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All the World's a Stage...The Effect of Reader's Theater on the Reading Fluency Rates, Comprehension Levels and Attitudes of Second Graders

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All the World's a Stage . . . The Effects of Reader's Theater on the Reading Fluency
Rates, Comprehension Levels and Attitudes of Second Graders

By
Cheryl Lynn Parker

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2016

Approval Page

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Acknowledgements

A doctorate is not a journey one takes alone. If not for the support, encouragement, and guidance of others, the journey's end would never be reached. I am truly thankful to all who took this journey with me. This adventure would never have been possible without the grace, mercy, and unconditional love of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I would like to sincerely thank the many family, friends, colleagues, and professors who provided support in so many different ways. The constant love and support of my parents have brought me to where I am now, and I am eternally grateful. My sister and best friend has been and continues to be an inspiration to me. My fur-babies, two of whom I lost during this process, have been my comfort and joy as well as my motivation to finish this journey. My coworkers worked with me through this process, encouraging and inspiring me along the way. I would also like to thank the members of my cohort who lifted me up and kept me going when I was ready to quit. They will always be family to me. To my dissertation chair and committee, your guidance and encouragement throughout this process has allowed me to grow personally as well as professionally. Without all of you, this long journey would never have been completed.

Abstract

All the World's a Stage . . . The Effects of Reader's Theater on the Reading Fluency Rates, Comprehension Levels and Attitudes of Second Graders. Parker, Cheryl Lynn, 2016: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, *Reader's Theater/Reading Strategies/Elementary Schools/Comprehension/Fluency*

Second-grade students of the targeted school were performing below a level of proficiency in reading fluency and comprehension. Many students were reluctant to read. This dissertation is designed to study the effects of *Reader's Theater* on the reading fluency rates, comprehension scores, and attitudes of second-grade readers. The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent using *Reader's Theater* affects the reading fluency rates, comprehension levels, and attitudes of second-grade readers, thus answering the question, "To what extent does the use of *Reader's Theater* affect the fluency rates, comprehension levels, and attitudes towards reading of second-grade readers?"

The findings of the study showed that the improvements made in student fluency rates and comprehension levels after participating in *Reader's Theater* were not statistically significant. Student and teacher interviews revealed that students enjoyed *Reader's Theater* and wanted to continue the program.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

Whether or not children can read well by the end of third grade is a strong predictor of how they are likely to do in the future in school, at work, and as parents and citizens (Mead, 2010). According to the latest study done by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1994), 38% of all youth in juvenile detention read below the fourth-grade level.

Reader's Theater has been described as a highly motivational strategy that connects reading, literature, and drama in the classroom. Students bring stories to life using only their voices to interpret the emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and motives of the characters they represent (Carrick, 2001). Struggling readers often shy away from reading because it is difficult and unenjoyable. *Reader's Theater* makes learning to read fun. It is an effective, motivating strategy for improving the reading abilities of all students (Clementi, 2010). This study examined the effects of *Reader's Theater* on the reading fluency rate and comprehension scores of second-grade readers.

Teachers of elementary English/language arts, elementary reading specialists, elementary curriculum facilitators, and district-level curriculum leaders may find this study of interest when seeking methods to improve the reading fluency and reading comprehension levels of their readers.

Why Action Research?

Action research requires the researcher to begin with an educational problem to analyze, to develop a plan of critically informed action to improve on what is happening, to act to implement the plan, to observe the effects of the action, and then to reflect on these effects as a basis for further planning (Anderson & Herr, 2005). Most importantly,

action research is, according to Anderson and Herr (2005), “inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organization or community, but never to or on them. It is a reflective process, but is different from isolated, spontaneous reflection in that it is deliberately and systematically undertaken” (p. 3).

Statement of the Problem

Studies have shown that most children develop into fluent readers by the third grade (Corcoran, 2005). Approximately 75% of students who are poor readers in the third grade continue to be lower achieving readers in the ninth grade and, in essence, do not recover their reading abilities even into adulthood. It is therefore imperative for reading fluency to become an integral part of the early elementary reading instruction (Corcoran, 2005). According to Mead (2010), learning to read by third grade is a goal that can organize everything educators do for children. Whether or not children can read well by the end of third grade is a strong predictor of how they are likely to do in the future in school, at work, and as parents and citizens. Children who do not learn to read proficiently by the end of third grade are unlikely ever to read at grade level. These students are at high risk for later school failure and behavioral problems, for dropping out of high school, and for a host of negative life outcomes once they reach adulthood. For example, poor reading skills in the early elementary grades are highly correlated with later delinquency (Mead, 2010). According to the latest figures from the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1994), 38% of all youth in juvenile detention read below the fourth-grade level. This is due in part to the fact that the end of third grade marks a critical transition point in children’s learning: It is at this time when children begin to shift from learning how to read to reading in order to learn (Mead, 2010). Once children reach fourth grade, the curriculum becomes more demanding and

children who lack foundational literacy skills find themselves struggling and unable to access the curriculum and keep up with their classmates. Faced with persistent failure as a result of their poor literacy skills, these students frequently become frustrated; disengage from school; “act out” behaviorally; and without significant interventions and supports to address their literacy deficits, may drop out of school and face a lifetime of severely diminished economic prospects. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2013), 31% of the fourth graders in this state and 33% of fourth graders in the U.S. performed below a basic reading level. A study conducted in 2012 by the Children’s Defense Fund stated that nearly one half (48%) of youths in the juvenile justice system were functioning below the grade level appropriate for their age. In order for this cycle to be stopped, children must learn to read proficiently before they reach the third grade.

