Understanding the Relationship between Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension: Fluency Strategies as a Focus for Instruction

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Abstract
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Document Type
Thesis

Degree Name
MS in Literacy Education

Department
Education

Subject Categories
Education

This thesis is available at Fisher Digital Publications: https://fisherpub.sjif.edu/education_ETD_masters/224
Understanding the Relationship between Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension:

Fluency Strategies as a Focus for Instruction

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

M.S. Literacy Education

Supervised by

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August 2012
Abstract

Understanding the relationship between reading fluency and comprehension is important. Reading fluency strategies can be used to help increase overall reading comprehension in students. Five students and one parent participated in the study of how repeated readings impact overall reading comprehension. Students were exposed to a set of reading passages that were read each week, and data was collected. At the end of the school year, students were given a reading comprehension post assessment to compare the results from September. When analyzing the data, it was clear that the repeated reading strategy was successful in increasing reading comprehension among the students. These findings suggest that fluency strategies such as repeated reading should be a major focus of instruction for students.
Understanding the Relationship between Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension

Fluency is an important reading skill that is crucial in the understanding of text. If children are not fluent in their reading, they are unable to make connections and fully comprehend the reading. Reading fluency is an important skill to master as it creates a bridge to reading comprehension. Implementing fluency strategies into the balanced literacy framework can help improve overall reading comprehension for children. Fluency is the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression (Rasinski, 2006). Being a fluent reader allows one to focus on the content in the reading, rather than focusing on the decoding of each individual word. As children become fluent readers, they are able to interact with text on a higher level. However, if children are not fluent in their reading, their overall success with reading is hindered. Non-fluent readers are often children who struggle with decoding as well. These students spend a great amount of time decoding and trying to break apart words, which then leads to a loss of meaning and an unclear understanding of the text. It is important to master decoding skills before becoming a fluent reader.

The true meaning of fluency is often misunderstood which affects both the teaching and learning of reading. Fluency has evolved to be known has speed reading by many teachers and students, which is not the true intent of fluency (Marcell, 2011). It is very important for educators to understand that reading fluency is a vehicle for reading comprehension. The focus of speed during reading should not be emphasized. The ultimate goal of reading is to make meaning and comprehend what was read, not how fast it was read. It is very important for children to receive fluency instruction through a variety of strategies. When students are able to practice fluent reading, they become better readers. Fluency is crucial to the reading development of children.
Struggling readers require a great amount of support in order to avoid a large discrepancy in their learning. When students are falling behind in their reading and do not understand basic skills and concepts, their overall reading achievement is affected. Struggling readers often spend much more time working skills from a bottom up approach, meaning that they work on phonics skills, decoding, and then reading in the text. When they are struggling with these basic skills, they are not fluent readers, and therefore, they do not attain reading comprehension skills. The implementation of fluency strategies for struggling readers allows them to focus on reading with ease which will ultimately lead to the understanding of what was read. Reading comprehension is very much dependent on the ability to read fluently, and struggling readers require interventions to allow them to be successful readers.

Determining the relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension is the purpose of my research project. Fluency is a major component in the balanced literacy framework and it is crucial to the development of reading comprehension in students. Through my research and review of literature, I have concluded that reading fluency is a measure of success in overall reading comprehension through the use of various fluency strategies and interventions. In this study, students participated in numerous fluency activities, with the main focus on repeated reading as a fluency strategy. As a result, students showed growth in reading comprehension. The literature supports the conclusion that fluency increases reading comprehension. Neddenriep et al. (2010) concluded that implementing repeated readings with practice, feedback, and modeling ultimately resulted in an overall increase in comprehension. It is important for teachers to understand the relationship between reading fluency and comprehension, and to begin implementing fluency strategies to increase student comprehension.
Theoretical Framework

The term “literacy” is in itself a complex term to define. Due its complex nature, many professional definitions of literacy exist, and some may show commonalities while others may not. Gee (1989) defines literacy as having control of secondary discourses where discourses are a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and acting. It can be used to define oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or social network. Individuals use their discourse as a tool for communicating and this is variable, depending on the social context of a given situation. Gee’s definition of literacy shows how the sociocultural theory is used to define people and their experiences based on their culture and experiences. Literacy is a social practice that is defined based on the environment, culture, and society of a group of people, and therefore will vary between cultures. Like all human activity, literacy is essentially social, and it is located in the interaction between people (Larson & Marsh).

Freebody and Luke (1990) make the claim that what defines satisfactory literacy performance is the culture and history of a society. Based on this claim, there are specific roles individuals take on in order to be literate in society. These components create a literate person who is able to decode text, draw on prior knowledge to make meaning, apply what they have read to the world and critically think about how and why a text was written (Freebody & Luke 1990). This definition of literacy is also informed by the sociocultural theory and states that what individuals can learn through literacy acquisition is shaped by social experiences with various memberships in different groups. Through this critique of traditional educational practices, learning occurs through participation in social, cultural, and historic contexts that are mediated by interaction within the society. With these various definitions of literacy, it can be concluded that literacy is indeed informed by the sociocultural theory. Children learn by participating in
formal and informal contexts of socially relevant situations. When exposed to a print rich environment, children begin learning basic literacy skills that are known as foundational skills.

In the process of mastering literacy, children participate in the acquisition and learning of a variety of skills in both their primary and secondary discourses (Gee, 1989). Acquisition is the “process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models and a process of trial and error, without a process of formal teaching” (Gee, 1989, p. 20). Acquisition in the case of language, specifically oral language, is something that children commonly acquire through their primary discourses. Then, upon entrance to their secondary discourses, such as a school institution, they participate in learning, which involves conscious knowledge gained through formal instruction (Gee, 1989). Cultural variation also plays a major role in the literacy acquisition of students. Cultural variation exists because students come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and their experiences and exposure varies among different cultures. The community and culture in which a child grows up directly affects their literacy acquisition and learning. The experiences that children receive through reading at home help them to become successful readers. A print rich environment and the availability of adults as mentors and models for reading greatly influences the reading opportunities of children at home. Through these opportunities, the background knowledge and overall educational experiences of these children are increased.

The sociocultural theory is important to understand and acknowledge when analyzing literacy acquisition in children. The social contexts that children are exposed to have a great impact on their overall learning and literacy experiences. Children develop roles as they become literate, and these roles are strongly embedded in their literacy learning. As children develop reading skills, they begin by recognizing letters and sounds, and then proceed to reading sight
words, which leads to connected text. Each of these skills builds upon one another, and they are all crucial to the development of young readers. As children develop struggles in the progression of reading, they are unable to fully understand text as a whole, as well as make meaning of the text.

The sociocultural theory is connected to the work of Heath (1982) in that Heath argues that the community in which a child grows up directly affects the way in which they take meaning from the environment around them. The sociocultural theory is also connected to the work of Meier (2003) in that Meier argues that because of the cultural diversity found in students, teachers are encountering students with strong linguistic foundations for literacy instruction that have had little experience with book reading, causing them difficulties in the classroom. This lack of literacy experiences results in a large gap among students and the skills they acquire before entering school. This gap continues to grow if students are not supported in their literacy learning. Specifically, students who lack literacy experiences are not able to be successful decoders, which cause them to struggle in reading fluently. These students ultimately become struggling readers, which then creates a discrepancy in their overall learning and comprehension. Students benefit from literacy experiences in the early grades, especially because the foundational skills build upon one another. Children that interact with text as well as other social experiences master the foundational skills required to become a literate individual.

Drawing on a balanced literacy framework, Freebody and Luke (1990) and Larson and Marsh (2009) argue that to be a literate individual or to have successful transactions with texts, people need to know how to read the text, connect to it, interpret it, apply it and critically analyze it. Without the ability to decode words accurately, reading becomes a struggle because a great amount of time is spent on the decoding of each word. With the focus of reading on decoding,
meaning is lost, and therefore no meaning is made from the text. Fluency is a component in the balanced literacy framework, but it does not stand alone. It is crucial to acknowledge that students are able to read a text, make a connection, and then also have a deeper understanding of the text after reading it.

**Research Question**

Given that literacy is a social practice and learning occurs during social interaction with specific roles for learning, this action research project asks, how can reading fluency strategies improve reading comprehension among struggling readers?

**Literature Review**

The following literature review explores the research examining the importance of reading fluency on the reading development of children and young adults. Research into the field of fluency has been ongoing in analyzing the importance of fluency and the role it plays in literacy development. The studies that have taken place on fluency address the various oral reading fluency strategies that can be implemented into the classroom to aid in students' reading fluency. Likewise, other researchers have focused on specific programs to enhance reading fluency and the effects the programs have on student performance. Among other research, the relationship between fluency and comprehension has also been addressed. Assessment measures for assessing oral reading fluency have also been addressed. The importance of reading fluency and intervention strategies for struggling readers is also of great importance.

**Strategies That Increase Oral Reading Fluency**

According to the National Reading Panel (2000), fluency is defined as the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression. Rasinski (2006) expands upon the definition by the National Reading Panel and in terms of oral reading fluency, “it deals with reading words
accurately and with appropriate speed, and it deals with embedding in one’s voice elements of
expression and phrasing while reading” (p. 18).

A third definition of fluency developed by Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, and Meisinger (2010) states:

   Fluency combines accuracy, automaticity, and oral reading prosody, which, taken
together, facilitate the reader’s construction of meaning. It is demonstrated during oral
reading through ease of word recognition, appropriate pacing, phrasing and intonation. It
is a factor in both oral and silent reading that can limit or support comprehension. (p.
240).

