ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to answer the questions, “Will time spent with an adult change a child’s view of him/herself as a reader?” and “Will time spent with an adult help improve a child’s reading ability?” The research will include strategies to help build up a young reader who has not experienced success in their early reading years. The research was conducted with a female student in the second grade in a suburban elementary school in a mid-size city. There are 468 students with 22 percent free and reduced meals in her school. The findings were analyzed through a Statistical Package (ASP), software was used to complete the statistical calculations in this study. Descriptive statistics and t-tests and a Chi-square were calculated. Microsoft Excel was used to compile some totals used in the research. The findings indicate that there is in fact a correlation between self-esteem and educational success. In her readings of “Pocahontas” she began her first reading with 110 miscues. Her second reading had 63 miscues and her third reading had 32 miscues. Her frustration level began with 14 complaints in the first reading, then her frustration level dropped to three complaints in the second reading and her last reading had no complaints at all.

While working on the first grade word list, there were ten miscues during the first week, five during the second week and then two during the third week. The second grade sight word list miscues were 15 for the fourth week, eight during the fifth week and then four during the sixth week.

I think that the assessment that showed the clearest picture of her growth in her self-esteem was the Garfield’s Reading Attitude Survey. During the pre-test, her full-
scale percentile rank was only 53.7%. After six weeks of working with her, her full-scale percentile rank jumped to an 85%.
INTRODUCTION

The student, Rachel Marie, (not her real name) is the youngest of three girls. She has had a tough start to her young life. Her father is an alcoholic and her mother is addicted to methamphetamines. She is living with an aunt at this time so she is considered “homeless” by the school district. She is very bright and she is a very good athlete, but she sees herself as stupid and fat. Her mother has a reading level of about a fourth grader and does not like to read with her because she feels inferior. Some strategies that she has been exposed to are read-alouds and partner reading. While reading with a partner, there are some strategies that they are to talk about. They are: asking questions, making connections, predicting, summarizing, clarifying, and synthesizing. While reading on her own, the teacher has 20 reading rules. Her teacher said that the rule that Rachel has the most problem with is “Reading Rule #3, which is “a silent ‘e’ at the end makes the vowel say its name”. The literacy strategies that were used while working with Rachel are the re-reads of “Pocahontas” along with some scaffolding while working with her on this book and her sight words. The Garfield Reading Inventory was used to find out how she feels about herself and reading. There was a pre- and post-assessment given using the Garfield Reading Inventory. Other assessments that were used are the documentation on the amount of miscues that she had while going through her three readings and the first and second grade sight word lists. Documentation was also made on the times that she got frustrated while reading “Pocahontas”.
Background, Issues and Concerns

There is a concern of helping every student achieve his or her potential that plagues every school district. Because every student does not have the same parental support at home to help team up with teachers to achieve this goal, teachers need to work overtime on behalf of these students. There is also the concern for students who have a low self-esteem because of academic failures especially in reading. In the background of many of these students is the failure of their parents to have completed a high school diploma or GED, so the parents themselves do not feel capable of helping their child succeed academically although it is the desire of their heart. So the issue at hand is how to address these academic, emotional and social concerns. Although our concern is for the students themselves, addressing these issues will also help the school districts with their levels of proficiency on the standardized state tests.

Practice Under Investigation

The practice under investigation is how to use strategies in both the classroom and one on one tutoring to build up struggling readers to become confident readers.

School Policy to be Informed by Study

It is crucial that we meet the needs of every student, so it is imperative that the school is informed about this study to help those students who have fallen through the cracks of the educational system. This study can be brought to the attention of the teachers and paras during monthly meetings, with names of students who would benefit from the tutoring. This can especially be implemented through our Extended Learning Plan.
Conceptual Underpinning

Every learner in the classroom is different. Some children were born highly motivated because of the encouragement of their parents. Others on the other side of the spectrum weren’t so lucky to grow up around parents who helped build self-esteem in their children. This is one area where it is imperative that teachers or a staff member or volunteer in the school supply the support that is lacking either from home or from the student him/herself to be able to increase the academic achievement needed. Although some theorists do not believe there is a correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement, Theodore S. Kaniuka’s viewpoint is that self-esteem influences achievement. As teachers, we need to help even the score for those who were not born with family members who inspire their children to do their best. This study is one student’s journey from hopelessness as a reader to a flourishing reader who has begun to love to read.