During the last semester of 2015, 31% of the second-grade students at this worksite were below expected state standards for reading fluency as reflected on the school’s *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® progress monitoring report for reading fluency (District Internal Communication, n.d.). Twenty-eight percent of the second-grade students were below expected state standards for comprehension, having received below grade-level expectation on *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC (running-record Text Reading and Comprehension diagnostic tests) at a reading level below an M (District Internal Communication, n.d.). The TRC reading levels run from A-Z: Levels A-E are kindergarten levels; E-J are first-grade levels; and J-N are second-grade levels. Twenty-eight percent of the students received scores below their grade-level standards on the *STAR*™ (Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading) monitor for comprehension

and fluency (District Internal Communication, n.d.).

Theoretical Framework

One theory the writer is addressing is the developmental reading theory. This theory, as stated by the National Institute for Professional Practice (2015), operates on the premise that reading is a developmental process and within that process fluency plays an important role in building comprehension in reading; there are two main factors regarding the role of fluency in a reader's ability to comprehend text: automaticity and prosody (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). Automaticity states that individuals have a limited amount of attention available for any task, including reading (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). As a result, the more attention a reader places on decoding words, the less that remains for comprehension (Adams, 1990; Stanovich, 1984). Prosody involves pitch or intonation, the tempo or rate at which an individual reads, and the rhythmic or regularly recurring patterns of language (Hanks, 1990; Harris & Hodges, 1981, 1995). Poor readers are not as prosodic in their reading or as proficient with their use of appropriate phrasing as are good readers (Dowhower, 1991; Reutzel, 1996; Schreiber, 1991). Even mild difficulties in word recognition can take a reader's attention away from the underlying meaning, reduce the speed of reading, and cause the reader to reread selections in order to gain meaning (Hook & Jones, 2002).

Research on the use of *Reader's Theater* as part of fluency instruction has shown three possible benefits. The first is motivation, in that most of the texts are engaging, supporting independent and group repeated practice. The repeated practice is interactive and engages all participants. A second benefit is that creating a meaningful context for rereading brings enjoyment and purpose to a rote activity. The third benefit is that *Reader's Theater* brings emphasis to the prosody aspect of reading which provides ample

opportunity to highlight intonation, phrasing, and attention to punctuation as the reader brings the text to life. Working on group performances encourages engagement with the text and enhances comprehension through increased familiarity and discussion (Carrick, 2006).

Reader's Theater taps the multiple intelligences of a reader and allows for multiple ways of understanding (Gardner, 1985). Support for the comprehensive nature of *Reader's Theatre* is found in several reading theories and educational paradigms including those of Samuels (2002), Rosenblatt (1978), Schreiber (1991), and Slavin (1987). More recent studies by Griffith and Rasinski (2004) and Young and Rasinski (2009) indicated that *Reader's Theater* also promotes fluency and interest in reading. Through repeated readings of the text, students increase sight word vocabulary and the ability to decode words quickly and accurately (Carrick, 2006). The repeated readings allow the students to phrase sentences appropriately, read punctuation markers, and read with greater ease. This fluent reading enables students to spend less time on decoding and increase comprehension (Pikulsi & Chard, 2005). The *Reader's Theater* script acts as an incentive to elicit thoughts, ideas, and past experiences from the reader. This allows the reader to read the script through an interpretive process and use both the cognitive and affective domains (Carrick, 2001, 2006).

A second theory addressed through this study is the theory of attitude and change. According to Benoit (2015), attitudes are derived from experience and influence our behavior. The fact that attitudes are *formed through experience* means that we can, potentially, change them. You can change a person's attitude by changing either the belief or the value but not both, by creating new belief/value pairs, or by changing the relative importance of belief/value pairs (Benoit, 2015).

Attitude to reading has been defined as “a state of mind, accompanied by feelings and emotions, that make reading more or less probable” (Smith, 1990, p. 215). It has also been described as “a system of feelings related to reading which cause the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation” (Alexander & Filler, 1976, p. 1). Positive attitudes regarding reading have consistently been linked with higher reading achievement (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995) and more frequent reading (Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004). In international studies conducted by Mullis, Martin, Gonzalez, and Kennedy (2003) and Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, and Fox (2007), it was reported that students with high positive attitudes to reading have substantially higher average reading achievement than those with lower attitudes to reading. The development of a positive attitude toward reading has also been associated with sustained reading throughout the lifespan (Cullinan, 1987).

McKenna’s (2001) model of attitude formation identifies three major factors in forming attitudes towards reading: (a) the direct impact of episodes of reading, (b) beliefs about the outcomes of reading, and (c) beliefs about cultural norms concerning reading. This model implies that attitudes are developed over an extended period through the influence of these three sources. Each reading episode has a small but direct effect on the reader’s attitude toward reading. The effect may be to reinforce an existing attitude or change that attitude by providing an outcome unexpected by the reader. The effects of reading are cumulative, according to McKenna. If reading episodes are frustrating or difficult for a reader, the reader slowly comes to anticipate that reading will be frustrating and difficult. In turn, if reading episodes are pleasurable, the reader will anticipate that reading will be a pleasant experience. These expectations are relevant. “One is the expectation of success versus failure; the other is the expectation of pleasure versus

boredom” (McKenna, 2001, p. 141). These expectations of the reader have implications for the teacher. It is important to ensure early reading success for students by providing support for students so they come to believe that they are readers and can read (McKenna, 2001).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent using *Reader’s Theater* affects the reading fluency rates and comprehension levels of second-grade readers at this worksite. This study also sought to discover to what extent participating in *Reader’s Theater* affects student attitudes toward reading. The study began with a look at reading fluency and why it is important for students to become fluent readers. This portion of the study also looked at the way reading fluency and reading comprehension are related. The second half of this study focused on *Reader’s Theater* as a strategy for improving oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, and student attitudes toward reading.

