

The Effects of Repeated Reading on Struggling Third Grade Readers Reading Comprehension

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the strategy of *repeated reading* on the reading comprehension of struggling third grade students. This study was quasi-experimental with a pre-test and post-test comparing the comprehension scores of the experimental group to the control group of third grade students. Students were randomly chosen based on their small group instructional groups, and their Fountas and Pinnell comprehension score. Both groups used the same materials in small group and whole group instruction. The experimental group consisted of 13 students who were guided in small group instruction using the repeated reading strategy over the course of eight weeks. The control group of 12 students did not receive additional instruction. Comparison of the pre-test and the post-test scores showed no significant difference to suggest that repeated reading is a strategy that would increase reading comprehension among struggling third grade readers. Although the scores did not show significant differences, observations of the experimental group and research suggest that teaching students through the repeated reading strategy can be beneficial to student motivation in reading.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Successful readers set a purpose for reading and use a variety of strategies before, during, and after they read in order to set a purpose for reading. They plan their reading to meet specific goals, and plan ahead to monitor and evaluate their reading. Successful readers use cognitive strategies such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. These cognitive skills are necessary for reading development. Successful readers also use metacognitive skills such as setting goals and using strategies to self-monitor and achieve their goals. Students need to be engaged and motivated to improve their reading comprehension as well (Affleback, Cho, Kim, Crassas & Doyle, 2013).

In order to be competent readers, students need to practice reading words in a meaningful context. Repeated reading is an evidenced-based strategy that allows students to read a meaningful passage repeatedly until a satisfactory level of fluency is reached. Through this strategy, students read a set numbers of times through one-to-one instruction, tutors, peer guidance, and other means. This strategy has been found to not only increase reading fluency, but also comprehension. (Oddo, Barnett, Hawkins & Musti-Rao, 2010). The fluency that students achieve is the ability to read smoothly. Students are able to read the passage in fluid sentences. While using this strategy, students may read aloud to a partner, the teacher, or themselves, but they can also read the passage silently a number of times to themselves, or along with an automated passage. This allows students more exposure to the text, therefore allowing students more time to comprehend the text.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of repeated reading on third graders struggling with reading comprehension.

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis is that there is no difference in the reading fluency and comprehension of students participating in repeated reading compared to similar students who receive only regular classroom instruction in reading.

Operational Definitions

The independent variable in this eight-week study was the strategy of *repeated reading*. Repeated reading is a strategy in which students are required to read a given passage numerous times in order to gain fluency and comprehension of what has been read. The fluency that students achieve through this strategy is the ability to read without stopping in the middle of sentences, or stopping to sound out words. They are able to read in complete sentences as if they were talking. The comprehension that students gain through this strategy is the ability to fully understand what was being read. Students are able to fully answer questions related to the text without difficulty.

Both groups of students were given the same materials to read throughout the program. Students participating as repeated readers were asked to read the passages with the teacher, to read with a partner, to read with the computer as the computer read to them, or to read the material a set number of times before answering the comprehension questions.

The dependent variable in this study is the *reading comprehension* of students assessed through the Fountas and Pinnell (2011) reading comprehension toolkit. The struggling readers in this study are the students who are tested with the Fountas and Pinnell reading comprehension

toolkit as reading below-grade level. The toolkit has a book for each reading level and comprehension questions that accompany the text. Students are assessed on their fluency and comprehension using the assessment. Each month of any grade level has a reading level code that accompanies the text. Students are tested as reading below, on, or above grade level based on the Fountas and Pinnell measure.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

This review seeks to explore the impact of repeated reading on third grade reading comprehension levels. Section one provides an overview of the difference between reading fluency and reading comprehension. Section two provides an explanation of different strategies that are often implemented in the classroom to increase students reading comprehension, all relating to the repeated reading strategy. Section three explains the impact of motivation and engagement on student comprehension levels of reading.