With these definitions of fluency, it is evident that fluency is multidimensional. Accuracy refers
to the reader’s ability to read words accurately. Automaticity refers to the ability of the reader to
read words correctly and effortlessly. Prosody refers to the ability to read with appropriate
expression and phrasing (Young & Rasinski, 2009). Accuracy, rate, and prosody are relative to
each other, and to overall reading comprehension. Fluency is a critical literacy component that is
necessary for successful reading. The National Reading Panel (2000) identified phonics and
fluency as two key factors in the success of early reading. Children who do not develop reading
fluency continue to struggle in reading (Allington, 1983). Therefore, fluency is indeed crucial in
determining reading success for children.

   The ability to read fluently is dependent on the ability of the reader to quickly recognize
words that have been learned automatically (Paige, 2011). The ability to decode words directly
impacts reading fluency and comprehension. LaBerge and Samuels (1974) claim that reading
fluency problems are the result of poor decoding skills. Poor readers spend too much time
decoding words rather than focusing on the content of the reading. Automaticity of reading
words allows the reader to spend less effort decoding and allows for comprehension processes to
occur (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). According to the automaticity theory (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974):

Readers who have not yet achieved automaticity in word recognition (fluency) must apply a significant amount of their finite cognitive energies to consciously decode the words they encounter while reading. Cognitive attention or energy that must be applied to the low-level decoding task of reading is cognitive energy that is taken away from the more important task of comprehending the text. Hence, comprehension is negatively affected by a reader’s lack of fluency. (p. 22).

Practice is essential for the acquisition of fluency and providing students with varied opportunities to practice and acquire fluency will enhance their participation and engagement (Nichols, Rupley, & Rasinski, 2009).

Rasinski, Homan, and Biggs (2009) identified important instructional roles a teacher can take in developing reading fluency among students. These roles include modeling fluent reading, acting as a fluency coach, engaging in assisted reading, collecting fluency materials, and providing for performance and celebration (Raskinski et al., 2009). Rasinski (2003) claims that oral reading should be implemented in reading programs with the following principles: the teacher must act as a model for oral reading, students receive support from teachers and peers, students receive multiple opportunities to practice reading, and phrasing is a focus. Likewise, Nichols et al. (2009) state that, “it is the teacher’s responsibility to model expressive readings that demonstrate both automaticity and prosody as well as provide a scaffold for students who continue to need additional support in developing fluency” (p. 4).

One strategy that has been utilized for decades in increasing reading fluency among students is repeated reading. Reading fluency is developed when given the opportunity to
practice oral reading repeatedly. Repeated reading is an evidenced based strategy that increases reading fluency and comprehension among readers (Therrien, 2004). Repeated Readings are effective because rather than encountering new text, readers are given the opportunity to repeatedly read a given text until they can read it fluently with mastery (Kuhn, 2005). Repeated practice of reading will improve accuracy and automaticity in word recognition. In 2000, the National Reading Panel suggested that repeated oral readings with feedback are effective in improving reading skills. Repeated reading also increases reading comprehension because with each reading, students are working on decoding, and eventually the decoding barrier to comprehension is overcome (Samuels, 1979). This method of repeated reading allows students to focus on the main components of reading fluency including accuracy, automaticity, and prosody. When given the opportunity to read text multiple times, children can focus on the aspect of fluency rather than decoding, which ultimately leads to increased reading comprehension.

In an analysis of repeated readings to improve reading fluency and comprehension for struggling high-school students, Hawkins, Hale, Sheeley, and Ling (2010) discovered that repeated reading led to increases in reading fluency and comprehension among the six students utilizing the repeated reading strategy. All of the participants in this study showed an increase in reading fluency when completing the repeated readings as compared to the control condition. This research is consistent with that of Therrien (2004) in that repeated reading can be used effectively as an intervention to increase overall fluency and comprehension ability. This research also aligns to the work of O’Connor, White, and Swanson (2007) which focused on repeated reading versus continuous reading and their influences on reading fluency and comprehension. As a result, O’Connor et al. (2007) indicated that the 37 students in the experimental group improved in overall levels of performance. Repeated reading is an effective
strategy to use that increases reading achievement among students. However, despite the improvements made, this research also indicated that there were no significant differences between the repeated reading and the continuous reading strategy (O’Connor, 2007). Continuous reading differs from repeated reading in that continuous reading simply is reading a greater amount of text across a given time. This conclusion is similar to the work of Allington (2001), in that increased reading across the curriculum exhibits the most gains in overall reading improvement. Continuous reading is a strategy that allows students to read more text and to become exposed to much more text, therefore allowing them ample time to read and interact with a given text. Allington (1977) argues that to develop reading fluency, having the opportunity to read is necessary. Without the opportunity to read, increasing reading fluency is not attainable. The work of Allington is reflected in the work of Kuhn (2005) in that wide reading across text resulted in more gains in reading comprehension than repeated reading.

The fluency-oriented reading instruction (FORI) program is based on oral reading fluency. The lessons in FORI were designed for whole class instruction that incorporated repetition of text, partner reading, as well as a comprehension focus (Kuhn et al., 2006). Twenty-four second grade classrooms participated in the study in which FORI and the wide reading approach were studied. This study reflects the work of Allington (1977, 2011) Kuhn (2005), and Hawkins, Hale, Sheeley, and Ling (2010). FORI was utilized with texts that were at grade level for students. This fluency approach is based on a scaffolded design, and children were gradually given less support as the week went on. The wide reading component of the study utilized three texts over the course of a week, rather than reading a single text repeatedly. Both FORI and wide-reading approaches are useful for reading instruction (Kuhn et Al, 2006). In comparison to Samuels (1979) fluency theory of repeated reading as an underlying factor to improving fluency,
wide-reading based on this study did just as well as the FORI approach in terms of comprehension and word recognition (Kuhn et. al, 2006).

Reading fluency programs have also been implemented to increase and improve the reading fluency among students. One example of a program is the Great Leaps Reading program which consists of fluency activities at three different levels (Spencer & Manis, 2010). The Great Leaps Reading Program consisted of repeated readings with the opportunity for a paraprofessional to provide feedback. This structure of the program is very similar to that of the repeated reading strategy, which has been a major focus of fluency instruction. This intervention program was successful in improving oral reading fluency among students. Gains in fluency were significantly higher in the experimental group than in the control group. Contrary to oral reading fluency is silent reading fluency. Reading Plus, a computerized reading intervention system is used to measure silent reading fluency overall reading proficiency (Rasinski, Samuels, Hiebert, Petscher, & Feller, 2011). Paralleling the work of the Great Leaps Reading Program, Reading Plus indicated that students participating in the program made significant gains in silent reading. Extending on the current research of fluency instruction, Rasinski, Padak, Linek, and Sturtevant (1994) developed a model of fluency known as fluency development lesson (FDL). The FDL incorporates key principles of effective fluency instruction, including teacher modeling, re-reading of texts, and positive feedback (Rasinski et. al, 1994). Based on pre-assessments and post assessments using informal reading inventories, oral reading rate increased among students in the experimental group. In addition to the data collected, teachers noticed significant improvements in the reading of their students. One teacher reported:

My students are able to read more fluently. They can attack the words better and they are really much more interested in reading than they were before. I found that my less able
readers, people who are not normally better readers to begin with, growing more. And they became more interested in reading, especially if the poems or stories were ones they enjoyed…The students participated better in the lesson. Those that normally won’t get in front of a crowd, it’s like they don’t want to be left out now. Some days our time will be running out, and they’ll get upset because they didn’t get to perform for the class. That’s when I let the lesson go to the next day. I made sure that those who didn’t get a chance to read that day will be first the next day. Everybody wants to read and be involved…It works well enough that I will try this again next year. (Raskinski et al, 1994, p. 163).

Additional research on reading fluency strategies is consistent in the thought that these strategies increase overall reading fluency and comprehension. Goering and Baker (2010) sought to analyze how the participation in dramatic oral reading affects reading fluency and comprehension abilities. The 25 tenth grade participants in the study applied the model of repeated reading to the intervention. Pre-assessment and post assessment data conclude that overall fluency and comprehension increased as a result of the dramatic repeated oral readings. Rasinski, Padak, McKeon, Wilfong, Friedauer, and Heim (2005) contradict the work of Goering and Baker (2010) by determining that if students are not proficient fluent readers by ninth grade, they do not work to develop it in high school. The work of Goering and Baker (2010) indicate that students did make gains in fluency and comprehension, while remaining engaged in the dramatic oral readings.

The study by Paige (2011) concluded that whole class choral reading as a fluency strategy led to improvements in the decoding process and in oral reading fluency. This fluency strategy allows students to have repeated exposure to a reading passage throughout a week. Oral reading fluency was also measured by Neddenriep, Skinner, Wallace, and McCallum (2009)
through the use of ClassWide Peer Tutoring (CWPT). The purpose of the study was to determine if the intervention designed to increase oral reading fluency would also increase reading comprehension. Two sixth grade students participated in this study of CWPT. During this study, one student acted as the tutor and one as the tutee. The students took turns reading a passage for ten minutes while the tutor provided feedback. After both students read the passage, comprehension was assessed through the use of ten comprehension questions. This particular study was unique in that the students also were asked to participate in a control group in which they read a passage once and answered ten comprehension questions. The results are similar to the work of Paige (2011) in that this particular intervention yielded results that showed an increase in oral reading fluency and comprehension levels. The students also showed an increase in fluency and comprehension on the control passages, which suggests that improvements in overall reading may be generalized to non-tutored passages (Neddenriep et al., 2009). The carryover of skills suggests that students are applying the strategies they learn to new text.