Research Questions

At the conclusion of this study, the researcher sought to answer the following questions.

1. To what extent does participating in *Reader’s Theater* affect the fluency of second-grade readers?
2. To what extent does participating in *Reader’s Theater* affect the comprehension levels of second-grade readers?
3. To what extent does participating in *Reader’s Theater* affect second-grade students’ attitudes toward reading?

Limitations

There were some limitations that might have affected the outcome of this study.

The predictive validity and generalizability of the study were limited in the following ways. The study was conducted for 9 weeks with daily lessons; therefore, the time span and frequency for the intervention was restricted. Another factor affecting the validity of the study was the attrition of students who transfer in and withdraw out of the elementary school. With a small number of participants, losing or gaining students could yield a threat to the reliability of the study.

Another predictive validity threat was the unfamiliarity of the reading passages for the participants during pre and posttests which could affect the outcome. The small sample size and the fact that only students in one school were being observed during the study may have been an external validity threat. Finally, there was a reactive arrangement whereby student knowledge regarding their participation in the study could have altered their performances on the pre and/or posttest measures.

There was no control group; therefore, there was no direct comparison to verify if using *Reader's Theater* was the major factor in improving the feelings towards reading and the amount of student reading practice. Another limitation was that several participants receive services outside the classroom that supplement reading instruction. Ideally, the number of repeated readings should be the same each day. Due to scheduling complications during the school day, the number of repeated readings fluctuated from day to day. This study was limited to data from second-grade students in one elementary school as opposed to the entire population of second graders in the state. Despite these limitations, the design and the results may be transferable should the readers believe their situations to be similar to that described in this research study.

Delimitations

A number of delimitations were present in this study. First, all participants were

second-grade students from a single, suburban K-2 elementary school. Second, the daily implementation of *Reader's Theater* spanned 9 weeks between pretest and posttest. Third, the test of student reading comprehension was conducted by a single standardized measure with alternate forms for the pretest and posttest. Last, the test of student reading fluency involved the measurement of oral reading rate and oral reading accuracy by means of three 1-minute timed readings. Alternate forms were used for the pretest and posttest. Prosody and intonation, other key elements of reading fluency, were not assessed. The researcher was both the researcher and a classroom teacher in this study. To avoid bias and ensure validity, the researcher did not assess her own students. The data collection procedures were standard evaluation methods the school used and did not take up any regular instructional time.

Researcher's Role

The researcher has been teaching since 1987 and earned National Board certification in 2001. In addition to National Board certification, the candidate earned her Master of Education degree in Elementary Education in 2012. The researcher's role at this school is that of a second-grade teacher within the regular classroom program. She has been a second-grade teacher at this worksite since 1997 and employed by this county since 1993. The researcher compiles unit plans for the grade level/professional learning community (PLC) using subject plans created by individual grade-level/PLC members. Additional responsibilities include collaborating with the second-grade team to develop lesson plans and enrichment activities to meet the academic needs of the second-grade students; serving as grade-level School Improvement team member; planning, teaching, and assessing second-grade students in all generalized education areas including science, math, social studies, and literacy according to the state's standard course of study; and

assessing mastery of student learning in order to guide instruction and then evaluate and use the results to plan for corrective instruction in order to correct the learning deficits identified by the assessments. The researcher uses the assessment data in order to provide differentiated instruction to meet the learning needs of all students as well as providing learning opportunities that meet the learning styles of all students.

Other responsibilities held by the researcher include consulting with the special education department, support personnel, and paraprofessionals to schedule student instruction and the administration of all academic achievement testing to the writer's students including county benchmark tests as well as teacher-made tests. It is the researcher's responsibility to plan, administer, and analyze all interventions and probes necessary for the MTSS (Multi-Tier Systems of Supports) program, also known as Response to Intervention (RTI), and then use the results to further differentiate instruction for those students and seek assistance from the Exceptional Education Department if necessary.

The researcher is a contributing member of this school's second-grade PLC. Along with the second-grade PLC, the writer creates, administers, and evaluates assessments that target specific academic deficits within the second-grade student population. It is then that the researcher, along with the PLC team, differentiates instruction by grouping the second-grade students into flex groups based on the specific skills they need to work on in order to improve skill mastery and student success. The researcher also takes advantage of professional development opportunities in all areas in order to help drive classroom instruction and improve student achievement.

Definition of Terms

Accuracy. A person's ability to read words correctly; a component of fluency.

(FCRR, 2014).

mCLASS:Reading 3D®. A benchmark and progress monitoring system based on direct, frequent, and continuous student assessment. It is a scientifically based, formative assessment system that is used three times per year to manage, evaluate, report, and chart the results of Benchmark assessments for Grades PreK-8. The *mCLASS:Reading 3D®* system components provide one comprehensive progress monitoring and MTSS solution. It is also the computer management system for RTI (“mCLASS: Reading 3D,” 2015).

