

The Effect of Independent Reading at Home  
on Reading Comprehension Scores of Fifth Graders

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the correlation of independent reading time at home on the level of reading comprehension of fifth grade students. The measurement tool used was the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment system. Time spent reading at home was collected via a reading log, signed by parents for validity. This study utilized a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design. Independent reading time was not significantly correlated to reading comprehension. Research on the relationship of independent reading time at home on reading comprehension should continue due to the importance of reading on future academic success.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

An important question in education is how to improve reading skills and comprehension in order to close the achievement gap. Students need to develop strong, fundamental reading skills in elementary school to set the groundwork for future success in all academic areas so they can become productive and contributing citizens. It is essential to help struggling students close academic literacy gaps in elementary school, before they begin to tackle more complex materials later on in middle school, high school, and beyond. In order to help struggling students make the reading gains they need, it is important to consider and study their reading habits outside of school.

Children's reading comprehension develops due to a wide range of direct and indirect factors. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a division of the U.S. Department of Education, children who are read to at home enjoy a substantial advantage over children who are not (NEA, 2016). Emergent literacy, including oral language skills such as vocabulary and word knowledge along with decoding skills, play a key role in children becoming successful readers in later school years (Katzir, Lesaux, & Kim, 2009). Reading at home allows for extra time for students to reinforce their newly learned skills from school. Children who are exposed to a variety of vocabulary during home literacy activities have greater vocabulary skills than children who are not. When reading books independently or with parents, children are exposed to more complex and diverse vocabulary that is often used or observed during routine based activities such as mealtime and playtime. However, some students read at home more than others. Home literacy practices play a large role in how often students engage in reading at home. By studying the correlation between at home reading and comprehension

scores, we can begin to dive deeper into home literacy practices, and identify ways to better support children and their reading practices at home.

### **Statement of Problem**

The purpose of the study is to investigate how independent reading time at home correlates with fifth grader's comprehension of grade level texts. By studying the amount of reading time at home, it will help educators have a better understanding of home literacy environments. This will enable teachers to better support families with strategies and tools to be used at home in order to promote more reading among students, and thus help to close the achievement gap.

### **Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis was the focus of this study.: There is no relationship between the amount of time students read at home and the reading level of fifth grade students. Reading time was measured through a log. Reading achievement was measured through the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System).

### **Operational Definitions**

*Student assessment scores are the dependent variable as measured by the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment. The independent variable is time spent reading at home. To decipher the effects of time spent reading at home on reading comprehension in fifth grade students, this study examines how much time students' spend reading at home through a weekly reading log. The reading log details how much time students spend reading at home per week, and requires parents to confirm this time to ensure accuracy and honesty.*



## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **Overview**

The purpose of this literature review is to examine how independent reading practices affect 5th grade students' grade level comprehension. The first section discusses reading comprehension. Section two discusses the importance of independent reading. Section three examines home literacy practices, and how they affect student success. The fourth section reviews best practices for implementing at home reading programs. The concomitant research explores how time spent reading at home correlates with students' reading performance.

#### **Reading Comprehension**

Reading is an important language skill whose main purpose is comprehension. It requires a combination of cognitive and linguistic skills that are all applied at the same time. Other key factors that influence comprehension are psychological perceptions of ability, as well as environmental influences; both home and school literacy environments (Katzir, et al., 2009).

Reading fluency is a key contributor to reading comprehension. In a study on the effects of independent reading on oral reading fluency and comprehension, Seago-Tufaro (2002) found that, in a wide range of children, difficulty reading is due to a lack of fluency. She explains fluency as reading smoothly without hesitation, and with accuracy. The ability to recognize words automatically is an important prerequisite to comprehension because it allows the student to decode and comprehend the text simultaneously, thus reducing memory load and the effort required for reading. If part of a reader's attention is diverted away from comprehension due to word recognition, the result will be limited comprehension. Students can improve their fluency by practicing various fluency strategies. Examples of fluency strategies include reading orally to

a peer or an adult, repeated readings, peer tutoring, readers theatre, and demonstration and modeling. The more students read, the more fluid and natural their reading becomes. When children read aloud to siblings, parents, and stuffed animals, or practice reading in any general form, they are strengthening their reading fluency. By working to improve fluency, a child's comprehension will also likely improve.

In order to achieve effective comprehension, readers must draw on their well-developed vocabulary and background knowledge, as well as personal experiences. Readers acquire rich vocabularies and background knowledge through the diverse books they read. When students read a wide range of texts, they are exposed to new settings, experiences, and concepts. If students read a variety of books at home, then they are exposed to new words and ideas.