Oral reading fluency is also supported in the classroom through the use of Readers Theater. Readers Theater is an approach to fluency instruction that incorporates repeated reading and assisted reading (Young & Rasinski, 2009). Readers Theater is a component in the balanced literacy framework that supports literacy learning for students. In addition to repeated reading, Readers Theater also incorporates teacher modeling, an important aspect in the development of fluency (Keehn, Harmon, & Shoho, 2008). Readers Theater is a performance of a written script that demands repeated and assisted reading (Young & Rasinski, 2009). Readers Theater can be implemented across the curriculum and can be easily implemented in the classroom. When given a script, students practice a given set of lines multiple times, often in the same structure as repeated reading. The repeated reading and practicing of the reading allows the reader to become
successful in the script and to practice specific reading skills. The work of Young and Rasinski (2009) indicate that word recognition accuracy, words per minute, and prosody increased for all twenty nine participants based on growth between Fall and Spring testing. This research corroborates with the work of Keehn et al. (2008) which studied the impact of Readers Theater on eighth grade students and found that reading fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary learning were all improved over the six week intervention.

An additional factor in increasing students’ oral and silent reading fluency is home involvement and support. A fluency based home reading program known as Fast Start (Rasinski & Padak, 1995) provides families with weekly materials and support to help increase reading achievement among students through the use of repeated readings. Children take passages home each night and parents model the reading, and then read the passage with their child numerous times (Rasinski, 2003). The scaffolding provides support and feedback that children need in order to succeed and improve in their reading fluency (Rasinski, 2003). Rasinski (2003) encourages the active participation and involvement of parents to support the literacy development of their children. Studies of previous parent involvement programs have resulted in positive outcomes for student learning (Rasinski & Stevenson, 2005). When parents are involved in their children’s education and act as positive models, a higher level of learning takes place. In fact, Crimm (1992) concluded that parent involvement can often correct educational deficits and it can lessen the need for intervention. Programs to assist parents and families in creating and maintaining parental involvement exist, and are often necessary. Not all parents understand how to be involved in their children’s education, or why for that matter. Fast Start is an adaption to the Fluency Development Lesson (Rasinski et al., 1994). Fast Start is designed to provide children with intensive and systematic parental involvement in phonics and fluency (Rasinski &
Stevenson, 2005). Throughout the five week program with thirty first grade participants and their families, the Fast Start program had a positive impact on the students with the lowest levels of reading during the pretest (Rasinski & Stevenson, 2005). The Fast Start Program provided parents with weekly materials that provided parents with ideas on helping to develop literacy habits as well as poems to be used as the instructional text in the program (Rasinski & Stevenson, 2005). As with any parental program, it is necessary to provide materials for parents to use at home. Providing families with the necessary materials and resources will ensure that the correct instruction is provided. Rasinski (2003) strongly believes that parental involvement in children’s literacy learning is crucial to their success in reading. Parental involvement is especially crucial in the primary grades, and provides children with more time to learn literacy skills.

**Fluency Instruction for Struggling Readers**

Often times, struggling readers are those that require the most fluency intervention in the classroom. However, struggling readers often do not have opportunities to engage with connected text because they are receiving instruction that focuses on word recognition strategies (Allington, 1977). According to Allington (1977), focusing on isolated skills rather than reading in context hinders the development of reading ability. When only working on isolated skills, students are not exposed to connected text in which they can learn to apply the skills they have learned. Working with a connected text is more meaningful for students and it provides many learning opportunities.

Despite current research on teaching reader and reading intervention methods, struggling readers still exist in classrooms today. These struggling readers are often not meeting the expected progress of their grade level. Although they may learn reading skills such as decoding
and phonics, they are not fluent readers. Teachers of struggling readers need to recognize the importance of implementing fluency based instruction into their reading programs.

Explicit and direct instruction is an efficient way to teach the major components of the reading process, including fluency (Rupley, Blair, Nicholas, 2009). The teaching of reading skills through explicit and direct instruction allows the teacher to model for the student and then provide guided practice of the skills. This method of teaching provides students with new information while the teacher and student interact with each other. According to Rupley et.al (2009), “The key to direct/explicit instruction is the active communication and interaction between teacher and student.” (p. 127). The major components of direct/explicit instruction include explicit explanations, modeling, and guided practice. Through the use of modeling, the teacher is demonstrating for the students how to successfully complete a task. Direct/explicit instruction will help students interact with text and make meaning from the text.

In determining the best instructional strategy for struggling readers, Mathes, Torgesen, Clancy-Menchetti, Santi, Nicholas, Robinson, and Grek (2003) agree with Rupley et.al (2009) in that teacher directed instruction is a powerful tool for struggling readers. In comparing peer assisted instruction to teacher directed instruction, the instruction of struggling students in a small group through direct teaching was more powerful than peer instruction (Mathes et. al, 2003). Small group instruction is more focused on individual student needs than whole group teaching. Struggling students especially benefit from small group instruction because they are learning at their level and the teacher can properly pace their learning. Peer assisted learning is valuable in creating meaningful reading experiences and provides students with increased practice in reading skills. Algozzine, Marr, Kavel, and Dugan (2009) studied the effects of using peer coaches to increase oral reading fluency. Similarly in the study by Mathes et.al, (2003)
using Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), Algozzine et.al, (2009) studied the effects of Peer Coaching Fluency Building (PCFB) for students at risk. Children who work together in peer-mediated groups support each other in a way that leads to powerful interventions that can help prevent further reading struggles. PALS has been shown to increase academic engagement of struggling students which increase instructional intensity (Mathes, et.al, 2003). Struggling students that are engaged in a peer tutoring program like PALS demonstrate reading growth. In general, the use of peer tutoring approaches are favorable when looking at student outcomes.

Repeated reading through peer directed learning has been identified as a way to increase oral reading fluency among struggling readers who are not making adequate progress. The PCFB intervention utilizes repeated readings as a way to build instruction for struggling readers (Algozzine, et.al, 2009). PCFB involves students reading fluency passages at their independent reading level, while the coach models the reading and provides support as needed through multiple readings. An additional feature of PCFB is the charting of student progress on the fluency readings. Charting progress motivates students to practice their reading to meet their goal (Algozzine et.al, 2009).

Struggling readers in middle school experience similar obstacles as those students in elementary school. Struggling secondary school students that do not make adequate progress in reading are identified as having reading disabilities. 65% of eighth grade students with learning disabilities read below the twentieth percentile (Spencer & Manis, 2010). Reading instruction strategies for struggling readers are not as apparent as the strategies and instructional methods used for typical learners. Fluency is a crucial component of reading among secondary students (Spencer & Manis, 2010). According to Dudley (2005), “When students do not attain reading fluency, their abilities to participate in the general education curriculum and to attain academic
success are severely impaired.” (p. 16). With the knowledge of how critical fluency is among secondary students, interventions to increase oral reading fluency among students are necessary. Current research on fluency interventions with struggling secondary students is inconclusive (Spencer & Manis, 2010). The lack of research indicates that more research is required to determine the impact of reading fluency on reading comprehension among secondary students.

Reading fluency instruction is important in providing opportunities for students to read at their independent or instructional level while increasing their reading rate. Reading fluency interventions for struggling secondary students are very similar to the interventions used for primary and elementary students, such as repeated reading, one of the most widely used fluency interventions. The focus for secondary students is to help them read with ease so they can place most of their attention on understanding the text (Dudley, 2005). Therefore, reading fluency for struggling secondary students must be taught, practiced, and monitored.

Reading fluency intervention for struggling students is necessary in helping them achieve reading success. Regardless of the age, interventions can be used to help increase reading fluency. Specific programs exist that teachers can implement into their reading instruction. The use of both direct/explicit instruction and peer tutoring instruction can be used to help struggling readers become fluent readers. Fluent oral reading is essential for success in overall reading.

Fluency Contributes to Reading Comprehension

The development of reading fluency is critical for children as they develop as readers and move from decoding to reading connected text and focusing on comprehension (Bashir & Hook, 2009). As in previous studies, it has been argued that fluency and comprehension are linked in that fluent word recognition frees up processing time that can be used to focus on comprehension. Reading comprehension is a complex process that involves integrating
information, making inferences, and constructing meaning (Bellinger and DiPerna, 2011). Today, reading comprehension is thought to be an active and intentional practice versus a passive practice as it was years ago (Bellinger and DiPerna, 2011). In order to be an active practice, students need to be involved in the reading process first hand, and actively read for meaning by making connections, inferring, synthesizing, and predicting. Comprehension is dependent upon several skills including fluency, semantic skills, phonological skills, memory-processing skills, vocabulary, inferring, grammatical structure, prior knowledge, and verbal ability (Cain & Oakhill, 2006). The National Reading Panel (2000) stated that reading comprehension is a critical component of children’s learning, and in order for children to achieve growth in learning, they must be able to comprehend text. Without comprehension, the goal of reading is not met, and children are not successful readers. In order to achieve a high level of comprehension, basic reading skills need to be mastered. Due to this importance of reading comprehension on overall learning of children, it is no surprise that Cain and Oakhill (2006) found that children with poor comprehension skills made fewer gains than children with good comprehension. Comprehension is the ultimate goal in reading and without an understanding of reading, achievement is not made. The National Reading Panel (2000) affirms that reading comprehension is an essential component of increasing knowledge and it also assists in the enjoyment of reading because if children do not understand what they read, they will not have the desire to read.