Comprehension versus Fluency

Reading instruction is a very important concept to all students and teachers. Research has found that at least 20% of students have significant difficulties with reading acquisition. Also 74% of children who are poor readers in the third grade will remain poor readers into the ninth grade (Therrien & Hughes, 2008). Students in the elementary years are creating and building upon skills that they will use throughout their life. However, due to time constraints in the classroom “reading comprehension is a skill that many children fail to achieve” (Schisler, Joseph, Konrad & Alber-Morgan, 2010, p.135).

When it comes to reading instruction there has been a long debate about reading comprehension and reading fluency. Over the years the common belief has been that “if reading fluently contributes to reading comprehension, then highly fluent readers should be expected to perform well in comprehension when reading materials at their current grade level” (Applegate, Applegate & Modla, 2009, p.514). This belief is a belief that is not true. Many teachers do believe this and for that reason many students comprehend below grade level. It has been studied

that if a student does not read and comprehend at grade level by the third grade, they will consistently perform below grade level throughout their education (Therrien et al., 2008).

Repeated reading has been found to increase comprehension for highly skilled students, where low-skilled students are found to benefit from word-level skills that increase reading rates, not comprehension (O'Connor, White & Swanson, 2007).

While the ability to read fluently is an important skill, there has been “an overemphasis in their schools on the development of oral reading indicators such as rate and accuracy without an accompanying emphasis on comprehension” (Applegate, et al., 2009, p.512). Many studies are proving that there is little correlation between reading comprehension and reading fluency. “Competent reading requires practicing reading words in a meaningful context” (Oddo, et al., 2010, p.842). Readers need to not only read the words fluently, they need to have a purpose and put meaning into what is read. As students read, they need to stop and ask questions; the teacher also needs to stop and ask questions to make the text more meaningful. The text that is chosen also has to be from a variety of genres for students to grow and comprehend on different levels.

It has been proven through multiple studies that reading comprehension and reading fluency are not correlated as being predictors of one another. If a student is a fluent reader, they may not be strong when comprehending what has been read. Many teachers use student fluency to put their students into sub-groups to gauge how well they comprehend the text, but that is not a true indicator. “Although it is a common assumption that reading rate influences comprehension, little evidence exists to support a causal connection” (O'Connor et al., 2007, p.32). For this reason it is seen that students need to also attend to the text to increase their comprehension and fluency rate. Students need to use different strategies in order to correlate

reading comprehension and fluency rate, such as asking and answering questions, predicting and inferring as they read the text.

There are still many theorists that “believe that fluency is a facilitator of comprehension and precedes its development” while others “believe that fluency is the outcome of comprehension” (Applegate et al., 2009, p.513). This is not a proven theory. When it comes to reading instruction, there is “scientifically-based reading instruction which has led many school districts to consider reading development in terms of five dimensions...phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension” (O’Connor et al., 2007, p.31). Fluency and comprehension cannot be taught alone but need to be taught together to be most effective. “Reading rate is important because students who recognize words effortlessly should be able to devote more attention to reading comprehension...motivation for improving reading rate is the possibility that increased rate might enable improved reading comprehension” (O’Connor et al., 2007, p.31).

Metacognitive Strategies to Increase Reading Comprehension

When a student is required to comprehend the text there are many skills that need to be taught first and internalized for the student to be able to do so at grade level. “Comprehending text requires an understanding of vocabulary, recognizing and recalling specific details; and making inferences, drawing conclusions, and predicting outcomes” (Schisler et al., 2010, p.135). A student who is assessed as reading below-grade-level needs to be exposed to the text more than once so they can become familiar with the vocabulary and recall specific details in order to draw conclusions, predict outcomes, and make inferences.

