students. These are the students who received the most interventions and support this year, so perhaps they internalized that work as growth. I do not have an absolute measure to which I can compare these general self-assessments to, but it appears that students did in fact become more accurate over time in understanding their reading strengths and weaknesses. However, seeing this data, particularly from lower students, makes me worry that by helping students become more accurate, I have reinforced either negative or positive mindsets about students' abilities and perhaps contributed to a fixed versus growth mindset for some.

In reviewing the mindset-related questions in the survey, I was pleased to see that all students but three (Lila, Yael and one other student) showed positive growth in their beliefs about their intelligence. In questions related to self-advocacy (i.e. I stop to check whether I understand), only three students showed negative growth (Cassandra, Rodimiro, and one other student). In particular, students grew most on the question “I stop to fix up my work”, which is the prompt correlating most closely with the work we did around student self-assessment. While I don't have a concrete way to measure whether students did use the three strategies measured (check whether I understand, stop to revise work, and ask for feedback), I was pleased to see that students believed they were using these strategies more.

Qualitatively, it's important to note the changes I saw in my “low motivation” group: Daniela, Rodimiro and Eduardo. All three of these students grew more accurate in their overall self-assessment and reported among the highest positive change in their growth mindset. I saw all three students take significantly more ownership throughout the school year, eventually showing additional interest in getting feedback and support that I had never seen before. Below is an excerpt from my March 5 journal.

Both of these boys (Rodimiro and another student) produce work of extremely low quality. Rodimiro struggles to even finish the work that is assigned to him and often just sits for the duration of the work time without starting much. Both boys turn in work that frequently doesn't even address the question that has been asked of them (often just retelling what happened in a text or writing their reaction to the text) despite having models displayed, rubrics on their work, and posters for support (as well as several check-ins from me).

...

Last week I had a meeting with Rodimiro's mom and him. His mom essentially broke down in the meeting and voiced her frustration with him; She has five sons, with the youngest being one or two, and it was clear she did not feel she had the capacity to be "on top of" Rodi about his work. I think this was a revelation for Rodimiro. He agreed in the meeting that he shouldn't need to be 'babysat' while doing his homework, and that his job was to help his mom, not cause more stress. I need time to properly debrief this conversation with him and to get his deeper reactions, but I will say that his work in class has improved dramatically. He's now starting his work right away, and while it's not perfect, he's at least showing effort to use the criteria we give him to try his best. He's also started turning homework in 3-4 days a week, which is significantly better than the one day a week he was turning it in before!

I believe one area that could have been better utilized to support increased accuracy in self-assessment is our literacy conferences. Due to time constraints, these did not happen as frequently as I had initially planned. As a result, they continued to be more teacher-supported and less student led. This may have led to students not fully internalizing conversations about their strengths and areas for growth.

How does increased ownership impact student growth towards individual literacy goals?

How does student ownership impact the extent to which students can independently use and apply strategies?

Table 3: Guided Reading Growth Comparison; second grade to third grade

I looped with this group of students, meaning that I taught them in both 2nd grade and 3rd grade, and therefore have historical data to which I can compare their reading growth this school year. The first column notes students' quarterly average growth in second grade, as measured by the TRC Running Record Reading Assessment System. This system measures students' reading accuracy, fluency and reading comprehension. Red columns denote quarters in which students grew *less* than they did on average each quarter in 2014; Green columns are quarters in which they grew *more* than the average in 2014. It should be noted that depending on their starting reading level, students grow at different paces. For instance, Lila, who is the lowest reader in this group, should be expected to grow more rapidly than should Eduardo, who already reads significantly above level.

