THE EFFECTS OF REPEATED READING ON SECOND GRADE READING FLUENCY SCORES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a difference in student fluency achievement between repeated reading and traditional reading methods. The data that was collected was comprised of a class of sixteen second grade students from a very small, rural town. The class was divided into two equal groups: traditional and repeated reading. The traditional group received fluency practice in a traditional manner while the repeated reading group only focused on repeated reading. Each student was given a one-minute fluency test at the end of each week for a five week period. The findings were analyzed through Microsoft Excel and A Statistical Program (ASP). The results indicated that there was a slight difference as demonstrated by the traditional mean of 80.15 compared to the repeated reading mean of 88.48, but not a significant statistical difference between the traditional and repeated reading method. Further study in the effectiveness of repeated reading on fluency is warranted. The school may want to consider extending this research for a second year and for a longer period of time.
INTRODUCTION

Background, Issues and Concerns

There has been a concern with students not reading fluently, which can affect comprehension. If students are taught, modeled, and practice repeated reading in order to increase their fluency it should help student’s understand what they are reading. It is important to ensure that students are able to read fluently in order to help them understand what they are reading. Reading is being able to read the words at a good rate comprehend the material and be able to explain and answer questions on the passage. To increase a students’ fluency will create a foundation of reading skills in order to be a successful reader.

Practice under Investigation

The practice under investigation is what teaching method to use with students to increase their oral reading fluency scores. There will be an investigation to see if there is a significant difference in fluency achievement based on teaching methods.

School Policy to be Informed by Study

The school practices the use of teaching fluency through the traditional method. If there is a significant difference within fluency achievement the school will want to make sure to implement the method in which the students had the higher reading fluency achievement scores.

Conceptual Underpinning

Reading is a major focus in the elementary school especially in the primary grades. Not all students can read fluently for their age. Fluency is a focus because it can affect a reader’s comprehension. Making sure that students practice to become more fluent readers will allow them to have a better understanding of what they read. In theory, repeated reading will increase student achievement.
Statement of the Problem

The problem is that students are not reading fluently, which is effecting their comprehension of what they have read.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to find out if there is a significant improvement in fluency by using repeated reading.

Research Question

RQ#1: Is there a difference in student fluency achievement between repeated reading and traditional reading methods.

Null Hypothesis

There is no difference in student fluency achievement between repeated reading and traditional reading methods.

Anticipated Benefits of the Study

If there is a difference between repeated reading and fluency, teachers will be able to differentiate instruction so that the student can improve their reading fluency.

Definition of Terms

WCPM(words correct per minute)- the number of words a student can read correctly in one minute. To figure a student’s WCPM: take the total number of words read in a one minute period minus the number of mistakes made by the student.

Fluency- fluency is the ability of readers to read quickly, effortlessly, and efficiently with good expression.
Repeated Reading (RR) - repeated reading is a teaching method in which a student reads a passage several times in order to increase their fluency on the piece.

Summary

A study was conducted to see if there is a significant difference in fluency achievement test scores between repeated reading and traditional reading methods. If the t-test concludes there was a significant difference, teachers should focus their fluency instruction by the method with the higher mean. After this study is completed, teachers can benefit by looking at the performance data and obtain information in order to implement the teaching method within their classroom.
“Reading is inarguably one of the most important and critical educational skills, in part because it influences virtually all academic disciplines” (Roundy and Roundy, 2009, p.54). Teachers want students to be able to not only read the material at grade level, but have an understanding of what they read, be fluent when they are reading and be able to discuss and answer questions over passages. “A considerable number of students experience academic failure as a result of their reading deficits” (Alber-Morgan, 2006, p. 273). As a result of this, teachers are always trying to find ways to make their students become successful readers. “Reading fluency is strongly associated with reading comprehension; thus, when the National Reading Panel (2000) reported that fluency instruction was often neglected in classrooms, reading fluency gained renewed attention” (Pilonieta, 2012, p. 8).

Fluency is the ability to read the words in a text with sufficient accuracy, automaticity, and prosody. Accuracy is the ability to read a passage without making pronunciation errors. Being able to read words in a passage correctly and effortlessly so that a reader is able to comprehend the words is defined as automaticity. Finally, prosody is the ability to read a passage with the correct phrasing and expression. When a person reads with fluency, it sounds as if it is their natural speech. Readers who are fluent while oral reading, are also fluent during silent reading as well (Young & Rasinski, 2009).