One study found it to be critical for educators to find the most efficient method to increase student achievement (Schisler et al., 2010). This researcher became interested in

repeated reading and the correlation with reading comprehension based on these findings and the reading level of the third grade students participating in the study. Due to research proving that reading comprehension and fluency should not be taught separately, but together, the reading strategy of repeated reading has been shown to increase reading comprehension for the students that used the strategy. Repeated reading is a strategy that is evidence-based and requires students to read a passage a given amount of times until a level of satisfactory fluency has been reached (Oddo et al., 2010). There are many different techniques with this strategy that lend themselves to assist students not only reading to practice fluency and improve upon their fluency rate, but also to practice and improve their comprehension.

There are a number of strategies used for repeated reading: (1) there is the direct instruction approach in which students read with the teacher (2) unassisted, the student silently reads and rereads (3) taped previewing, the student listens to the passage before reading along (4) assisted repeated reading, the student reads aloud with a fluent adult, and lastly (5) peer-mediated, the students read to one another until the fluency criterion is met (Oddo et al., 2010) As students use repeated reading, they become more familiar with the text so when they do answer comprehension questions, the student is prepared having been exposed to the text, and given the opportunity to read facts from the text more than once.

There are many strategies that can be used to help students comprehend text. One strategy that has been researched and studied as being effective is the modeling strategy either with a peer, teacher, parent or tape that models fluent reading also known as reading previewing (Hawkins, Musti-Rao, Hale, McGuire & Hailley, 2010). Using this strategy, students are exposed to a fluent reader and are exposed to the text. They are then able to go back into the text and read

focusing more on the comprehension piece and not focusing on decoding words or spending cognitive energy trying to decode words.

Through this strategy, students are also exposed to the vocabulary in the text and “explicit vocabulary instruction can improve reading comprehension” (Hawkins et al., 2010, p.905). Through the strategy of listening previewing, it was seen as “increasing reading comprehension of targeted material as compared to silent reading. Students answered significantly more factual comprehension questions in listening previewing situations” (Hawkins, et al., 2010, p.904).

The vocabulary in the text also plays a significant role in reading comprehension. One study showed that “Vocabulary acquisition has also been found to be a high predictor of reading comprehension” and that “...students who were behind in vocabulary knowledge in third grade would remain behind throughout the duration of their schooling” (Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill & Joshi, 2007, p.72). When students were given the reading instruction that helped them to not only decodes words but also gave them time to comprehend what was read, their comprehension increased. Using the strategy of repeated reading, students are given the skills necessary to decode words, and the opportunity to then focus on understanding the text using strategies such as summarizing. Students do not comprehend text just by reading more; they also need to apply metacognitive strategies (Boulware-Gooden et al., 2007).

Along with the study of listening previewing, it is seen as being beneficial for poor reader’s comprehension to be enhanced if they read aloud. After listening to the text being read to them, they should then read the text aloud to gain a better understanding of the text. This goes along with repeated reading as the students will repeatedly read aloud to themselves, a partner, or a teacher to gain a better understanding. Reading aloud has been studied as being less beneficial

for younger or less skilled readers because they do not have the decoding skills that are needed when reading and comprehending text. Students are seen as focusing more on the phonological portion as opposed to the comprehension portion.

Other studies have found that students comprehend more after reading orally. Poor readers may benefit more than good readers from hearing themselves read and from the attention needed to read orally. “Students reading proficiency may affect the reading mode that best facilitates comprehension” (Hale, Skinner, Williams, Hawkins, Needenriep, & Dizer, 2007, p.10). When a poor reader reads aloud, they are able to hear the errors they are making and correct themselves. They are then able to focus on the content of the reading instead of the decoding of their reading and comprehending the text.

Another study showed that some students benefit from repeated reading in an independent format. This format allows students to “...obtain computer-generated help when needed” (Rasinski, 1990, p.148). Students still read the text until a predetermined level of fluency is achieved, but they are also able to use the computer to read to them for the listening-while reading portion of the instruction. They are able to gain the instruction of fluent reading, allowing the teacher time to work with other students as repeated reading can be “...labor intensive for teachers as they are called on to provide assistance to individuals experiencing difficulty in initial readings” (Rasinski, 1990, p.149). The students are also able to work at their own pace and it may help in the long term with student interest. This study found that “students may lose interest in and motivation for repetition of previously read material” (Rasinski, 1990, p.149). Using the computer and having teacher instruction will help the students to stay motivated as the readings are read in different contexts and expectations are varied for each situation.