	2014 Quarterly Growth Avg.	2015 Q1 growth	2015 Q2 Growth	2015 Q3 Growth	2015 Q4 Growth	Overall Growth 2015 (years)
Daniela	0.38	0.33	0	0.34	1.66	2.33
Yael	0.46	0.66	0.34	1.00	1.0	3.0
Cassandra	0.42	0	0	0.67	.33	1.0
Eduardo	0.31	0.34	0	0.66	1.0	2.0
Lila	0.69	0.5	0.25	0.33	.92	2.0
Rodimiro	0.33	0.33	0.66	0.33	.33	1.67
AVERAGE	0.43	0.36	0.21	0.56	.82	2.0

Table 4: Student Ownership and Mastery Over Time

The following table shows student mastery on specific literacy assessments when students were given the opportunity to “opt-in” to different remedial structures. On Mondays, students received their assessment from the previous Friday with feedback on it. They then chose whether they wanted additional support. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, those students attended remedial groups for support. On Thursdays, they examined their work from the week and had the chance to ask for specific feedback for improvement. On Fridays, they were reassessed. The table below shows several assignments, students' initial scores, and their scores after retaking the assessment, and their growth. Note that not every student has scores for each assessment, as they were given choice about whether they needed support. The final row of each column notes the class average, including students outside of the studied subgroups.

	Genre Assessment – February			Connecting Theme Assessment- March			Inferring Narrator Perspective April		
	Initial	Retake	Difference	Initial	Retake	Difference	Initial	Retake	Difference
Rodimiro	56%	88%	+32%	7%	63%	+56%	60%	87%	+27%
Eduardo	87%	N/A		42%	90%	+48%	67%	87%	+20%
Daniela	56%	68%	+13%	67%	81%	+14%	73%	93%	+20
Yael	87%	N/A		93%	N/A		87%	N/A	
Cassandra	93%	N/A		77%	100%	+23%	93%	N/A	
Lila	65%	81%	+16%	93%	100%	+7%	80%	93%	+13%
All participating students	63%	79%	+16%	59%	87%	+28%	77%	90%	+13%

As shown in table 3, this group of students grew an average of .36 of one year in quarter one, and that slowed to .2 of one year in quarter two. However, this growth increased significantly in quarters three and four and ultimately nearly doubled the average growth seen in the 2014-2015 school year. I was also pleased to see that students at all levels grew tremendously this year, with the exception of Cassie, who made average growth. I often see high readers, including those at Daniela and Cassie's level "max out" at high levels because the content of the text and the comprehension demands are extremely high. However, that did not happen this year (Daniela and Eduardo reached a W (a 6.33 grade level equivalent) and Yael reached an X (a 6.67 grade level equivalent)).

Historically, this class grew significantly more than any other class that I have taught. Combined, they grew 1.8 years in reading as measured by running records. . (In 2014 and 2013, my classes averaged 1.5 years of growth, and in 2012 they averaged 1.3 years of growth.) Additionally, 92% of students ended the year reading on grade level, and one who did not is a part of the special education program and has individual growth goals. The cohort of six students in this research grew an average of two academic years, while last year they grew 1.7 academic years. Previously, I would have attributed high growth in reading levels to guided reading (a small group, research-based structure in which I give direct instruction and feedback to students on their instructional reading level). However, this year I did significantly less guided reading than ever before, due to time constraints, replacing it with new structures implemented by this research, and simply because guided reading occurs less frequently at higher reading levels. Since very little else about my classroom instruction changed from the 2014 school year to this school year, I have reason to believe that increased student ownership had a positive effect on overall reading growth.

The majority of interventions related to these research questions were implemented in January through March, and the data table above suggests that the interventions positively correlated with student growth. It is very typical that students will show large amounts of growth in quarter 1, as they are often simply recuperating summer reading loss. It has been typical for me to see the most growth in quarter two, when we heavily invest in intervention time. Interestingly, I typically see the least growth in quarter 4, but this year I saw tremendous growth during that time. Referring back to this research implementation, quarter three was spent problem solving around structures in which students could take action on their self-assessments and my feedback. During this time, I shifted from teaching significant amounts of guided reading (about four small groups a day) to a balance of feedback/remediation groups and guided reading. I additionally created extra opportunities for specific skill remediation, allowing students to opt in to study groups, individual feedback partnerships, and more individual time to review and revise their own work. The second half of quarter four focused heavily on student choice and control. Students now took the self-assessment data and feedback they'd received, and rather than opting into teacher-created structures, designed their own opportunities for practice. At the time, I stressed about how the structures described above cut into guided reading. However, while I can't exclusively correlate the increase in growth to these structures, it may have had a positive impact in quarters three and four.