### **Independent Reading**

Voluminous reading is critical to the development of reading proficiency (Allington, 2014; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). A proficient reader is one that has phonemic awareness, strong fluency, rich vocabulary, and good text comprehension. However, children must spend time reading independently in order to become a proficient reader, and not just rely on reading during classroom instruction. According to Reutzel and Juth (2014), "Time spent reading, including reading silently, has consistently correlated strongly with reading achievement" (p. 29).

Block and Mangieri (2002) found that students who engage in recreational literacy activities during school hours read books outside of school more frequently. They went on to explain how even with only 15 minutes of in-school independent reading per day, students significantly increased their reading performance, with average and below-average readers experiencing the greatest gains. A previous study showed that students who spent more time in

recreational reading activities, scored higher on comprehension tests in grades 2, 4, 8 and 12. They also achieved significantly higher grade point averages.

In summary, the studies mentioned above show that independent reading, built into the school day, aids the development of specific skills and habits that contribute to students' overall reading achievement and attitudes toward reading. So, it is plausible to think that additional time spent reading at home positively impacts comprehension scores.

### **Home Literacy Practices**

“Parents and the home literacy environments they establish, have a direct impact on children’s acquisition of print awareness, vocabulary, reading comprehension and spelling before they enter schooling environments” (Bingham et al., 2017, p. 2). According to Puglisi, Hulme, Hamilton, and Snowling (2017), a home literacy environment refers to the activities undertaken by family members at home that relate to literacy learning. These practices come in two forms; formal and informal. Formal literacy practices refer to activities that adults directly teach or that promote reading skills. Informal literacy practices refer to activities in which parents read to their children or direct attention to texts like advertisements or to street names. “Informal literacy practices appear to be more closely associated with the development of broad oral language skills, including vocabulary knowledge and thus indirectly with reading comprehension later in development” ( p. 498).

It is plausible to think that home literacy practices affect a child’s comprehension level. In a study on 4th grade reading comprehension, findings indicate that early literacy skills, like phonological processing and letter knowledge, and positive attitudes towards reading are influenced by both home and school practices (Katzir et al., 2009). Parents play a huge role in their child’s reading practices based upon their own attitudes and practices in the home setting.

For example, parents identification of pleasure reading predicted their own child's motivation for reading. If a parent enjoys reading, they may promote and model reading as an enjoyable and valuable activity for recreation. If a parent perceives reading in a negative way, it is possible the negative attitudes influence their children to perceive reading in a similar way. The ecological theory of human development was a useful framework used in the study. The theory focuses on the interaction among individual and contextual influences on development. Home practices affect a child's reading self-concept, which in turn may affect reading comprehension. This is cause for additional research into the following questions. Is it reasonable to think that some parents promote reading at home while others do not? Do children whose parents require them to read more score higher in comprehension than the children who are not required to read at home? If a student is not required to read at home, do they choose to read anyway because they enjoy it? Parents attitudes and practices with reading may influence their children's attitudes and frequency of reading.

In addition to parental attitudes toward reading, socioeconomic status (SES) is predictive of reading achievement for children 8-10 years old (Katzir et al., 2009). Factors such as income, education, occupation, and parental characteristics all play a vital role in home literacy environments. A study by Wing-Yin Chow Suk-Han-Ho, Wong, Waye, & Zheng (2017), found that SES and home literacy environments contributed significantly to general language and reading. Senechal and LeFevre (2014) found that story reading is related to vocabulary and comprehension skills. Reading materials at home also influence a child's ability to read at home. If the child comes from a family with a low socioeconomic status, it is possible that there are no books available at home to read. Students with access to a collection of quality books in their classrooms read 50-60% more than students who don't (Neuman, 1999; Capatano, Fleming, &

Elias, 2009). When bookshelves are well stocked, interest and motivation for reading is generated. Children are also given the opportunity to practice necessary skills requisite to proficient reading. If students lack access to books, they are not afforded those same opportunities to develop reading skills. Allington (2014) states that children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds have severely limited access to print material outside of school. If a child has no access to books or lacks a comfortable, quiet reading area, time spent reading outside of school is impacted. This in turn impacts skill development, especially compared to others that have access to resources and areas to read. Thus, reading comprehension is likely negatively impacted as well.

By fourth and fifth grade, children are expected to read across a variety of texts and settings, and the demands are greater than in the younger grades (Katzir et al., 2009). However, the skills addressed in early years impact readers abilities later on. Kim (2009) states that emergent literacy, including oral language skills and decoding skills in early years, play a key role in children becoming successful readers later in their school years. “Although good reading instruction is essential, another important influence on children’s literacy ability is their home literacy environment” (Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans, 2016, p.6 ). Children exposed to a variety of vocabulary during home literacy activities develop vocabulary skills at a higher level. In addition, children engaged in home literacy activities get more practice in decoding and expand their literary knowledge. Since vocabulary and decoding skills are important precursors for later reading skills, it is hypothesized that home literacy activities influence reading comprehension as well.

