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Increasing reading fluency through repeated, teacher modeled oral readings

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Increasing Reading Fluency through Repeated, Teacher Modeled Oral Readings

By

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Abstract

Response to Intervention has become a relevant topic in regards to special education within the past few years. With this said, there is little understanding within the high school in the School District of Waukesha about which interventions are relevant and research-based to use with students identified with a reading disability. In the following study, three special education students with specific learning disabilities were given instruction in fluency via teacher modeled oral read alouds and repeated readings to explore the effects of their fluency. Students were then observed and evaluated on their fluency throughout this six week unit. At the end of the research, data showed that there is a correlation between students' fluency growth when provided with oral reading by teacher modeling and repeated readings.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Working as a special education teacher, I see students with a learning disability in reading on a daily basis. In previous years within the school setting, these students would be serviced within a self-contained class focused on working on their reading skills. That being said, there was not a set curriculum or set of standards that was to be taught within these self-contained classes. Many times, the responsibility of teaching the class would be traded off within the special education department. The teachers responsible for teaching this class did not have backgrounds in teaching reading and therefore relied on basic teaching of reading material.

Within the past two years, however classes are no longer self-contained and students with a learning disability in reading are serviced in the traditional Language Arts classes, with an intervention period to service their reading needs. I began to question the content and the means for intervening with the students. At that point in time, there was not a set instructional practice put in place for providing interventions in fluency for students. The teachers providing the interventions were instructing students on what they thought would work best, without consideration to best practices in teacher reading fluency. I wanted to do what was best for the students as well as use research based interventions to foster growth in the students reading fluency. In order to help intervene with students I began researching reading strategies and interventions to use to help support the students within my classroom. While reading a study by Hawkins, Hale, Sheeley and Ling (2010), I became aware that repeated readings impacted student's reading fluency rates. Another study conducted by Denton, Fletcher, Anthony, and Francis (2006) studied the effects of used intensive phonemic and word study interventions to promote decoding and oral reading fluency in students with reading difficulties. These studies

along with ten others, assisted my decision to research the effect of using teacher modeled read alouds and repeated readings to increase individual students reading fluency rates. Within this chapter, I will discuss terms used in my research, the context of my research provide connections to the Wisconsin Common Core Standards, previous research, the research question and the purpose of the study.

Educational Terms Used

Aimsweb (NCS, Pearson, 2010) is an online progress monitoring tool that is to be used weekly with students in special education to monitor their reading fluency and comprehension. Aimsweb (NCS, Pearson, 2010) includes weekly narrative text reading as well as a weekly clozed paragraph comprehension check in which students are asked to circle one of three words that fits best within a piece of narrative text.

Response to Intervention (RtI) (Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2006) is a federal mandate in education. Response to Intervention mandates that every student is offered quality core instruction and any student that is continuing to struggle with material at the core is given an appropriate intervention as a means to help them achieve some growth in their learning. Tier I intervention refers to the quality core instruction within the general education classroom setting. All students receive Tier 1 interventions. Tier II is a step above Tier I interventions. These are put in place when a student has received Tier I interventions and is still struggling to grasp a concept. The final tier, Tier III, is the most extensive tier put in place. Tier III often refers to interventions that are happening above and beyond Tier I and Tier II, and the student is still not progressing in their understanding of concepts given Tier I and II interventions. Tier III also refers to special education interventions that are received in addition to Tier I interventions.

Fluency is the rate at which a student is able to read with accuracy measured in words per minute correctly read.

An intervention, another term used throughout my research is any researched based change that is different from the core instruction in meeting students' needs.

The Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) (Leslie, & Caldwell, 2010) is a reading assessment that measures a student's reading fluency, vocabulary knowledge, prior knowledge, retelling and comprehension of explicit and implicit questions in both within narrative and expository texts.

Description of the Context

The study began at the end of March and lasted for six weeks until the middle of May. The study took place at a suburban high school, with a population of around 1300 students. The students who were part of this research included three boys, ages 17to18. The three boys who were studied were all reading at an eighth grade level, and were identified as having special education needs with a specific disability in reading. They boys were placed within a reading interventions class in which the study took place. One of the students was also an English language learner.

   To begin the study, I completed two baseline measurements with each of the boys. The first measurement I took was with Aimsweb (NCS, Pearson, 2010) a progress monitoring tool adopted by my district to be used with any student in a reading intervention class. The second measurement that I used was the QRI (Leslie, & Caldwell, 2010) in order to achieve an instructional reading level and fluency rates. When the study ended, students were again measured with both the Aimsweb (NCS, Pearson, 2010) and QRI (Leslie, & Caldwell, 2010) to achieve posttests results.

The class met two out of a three day schedule for 70 minutes each, in total 18 times. Each class period would begin article reading. The article was the same article for seven days and was at the student's instructional reading level. To begin the article, I would read through it, orally modeling the reading paragraph by paragraph. I would then ask the students to read through the paragraph that I had just read and continue through the article with me reading a paragraph and then the student reading that paragraph. If a student were to read a sentence without fluency, they were asked to go back and look at the sentence again and reread it.

After reading through the article, the students were then asked to read an independent novel with the teacher. Novels were chosen based on student interest and guidance by me in regards to the grade level of the book. For 40 minutes, the students would read their independent novels with me, and we would take turns reading aloud. During the reading, I did not stop to ask questions about the book, however if a student misread a word, or stumbled in their reading, I would ask them to begin from the start of the sentence again and read fluently to the end. At the end of each week the students were progressed monitored using the Aimsweb.

Literature Review

In my literature review, I summarized twelve articles. The focus of the research suggested that when given reading interventions, students struggling with reading or having a disability in reading are able to make gains in their reading levels (Hawkins, Hale, Sheeley & Ling, 2010). The research also suggested that reading intervention should be a class separate from core instruction in reading (Goering, & Baker, 2010). All of the research that I reviewed placed reading interventions as an important emphasis on helping struggling readers or students with a reading disability to achieve growth in reading.

Research Question

Do students with a reading disability when given repeated exposure to the same readings at their instructional level, as well as, teacher modeled read alouds make gains in their reading fluency?

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I focused on the reasoning behind my research and study. In chapter two, I will focus on studies that I have reviewed to guide and support my research.

Chapter Two

Throughout this chapter, research will focus on using interventions to meet the needs of students that are at-risk for or who have been identified with reading difficulties. The research will focus on two areas of reading intervention, word level interventions focusing on phonemic awareness, spelling, decoding and word knowledge and passage level interventions focusing on fluency and comprehension skills. The research contained in this chapter focuses on two main arenas of reading skill; word level interventions encompassing vocabulary, phonemic awareness, decoding and word recognition, and passage level interventions encompassing fluency and comprehension skills. The studies included in this chapter all reflect an intervention based model and results found through research in this area.

Word Level Interventions

This section will focus on word level interventions used with students, specifically phonemic awareness, spelling, decoding and word knowledge skills in reading.

Pullen, Tuckwiller, and Konold (2010) investigated the role of supplemental tiered instruction in vocabulary instruction for elementary students at-risk for a reading disability in a tiered intervention model.

Kerins, Trotter, and Schoenbrodt (2010) discussed a multi-sensory approach to increase

phonemic skills through a tiered intervention model in first-grade children's literacy skills.

Denton, et al., (2006) addressed the question of whether students with reading difficulties would demonstrate a significant growth given specifically designed interventions focusing on decoding and spelling skills.

Edwards (2008) explored the effects of using a phonics intervention on the reading fluency of high school students.

Locakvitch and Algozzine (1998) explored the effects of using the failure free Reading Program (Lockavitch, 2010) with students identified as having a severe reading disability.

Students that are at-risk for a reading disability or students that have an identified reading disability have often been pigeon-holed into self-contained or pull-out reading instructional models. In order for students that are identified as either at-risk or with a reading difficulty to be successful in their reading ability, they must be provided with reading instruction that allows them to interact with their peers while also, receiving interventions that directly addresses their individual needs in reading (Denton, Fletcher, Anthony, and Francis, 2006). Research included in this chapter shows evidence of the fact that students who are either at-risk for reading difficulties or who have been identified with a reading disability and who receive tiered interventions are able to increase their skills in the area of reading. In order for students to increase their skills, interventions must target the specific areas in which students are struggling and provide instruction to address those skills.

The following studies focus on the use of a variety of tiered intervention models with students either at-risk for or identified as having a reading disability in an effort to increase their reading skills.

Word level Interventions

Reading interventions that address word level skills typically encompass those initiatives that target vocabulary, phonemic awareness, decoding and word recognition skills in reading. Students either at-risk for or identified with a reading disability often have weaker skills associated with their word level knowledge, which in turn, impacts their reading ability. To this end, Pullen, Tuckwiller, and Konold (2010) investigated the role of supplemental tiered instruction in vocabulary instruction for elementary students at-risk for a reading disability in a tiered intervention model. Kerins, Trotter, and Schoenbrodt (2010) discussed a multi-sensory approach to increase phonemic skills through a tiered intervention model in first-grade children's literacy skills. Denton, et al. (2006) addressed the question of whether students with reading difficulties would demonstrate a significant growth given specifically designed interventions focusing on decoding and spelling skills. Finally, Edwards (2008) explored the use of phonics instruction on high school students struggling with reading in order to increase reading fluency.

With an increase in the implementation of RTI in the educational world, it has been important for researchers to begin addressing the need for interventions to be put in place with students that are at- risk for or identified with reading difficulties. Pullen, Tuckwiller, Konold, Maynard and Coyne (2010) explored the effects of using tiered interventions to increase at-risks students' development of receptive vocabulary knowledge. The authors' hypothesized that when struggling readers participated in tiered interventions, their vocabulary learning will have accelerated (Pullen et al., 2010).

The sample of this study consisted of about 224 first grade students from three different schools in a medium sized district. The schools reflected a diverse population with a large percentage of students in the lower socioeconomic status determined on the amount of students

receiving free lunch.

Based on results from a nationally-normed, standardized assessment of vocabulary knowledge, researchers determined that approximately half of the students were at risk for language difficulties. Researchers used this pre-test data to place students in appropriate tiers for intervention. At-risk students were then randomly placed in either an at-risk control group or an at-risk treatment group. Students placed in the control group received instruction only from the general education teacher, while students in the treatment group received instruction from the general education teacher, as well as Tier 2 interventions administered by a graduate student in education.

The instruction of both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 groups focused on two, age-appropriate story books. The researchers then picked four target vocabulary words, based on expert opinion, on which to instruct the groups. The targeted vocabulary words represented words that were important to the story but would likely be unknown to the students. All students received Tier 1 instruction by a certified first grade teacher. The story books were read on days one and three of instruction with vocabulary activities after the reading. Each lesson lasted approximately 30 minutes. Tier 1 instruction focused on exposing the students to word-rich stories, direct instruction of selected target words in language commonly understood by first graders, and multiple activities providing students with multiple interactions around the target words. Tier 2 instruction focused on building upon general education instruction by intensifying and increasing the students' exposure and awareness of the target words in a small group setting. Students in the Tier 2 instructional group engaged in additional activities and interactions with the target words to intensify and create a rich understanding of the target words. The researchers administered a researcher-developed measure to each of the students in the treatment group to

assess their knowledge of the target words immediately after the intervention, and then again four weeks following the intervention time period.

The researchers found that the students who were provided with treatment through Tier 2 intervention achieved higher post-test scores in receptive and contextual vocabulary knowledge than the students who were provided with only Tier 1 instruction. This suggested that students who are at-risk and who receive only Tier 1 instruction may not sufficiently learn the target words as effectively as students who receive Tier 2 instruction. The researchers thought that this may be because the classroom instruction may not have been intensive enough for children to learn target words. This reinforces the idea that supplemental Tier 2 instruction for students that are at-risk for a learning disability is beneficial for students' acquisition of receptive and contextual vocabulary.

The results of the previous study showed that supplement tiered intervention were highly effective in teaching receptive and contextual vocabulary to students at- risk for a reading disability. The following article describes a tiered intervention using a multi-sensory approach to teaching phonemic awareness to first graders at risk for developing reading difficulties.