Within the subgroups, it was not easy to see whether motivation correlated with growth, as all students grew significantly. For instance, Daniela (a high reader with low motivation) grew most, while Cassie (a high reader with high motivation) grew least. Likewise, high readers did not necessarily grow more than low readers. In fact, each "pair" of readers (organized by low, average and high) fell in very different places in terms of their growth made (i.e. Cassie grew one year, and Daniela grew 2.33.)

I also measured growth in student mastery when students made choices to retake assessments after opting into small groups or one on one remediation (see table 4). While not all students needed to or decided to retake the assessment/engage in review opportunities, every student who did saw positive growth on these assessments. At times, this growth was quite high, particularly for students like Rodimiro and Eduardo. This data leads me to believe that not only did giving students choice about engaging in remediation practices support higher levels of mastery, it was particularly useful for students for low motivation. They may have needed the additional time to reflect on their challenges and build confidence throughout the week's remediation opportunities.

While it's difficult to say exactly which interventions could have potentially caused this surge in growth, I feel confident in attributing it to the overall mindset shifts I saw in my classroom in quarters 3 and 4. As students became more and more accurate in their self-assessment, they were more easily able to identify which areas of the reading assessment held them back from progressing. Before, most students might have been able to identify whether fluency, accuracy or comprehension was their limiting factor. However, I now hear students using much more specific language like, "I need to use the text to support my answer" or "It's difficult for me to answer questions when I have to make an inference" rather than saying, "I need to work on comprehension." It's difficult to translate this to action for students, but it is definitely indicative of qualitative growth.

How does increased ownership impact student agency and choice?

Table 5: Student Reading Conferences

The following table measured student responses during literacy conferences, as measured by a four-point rubric (see Appendix C) that was co-constructed with students. While I conferred with each student about every two weeks, I formally collected this data about once a month beginning in December. The categories are as follows:

Initiative: Student leads conference

Accuracy: Student thoroughly and accurately describes their strengths and weaknesses

Purpose: Student can articulate why their specific goal is meaningful to them in the short and long term

Advocacy: Student can suggest reasonable next steps for both themselves and where they need teacher support

	December					February					April				
	I	Ac	P	Ad	TTL	I	Ac	P	Ad	TTL	I	Ac	P	Ad	TTL
Group Avg	1	1.3	1.5	1.2	5/16	2.7	2.7	2.5	3.2	11/16	3	3.3	3.2	2.8	12/16
Daniela	1	2	2	1	6	3	3	3	3	12	2	3	4	3	13
Yael	1	1	2	1	5	2	2	2	3	9	3	3	3	3	12
Cassandra	1	1	1	1	4	3	2	2	3	10	3	2	2	2	11
Eduardo	1	1	1	1	4	3	4	3	3	13	3	4	3	3	13
Lila	1	2	2	2	7	3	4	3	4	14	4	4	4	4	16
Rodimiro	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	2	3	8	2	3	2	2	9

Table 1: Initial Reading Self-Assessment and Attitudes Survey

Below is an excerpt from table one, including the questions asked of students based on their perceived ownership in the classroom.

