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Repeated Reading and Reader's Theater to Improve Fluency

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose of This Study

I teach second grade at School for All Seasons in Isanti, Minnesota. I have 17 students in my class. My students include 10 boys and 7 girls. I have two students in special education. I teach reading, math, science, engineering, social studies, writing, and the arts. School for All Seasons is a year-round STEAM school. As a teacher I integrate multiple content areas together throughout the day.

I am researching the impact of Reader's Theater and Repeated Reading as a reading strategy for an elementary student's fluency growth. I became interested with researching the two reading strategies because in my second-grade classroom, I had struggling readers. I wanted to boost their confidence and their reading fluency; therefore, I researched commonly used reading strategies for fluency growth.

This study focuses on elementary students and does not consider middle school and high school students' reading fluency. This study takes place during guided reading in Daily 5 (Moser, 2006). Daily 5 is a method of small group instruction. There are stations where students complete activities at for 15 minutes, then rotate to the next station. Stations in our classroom are teacher table, word work, listen to reading, and hands-on activity. Outside of Daily 5, my students practice reading to self and work on writing as a whole group.

When students are at the teacher table, they are practicing reading skills and strategies in reading. I group my students using ability groupings. Each group has three to four students in it. For this study I saw all of my students at the teacher table, Monday-Friday daily. They received 15 minutes of instruction and practiced Repeated Reading and Reader's

Theater with me daily. All students start with the strategy Reader's Theater first for 3 weeks. Then the students switch to the reading strategy Repeated Reading for 3 weeks.

Reader's Theater is where students are assigned a script and part from me. I assign based upon the student's reading level. I give them a part I know they will need practice in without being too challenging where the student will have high frustration levels. The students practiced daily for 15 minutes with me for 3 weeks. The students practice fluency and prosody within that.

At the end of 3 weeks the students perform their plays for many audiences. Other classes come into our classroom to watch the students perform. During their performance I grade the students on prosody, correct amount of words, and words missed. During Reader's Theater all students had a script present when practicing the play and also performing the play for different audiences.

Repeated Reading is where I see every student daily Monday-Friday for 15 minutes in a small group. They read a passage at an instructional level three times to me for 1 minute. The students graph their correct words per minute. They are able to track and see their growth. I am tracking their words correct per minute and missed words. I am able to analyze their scores, especially missed words, to see what spelling pattern or high frequency words the student is struggling with.

The state oral reading fluency target scores is provided in fall, winter, and spring semester. The winter goal is 81 words per minute and the spring goal is 100 words per minute. Once the student reaches that oral reading fluency goal, I bump their reading level up

and they receive a different passage to keep challenging them and the end goal to make reading fluency gains.

In my starred paper, I discuss the impact of two reading strategies in my guided reading groups during Daily 5 and analyze how the different types of reading strategies improve students' reading fluency and prosody. This is a quasi-experimental study because I am trying new reading strategies in my guided reading groups in Daily 5. I analyzed the growth of each individual student in reading fluency using the two reading strategies Repeated Reading and Reader's Theater. I saw the impacts that each strategy has on a student's fluency growth based upon data shown in my upcoming data collection.

This study is important to me because every child learns different and I would like to use the two reading strategies, Repeated Reading and Reader's Theater, to see the growth in reading fluency of each individual student. This impacted my teaching because I am learning about different reading strategies to improve reading fluency and implementing the reading strategies into my guided reading groups.

Reader's Theater and Repeated Reading were two strategies that I think are effective teaching strategies in my second-grade classroom. I set aside 6 weeks to use these strategies in my guided reading groups for all of my students. Based upon a kid's personality, I was curious which reading strategies students would feel the most comfortable with. Reader's Theater is a strategy where students are outspoken in front of an audience. Repeated Reading is not in front of an audience.

I hope to see unmotivated students become motivated and determined. Students will get their fluency scores, graph their score, and see their growth during Repeated Reading. Having

each student track their progress and visually see it may boost their confidence, which also can boost their reading fluency.

While analyzing my data collection, I wanted to see if there was a connection with students' personalities and reading strategy to make fluency growth. I wonder if Reader's Theater has a great amount of impact on students who need more help with prosody or whether a student is a shy or not. Will a shy student prefer Reader's Theater or not since it is performing in front of an audience? A student's personality can factor into which reading strategy helps their fluency grow the most.

When students use the Repeated Reading strategy, I wonder if their fluency will grow based upon working one to one with me within the small group, immediate feedback from me, graphing words correctly read per minute, and seeing their growth visually. Every student has a different personality. These two reading strategies are different and can speak to a specific personality more than another.

