

The Effects of Fluency Strategies on Below-Level Fourth Grade Readers

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Education

July 2015

Graduate Programs in Education

Goucher College

## Table of Contents

List of Tables	i
Abstract	ii
I. Introduction	1
Overview	1
Statement of Problem	2
Hypothesis	2
Operational Definitions	2
II. Review of the Literature	3
Reading Development and Instruction	3
What is Fluency?	4
Struggling Readers and Fluency	5
Strategies and Interventions for Fluency in the Intermediate Grades	8
III. Methods	11
Design	11
Participants	11
Instrument	12
Procedures	12
IV. Results	14
V. Discussion	16
Implications of Results	16
Threats to Validity	17
Connections to Previous Studies	18

Implications for Future Research	19
References	21

## List of Tables

1. Means and Standard Deviations by Group	16
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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of Repeated Readings versus Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Sight Words (SIPPS) for below-level readers in fourth grade. This pre-experimental study used a pre- and post-test design to compare students' scores. Participants were measured in their oral reading fluency rate using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS™) assessment of oral reading fluency. Half of the participants were given the intervention of SIPPS, while the other half received Repeated Readings over the course of six weeks. While participants increased in their oral reading fluency rate, the hypothesis was supported for this study as there was no significant difference when looking at the pre- and post-test between strategies used. Research in this area should continue as there is little information on strategies other than Repeated Reading to help intermediate students increase their fluency rates.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

Reading is a skill that transcends beyond the English Language Arts block in classrooms. Math requires reading of multi-step word problems; science includes reading directions to properly conduct investigations; social studies involves the reading of text that provide background on such topics as Native Americans and our Constitution. Once students have entered the intermediate grades (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>) of elementary school, the expectation is that students have mastered the foundations of reading, such as phonemic awareness and vocabulary acquisition, and are able to move onto application of reading skills, such as making inferences and identifying cause-and-effect relationships. The ability or inability to read fluently plays a major role in students being able to make meaning from text (Pikulski & Chard, 2005).

As the volume and complexity of reading expectations and materials expand, students who are not developing fluency have a hard time understanding and keeping up with schoolwork and often find themselves in increasing difficulty even if they have previously done well. (Worthy & Broaddus, 2002, p. 335).

When fluency wanes, it can lead to students avoiding additional reading, falling further behind academically, and decreasing in self-esteem.

With the need to help struggling readers achieve growth in their fluency prior to entering middle school, this study explored the effectiveness of reading interventions—one a prescribed program and the other a “low-tech” approach—on struggling readers. An increase in students entering fourth grade reading below grade-level has become a concern as more and more responsibility and accountability rest on general educators’ shoulders, particularly with a decrease in the availability of special education teachers who can work with these students. An exploration of the effect of fluency interventions that could be easily implemented in the

classroom would arm this researcher and other teachers with critical additions to their arsenal of effective strategies.

### **Statement of Problem**

This study was designed to determine which reading intervention, SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words) or Repeated Readings, was most effective on the reading fluency of below grade-level intermediate students.

### **Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference in reading fluency rates of students who received SIPPS and students who participated in Repeated Readings.

### **Operational Definitions**

The independent variable in this study is the comparison of three below-level students receiving the extra reading intervention of SIPPS and three below-level students participating in Repeated Readings. The dependent variable is the increase in oral reading fluency rates defined by an increase of each participant's score as calculated on the Oral Reading Fluency component of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS™).

Fluency is defined as the ability to “decode text accurately and automatically so that energies can be refocused on understanding the meaning of the text” (Dudley, 2005, p. 17). In this study, fluency is determined by the rate of oral reading based on the number of words read correctly in one minute. SIPPS is a program designed to help build struggling readers' decoding skills in order to gain reading fluency. Repeated Readings is the process of providing students with a reading passage at the beginning of the week, which they are expected to practice rereading each day with a goal of fluency by the end of the given period.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

This literature review discusses fluency strategies that are effective with below grade-level readers in fourth grade. The first section of this literature review discusses the development of reading and the role of fluency in reading acquisition. Next, the issues surrounding struggling readers, with further discussion on the struggling intermediate reader, are discussed. Finally, this review discusses the research on strategies used to develop fluency in struggling readers in the intermediate grades.