	Prompt 5: Mrs. D. teaches what I need most			Prompt 6: I decide what I learn		
	BOY	EOY	CHANGE	BOY	EOY	CHANGE
Class Average	4.3	4.4	+1	2.3	3.7	+1.4
Daniela	5	5	0	1	4	+3
Yael	4	5	+1	1	3	+2
Cassandra	4	4	0	3	4	+1
Eduardo	5	5	0	1	4	+3
Lila	5	5	0	3	3	0
Rodimiro	4	4	0	4	5	+1

As a whole class, students agreed by .75 more of a point (on a five point scale) on two prompts:

- 1) Mrs. D. teaches the things that I need most
- 2) I can decide what I learn

In hindsight, I think it's important to disaggregate these two questions because I realize in hindsight students could potentially read them in opposition to each other (Mrs. D. makes my choices vs. I make my choices). Students' opinions about whether *my* instructional choices were meaningful for them really did not change throughout the year. However, all but three students showed positive growth responding to the prompt "I decide what I learn", demonstrating that they did perceive that they had more choice in the classroom.

However, I would have liked to see higher growth in this area given that it was a major priority in the third and fourth quarter. Qualitatively, it seems like most students understood "choice" to occur within the context of Choice Friday. The quotes below are taken from student surveys (see Table 1).

- **Samantha:** "I am kind of choosing what I learn, but sometimes only on Fridays." (Referring to choice Fridays, described in Implementation section)
- **Tania:** "I feel like I can have challenges and choose partners and choice Fridays choose what I want."
- **Rodimiro:** "I don't ever but I actually do sometimes like when I pick small groups."
- **Carlos:** "Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. Because Choice Friday I do."
- **Ashley:** "Mrs. D. does and does not because I have choices only Fridays and sometimes Mrs. D. always tells us."
- **Anthony:** "Mrs. D. gives us only one choice every Friday and I should get to choose on my own."
- **Daniel:** "I sometimes get no choices but sometimes I get to decide small group or pick a partner."
- **Giselle:** "I kind of agree because she tells us what to do. She should let us teach others what they don't know."

Of students who listed specific reasons they do or do not feel they have choice, only Daniel and Tania were able to identify other times in the classroom that they have choice, such as in partners, in opting into small groups, or in the ways they solicit feedback or practice time. These quotes reveal that perhaps I have a different definition of “choice” than do my students, and that if I truly want to give them authentic agency in the classroom, we need to co-define that better next year.

Conclusions

How does it impact the extent to which students can accurately and specifically reflect on their strengths and weaknesses?

Despite spending most of the year focusing on accurate self-assessment, I saw minimal growth in this area at the whole-class level. Interestingly, students moved through several phases of self-assessment. Initially, as a class, they dramatically over-rated their performance. As a result of added discussion and practice using rubrics, checklists, and criteria scales, students became somewhat more accurate. However, during this time, I may have unknowingly reinforced negative mindsets about self-assessments, leading students to believe that rating themselves as less than perfect would lead to added work that they weren't particularly motivated to do. After addressing this and reinforcing self-assessment not as a summative tool but as a tool for improvement, students began using them more correctly but shifted to under-rating their performance. Interestingly, I did consistently see several trends that were supported by the research done within my literature review: students with low motivation consistently over-rate their performance, while students with high motivation consistently under rate their performance.

Students did become more generally accurate in their understandings of basic literacy strengths and weaknesses. This was particularly true for average performing students, who likely heard these messages reinforced through me, as they spent the most time in intervention groups and conferences. Additionally, students did self-report that their growth mindsets improved over time, as did the strategies they independently took to improve on their work and strengthen their learning. While this may have been simply due to a building awareness of growth mindsets over time, I hope that it can also be correlated with students seeing the fruits of their labor (higher reading growth and mastery) as they made choices to be a part of remediation structures and supports and to act on their self-assessment data.

How does it impact student growth towards individual literacy goals?

How does it impact the extent to which they can independently use and apply strategies?

As noted in the data discussion above, students grew tremendously more this year (as measured by running records) than they did in the 2014-2015 school year. This happened despite less leveled guided reading instruction and literacy intervention. Additionally, the periods during which students grew the most (quarters three and four) corresponded closely with the times during which feedback/self-assessment cycles were most consistent and students had the most ownership and choice in the classroom. Furthermore, and unlike in previous years, students saw significant growth *regardless of* their beginning reading level. Typically, low readers progress much more quickly and higher readers hit a ceiling. This makes me consider the changing nature of support for students as they begin reading significantly above level. This research suggests that it should become less teacher-led and more student-driven in terms of depth, scope, and learning method.