DeKonty Applegate, Applegate, and Modla (2009) disagree with the notion that fluency frees up cognitive use for comprehension, and argue that the result of automaticity in word recognition does not necessarily attribute to comprehension. It is important for teachers to integrate fluency practices into all aspects of reading (Bashir & Hook, 2009). Reutzel and
Hollingsworth (1993) discovered that there was a direct connection between students’ fluency development and their overall reading comprehension. This research is solely based on the Oral Recitation Lesson which incorporates modeling and repeated reading for students. The use of repeated reading and modeling is proven to be effective in increasing reading fluency, which then directly impacts reading comprehension. Reutzel and Hollingsworth (1993) state, “there appears to be an effect of fluency training on the reading comprehension of second grade students” (p. 330). It is clear that when given the opportunity to practice reading fluency directly, reading comprehension is improved among students. When educators implement fluency interventions to improve fluency, changes in comprehension can be predicted but not necessarily guaranteed (Paris, 2005). The expected progress of student learning differs among students due to learning styles, learning disabilities, and overall interest in learning.

Neddenriep, Fritz, and Carrier (2010) developed a study to further the understanding of the relationship between changes in reading fluency and comprehension. Five fourth grade students participated in the 15 week study. The students selected for participation in the study were all general education students who exhibited characteristics of a struggling reader. The premise behind this study was to implement repeated readings, an evidence based strategy that incorporates the primary component of practice (Neddenriep et al. 2010). This study concluded that implementing repeated readings with practice, feedback, and modeling ultimately resulted in an overall increase in comprehension (Neddenriep et al. 2010). With the conclusion of the study, it is clear that there is a relationship between fluency and comprehension, and as students improve in overall oral reading fluency, their overall understanding of a text increases.

Deficits in word reading accuracy lead to comprehension deficits, which results in a general reading disability (Cutting, Materek, Cole, Levine, & Mahone, 2009). This domino effect
is due to the fact that at an early age, children were not provided with appropriate literacy experiences, thus causing them to fall behind in learning literacy skills. Cutting et al. (2009) aimed to study the role of fluency of reading words in isolation and in context, oral language proficiencies, and executive function on reading comprehension performance in typically developing, students with general reading deficits, and those with specific reading comprehension deficits. Executive function consists of higher order skills such as working memory, planning, organizing, and self-monitoring (Cutting et al., 2009). The overall goal of this study was to determine which processes are important to reading comprehension for students with specific reading comprehension deficits. In conclusion, students with specific reading comprehension deficits exhibited deficits in the various processes which impacted their overall comprehension (Cutting et al., 2009). This conclusion demonstrates the importance of multiple reading skills and process, and how they all coincide with overall reading success. When a student demonstrates a difficulty in an area of reading, the overall success of that reading is hindered. It is crucial in the development of reading comprehension that basic reading skills and process are mastered.

Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins (2001) recognized a correlation between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension which is supported by theoretical frameworks on the potential of oral reading fluency as an indicator of reading success. Kim, Petscher, Schatschneider, and Foorman (2010) corroborate the work of Fuchs, Fuchs, Hops, and Jenkins (2001) and found that oral reading fluency best determined achievement in reading comprehension. Little focus and emphasis has been placed on the understanding of silent reading fluency and its importance in comparison to oral reading fluency (Kim, Wagner, & Foster, 2011). According to Kim, Wagner and Foster (2011), previous studies that examined the
relationship between silent reading and reading comprehension appear to be less clear than the relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. First grade students participated in a study that aimed to examine the relationship between oral reading fluency, silent reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Assessments were given to students to measure listening comprehension, list reading fluency, oral reading fluency, silent reading fluency, reading comprehension, and word reading accuracy (Kim et al., 2011). The results of the study indicated that oral reading fluency is a better predictor of reading comprehension at the first grade level (Kim et al., 2011). These results corroborate the work of Denton, Barth, Fletcher, Wexler, Vaughn, Cirino, Romain, and Francis (2011) in the study of oral and silent reading fluency and reading comprehension with middle school students in which oral reading fluency was found to have a positive impact on reading comprehension.

When considering English Language Learners, minimal research has focused on reading fluency and comprehension of this growing population (Crosson & Lesaux, 2010). Crosson and Lesaux (2010) investigated the influence of text reading fluency and word reading fluency to language minority learners’ reading comprehension. The current study aligns with previous studies on children’s text reading fluency in relation to reading comprehension. Seventy six fifth grade students from Spanish speaking backgrounds participated in this study. Prior to the study, word reading fluency, text reading fluency, reading comprehension, vocabulary, listening comprehension, and decoding skills were measured through a variety of assessments (Crosson & Lesaux, 2010). As a result of this study, it was discovered that text reading fluency was related to performance in reading comprehension (Crosson & Lesaux, 2010). This conclusion further emphasizes the importance of reading fluency as a determiner of reading comprehension. The results indicate that regardless of a child’s background and native language, reading fluency is
necessary to build reading comprehension among students. It is clear that fluency is indeed the bridge to comprehension. As reading fluency performance is improved, reading comprehension performance is also improved.

Integrating fluency into literacy and content instruction can be done with ease (Rasinski, Padak, McKeon, Wilfong, Friedauer, Heim, 2005). Many strategies and methods exist that help to develop fluency in children. A lack of reading fluency may be an important cause for reading comprehension difficulties among students (Rasinski et al., 2005). With the correlation between fluency and comprehension, it is evident that reading fluency is crucial in the education of students. In order to decrease difficulties in reading comprehension, reading fluency needs to be addressed. Some fluency programs or interventions seek to increase student reading rate only, which is not a true measure of their overall reading fluency. As the definition of fluency suggests, automaticity, accuracy, and prosody should all be included when focusing on reading fluency. As suggested by Rasinski et al. (2005), “fluency needs to be a concern for teachers at all grade levels, not just teachers of beginning readers” (p. 27). This urgency to address fluency at all grade levels corresponds to the important role that fluency plays in overall reading achievement.

**Assessment Methods and Materials for Assessing Reading Fluency**

The best way to determine whether or not a student is making adequate progress is through regular assessments (Kuhn et al., 2010). Curriculum-based measurements (CBMs), DIBELS, and AIMSweb have been influential in determining early reading instruction and fluency instruction (Kuhn et al, 2010). Each of these assessments measures different areas of reading, such as fluency, word recognition, and comprehension. It is important to use appropriate assessments when assessing in order to inform instruction. It is crucial to expand the way fluency
is measured so that it does not just focus on rate and accuracy. Also, it is important that students are not solely focused on rate at the expense of their understanding of the text. Appropriate assessments provide a great amount of information to the teacher that informs their daily instruction. Teachers use oral reading fluency as a way to measure progress toward specific reading goals, such as reading comprehension (Coulter, Shavin, Gichuru, 2006). Oral reading fluency is often assessed using a one minute assessment in which students read and the teacher notes the number of errors. Commercial systems for assessing oral reading fluency include the Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) which is used throughout the United States. One important factor when creating or administering assessments is to ensure that the assessments are accurate. As Kuhn et al. (2010) have stated, assessments provide information regarding instruction for students. If an assessment is not accurate, it will not provide the correct information needed to assist a student. Classifying a reader as needing additional support in reading is crucial to the overall well being of the student. Misclassifying a student can have consequences such as a student would receive unnecessary intervention, or a student may not receive intervention if errors are not classified (Coulter et al., 2009). Training for individuals administering assessments is essential in ensuring that assessments are being used as they are intended to be.

The National Reading Panel (2000) made the recommendation that teachers assess fluency on a regular basis. Due to this recommendation, one minute fluency assessments are becoming much more prevalent (Deeney, 2010). One minute fluency measures are reliable in identifying students who are at risk, however they do not always coincide with the definition of fluency (Deeney, 2010). Automaticity and prosody play an important role in the assessment of reading fluency. Logan (1997) considers automaticity to possess the qualities of speed,
effortlessness, autonomy, and lack of conscious awareness. These qualities of automaticity conclude that the reader reads at a good pace, the reading is completed with ease, reading is unintentional, and the reader can read without having to work on specific skills (Logan, 1997). Each of these qualities contributes to fluent reading. Reading with ease demonstrates that the reader does not struggle with word recognition or decoding and therefore they are able to spend more time simply reading and making meaning. Pitch, duration, stress, and pausing are all prosodic features that account for critical components in reading fluency (Kuhn et.al, 2010). Readers use appropriate prosody through their understanding of the context of the text and by using text cues (Deeney, 2010). Appropriate phrasing, intonation, and stress among readers implies that the reader is comprehending (Valencia, Smith, Reece, Li, Wixson, Newman, 2010). Each of these features of reading contributes to overall reading fluency, which in turn contributes to the understanding of the text. When the features of reading fluency are mastered, a higher level of comprehension can be achieved.