These two reading strategies will impact my teaching because I will be able to analyze my data, the students I am working with, and hopefully see growth that I can use for my instructional strategies. I can use my data collection to choose which reading strategy had a higher growth of reading fluency for each student. I will also be able to use my knowledge about the students' learning style and personality among the data results to make my decision of which strategy I will continue teaching to a specific student.

I am interested in this study because I think that students who have high fluency will have high prosody and high comprehension, thereby leading to a higher interest in wanting to read to

learn. This will help me differentiate and choose my reading strategy for specific students in my guided reading groups.

Prosody is a component within reading fluency and it is an important one. When a student is reading with prosody the student is using punctuation to pause briefly when reading and using it for expression. A fluent reader uses those aspects of prosody and is able to switch their pitch and tone according to what they are reading. In this study during guided reading I gave instruction about prosody to each student. Reader's Theater was a reading strategy the kids connected with most understanding prosody because it is play based.

The purpose of this study was to have research articles using the EBSCO searching engine to receive resources that are offered to me as a St. Cloud State University student. "Introduced in the early 1970s, Repeated Reading has a history of helping students build oral reading fluency spanning almost 40 years" (Kostewicz, Kubina, Selfridge, & Gallagher, 2016). I assumed a student who is on-level or above level in reading fluency will comprehend texts in depth. If kids are engaged and excited to graph their reading fluency results, I hope they will enjoy the Repeated Reading strategy.

A purpose of implementing Repeated Reading is to see which students make fluency growth. "Results implied that effects were greater for lower performing readers because they made greater improvements on high-frequency target words; whereas, effects were diminished for higher performing readers" (Zawoyski, Ardoin, & Binder, 2015).

There were high frequency words in Repeated Reading passages and Reader's Theater. Students make gains in fluency by being able to blend words and recognize high frequency words. High frequency words appear often in text and do not follow rules of spelling or

syllables. Students are learning to be able to see it and say it with those words. High frequency words (e.g., and, the, what, there, as, it, and on) are often in a text at second-grade level, according to Reading Street (2011) curriculum.

Reader's Theater is a reading strategy to get students engaged reading with prosody and using their body language to express themselves while reading. "There are benefits to the strategy. It includes four language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Readers Theater attracts students' interest and attention through drama. The most important thing Readers Theater offers is a visual, oral, and audio stimulus for students" (Lin, 2015, p. 47).

To assist students with special needs it is best to break the learning tasks into chunks. I plan on to break up Reader's Theater into chunks for my special education kids. They will rotate reading their lines that create the setting of the story to keep them engaged and not feel overwhelmed. "This type of self-to-text connection gets students interested in what they are learning because they are able to relate to the material" (Lewis & Feng, 2014).

In my classroom we work in groups and individually. The Repeated Reading strategy is individual. Reader's Theater is also individual but presented in front of an audience in a small group. The action research was 17 individuals doing the Repeated Reading strategy and Reader's Theater strategy.

Research Question

What is the impact of Reader's Theater and Repeated Reading as a reading strategy for an elementary student's fluency growth?

To answer this question, I will review the literature on:

- Repeated Reading
- Reader's Theater
- Oral reading fluency target goals for second grade
- Repeated Reading and Reader's Theater impact prosody in fluency

Theory of Action

I believe high reading fluency will increase a child's comprehension while reading. If a child can read fluently and understand what he/she is reading, then the child will be more motivated and engaged while learning reading strategies and skills. This belief will help my students' progress to third grade where students often read to learn while currently they are learning to read. They will be more motivated, determined, and prepared for third grade learning.

In my action research I am using what I know about my students' personalities, learning style, and reading levels to group students upon their abilities with other students. My instruction in Repeated Reading and Reader's Theater for each group will give me data and informal feedback. I will be able to see by the data the students' growth and their personal outlook on the reading strategy of which one they learn best to improve their reading fluency the most.

Use of Findings

I will use my findings to adjust how I group students into small groups for practicing being fluent readers, see a correlation or pattern and use that knowledge of which strategy best

fits a student's personality and reading level combined together for future teaching fluency purposes, and sharing with parents and colleagues.

Having the evidence and facts of the action research can help support and give more in-depth explanations to parents of which reading strategy and why that specific reading strategy is best for their child to make the most growth they can in their fluency. Parents can use this information to help their child become a fluent reader at home with the strategy that best fits their child where their child is interested in that strategy and they show the most growth.

I can also share this data with colleagues so we can have discussions about it, patterns and correlations I see and they see among each student's fluency growth, keep collecting data and using it to adjust instruction and groups with students in.