Additionally, remediation structures proved to be very effective in raising student mastery on assessments. These took a variety of forms that students opted into, based on discussion of their level of need, preferred learning style, and whether they wanted to re-learn, practice, or teach others. These structures particularly benefited students with perceived low levels of motivation, and the data suggests that giving student-driven opportunities for re-learning and re-assessment could be an effective structure for both raising student achievement and encouraging a growth mindset in this subgroup. However, not all students who *should have* opted into this group did so. Each round, there were certainly low-performing students who needed more opportunities for practice who did not take them. This makes me consider how students may have different readiness levels for being handed complete control. Additionally, I did not find a meaningful and consistent way for high-achieving students to participate in this process like I had done in previous years in math (when students became the teachers). In future years, I would like to be able to give these students opportunities to do more leading of the remediation groups.

How does it impact student agency and choice?

As mentioned in the analysis above, all but three students agreed quantitatively that they had more choice at the end of the school year than they did at the beginning. However, this growth was not as dramatic as I would have liked it to be, and students qualitatively revealed that they actually felt fairly limited in their choices. Students seem to have defined “choice” very narrowly and only when it was explicitly called “choice time”. Conversely, as the teacher, I saw dozens of small ways I was allowing my students to demonstrate agency every day, but perhaps was not communicated explicitly enough for them to know they were actively in charge. In the future, for students to truly see the cycle of student self-assessment and ownership (development of criteria and goals → self-assessment → choices for learning → improved outcomes and reevaluation of goals), they need to very clearly understand their role in learning choices, or they will not value the cycle at all.

Policy Recommendations

1. At the School Level: **School staff should work to establish a true vision for what student directed learning looks like.** At present, it is limited to adaptive computer programs. Instead, we should work to establish clear outcomes at each grade level for what we want student ownership to sound like and look like in elementary classrooms. For instance: What should students be able to articulate about their goals? What should they be able to describe as their next steps for improvement towards their goals?) A shared vision for student direct learning will help teachers organize classroom structures, goal setting conversations, and conferences towards these goals such that students move along a trajectory towards true ownership over their learning.
2. At the School Level: **School staff should engage in professional development that supports teachers in engaging student in assessment analysis and creation of learning criteria.** The REACH Evaluation Framework calls for students to take part in their own assessment of learning, as well as in the creation of assessment criteria. This continues to be difficult for many teachers to implement, particularly those of the youngest students.
3. At the School Level: **As ongoing development towards more meaningful student self-assessment, teachers should conduct learning walks to gather evidence and best practice around student ownership.** (In a learning walk, teams of teachers visit particular classrooms throughout the school, observing for a specific practice.)
4. At the Teacher Level: **Teachers should work to implement opportunities for accurate self-assessment and ownership of goals within their classroom, as is grade appropriate.** In the beginning of the school year, teachers should provide opportunities for students to gain an accurate understanding of their strengths and areas for growth. Through strong modeling, the teacher should support students towards developing criteria for their work. The teacher should provide opportunities for students to analyze their work against these criteria. Most importantly, the teacher should provide opportunities for students to act on those reflections through requests for support from the teacher or peers.