Matching the definition of fluency to assessment practices is often not the practice among teachers (Deeney, 2010). Even though there are many definitions of reading fluency that exist today, many of them contain similar components such as accuracy, rate, and prosody. Therefore, the assessment of fluency should incorporate accuracy, rate, and prosody, yet in reality it is not what is being practiced (Deeney, 2010). Deno and Marston (2006) note:

Were we to define fluency as the “number of words read correctly from text in one minute,” we would be missing other features of fluent reading, such as prosody (i.e., reading with expression), that are not included in the CBM of oral reading. (p. 180).

Torgesen (2000) argued that the components of fluency that can be reliably assessed are rate and accuracy. One minute fluency assessments are reflective of a reduced view of fluency with a
focus on accuracy and rate, rather than a deeper view of fluency that encompasses other skills such as comprehension (Deeney, 2010). One minute assessments help educators identify students who cannot read accurately or quickly, but they do not provide information as to why they cannot read with accuracy or speed (Deeney, 2010). One minute fluency assessments help to inform instruction in the classroom. Instruction is key to improving reading fluency and other literacy skills.

Rasinski, Rikli, and Johnston (2009) assessed reading fluency using prosody as a way to measure reading fluency. This study is unlike many others, in that the focus is not on rate or speed of word and text reading, but prosody, or expression in reading. Prosody is often overlooked in studies on reading fluency and fluency instruction (Rasinski et al., 2009). Despite having an impact on comprehension, prosody may also increase student motivation and engagement in reading (Rasinski et al., 2009). When students understand prosodic features, they are more engaged in reading which increases their interest level. With an increased interest level, they are much more attuned to the reading, thus fostering in their understanding of the reading. As a result of this study, it was evident that reading comprehension was impacted both through prosody and automaticity of words. It is clear that reading fluency is much more than speed, and that when the components of fluency are integrated, a higher level of achievement is attained. These results indicate that prosody should be assessed when determining increases in reading comprehension. Prosody is an important aspect of reading comprehension, and it should not be neglected in assessments of oral reading fluency.

With the growing emphasis of reading fluency in the classroom, a focus has been put on the speed of reading versus comprehension of the text (Pilonieta, 2012). Educators may be overemphasizing fluency instruction in their classrooms, especially with the component of
reading rate. Fluency, with its close relationship to reading comprehension is a fundamental part of reading and should be part of the reading curriculum (Pilonieta, 2012). An observational study was conducted with second grade students and how fluency strategies were implemented into the classroom curriculum (Pilonieta, 2012). Thirty three students were part of the observational study that took place. In the classrooms that were being observed, fluency instruction was implemented into the daily routine for thirty minutes each day with a strong focus on whole group fluency instruction aimed at increasing students’ rate of reading (Pilonieta, 2012). Correct words per minute (CWPM) was the only aspect of fluency instruction that was assessed during this particular study. Words per minute provides an observer with the speed or rate of the reader, however it does not incorporate other valuable reading skills. Focusing on one minute fluency assessments and increasing oral reading rate scores may mislead students into thinking that speed is the most important component of reading. Fluency rates can be used to help monitor students’ reading progress, but it is important not to lose focus on other components of reading, such as comprehension. This research conducted by Pilonieta (2012) is consistent with Denney’s (2001) conclusion that fluency is more than accuracy and rate. If a student is taught that fluency is just about speed, they will focus solely on beating the timer rather than focusing on the content of the reading to make meaning. It is important to focus on fluency as a whole, rather than just speed. The alignment of assessment practices to theories of reading fluency need to be a priority for educators (Kuhn et.al, 2010). Recognizing that rate is a small part of reading fluency is important to remember when implementing fluency instruction into a daily routine.

One program designed to assess fluency on a range of reading skills is the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills (DIBELS). The subtests in DIBELS assess discrete skills such as phonemic awareness and phonics. The validity of DIBELS is questioned because
the assessment utilizes a one minute measure of reading accuracy and speed as the means for identifying students at risk (Shelton, Altwerger, & Jordan, 2009). Speed is one aspect of fluency, and therefore this assessment is only measuring the rate of reading. The reliability of DIBELS is questioned as well as to whether or not the assessment can predict growth in the ability to read and comprehend authentic texts (Shelton et al., 2009). The comprehension component of DIBELS is similar to the oral reading fluency in that students are asked to retell what they read in only one minute, while the administrator records the number of words the student speaks in the retelling. The number of words spoken in that one minute derives a comprehension score (Shelton et al., 2009). This oral retelling is again focused on speed, and what the student can retell in one minute. In the study conducted by Shelton et al. (2009) there was no clear connection between DIBELS oral reading fluency and students’ oral reading fluency and comprehension of authentic texts. Also, the findings in this study conclude that there are no clear connections between oral reading fluency and comprehension (Shelton et al., 2009). This analysis is inconsistent with the work on other fluency interventions and assessments, where comprehension was increased due to increased practice in reading fluency. This evidence questions the assessments that are used for fluency and what their purpose is. In the case of DIBELS, the assessment is not authentic, and therefore students are not carrying over the skills they are learning to authentic texts. Multiple measures of assessing rate and accuracy are needed to assess overall reading proficiency and comprehension among learners.

State and local education agencies require schools to demonstrate student learning through the use of benchmarks (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006). Categories of reading assessments include screening, diagnostic, progress-monitoring, and outcome measures (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006). Each of the benchmark assessments differ in a way that provides different information to
an educator. It is important to utilize all the benchmark assessments to gather a great amount of information on a student. The assessments provide valuable information that helps guided instruction. The availability of norms helps guided teachers to make instructional decisions and can serve as tools to assist educators developing, implementing, and evaluating effective instruction to help all children succeed as a lifelong reader (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006).

The focus and importance of fluency has risen in the past years due to studies that have determined its importance on student reading. Based on the studies conducted determining the influence and importance of fluency, it can be determined that fluency is indeed a major component of reading instruction for children. Research based fluency strategies have been identified to help increase student oral reading fluency. Many controversies around oral reading fluency still exist, and it is important to look at a holistic definition of fluency to fully understand the components. Fluency and comprehension have been identified as being dependent upon each other, and studies have shown the importance of that relationship. Assessments in reading fluency are of a concern, and now more than ever educators are placing a great importance on reading fluency as a determination of reading achievement. Fluency is an important part of reading, and it should be implemented as part of a balanced literacy framework.

Method

Context

Research for this study will take place in a second grade classroom of 16 students. The classroom is one of five second grade classrooms in Ready, Set, Grow Elementary School (a pseudonym). The Ready, Set, Grow Elementary School in the Fayette School District (a pseudonym) enrolls kindergarten through second grade students. According to the New York
State Report Card for 2009-2010, there are 97 kindergarten students, 109 first grade students, and 104 second grade students. There are six kindergarten classrooms, six first grade classrooms, and five second grade classrooms.

The percentage of White students attending the school is 94%. Black or African American students’ makeup 3% of the population, Hispanic or Latinos make up 1%, Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander makeup 1%, and 1% of the population is Multiracial.

None of the students attending Skoi-Yase are limited English proficiency. There is one self-contained classroom for kindergarten through second grade students. Within each grade level there are two inclusion classrooms for second grade, two inclusion classrooms for first grade, and one inclusion classroom for kindergarten. The estimated percentage of students who are from families receiving Public Assistance is 51-60%. Forty-two percent of students are eligible for free lunch and 11% of the students are eligible for reduced-price lunch.

The classroom involved in the study consists of 16 students, 10 female, 6 male. In the classroom, four students receive special education services, nine students receive speech and language services, and five students receive AIS services. In terms of ethnic makeup, 88% of the students are white and 12% of the students are African American.

Participants

Students. Five students out of 16 students in the class participated in this study. All five students are seven years old. The three girls and two boys in the study are all white students in the middle class. Reading levels for each student were determined using running records from Fountas and Pinnell. By the end of second grade, students should be reading at level M to be on grade level. All names of students participating in this study have been changed to protect the identity of students and their rights.
Kim is an eight year old white female currently reading at a level J, which indicates that she is reading below grade level for this time of the year in second grade. Kim’s fluency score for the fourth quarter was 84 WPM which is meeting the standards for the end of second grade. Kim receives AIS services and has gone through the RTI process for intervention in math and reading. Kim’s mother is currently enrolling her in Sylvan Learning Center for the summer to aid in additional interventions. Kim lacks motivation and interest in school and in learning.

Nick is an eight year boy currently reading at a level J, which indicates that he is reading below grade level for this time of the year in second grade. Nick’s fluency score for the fourth quarter was 63 WPM which is not meeting the benchmark of 82 WPM for second grade. Nick currently has a 504 plan, and was referred to CSE, but an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) was not created at the time. Nick also receives AIS services for reading. Nick lacks confidence in himself and he is often afraid to take risks. He needs continuous support in his reading and writing, but always works hard and has a positive attitude.

Joe is an eight year old boy currently reading at a level M, which indicates that he is reading on grade level for this time of the year in second grade. Joe’s fluency score for the fourth quarter was 141 WPM which is well above the recommended benchmark score for second grade. Joe entered second grade as a struggling reader receiving AIS services and going through the RTI process. However, with classroom interventions, AIS services were discontinued, and he met all of his goals for RTI. Joe’s reading increased in the classroom, and he was able to use many more strategies. He began reading chapter books and read all of the Nate the Great books in the entire series. Making inferences is a hard task for Joe, but he has improved greatly from the beginning of the year.