It has been studied that "...successful readers are metacognitive. They plan their reading in relation to specific goals, and they monitor and evaluate their reading as it progresses" (Afflerbach et al., 2013, p.440). The *No Child Left Behind Act* and now, the Common Core, have reinforced the idea that students needed to be cognitive readers and use metacognitive skills to be successful in reading and other subjects in school. These programs teach the "learning of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension" (Afflerbach et al., 2013, p. 441). All of these cognitive strategies are seen as the staple in effective reading programs and lead to metacognitive skills such as setting goals, selecting strategies to use, and monitoring the effectiveness of their reading goals.

Reading Engagement

Readers also need to be motivated as it has been found that "highly engaged readers are both internally motivated and strategic, and less engaged readers show lower motivation and less use of strategies for comprehending text" (Wigfield, Guthrie, Perencevich, Taboada, Klauda, McRae & Barbosa, 2008, p.432). Highly engaged readers use strategies such as summarizing, and are internally motivated to read frequently and at a deeper level. The process of engagement in reading is facilitated in the classroom when practices directly address them by providing instruction in cognitive reading strategies and providing support systems for the motivational process.

The strategy of repeated reading allows students to become engaged in the reading - they are actively participating while reading and understand what is expected of them. As students use this strategy they are expected to self-correct when reading, and stop and decode words so the next read through they can correctly read the passage. Repeated reading is used to increase reading fluency, but has also been found to be effective increasing reading comprehension. Slow

and inefficient word identification creates a bottle-neck and diverts cognitive resources needed for comprehension. When readers are trained in verbal efficiency and text reading accuracy then comprehension will be improved (Vadasy & Sanders, 2008).

One study suggested that reading comprehension was enhanced when students read aloud as opposed to reading silently. It also provided information to support that the theories of reading comprehension was significantly higher under the read aloud conditions (Hale et al., 2007). Under the repeated reading strategies, students would be reading aloud which would help to support this theory and the theory that repeated reading is a strategy that can increase reading comprehension in poor readers.

A reading instruction program that can be used along with the repeated reading strategy is the Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) that motivates, engages, and fosters reading comprehension in students through reading science books. This study found that highly engaged readers were strategic in using comprehension strategies such as “questioning, summarizing, to gain meaning from the text” and provided instruction for cognitive reading strategies that help to support and motivate reading processes (Wigfield et al., 2008, p.433). The thought of using science books as the text when reading goes along with the Common Core curriculum that is taught in the classroom. This is a cross- curricular strategy (Science in a Language Arts class), and allows students to still comprehend the text that is being read. The use of different text is also found to be an engagement component; using different text grabs the reader’s attention as some students prefer different text such as non-fiction compared to fiction. Studies show that highly engaged readers are going to be more motivated to use their reading strategies to help them comprehend the text.

Repeated reading is widely used to increase fluency, the rate and accuracy in oral reading. It has been proven that the practice in “reading connected text (repeated reading)” helps to improve reading comprehension (Vadasy et al., 2008, p.273). Students who perform in the emergent stage of reading are found to benefit the most from repeated reading, they are given the model of a fluent reader and during the rereading of the text are able to make corrections and gain feedback from the teacher when necessary.

Repeated reading is a strategy that allows students the time necessary to decode, and gain a deeper understanding of the text. Students are then able to apply metacognitive strategies to comprehend the text and apply what was read. “Some teachers assume that reading comprehension will develop naturally without any direct teaching of comprehension” however the studies mentioned have found that “reading instruction does not end when students can decode words. They continue to need instruction that will support their understanding of what they are reading. Comprehension is the reason for reading” (Boulware-Gooden et al., 2007, p.70) and repeated reading is a strategy that helps students use their metacognitive strategies to support the understanding of what is read.