“Further, because parents vary considerably in the manner in which they promote these experiences in their homes, researchers should consider the complex ways in which

parenting processes may contribute to how they share language and literacy experiences with their children and how such experiences relate to children's academic outcomes"

(Bingham, Jeon, Kwon, & Lim, 2017, p. 2).

It is important to consider what the home literacy environment is like when evaluating how it impacts comprehension.

### **Promoting Reading at Home**

In an effort to increase independent reading and thus affect reading achievement, many efforts are initiated to develop positive reading habits among children (Harlaar, Deater-Deckard, Thompson, DeThorne, & Petrill, 2011). One of a teacher's most important responsibilities is to inspire students to become lifelong learners with a desire to read. Teachers cannot assume that parents help create positive attitudes toward reading, nor that parents provide materials or meaningful opportunities for children to read at home. Therefore, teachers need to support their students with materials and programs that intrinsically and extrinsically motivate students to read outside of school. The ultimate goal of these programs is to help students develop their vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension through out-of-class reading. (Lipp, 2018)

One way for teachers to promote reading outside of school is to provide students with classroom libraries where they can borrow books to take home and read. Since poverty and SES affects home environments, the library affords opportunities to access and read materials they can enjoy at home rather than at school.

Another way teachers can promote reading outside of school is to offer incentives for time spent reading. Goal creation is a strategy that intrinsically motivates students. Food coupons or rewards are examples of extrinsic motivators. It is the role of the teacher to build motivation within their students to read.

School reading programs are a great way to unite the classroom, school, families, and the entire community. Schools often hold parent nights where information is communicated to parents about reading expectations, and ways to help at home. At parent events, parents are provided the tools to set up home libraries and taught strategies to use with their children. Efforts by teachers are needed in order to make independent reading a priority outside of school.

### **Conclusion**

Children must engage in independent reading on a regular basis if they are to become competent, lifelong readers. Various studies report a link between reading at home and reading comprehension. Time spent reading at home likely improves comprehension scores.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS**

The purpose of the study is to investigate how independent reading time at home correlates with fifth grader's comprehension of grade level texts. Reading comprehension was measured by their performance on the Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmark assessment system 2 (Fountas & Pinnell, 2016). Independent reading time was measured using a weekly reading log, signed by parents to ensure accuracy.

#### **Design**

This study used a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design to determine the relationship between independent reading at home and comprehension level in fifth grade students. A convenient sampling method was used since all the students were in the same reading class. The study did not determine a causal relationship between the independent variable (independent reading time at home) and the dependent variable (comprehension level), but rather attempted to find a correlation between the two.

#### **Participants**

Subjects selected for this study were fifth-grade students from an elementary school in Davidsonville, Maryland. This sample was selected based on the convenience method as the researcher used all students in her reading class in 2018-2019. Twenty-six students participated; 14 females and 12 males, ages ten and eleven. Of the students, one had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and two students had 504 plans. The sample consisted of 23 Caucasian students, 1 African American student, 1 Asian student, and 1 Hispanic student. In this sample, 19 of the students were exceeding grade level reading expectations and 7 students were not meeting grade level reading expectations at the start of the study.



## **Instrument**

Fountas and Pinnell's (F&P) Benchmark Assessment System 2 (2016) provides materials and procedures for assessing the reading levels and behaviors of students in grades 3-8. The F&P level gradient represents 26 points on a gradient of reading difficulty. The points on the gradient move from the easiest level, A, to the most challenging level, Z. There are small significant increases in difficulty over the previous level as the letters advance.

The assessment system includes two books at each letter level; one fiction and one nonfiction. These level books help to identify the students independent, instructional, and hard level of books. The instructional text is the one that is more complex to read independently, but one where students can read with instruction and support of teaching. The instructional level allows you to find the edge of their current understanding, and then reach and go beyond it. Instructional reading levels were used in this study.

To determine a child's instructional reading level, a comprehension scoring key is used to score three categories of understanding; Within the text, beyond the text, and about the text. When scoring, there is a column of prompts to help elicit understandings. Using a rubric, overall judgment is used based on evidence to determine whether a student demonstrated that comprehension level. The child receives a comprehension score based on nine points, which will determine if they are proficient, approaching proficiency, limited proficient, or not proficient at that level book. A child's reading level either meets, does not meet, or exceeds grade level expectations. For fifth grade, reading levels T, U, and V are considered meeting expectations.