Katie is an eight year old girl reading at a level G, which indicates that she is well below
grade level for this time in second grade. Katie’s fluency score for the fourth quarter was 37 WPM, which is also well below the benchmark score for second grade. Katie receives special education services, speech services, occupational therapy, and AIS. Katie received an outside evaluation for speech and language. Katie is a very positive girl, and she enjoys coming to school. Katie understands when she makes progress in something, and when a goal is met, she is very excited for herself. Katie loves to read about cats and shows great interest in them. Katie’s speech interferes with her ability to correctly decode words and to correctly identify letter/sound relationships.

Amelia is an eight year girl that is not a struggling reader. She is reading well above grade level. Amelia is reading at a level R, which indicates she is at the fourth grade level. She enjoys reading independently and uses great expression and fluency when reading. Amelia was used in this study to compare how a non-struggling student benefits from fluency intervention in the classroom.

The parents of the student participants were also asked to participate in this study. One parent consented to be a participant in this study. Linda is the mother of two children, one in second grade and one in fourth grade. She currently works as a real estate agent for Nothnagle Realtor. Linda was previously a fourth grade teacher.

**Researcher Stance**

In this study, I took the role of active participant observer by engaging in teaching while observing the outcomes of my teaching (Mills, 2011). I recorded observations of the participants in the study through field notes and anecdotal records (Mills, 2011). This role may impact the current research because as the teacher, I have to meet the various needs of all the students in my classroom, and it may be difficult to keep records of observations made due to time constraints.
and other classroom factors. Due to the fact that as the teacher I am responsible for providing instruction, making clear observations of students in the study may be difficult to do. However, through small group instruction and co-teaching, observing students in the classroom setting is possible.

I have taught second grade for two years and third grade for one year in Waterloo. I was granted tenure in June 2012. I am currently pursuing a Master’s Degree in Literacy, Birth-12 from St. John Fisher College. I attended SUNY Geneseo and received my initial certification in Childhood and Student’s with Disabilities Grades 1-6. I also obtained my Early Childhood Education Birth-grade 2 initial certification. I currently reside in Clifton Springs, New York.

Method

This study occurred for nine months throughout the 2011-2012 school year. Parents were asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding fluency strategies and practices and their thoughts about how fluency has impacted their child’s overall reading experience. During first quarter testing in November, students were administered a reading comprehension benchmark test that consisted of two reading passages and questions to follow. Students were instructed to read the passage independently and answer the questions. Also, as part of quarterly testing, students were asked to read a fluency passage aloud to the teacher to test the number of words they can read in one minute.

Based on the assessment results, four out of the five students were not meeting the benchmark for the fluency, and four out of the five students received a score of 80% or less on the reading comprehension. One student received 100% on the reading comprehension, and read 108 WPM on the fluency. Intervention and instruction was created for the four students that did not meet expectations for the testing. Interventions included weekly fluency assessments as part
of the Professional Learning Club in 2nd grade, a weekly reading bag for parents with fluency passages, poem of the week practice, and fluency practice games from the Florida Center for Reading Research. Students worked in small groups with the teacher, teacher assistant, with peers, and whole group at times.

Data was kept on students’ weekly fluency scores, and an average was collected for each quarter. Students consistently read a reading passage on a weekly basis, and the passages rotated every four weeks, so the students had exposure to them through re-readings. After reading, a discussion was held, and students were shown their progress from the previous time they read the passage. Observations of students were held during fluency practice with fluency games. Students timed each other, read words and phrases, and also set goals for themselves. The weekly reading bag that was sent home on Mondays and collected on Fridays consisted of a reader’s theater, a mini book, and a fluency poem. Students checked off the activities they did on a nightly basis and then brought the recording paper back on Friday. During school, students were able to read aloud the poem that they had practiced all week.

During the study, students continuously increased in their fluency scores, although there were some inconsistencies. Students read reading passages that ranged in Lexile level between 300-600 which is the range for second grade. For students that were reading below grade level, these passages were difficult at first, and making meaning of the passages was not evident among all students in the study.

At the end of the school year, students were readministered the same reading comprehension test and fluency from the beginning of the year. Parents were given questionnaires to discuss their overall feelings about the fluency practice that took place at home and the weekly reading bag. Changes in student achievement were determined from November
to June based on the scores from the tests.

**Quality and Credibility of Research**

In doing research, criteria for assessing trustworthiness must be met by addressing the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Mills, 2011). Mills defines credibility as the researcher’s ability to take into account the complexities that are present in a study and how to deal with the patterns that are not easily explained (Mills, 2011). To ensure credibility in this study, I applied different strategies. As the teacher, I was able to guarantee prolonged participation at the research site and was fully immersed in the setting (Mills). During my research, I used peer debriefing as a way to interact with other professionals to help me reflect on the research and process of the study (Mills, 2011). In addition, I practiced triangulation to compare data (Mills, 2011). Data included both qualitative and quantitative measures.

Transferability is the researcher’s belief that their study is bound to the context and that the goal of their work is to not generalize among larger populations (Mills, 2011). To ensure transferability, I collected descriptions about the context of the study in which the research took place (Mills, 2011). This information will allow the comparison of the context of the study to other settings.

Dependability is defined as the stability of the data (Mills, 2011). I ensured dependability throughout the study by overlapping different data collection methods and sources of data. The use of qualitative field notes and quantitative test scores reflect the dependability of the study and the use of different methods for collecting data. Both the qualitative and quantitative measures of data collection offered different types of information. Additionally, I established an audit trail, a way for another person to do what I did through the examination of the data.
collection through written notes, questionnaires, and student artifacts (Mills, 2011).

The fourth criteria for validity is confirmability. Mills (2011) defines confirmability as, “the neutrality or objectivity of the data that has been collected” (p. 105). To ensure confirmability, I practiced triangulation and utilized a variety of data sources. Also, writing down reflections to reveal assumptions or biases was practiced.

**Informed Consent and Protecting the Rights of the Participants**

Prior to beginning research, I collected informed assent from the participants as well as parental permission. Students provided me with a verbal assent to use them in my research. The consent forms explained the details of the study including the purpose of the study, the context of the study, risks and benefits of the study, and parent’s rights. Parents were asked to sign the informed consent form which allowed me to use their information in the current study. They were also asked to sign the parental permission form which allowed me to work with and use their child’s information in the study.

**Data Collection**

To gauge student growth in overall reading comprehension while implementing fluency strategies, I used qualitative data through the use of parent questionnaires and field notes. The questions the parents were asked included their thoughts and feelings about the current weekly reading bag that was being sent home, and how they felt it helped their child’s overall reading, if at all. It also included a scale for parents to rate their child’s reading. Parents were also asked to identify changes in their child’s reading during the second grade school year.

Quantitative data was used when analyzing overall reading comprehension and fluency scores. The questions that students answered provided me with a percentage of correct answers. In looking at the questions, it can be determined what types of questions the students are
struggling with or excelling in. This data was used to determine which students needed additional intervention with reading comprehension. Data was also collected when testing students’ fluency scores. Students read for one minute, and the correct number of words read per minute was recorded. This data collection was used to determine which students were meeting expectations, those that were close to the expectation, and those that needed additional interventions for reading fluency.

The final data collection method was through the use of field notes and anecdotal records. During my guided reading instruction, I recorded observations of the students and paid particular attention to their fluency and overall comprehension of a text. Also, while completing running records, fluency and comprehension were also measured through note taking. The field notes and anecdotal records were focused on student needs regarding fluency and comprehension.

Data Analysis

The data was collected through parent questionnaires, observations and field notes, and student results on fluency and comprehension assessments. I first looked through all of the data to familiarize myself with the information that was collected. Then, I looked through all of the data a second time to begin coding the data to identify different themes and categories that fit together. The final time that I looked through the data was to look for any disconfirming evidence. The quantitative data was analyzed by first looking at the data and deciding what data was imperative to the research question. Then, the data was interpreted by deriving raw scores and mean scores.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the data showed commonalities and I was able to clearly see consistent themes from all of the data sources. These themes are also consistent with ideas found in the
literature review. I discovered three themes that I felt were important when analyzing the data. These themes include parent involvement and participation, student motivation, and teacher modeling. These themes appeared to be the most important when looking through the data.

Along with the qualitative data, quantitative data also provided pertinent information regarding reading comprehension and fluency among struggling readers. The reading comprehension data was analyzed by determining a percentage based on the number of correct answers out of the total amount on the assessment. The fluency data was analyzed by comparing pre and post assessments, as well as determining an average score for each student on overall reading fluency.

Students were presented with a reading comprehension assessment in the first quarter of the 2011-2012 school year. The assessment was administered again in June of the same school year, and the results were compared to the pre-assessment. During the pre-assessment, the reading passages were read to the students, and then the students had to independently answer the questions. When the post assessment was administered, the students read the passages and questions independently without any teacher assistance. The reading passages were leveled using a Lexile level. The Lexile level of the passages fell between the range of 300-600 for second grade. The results of the students’ assessments were analyzed and a score was derived for each student. The students were given a raw score out of fifteen possible points and also were given a percentage.
Table 1

*Reading Comprehension Assessment Results in Percentages for Individual Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Pre-Assessment</th>
<th>Post Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelia</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In Table 1, it is evident that all of the struggling readers improved in their overall reading comprehension. The non-struggling reader maintained her comprehension score from the pre-assessment. This increase in overall reading comprehension may be due to the fact that these students were exposed to numerous fluency interventions throughout the entire school year. The interventions included reader’s theater, whole class choral reading, poetry readings, and repeated readings. Repeated reading is an evidenced based strategy that increases reading fluency and comprehension among readers (Therrien, 2004). When given the opportunity to read text repeatedly, students are able to better understand the text. Repeated reading also increases reading comprehension because with each reading, students are working on decoding, and eventually the decoding barrier to comprehension is overcome (Samuels, 1979).