Kerins, Trotter, and Schoenbrodt (2010) studied the effects of using tiered interventions with students that were at risk for developing reading difficulties. The authors hypothesized that Tier 2 students at risk for reading difficulties who received interventions would perform better on reading tasks than students who received classroom instruction alone (Kerins et al., 2010).

The sample consisted of 23 students in first grade deemed at risk for reading difficulties as measured by a nationally-normed, standardized assessment of early literacy skills. The students, who attended a suburban public school in southern Maryland, were divided into a control and an experimental group of approximately equal numbers. The control group was

made up of eight males, and one female. The experimental group was made of up eight males, and three females.

Students in both groups received the same daily reading instruction. The students in the control group were divided in half and randomly placed in groups. The experimental group received an additional 60-90 minutes of weekly intervention from both the speech and language pathologist as well as the special education teacher totaling 16.5 additional treatment hours for students in the intervention group. Each student in the experimental group received 30 minutes of phonological awareness instruction and 30 minutes of multi-sensory phonics instruction over the course of nine weeks and 18 sessions.

During phonological awareness instruction with a speech and language pathologist, students in the experimental group used consonant-vowel-consonant words to blend and segment real and nonsense words in an auditory manner and segmented phonemes with colored blocks. The experimental group then transitioned to instruction with the special education teacher that included multi-sensory segmenting, an introduction to sound-symbol relationship, as well as an exercise that involved writing sounds and symbols in the context of words and sentences. The special education teacher followed the same pattern in instruction, beginning with visually presenting the letter, oral rehearsal of the letter, and then formation of the letter and blending of phonemes from left to right. Each session was completed daily following the same three part pattern.

Classroom instruction provided to the control group consisted of phonemic awareness activities using word families, predictive reading lists, and instruction on sight words. Leveled readers reinforced taught skills. Classroom instruction was faster paced with less time spent on phonological awareness and an absence of a multi-sensory approach.

Both members of the control and experimental group were given the same nationally-normed standardized pre and post assessment. The assessment measured phonological awareness, alphabetic comprehension and reading fluency at the kindergarten level. Researchers found that there were no significant differences between the control and experimental groups. Therefore, results from this study did not support the hypothesis that the students in the experimental group who received additional interventions would improve more significantly that the control group who received only classroom instruction. The researchers thought this difference in the experimental findings and the hypothesis was that the Tier 1 classroom instruction was faster paced with an emphasis on segmenting, blending, and phonics practices that are successful with struggling readers.

The previous study focused on a multi-sensory approach within tiered instruction to teach at-risk students phonemic skills. The following research will address reading interventions that have been put in place to promote students' growth in the area of decoding skills and spelling ability.

Evidence supports the fact that repeated practice on oral reading and decoding skills promotes growth in students reading ability. Denton, Fletcher, Anthony, and Francis (2006) studied the effects of using intensive interventions to promote decoding and oral reading fluency in students with reading difficulties. Through this study the authors developed and evaluated an intensive reading intervention program for students who had severe reading difficulties beyond having received high-quality classroom instruction. The authors also evaluated the effectiveness of a 16-week program with explicit instruction in decoding and fluency. The authors questioned whether 1.) Do students who have persistent reading difficulties make significant gains in their fluency, spelling and comprehension when participating in an intensive intervention designed to

address these skills? 2.) What percentage of students responded to the intensive intervention? 3.)

Was the response rate different for students who have previously received Tier 1 and Tier 2

interventions than for students with persistent reading difficulties that had not have tiered

instruction? (Denton et al., 2006)

The study was conducted in four schools in a large urban district. The participants

included 27 students in first grade, three of which were identified has having difficulties in

reading. All of the participants were repeating first grade and had a weak response to previous

interventions. The sample included 52% African Americans, 22% Hispanic, 22% European

American, and 4% Asian American. Researchers used a nationally-normed standardized

assessment to obtain baseline measurements of students' basic reading scores.

After the researchers obtained a baseline measurement for student's basic reading scores,

students received a 16-week intervention daily with a highly qualified teacher in groups of two

students per teacher.   The first eight-week intervention focused on increasing phonemic skills

through a system of characterizing letters and sounds with pictures and symbols. Students were

taught to segment, blend and manipulate sounds through sound pictures or symbols. Instruction

in this area was explicit in nature and progressed from understanding that letters are pictures of

sounds, to the ability to read and spell multisyllabic words. Throughout this eight-week

intervention students were provided extensive practice with manipulating letters and their

associated symbols. Students then generalized skills learned to the ability to reading a decodable

text.

The next eight-week intervention focused on promoting oral reading fluency. The

teachers followed a nationally-normed standardized program to instruct the students daily in

strategies of oral reading. The teachers used nonfiction passages at the students' instructional

reading levels. The student picked a passage, wrote a prediction about the content of the

passage, and read the passage orally while being timed by the teacher for one minute. After

reading through the passage students received additional practice using their knowledge of

decoding from the previous intervention to address any words that were missed in the oral

reading. The student then graphed their fluency level. Next, the student read the passage while

receiving modeling support from an audiotape, and after answered five comprehension questions

related to the text. The student then read the passage while being timed by a teacher, graphs their

words correct per minute, and then wrote a retelling of the passage.

To evaluate student progress during the intervention, researchers collected assessment

data four times during the 16-week intervention process; once before the intervention period, and

before and after each intervention session using a nationally-normed standardized assessment.

Researchers addressed specific skills data, spelling, un-timed decoding skills, reading fluency,

and reading comprehension in their assessment

Results based on collected assessment data revealed that in the area of phonemic skills

students' scores significantly improved relative to their pre-intervention scores in the areas of

spelling, letter-word identification, word fluency, decoding fluency, reading fluency and

comprehension skills. After receiving eight-weeks in oral reading fluency intervention, results

from the pre-intervention assessment and post-intervention assessment reflected a significant

gain in fluency and comprehension. Researchers noted that while students made gains, their

overall reading ability still remained below average after the intervention. The students in this

study that had not had previous interventions were able to increase their reading skills by 33%

when using pre and post-test assessment scores.

While there were significant gains for both students that had received intervention and

those who had not, the largest area of gain was with the students that had not received earlier interventions. The researchers hypothesized that this may have been a result of the students not receiving prior interventions having a lower subset of reading skills, thus their gains were larger overall when comparing pre and post-test assessments. Due to the significant growth made by students in this study, the researchers' evidence supports that the change in scores is linked to the fact that students received intensive interventions.

The idea of phonological awareness and skills has been used to educate younger children in learning to read for many years; however it is not often an element used to instruct older students in reading. Edwards (2008) studied the use of phonics instruction with students struggling with reading at the secondary level in order to increase decoding and reading fluency. Through this study the researcher used an intervention based model in order to instruct phonics as a mini-component within an English classroom. The author questioned whether instruction in phonics would lead to increase levels in decoding and reading fluency skills.

The participants in this study were located in the same ninth-grade English classroom. There were approximately 15 students in the class, and about 75% of the participants were male with about 25% female. The students ranged in age from 14-16 years old. The intervention took place during the second semester within the students' English classroom. The target group of students selected to receive the intervention were selected due to lower grades earned.

Students were given a pre-test assessment to monitor their reading progress and identify areas of need. After a baseline measurement was achieved, an intervention plan was set in place that included around 15 minutes of phonics instruction for the target group before beginning a lesson in their English classroom. The intervention was to last for approximately seven weeks, with the allowance and integration of the skills taught in the intervention into the English

lesson. The mini-lessons in phonics were explicit in nature and correlated to results found from

the pre-test assessment.

     To begin the intervention, students were given an individual notebook with supplies needed

referred to as their Tool Kit (Edwards, 2008). The instruction began with a review through the

alphabet and moved through a review of the vowel sounds, and syllabication patterns. Each new

phonics lesson was embedded into activities for students to explore interactively, with a main

focus on breaking words apart and tracking through entire words. Once students had practiced

the isolated skills they were asked to transition their learning and understandings into read world

text.

     The results found indicated that students with the lowest scores on the pre-test made the most

significant growth, some by approximately three grade levels. The results indicated that the

students that were participants in the target interventions were able to gains in their phonemic

awareness as measure by a post-test comparison. The researcher hypothesized that the use of

phonemic interventions was a direct link to students' improvement in post-test assessment data.

The research supports the idea that teaching phonics to high school students with difficulties in

reading can be instrumental in increasing their reading ability.

          The previous study suggested that teaching phonics skills to high schoolers struggling

in reading helped to increase their reading ability. The following study will discuss the effects of

using a reading program designed to meet comprehension and word recognition skills of students

identified as having severe reading disabilities.

          Many students that are identified as having a learning disability struggle with basic

concepts in reading ability. To this end Locakvitch and Algozzine (1998) explored the effects of

using the failure free Reading Program (Lockavitch, 1998) with students identified as having a

severe reading disability. The researchers questioned whether or not using the failure free

Reading Program (Lockavitch,1998)as an intervention would increase the participants overall

reading ability.

The participants in this study included about 40students in a suburban school district.

Approximately 80% of the participants were male, with an average age range from about eight to

eleven years old. Each student was participating in the special education programming and

identified as reading two or more grade levels below their peers.

Students were given the failure free Reading Program (Lockavitch,1998)in addition to the

classroom reading instruction for approximately 7 months. To begin the intervention, a pretest

using a nationally-normed standardized assessment was given to each participant to achieve a

baseline measurement. The students participated in daily instruction for a period of about 30

minutes with a teacher trained in the failure free Reading Program (Lockavitch, 1998). The

intervention format included students previewing the text to be read, listening to the teach read,

answering questions based on the text, reading the text, and then reviewing the text. These

concepts were designed to improve the participant's word recognition and comprehension skills

through the use of controlled reading passages. The instruction followed the same daily format

with the only change being that controlled texts that were used with students. Students were

given a post-test using the same nationally-normed standardized assessment at the end of the

intervention period to measure the participants' growth in reading achievement.

Post-test results indicated that when participants were given a structure format to follow

with controlled text to supplement reading instruction, participants were able to make about a

nine to eighteen month gain in their reading scores.

To conclude the word level intervention section of the chapter, it is important to note that

while the researchers from all the studies used different interventions, results indicated growth in

reading skills. In the first study by Pullen et al. (2010) participants were able to make gains in

their contextual and receptive vocabulary skills after being provided tiered instruction in this

area. Kerins et al. (2010) studied the phonemic development of students who have reading

difficulties that received Tier 1 instruction vs. students who have reading difficulties that

received a more intensive Tier 2 intervention. While there were not significant gains between

the experimental and control group, the authors recognize the importance of high-quality Tier 1

instruction targeting specific areas of need. Furthermore, Denton et al. (2006) conducted a study

that questioned whether intensive intervention promotes growth in students with persistence

reading difficulties. Results based on their findings showed significant gains made by

participants when given intensive interventions in decoding, fluency and comprehension skills.

Edwards (2008) study also reflected a growth in reading ability in conjunction with phonics

interventions and students at the high school level struggling in reading. This study is further

supported by Lockavitch & Algozzine (1998) in their study of using a structured reading

intervention program to increase students reading achievement scores. In review these studies

support the idea that students either at-risk for or who have reading difficulties benefit from

receiving intensive interventions with specific focus on word level skills, beyond the classroom

instruction, to increase their skills in the area of reading.

Passage Level Interventions

This section will focus on using interventions to increase students at-risk for or who have

been identified with reading difficulties fluency and comprehension skills. Each of the

following studies uses an intervention based model addresses these skills.

Vaughn, et al. (2010) explored the effects of a Tier 2 intervention and the reading-related

outcomes of middle schoolers with reading difficulties and their comprehension and fluency skills.

Strong, Wehby, Falk, and Lane (2004) explored the effects of using a class-wide direct instruction curriculum on the reading fluency and comprehension of students with an emotional behavior disorder, as well as the effects of using a repeated reading curriculum on these aspects of reading within the same population of students.