Limitations

I found articles that had studies and findings presented with the Repeated Reading and Reader's Theater strategies to improve a student's fluency. While Repeated Reading intervention studies had great outcomes for the experimental group, some studies provided unequal sample sizes for the experimental group and control group. There would have been more reliable and valid data to collect if both groups had the same number of children in each one to carry out the intervention. During this time period early intervention and RTI initiatives were used infrequently so it is possible that some control participants received less reading instruction overall than those in the experimental intervention group.

Doing research, I was not able to find an article containing Reader's Theater versus Repeated Reading. I wanted to find an article that compared the impacts of both reading

strategies to determine which teaching strategy is better for fluency growth. I was not able to find an article with any findings comparing the two reading strategies.

I was limited with articles of small sample sizes majority. I found a few articles with a big sample size. The articles I found with a small sample size had detailed findings, graphs, and zoned in on small groups or an individual's growth from the intervention that was received.

Prosody is a component of reading fluency. Some articles' findings showed prosody separate from reading fluency. Those articles did not connect prosody being a part of reading fluency. Some studies did not test prosody with students. I was limited finding articles that had studies including prosody as a key component of reading fluency.

A limitation in my action research was I used differentiated Repeated Reading passages and Reader's Theater scripts that were not in my district's Reading Street curriculum. I did not give a student the same leveled passage for 3 weeks. If they continued to reach the oral reading fluency goal, they moved up a reading level and received a new passage.

Each student performed one Reader's Theater in the 3-week time period. The kids were able to practice a lot. Therefore, did some kids memorize their lines because of the repeated practice? In Reader's Theater kids are exposed to only a set amount of words for their own lines and peers in the play rather than many more words that are exposed in multiple differentiated reading passages.

My action research was 6 weeks long and my sample size was my students, which was 17 students total in my class that I used for my action research. That is a small sample.

Rationale

The significance of this study is to understand which reading strategy is best for students based upon data growth shown in my data collection using Repeated Reading and Reader's Theater. What will happen in my guided reading groups daily? I plan to have three groups that are grouped together based upon ability levels do Repeated Reading for three weeks and the other three groups do Reader's Theater for 3 weeks. After the 3 weeks are up, I will switch groups where the group will do the reading strategy they have not done yet.

The 3 weeks for each reading strategy is keeping my instruction consistent. In total, this action research will take place for 6 weeks because I want a lot of data to analyze and time to implement it where it is routine for my students. The students know how each reading strategy is taught and can explore with both to see which strategy improves their reading growth the most.

I chose these two reading strategies because I saw articles in research the most about them and they were a personal interest of mine to teach my students. I like that my students will be tracking their own progress. I like how Reader's Theater ties in arts and drama. I think one or both of the reading strategies will impact students' reading fluency because my students will be able to graph their progress, be responsible, act, include arts and drama, and create props and a setting background for their Reader's Theater.

Definitions

- **Reader's Theater:** Students are reading a script adapted from literature and the audience is watching the action from hearing the students read the script aloud. The students will be creating props and using a small setting while performing.

- **Repeated Reading:** Students use repeated guided oral reading practice and immediate error correction to improve reading rate, accuracy, and comprehension. Students read short passages several times until a level of fluency that is satisfactory is reached. Each student will read the same passage three times and graph their words per minute with errors subtracted from the total number of words read in a minute. First time reading the passage is called a cold read. Second time reading the passage is called a warm read. Third time reading the passage is called a hot read.
- **Guided Reading:** an instructional approach that involves a teacher working with a small group of four students who demonstrate similar reading behaviors and can all read similar levels of texts. The text is at an instructional level for students to read with a teacher's support.
- **Daily 5:** a method of small group instruction. This is a literacy structure that allows for differentiation in the classroom and provides consistency. It is an integrated literacy instruction and classroom management system for use in word work, guided reading, I-pad spelling, and listen to reading. It is a system of literacy tasks that teaches students independence. My Daily 5 are the four groups listed above. The four groups allow for me to have four students in each group so when I see a group for guided reading there is more direct attention and instruction.
- **Data Collection:** the process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in an established systematic fashion, which then enables one to answer relevant questions and evaluate outcomes.
- **Prosody:** the patterns of intonation in a voice while reading.

- **Reading Fluency:** the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and prosody.
- **Cold Read:** the student has never read the passage before.
- **Warm Read:** the student has read the passage once.
- **Hot Read:** the student has read the passage two or more times.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter reports the findings of the impact of Repeated Reading and Reader's Theater for a student's fluency growth by looking at studies with student performances, analyzing prosody within fluency, and the two reading strategies used in studies.