#### **Reading Development and Instruction**

Reading development can be broken into four main stages: emergent or beginner, transitional, intermediate, and advanced. Gehsmann and Templeton (2012) state in “Stages and Standards in Literacy: Teaching Developmentally in the Age of Accountability” that in the emergent stage, typically Pre-K-1<sup>st</sup> grade, a child’s writing is mostly drawings and scribbling. Children, particularly those who have been exposed to literature at home, pretend to read using verbal starters such as “Once upon a time.” They go on to explain that in this stage children begin to connect the relationship between graphemes and phonemes and make the connection between spoken words and written text. In the transitional stage, between grades 1 and 2, children are able to apply spelling patterns to text to help them decode words. The authors explain that reading short phrases with some expression is a focus and the amount of higher-level comprehension questions increases. In the intermediate stage, grades 3-4, as outlined by Gehsmann and Templeton, patterns of multi-syllabic words and morphology help the student independently engage in reading and understanding more complex texts. Beyond these levels is the advanced stage, which tends to begin in grade 5 and continues to secondary school, where



students are reading significantly longer texts and applying spelling and reading strategies appropriately to help with comprehension. As with any “prescribed” development chart, students can lead or lag at any stage.

In terms of reading instruction within these stages, The National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2001) found that the combination of phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, fluency instruction, guided oral reading, teaching of vocabulary words, and reading comprehension strategies were the most effective for teaching children to read. Phonemic awareness and phonics, as well as reading aloud, begin to be developed in a child within their early childhood years (1-3 years of age) through exposure to text by reading aloud at home. In school, development continues to be fostered in what some term the “Learning to Read” stage (grades K-3), where focus is primarily on decoding and recognizing sight words. Around fourth grade, as with the intermediate stage of reading development, reading transitions to “Reading to Learn,” where students are given more informational text and reading strategies, such as summarizing and inferring, are applied to help them tackle more complex text.

### **What is Fluency?**

Becoming a good reader is a process that happens over time and with practice. Even after students are able to recognize words and sounds, the ability to read them in sentences and with expression is not always a natural process. This is an important part of reading development as it allows meaning from text to take shape—an important milestone for intermediate grade readers. Fluency is defined as the ability to “decode text accurately and automatically so that energies can be refocused on understanding the meaning of the text” (Dudley, 2005, p. 17). Besides automatically being able to recognize or decode a word correctly,

fluency also includes prosody, which is a reader's ability to use proper intonation, expression and pauses. Many researchers and teachers narrow the definition to looking at words correct per minute, but studies have shown that while many students can identify words correctly, the student may not comprehend the given text (Applegate, M., Applegate, A., & Modla, 2009; Rasinski & Padak, 2005). Pikulski and Chard (2005) describe fluency as a bridge from word recognition accuracy to text comprehension.

Once fluency is properly defined, the educator must now make instructional decisions on how to measure fluency, which can include: developing an appropriate baseline for pacing, determining how much growth should be expected, and finding the types of interventions needed. However, in many classrooms fluency is not getting the attention it needs with regards to reading instruction. Some of this is due to programs that focus on fluency as speed without regard for meaning or look only at fluency in oral reading, which is used less often in the intermediate grades (Rasinski, 2012). Additionally, fluency can also be seen as something that should be mastered in the lower grades (Rasinski & Padak, 2005). If comprehension of text is a primary goal in reading, then fluency should have its place in instruction particularly when it comes to helping struggling readers.

### **Struggling Readers and Fluency**

Rasinski and Padak (2005) state that generally by the intermediate to secondary grades, the main problems for below-level readers are poor vocabulary and comprehension. Additionally issues may stem from not achieving the milestones at each level of reading development. When looking at a fluent reader as compared to a struggling reader, fluency instruction takes on an entirely new meaning. The National Reading Panel (2001) explains that because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the words, they can focus their

attention on what the text means. They can make connections among the ideas in the text and between the text and their background knowledge. In other words, fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time. The National Reading Panel further concluded that less fluent readers, however, must focus their attention on figuring out the words, leaving them little attention for understanding the text. The time spent figuring out the words further causes the student to fall behind in instruction as their teacher and peers have moved on to skills requiring comprehension.