Lang, Torgenson, Vogel, Chanter, Lefsky, and Petscher (2009) explored the effects of using a multiple interventions approach with struggling high school readers and results on scores of state standardized assessments.

Slavin, Cheung, Groff, and Lake (2008) conducted research to evaluate which canned reading programs were successful in helping students to raise their reading levels.

Goering and Baker (2010) investigated the use of dramatic oral reading interventions on both reading fluency and comprehension.

Scheffel, Shroyer, and Strongin (2003) researched the effects of a structure reading intervention program on students that were identified as having significant reading underachievement.

Allinder, Dunse, Brunken, and Obermiller-Krolikowski (2001) questioned whether or not using specific reading strategies with students identified as having a reading disability would improve oral reading abilities.

Reading skills such as fluency and comprehension are essential components in understanding reading material. Students that have a reading disability are often lacking in their fluency skills, as well as their ability to understand what they are reading. The following studies focus on intensive intervention in the areas of fluency and comprehension provided to

students with reading difficulties and the outcomes related to the interventions. Vaughn, et al. (2010) explored the effects of a Tier 2 intervention and the reading-related outcomes of middle schoolers with reading difficulties and their comprehension and fluency skills. Whereas, Strong, Wehby, Falk, and Lane (2004) explored the effects of using a class-wide direct instruction curriculum on the reading fluency and comprehension of students with an emotional behavior disorder, as well as the effects of using a repeated reading curriculum on these aspects of reading within the same population of students.

Students that are struggling readers often lack comprehension and fluency skills and often instruction in these areas has not been intensive enough to meet their individual reading needs. Vaughn, et al. (2010) studied the effects and outcomes of a comprehensive research-provided intervention with older students with reading disabilities. The authors hypothesized that Tier 2 research-provided intervention would improve outcomes for students at risk for reading difficulties relative to other students not at risk, and that Tier 2 students would gain the skills needed to close the gap with typical readers without reading disabilities throughout the course of the year (Vaughn et al., 2010). The independent variables in this study were the interventions provided for the students in tiered groupings, the training of the teachers in the Tier 2 vs. Tier 1 groupings. The dependent variable in this study was the result based on the post-assessment of students in the Tier 1 vs. the Tier 2 groups.

The sample was made up of 576 sixth grade students from seven different middle schools; three schools from a large urban district and four schools from two medium sized districts, in two different cities. Three hundred twenty seven students were classified using a nationally-normed, standardized test as struggling readers, and 249 students as typical readers. The struggling readers were assigned to a 2:1 ratio research-provided Tier 2

intervention group. Seventy-nine percent of the sample qualified for free or reduced

lunch. Pretest nationally-normed, standardized assessments were used to measure the students'

decoding and spelling, fluency and comprehension abilities.

    To provide Tier 1 intervention, content area teachers of all sixth grade students were

provided with professional development of evidence-based practices for teaching vocabulary

and comprehension. Teachers attended a six hour session at the beginning of the school year

and then met as study groups within their schools once a month throughout the year. Teachers

learned to use graphic organizers as a framework for teaching vocabulary as well as

comprehension strategies to use within their content areas.

    Tier 2 students were placed in homogeneous groups of 10-15, received yearlong

interventions from September through May for 50 minutes per school day. The intervention

included three phases of instruction given by nine interventionists who received 60 hours of

professional development prior to providing interventions. Phase I included 25 lessons over a

seven to eight week period focusing on word study and fluency. Fluency was taught by using

repeated oral readings and pairing high and low readers for partner reads. Word study was

taught through strategies for decoding multisyllabic words. Comprehension was addressed by

asking students to answer literal and inferential questions from texts read during intervention

sessions.

    Phase II focused on vocabulary and comprehension with additional instruction and

practice applying word study and fluency strategies learned in Phase I. Phase II instruction

occurred over a 17-18 week period. Fluency and comprehension were taught three days a week

by reading and providing comprehension instruction with expository social studies text and

two days a week using narrative text. Students read through the text at least twice for fluency

and then received explicit instruction generating questions at different levels of complexity. Phase III continued for eight to ten weeks maintaining a focus on vocabulary and comprehension with components of word study. Fluency and comprehension were taught using the application of strategies for reading and understanding expository and narrative texts.

Following the intervention all of the students were given a nationally-normed, standardized assessment to measure gains throughout the year. The researchers found that students who received Tier 2 interventions made significant gains in word attack, spelling, comprehension, and phonemic decoding skills, but a gap still existed between struggling readers in this intervention group and typical readers. The typical readers outperformed students in the Tier 2 intervention group on all measures which was a similar result in the pre-test findings. The researchers credited these findings to the sample size, the lack of knowledge known to remediate struggling readers at the secondary level, and the instruction provided to the Tier 2 group.

The previous study explored the effects of Tier 2 instruction for students with a reading disability through repeated readings to increase fluency and explicit comprehension instruction through explicit instruction in expository and narrative texts. The next study will focus on using repeated readings and a nationally recognized reading program with middle school students who have an emotional behavior disorder to increase their comprehension and fluency rates.

The study conducted by Strong, Wehby, Falk and Lane (2010) explored the effects of using repeated readings on the fluency and comprehension performance of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. The purpose of their study was to determine the effect of using a nationally recognized reading program and repeated reading intervention on the

performance of junior high school students with an emotional behavior disability. The

researchers addressed two questions in their research. 1) The impact of using a class-wide

nationally recognized reading program on the reading fluency and comprehension of junior

high students with an emotional behavior disorder. 2) The effects of using repeated readings as

an intervention along with the nationally recognized reading program on the fluency and

comprehension of junior high students with an emotional behavior disorder. The independent

variables in this study were the nationally-normed assessments used to measure student

progress, the intervention instruction, and the training given to teachers. The dependent

variable was the outcome between pre- and post-test findings in the intervention based model.

Participants in the study included about six male students in the seventh and eighth grade.

These students were enrolled in a self-contained metropolitan school servicing students with

emotional behavioral disorders. Four of the participants were African American, and two

participants Caucasian between the ages of 13 and 14. The students were assessed using

nationally- normed, standardized assessments on reading ability prior to intervention.

To begin a baseline, students were given a curriculum based measurement to measure

fluency when reading a text. Probes at the third grade level were given to students once a

week. Third grade level texts were chosen based on the findings from the nationally-normed,

standardized assessments and the mean functioning level of the students. Students were asked

to read aloud passages ranging from 96-140 words, while the examiner marked missed words

and the amount of time it took a student to read a passage. After the reading, the student then

answered five comprehension questions beginning with recall questions and ending with

inferencing and vocabulary usage in the passage. The reading fluency was then calculated by

counting the number of words read correctly and dividing those numbers by the number of

seconds it took the student to read the passage. The answer was then multiplied by 60 to get a fluency score of the correct words read per minute of each student. The students' comprehension was measured by adding the number of questions answered correctly out of the five questions asked.

After a baseline was achieved two interventions were given to students. One intervention focused on the students' sound and word discrimination skills through a nationally recognized direct instruction program to increase fluency and decoding skills. The other intervention focused on using repeated readings to increase the students' fluency skills. The students were then given 30-40 minutes of intervention with the direct instruction program 4 days a week by a teacher that had received 5 hours of training in the program used for intervention. After receiving intervention in the direct instruction program, students were then paired up and asked to complete the second part of the intervention with repeated readings. The intervention with repeated readings was given to the students four days a week for 20-30 minutes each day. The students began by chorally reading aloud an unfamiliar passage twice. After reading the passage twice, the students took turns reading the passage out loud. After the students read the passage four times, they were given a new passage that was the same difficulty level and were timed on their fluency with the passage. They were then asked comprehension questions following their reading of the text. The interventions lasted approximately seven weeks.

The authors found that four out of the six students were able to increase their words per minute and oral reading rates at their functional level in age/grade leveled texts. The same four students were also more accurate in their responses to the comprehension questions. The authors thought that for the two students that were less responsive to the intervention

experienced a "ceiling effect" (Strong et. al) due to the fact that they were initially reading at a higher rate than the other participants.

 The previous study explored the effects of increasing student's fluency using paired repeated readings. The following study will research the effectiveness of a variety of intense reading interventions with struggling high school readers.

In regards to interventions, there have been a variety of interventions that have been studied and analyzed in regards to effectiveness. To this end, Lang, Torgenson, Vogel, Chanter, Lefsky, and Petscher (2009) conducted a study to explore the effectiveness of intensive reading interventions for struggling high school readers. In order to test this question, a yearlong study was conducted to explore the effects of using intensive interventions with at risk students identified using a criterion-referenced state assessment as the control group. The authors hypothesized that students that received multiple interventions would make greater reading gains.

The sample included approximately 1200 students identified as struggling readings. The sample included a diverse population made up of approximately 50% Caucasian, about 20% Latino, about 20% Black, and approximately 40% of the students were identified as eligible for free and/or reduced lunch.

Participants were selected based on the prior year's testing, using a standardized criterion referenced assessment as a pre-test. From the results students were randomly placed into one of the four treatment intervention control groups. Intervention consisted of a 90 minute class with no more than 21 students per group. The four interventions used were Read 180 (Smith, Rissman, & Grek, 2004), REACH (SRA Reach System, 2008), Reading Intervention through Strategy Enhancement (RISE; Lefsky, 2004), and School Offered Accelerated Reading (SOAR;

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Press, 2008). The teachers administering the interventions had a full

year of professional development and experience with the interventions. The participants in

addition to receiving one of four specific interventions, was also placed in science and social

studies classes with a teacher that taught using student focused reading strategies.

Read 180 consists of a 90 minute a day intensive reading intervention designed to meet

the needs of readers that are achieving below grade level. The program includes a 20 minute

teacher-led whole group instruction portion, followed by three 20 minute rotations, 1) small-

group direct instruction, 2) READ 180 software (Smith, Rissman, & Grek, 2004), and 3)

independent and modeled reading. When students have completed each of the three rotations, the

class comes back together for a 10 minute whole group closing. During the first 20 minute,

teacher-led portion, the teacher used the rBook to teach reading skills and strategies, vocabulary,

word study, writing, and grammar using content area readings including nonfiction texts. The

students would then begin the intervention with a video to help build background knowledge and

anchor instruction. They would then participate to build academic vocabulary that students

would encounter across content area readings. The students would then move to the Read 180

software with activities designed to individualize instruction in decoding, fluency, vocabulary,

comprehension, and spelling. The students would then move to Modeled and Independent

Reading to practice fluency and comprehension through Read 180 audio books, and leveled

books based on the students lexile level and interest area. The teacher would then use 10

minutes to summarize and review skills learned with the whole class.

The REACH (SRA Reach System, 2008) intervention focused on providing explicit and

systematic instruction to enable students to progress and participate in grade level

reading/language-arts programs. Students are placed in the REACH (SRA Reach System, 2008)

system according to their skill level determined by a diagnostic test. REACH (SRA Reach System, 2008) addresses four basic areas of instructional focus, decoding, comprehension, and writing, and spelling through morphemes. The decoding section of REACH (SRA Reach System, 2008) is separated into three skills levels, Corrective Reading Decoding A in which teaches basic print and phonemic awareness. Corrective Reading B1 reviews phonemic awareness for reading long and short sound relationships, Corrective Reading B2 is designed to build fluency and accuracy while reading.

The next section of REACH (SRA Reach System, 2008) is also divided into three skills levels. Corrective Reading Comprehension A is an oral language program that focuses on world knowledge, vocabulary, and thinking-reasoning skills to provide a foundation for comprehension. Corrective Reading Comprehension B uses content from science and social studies in order to teach the necessary skills for students to comprehend expository text and respond to written questions regarding the text. Corrective Reading Comprehension C teaches students higher order skills in reading such as inferring, finding the main idea, and drawing conclusions from text.

The final subset of REACH (SRA Reach System, 2008) is divided into four skills sets. Reasoning and Writing B uses storytelling and other activities to help students develop elements of the narrative structure, students are taught higher level comprehension skills such as cause-effect, predicting, and character analysis. Reading and Writing C allows students to apply their knowledge of communication and reporting in writing. Reasoning and Writing D emphasizes expository writing and continues to Reasoning and Writing E in which students are taught to use more sophisticated writing and referencing through writing.