***mCLASS:DIBELS next®* progress monitor**. A system which allows teachers to monitor students at risk, or those students with more severe educational needs, more frequently to evaluate the effects of interventions and document appropriate instructional changes (“mCLASS: Reading 3D,” 2015).

Automaticity. The ability to do things without occupying the mind with the low-level details required, allowing it to become an automatic response pattern or habit. It is usually the result of learning, repetition, and practice (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974).

Below-level readers. Students who score at or below the 25th percentile in *mCLASS:Reading 3D®* norm scores and who are below the TRC level required for on-grade level status (“mCLASS: Reading 3D,” 2015).

Benchmark. Used in *mClass®* software as a word for a grade and benchmark goal for a specific period (“mCLASS: Reading 3D,” 2015).

***mCLASS: Reading 3D®* TRC**. A process where students are given a book and, before reading, they make predictions. Students then read aloud as the teacher marks words read as correct and incorrect. After reading, students answer comprehension questions. A score of 90% or higher is considered adequate comprehension (“mCLASS: Reading 3D,” 2015).

Prosody. A component of fluency; the process of reading with feeling and involves stress, intonation, and pauses (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974).

Rate. The speed at which one reads; a component of fluency (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974).

Reading comprehension. The process in which readers construct meaning by connecting prior knowledge and experience to information from the text (FCRR, 2014).

Reading fluency. A set of skills that allows readers to quickly and accurately decode text while maintaining high comprehension; the ability to read aloud expressively and automatically with understanding (Weaver, 2002, p. 215).

Repeated readings. Reading a passage or story several times with the practice of providing high-quality instruction matched to student need, monitoring their progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important educational decisions (Brummitt-Yale, 2011).

STAR™ reading test. A computer adaptive assessment of student reading fluency and comprehension; measures student performance in comparison to national norms (“The Foundation of the STAR Assessments,” 2015).

Significance of the Study

Studying the effect of an instructional intervention such as *Reader’s Theater* is significant for several reasons. First, in the local setting, this study could be significant for struggling readers in similar settings (Starratt, 1996). If young students are able to use decoding skills to the point of automaticity through *Reader’s Theater* in the local setting, the students’ fluency may improve and, in turn, so will reading achievement as a whole (Starratt, 1996). Next, this study provides teachers and students with strategies to enhance poor reading skills. If the daily use of *Reader’s Theater* improves the fluency

and comprehension for students in the local setting, then students who accomplish reading comprehension skills can thrive in the community. Finally, this study allows the school's administrators and team leaders to better understand the importance for collegial interactions; and as a result, teachers can obtain professional learning to provide effective strategies that foster student learning.

Summary

The problem researched in this study was that children who do not learn to read proficiently by the end of third grade are unlikely ever to read at grade level (Mead, 2010). These students are at high risk for later school failure and behavioral problems, for dropping out of high school, and for a host of negative life outcomes once they reach adulthood (Mead, 2010). Thirty-one percent of the second-grade students at this worksite were below the 87 words-per-minute expected state standards for reading fluency during the last semester of 2015, as reflected on the school's *mCLASS:DIBELS next®* progress monitoring report for reading fluency (District Internal Communication, n.d.). Twenty-eight percent of the second-grade students were below expected state standards for comprehension, having received below grade-level expectation on *mCLASS:Reading 3D®* TRC at a reading level below an M (District Internal Communication, n.d.). The *mCLASS:Reading 3D®* TRC reading levels run from A-Z. Levels J-N are second-grade levels, with M/N being the goal for the end of the second-grade year. Twenty-eight percent of the students received scores falling in the bottom 25th percentile on the *STAR™* monitor for comprehension and fluency (District Internal Communication, n.d.).

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the use of *Reader's Theater* affects the reading fluency and comprehension levels of second-grade readers.

The researcher also sought to discover to what extent *Reader's Theater* affects student attitudes toward reading. At the conclusion of the research period, the researcher sought to answer the questions, "To what extent does the use of *Reader's Theater* affect the reading fluency rate of second-grade readers"; "To what extent does *Reader's Theater* affect the comprehension levels of second-grade readers"; and "To what extent does *Reader's Theater* affect second-grade student attitudes toward reading?" If *Reader's Theater* has been shown to increase student reading fluency and comprehension levels, the writer hopes to be able to provide support for the implementation of this instructional program throughout the county for the benefit of all students.

Chapter 2: Study of the Problem/Literature Review

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent using *Reader's Theater* affects the reading fluency rates and comprehension levels of second grade-readers at this worksite. This study also sought to discover to what extent participating in *Reader's Theater* affects student attitudes toward reading. Chapter 1 provided the background for the study, statement of the problem, the theoretical framework, the purpose and significance of the problem, a description of the community and worksite that were the location of this study, definition of terms, and research questions. Chapter 1 laid the groundwork for this study. Chapter 2 is a research-based study of the problem.

During the last semester of the 2014-2015 school year, 31% of the second-grade students at this worksite were below expected state standards for reading fluency as reflected on the school's end-of-year (EOY) *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® progress monitoring report for reading fluency. Twenty-eight percent of the second-grade students were below expected state standards for comprehension, having received below grade level expectation on *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC at a reading level below an M; and 28% fell in the bottom 25th percentile on the *STAR*™ monitor for comprehension and fluency.