By 4<sup>th</sup> grade the expectation is that a large majority of students are able to recognize words in grade-level texts with reasonable accuracy (Hiebert & Fisher, 2005). However, when students are reading so slowly that it hinders their comprehension, a breakdown in fluency needs to be addressed. “The ultimate causes of individual differences in learning to read are the biological and environmental factors that shape the development of brain systems underlying reading” (Hulme & Snowling, 2013, p. 1). Hulme and Snowling explain that issues in reading can stem from learning disabilities, a lack of a literacy environment at home with few books available, little to no verbal interactions such as reading stories aloud, and the quality of children’s instruction at school. At school students may be taught with a less consistent orthographic environment or receive interventions from a less qualified individual such as a paraprofessional. However, for many of these struggling students, many of their reading problems are due to a lack of mastering reading skills in their early years (Rasinski & Padak, 2005). Since reading fluency has been found to be strongly associated with reading achievement in younger students, one can conclude the possibility that difficulties in reading with intermediate students can be related to poor fluency. Whether these students’ struggles with fluency in the primary grades were evident or if the increasing complexity of the text in the

intermediate grades exposed an area of weakness, the added instruction of fluency in the upper grades is essential to helping these students meet with reading success.

However with the rise of high-stakes standardized testing, many programs on reading dictate not only what is taught, but also *how*. Gehsmann and Templeton (2012) state that this new trend is worrisome when looking at the possible effects it will have on children in low socioeconomic communities, English language learners, and low-skilled learners. Teachers, who are in direct contact with their students each and every day, are realistic in their approach as they understand their students may not fit inside the expectations of these prescribed programs, particularly for the learner who is reading below grade-level. “Educators who understand learning from a learner-centered and developmental perspective often criticize not only *what*, but *how much* is expected by the end of each grade-level” (p. 5). Due to the shift in what is now taught in lower grades (i.e. what was once taught in middle school is now a part of the grade four and five curricula), students who are reading below grade-level have an even greater need to increase their reading skills such as fluency.

One of the first steps to be taken when looking to help struggling readers with fluency is identifying a level of text that a student can read with 96-100% accuracy (Dudley, 2005). Too many times focus is on getting these students to read grade-level text when in reality this is impossible without dedicated and intensive reading intervention in place. Dudley references a study done by Jorgenson, Klein, and Kumar that shows when struggling readers are given text that matches their current reading level, they are more engaged. From there the instructor can then determine what goals to set for the student that will show an appropriate level of improvement and the strategies necessary to help the student reach these goals.

While findings show that fluency issues are not the only cause for poor reading in the intermediate grades, the lack of attention placed on fluency intervention should be recognized, especially when evidence has proven that fluency instruction can help struggling readers. “If the goal is to help older students read text with ease so they can place most of their attention on understanding the text, then reading fluency must be taught, practiced, and monitored” (Dudley, 2005, p. 21). Fluency instruction can no longer be a practice only done in the primary grades. All students should have continuous exposure and instruction in fluency to strengthen their reading and to help struggling students from falling further behind.

### **Strategies and Interventions for Fluency in the Intermediate Grades**

Hiebert and Fisher (2005) include the research of The National Reading Panel, which concluded that repeated and guided oral reading as strategies to help struggling readers were “consistently and positively” making an impact on fluency development and comprehension for students in grade 4 and even those in higher grades. Repeated reading, developed by Samuels in the 1970s, occurs, in some variation, when students are given a short passage of meaningful text that they are required to read and reread until able to reach a specified level of speed and accuracy (Rasinki, 2012). Students then move onto a new passage, and the routine is started again (Pruitt & Cooper, 2008).

One of the purposes for this strategy is to not only increase students’ speed and accuracy but to increase students’ exposure to new sight words and vocabulary. Once the program is running smoothly, most assessments take no more than fifteen minutes to administer (Pruitt & Cooper, 2008). Graphing students’ progress of repeated reading can serve as a visual goal sheet for the student as well as a record of data for the teacher. This is also one of the key motivators that keeps students willing to read the same passage multiple times—seeing their progress.

Additionally, Pruitt and Cooper highlight that aside from improving on passages that they are currently reading, research has shown that students also make improvements when reading passages they have never encountered. This demonstrates that learning is taking place.