Statement of the Problem

One of the greatest problems that we have is to make sure there is a nurturing atmosphere for children to thrive in. Teachers cannot give that one on one time to each individual, but not all children grow up in a nurturing environment. As a teacher sees that there is a need for one of their students to be shown that they matter, then there needs to be an effort made to give of their own time or set some tutoring time up for that individual student to be paired up with another adult who has a lot of patience and caring.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to give strategies to build up a young reader who has not experienced success in their early reading years.

Research Question (s)

RQ#1: Will time spent with an adult change a child’s view of him/herself as a reader?

RQ#2: Will time spent with an adult help improve a child’s reading ability?

Null Hypothesis (es)

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the times spent with an adult changing a child’s view of him/herself as a reader.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the times spent with an adult to improve a child’s reading ability.

Anticipated Benefits of the Study

There are several benefits anticipated from the study. The first one is to be an encourager to teachers and parents who have almost given up on some struggling readers. The second one is to help encourage the students to not give up on themselves, but to know that there are caring adults out there who will help them. The third benefit is to give teachers and parents the strategies that they might not have tried yet to help these Students.

Definition of Terms

Chi square – a measurement of how expectations compare to results
Conceptual Underpinning – theories or principles that may explain cause and effect relationships established during the research process, or help interpret observations and findings that result from data analyses.

Null Hypothesis – A type of hypothesis used in statistics that proposes that no statistical significance exists in a set of given observations.

Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) – an objective assessment of a student’s reading comprehension level

T-test – a statistical hypothesis test used to determine if two sets of data are significantly different from each other

Summary

A study was conducted to see if time spent with an adult would change a child’s view of him/herself as a reader and help improve a child’s reading ability. If this is the case, then there needs to be provision in place for tutoring to take place. Every student should be able to perform at his or her highest level of achievement. Since not all students have the parental support that is needed to reach that goal, then measures have to take place at the school for each student to be successful. Every school district can benefit by looking at the different strategies to help students with low self-esteem and who are struggling to reach their potential.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Newkirk (2010) argues why it is important to show that reading is more than just a contest to see how fast a person can decode words. He tries to dispel the myth that if you are a fast reader, then you are smart and if you are a slow reader then you are stupid. He argues that there is pleasure in slowing down to enjoy the ride rather than to try to see how fast you can get through a reading. He also argued that timed standardized tests should also be eliminated. He cited the fact about how humiliating it is for slower readers and the fact that most slower readers don’t even try because they feel they are going to fail anyway.

Manning (2006) starts out by giving a scenario that many teachers experience in trying to help their students overcome the feeling of being stupid because they feel they don’t measure up to other students who are faster readers or who have been ridiculed by other students because they don’t divide the words into their syllables quickly. She gave a list of different strategies to help our struggling readers gain confidence. Some of them are to choose interesting, appropriate texts and create an accepting classroom environment. A teacher should also use assessments that place a higher value on what students can do instead of what they can’t do. She compared a student’s reading confidence to a balloon. If someone is an encourager to that student then the balloon is inflated, but if someone causes the same student to feel as though they are unsuccessful in reading, then their balloon is deflated.

Vacca (2006) explains about self-efficacy, which is an “I can” belief in oneself and the emotional demands that reading places on students (young and old). He explained
that a reader might be confident while reading one type of literature, yet struggling in a
different area of literature. Vacca also described various strategies to get students to be
motivated to participate in reading activities especially for education’s sake. The
strategy that he highly suggested to help motivate students was finding ways to connect
the reading materials to students’ life experiences.