Research has linked reading fluency with comprehension (Johns & Berglund, 2005; Samuels, 2002). It is the responsibility of teachers to find teaching strategies that will motivate and encourage students to read, while at the same time providing them with the skills necessary to become successful fluent readers.

Statement of the Problem

Students not performing at a level of proficiency warrants concern due to the fact that whether or not children can read well by the end of third grade is a strong predictor of how they are likely to do in the future in school, at work, and as parents and citizens. Children who do not learn to read proficiently by the end of third grade are unlikely ever to read at grade level (Mead, 2010). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2013), in 2013, 31% of fourth graders in the U.S. performed below a basic reading level. A study conducted in 2014 by the Children's Defense Fund stated that nearly one-half (48%) of youths in the juvenile justice system were functioning below the grade level appropriate for their age ("The State of America's Children," 2014). In order for this cycle to be stopped, children must learn to read proficiently before they reach the third grade ("The State of America's Children," 2014). Ellis (2004) stated that when the state of Arizona projects how many prison beds it will need, it factors in the number of kids who read well in fourth grade. Evidence shows that children who do not read by third grade often fail to catch up and are more likely to drop out of school, take drugs, or go to prison (Ellis, 2004). According to the National Institute for Literacy (1998), poor literacy has been linked to crime. On their website, the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) stated that low literacy is strongly related to unemployment. More than 20% of adults read at or below a fifth-grade level which is far below the level needed in order to earn a living wage. According to Luthy and Stevens (2013), the Department of Justice reported that academic failure and delinquency, violence, and crime are connected to reading failure. The 2011 Annie E. Casey Foundation Report, stated that low-income children who do not read on grade level by third grade are six times more likely to drop out of high school than their peers. The report also noted that low-income children of color who

were not at grade level by third grade were eight times more likely to drop out of high school than their peers (2011). DiFillippo (2012) wrote in a special report for the Annie E. Casey Foundation that 44 million adults are now unable to read a simple story to their children and that 50% of adults cannot read a book written at an eighth-grade level.

DiFillippo also reported that 45 million adults are functionally illiterate and read below a fifth-grade level. Illiteracy has been reported as having a direct impact on our nation's economy. According to the National Institute for Literacy, National Center for Adult Literacy, The Literacy Company, and U.S. Census Bureau (2015),

- 3 of 4 people on welfare cannot read
- 20% of Americans read below the level needed to earn a living wage
- 50% of the unemployed between the ages of 16 and 21 cannot read well enough to be considered functionally literate
- Between 46 and 51% of American adults have an income well below the poverty level because of their inability to read
- Illiteracy costs American taxpayers an estimated \$20 billion each year
- School dropouts cost our nation \$240 billion in social service expenditures and lost tax revenues

The National Institute for Literacy, National Center for Adult Literacy, The Literacy Company, and U.S. Census Bureau reported illiteracy's direct impact on society as the following.

- 3 of 5 people in American prisons cannot read
- To determine how many prison beds will be needed in future years, some states actually base part of their projection on how well current elementary students are performing on reading tests

- 85% of juvenile offenders have problems reading
- Approximately 50% of Americans read so poorly that they are unable to perform simple tasks such as reading prescription drug labels

Richek, Caldwell, Jennings, and Lerner (2002) stated, “Society suffers when citizens cannot read adequately. People with low reading levels comprise many of the unemployed, high school dropouts, the poor and those convicted of crimes” (Richek et al., 2002, p. 3). Being able to read is no less than a survival skill in today’s world.

According to the data, second-grade students at this worksite scored poorly on fluency assessment. Teachers at this worksite reported that fluency rates for 31% of the entire population of second-grade students on the *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® reading fluency diagnostic tests fell in the *below* or *well below* proficiency levels. Table 1 breaks these data down into the subgroup of race represented at this school.

Table 1

2014-2015 Second-Grade EOY DIBELS Fluency Data Segment Results by Race

Race	Total Number of Students	% Below Proficiency	% Far Below Proficiency	Total % Below Proficient
Black/African American	4	0%	0%	0%
Multi-Racial	9	22%	22%	44%
Hispanic	8	12%	38%	50%
Caucasian	114	16%	14%	30%
Asian	1	0%	0%	0%
Male	76	21%	16%	37%
Female	60	13%	10%	23%

Twenty-eight percent of the students are below grade-level expectations, having received scores lower than a reading level N on the *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC.

Twenty percent of the students fell in the *far below* category, scoring a level J (first-grade level) or below. Table 2 below displays this resulting TRC data by gender.

Table 2

2014-2015 Second-Grade EOY TRC Data Segment Results by Gender

Gender	Total Number of Students	% Below Proficiency	% Far Below Proficiency	Total % Below Proficient
Male	76	7%	27%	34%
Female	60	6%	16%	22%

Table 3 below displays the EOY TRC data broken down by the subgroups of race.

Table 3

2014-2015 Second-Grade EOY TRC Data Segment Results by Race

Race	Total Number of Students	% Below Proficiency	% Far Below Proficiency	Total % Below Proficient
Black/African American	4	0	0	0
Multi-Racial	9	33%	11%	44%
Hispanic	8	0	38%	38%
Caucasian	114	3%	18%	21%
Asian	1	100%	0	100%

Twenty-eight percent of the second-grade students fell in the below grade-level range for reading comprehension and fluency as measured by the *STAR*™ reading

assessment for fluency and comprehension, receiving a score of 2.1 or below which, according to Renaissance Learning (*STAR™*), is equivalent to second grade, first month.