The books that are part of the F&P Benchmark System have been written, edited, and extensively field tested to ensure they reflect the characteristics of texts and demands on the reader at each specific Fountas and Pinnell level. Reliability and validity for the Fountas and

Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessment system 2 (2016) was completed through the publishing company's work with students in grades K- 5, from 22 different schools. The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessment is a mandated reading assessment in Anne Arundel County Public Schools due to the validity and reliability of the program.

Instructional reading time was measured weekly for the students through a weekly reading log created by the teacher. The form included each of the seven days of the week that it was assigned, each with a space for students to record their minutes read for that day. In addition, it included a space for students to record the title of the text that they read, as well as an area for parents to verify the time their child spent reading.

### **Procedure**

A pre-test was administered using the Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmark assessment system 2 (Fountas & Pinnell, 2016) to determine the starting reading level of each student.

Students were given weekly reading logs to keep track of any time spent reading at home. Students were not given a specific amount of time to read, and were instructed to keep track of any amount of time at home, even if they did not choose to read. Students record their time spent reading in minutes, and record a zero if they did not read on any given day. Parents were required to sign off for each day to ensure accuracy and honesty among the students. The results of these time logs were averaged to determine how many minutes they read weekly, and compared to the reading comprehension level of the student, as determined through the assessment system.

After collecting several months of reading logs, all students were reassessed to see if their reading level increased using the F&P BAS 2 kit. Data collected in the form of reading logs to

measure the time students spent reading at home was then analyzed with post assessment results from the Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmark assessment system 2 that measured comprehension level. Descriptive statistics and correlations were used to compare the independent and dependent variables.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

The purpose of the study is to investigate how independent reading time at home correlates with fifth grader's comprehension of grade level texts. The independent variable, amount of time spent reading at home, was administered and assessed through reading logs. The dependent variable was student's instructional F&P level. At the conclusion of this study, the results showed that none of the correlations were significant except that the reading level increase had a significantly negative correlation with time for the students who exceeded on their pretest.

The following pages present research findings of this study.

Figure 1 shows the Fountas and Pinnell reading level gradient for various grade levels (Fountas & Pinnell, 2016). These levels determine whether a student is not meeting, meeting, or exceeding reading level expectations. A student meeting reading expectations for fifth grade should be reading at a level of T, U, or V.

**Figure 1**

**Fountas and Pinnell Text Level Gradient**

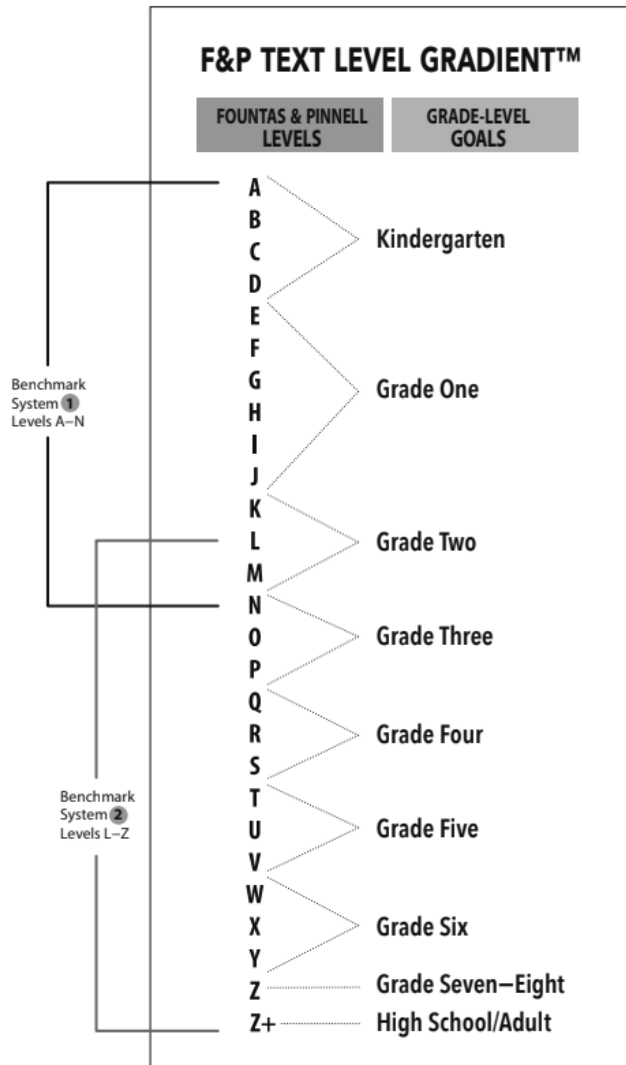


Figure 2 shows the comprehension scoring rubric that was used to administer the pre and post-test. The student’s comprehension score is used to determine their instructional reading level.