Another variation on repeated readings that is effective at the upper elementary level is Reader's Theater. This form of repeated reading happens not with a passage, but with a script. Like a traditional play, students are given parts to practice and publicly read. In lieu of a physical performance, students bring the play to life through the expressiveness with which they read (Clark, Morrison, & Wilcox, 2009). If students are able to read with appropriate pacing, expression, and volume, then students are able to portray the meaning of the play, which in turn means that they have comprehended what they have been practicing. Students are motivated in this activity not only by the successes they achieve in reading fluency but through their performance for their peers. A study done by Clark, Morrison, and Wilcox showed that Reader's Theater provided students not only the motivation to perform, but also the motivation to read *more*. They also emphasize that it is not a stand-alone activity, but one in which the teacher still must provide instruction on theatrical elements, such as expression and volume. Furthermore, during this direct instruction, students benefit from hearing fluent reading modeled by the teacher.

An additional benefit to Reader's Theater is strengthening students' writing by using published exemplars as a basis of the scripts and repeated reading. In a study done by Griffith and Rasinski, Griffith found that "having the children practice reading the passages taken from trade books would cement the vocabulary and writing techniques with their thinking about writing" (2004, p. 131). Griffith would later revisit the familiar passage and use it as a model for authentic narrative writing. For struggling readers, the incorporation of writing further bridges

the connection between reading and writing and allows them to apply the skills that they are working to strengthen.

### **Summary**

Allington (2013) states in “What Really Matters When Working with Struggling Readers”:

We can change the future for struggling readers. However, to do so requires that we rethink almost every aspect of the instructional plans we currently have in place...It remains up to us, the educators, to alter our schools and our budgets so that every child becomes a real reader. (p. 527)

We have to remove ourselves as educators from the cookie-cutter approach to education and be willing to meet our students instructionally where they are. Coming out of the “one size fits all” structure may require the teacher to change his or her schedule to include sufficient time for fluency instruction through strategies such as Repeated Readings and Reader’s Theater. The importance of developing reading fluency in helping struggling intermediate grade readers cannot be overlooked.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS**

This study examined the effects of Repeated Reading versus the use of SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words) on fluency. In particular this study focused on the impact of each intervention on six struggling readers in fourth grade. The results were used to determine which program is most effective.

#### **Design**

This study was pre-experimental, using the same pre- and post-test to evaluate student progress. The first pre-test was given in February 2015, and the study ran for six weeks, concluding in April 2015 with the post-test. The dependent variable was the oral reading rate of students based on the Oral Reading Fluency component of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS™). The independent variable was the treatment of repeated reading versus SIPPS.

#### **Participants**

The six students in this study attend elementary school in the Baltimore County Public School System. Currently the school houses approximately 606 students, which includes a Functional Academic Learning program for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The students in this study were in the same fourth grade classroom with the majority attending the school since Kindergarten. Participants in the Repeated Readings group consisted of 2 males (9 years old and 10 years old, respectively) and one female (10 years old). Participants in the SIPPS group were three males (11 years old, 10 years old, and 11 years old, respectively). Two students in the Repeated Readings group did not have any form of special education program but were at risk for reading difficulties as determined through teacher observation and the Measures



of Academic Progress® (MAP) assessment, which is a state-aligned computerized adaptive assessment program, whereas the other student in the group had a 504 for reading and writing, but recently was removed due to showing improvement academically. All participants in the SIPPS group had Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for learning difficulties, including, but not limited, to reading. All students are African-American and have good attendance.

### **Instrument**

The pre- and post-test were a part of the DIBELS™ assessment. Students were only given the DIBELS™ Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) component. DORF is a standardized, individually administered test of accuracy and fluency with connected text. The pre- and post-test used the same passages: two fiction and one non-fiction text. Students were assessed by having them read passages aloud while being timed for one minute. Student errors were counted if words were omitted, when the wrong word was used, or when the teacher had to provide the word for the reader. The total number of correct words read within the minute were counted as the oral reading fluency rate. Shanahan (2002) stated that the Oral Reading Fluency was one of the components of DIBELS™ that “showed remarkable levels of reliability” (para. 18).

### **Procedures**

The study lasted over an 8-week period beginning in February 2015 and concluding in April 2015 with six weeks given for treatment. Participants were chosen out of a classroom of 26 based on performing at an “at-risk” level on their MAP assessment as well as teacher observations. Furthermore, three of the chosen had IEPs that included goals for reading.