Concept of Reading

There are a lot of components of being a fluent reader. All of the components are stepping stones to build on one another. Being a fluent reader means students need to know sight words, can decode unknown words, read with prosody, and comprehend texts. In my starred paper, I am focusing on reading fluency. Fluency and prosody are not two separate components of being a fluent reader. A fluent and expressive reader can read with automaticity and prosody. A fluent reader is able to make a connection with the text being read, their background, and vocabulary (Hickman, 1977). My findings in research and studies focuses heavily on reading fluency and prosody within fluency.

Fluency

If someone is fluent in speaking a language, learning a dance, playing an instrument, etc., there is a smooth and graceful quality to it. This is also true with reading skills such as being a fluent reader (Moran, 2006). Being a fluent reader is important because it is the bridge between decoding words and comprehending what has been read. "Fluency is assessed through reading aloud and requires the combination of sight word recognition, comprehension, and verbal expression" (Moran, 2006, p. 318).

Fluency is the ability to read a text with speed and accuracy, recognizing each word at an accurate rate (Corcoran, 2005). The reader begins to construct meaning from each word and

phrase as they are read. If students are fluent readers, they will be able to comprehend texts.

“Fluency is measured by giving the student a passage of text, written on grade level, that has not been read by him or her prior to this assessment. The student is timed for 1 minute and reads out loud as much of the passage as he or she can in that time” (Corcoran, 2005, p. 105). Quantitative testing, in order to get the students’ performance, emphasizes teaching fluency.

Repeated Reading and Reader’s Theater are two reading strategies used in some classrooms to improve a student’s reading fluency and prosody. “Reader’s Theater found a stable presence over time as a holistic method suitable for building fluency, sight word knowledge, and interest” (Rinehart, 1999, p. 75). “Overall, the National Reading Panel (NRP) found that guided Repeated Reading was effective, having an effect size average of 0.41 and suggesting that guided repeated oral reading has a moderate impact on reading achievement” (Oddo, Barnett, Hawkins, & Musti-Rao, 2010, p. 842). These two reading strategies are effective for students showing growth in reading fluency and prosody.

Prosody

More researchers have research to regard prosody in studying Repeated Reading. A large amount of research supports Repeated Reading as an intervention to improve reading fluency, but it ignores reading prosody, which is a key component of reading fluency (Ardoin, Morena, Foster, & Binder, 2013). Findings in a study of a prosody and Repeated Reading intervention showed when encouraged to attend to prosody, students’ prosody improved the most in pitch declination, pauses between commas, sentences, and paragraphs (Ardoin et al., 2013).

Telling students to read with expression is not enough. Teachers need to train students to be an expressive reader by modeling how to read with expression and also showing examples

reading with no expression to compare with the students and have discussions about it. “Fluency involves not only accuracy and rate, but also expression. If we struggle to read aloud with expression, then we need to increase our own expressive fluency as part of our effort to become better teachers of young children” (Moran, 2006, p. 321). Prosodic cues while reading are intonation, duration, and stress (Casey & Chamberlain, 2006). Fluency teaching ties into expression. Expression is taught by teaching student’s fluency.

A study’s findings show that: “As children increase in reading rate, accuracy, and comprehension, they also improve in prosodic reading” (Dowhower, 1987, p. 402). These cues are used in Reader’s Theater often. In order to train students to develop prosody as a reader, the teacher must coach them how to be an expressive reader. Teachers should create engaging and meaningful lessons to teach students how to be expressive readers. “Lessons could address punctuation, phrasing, intonation, pitch, stress, and juncture. An example might be a lesson designed to focus on stress, with students repeatedly reading a sentence, stressing a different word each time” (Casey & Chamberlain, 2006, p. 22).

Teaching Strategies

After conducting research of teaching strategies to teach reading fluency, two strategies had a variety of research, studies, and findings. The two teaching strategies I decided to focus on were Repeated Reading and Reader’s Theater. Both strategies are different from each other. Repeated Reading focuses on reading a short passage until fluent with the passage over time, which can range from days to months (Oddo et al., 2010). Reader’s Theater focuses on expressive reading, so prosody plays a bigger role in that strategy. I found findings in primary grades to support Repeated Reading as an intense intervention early into school (Lovett, Frijters,

Steinbach, Sevcik, & Morris, 2017). Repeated Reading has a variety of formats. The format I am focusing on is a student repeatedly reading a passage three times and documenting words per minute correct and errors (Oddo et al., 2010).