Summary

This chapter reviews different studies and different components that are a part of the reading comprehension process. There are five metacognitive strategies that readers use when reading, and it has been found that the instructional strategy of repeated reading can be beneficial to readers comprehending below-grade-level. Not only do readers need to use the metacognitive strategies such as summarizing and questioning the text, readers need to be engaged in the reading. Repeated reading has many different implementation strategies in the classroom and can

be a time consuming process but has been found to increase a student's reading comprehension as well as reading fluency.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of repeated reading on the reading comprehension of third grade students.

Design

The design of this study is quasi-experimental, used to determine whether struggling third grade readers who engaged in repeated reading along with regular classroom instruction over an eight-week period, would demonstrate greater improvement in comprehension compared to similar students who received only regular classroom instruction.

Participants

The participants of the study were selected from a public school in which the researcher is employed. The school serves primarily middle- to upper- middle class, predominantly Caucasian (80%) students in suburban Pasadena. Approximately one in four students is FARMS-eligible.

The participants chosen for this study were students in the researcher's third grade Language Arts class. There were twenty-five students in the class with thirteen students participating as repeated readers (experimental group). The other twelve students in the class were the control group. A small portion of the class is FARMS-eligible. Of the thirteen students in the experimental group eight were boys and five were girls. The majority of students were Caucasian.

The participants in the study varied in reading levels from level J-Q based on assessments included in the Fountas and Pinnell reading comprehension tool kit. The researchers group of students has been classified as reading below, on, and above-grade-level. There is one

student reading on a level J, two students reading on a level L, one student reading on a level M, one student reading on a level N, three students reading on a level O, four students reading on a level P, and one student reading on a level Q (fourth grade level). The students were first put into three different reading groups according to letters of reading level, there was a very below group, below and then an on-level reading group. After students were grouped, they were randomly chosen to be repeated readers or members of the control group. The researcher tried to make it as even as possible with the same amount of students reading at a certain level in either control or repeated reading. For example if there were four students reading on level M, then two would be the control group and two would be in the repeated reading group. All students reading below grade level were tested as reading fluently, but had difficulty retelling or recalling ideas from the story.

Instrument

The groups were formed and students were identified by reading level using the Fountas and Pinnell comprehension toolkit (2011). Students were grouped based on comprehension with one group reading below-grade level for the time of year, on-grade level, and on/above-grade level. The Fountas and Pinnell comprehension starts with a beginning reader reading at a level A and the advanced reader reading at a level Z. The beginning level is usually pre-kindergarten to kindergarten-aged students reading A-D. First grade readers are leveled from E-J. Second grade readers are leveled from J-L. Third grade readers are leveled from M-P with an on-level third grade reader reading ending on a level O-P.

Each student was pulled individually to read a text three times a year to test their reading comprehension level. After reading the passage through the comprehension toolkit students are asked approximately nine questions based on the passage, three questions are directly from the

text, three are inference-type questions, and three are beyond the text questions, asking students to think more deeply about the text. A score is given as independent, instructional, and frustration based on the students errors, self-correction, fluency, and comprehension. Based on a student's score, the researcher moves the reader up a level if that student scores Independent or Instructional on that leveled text or down a level if that student scores Frustration on that level text. If a student scores Instructional they move up a level until they reach the Frustration level of reading to ensure they are reading at the highest level of text for their level.

This information changes throughout the year, therefore students are placed in flexible groupings, being able to move up or down based on their needs. Students are also able to receive intervention if they comprehend below-grade-level. By the middle and end of the year, the researcher uses the same procedure to test the students again to assess their reading level and observe changes and progression. For this study the researcher identified three students reading on a second grade level, two students reading on a beginning of third grade level and seven students reading appropriately on third grade level. One student was identified as reading at a beginning of fourth grade level. These students participated using the repeated reading strategy during whole group and small group instruction. Students that were not using the repeated reading strategy were identified as: one student reading on a second grade level, five reading on a beginning of third grade level, six third grade level, and one beginning of fourth grade level.