The next intervention that was used in the study was RISE (Lefsky, 2004). RISE (Lefsky,

2004) focuses on using teacher's time, professional development, and resources in order to create

an effective curriculum that is engaging for students as well as to provide remediation for

struggling readers. RISE (Lefsky, 2004) teachers incorporate literacy skills and differentiate

based upon student needs and response. The basis for RISE (Lefsky, 2004) daily instruction is

the text set and unit plan. By using the text set, and leveled texts, the intervention teachers are

able to motivate students to take an active interest in the topic and see the relevancy in their

lives.

RISE (Lefsky, 2004) includes three daily components including independent reading

practice, whole group lessons, and daily-small differentiated instruction. Within in independent

reading practice, students are to read for 20 minutes independently as monitored by the teacher.

The focus is for students to receive successful practice as well as reading for pleasure. Within

the next component, whole group lesson, the teacher provides a lesson or whole group discussion

on a common text. During this time, the teacher may model a skill, strategy or oral reading

through an interactive think-aloud for students. Students are then able to practice strategies,

increase vocabulary, and background knowledge. The last component within the intervention is

daily small-group differentiated instruction in which students participate in three to four

workshop stations after the whole group lesson. One group is led by a teacher, another led by

students, and the third technology or independent work.

SOAR (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Press, 2008), the last intervention investigated was the

school wide accepted intervention and considered business as usual. General reading instruction

was based on a variety of materials and included standardized test preparation.

The results of the study concluded that all four interventions were equally effective in

meeting struggling students' needs however the control group that specifically taught skills

needed on the standardized tests showed the largest growth in performance. This study suggests that students that are receiving an intervention of any kind are able to make gains in their reading ability and standardized scores.

The previous study looked at using a variety of different interventions to help increase students' scores and state standardized testing. The following study will evaluate which programs were successful in helping students raise their reading levels.

Recent research shows that there is a decline in reading abilities among high school students. In fact, six million high school students read at far below grade level (Slavin, Cheung, Groff & Lake, 2008). To help try to lower this rate, Slavin, Cheung, Groff, and Lake (2008) conducted research on several programs used in middle and high school classrooms, throughout the United States. The goal of this research was to evaluate which programs were successful in helping students to raise their reading levels. The programs they focused on were Read 180 (Smith, Rissman, & Grek, 2004), Voyager Passport, Reading Apprenticeship, and Talent Development High School (Kemple, & Herlihy, 2004). The Read 180 (Smith, Rissman, & Grek, 2004) program was developed to help struggling readers. The program follows an intense reading curriculum where students read for twenty-minutes a day and then do small group work with their peers and teachers. The Voyager Passport (Journeys Beginnings, 2008) program focuses on students who are struggling with reading. The program uses DVD's and other online learning activities to help students with vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The Reading Apprenticeship (Strategic Learning Initiative, 2010) program was designed to help high school students who are struggling with reading. This program focuses on silent reading, language study, and writing. Finally, the Talent Development High School program (Kemple, & Herlihy, 2004) is designed for high poverty high schools. This program tries to improve math and

reading scores. This program includes a 'double dose' of reading and math on a daily basis. During the first semester, students participate in a reading program that allows them to self-select the texts. During the second semester, students read novels from the district curriculum.

When conducting this research, Slavin, Cheung, Groff, and Lake (2008) had two groups for each different program. The control group was the students who were in the regular classrooms. The group who was receiving the reading program was the test group. The data from these two groups was then examined together to look for similarities and differences. In order to acquire this data, researchers measured four different aspects of each program: the reading curriculum, the methods used, the computer assisted instruction, and the instructional processes.

Thirty-three schools throughout the United States participated in this study; however, I will only focus on the high schools that participated. First, the Read 180 (Smith, Rissman, & Grek, 2004) was given to ninth grade students in a school district in Arizona. Students from the Read 180 group were matched with students who were not in the program. This particular studied last for a year. Students were given pretests on their reading abilities in the beginning of the year, and then posttests at the end of the year. Results showed that students who used the Read 180 program achieved 1.3 grade levels higher than the control group.

Another program that was tested was the Voyager Passport (Journeys Beginnings, 2008). This program was tested in Florida with ninth and tenth grade students who were limited in their English. Four schools implemented this program over a year. These four schools were paired up with four other schools that did not use this program, who became the control group. Students were tested in the beginning of the year and the end of the year. Results showed that there were no significant gains in reading with this program.

In addition to these two programs, researches also explored the effectiveness of the Reading Apprenticeship program (Strategic Learning Initiative, 2010). To evaluate this program, researches chose thirty-four high schools around the United States to participate in this program. Students were randomly chosen ninth graders who were reading two to four grades below reading level. Again, each school had a partner school that was not using the program as the control group. Students were tested at the beginning of the year and the end of the year. Again, there were little gains in reading comprehension, less than 0.07%.

Finally, the last high school program analyzed was the Talent Development High School program (John Hopkins University's School of Education, 2009). Three schools participated in this program, which included 257 students in grades nine through twelve and eight general education teachers. Again, there was a control group of three high schools that did not use this program. Students were tested at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year. At the end of the year, students who participated in this program scored much higher than students who were in the control group. Students who participated in this program, had Terra Nova scores 17% higher on their posttests than their pretests.

With all this information, one can see that the two programs that worked the best were the Read 180 (Smith, Rissman, & Grek, 2004) program and the Talent Development High School (John Hopkins University's School of Education, 2009. Two factors contributed the most to helping students raise their reading levels using these two programs. The factor that contributed to the success of the Read 180 (Smith, Rissman, & Grek, 2004) program was that students were able to work in small groups to help comprehend the text. This cooperative learning allowed students to make connections, question, and help one another to understand the text. The factor that contributed to the success of the Talent Development High School (John

Hopkins University's School of Education, 2009) was the fact that students were able to choose text they were interested in. This motivated students to read and proved to them that they were an important part of the classroom.

The previous study explored the effects of using multiple interventions with struggling high school students in order to increase state standardized test scores. The following study will investigate the effects of using dramatic oral reading interventions on reading fluency and comprehension.

Reading fluency and comprehension have often been studied together to explore correlation between the two. This is correlation is something that is often looked at in students that struggle with reading and require reading interventions. With this in mind, Goering and Baker (2010) investigated the use of oral reading interventions on both reading fluency and comprehension. The question that Goering and Baker (2010) explored throughout the study was whether participation in dramatic oral reading interventions affects high school students reading fluency and comprehension.

The participants in this study included twenty-five tenth graders, approximately 10 males and about 15 females. Approximately seven of the participants were English Language Learners, and about three students were identified as receiving special education services. Students in the intervention period had been previously identified as having a need for interventions in reading and were assessed using a nationally norm referenced test to measure their pretreatment data in oral fluency and comprehension skills.

The intervention consisted of about 25 classroom days, with four day cycles in which texts were used. The cycle began with modeling of good and bad examples of oral reading. The materials used ranged from high-interest selections to young adult fiction with each selection

pick by the participant and the teacher that were above their tested grade level in reading. The

second day the students participated in repeated readings with poems as the dramatic repeated

reading. The third day of the cycle the participants practiced oral reading individually, with

partners, and with a small group. On the fourth day of the cycle, the participants concluded the

cycle with a poetry reading event. After the completion of the four-day cycle, the researcher

would conduct an interview with the participants comparing fluency scores as well as participant

experiences with the intervention.

The results of the intervention based on posttest data scores indicate that participants

were able to make significant gains in their reading fluency and comprehension, as well as

increasing their enjoyment for reading when given opportunities to practice oral reading fluency

as well as choice and dramatic effect in reading material.

The previous study looked at using dramatic oral readings in order to increase students

reading fluency. In the following student researchers explored the effects of using a structured

reading program in order to increase the reading ability of students experiencing significant

reading underachievement.

There have been many programs designed to increase reading ability with students

struggle in reading achievement. To that end, research has been conducted to explore the

effectiveness of the programs in regards to students overall reading achievement. Scheffel,

Shroyer, and Strongin (2003) researched the effects of a structure reading intervention program

on students that were identified as having significant reading underachievement. The program

that the researchers examined throughout the study was the Language! Program (Green, 1996).

The Language! Program (Green, 1996) is a curriculum designed to meet the needs of adolescents

and adults that had not learned to read and write through traditional instructional methods. The

researchers hypothesized that students participating in the Language! Program (Green, 1996)

when implemented within a public school district would make significant gains in their overall

reading skill set.

The sample consisted of approximately 550 students in grades six, seven, eight and ten.

Of the participants about 275 were male and about 275 were female. Approximately 15 of the

participants were identified as receiving special education services. About 65% of the

participants were considered to have English as their primary language. About 50% of the

students were Asian- Americans, about 30% percent Hispanic, approximately 15% African

American, and about ten percent Caucasian.

Based on results from a nationally-normed, standardized assessment of letter-word

identification, word attack skills, and spelling skills pre-test scores were used to determine

participants for the intervention program. The participants that scored below in reading skills

were then placed within the intervention group.

Instruction within the Language! Program (Green, 1996) included teacher education and

training as well as professional development with the program. Teachers implementing the

intervention were given about three days of training with a certified Language! Trainer and some

teachers received follow-up trainings during the school year.   Participants were then given the

intervention within their language arts classes. The intervention group consisted of about 10-30

students with one teacher. Intervention was daily for 90 minutes resulting in approximately 270

hours of intervention for the year. The intervention was individual and was based on pretest

information.

The Language! Program (Green, 1996) Curriculum is made up of three levels, designed

to take three years to complete. Level I includes student learning in non-phonetic vocabulary

words with a range of reading material from min-second grade to the primer level. Level II includes short and long vowels, sight words, syllabication, consonant blends, and comprehension strategies, and reading material in Level II ranges from late second grade to mid-fourth grade level. By the end of the level, students are expected to have mastered phonetic reading and read fluently. Level III incorporates reading skills from the late fourth grade to the sixth grade level. Within Level III, students are expanding on their comprehension strategies focusing on morphology and syntactic skills through higher level readings.

The format of the intervention included six steps of instruction. First, the teacher would introduced new concepts and review vocabulary out loud. After this, the student would complete workbook activities, and the teacher would check over their work. Next, the student would read silently from a reader, and the student and teacher would conference with each other to check comprehension. The student then completes a writing assignment using provided topics. Finally, the student completes a unit spelling test. If the student did not reach 80% accuracy on all tasks, the student is unable to move to the next unit and the teacher must re-teach until mastery is achieved.

The participants were given a nationally-normed standardized post test and results indicate that after the implementation of the Language! Program (Green, 1996); participants improved their reading performance across most grade levels.

The previous study suggests that using a structured intervention with students tailored to meet individual needs is effective in increasing students' growth in their reading performance. The following study will explore attempts to improve the fluency performance using specific strategies with students identified with a reading disability.

Reading fluently is a critical component in the reading ability; however it is often overlooked in planning reading curriculums. To this end, Allinder, Dunse, Brunken, and Obermiller-Krolikowski (2001) questioned whether or not using specific reading strategies with students identified as having a reading disability would improve oral reading ability.

Participants in this study included about 50 seventh grade students enrolled in remedial reading classes. About 50 % of the participants were male from a non-minority background, and about 30% had been identified as having a disability.

Two teachers and one speech-language pathologist provided reading instruction during the time of the study. Students were then assigned to one of three remedial reading classes, and were randomly assigned to the fluency strategy group or the no-strategy group. Students were grouped based on a nationally- normed standardized test into interventions groups.

Before the intervention began, participants met with the teachers in an individual conference to discuss where reading fluency strategy would be taught during the 10 week intervention. The strategies that were taught included reading with inflection, and reading at the appropriate pace (Allinder, Dunse, Brunken, & Obermiller-Krolikowski, 2001). Three classes per week were devoted to the reading instruction. Each class period lasted for approximately 50 minutes. The instructional routine consisted of three major instructional components, comprehension, phonics skills, and oral reading. During the comprehension component students were instructed with teacher-led group discussions regarding questions about the text, as well as making predictions about the reading. At this time unfamiliar vocabulary was also introduced for the students. During the phonics component, teachers taught a specific phonics rule through direct instruction, teacher modeling, and repeated student practice. The third component of oral reading included students reading aloud from the trade book used throughout the intervention.