Now that reading fluency has become a critical goal in the reading curriculum for elementary schools, teachers need to have a better understanding of the concept. Teachers also need to make sure that students are aware and have an understanding of each component. Fluency has three main components: a fluent readers needs to read at the proper rate, accurately, and with expression (Pilonieta, 2012). Students can easily get stuck on the rate at which they
read and disregard being accurate and having expression. In order to prevent this from occurring, teachers need to put an equal amount of emphasis on all three components. Create fun activities in order for students to get excited about not only how fast they read, but how accurate and how much expression is shown. A graph or stick chart is a great way for younger students to see their progress in all areas of fluency.

People expect fluent performances from not only sporting events and music concerts but also in regard to reading as well (Kostewicz, 2012). The only way a person can get better at an activity is to spend many hours working on and practicing a skill. Readers who are struggling need to be provided several opportunities to practice reading passages at their reading level in order to transition into fluent readers (Musti-Rao, Hawkins, & Barkley, 2009). Teachers need to understand fluency norms so that they can correctly interpret reading rates and determine how much fluency instruction children need (Pilonieta, 2012). Those students who struggle with fluency will need to practice longer and with more supervision from the teacher than those who are already proficient. All students need to continue to practice their reading skills in order to keep making progress.

Repeated readings (RR) are one form of keeping students responding effectively and to increase reading performance. “RR generally involves students re-reading a story (a) a pre-established number of times, (b) to a pre-established level of fluency, or (c) until they increase their fluency to a pre-established percent above their baseline fluency” (Ardoin, McCall, & Klubnik, 2007, p. 56). Students will see a larger increase on their reading fluency with a certain passage, the more times that they read it. This occurs because students start to become familiar with the words that they have read several times. The first time that a student reads the passage, there tends to be several words that are challenging and new to the student. By the time a student
has read the passage three or more times, those words that started off as challenging are starting to become more familiar. This eliminates the struggle and time the reader took to form the words the first time, creating a more fluent reader. Research has shown that repeated readings help students make improvement on their fluency (Young & Rasinski, 2009).

There are three ways that repeated readings can be implemented within a classroom. The first way allows the teacher to model the passage while the students follow along. This way can be completed with the whole class. As the teacher reads, students are able hear how the passage should flow with the correct punctuation and pronunciation of all the words. The other two ways include: small-group approach and peer-mediated approach (Musti-Rao et al., 2009). The small-group approach consists of a group of students that take turn reading a passage. In the peer-mediated approach students are grouped in pairs and read a specific passage repeatedly. A teacher can use one or all of the different approaches to repeated reading depending on what is needed and will benefit their class. Each approach has its own benefits.

Alber-Morgan (2006) states ten recommendations in order to enhance the effectiveness of repeated readings. These recommendations were based on other repeated reading research that has already been concluded. Some of the recommendations include: use repeated reading daily, provide materials at the appropriate reading level, provide performance feedback, reinforce student performance, and assess reading comprehension. Allowing each student to read a passage at an appropriate reading level and providing feedback to the student helps the student be set up for success. Using repeated reading correctly helps to ensure that the students are getting the most benefit out of the program. The more knowledge that a teacher has over the program the better they will be able to use the program to help their students increasing their reading skills.
Once students get into a routine of completing repeated reading, the teacher needs to find new ways in order to keep things fun and exciting. Incorporating jokes with repeated reading is a great way to energize students again. The more engaged and involved students are with reading, the less likely they will see it as work and just enjoy telling one another jokes. Jokes require students to pay attention to punctuation, intonation, and phrasing (Ness, 2009). These are all skills students need to work and build on to become a better more fluent reader.

Poems, like jokes, are another great way to get variation into repeated reading. Finding funny children’s poems that are at the correct reading level really gets students interested in reading. Students will be so excited that they will want to practice reading poems when they have extra time during school. Poems are a great way to really focus on intonation with students. Students really have to watch how they are saying the words in order to relay the correct message. Including poems and jokes into your repeated reading routine can really help students stay excited and increase their reading skills at the same time.

“If children do not acquire the fundamentals of reading, which is based largely on reading fluency, at a young age it places them at a considerable disadvantage in their future academic pursuits” (Roundy & Roundy, 2009, p. 54). Repeated reading is successful strategy in improving reading fluency. It incorporates all aspects of fluency: rate, accuracy, and expression as well as making it enjoyable, motivating and beneficial for students to improve their reading skills.
RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

A quantitative study was conducted to see if there was a gap in achievement in fluency based on the teaching methods. The independent variable being the method of teaching received, while the dependent variable tested was fluency achievement on a one-minute reading passage. If the difference is significant in scores based on teaching methods, teachers should be informed and implement the teaching method with the highest mean to increase student fluency achievement.