There were two instruments used in this study. The first instrument was the pre-test and post-test measurement, which was a reading comprehension passage and questions. The students in the study were asked to read a passage that was third grade level, a level M passage, and answer comprehension questions. The pre-test and post-test was the same reading passage so the

student's growth could be compared. The students' scores of how many questions they answered correctly were used as a measurement of growth.

The second instrument of measurement was the Fountas and Pinnell reading comprehension toolkit. The students were tested before the repeated reading instruction was put in place and at the end of the study to measure the students comprehension level and growth in the levels at which they were reading and comprehending. The students read a passage from a leveled reader and then answered comprehension questions. Based on their fluency score and their comprehension score they are then scored as independent, instructional, or frustration at that level book. When they reached their highest instructional level, that level became the leveled material the researcher then used in small group practices. There is no Mental Measurement Yearbook information about the Fountas and Pinnell comprehension toolkit to confirm the reliability and validity of the assessment scores.

Throughout the study the researcher took comprehensive notes during small group instruction that lasted about 20 minutes for each group. The notes taken measured the questions asked to the group, the questions answered by all students, and whether they were answered correctly or incorrectly. The post-test was administered eight weeks after the pretest to determine the effectiveness of the instructional practices in place. The score the students received was based on a point system, the multiple choice questions students answered were worth one point each, the written response questions students answered were worth two to three points based on the question and how many parts were in the question. For example, some questions were two parts, asking the student to answer the question and then cite evidence from the text. Those questions were worth two points.

Procedure

The students were first tested using the Fountas and Pinnell reading comprehension toolkit. Once the students were identified by reading level they were then placed into three groups based on their instructional level. The first group was reading below-grade-level, the second group was also below-grade-level, but closer to being on-grade-level, and the third group was identified as reading on-or slightly above-(by one level) grade level. After they were grouped, students were then randomly chosen to participate as a repeated reader or be a part of the control group. The researcher did try to make the groups as even as possible so that not all repeated readers were a level M, but so there was an equal amount of level L's, M's, and so on.

Instruction using the repeated reading strategy started during small group instruction. With each group, the students identified as repeated readers would sit on one side of the table reading the text two or three times before comprehension questions were asked orally. The students also were given opportunities to read with another repeated reader during group that is known as partner reading. This allows the reader to listen to another as they read along with the text. During whole group instruction, students again partner read with other repeated readers, read the text two to three times, or read along with the computer. The computer reads the text aloud to students as they followed along.

During small group instruction, the researcher would keep a tally of how many comprehension questions were asked, a tally of how many times a student answered the questions correctly and kept track of how often the students using the repeated reading strategy were able to answer questions correctly compared to those not using the strategy in group. One observable positive benefit was the confidence that students portrayed in being able to answer comprehension questions and knowing exactly which part of the text to reference for evidence

when answering questions or prompts. Throughout the eight weeks, the students participating as a repeated reader were the students that answered more questions about the text and asked questions in return about the text compared to the control group of students.

At the end of 8 weeks the students were given the post-test which was the same as the pre-test, a reading passage and comprehension questions that followed. The passage was a level M, and the scores were compared for growth. The researcher was looking for any areas of growth that were much larger in the repeated reading students than the control group as all students made growth. It was noted that students identified as repeated readers scored the lowest on the pre-test and some of the highest on the post-test. The students were also leveled again using the Fountas and Pinnell comprehension toolkit to assess growth made, if any, in the students' reading levels. Again the researcher observed growth in all students, but took notes on how many levels students identified as repeated readers moved through compared to the control group. The researcher also observed and noted when students referred back to the text when answering the comprehension questions and noted if they were a student in the control group or the repeated reading group.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study examines the impact on third graders struggling with reading comprehension from repeated reading. Data was gathered by using the ReadWorks (2014) reading passage “Happy Trails” and comprehension questions. Using the same ReadWorks passage as the pre- and post-measure. An improvement score was calculated for each student in the study by subtracting the pre-test from the post-test score. An independent *t* test was run between the experimental and control groups with the improvement score as the dependent variable. Table 1 displays the measure of central tendency and Table 2 has the results of the independent *t* test analysis. Table 2 clearly indicates that the results were not found to be statistically significant and therefore the null hypothesis is retained.