Before beginning the oral reading component, students were asked to use their strategy for oral reading when it was their turn to read.

The results of the study indicated that the use of reading strategies to increase oral reading fluency is varied. Both groups, students receiving a strategy versus non-strategy students performed better on the standardized tests subtest measuring passage comprehension, but not on other subtests. Results indicated that the increased reading practice not the strategy instruction seemed too contributed to gains in students' fluency.

To conclude this chapter, it is important to note students at-risk for or who have been identified with a reading disability benefit from intensive intervention focusing on word level, and passage level skills in reading. Response to Intervention is a nationally recognized initiative to be recognized in schools across the country that will allow these targeted students interventions needed to increase their skills in reading. It is crucial that teachers understand the outcomes of providing students with interventions and target these areas of need with research-based interventions. Pullen et al. (2010) understood the need for students to be provided with Tier 2 interventions in the area of vocabulary, which in turn increased the student's receptive and contextual vocabulary. Kerins et al. (2010) provided students with a tiered, multi-sensory approach to increase phonemic skills. Denton et al. (2006) used tiered interventions to increase students decoding and spelling skills. Vaughn et al. (2010) explored an intervention based model to increase students reading fluency and comprehension skills through a repeated reading approach. Finally, Strong et al. (2004) researched the effect of using a class-wide direct instruction model paired with repeated readings to increase students' fluency and comprehension skills. This research further backs the importance of using tiered interventions to increase the word and passage level reading skills for students at-risk for or who have been identified as

having a reading disability.

Chapter Three

Procedures for the Study

In the previous chapter research that showed the importance of using teacher modeled read alouds, and repeated readings to support students who struggle or have an identified disability in reading fluency. One way in which to provide interventions to students is to allow them more exposure to readings as well as to model fluent reading. The purpose of this study was the explore the effectiveness of using teacher modeled oral read alouds and repeated readings in increase students' reading fluency rates. Based on the classroom teacher's observations, the students that were participating in the intervention groups were not fluent readers compared to those in their same age range. Therefore, the classroom teacher wanted to determine whether or not the use of explicit teacher modeling in oral reading paired along with repeated readings would increase the students reading fluency.

The information presented in this chapter explains the different methods used to increase students' reading fluency. This chapter describes the sample, the procedures, the collection of data, and a brief summary.

Description of the Sample

The study was conducted within a Milwaukee suburban high school. The school serves over 12,000 students between the ages of three to twenty-one. The school district is diverse, serving 20 % minority students, 22% qualifying for free of reduced lunch, 12% special education, and over 39 languages educated through English Language Learners services.

The district provides fourteen elementary schools, pre-kindergarten through grade five; three middle schools, six-eight; and three high schools, grades nine through twelve. Additionally,

the district offers one alternative high school, and a County Head start program.

The general mission of the school district is: To educate and graduate students by providing equal access to quality education with high academic standards to develop responsible citizens with the skills, necessary for lifelong learning, higher education, and employment.

 The participants in this study included three high school boys, ages 17-18 years old in a special education reading interventions class. One of the students was an English Language Learner, from Mexico, one student was African American, and one student was Caucasian. All three participants were reading at the early eight grade level. These students had already been placed in this class because they had an identified reading disability, and they were up for a reevaluation of their disability that year. Therefore, interventions needed to be put in place to re-evaluate the need for Special Education services.

Description of the procedures

The six-week study was administered during the end part of the third and the beginning part of the fourth quarter of the regular academic year. The lessons occurred during third period in a three day rotational schedule with the class meeting every two out of three days for 70 minutes each day. The action research study used twenty minutes for repeated readings, and the remaining fifty minutes for the teacher modeling read alouds with the students.

Before the study began the researcher administered the Aimsweb (NCS, Pearson, 2010) (Appendix 1) weekly probe to obtain a fluency measure for each student, as well as the Qualitative Reading Inventory (Leslie & Caldwell, 2010) (Appendix 2) to measure fluency rates. The classroom teacher began with the Aimsweb (NCS, Pearson, 2010) probe at the student's current progress monitoring level, and asked the student to read through the passage for one minute as the classroom teacher marked errors in the student's reading. The classroom

teacher then administered the QRI (Leslie & Caldwell, 2010) and asked the students to read through the entire passage aloud while the classroom teacher measured words per minute as well as errors. The two measures determined the students' pre-assessment scores and a baseline fluency rate for the individual students.

On the first day of the study, the classroom teacher explained that the students would be working on their fluency skills within the next six weeks. The classroom teacher informed the students that with the first twenty minutes of class would be spent reading through an expository news article (Appendix 3) with the teacher reading the entire article, and the student reading immediately after for five days. The students were expected to pick up the articles each day before class began in order to prepare for that day. The teacher also informed the students that they were going to be reading an independent narrative text for the next six weeks, along with the teacher aloud in the classroom. The first day, the classroom teacher and the students went to the library to select the narrative text that was used throughout the six week study. The classroom teacher then went over the means of measuring fluency and read aloud for students to serve as a model of each of the fluency measures.

On the second day of the study, the classroom teacher modeled for the students oral reading fluency through the use of the article for week one. The students listened as the teacher read through the entire article, and were then asked to read through the same article while the teacher tracked words read per minute and the errors to individual students reading. The students were then asked to get their independent novels and read through them with the teacher for the remaining 50 minutes of class. The teacher would take turns with the students reading in ten minute intervals and asking the students to read in ten minute intervals. While reading, the teacher would stop students if an error occurred and have the student reread the selection, after

the teacher read the selection aloud for the student correctly. This process was used each time a student made an error in their reading for the first week of the study. This format of the teacher read of the article, then student read of the article, then the independent novel read was followed each day of the study. At the end of the first week of study, the classroom teacher administered the Aimsweb probe to measure fluency, as well as the one minute read with the news article to measure fluency after exposure to the article five times.

The second week of the study followed a similar format to the first week of the study; however the repeated article used with students changed due to the five day limit. The classroom teacher read through the entire new article, and then asked students to read through the article as the teacher measured each student's words per minute and errors within one minute the first time reading the article. The students were then again asked to read from their independent novels taking turns reading aloud with the teacher. At the end of the second week an Aimsweb (NCS, Pearson, 2010) assessment, as well as words per minute and errors after five times exposure to the article was completed by the classroom teacher.

The following four weeks continued with the same routine and format as the first two weeks in the study. The teacher continued introducing new articles to the students each week, orally modeling the reading each of the five times the article was used with the students. The teacher also continued to read independently with the students, stopping the students when they had misread a section or sentence, modeling the correct reading, and then having the students read the section or sentence over.

Collection of data

The data for this study was collected in the following three ways. First the classroom teacher used previously collected progress monitoring data through the use of Aimsweb (NCS,

Pearson, 2010) assessment to examine the current trends in fluency over the course of the year in

the reading interventions classroom. The use of Aimsweb (NCS, Pearson, 2010) had already

been put in place as a progress monitoring tool and was familiar to the students. The classroom

teacher looked at the last passage that was completed the week before with the student, and the

level at which the student was currently performing. The classroom teacher then asked the

student to read the next passage in the level at which the student was being monitored for one

minute while the teacher measure words read, and errors. The monitoring with the Aimsweb

(NCS, Pearson, 2010) continued each week on Friday and passages continued in succession.

The final passage at the end of the six weeks served as a post-test measure.

Second, the teacher used the QRI (Leslie & Caldwell, 2010), as another means to

measure the students' words per minute and accuracy in reading. The classroom teacher took the

level at which the student was being progress monitored in the Aimsweb (NCS, Pearson, 2010),

and asked the student to read an expository text selection "Fireworks" (Leslie & Caldwell, 2010)

from the QRI. The students read the entire selection while the teacher monitored the words read

per minute as well as the errors. At the end of the six weeks, the students were again given the

expository text "Birth of Star" (Leslie & Caldwell, 2010) at the same level and asked to read

through the entire text while the teacher monitored words read per minute and errors to serve as a

post –test measure.

Finally, the teacher used the expository news articles as a third measurement. The

teacher would model the article each week, and then ask the student to read the article. The

teacher monitored the students' words per minute and errors with the students first time reading

the article, as well as the fifth time reading the article in order to measure growth in the students'

fluency. The final time reading through the last article served as the post-test measure for the
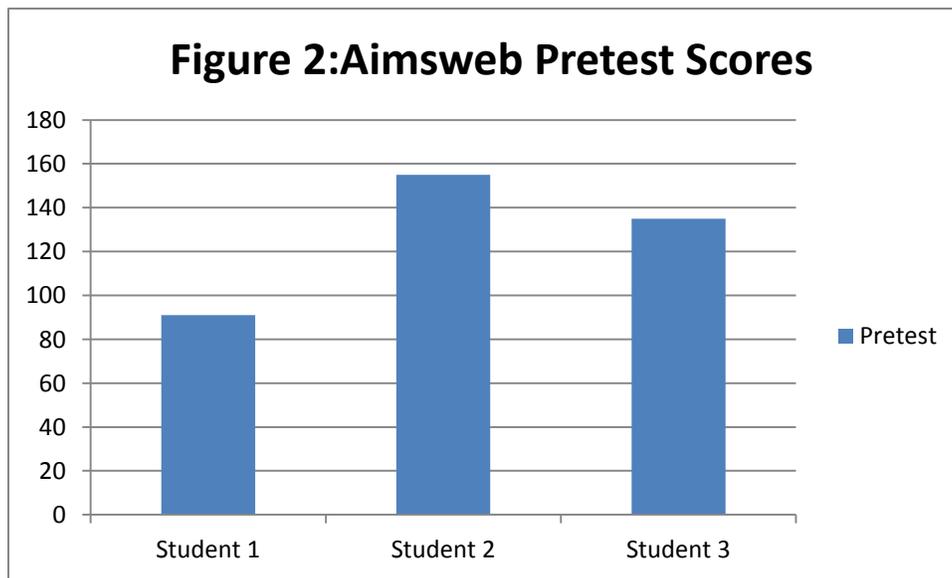
article reading.

Chapter Four

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of using repeated, teacher oral modeled readings on students' fluency rates. The students followed the procedure of reading six expository articles read orally and modeled by the teacher and then read by students for the first twenty minutes of the class period. The students would then spend the remaining 50-minutes orally reading aloud with the teacher, taking turns in ten minute intervals with the teacher modeling first and then the student reading. This format was the same throughout the six week study. This chapter starts with a description of the data collected and ends with an analysis of the data.

Data Collection and Analysis

Students' fluency rates were pre-assessed through the administration of both the Aimsweb (NCS, Pearson, 2010) progress monitoring tool, the QRI (Leslie & Caldwell, 2010) expository passage reading "Fireworks" at the eighth grade level. The purpose of this pre-assessment was to determine to students current words per minute and errors in oral reading at the eighth grade level. The researcher separated and analyzed the data from the three students and the two measures in order to identify the students' current fluency rates. Figure 1 illustrates the students' pre-assessments scores in words per minute on the QRI assessment. Figure 2 illustrates the students' pre-assessments scores in words per minute of the Aimsweb assessment.