Fink (2012) describes different tactics and to help the readers reach the next level.
She has the article divided up into age groups and listed different strategies to help those
age groups. The building blocks for K – second grade was to work on comprehension
and fluency. The next grade split was third to fifth grades where they worked on
fundamentals, decoding and strategies for parents to implement reading in real life. The
last age group was for sixth to eighth grades. They focused on building confidence,
developing a routine, using graphic novels and allowing the students to read what
interests them.

Wilfong (2008), a literacy coach in an elementary school, tells about the birth of
the Poetry Academy that was based on a program called Fast Start, where young readers
would read poetry with their parents using a strategy called repeated readings. She used
86 third graders because they would be taking two different state mandated assessments
that year. She graphed out the cycle that the Academy used and used charts to show who
the participants were and also their outcomes.

Babicki & Luke (2007) is about a program called Reading Buddies. This is a
great program that helps build self-esteem in both the older and young readers. The older
readers develop a sense of responsibility and enjoy helping a younger reader to develop their reading skills. The younger readers’ self-esteem is built up by the relationships and friendships that are developed with the older students. The Montessori activities always start by teachers modeling the qualities of good behaviors both socially and academically. Oh, and they do reading, too.

Fitzgerald & Graves (2005) describe scaffolding reading experience (SRE). A good example that they gave is using training wheels when teaching a child how to ride a bicycle. This article is about teaching English language readers but would also fit perfectly for struggling readers. Scaffolding framework consists of a set of prereading, during-reading, and postreading activities to use with both fiction and nonfiction. They list different activities for each timeframe.

Baskwill (1995) gives us a common sense approach to helping students who are struggling with reading. She lists eight strengths that the learner support system has. First of all, it helps build self-esteem. It takes place in the classroom, it is consistent and it can be carried out by either one classroom or by the whole school. The teacher carries it out, it does not take expensive training, and it offers support to students of any age.

Harmon, Wood, Hedrick, Vintinner & Willeford (2009) performed a study using 44 seventh graders to show how to use word walls to enhance vocabulary. They showed how to build background knowledge to help select words. They gave student interviews and also showed their student’s achievements to show the impact from their instruction. They do not believe that word walls them-selves teach vocabulary, but that it is a
powerful tool to enhance vocabulary instruction.
RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

The research design is working one on one with a student to improve her self-esteem while working to improve her reading level. The alpha level was set at 0.01 for all tests with this research. There were two dependent means on the two T-tests. They were the Pre and Post test done on the miscues from the readings of Pocahontas and the Pre and Post tests on the complaints from the readings of Pocahontas. Tests run will include the t-test.

Study Group Description

This study group is only one student, Rachel Marie, (not her real name). She is eight years old and in the second grade in a suburban elementary school in a mid-size city. There are 468 students with 22 percent free and reduced meals in her school. She is the youngest of three girls. She has had a tough start to her young life. Her father is an alcoholic and her mother is addicted to methamphetamines. She is living with an aunt at this time so she is considered “homeless” by the school district.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The first test administered was the Burke Reading Interview on September 13, 2012 during a private session to find out her perceptions of herself as a reader. For an assessment on how she feels about herself and reading, a pre- and post-assessment was given using the Garfield Reading Inventory. Other assessments that were used are the documentation on the amount of miscues that she had while going through her three readings and the first and second grade sight word lists. Her frustration while reading
and re-reading “Pocahontas” was also documented. Information was graphed and analyzed.

Statistical Analysis Methods

http://www.socscistatistics.com/tests/ttestdependent/Default2.aspx was used to complete the statistical calculations in this study. Descriptive statistics and t-tests were calculated. Microsoft Excel was used to compile some totals used in the research.
FINDINGS

There were two research questions that were addressed during this study. The first one was, “Will time spent with an adult change a child’s view of him/herself as a reader?” The second question was, “Will time spent with an adult help improve a child’s reading ability?”

Results from the graphs show quite an improvement in both Rachel’s accomplishments at reading texts and vocabulary in lowering her miscues and also in lowering her frustration outbursts.