Table 1

Measures of Central Tendency

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Improve	Reading Experimental	13	4.385	1.7097	.4742
	Control	12	3.750	1.4848	.4286

Table 2

Independent *t* test Analysis

		<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Improvement	Equal variances assumed	.987	23	.334	.6346
	Equal variances not assumed	.993	22.925	.331	.6346

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study examines the impact on third graders struggling with reading comprehension as a result of exposure to a repeated reading strategy. Data analysis indicated that the null hypothesis was retained.

Implications of the Results

The analysis of this study shows no significant impact or difference between the control group and the experimental group and implies that the strategy of repeated reading instruction does not improve the reading comprehension of struggling third grade students. However, the researcher would like to note that while there was no hard evidence to clearly support the strategy the experimental group received, the researcher observed changes in student behavior that could be associated with the treatment. For example, students in the experimental group began to reread the text on their own without reminders or prompting from the researcher and looked back in the text for evidence to support their answers either orally or written.

Students also began to provide more developed responses during small group instruction when answering comprehension questions, while also questioning the text. All of these strategies are skills that well-developed readers also use in reading. It is also important to note that while the repeated reading strategy cannot be used as hard evidence, all of the students that participated in the experimental group moved Fountas and Pinnell instructional levels. Some students moved from a level L or M instructional level to a level O or P instructional level, third grade levels, in the eight weeks. Again it could have been due to maturation, but students were observed as reading and answering comprehension questions with more confidence.

Threats to Validity

Throughout this study there were some threats to the internal validity of the study. The threats to internal validity were the maturation of the students, testing, and differential selection of participants. The study took place over an eight-week period. During that time, the students chosen for the study were naturally maturing and even though there was little difference between the scores of the control group and the experimental group, it is difficult to conclude if the scores improved due to natural maturation. Due to the lack of significant findings between the control and experimental group, the evidence did not support that the repeated reading strategy caused an improvement in the student's scores.

Testing was also a threat to validity, with only a short amount of time between the pre-test and the post-test. Students read the same passage and answered the same questions on the pre-test as they did on the post-test. The selection of participants was a threat to internal validity as well. The researcher selected the students based on convenience, selecting students from the researcher's third grade Language Arts class. The selection of the students that would be the control and experimental group was based on the researchers pre-existing small groups for instruction. This is less than ideal for the study as there was not much diversity within the selection of students and although the students may have been reading and comprehending on the same F&P instructional reading level, the depth of understanding differed between students.

The external threats to validity were treatment diffusion, the generalization to the overall population and student attendance. Due to the small size of the class and the student's interaction during small group and whole group instruction, treatment diffusion occurred. Students in the control group witnessed and observed students in the experimental group and were observed by the researcher also using the repeated reading strategy. Some of the students in the control group

were observed reading the text multiple times before answering questions, or reading along as the computer read the text aloud to them. The size of the group of students in the experimental group was small, only having 13 students from a class of 25. A better experimental group would have been to use struggling readers from all of the third grade classes with the other students comprehending and reading on-grade-level as the control group.

The last of the external threats was the consistency of student participation. The attendance of the students was a major factor. One student attended about 50% of the sessions being absent or late and therefore, missing instruction. Another student was late and missed 50% of the sessions also affecting the instruction received. Having only received partial instruction or none at all, it is hard to determine if the repeated reading strategy had any effect on the student's learning. Also, due to the research scheduled in January and February, there were five days school was canceled due to snow and five days of instruction shortened due to snow delays.