Figure 1:QRI Assesments Pretest
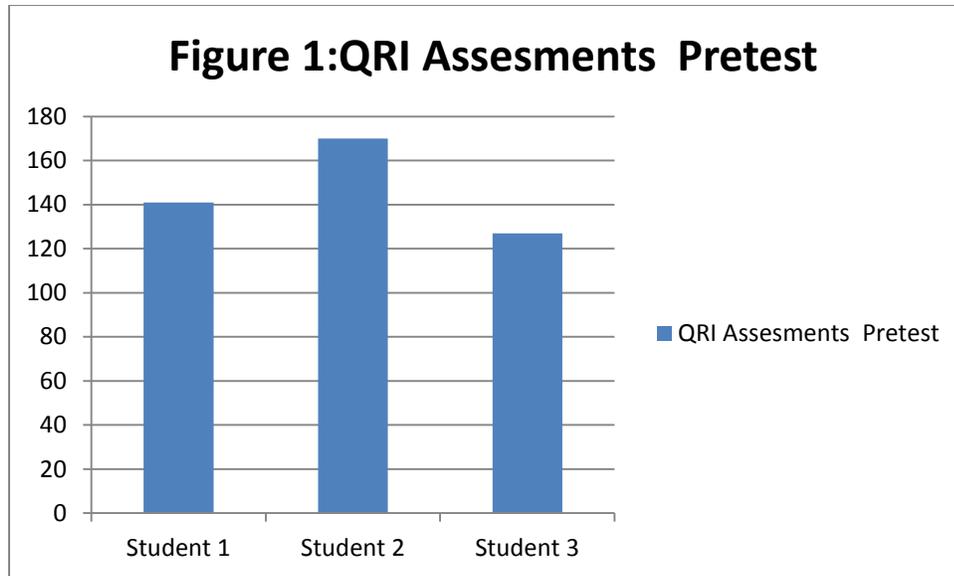
Results on the QRI pretest assessment show a mean score of 146 words per minute, the

median was 141, the standard deviation of 21.93.

Figure 2:Aimsweb Pretest Scores

Results on the Aimsweb pretest assessment show a mean score of 127 words per minute,
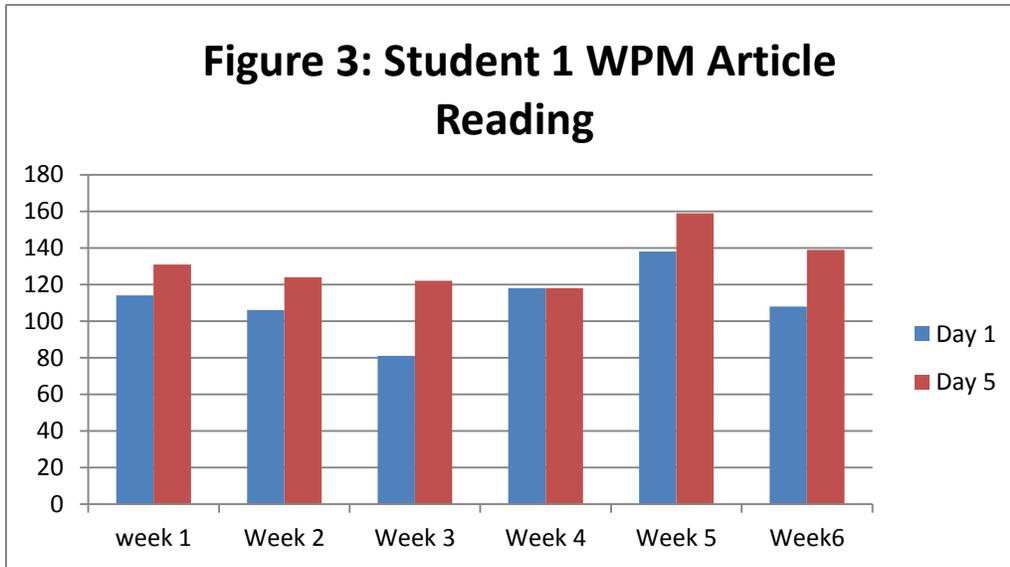
the median was 135.

Figure 3: Student 1 WPM Article Reading

Figure 3 illustrates student one's readings progress in article reading over a six week time frame. The figure illustrates the student's initial reading as day one in blue, and the student's final reading with the article, day five in red. The student's mean in words per minute over the six week period for the initial reading was about 91, the median was 111. The mean for the final reading was about 132, the median was 127.5. This indicates an increase of about 17 words from the initial reading week one to the final reading in week six.
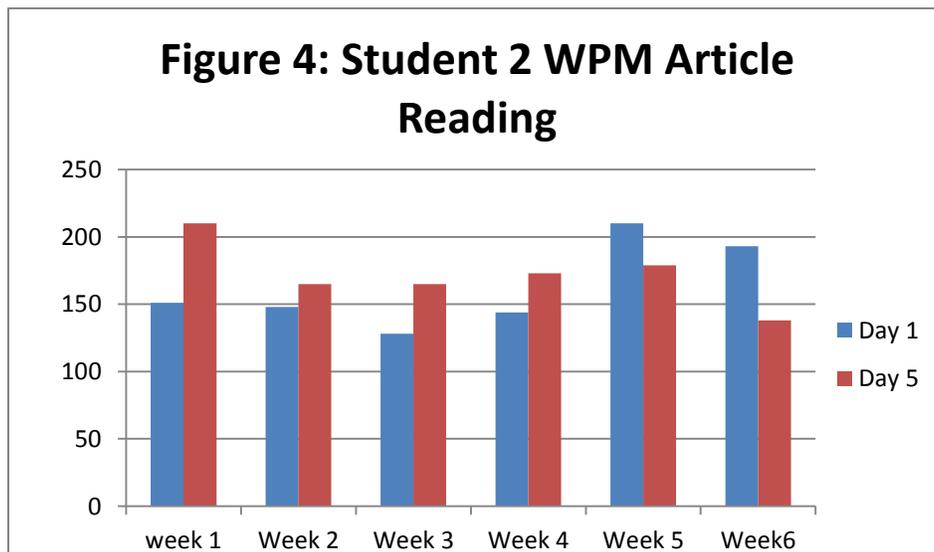

Figure 4: Student 2 WPM Article Reading

Figure 4 illustrates student two's readings progress in article reading over a six week time frame. The figure illustrates the student's initial reading as day one in blue, and the student's final reading with the article, day five in red. The student's mean in words per minute over the six week period for the initial reading was about 162, the median was 149.5. The mean for the final reading was about 172, the median was 169. This indicates an increase of about ten words from the initial reading week one to the final reading in week six.
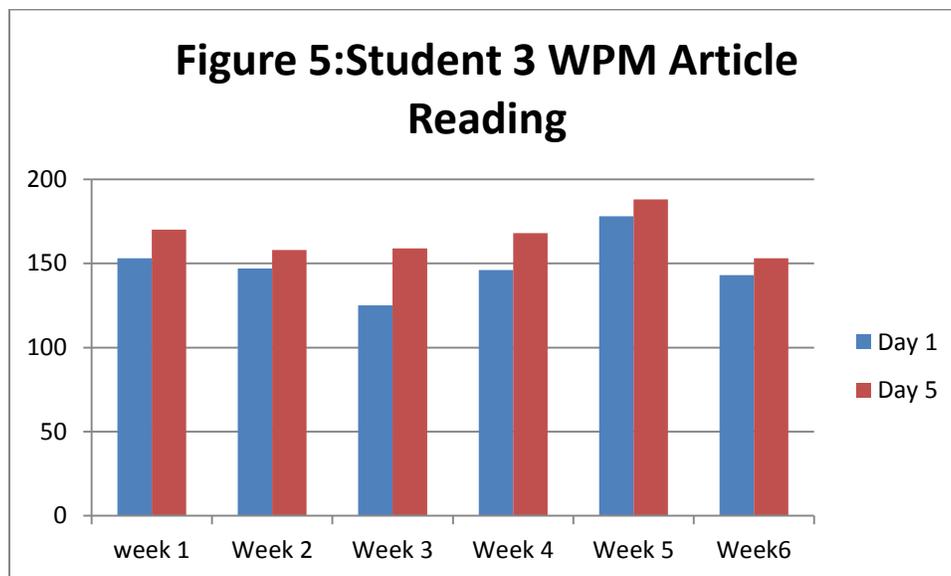
Figure 5:Student 3 WPM Article Reading

Figure 5 illustrates student three's readings progress in article reading over a six week time frame. The figure illustrates the student's initial reading as day one in blue, and the student's final reading with the article, day five in red. The student's mean in words per minute over the six week period for the initial reading was about 149, the median was 146.5. The mean for the final reading was 166, the median was 163.5. This indicates an increase of about seventeen words from the initial reading week one to the final reading in week six.
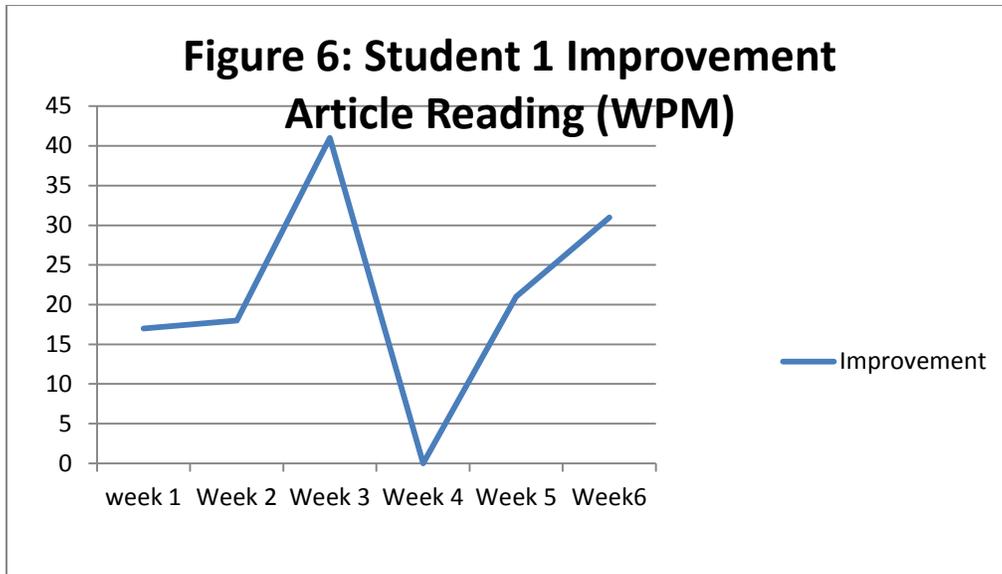
Figure 6: Student 1 Improvement Article Reading (WPM)

Figure 6 illustrates student one's improvement scores over the six-week period. The graph illustrates an overall gain in the student's words per minute from week one to week six in article reading.
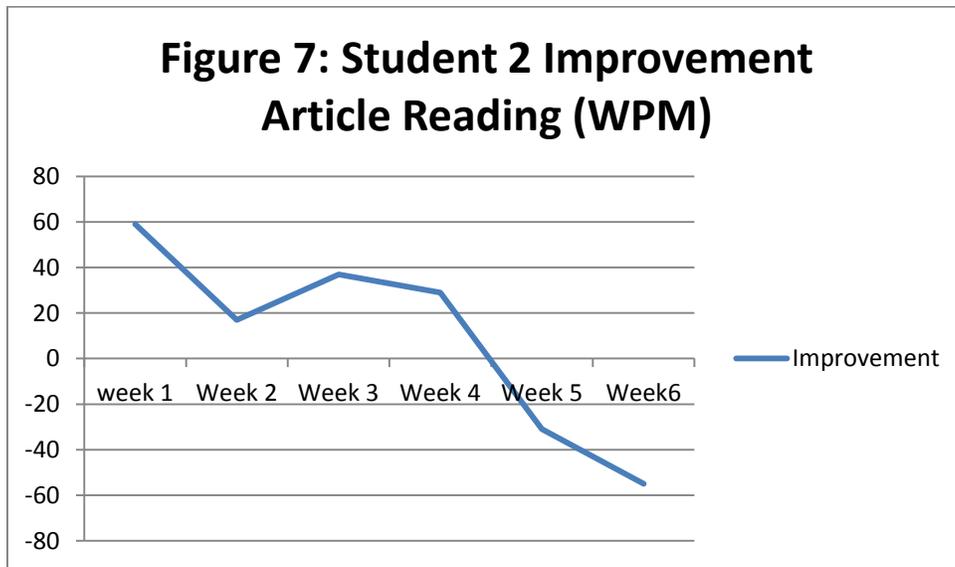
Figure 7: Student 2 Improvement Article Reading (WPM)

Figure 7 illustrates student two's improvement over the six week period. The graph Illustrates and overall decline in the student's words per minute over the six week period in the article reading.