**Figure 2**

**Fountas and Pinnell Comprehension Scoring Rubric**

Score	Within the Text	Beyond the Text	About the Text
<b>3 Proficient</b>	<p><b>For Fiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levels L-N: Communicates most of the important events in the story, including the problem, solution, and characters.</li> <li>Levels O-Z: Communicates the important ideas and events in the form of a well-organized summary that includes the key story elements (setting, characters, problem, resolution).</li> </ul> <p><b>For Nonfiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levels L-N: Communicates most of the important ideas and information explicitly stated in the text, including steps in a process or events in order when appropriate.</li> <li>Levels O-Z: Communicates the important ideas and information explicitly stated in the text in the form of a well-organized summary.</li> </ul> <p><i>No teaching is needed to help the student think within the text at this level.</i></p>	<p><b>For Fiction and Nonfiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently makes inferences about meaning based on the text and illustrations (including setting, characters, themes, writer’s purpose), and provides evidence.</li> <li>Demonstrates clear understanding of the deeper messages of the text.</li> <li>Consistently makes connections between the content and personal experiences or other texts.</li> </ul> <p><i>No teaching is needed to help the student think beyond the text at this level.</i></p>	<p><b>For Fiction and Nonfiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies the genre of the text by noting many of the characteristics of the genre as they appear in the book.</li> <li>Demonstrates the ability to think analytically about the text by using academic language to describe many of its significant features (structure or organization, craft elements as appropriate, graphics).</li> <li>States an opinion about aspects of the text (e.g., writer’s craft) and justifies it with evidence from the text.</li> </ul> <p><i>No teaching is needed to help the student think about the text at this level.</i></p>
<b>2 Approaching Proficiency</b>	<p><b>For Fiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levels L-N: Communicates many of the important events in the story, including the problem, solution, and characters.</li> <li>Levels O-Z: Communicates most of the important ideas and events in the form of a well-organized summary that includes most of the key story elements (setting, characters, problem, resolution).</li> </ul> <p><b>For Nonfiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levels L-N: Communicates many of the important ideas and information explicitly stated in the text, including steps in a process or events in order when appropriate.</li> <li>Levels O-Z: Communicates most of the important ideas and information explicitly stated in the text in the form of a well-organized summary.</li> </ul> <p><i>Some teaching is needed to help the student think within the text at this level.</i></p>	<p><b>For Fiction and Nonfiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often makes inferences about meaning based on the text and illustrations (including setting, characters, themes, writer’s purpose), and provides evidence.</li> <li>Demonstrates satisfactory understanding of most of the deeper messages of the text.</li> <li>Makes some connections between the content and personal experiences or other texts.</li> </ul> <p><i>Some teaching is needed to help the student think beyond the text at this level.</i></p>	<p><b>For Fiction and Nonfiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies the genre of the text by noting some of the characteristics of the genre as they appear in the book.</li> <li>Demonstrates the ability to think analytically about the text by using academic language to describe some of its significant features (structure or organization, craft elements as appropriate, graphics).</li> <li>States an opinion about aspects of the text (e.g., writer’s craft) that is partially justified with evidence from the text.</li> </ul> <p><i>Some teaching is needed to help the student think about the text at this level.</i></p>
<b>1 Limited Proficiency</b>	<p><b>For Fiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levels L-N: Communicates a few of the important events in the story, including the problem, solution, and characters.</li> <li>Levels O-Z: Communicates some of the important ideas and events including some of the key story elements (setting, characters, problem, resolution), but does not provide a well-organized summary.</li> </ul> <p><b>For Nonfiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levels L-N: Communicates a few of the important ideas and information explicitly stated in the text, including steps in a process or events in order when appropriate.</li> <li>Levels O-Z: Communicates some of the important ideas and information explicitly stated in the text, but does not provide a well-organized summary (or provides a list of information, mentioning some essential facts but leaving out others).</li> </ul> <p><i>Intensive teaching is needed to help the student think within the text at this level. Teaching will be successful only if accuracy meets the criterion and the scores for thinking beyond and about the text total at least 3.</i></p>	<p><b>For Fiction and Nonfiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes some inferences about meaning based on the text and illustrations (including setting, characters, themes, writer’s purpose), and provides some evidence.</li> <li>Demonstrates limited understanding of some of the deeper messages of the text.</li> <li>Makes a few connections between the content and personal experiences or other texts.</li> </ul> <p><i>Intensive teaching is needed to help the student think beyond the text at this level. Teaching will be successful only if accuracy meets the criterion and the scores for thinking within and about the text total at least 3.</i></p>	<p><b>For Fiction and Nonfiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies the genre of the text, but does not note any of the characteristics of the genre as they appear in the book.</li> <li>Demonstrates the ability to think analytically about the text by using academic language to describe one of its significant features (structure or organization, craft elements as appropriate, graphics).</li> <li>States an opinion about aspects of the text (e.g., writer’s craft) but does not justify it with evidence from the text.</li> </ul> <p><i>Intensive teaching is needed to help the student think about the text at this level. Teaching will be successful only if accuracy meets the criterion and the scores for thinking within and beyond the text total at least 3.</i></p>
<b>0 Not Proficient</b>	<p><b>For Fiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levels L-N: Does not communicate the important events in the story.</li> <li>Levels O-Z: Does not communicate the important ideas or events in an organized way (or provides a retelling with many unimportant details) leaving out most of the key story elements (setting, characters, problem, resolution).</li> </ul> <p><b>For Nonfiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levels L-N: Does not communicate the important ideas and information explicitly stated in the text.</li> <li>Levels O-Z: Does not communicate the important ideas or information explicitly stated in the text in an organized way. (There may be a lot of talk and repetition.)</li> </ul> <p><i>Teaching will be successful only if accuracy meets the criterion and the scores for thinking beyond and about the text total at least 4.</i></p>	<p><b>For Fiction and Nonfiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not make inferences about meaning based on the text and illustrations.</li> <li>Unable to demonstrate understanding of the deeper messages of the text.</li> <li>Does not make connections between the content and personal experiences or other texts.</li> </ul> <p><i>Teaching will be successful only if accuracy meets the criterion and the scores for thinking within and about the text total at least 4.</i></p>	<p><b>For Fiction and Nonfiction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not identify the genre of the text or note any of the characteristics of the genre as they appear in the book.</li> <li>Does not demonstrate the ability to think analytically about the text.</li> <li>Does not state an opinion about aspects of the text (e.g., writer’s craft).</li> </ul> <p><i>Teaching will be successful only if accuracy meets the criterion and the scores for thinking within and beyond the text total at least 4.</i></p>