Background

In order to lay the foundation for this study, it is not only necessary to look at the history of reading but the importance of reading in the United States as well. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2005), since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act first passed Congress in 1965, the federal government has spent more than \$242 billion through 2003 to help educate disadvantaged children. Also found in the article is the fact that “according to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) on reading in 2000, only 32 percent of fourth-graders can read at a proficient level” (NAEP, 2001, p. 12).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind) was designed to improve student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). The goal of No Child Left Behind was to bring all students up to the “proficient” level on state tests by the 2013-2014 school year. Yet in 2013, according to the U.S. Department of Education (2013), 32% of fourth graders were reading below a level of proficiency. Children who enter school with language skills and prereading skills (e.g., understanding that print reads from left to right and top to bottom) are more likely to learn to read well in the early grades and succeed in later years (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). According to their research, most reading problems faced by adolescents and adults are the result of problems that could have been prevented through good instruction in their early childhood years (Snow et al., 1998).

Causative Analysis

There are a number of possible causes that may have led to the problem of poor

reading fluency and poor reading comprehension. Even though reading fluency has been shown to impact reading comprehension, it is often not included as part of the traditional reading programs. Many teachers often omit reading fluency instruction and focus instead on reading accuracy (Casey & Chamberlain, 2006). A student who has a history of poor reading fluency may be reluctant to read. Their motivation and interest levels are low (Bashir & Hook, 2009).

Another factor to consider is a student's family background. If the student comes from a family of nonreaders, chances are he or she has not had as many opportunities to listen to someone model fluent reading as a student coming from a background of fluent readers. This student may also lack the opportunities needed to practice good reading, which is necessary in order to develop reading fluency.

Theoretical Framework: Developmental Reading Theory and Theory of Attitude and Change

Developmental reading theory. One theory the writer hopes to add to is the developmental reading theory. This theory, as stated by the National Institute of Professional Practice (2015), operates on the premise that reading is a developmental process and within that process, fluency plays an important role in building comprehension in reading. According to *Stages in Reading Development*, an article written by Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (2012), the stages of reading development are a continuum that explain how students progress as readers. These stages are based on the students' experiences and not their age or grade level. The stages are as follows.

Emergent readers recognize letters and words and even language patterns. They are able to work with concepts of print and are at the beginning stages of developing the

ability to focus attention on letter-sound relationships. *Early readers* are able to use several strategies to predict a word, often using pictures to confirm predictions. They can discuss the background of the story to better understand the actions in the story and the message the story carries. It is this time in the reader's development that the cueing systems are called upon significantly, so they must pay close attention to the visual cues and language patterns and read for meaning. It is a time when reading habits of risk-taking and of predicting and confirming words while keeping the meaning in mind are established. *Transitional readers* often like to read books in a series as a comprehension strategy; the shared characters, settings, and events support their reading development. They read at a good pace; reading rate is one sign of a child's over-all comprehension. At this stage, children generally have strategies to figure out most words but continue to need help with understanding increasingly more difficult text. *Fluent readers* are confident in their understandings of text and how text works, and they are reading independently. The teacher focuses on student competence in using strategies to integrate the cueing systems. Students are maintaining meaning through longer and more complex stretches of language. An effective reader has come to understand text as something that influences people's ideas (Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, 2012).

According to the National Institute for Professional Practice's article, *Developmental Stages of Learning to Read*, (2015), children may enter school at the same age, but they are at various stages of reading development. The same article noted that a child's ability to understand the spoken word and his or her knowledge of print have an impact on his or her reading instruction (National Institute for Professional Practice, 2015). The article stresses that teachers, therefore, need to be aware of the

developmental stages of reading in order to ensure success for all students (National Institute for Professional Practice, 2015). According to Chall (1983), there are five stages of learning to read.

- Awareness and Exploration of Reading (typically prekindergarten)
- Emergent Reading Stage (typically prekindergarten to kindergarten)
- Early Reading Stage (typically kindergarten to early Grade 1)
- Transitional Reading Stage (typically late Grade 1-Grade 2)
- Fluent Reading Stage (typically Grade 3 and higher)

These developmental stages of learning to read can give teachers an estimate of each student's beginning instructional level. Students in kindergarten through the fourth grade show the greatest gains in reading fluency when it is a part of their regular reading education program (Brummitt-Yale, 2011). Nonfluent reading leads to less reading (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991). Since reading is the key to unlocking knowledge, developing vocabulary, and facilitating other cognitive skills (Stanovich, 1984), these other skills and processes are delayed. The child who is slow to develop fluency is doubly disadvantaged (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991). Nonfluent readers who have not been provided with the opportunity to listen to expressive, fluent reading within the school setting may also lack the desire to read. When nonfluent readers are assigned stories that are of little or no interest to them, they may not desire to put forth the effort to read. These students may not be motivated to read because their labored reading allows for little, if any, comprehension to occur. When nonfluent readers are forced to read material that is too difficult for them or when they are "put on the spot" and made to read material aloud without practice, they may become embarrassed or ashamed.

Consequently, their self-esteem may be damaged and their reluctance to read will be solidified. If the nonfluent student's teachers have not been enthusiastic about reading and only presented reading as another work assignment, the nonfluent reader may have picked up on that attitude and adopted it as their own (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991).