TABLE 1

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The graphs show that in her readings of “Pocahontas” that she began her first reading with 107 miscues. Her second reading had 63 miscues and her third reading had 31 miscues.
TABLE 2

This graph shows that her frustration level began with 14 complaints in the first reading, then her frustration level dropped to three complaints in the second reading and her last reading there were no complaints at all.
In this graph, it was very interesting to combine the two graphs and see the correlation between the amounts of miscues in comparison to the amount of complaints.
TABLE 4

In the graph of the reading miscues for the Fry Sight Words, the miscues for the first grade word list were ten during the first week, five during the second week and then two during the third week. The second grade sight word list miscues were 15 for the fourth week, eight during the fifth week and then four during the sixth week.

I think that the assessment that showed the clearest picture of her growth was Garfield’s Reading Attitude Survey. During the pre-test, her full-scale percentile rank was only 53.7%. After six weeks of working with her, her full-scale percentile rank jumped to an 85%. The only place that she gave a one for an indication was for reading in front of the class.
TABLE 5

This T-Test is for two dependent means. They were the Pre and Post test done on the miscues from the readings of Pocahontas.

**T-Test Analysis Results for Miscues Pre-Test and Post-Test**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Source</th>
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Note: Significant when p<=.01

**T-Test for 2 Dependent Means**

The second null hypothesis that was challenged was “There is no significant difference between the times spent with an adult to improve a child’s reading ability. The mean of the Pre-Test was 3.30 while the mean of the Post-Test was 1.34. The Mean D, or difference between the two groups, was 1.96. The t-test result was -10.42 and the df was 22. This null hypothesis was rejected because the p-value, 1E-5, is lower than the alpha level, 0.25. This shows that time spent with an adult will help improve a child’s reading ability.
TABLE 6

This T-Test is for two dependent means. They were the Pre and Post test done on the complaints from the readings of Pocahontas.

**t-Test Analysis Results for Complaints Pre-Test and Post-Test**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>t-test</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Post-Test</td>
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<td>-3.73</td>
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<td>5.82E-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Significant when p<=

**T-Test for 2 Dependent Means**

The first null hypothesis that was challenged was “There is no significant difference between the times spent with an adult changing a child’s view of him/herself as a reader. The mean of the Pre-Test was .609 while the mean of the Post-Test was 0. The Mean D, or difference between the two groups, was .609. The t-test result was -3.73 and the df was 22. This null hypothesis was rejected because the p-value, 5.82E-4, is lower than the alpha level, 0.25. This shows that time spent with an adult will help improve a child’s view of him/herself as a reader.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between the times spent with an adult changing a child’s view of him/herself as a reader. The second null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between the times spent with an adult to improve a child’s reading ability. However, the study reveals just the opposite. Not only did Rachel excel in minimizing her miscues in her readings of “Pocahontas” and improve in her word lists, she also changed the view she had of herself as a reader, which is a high indicator that her self-esteem has improved immensely.

Many children act up as the class clown as a result of low self-esteem or simply give up because they feel that they are a failure in school. Because of the findings from this study, another study that can be completed would be to see if behavior problems could be minimized if there would be times spent with an adult, not only to improve the student’s reading ability but also his/her behavior in classrooms.

The conceptual underpinning of Theodore S. Kaniuka’s is that self-esteem influences achievement. This concept is supported by the findings of this study. This study shows the improvement made in both fewer miscues and fewer complaints made while working with an adult. The support given to this student was the correlation between academic success and academic failure.

The highest implication for both teaching and learning is to make sure that there is a nurturing atmosphere for children to thrive in. In such a short time, Rachel’s view of herself as a reader changed because she was shown that she was important and that she
mattered. Teachers cannot give that one on one time to each individual, but not all children grow up in a nurturing environment. As a teacher sees that there is a need for one of their students to be shown that they matter, then there needs to be an effort made to give of their own time or set some tutoring time up for that individual student to be paired up with another adult who has a lot of patience and caring.
References