Repeated Reading

Fluency is as a major important goal of reading instruction, especially in first and second grade. These are the two grade levels where students make the most growth in reading fluency compared to kindergarten and third grade (Lovett et al., 2017). There are different routes to learn fluency. “One route is to give students extensive practice reading books that are at their zone of reading development. By encountering high frequency, common words in a variety of meaningful contexts, students acquire the ability to recognize the words automatically” (Bendak, 2018, p. 232). Repeated Reading is a reading strategy used to increase oral reading fluency. Repeated Reading consists of a giving a student a narrative passage. The student does a cold read where the student reads the passage for the very first time in 1 minute. The teacher documents how many errors and words read per minute. The next read is a warm read because the student is reading the passage for a second time. The last read is called a hot read because the student is reading the passage for the third time and has seen the words in the passage recently from the previous two reads (Oddo et al., 2010).

A study of 172 participants showed there were findings that Repeated Reading impacted reading fluency an effect size .64. “Children who received the program in first or second grade made greater gains in basic reading skills than those who received it in third grade; and those who received it in first grade continued to develop reading at faster rates well after the program ended” (Lovett et al., 2017). Repeated Reading has been successful in improving reading

fluency for students in elementary schools. There is importance in giving struggling readers intense Repeated Reading interventions in the primary grades to improve their reading fluency. These findings provide evidence that there is a huge importance of early reading interventions for struggling readers starting in first grade.

Students need to focus on reading small amounts rather than big amounts that contain various passages. Students who give their attention to reading small amounts increase their reading rate. “Results indicated that as students increased their reading rate, they subsequently improved their reading accuracy” (Kostewicz et al., 2016, p. 24).

Repeated Reading is found to impact below level readers. (Bendak, 2018). There is an oral reading fluency goal in fall, winter, and spring for each grade level. If a student is below the expected grade level reading, then the student has room to grow in their fluency. “Although the definition of the slow learner varies, characteristics of slow learning children are quite similar. Slow learning children have difficulty in literacy, especially in reading, and are slightly slower when compared to their peers in the same age group” (Bendak, 2018, p. 232).

The Repeated Reading intervention makes the most impact on fluency growth in primary grades. There are studies of the Repeated Reading intervention applied into schools by Bendak, Oddo, Barnett, Hawkins, Musti-Rao, Kostewicz, Kubina, Selfridge, and Gallagher. Bendak’s (2018) study contained the Repeated Readings intervention on an experimental group of 10 students in grades 1, 2, and 3 with learning difficulties who formed the experimental group over two trimesters. Repeated Reading was not applied in the control group of 10 students who also had the same reading levels and conditions. Bendak stated: “Using the Woodcock-Johnson III

Test of Achievement, results showed that the experimental group showed significantly better performance in reading fluency test score than the control group ($p=0.00$)” (p. 234).

While the Repeated Reading intervention happens over a period of time, it is important for the teacher to give the student feedback about their fluency. The feedback can be recorded orally or by video. The three different types of feedback given to each student concerns the number of words read correctly, reading miscues, and correcting the reading miscues (Ates, 2013).

In a study done in Turkey, the researcher focuses in on one student describing how the video recording of him reading and the teacher giving him feedback impacted his reading fluency. After hours of practicing, the student grows from frustration level to instructional level with words accurately read per minute. “The student’s errors of misreading and omissions were found the most in long words that contained 3-5 syllables. After the corrective feedback, it was observed that the student paid more attention to long words in the reading process” (Ates, 2013, p. 162).

While Repeated Reading can be an intervention as direct instruction with the teacher, it can also be an effective intervention for peer tutoring.

Green and colleagues found that second-grade students who received peer tutoring, as student dyads, using Repeated Reading and individual tutoring from college students showed a median gain of 26 words read correctly after meeting with tutors twice a week for 20 minutes for 10 weeks compared to peers who did not receive the instruction who made gains of 20 words read correctly. (Oddo et al., 2010, p. 843)

Students who are at a second-grade level are expected to increase 1-1.5 words read correctly per week (Oddo et al., 2010). The findings from the study show a range from students

gaining one word to greater than three words read correctly. “All students believed the peer tutoring helped them, providing a measure of social validity” (Oddo et al., 2010, p. 843).

Repeated Reading is an intervention used for learners who have difficulty reading. It is also used for learners who are reading at grade level or beyond. “Not only should students be able to decode words and phrases with a high degree of accuracy, they must also be able to decode them automatically with minimal attention or effort. Practice through repeated readings helps them get there” (Bendak, 2018, p. 232).