Another possible cause to consider is that many students are involved in numerous afterschool activities such as sports, dance, and music. These activities may not allow the time needed for the student to practice reading at home (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991). A further possibility to consider is that the student who is a nonfluent reader may have failed to internalize basic sight word knowledge and decoding skills and consequently is now unable to read fluently. The reader must focus on decoding each word one at a time. This, in turn, makes it very difficult to gain any understanding from what is being read. Reading instruction in the elementary school grades is important for the development of reading abilities in young children (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991).

Reading attitude is an important factor that affects student reading achievement and in-class reading activities and determines whether they will become independent readers or not (Logan & Johnston, 2009). Positive reading attitudes lead to positive reading experiences which, in turn, lead to higher academic performance. Wang (2000) explained that children's literacy development determines their future success in reading and whether or not children read is determined by their attitudes toward reading. According to Wang, "If children do not like reading or they think reading is boring, their negative attitude toward reading will hinder their reading improvement" (p. 120).

Lacking the fundamental skills necessary for good reading leads to another possible cause for students having poor reading fluency and comprehension scores. If the student has had a history of poor reading fluency and comprehension, were interventions

in place? When teachers do not provide individualized interventions based on a student's learning deficits, that student's specific learning needs will not be met. When reading becomes a chore, when a student's self-esteem has been damaged, when there are no fluent readers to act as role models, when there is no motivation to read or enjoyment from reading, and when the student lacks the skills to improve their reading, the student may become reluctant to and even fearful of reading. This, in turn, keeps the poor reading cycle turning. Stanovich (1986) coined this poor reading cycle phenomena as The Matthew Effect.

Fluency and comprehension. A good reader is a fast, efficient problem solver who uses meaning and syntax as they quickly and efficiently decode unfamiliar words (Weaver, 2002). Bashir and Hook (2009) viewed reading as “a developmental process that is based on the integration of diverse components into a smooth and automatic foundation on which fluent reading and comprehension are grounded” (p. 196).

Reading fluency. A commonly used definition of fluency is “the ability to read aloud expressively and automatically with understanding” (Weaver, 2002, p. 215). *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*, a publication funded by the National Institute for Literacy (2006), defined reading fluency as “the ability to read text accurately and quickly” (p. 29). Armbruster, Lehr, Osborn, and Adler (2001) also emphasized the importance of fluency to a student's success in reading by saying it is a “bridge between word recognition and comprehension” (p. 22).

Rasinski (2003) referred to reading fluency as a reader's ability to read quickly, effortlessly, and efficiently with meaningful expression. The National Reading Panel (2000) concluded that fluency results from reading “with speed, accuracy, and proper expression” (p. 3-1). It is often associated with oral reading only, due to the fact that

teachers can easily assess oral reading. However, fluency pertains to silent reading as well as oral reading (Johns & Berglund, 2005). According to Brummett-Yale (2011), fluency can also be defined as “the speed, accuracy and prosody (expression) that a person uses when reading a text” (p. 1). Fluent reading involves three components that work together: accuracy of decoding; automaticity of word recognition; and the appropriate use of the prosodic features such as stress, pitch, and suitable phrasing (Kiley, 2006). Richards (2000) suggested that “For successful readers, oral reading fluency is the ability to project the natural pitch, stress, and juncture of the spoken word on written text, automatically and at a natural rate” (p. 534). Fluent reading involves more than simply being able to read words accurately and automatically; it also incorporates expressive and meaningful rendering of a text (Kuhn, 2005). Fluency also includes the meaningful phrasing of the sentence as one reads as well as reading with the appropriate stress, intonation, and prosodic features (Bashir & Hook, 2009).

Fluency is measured by giving the student a grade-level appropriate reading passage that he or she has not read before. The student is timed for 1 minute as he or she reads as much of the passage as possible. The number of correctly read words is then divided by the total number of words in the passage to determine the reading rate. The score can then be compared to other students for that specific grade level (Corcoran, 2005). Some studies have suggested that reading fluency includes comprehension (Johns & Berglund, 2005; Samuels, 2002). For these, fluency includes *speed*, *accuracy*, *appropriate expression*, and *comprehension*. Reading requires a person to decode the words they are reading while at the same time comprehending what they have read. When word recognition is not fluent, there is a gap in the student’s ability to focus, making it impossible for him or her to understand what he or she is reading (Armbruster

et al., 2001). Without comprehension, reading is decoding, word calling (Johns & Berglund, 2005).

Fluency is a multifaceted process and requires a reader to use multiple skills at the same time. *More Focus on Reading Fluency Needed, Study Suggests*, an article published in *Education Week*, stated that “students who can read text passages aloud accurately and fluently at an appropriate pace are more likely to understand what they are reading, both silently and orally” (Manzo, 2005, p. 11). Fluency represents a complicated, multifaceted performance. It involves a reader’s perceptual skill at automatically translating letters into sounds and gaining meaning from those sounds (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001). Because fluency is a multifaceted process, it requires the reader to use multiple skills at the same time. The reader must be able to decode and comprehend the individual words and complete phrases and sentences he or she encounters (Brummitt-Yale, 2011). Fluency builds on a foundation of oral language skills, phonemic awareness, familiarity with letter forms, and efficient decoding skills. If these skills are not firmly in place, comprehension will not be complete (Kuhn, 2004). Fluency and comprehension are connected. Efficient fluent word recognition frees up cognitive processing skills in order to focus on comprehension. In contrast, slow word recognition places demands on remembering what is read and therefore interferes with comprehension (Bashir & Hook, 2009).