Figure 3 below shows the percentage of students' and the amount of reading levels they increased. The x axis shows the number of reading levels increased. The y axis shows the percentage of students that increased for the amount of levels. According to this figure, 58.85% of students increased one level, 30.77% of students increased two levels, 11.54% of students increased three levels, and 3.85% of students increased four levels.

**Figure 3:**

**Percentage of Students by Reading Level Increases**

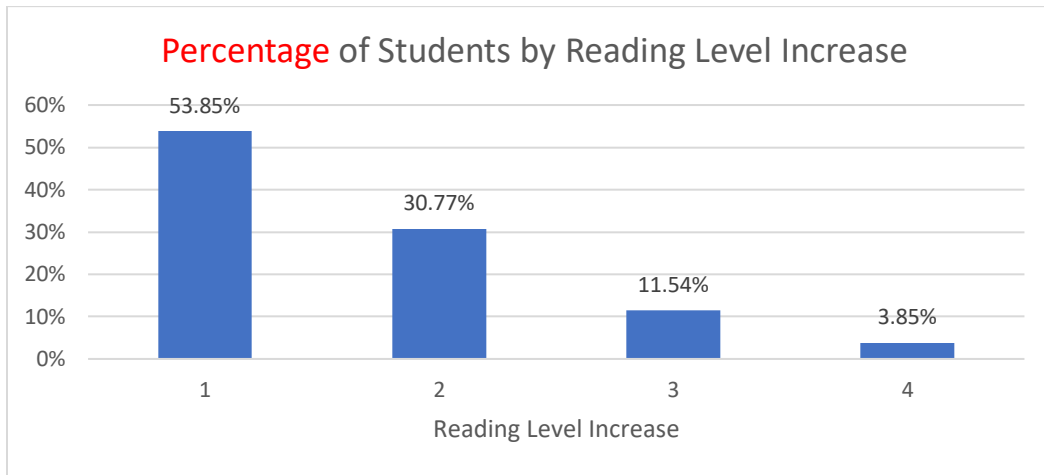


Figure 4 shows the number of students that increased for each level. The x axis shows the number of reading level increases, and the y axis shows the number of students.