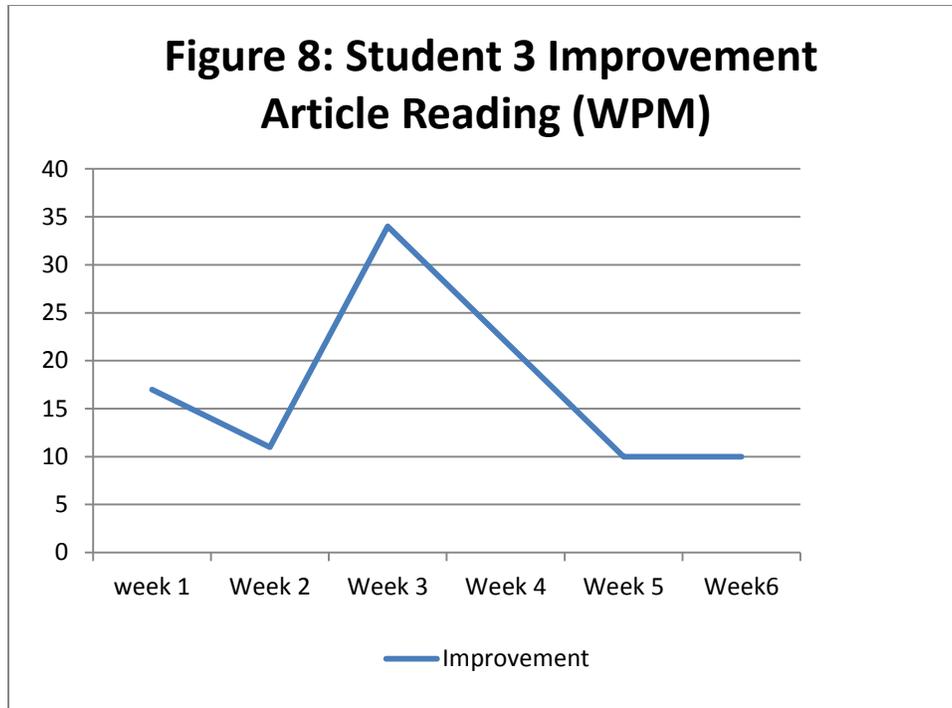**Figure 8: Student 3 Improvement Article Reading (WPM)**

Figure 8 illustrates student three's improvement over the six week time period in the article readings. The graph illustrates a gain in week three, and then a steady decline in the final two weeks of the article readings.
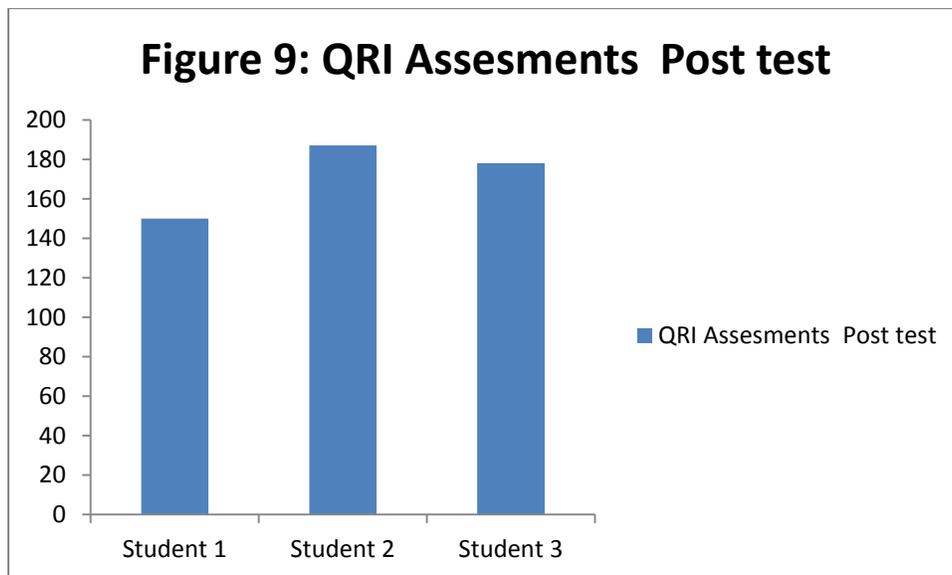

Figure 9: QRI Assesments Post test

Figure 9 illustrates the post test QRI assessment scores. The mean score was about 172, the median score was 178. The standard deviation was 19.29.

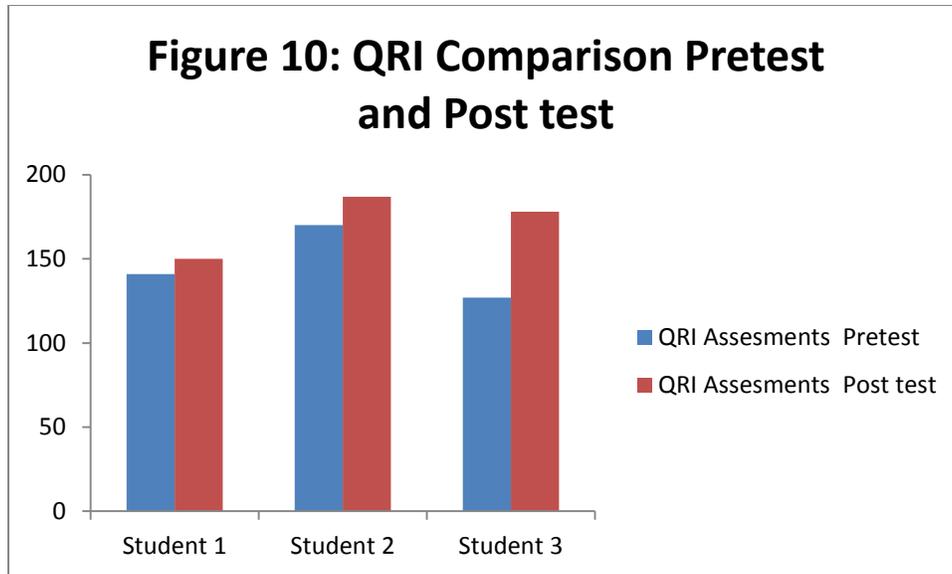**Figure 10: QRI Comparison Pretest and Post test**

Figure 10 illustrates the comparison between the QRI pre and post test assessment. The graph illustrates the pretest assessment for each student in blue and the post test assessment in red. The graph illustrates that each student made gains in their reading from the pretest to the post test assessment.

Figure 11: Aimsweb Post Test Scores

Figure 11 illustrates the posttest Aimsweb (NCS, Pearson, 2010) assessment scores. The mean score was about 203, the median score was 151.

Figure 12: Comparison Pretest and Post Test Scores on Aimsweb

Figure 12 illustrates the comparison between the Aimsweb (NCS, Pearson, 2010) pre and posttest assessment. The graph illustrates the pretest assessment for each student in blue and the post test assessment in red. The graph illustrates that each student made gains in their reading from the pretest to the post test assessment.
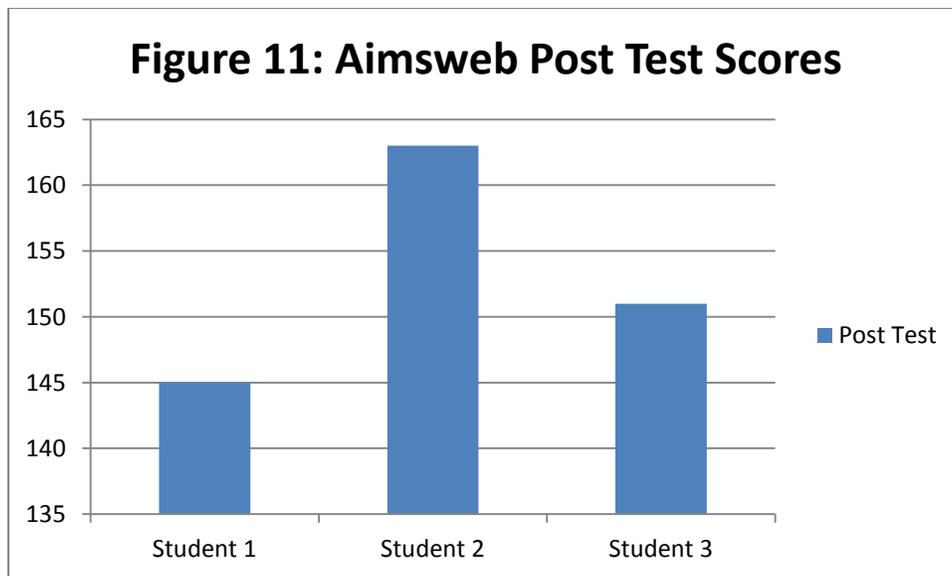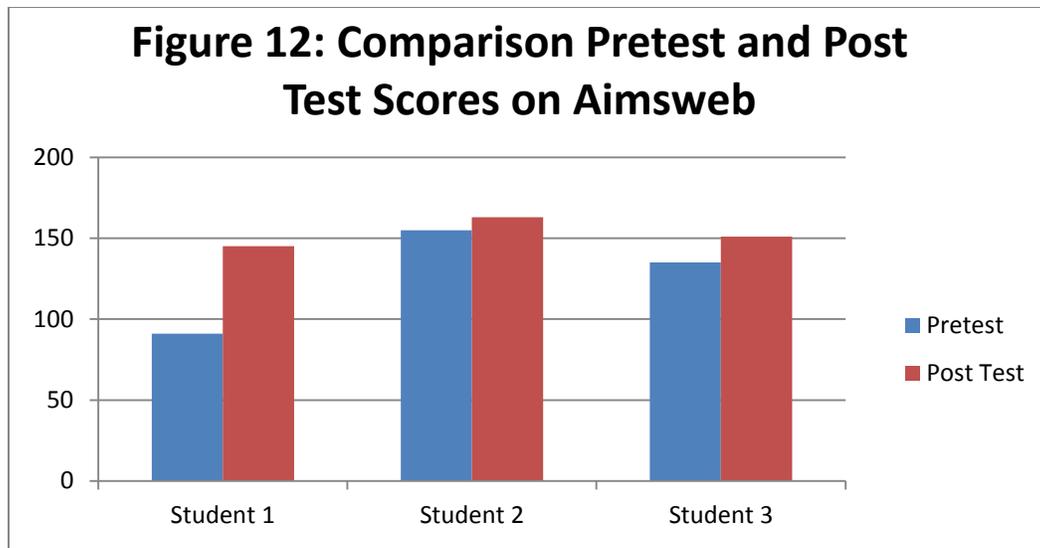
Summary

In order to determine whether the explicit teacher modeled using repeated readings assisted in students' fluency, the researcher conducted a six-week study that implemented the use of oral teacher modeling, and exposure to repeated readings with both expository and narrative texts. Determining the specific effects of the fluency consisted of pre assessments that were administered at the beginning of the study and post assessments that was administered at the end of the six-week study. Throughout the course of the study, the students would read expository articles that the teacher had modeled for them, as well as narrative text that was read aloud with the teacher in ten minute shared intervals. As a result of study, the students did in fact significantly improve their overall reading fluency rates based on the results of the pre and post assessments. Chapter Five will connect this study to previous research conducted. Also, final

conclusions and explanations will be discussed as well as the study's strengths, limitations, and future research recommendations.

Chapter Five

Conclusions

The purpose of Chapter Five is to connect this six-week study with existing research to determine the benefits of using oral modeled, repeated readings to improve reading fluency. This researcher used both expository and narrative articles with the students, orally modeling the reading, and using the readings repeatedly. In addition, other researchers (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Meyer & Felton, 1999; Samuels, 1979; Therrien, 2004) have used repeated readings to increase reading fluency in the classroom. Strong, Wehby, Falk, and Lane (2004) understood the importance of oral modeling in the classroom to increase students understanding of reading fluency. Therefore, the implementation of these specific instructional methods is beneficial for students to practice and master in order to become proficient and fluent readers. These connections from previous research to this study will be discussed and analyzed. The results that were identified in chapter four will also be discussed and explained. Finally, the strengths and limitations of the study will be addressed as well as recommendations for future studies.