The scoring of performance on the pre-test and post-test was also problematic. The comprehension portion of the tests included multiple-choice answers and three BCR's (Briefly Constructed Responses) that are subjective to the researcher and could vary from teacher to teacher regardless of the answer key and rubric that were given. Subjective grading could also impact the validity of this study.

Connections to the Literature

The research findings support the findings of a study by O'Connor, et al., (2007). That study ran for 14 weeks, and found no significant difference between the control group and the experimental group comprehension scores. The repeated readers in the study did outperform the control group, but the differences were not significant enough to attribute to repeated reading.

The findings from this research study also support a similar study conducted by (Rasinski, 1990), in which the findings were that repeated reading may help to improve comprehension, but the findings were not significant compared to scores in the. The researcher discussed that teachers may want to use a strategy other than repeated reading to improve the reading comprehension of their students due to the amount of time required for the repeated reading strategy which may result in lack of motivation as well as not resulting in improvement in scores.

Though this study did not find any significant findings to support repeated reading as a strategy to improve reading comprehension, a previous study conducted by Therrien et al., (2008), did support repeated reading as a strategy to improve comprehension. The study found 95% of student's improved reading comprehension due to the strategy of repeated reading. This study was ongoing for a longer period of time, which supports the researchers previous statement of threats to validity due to the time spent on the study. This study also had a larger and more diverse group of students in the experimental group using 32 students compared to the 13 students the researcher used for the convenience sample.

Implications for Future Research

To summarize the results of this research, the scores between the control group and the experimental group were not significant. The strategy of repeated reading could not be found to improve the comprehension of struggling readers in third grade. The researcher was able to observe changes in the experimental group of students, but the scores did not provide hard evidence. The strategy of repeated reading was found in other studies to provide some benefits to students, but similar to this study, the results were not significant. Therefore the null hypothesis

is supported, stating there is no significance difference among students participating in repeated reading compared to students only receiving regular classroom instruction.

For future research, there are a few recommendations the researcher would like to make. One recommendation would be to allocate more time for the students using the strategy of repeated reading. Only running the study for eight weeks did not allow the students sufficient time to fully learn, practice, and internalize the strategy. While students were able to replicate the strategy often throughout the study, they needed frequent reminders to reread the text, or needed a certain number given to them in order to implement the strategy. Students often needed modeling of how to partner read, or coach another student when implementing the strategy.

Another recommendation the researcher would offer for future studies would be to have a separate group for the intervention strategy. Having the control group and the experimental group of students working together in the same small group often confused the students. Students who were part of the control group would also use the strategy of repeated reading, which was previously stated as being a threat to validity. With the groups being separated, there would be little interaction between the two groups, therefore cutting down on the threat to validity.

The last suggestion for future research would be to use a larger group as the experimental group. The study conducted by Therrien et al., (2008) used 32 students in the experimental group and found significant differences between student's scores. Using a larger group of students for a longer period of time would allow more data to be collected and permit students more time to use the strategy.

Conclusion/Summary

In conclusion, while both the control and experimental group reflected growth in reading comprehension, the *t* test results were not significant. During the eight-week study, the students that participated in the repeated reading experimental group made growth when comprehending different textual material as did the students in the control group. The students in the experimental group were observed as having more confidence in their reading ability and using metacognitive strategies that capable readers use such as questioning the text, and referring back to the text as evidence to support answers to comprehension questions. As stated by Schisler, et al., (2010), students reading below-grade-level need to be exposed to the text more than once in order to become familiar with the text and be able to recall details.

For future research, there are a few recommendations the researcher would like to make. One recommendation would be to allocate more time for the students using the strategy of repeated reading. Only running the study for eight weeks did not allow the students sufficient time to fully learn, practice, and internalize the strategy. While students were able to replicate the strategy often throughout the study, they needed frequent reminders to reread the text, or needed a certain number given to them in order to implement the strategy. Students often needed modeling of how to partner read, or coach another student when implementing the strategy.

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