**Figure 4**

**Frequency of Students and Reading Level Increase**

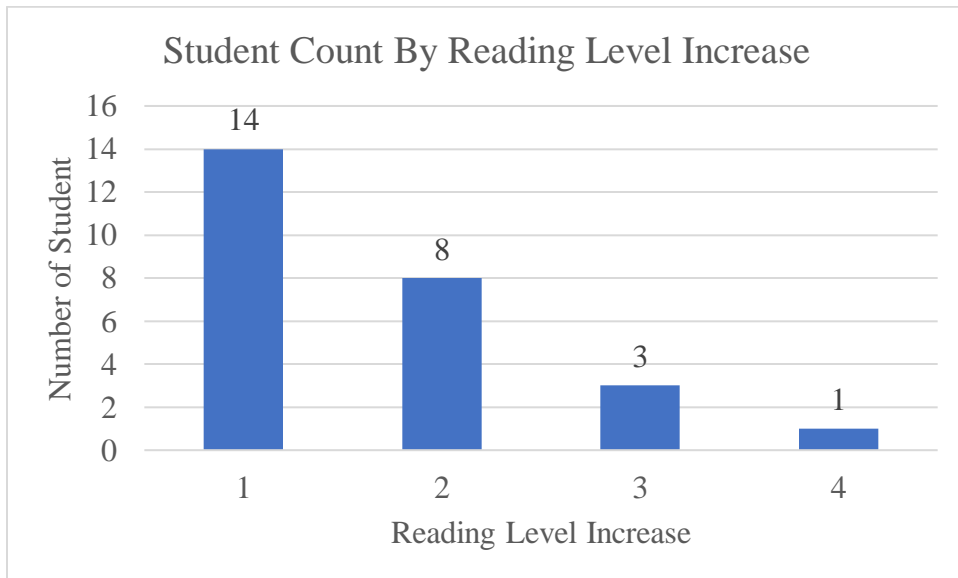




Figure 5 shows the average time students spent reading at home. The x axis shows the average amount of time spent reading in minutes, and the y axis shows the number of students.

**Figure 5**

**Average Number of Minutes Read at Home**

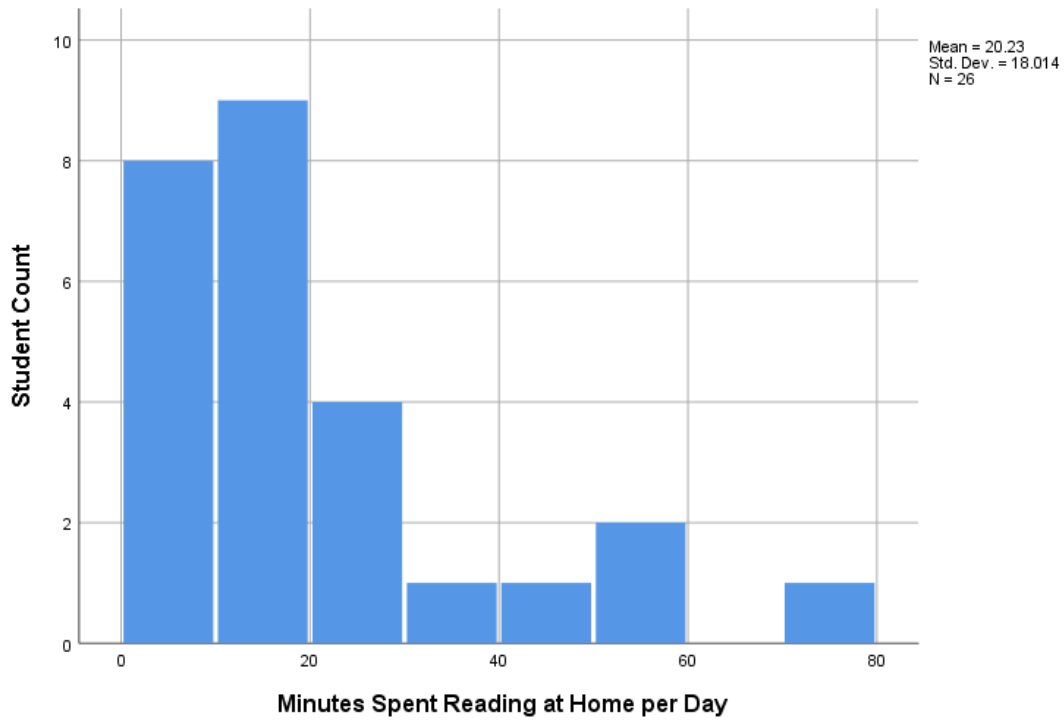


Table 1 shows two different correlations. First, the correlations between reading level increase and time spent reading at home. Second, the correlations between comprehension increase and time spent reading at home. For students that were exceeding their reading level for their pretest, their comprehension and time spent reading at home has an insignificantly positive correlation. However, their reading level vs. amount of time spent reading at home has a significantly negative correlation. For students who did not meet reading level for the pretest, the reading level increase and time has an insignificantly positive correlation while the comprehension increase had no correlation with time. Column D in Table 1 shows whether the correlations are significant. The correlation needs to be 0.05 or lower for significance.