Reader’s Theater

“Readers Theater is a staged reading of a play or dramatic piece of work designed to entertain, inform, or influence” (Moran, 2006, p. 317). Reader’s Theater promotes fluency, helps students read with expression, and builds confidence as a reader. “Through this method, student interest and motivation to read is also positively reinforced” (Carrick, 2001, p. 106).

Readers' Theater uses scaffolding, modeling, and independent student practice, while students rehearse a play appropriate to their reading level. The students rehearse until they are able to perform it fluently and with prosody for an audience (Corcoran, 2005). The audience can include their classmates or other classes from different grades in the school to be invited into the classroom to listen to the student’s Reader’s Theater.

“It makes theoretical sense that Repeated Reading of familiar material might result in fluency gains and that being able to read something successfully in front of a group of peers would probably benefit attitude and interest for students otherwise lacking such opportunities.” (Rinehart, 1999, p. 72). When students practice their Reader’s Theater script multiple times,

they are more familiar with the text, which can boost students' words read correctly per minute and confidence reading with expression.

There are guidelines that the teacher follows when doing a Reader's Theater program with students. Teacher and student can choose literature together as long as it is at an appropriate level for the student (Rinehart, 1999). Develop a script for a story or find a script provided for the specific story. Assign parts to students. Discuss props and background that need to be created. Props should enhance the student's reading; not detract from it (Rinehart, 1999).

It is important for students to practice their Reader's Theater multiple times individually and as a small group with everyone's lines, backgrounds, and props. "Prepare, practice, and rehearse. Readers should practice over time until they are fluent" (Rinehart, 1999, p. 77). Then the students perform in front of a group or class. The main point of Reader's Theater is for students to actually read and not recite from memory (Rinehart, 1999). Reflect at the end and discuss how the Reader's Theater went.

In a study, there were 12 special education students in a combined second- and third-grade class. The Reader's Theater program was implemented for 8 weeks. "Pre and post fluency scores were collected within the same time frame as the survey, and field notes were recorded to help note student comments and observations occurring in the classroom" (Corcoran, 2005, p. 107). Reader's Theater promotes fluency and increasing confidence in reading for special education students. By using the Reader's Theater strategy, special education students show growth in their fluency.

There were two questions presented to the students in a pre- and pos- test. "How do you feel about reading out loud in school?" " How do you feel when it is time for Reader's Theater?" "The pre-survey findings showed a comfort level of 81% in how Reader's Theater made them feel. The post-survey findings found 95% of the students feeling the best about Reader's Theater. In reading out loud at school, 52% felt comfortable in the pre-survey; in the post-survey, 68% felt comfortable" (Corcoran, 2005, p. 109). Reader's Theater is a reading strategy to enhance students' comfortability levels with reading aloud to an audience and by themselves.

The oral fluency scores were tested in January and April. "The number of words read correctly per minute increased overall as a class by an increase of 17 additional words read correctly in spring versus the winter. Increases individually ranged from the lowest of three words more per minute to the highest increase of 41 additional words read correctly" (Corcoran, 2005, p. 109). This is evidence that Reader's Theater is a reading strategy to improve students' oral reading fluency within 4 months.

"The data from this study suggest that the special education students did benefit from a Reader's Theater program. The purpose of this study was to measure the effects of Reader's Theater on the literacy needs of low achieving readers. Limitations include the small number of students involved, the lack of an adequate control group, and the short time span between fluency scores" (Corcoran, 2005, p. 110). Special education students and low achieving readers especially benefit from Reader's Theater to increase their reading fluency.

Reader's Theater is structured for all reading skill levels. The teacher can assign parts based on reading level, interest, and personality. Reader's Theater helps engage students in the literature even the students who are normally reluctant to. "Readers theater may be better suited

for literacy development than many other forms of drama because it is both text and performance based (Moran, 2006, p. 318). Because Reader's Theater is performance based, students have interaction and collaboration with their group practicing their script, creating a setting, and background. These factors affect a student's reading performance and mindset about Reader's Theater.

Reader's Theater can be differentiated for all students. The teacher can introduce the text by focusing on the illustrations and encouraging the students to talk about what they see (Moran, 2006). "Younger children and emergent readers may find scripts that combine pictures and text more manageable" (Moran, 2006, p. 320). In order for students to read their lines with prosody, the teacher must model expressive reading because students learn from what teachers do. While the teacher models expressive reading the teacher should also model monotone reading and have a discussion with the students comparing the two.

