

Donna Earl, an adult reading teacher in north Georgia, frustrated with her students' sporadic progress, wanted to help her students move beyond basic skills to become proficient and fluent readers. She knew from reading research that there was a positive correlation between time spent reading and reading achievement; she also knew that her students rarely, if ever, read at home.

She set up an experiment, or "action research," by assessing her students' abilities beforehand, then giving each of them weekly reading logs, and asking them to read at home 15 minutes every day, filling in their logs with notes of what they had read. After three months, she gave post-tests to the students, both written and oral (using a tape recorder). Eight participants had logged 318 hours of reading outside class, and the average score on the reading comprehension post-test went from a grade level of 5.6 to 7.8, a gain of 2.2 grade levels in those 12 weeks!