**Table 1**  
**Correlations between Reading Level Increase and Time Spent Reading at Home.**  
**Correlations between Comprehension Increase and Time Spent Reading at Home**

Pretest Performance Level		Correlation Coefficient	P Value	N
Exceed	Reading level increase vs. time spent reading at home	-0.456*	0.050	19
	Comprehension level increase vs. time spent reading at home	0.365	0.374	8
Not Met	Reading level increase vs. time spent reading at home	0.567	0.184	7
	Comprehension level increase vs. time spent reading at home	-0.019	0.968	7

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to examine if time spent reading at home correlates to fifth grade reading achievement as measured on the Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmark assessment system. The correlation of  $-0.019$  for time spent reading at home and comprehension increase for the students who did not meet during the pretest were not statistically significant, so the null hypothesis was supported. Additionally, the correlation of  $0.365$  for time spent reading at home and comprehension increase for the students who exceeded the pretest showed an insignificantly positive correlation. Since the p value is not  $.05$  or lower, it is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was supported for those students as well.

Positive correlation between time spent reading at home and reading level increase was identified only for the students who did not meet reading expectations in their pretest. However, the correlation was not significant. It was also found that that reading level increase had a significantly negative correlation with time spent reading at home for the students who exceeded their pretest.

#### **Implication of Results**

When reviewing the results of the study, there was no significant evidence to suggest that time spent reading at home had a correlation with improved reading comprehension in fifth graders. However, after reviewing the results of the study and through the analysis of data, the researcher noted a significant negative correlation of  $.456$  between reading level increase and time spent reading at home for students that exceeded the pretest. One reason for the negative correlation could be the AACPS F&P ceiling rule. When a student who is already exceeding a reading level is tested during the F&P window, the test administrator is limited in how many

reading levels to continue testing the reader. If a student is already exceeding, only one book level is used during testing in order to show that the student is continually making progress. Therefore, it does not give an accurate account of how many reading levels they actually increased. So, even though their time spent reading at home may be high, those students were only given the opportunity to advance one reading level.

### **Theoretical Consequences**

No significant impact of reading time spent at home on comprehension was found through this study.

### **Threats to Validity**

This study contained some internal and external threats to validity. One possible threat to external validity was the sample size. This study only included 26 students. A larger group of students would have provided a broader range of results and an increased likelihood of finding statistically significant correlations. In addition to this, the treatment time was short and does not give an accurate account of what reading time is like for the child during an entire school year. Students may have increased the time spent reading at home simply due to the required reading log for the time period of the study.

Another threat to external validity would be the child's home literacy practices. Some children have parents that promote reading at home, and other parents do not. This could be due to a wide range of factors, including the education level of the parents, socio-economic status, the parent's work schedule, and simply the parent's own beliefs and interests regarding reading.

A threat to internal validity was the number of students who either had an Individualized Education Program or a 504. These students had many other variables that impacted their

reading growth as well as the time they spend reading at home.

Another threat to internal validity was the F&P assessment ceiling rule, which limited the amount of level increases for students who were already exceeding on the pretest. Since most of the participants were exceeding on their pretest, only one book was allowed to be administered in the post test. This resulted in a significantly negative correlation of .456 between reading levels and time, due to the limit on how many levels the student could continue reading. If there was not a level ceiling required by the county, the reading level of increase would be more accurate data.

### **Connections to Previous Studies/Existing Literature**

This study focused on time spent independently reading at home and comprehension increase. A previous study by Senechal and LeFevre (2014) studied story reading, and found that it is related to vocabulary and comprehension skills. However, this study's focus was on independent reading at home, unlike Senechal and LeFevre, whose study focused on reading done at school. Block and Mangieri (2002) found in their study that students who engage in recreational literacy activities during school hours, read books outside of school more frequently. Their study found that with only 15 minutes of in-school independent reading per day, students significantly increased their reading performance. However, analysis of data and reflection from the researcher after this study leads to questions about home literacy practices. According to a study by Wing-Yin Chow et al.,(2017), found that SES and home literacy environments contributed significantly to general language and reading. The reading environment at home is different than the environment at school which makes it difficult to compare these two studies.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Due to the results of this study, it is recommended that future researchers extend this study to go through the course of an entire school year. In addition, a larger sample size, perhaps of an entire 5<sup>th</sup> grade, would potentially provide statistically significant results. In addition, removing the testing ceiling would provide more accurate results for students who exceeded their pretest. By assessing for at the middle of the school year and again at the end of the school year, it would help show if there was any significant correlation that exists between time spent reading at home and reading achievement over the course of an entire year.

Future research can be done on home literacy practices. Children's time spent reading at home can be impacted by their home literacy environments. It would be helpful to survey parents about their perceptions about reading, as well as their practices at home. However, some parents may be hesitant to admit their practices for fear they would look bad or that they might affect the success of their child.

### **Conclusion**

This study did not provide significant statistical evidence that time spent reading at home and 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading improvement are correlated. Further research on home literacy practices is required in order to better support this research question.

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