Reader's Theater can be integrated into other content. There is an example of a teacher who uses Reader's Theater in their science class. "The strategy is usually taught using narrative text that contains large amounts of dialogue; however, it can also be used with science texts and informational science trade books" (Kinniburgh & Shaw, 2007, p. 17). Teachers can implement Reader's Theater not just during reading class, but across content areas the teacher sees students struggling with.

There is a lot of extensive vocabulary in science textbooks. "A way to have students practice that vocabulary is by putting definitions of vocabulary words into the context of the Readers' Theatre. Students will have an understanding of the language of science and will remember the vocabulary because they will rehearse a number of times prior to their

performance” (Kinniburgh & Shaw, 2007, p. 17). If a teacher observes students struggling with vocabulary in a specific content area, Reader’s Theater is a strategy that can help students improve their vocabulary understanding and applying it within a Reader’s Theater play.

A rubric is very effective in assessing students performing their Reader’s Theater. A rubric allows for students to know the criteria, expectations, and guidelines to working with peers. Criteria a teacher can use in their rubric are group participation, science learning, expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace (Kinniburgh & Shaw, 2007). “Readers’ Theatre scripts can be used in any science content area. This strategy effectively integrates language arts into other areas of the curriculum” (Kinniburgh & Shaw, 2007, p. 18).

Reader’s Theater motivates reluctant readers. It is a unique teaching strategy to help struggling readers increase their fluency. In a study by Chase and Rasinski (2009), the class did a new Reader’s Theater weekly. “The levels of reading achievement in the class at the beginning of the study ranged from early kindergarten to mid-year third grade, with the mean at approximately the end of first grade” (Chase & Rasinski, 2009, p. 5). The teacher administered the DRA test at the beginning and end of school year to determine each student’s independent reading level based on word recognition and comprehension.

The implementation of Reader’s Theater was daily for the entire school year. Reader’s Theater was integrated into the balance literacy curriculum being used daily anywhere from 5-30 minutes depending on the schedule of a day. Teachers are able to implement Reader’s Theater as often as they like depending on their students’ needs.

During Chase and Rasinski’s (2009) study, many students improved their reading fluency and also their prosody, which is part of fluency. “In Chase’s class, reading rate was never an

instructional goal. Rather, when doing Readers Theater, the goal was to read with expression for meaning, not speed. Nevertheless, despite the lack of emphasis on reading rate, students in Chase's class clearly made significant gains in automaticity" (Chase & Rasinski, 2009, p. 10). A gain in prosody of 0.8 represents a 20% overall improvement in a student to read with expression (Chase & Rasinski, 2009, p. 10). Modeling students how to read with expression and guiding them can increase students' prosody. Students need to practice their lines with prosody multiple times and hear peers to make gains reading with expression.

The students began the school year reading at 62.7 words read correctly per minute. This reading rate puts the average performance of the students between the 50th and 75th percentiles for second graders (Chase & Rasinski, 2009). "By the end of the school year the average student reading rate was at 127.6 WCPM, which is an increase of nearly 65 words. The students are now between the 75th and 90th percentiles" (Chase & Rasinski, 2009, p. 10). Because the teacher in this study implemented Reader's Theater weekly and students practiced daily, the students were able to make tremendous gains with reading fluency all year long.

Conclusion

In conclusion, students make fluency growth with Repeated Reading or Reader's Theater. There is a correlation of prosody growth and Reader's Theater. There is a correlation of fluency growth and repeated reading. Students were engaged in the Reader's Theater teaching strategy, especially reluctant, struggling readers. Students naturally had prosody growth on a scale 1-4 because the teacher scaffolded students reading with stress and intonation. The Repeated Reading teaching strategy was effective because students were exposed to words in a text

multiple times; therefore, they could recall the words more to have a high words correct per minute and low errors.

It is important to provide Repeated Reading intervention at primary grade levels 1-2 rather than third grade. Lovett et al. (2017) stated in their study: “First grader’s make the most reading fluency growth based off of Cohen’s standard measure” (p. 898). I think it is because in third grade students are expected to know how to read and use reading to learn, whereas first and second grade is learning how to read. Third grade curriculum focuses heavily on reading skills not foundational reading fluency skills.

Chapter 3: Summary and Recommendations

This chapter provides an overall summary of the impact of Reader's Theater and Repeated Reading as a reading strategy for an elementary student's fluency growth. It includes a conclusion, as well as recommendations and suggestions for those two reading strategies. The result of this chapter is based on the findings of the study I did in my own classroom. I am using student data I collected to make conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions to share.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of Reader's Theater and Repeated Reading as a reading strategy for an elementary student's fluency growth. Within fluency the students were getting a score for reading with prosody. Both reading strategies had a positive impact for all students in my class over the 6-week period.