Oral reading rates also increased for all of the students from the pre-assessment to the post assessments. Students read a cold read of the reading passage “Jake’s Jar” in November 2011. Then, as a post-assessment, students read the same passage in June. The results for each student indicate an increase in oral reading fluency. This increase in reading rate may mean that
repeated practice of reading improves accuracy and automaticity in word recognition. When students are able to read with accuracy and automaticity, their reading rate improves. Repeated readings provide students with numerous opportunities to interact with the same text, so they become more familiar with the text itself. Therrien (2004) indicated that repeated reading can be used effectively as an intervention to increase overall fluency and comprehension ability. As can be seen in

Table 2

*Words Read Correct Per Minute*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Pre-Assessment</th>
<th>Post Assessment</th>
<th>Increase in WCPM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Amelia</em></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *= non-struggling reader

Table 2, students increased their oral reading rate measured by words read correctly per minute. The four struggling readers increased their overall reading rate by at least double of what their rate was on the pre-assessment. Each of the struggling readers increased their total amount of words read correct per minute by at least 34 words. However, the non-struggling student did not make as much of a gain as the struggling students. This may mean that the fluency interventions that were implemented may be more beneficial to struggling readers than non-struggling readers. With this data, it may mean that different forms of fluency strategies should
be used with higher level students. The non-struggling student showed the least amount of growth on the fluency assessment.

Fluency averages were also calculated for each student based on repeated readings that were completed throughout the course of the year. The student averages show a gradual increase in each quarter.

Table 3

*Fluency Averages for Students per Quarter*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>1\textsuperscript{st} Quarter</th>
<th>2\textsuperscript{nd} Quarter</th>
<th>3\textsuperscript{rd} Quarter</th>
<th>4\textsuperscript{th} Quarter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelia</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows the students’ fluency averages for four quarters. These averages were calculated by averaging the student’s reading rate on the repeated readings used throughout the course of the school year. Students read four passages throughout the year that rotated on a weekly basis. When analyzing the data in Table 2 and Table 3, it is clear that students improved in overall reading fluency and this may mean that their improvement in fluency directly increased their overall reading comprehension. Schatschneider, and Foorman (2010) found that oral reading fluency best determined achievement in reading comprehension.

The results in Table 2 and Table 3 show consistencies in the student’s final fluency score. Based on these assessments on reading fluency rate, this may mean that repeated reading,
READING FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION

regardless of what the reading passages are, may have a significant impact on oral reading rate. These two different measures of oral reading may indicate that repeated reading is an effective strategy for increasing reading rate among students.

**Student Motivation as a Factor of Success**

Student motivation was a consistent theme when looking through all of the data that was collected. When observing students participating in the variety of fluency intervention activities and games, motivation was underlying factor of whether or not students wanted to participate in the activity. The types of activities the students showed excitement over and were motivated to participate in included the poetry notebook, the fluency flyers club, reader’s theater, and fluency phrases. The poetry notebook and fluency flyer club were repeated reading strategies with poetry and fiction based texts. Reader’s theater also implemented the element of repeated reading, but was not completed on a regular basis like the poetry notebook and fluency flyers club. All of the instructional strategies focused more on prosody rather than the speed of reading. Despite having an impact on comprehension, prosody may also increase student motivation and engagement in reading (Rasinski et al, 2009). Modeling was done for the students to show them proper expression when reading. The fast phrases were especially motivational for students because they tracked how many phrases they could read in one minute and they tried to improve their score the next time they read. While practicing his fluency through the fluency phrase cards, Joe began his own recording paper to keep in his desk each time he practiced his fluency. He wanted to see how he was improving each time he read the phrase cards. This action was done on his own, and I could easily see that he was motivated to keep trying his best. When observing the students in my classroom, it was clear what activities they enjoyed participating in and which ones they did not. If they enjoyed what they were doing, they were more involved and learned
more from the experience. In fact, on more than one occasion, I overheard a small group of students conversing about how they loved to read the poems in the poetry notebook over and over again. On April 2, 2012, students were reading a poem titled, “Chatterbox the Rain.” This poem was motivational for the students because it had vivid language and students used motion and sounds to act out the motions of the rain in the poem. On this particular day, Katie chose to re-read this poem multiple times throughout the day when she had any free time versus choosing any other activity. When asked why she liked to read the poems, Katie responded, “It makes me a better reader” (Katie, personal communication, June 4, 2012). The element of motivation may indicate a higher success rate in overall reading. When students are motivated and interested, they may show greater improvement. In response to the weekly reading bag that was sent home, Linda stated:

I loved the weekly reading bag because it provided constant reinforcement for reading and an opportunity for the child to learn to be responsible for completing their assignment. The reading bag improved my daughter’s reading and fluency and each night I noticed that as the days progressed, her reading and fluency improved and it was not a struggle by weeks end. I especially witnessed my child go from not being interested in reading to having passion to read every day. I also noticed her reading was more fluent and less halting and her confidence level improved. Reading has been a weakness for my daughter in second grade, but she did make some significant gains. (Linda, personal communication, June 20, 2012).

In addition, Nick greatly improved in his overall confidence in reading, which helped him to become more motivated in reading itself. During the pre-assessment test that was administered in November 2011, Nick did not have a lot of confidence in his reading. He had previously stated
during a reading inventory that he was not a good reader. During the pre-assessment, he cried excessively because he felt he could not read the passages and answer the questions. However, by the end of the year, this crying ceased, and he was a much more confident reader. This increased confidence and motivation may have a direct connection to improved reading comprehension and fluency.

**Parent Involvement and Participation**

The parents of the five children that participated in the study were actively involved in their child’s education. Based on a record of attendance, all five parents attended both the fall and spring parent conference, regularly maintained communication with myself, and regularly returned the weekly reading bag in a timely manner. Linda regularly e-mailed me during the week to check on the progress of her daughter. On February 7, 2012, she e-mailed me regarding her daughter’s reading. Linda stated, “I am very concerned with Kim’s report card. Why is her lexile level still at BR - 0 when I know she has improved and has gone up a couple levels in her reading at school?” This correspondence demonstrates that she is concerned with her daughter’s progress. This type of correspondence continued throughout the year with Linda, and she was always asking questions and wondering what she could be doing at home with her daughter.

After parent-teacher conferences in November 2011, I sent home reading material that Linda could use at home with her daughter. The materials included printable books from Reading A-Z, fluency phrase cards, sight word cards, and poems. Katie’s mother also inquired about additional sight word activities to use at home. During parent-teacher conferences in April 2012, when Katie was still not meeting second grade expectations for sight words, her mother was concerned and was interested in additional material that would help her towards the end of the year. Sight word games were sent home and a list of sight word activities was sent home with Katie. These
actions by these parents show their involvement in their child’s education and their willingness to seek additional help. These parents also attended family functions at the school, and regularly read to their child at home either through the reading material in the reading bag, a library book, or books at home. In March, the parents of the children attended a “Snack and Story” day at school where they read to their child for half an hour of the day. Through this experience, these parents acted as role models for their children and reinforced the importance of reading. This information on parent participation and involvement might mean that it impacts student learning and achievement in reading. When parents are involved in their children’s education and act as positive models, a higher level of learning takes place. In fact, Crimm (1992) concluded that parent involvement can often correct educational deficits and it can lessen the need for intervention.

Teacher Modeling and Instruction

Based on field notes and observations, teacher modeling was a common theme when planning instruction for my students. Each of the fluency intervention strategies contained an element of teacher modeling. The poetry notebook began with teacher modeling of the poem, and then gradually led to independent reading of the poem. Reader’s Theater also involved modeling between myself and the teacher assistant. The fluency flyers club was managed by the teacher assistant, and when given instructions on how to manage the groups, she was instructed to model the passage for the students and to identify vocabulary words in the passage for the students. When observing her working with students, she did model the passage for them after they had read it one time. After she modeled it, the students read it again and noted their progress from their first reading. At home, students were encouraged to read with their parents and older siblings. Parents were provided information on the power of modeling for their children, and all
of the parents did model reading at home through the use of the reading bag material and checklist that was sent back each week. Linda stated that “Modeling reading at home was reinforced to maintain consistency between home and school” (Linda, personal communication, June 20, 2012). Modeling for students may increase their overall success with reading because they are provided with a guide. Through the use of modeling, the teacher is demonstrating for the students how to successfully complete a task. Nichols et al. (2009) state that, “it is the teacher’s responsibility to model expressive readings that demonstrate both automaticity and prosody as well as provide a scaffold for students who continue to need additional support in developing fluency” (p. 4).