Study Group Description

The study group consisted of 16 second grade students from a rural elementary school in the northwest Missouri region. The district’s total enrollment for K-12 for the 2011-2012 school year is 234. The districts free and reduced lunch percentage for the 2011-2012 school year is 61.3%.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

Data was collected within a classroom to identify words per minute scores of students who received repeated reading instruction and traditional fluency instruction on one minute passages from the 2012-2013 school year.

Statistical Analysis Methods

A t-test was conducted to find if there is a significant difference in fluency achievement based on teaching methods. The source was broken into two categories: students who received repeated reading instruction and students who receive traditional fluency instruction. The mean, mean D, t-test, df, and p-value were concluded from this test. The Alpha level was set at 0.25 to
test the null hypothesis: There is no difference in student fluency achievement between repeated reading and traditional reading methods.
FINDINGS

The second grade class was divided into two groups to conduct a study to determine if fluency is improved by the use of repeated readings. The first group was given instruction in the traditional manner and the second group was given instruction focused on repeated reading practice. A t-test was conducted to decide whether there was a difference in fluency achievement based on teaching methods. The following table will depict the data that was collected in the classroom. There are only five weeks of data to look at since the school was implementing changes in the reading series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S²</th>
<th>Mean D</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (n=40)</td>
<td>80.15</td>
<td>1161.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated Reading (n=40)</td>
<td>88.48</td>
<td>1901.85</td>
<td>-8.33</td>
<td>-0.95</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The null hypothesis stated there is no difference in student fluency achievement between repeated reading and traditional methods. The above table shows the results of this study (t-test= -0.95, Mean D= -8.33 and p-value =.34) which notes a slight difference as demonstrated by the traditional mean of 80.15 compared to the repeated reading mean of 88.48. However, there is not a significant statistical difference between the traditional and repeated reading manner as the p-value is above the alpha level of 0.25. Therefore the null hypothesis is not rejected. This proves that the use of repeated reading does slightly improve reading fluency, but not large enough to create a statistical difference.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There was a null hypothesis identified at the beginning of this study. The null hypothesis stated that there is no difference in student fluency achievement between repeated reading and traditional methods. The null hypothesis was not rejected due to the p-value being above the alpha level of 0.25. The results of this study indicate that there is a slight difference as demonstrated by the traditional mean of 80.15 compared to the repeated reading mean of 88.48. However there is not a significant statistical difference between the traditional and repeated reading methods of instruction.

A research question was asked at the beginning of this study. The question asked, is there a difference in student fluency achievement between repeated reading and traditional reading methods. As a result of this study, data can show on a small scale that repeated reading does slightly increase student fluency achievement scores. Based on a statistical difference there was not a difference.

The conceptual underpinning is that repeated reading will support student fluency achievement which will allow students to have a better understanding of what they read. The result of this study shows that fluency achievement scores can be slightly increased due to repeated reading. The students that were taught fluency with the repeated reading methods had a mean of 88.48 where the traditional group had a mean of 80.15 which shows that the students who were taught with repeated reading had a higher average when reading. There was only a slight increase in the scores however the study was only done for a five week period with a small group of students. On a statistical scale, the results of this study did not support the conceptual underpinning that repeated reading will support student fluency achievement. It is suggested due
to the results of this study that further research needs to be conducted on the effect of repeated reading on fluency.

Although the data showed a slight increase in fluency achievement, it was not large enough to be a statistical difference. In order to get more data on the subject a teacher would be recommended to complete the study for a second year. The first year, the teacher was able to gain an understanding of repeated reading while also trying to teach it to their students. The teacher was not only trying to gain an understanding of the repeated reading method but also deliver instruction to the students over the method. Due to this the teacher would vastly improve the teaching skills for the second year which would be a huge benefit to not only the teacher but also have an impact on the students. This would also allow the teacher to really focus on teaching the students instead of learning how the process works.

To gain even further knowledge on the effect of repeated reading on fluency, the study should be conducted for the entire year instead of just a five week period. The study was only completed for a short period of time due to a new reading program being implemented in the school district. With the new reading program implemented the prior year the teacher will not have to focus on the reading program and can focus an equal amount on the newly implemented reading program and the fluency work. This will lead to more focus on the content being presented to the students. The longer the teacher conducts the study the larger amount of data will be reported and able to be use with the t-test to see if there would be a statistical difference.
REFERENCES