The students tracked their progress and I collected data. Students tracked their progress by graphing their words read correct per minute during repeated reading. Students tracked their progress in Reader's Theater by starting the first couple days off underlining difficult words. By the end of Reader's Theater each student was able to see if they could now read those difficult words and their part in the script with prosody.

I put data I collected on Repeated Reading into a Google spreadsheet for each student. Each student has documented the lexile level of the reading passage, words read correct per minute for cold, warm, hot read, and a fluency score from 1-3. We filled out the fluency rubric together and had discussions about each component of the fluency rubric. Each component the students is a 1, 2, or 3. The rubric listed "I read smooth like I talk." "I paused at punctuation." "When I got stuck on words, I tried to decode for two seconds then moved on." "I read with

good rate... not too fast... not too slow.” “I used emotion and expression in my reading. I averaged the scores for all the students to receive a fluency score.

To configure words read correct per minute, I took the total words read minus the number of errors which gave me total words correct per minute. Based upon the Repeated Reading data, there was a change in automaticity with a range of words read correct per minute from 7 to 72. All students improved how many words they read correct per minute. Some students jumped up reading levels with the passages during the 3 weeks. Repeated Reading does have a positive impact for a student’s fluency growth.

While analyzing the data for Reader’s Theater, I noticed each student made very few errors reading their parts. I infer it is because they were excited and motivated to have a part and practice it until they felt performance ready. They are not reading as many words as a passage three times in repeated reading daily. The student is practicing reading their part to themselves in their head and aloud; therefore, they are making less word errors.

When the students performed, I marked on their script any words they read incorrectly or paused for a while at. If a student had no marks on their script that means they read at a second-grade appropriate level reading fluency. I noticed in all performances the students reading with automaticity and expression was wonderful. They really engaged with this reading strategy. It seemed to be by the popular demand an exciting way to practice reading. In conclusion, Repeated Reading and Reader’s Theater impact an elementary student’s fluency growth.

Recommendations

Overall, there are many reading strategies for teachers to use in the classroom with students. I recommend that teachers research two reading strategies they are willing to

implement in the classroom to boost reading fluency growth. Repeated Reading and Reader's Theater are two strategies I recommend because they are both engaging; 1:1 practice with a student, the student gets excited to track their own progress, the student may find it fun to be a part of a performance with their classmates, and I found them successful with my students for reading fluency growth.

Since this study, my students practice and perform a Reader's Theater play a couple times throughout the year for our class and then eight other classes. They love that other students and teachers are coming into the classroom to watch them. They feel proud of themselves. I recommend Reader's Theater not only because it impacts fluency, but it brings together a strong community culture at school.

I use Repeated Reading more often than Reader's Theater. I do Repeated Reading the most with below level readers. I find using this strategy that students make big leaps in their fluency. I believe that is so because they are getting very direct 1:1 attention from me about reading the passages and they are tracking their growth with a bar graph. The kids enjoy taking charge of their progress, seeing if they made growth, and doing math to figure out how many words they went up.

I have had conversations at PLC's and team meetings about the two reading strategies. With my recommendations and research, I have shared with my colleagues; they now use Reader's Theater a lot more. It is pleasing to see this information being shared and colleagues trying out a strategy they feel comfortable with. My kids enjoy going to other classes' Reader's Theater performances.

I teach at a STEAM school. We do STEAM week in March. The last couple of years a Reader's Theater has been a STEAM rotation for kids to do because of the positive communication I have had with my coworkers about the reading strategy. Overall, I highly recommend a teacher to implement these two reading strategies at different times throughout the year for at least 3 weeks to see reading fluency growth.

Further Research

Education is a revolving door of change. Curriculums and strategies change over time based upon research. When I did my study in the classroom, I chose passages and scripts outside of the reading curriculum and paid for them through Teachers Pay Teachers. Our district is currently analyzing K-5 reading curriculum because our student scores are not meeting the target where the district wants them to be. The district is looking at possibly purchasing a new curriculum or purchasing supplementary materials for the current curriculum.

I am curious which reading curriculums are available and used that would have multiple reading strategies in them that impact fluency growth. I know our school in the past has used sing, spell, read, and write.

A future research question could focus on what reading curriculums have multiple research-proven reading strategies to improve fluency throughout the school year for students. With the strategies, what is an appropriate time frame to use so students will not get bored or tired of the same reading strategies used often? I think there is some valuable questions to research further with reading fluency.

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