All students were individually pre-tested in a one-week period using the Oral Reading Fluency section of the DIBELS™ assessment (DORF). Students were pre-tested using three passages: two fiction and one non-fiction. Each student was timed for one-minute in the reading

of each of the three passages. Errors were counted and words correct were used to determine their oral reading fluency rate.

Students continued their normal reading instruction inside the same 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom, with those students in the SIPPS treatment group being pulled out for SIPPS instruction at least three times a week for 20-30 minutes. Students in the Repeated Readings group received their repeated readings on Monday of each week (if possible) and were required to read aloud each evening to a parent or family member. The passages were a combination of fiction and non-fiction readings from Scholastic *Fluency Formula*. These students would then be called to read aloud the same passage at least three times per week to the teacher where feedback was given on topics such as intonation, pacing, and pausing. This process was completed over six weeks with a break between for the administration of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) state standardized assessment.

At the conclusion of the testing period, all participants were given the same DORF as a post-test over a one-week period to monitor their oral reading fluency rate. The results of the pre- and post-tests were compared to determine which intervention had the most effect on fluency.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

This study examined the effects of fluency interventions, Systemic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Sight Words (SIPPS) versus Repeated Readings, on the fluency of fourth graders below grade-level over a six week period of time. Six students participated in the study: three receiving Repeated Readings and three receiving SIPPS intervention. Fluency rate was measured counting the number of words read correctly in one minute based on the Oral Reading Fluency section of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills assessment.

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of the Repeated Reading and SIPPS intervention groups. To determine if there was a significant difference, several t-tests were run. First, dependent t-tests were run on each group to determine if there was a significant difference at post-test. Results showed no significant difference at post-test for either the Repeated Reading Group [ $t(2) = -2.474, P > .05$ ] or the SIPPS group [ $t(2) = -3.576, P > .05$ ]. Because the Repeated Reading group had a higher mean at post-test, an additional t-test was run to determine if the groups of students demonstrated similar performance at the beginning of the study (pre-test). Results of that independent t-test showed a significant difference between the two groups at pre-test [ $t(4) = 3.638, p < .05$ ]. The Repeated Reading group demonstrated higher performance at the beginning of the study as compared to the SIPPS group. Moreover, the Repeated Reading group continued to demonstrate higher performance than the SIPPS group. However, because there were not significant differences for either group pre- to post-test, the null hypothesis was supported.

Table 1.

*Means and Standard Deviations by Group*

Group	Pretest Mean (SD)	Posttest Mean (SD)
Repeated Reading	59.67 (9.074)	69.67 (4.509)
SIPPS	34.00 (8.185)	43.00 (4.583)

These results and their implications will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to determine which reading intervention, Repeated Readings or Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Sight Words (SIPPS), was most beneficial in helping below-level readers in fourth grade increase their fluency rate. This researcher's null hypothesis that there was no significant difference in reading fluency rates of students who received SIPPS and students who participated in Repeated Readings was supported. This is due to no significant differences between the pre- and post-test for either group. Moreover, further examination showed that students in the Repeated Reading group had higher scores with the pre-test. This difference in initial performance made it impossible to make statistical inferences about the Repeated Reading group's higher fluency rate at post-test as compared to the SIPPS group.

#### **Implications of Results**

Being that there were no significant differences suggested between Repeated Readings and SIPPS interventions in increasing the fluency rate of below-level readers, either strategy could be helpful to use within the classroom; with both groups making gains in their fluency rate, both strategies can help students progress with their reading fluency. However, with the Repeated Reading group having a higher mean for their pre-test, it could be implied that those students, while still below grade-level, did not have as severe a problem as those students within the SIPPS group.

Additionally, when looking at engagement, Repeated Readings offered more of an opportunity to vary the levels of readings, topics read, and genres. These choices further engaged students in the practice of Repeated Reading, whereas students in the SIPPS group were

sometimes reluctant to participate and at times exhibited poor behavior that could be attributed to a lack of engagement.

### **Threats to Validity**

There were several threats to validity during the course of this study. One of the greatest external threats was consistency within the study. During the six-week treatment period beginning in February, there were several closings, late openings, and early dismissals due to weather. During those days the SIPPS group was not met with, and though students in the Repeated Reading group may have received their reading for the week, follow-up could not be conducted on a daily basis. Likewise students in that group may not have received their readings on Monday, as was usually done, which shifted the length of their readings. Additionally there were days that students were absent, mostly in the SIPPS group and thus not pulled for their intervention. Consistency was also interrupted due to state testing for approximately five (non-consecutive) days in which students in the SIPPS group were not pulled for instruction due to schedule changes.