**Implications and Conclusions**

The action research that was conducted infers that fluency is an important aspect of reading comprehension. Practice with fluency along with direct instruction and modeling allow students to be more fluent readers and have more overall success in reading. As a teacher, this concept means that incorporating fluency strategies and activities into the daily curriculum is necessary to increase students’ overall reading fluency. While working on reading fluency, students are also increasing their overall reading comprehension because they are less likely to focus too much of their time on the actual reading of the words, and they are able to make meaning from the text. In order for students to make meaning of the text, they need to reach a level of fluency that allows them to read with ease. According to LaBerge and Samuels (1974), automaticity of reading words allows the reader to spend less effort decoding and allows for comprehension processes to occur. In general, all teachers should be implementing strategies to help increase reading fluency for their students, especially those that are currently struggling readers and may not have great comprehension skills as well. It is important to understand that
fluency is a major component of reading that leads to the overall success of reading. Making meaning of text is the ultimate goal of reading, and providing students with ample opportunities to practice reading fluency strategies will lead to the ability to make meaning from text.

Many strategies can be implemented with ease into the daily routine in the classroom. Many resources are available for teachers to use to help aid in reading fluency and comprehension. One of the most important things that any teacher can do for students is to model fluent reading. Through modeling, children can gain a better sense of what fluent reading is. With support in the reading process, students can become successful readers and will therefore make meaning with text. Nichols et al. (2009) supports the component of teacher modeling by stating that, “it is the teacher’s responsibility to model expressive readings that demonstrate both automaticity and prosody as well as provide a scaffold for students who continue to need additional support in developing fluency” (p. 4).

Student motivation is an additional factor that needs to be taken into consideration when planning for the implementation of fluency strategies to support reading comprehension. Motivation is key in developing student interest and attitude. Rasinski et al. (1994) observed that students became more interested in reading, especially if the poems or stories were ones they enjoyed. This factor is important for teachers to remember, especially when trying to increase motivation and interest in reading. As a teacher, it is also imperative to increase parent participation and involvement in order to foster growth in reading for students. Parent participation and involvement can help to increase overall learning in their child. Crimm (1992) agrees with the idea of involving parents and concluded that parent involvement can often correct educational deficits and it can lessen the need for intervention.

When looking at how fluency strategies increase reading comprehension, it is evident that
students’ reading fluency and comprehension are connected to each other. Based on the socio-cultural theory, children learn when they have exposure to new material. Without learning experiences, they will not grow as a learner. The social contexts that children are exposed to have a great impact on their overall learning and literacy experiences. Fluency is a major component in the balanced literacy framework and it is crucial to the development of reading comprehension in students. Based on the literature, fluency is a determiner of overall reading success and achievement among students. Reading fluently is necessary in order to understand text fully. When students are given opportunities to practice reading fluently through various strategies and activities, they are learning to read with automaticity and prosody. These two terms are crucial in the development of reading fluency. When automaticity and prosody are achieved, students delegate their reading to the understanding of the text rather than the decoding and breaking apart of words. In the action research that was conducted, it was evident that repeated reading as a fluency strategy was one way in which the overall reading comprehension among students was increased. Based on the findings and data analysis, all struggling readers greatly improved in their overall oral reading fluency as well as their overall reading comprehension. With this information, it is obvious that reading fluency should be a major focus for all teachers. The implementation of fluency strategies should be included into the curriculum, to further aid students in their overall reading success.

If I were to conduct action research again, I would like to divide students into different groups that work on different fluency strategies such as repeated reading, peer tutoring, and wide reading. I would administer a pre-assessment to all of the students in the study, and then begin implementing those strategies with the groups of students. I think it would be interesting to see which group made the greatest gains in their overall reading fluency and reading comprehension.
I think that this would provide more specific information as to which reading fluency strategy was the most effective in increasing reading fluency and comprehension. In the current study, there are three limitations. The first limitation is that while the students did benefit from the various fluency strategies, it is unclear whether or not the strategies impacted reading comprehension because there was no control group in the study. Therefore, the results of the data indicate that all the students increased their overall reading comprehension. The second limitation is that the study did not indicate the reading levels of the passages used when engaging in repeated reading activities with the students. The content and reading level of the passages is important to understand because students generally read better when the passage is at their instructional level. The third limitation is that the importance of charting student progress on repeated readings is unknown as it relate to reading success. Charting was a component used when students engaged in repeated reading activities, however, there was not enough data to indicate that charting helps to increase students’ reading fluency. Charting progress motivates students to practice their reading to meet their goal (Algozzine et.al, 2009).

This research provides a great amount of information regarding the relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension. However, I am eager to learn more about how to improve overall reading fluency and comprehension among students that are not struggling students. The research suggests ways to help students that are struggling readers, but it does not suggest how to help the students that excel in reading. It is important to recognize ways to help excelling students because the needs of all students need to be met. I would also like to further understand which strategies are most effective for students with disabilities and why they are considered to be the most effective for that population of students. Based on the results of the current study, it is important to emphasize student participation in reading fluency activities and
strategies to further develop their overall reading comprehension. Potentially, integrating reading fluency strategies into daily classroom routines could lead to student growth not only in reading but across the curriculum.
References


Appendix A

Parent Questionnaire

1. What were your thoughts on the weekly reading bag that was sent home?

2. Do you think the reading bag helped with reading and fluency?

3. What changes did you notice in your child’s reading from the beginning to end of the year?

4. Rate your child’s reading on a scale from 1-10.
Directions
Read this story. Then answer questions 1 through 4.

Bath Time

Tyler got the shampoo. Holly found a towel. Holly pulled the tub into the yard. Tyler filled it with water.

“Here, Dusty,” Holly called.

Dusty raced across the yard. When he saw the tub, his tail drooped. Dusty lay down and rolled over.

“Help me, Tyler,” said Holly.

The kids carried Dusty to the tub. Tyler shampooed Dusty while Holly held him.

“Time to rinse off the soap,” Tyler said. Just then, Dusty shook. Soap suds flew everywhere. Holly and Tyler were now covered with soap, too.
1. What did Tyler and Holly give Dusty?

2. What kind of animal is Dusty?

3. Complete the web to show the things Tyler and Holly needed for bath time.

4. Why did Dusty lay down when he saw the tub of water?
Life in a Castle

Long ago, kings and nobles lived in big castles. Nobles were the rich and powerful. The castles helped them stay safe. Workers lived inside the castle, too. There were cooks. There were soldiers. There were also animals like horses and pigs.

Sometimes, the castle was built on a hill. The guards inside could see who was coming. They could keep the king’s enemies out. Most castles had a moat around them. The moat was filled with water. A drawbridge crossed the water. The guards could lift the drawbridge. Then the enemy could not cross the moat.

Castles had a great hall. The king and his family ate there. They had big parties there, too. There were kitchens, bedrooms, and even a chapel. There were gardens. Sound great?

Well, all the light came from candles or oil lamps. Big stone rooms were very dark at night. All the heat came from a fire. In the winter, the castles were cold and dark. The kitchen had fires for cooking food. It had tubs of water for washing dishes. The stone floors were covered with straw. Sometimes the floors were just dirt. There were rats everywhere.

The kind liked living in the castle. Would you like to live in one?
Appendix B

Reading Comprehension Pre and Post Test

Complete the web telling who lived in big castles.

Lived in castles

kings

What is a moat?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Appendix B

Reading Comprehension Pre and Post Test

What does a moat do?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Would you like to live in a castle? Tell why or why not. Use two details from the story to support your answer.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Appendix C
Reading Fluency Pre and Post Test

Jake’s Jar

Jake loves to read everything in sight! This is why he joined the school’s reading club. Jake reads when he first wakes up in the morning. He reads a little at lunchtime. He reads right before he goes to sleep at night.

One day, Jake asked Mom how many books he had read so far. He and Mom forgot to count them. Mom found an old jar in the kitchen. Every time Jake finished a book, they put a dime in the jar.

This would help them know how many books Jake had read.

When the jar was full, Jake wanted to buy a book to give to his reading club. Jake’s mom cheered and said that was a wonderful idea!

1. What does Jake love to do?
2. What does Jake want to do with his money?
## Appendix D

Fluency Pre and Post Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Quarter</th>
<th>4th Quarter</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amelia</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>48 - doubled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>47 - doubled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34 - doubled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>72 - doubled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Fluency Averages by Quarter
Appendix F

At Home Reading Log

Home Learning Bag

Please read for 20 minutes a night with your child. Please check what you have read for each night. Sign and return the chart in the Home Learning Bag to school on Friday. Thank you for your cooperation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Items</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fluency Poem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini Book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader’s Theater</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book – from home or library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Child’s Name_________________________________________

Reading Partner’s Signature________________________________
# Appendix G

Field Notes (Fluency Post Assessment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: Kim</th>
<th>Name: Katie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comments: Always nervous at first, started out choppy, then phrased words together and read fluently. Able to answer comprehension questions and have a clear understanding.</td>
<td>Comments: Asked what her score was at the beginning of the year, highlighted on paper for her to see. After she read past that point, got very excited. Able to read with much more fluency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: Joe</th>
<th>Name: Nick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comments: Great decoding, pauses more on speed, have to remind him it's not all about speed.</td>
<td>Comments: Fluent!!! Very little struggle w/ decoding w/ worries about the timer. Even though it's not in sight. Able to answer questions. Very excited he beat his old score.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: Amelia</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comments: Super fluent! Not just speedy, very expressive and plays close attention to punctuation.</td>
<td>Showed all students how many wpm they read in 1st quarter. All made a goal for themselves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>