Appendix A: Weekly student reflections

Weekly Reflection: May 9, 2016 Name: Christina 5/12/16

Day	I can...	First Score	My reflections	My Next Steps
M	Compare two texts from different genres	80%	I did good with describing the fire. But it was hard with the genres.	<input type="checkbox"/> Small group <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with Mrs. D. <input type="checkbox"/> Practice alone <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
T	Compare two authors facts and opinions about the same topic.	70%	I did good with the opinions and I need help with the facts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Small group <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meet with Mrs. D. <input type="checkbox"/> Practice alone <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
W 5/12/16	Compare the words two authors use to describe a topic.	90%	I did good with list words and I am struggling with the comparing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Small group <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with Mrs. D. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Practice alone <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Th	Make inferences about why two authors have different perspectives.	70%	I did good with the authors perspective. I am struggling with inferring.	<input type="checkbox"/> Small group <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with Mrs. D. <input type="checkbox"/> Practice alone <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
	Decide which			<input type="checkbox"/> Small group

This week we compared and contrasted two texts about the same topic. We paid attention to:

- The authors' different purposes
- The facts and opinions the authors used in their writing
- The words and comparisons (metaphors) the authors used in their writing
- Clues that helped us infer about who the author is

Reflection

This week my strengths were:

- _____
- _____
- _____

This week I struggled with:

- _____
- _____
- _____

How will I show my learning? (Pick the choice that will show your strengths!)

- Ⓒ Pick two texts from our library about the same topic. **Design** my own graphic organizer to compare the two texts.
- Ⓒ **Write** two different texts about the same topic.
- Ⓒ **Illustrate** (Draw) two persuasive posters about the same topic that show different perspectives.
- Ⓒ **Plan a lesson** to teach someone about how two texts can show different perspectives

Why did you choose this way to show your learning?

Appendix B: Student self assessment and attitudes survey

Please be honest with yourself when you answer these questions. Use as much detail and examples as you can to explain your answers.

1	2	3	4	5
I completely	I disagree a little	I am not sure	I agree a little bit	I completely

DISAGREE	bit but I'm not sure		but I'm not sure	AGREE
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I read books that are on my level. 1 2 3 4 5

Explain: _____

I understand and comprehend the books that I read. 1 2 3 4 5

Explain: _____

I have strategies for sounding out and reading hard words. 1 2 3 4 5

Explain: _____

I independently try to use new writing strategies. 1 2 3 4 5

Explain: _____

The things Ms. D. teaches me are the things I need most. 1 2 3 4 5

Explain: _____

I get to decide what I learn. 1 2 3 4 5

Explain: _____

I can change how smart I am. 1 2 3 4 5

Challenging myself will make me smarter. 1 2 3 4 5

I can learn anything in this class. There is nothing I can't learn. 1 2 3 4 5

I can learn new things that help me become a better reader. I can control if I am a good reader or not.

1 2 3 4 5

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Once a week	Sometimes	Two or three times a week	Every day

How often do you...

When I do work for this class, I stop to check whether I understand what I'm doing.

1 2 3 4 5

I stop to fix up my work when I know it's not my best.

1 2 3 4 5

I ask for help or feedback when I don't understand.

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix C: Reading conference rubric

	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
Initiative	Teacher leads all portions of conference with significant prompting of student participation and response	S can begin some portions of the conference with teacher support S gives questions or next steps with heavy support	S can begin convo in a teacher-initiated conference S may either ask questions or mention next steps, with support	S requests conference S structures conference w/o support S engages teacher through questioning & next steps

Accuracy	S inaccurately describes strengths and weaknesses or does not do so at all.	S describes strengths and weaknesses vaguely or somewhat inaccurately. S does not give examples to support	S accurately describes their strengths and weaknesses and when prompted can give examples that support conclusion	S thoroughly & accurately describes detailed assessment of strengths and weaknesses and gives examples
Purpose	S cannot tell why a goal is important to them S does not describe, or inaccurately describes, description of achieving a goal	S can tell a general motivation for reaching a goal. Description of achieving a goal is vague: "I worked hard."	S can tell personal motivation when prompted S can describe vision for achieving a goal when prompted	S includes personal motivation for reaching a specific goal S includes specific and personal vision for what achieving a goal would look like
Advocacy	S cannot identify next steps S does not solicit teacher supports	S can give very general and vague next steps: "I need to work hard."	S can describe their own next steps OR S can ask for general teacher supports	S can, unprompted , describe own next steps S can, unprompted , ask for specific teacher supports

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