Connections to Existing Research

The role of reading fluency has been an important topic in regards to overall reading achievement and proficiency amongst educators because it is an important skill to have in order for students to be proficient readers. With the RtI model becoming an increasingly accepted idea within the education world, many studies have attempted to look at effective interventions in the area of reading fluency (Lang et al.; 2009; Goering & Baker, 2010; Strong, Wehby, Falk and Lane 2010; Scheffel, Shroyer, & Strongin, 2003). The purpose of this six-week study was to use

explicit instruction to teach students to use reading fluency strategies to help improve the students' overall reading fluency. The articles that were summarized in chapter two clearly relate to this study, and the results were similar to other studies that were previously conducted.

The first study to represent this six-week study was Lang et al., (2009). The researchers designed a case study using four different reading programs to determine whether intensive reading interventions would improve overall reading scores for struggling high school students. The researchers determined that all four reading interventions were equally effective in raising reading development of struggling students. Similarly, Goering and Baker (2010) conducted a study that explore whether participation in dramatic oral reading interventions affects high school students reading fluency and comprehension. The researchers determined that the participants were able to make significant gains in their reading fluency. These studies further enforce the idea that teachers explicitly teach specific fluency intervention strategies in order to improve the student's overall reading fluency.

Furthermore, Strong, Wehby, Falk and Lane (2010) explored the effects of using repeated readings on the fluency and comprehension using paired and repeated readings on the performance of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. The researchers found that using repeated readings increased the students' words per minute accuracy and fluency rates. Additionally, Scheffel, Shroyer, and Strongin (2003) researched the effects of a structure reading intervention program on students that were identified as having significant reading underachievement. The researchers found that using explicit teacher modeling as an intervention targeting specific skills in reading for individual students was effective in raising students overall readings scores.

The results of this study also indicated that using explicit instruction, orally modeling skills with paired readings was an effective means of reaching multiple students in their reading abilities. This study suggested that if a student were to receive individualized explicit instruction the student would make more significant gains.

Connections to the Common Core Standards

As well as providing research to verify the importance of using explicit teacher modeling, repeated oral readings, another important aspect to recognize is the connection between this study and the Common Core Standards. First, Common Core Standard RL. 9-10.4 states that a student can determine the meaning of words and phrases that are used in the text (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2011). This standard is shown when students are able to recognize and fluent read words within the articles as well as the weekly progress monitoring of comprehension passages. Common Core RL.9-10.10 that states that by the end of 9th grade students are able to read and comprehend literature with scaffolding as needed (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2011). This standard is addressed when students within the study are reading both expository articles and narrative independent novels throughout the study.

Explanation of Results

In addition to the Common Core Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2011) assessments and analysis of data is also required. The analysis of data has been separated into three sections. The first section will analyze the pre and post-assessments. The next section, will analyze the students' scores in the article reading. The third section will analyze the students' growth in regards to weekly Aimsweb (NCS Pearson, 2010) progress monitoring. The third and final section will discuss the strengths, limitations, and future

recommendations of the study.

Section One: Pre and post-assessments.

The students first completed an 8th -grade expository text reading from the QRI (Leslie & Caldwell, 2010) as a pre assessment to measure the students' current words read per minute and accuracy in oral reading. The same procedure was completed at the end of the six-week with another 8th- grade expository reading from the QRI (Leslie & Caldwell, 2010) used as a post-assessment. Student one increased his words per minute by nine words. Student two increased his words per minute by 17 words, and student three increased his words per minute by 51 words. As a whole the class had a mean improvement of about 25 words.

Section Two: Student article readings.

The students complete a weekly article reading. The researcher counted the individual student's words per minute on the initial reading as well as the final reading at the end of the five day exposure. The teacher would model the article reading each day for the student and then the student would take over reading the article. Student 1was able to increase his words per minute from the initial reading of 114 words per minute to 139 words per minute on the final reading after six weeks, a gain of 25 words. Student one was very motivated to progress through his reading fluency rates and thus put forth effort each week in his fluency. Student two began his initial reading with 151 words per minute and ended his final reading at 138 words per minute, an overall decline in his words per minute by 13 words. Student two became frustrated the final week of the study. He was going through some family problems and his motivation decreased. This lead the researcher to believe that his decline in words per minute was a motivation issue rather than due to the intervention. Student three began his initial reading at 153 words per minute and ended at 153 words per minute creating a stagnate effect on his reading fluency. The

researcher believes that he too lacked motivation at the end of the study due to it being the end of

the year because his scores in the previous weeks were in the 170's and 180's. Student three also

began to skip the interventions class, lacking the time that the other students had to practice their

reading fluency. Overall based on the scores from the article readings, student one was the only

student to make significant growth in his reading fluency.

        Section Three: Aimsweb pre and post test assessment.

        The students completed a pretest and a posttest using 8th -grade Aimsweb (NCS Pearson,

2010) progress monitoring probes. The students first completed an 8th -grade narrative reading

as a pre assessment to measure the students' current words read per minute and accuracy in oral

reading. The same procedure was completed at the end of the six-week with another 8th grade

narrative reading from the Aimsweb (NCS Pearson, 2010) was used as a post-assessment.

Student one increased his words per minute by 54 words. Student two increased his words per

minute by eight words, and student three increased his words by 16 words per minute. As a

whole the class had a mean improvement of about 26 words per minute.

Strengths, Limitations, and Recommendations

        This next section will outline the strengths, the limitations, and the researcher's further

recommendations for the study. After reflection, the researcher determined that the results of the

study proved effective in raising student's fluency rates. The needs that would need to be met in

further studies would be teaching further fluency strategies and adjusting the teaching to meet the

need of the students where they are currently functioning. One difficulty the researcher faced in

her study was that of student motivation, as well as the small population sample. The premise of

this study was to determine if using explicit teacher oral modeling of reading paired with

repeated readings would improve students' overall fluency levels.

Strengths.

The most significant strengths within this study was the improvement that students were able to make in their reading fluency, and the joy that they felt when they were able to see their progress and growth. Students in the study became invested in their individual progress and wanted to continue to increase their words per minute from week to week of the study.

Another strength of this study was that students felt that they were able to make considerable growth in their reading, and therefore began to enjoy reading aloud in the class because they felt more confident and aware of their reading fluency. This demonstrates that students need to feel motivated and invested within their own reading ability given the tools in order to improve.

Limitations.

The primary limitation in this study is the schedule in which the intervention classes of the study took place. Students were not able to receive instruction on a daily basis; therefore time that could have been spent orally modeling reading was reduced in this study.

Additionally, the study took place over the students' spring break and towards the end of the year. Therefore, the students did not receive any instruction, nor were they reading for eight days. After returning from spring break, the students' lacked as much motivation as previously seen in the study due to the low amount of weeks left within the school year calendar.

Another limitation of this study is related to time. Being that this was a six-week study, it did not allow for much personal growth for each student. The students should have been given more time to develop their reading fluency skills. It would have been more beneficial to develop a longer study to see more a longer trend line in growth.

A final limitation to this study was the sample size. The sample size was small and did

not include a diverse population. It would have been more beneficial to include a more diverse population as well as a larger population size in order to determine the effects of the study.

      Recommendations.

      The research behind using teacher modeled oral readings, and repeated readings has been a concept that has been researched extensively (Lang et al.; 2009; Goering & Baker, 2010; Strong, Wehby, Falk & Lane 2010; Scheffel, Shroyer, & Strongin, 2003) which demonstrates the importance of using these strategies and instruction to improve reading fluency. Based on the research reviewed, one revision that could be made to this study, would be to allow for more explicit teaching of other fluency strategies to meet students' at their current reading fluency ability. This study included using oral modeling, repeated readings, and corrective reading; however more fluency instruction could be used to meet students where they are at in their current fluency levels.

      Another recommendation would be to use a larger sample size in order to determine if these strategies are effective in meeting a larger groups reading fluency. This sample size consisted of three students; however more students could be included to determine the efficacy of the strategies.

Summary

      The purpose of this study was to determine whether using teacher modeled oral readings, and repeated readings would impact students' reading fluency. The participants in this study were part of a six-week study in where they were exposed to explicit instruction in oral teacher modeling, and repeated readings with expository and narrative texts. They were provided with time to practice oral reading with the classroom teacher in a supported environment. The data does show improvement within individual student scores, however, ideally the study would have

been longer and at the beginning portion of the year in order to see more accurate growth

measurements.

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Appendix 1

Aimsweb Reading Probe

Even though it was the end of May, the sky was overcast and there was a chill in the air. The girls' softball team quickly ran out onto the field. The Middleton Braves' team spirit was very high. The team was playing their archrivals, the Deltown Panthers, the only team to beat them all season. If the Braves won today, they would tie for the conference championship. That would be a great achievement considering the varsity team was made up of eighth and ninth graders. Miriam ran out to her position at shortstop before the game started and took several practice throws to first base to try and eliminate the butterflies in her stomach. She knew Deltown was good; they'd been conference champions for the last four years. However, Miriam remembered the Braves had lost to them by only two runs earlier in the season and she knew they could beat them now. The butterflies did not leave Miriam's stomach throughout the early innings of the game. Both teams were playing exceptionally well with strong pitching and tough defense. With every crack of a Panther player's bat, Miriam was on edge. The Braves couldn't afford to let someone on base because of an error, and Miriam knew the majority of balls would be coming her way.

Finally it was the bottom of the seventh with the score tied at three runs each. The Panther fans were in a panic as the Braves came up for their last at bat. The Braves fans were excited. The fans had watched their team develop into champion material over the past two years, and now the team had a chance to prove it.

It was now Miriam's turn to bat. There were runners on first and second and the

team had only one out. All Miriam had to do was get a base hit to score the winning

run. As the pitch flew over the plate, Miriam swung her bat. Suddenly, everything

seemed to go into slow motion. The ball went perfectly into the gap between the

first and second bases. The runner on second was being waved home and the

crowd was on their feet. They'd done it! As Miriam stepped solidly on first base,

she realized she no longer had a stomach full of butterflies.

Appendix 2

QRI Reading Prompt

Life Cycle of a Star

Stars have life cycles, just like humans. In fact, a star is born, changes and then dies. In

contrast to the human life cycle that lasts about 75 years, the life cycle of a typical star is

measured in billions of years.

Every star in the sky is at a different stage in its life cycle. Some stars are relatively

young, while others are near the end of their existence. The sun is about halfway through its 10-

billion-year-long life cycle.

Birth of a Star

The space between stars in not entirely empty. In some places, there are great clouds of

gas and dust. Each of these clouds is a nebula. A nebula is where stars are born.

The element hydrogen makes up most of a nebula. Helium and a sprinkling of dust are

also present. The particles in a nebula are spread very thin. In fact, the particles are a million

times less dense than the particles in the air you breathe. However, because nebulae are very

large, they contain enormous amounts of matter.

Appendix 3

Expository Article

Teens Are in No Rush to Drive

Washington- The quest to get a driver's license at 16- long an American rite of passage- is on the wane among the digital generation, which no longer sees the family car as the end all of social life.

Federal data released Friday underscore a striking national shift: 30.7 percent of 16-year-olds got their license in 2008, compared with 44.6 percent in 1988.

"Driving is real important to a lot of the kids in the culture, but it is not the central focus like it was 25 years ago" said Tom Pecaoraro, owner of I Drive Smart, a Washington area driver's education program, who added that plenty of his students are older teens. "They have so many other things to do now," he said, and, with years of being shuttled to sports, lessons, and play dates, "kids are used to being driven."

A generation consumed by Facebook and text-messaging, by X-box Live and smartphones, no longer needs to climb into a car to connect with friends. And although many teens are still eager to drive, new laws make getting a license far more time-consuming, requiring as many as 60 supervised driving practice hours with an adult.