Another threat to validity was the sample size. Only six students were selected for this study, mostly due to only being three students in the SIPPS intervention and trying to find an evenly-matched Repeated Readings group. With such a small sample size, it can be challenging to discover significant differences in group performance and it is difficult to account for pre-existing differences in students' performance in each group at the beginning of the study. To mitigate these challenges, this researcher could have increased the sampling size in the both groups, by choosing more students for the Repeated Reading group and seeking out students in other fourth grade classes that were receiving SIPPS intervention.

A threat to internal validity was the natural progression of students' reading skills during the course of the school year. All students received reading instruction daily based on the Baltimore County Public Schools curriculum and time mandates (120 minutes daily). Instruction was also differentiated to meet the learning needs of students through small group instruction. So the increase in fluency rate could simply be due to their natural academic progression versus any intervention strategies.

### **Connections to Previous Studies**

In a study by Musti-Rao, Hawkins, and Barkley (2009), researchers looked at the effectiveness of Repeated Readings with urban fourth-grade students who were at risk in the area of reading. Like all the participants in this researcher's study, students in this study were African-American ranging in age from between 9 years old to 12 years old. Within Musti-Rao, Hawkins and Barkley's study, all students in the classroom participated in Repeated Readings, but only 12 students were selected for monitoring based on markers that indicted their risk for reading failure. This marker was determined through the use of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS™) test. Similar to this researcher's study, half of the students selected (6 out of 12) received Special Education services. As in this researcher's study, all the students in this study increased in their fluency rates with the introduction of Repeated Reading. However, none of the students met the benchmark goal of 118 wpm. The researchers found that "despite the limited gains made by students . . . repeated readings promote reading fluency rates among struggling readers" (2009, p. 20).

Studies like those conducted by Kostewicz and Kubina (2010) and Begeny, Daly, and Valleley (2006) showed that when comparing Repeated Reading to other fluency strategies, both strategies increased students' fluency skills with no significant difference between either

strategy. In the study by Kostewicz and Kubina researchers used an intervention called interval sprinting which uses shorter timing intervals across a passage. In the study by Begeny, Daly, and Valleley the researchers compared Repeated Reading to the strategy of Phrase Drill Error Correction which “involves (a) consequent modeling on the part of the instructor and (b) prompting the student to repeatedly practice the phrase from the text which includes the error word” (p. 230). With their effectiveness similar to that of Repeated Reading, these strategies could be used to meet the needs of their diverse learners by increasing fluency rate.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Future research is needed on strategies that improve fluency for below-level readers specifically in the intermediate grades. Since students are expected to achieve certain reading milestones prior to entering fourth grade, improving fluency research is more heavily focused on primary grades. Very few strategies that receive high recognition are evident aside from ones that focus on students doing Repeated Readings in some regard (i.e. Reader’s Theatre).

Since the SIPPS intervention was given to students who had Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), looking at whether Repeated Reading would be equally or more beneficial to students with learning disabilities would need further investigation. This researcher also noted that students within the SIPPS group had less parental support at home compared to those students in the Repeated Reading group. While Repeated Readings could be done independently, it is more advantageous to students to have someone at home to read aloud to or to time students, so when looking at those with a lack of parental support finding a strategy that students could apply independently but still be of benefit would be essential in helping these students increase their fluency.



Lastly, by comparing below-level readers without IEPs who receive Repeated Readings to a control group of below-level readers without IEPs, with each group still receiving daily reading instruction, would better isolate the effectiveness of the use of Repeated Readings as a strategy to improve fluency.

### **Summary**

Results suggested that the hypothesis that there was no significant difference between Repeated Readings and SIPPS in terms of improving reading fluency was supported. These findings should push educators to continue to investigate available strategies that can be used in the classroom to help students in the area of reading fluency. Worthy and Broaddus (2002, p. 334) state that students “need explicit instruction and experiences that specifically target fluency.” While one strategy, Repeated Readings, is an easier tool to use for a busy teacher, SIPPS can be looked at for students who need more focused, small-group instruction to aid in improving reading.

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