Fluency has been shown to be a solid predictor of reading comprehension and a vital goal of reading (Fuchs et al., 2001). For students to be successful, they need to be able to read text fluently (Lo, Cooke, & Starling, 2011). Fluent reading is more than reading words; it also incorporates those elements that make for an animated and meaningful interpretation of text (Kuhn, 2005).

Oral reading fluency. Oral reading fluency, according to Fuchs et al. (2001), is “also a direct measure of phonological segmentation and recoding skill as well as word recognition” (p. 241). Fuchs et al. went on to state that the individual who is a fluent reader quickly and accurately translates written language into oral form. This ability may also be a reflection of the reader’s ability to gain meaning from the text (Fuchs et al., 2001).

Many studies have shown that limited oral reading fluency may be a predictor of reading comprehension (Hintze, Callahan III, Matthews, Williams, & Tobin 2002). A poor reader’s lack of fluency is evidenced by their slow, halting, and inconsistent rate of reading; poor phrasing; and inadequate intonation patterns. Good readers not only read fluently, but when they read aloud, they also use appropriate phrasing, intonation, and their oral reading mirrors their spoken language (Hook & Jones, 2002).

Reading fluency also involves the reader’s ability to anticipate what will come next in the passage. Anticipation facilitates reaction time and is particularly important for reading comprehension (Wood, Flowers, & Grigorenko, 2001). According to Brummitt-Yale (2011), “Fluency has the greatest impact on comprehension” (p. 2).

Research has shown that inaccurate word reading often leads to the mmisinterpretation of the story being read, poor automaticity can strain the reader’s ability to construct ongoing interpretation of the story, and poor prosody can lead to confusion through inappropriate groupings of words or the inappropriate use of expression (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005). Those students who demonstrate high fluency rates tend to read more and remember more of what they have read due to the fact that they were able to use less cognitive energy on decoding individual words (Brummitt-Yale, 2011).

Poor reading fluency. Poor reading fluency causes “an excessive cognitive capacity, leaving less capacity for comprehension” (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991, p. 15). In contrast, a fluent reader decodes texts automatically, which leaves the attention to be used for comprehension (Tyler & Chard, 2000). For the nonfluent reader, comprehension is difficult, if not impossible, because they have to focus on the decoding of the words (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991). Brummitt-Yale (2001) stated that when a reader “must stop at each word and spend time trying to pronounce it or determine its meaning he is unable to develop an overall understanding of the text” (p. 1). Poor reading fluency also prevents the reader from enjoying the reading process due to the fact that most of the reader’s energy and focus is on the decoding of words. Few resources are left for processing meaning, becoming totally absorbed in the story, understanding the humor, and using one’s imagination (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991). Being proficient in the low-level cognitive ability of word recognition frees the reader’s capacity for higher level, interactive comprehension processing of text. Fluent reading, then, can be an indicator of a reader’s overall reading competence (Fuchs et al., 2001).

Skeptics. Although the development of fluency is an integral component of reading instruction, it is often overlooked by traditional reading programs including basal reading series, daily lesson plans, individualized education plans, remedial intervention, and reading instruction textbooks (Casey & Chamberlain, 2006). Many teachers often overlook the importance of fluency, focusing on accuracy instead (Casey & Chamberlain, 2006). When students with reading fluency difficulties are read to and relieved of the burden of decoding the words themselves, their comprehension level is often considerably enhanced. These students’ abilities to read and comprehend text are primarily limited by their poor reading fluency (Wren, 2006). Fluent readers can perform

over a long period of time, retain the skill even after having gone for long periods of time with no practice, and can generalize across the texts. They are not easily distracted and their reading often seems to flow smoothly and effortlessly. In contrast, nonfluent readers tend to read in a disjointed, labored manner (Hudson et al., 2005). Since decoding the words is their primary focus, retaining and understanding what they have read is often impossible (Kiley, 2006).

Fluent readers are also able to read with prosody, meaning a combination of accuracy, automaticity, and expression that makes oral reading sound like spoken language (Kuhn, 2004). Prosody is the key that opens the door to the gathering of meaning and understanding from the written word (Kuhn, 2004).

Word recognition speed, or fluency, is associated with the increased capacity to focus attention on integrative comprehension processing when reading. This shows that the fluency with which a reader translates the written word into the spoken word should serve as an indicator not only of their word recognition skill but also of the reader's ability to comprehend the text (Kuhn, 2004).

Since the segmenting of text into appropriate phrasing is an indicator of the reader's ability to transfer or apply their knowledge of the spoken word to the written word, it can also be seen as an indicator that they understand what they read through their maintenance of the key features of expressive language (Kuhn, 2005).

Reading with comprehension. The skill of reading with comprehension involves two important skills. In order to read with understanding, the reader must be able to automatically and fluently decode the text while at the same time completely understand the language in which the text is written (Wren, 2006). Effective reading comprehension not only requires accurate reading skills but also the ability to read

automatically and fluently (Hook & Jones, 2002). According to Hook and Jones (2002), “Many struggling readers have difficulty moving to a level of automaticity and fluency that allows them to easily comprehend what they are reading” (p. 9). By helping learners to become fluent readers, teachers are not only aiding them in their ability to accurately and automatically decode but may also be assisting them in their ability to construct meaning as well (Kuhn, 2005).

According to Bashir and Hook (2009), reading is a complex process, which can be difficult for even the best of readers from time to time. However, when a reader struggles to decode each word and does not gain understanding from what is read, the motivation and desire to continue reading decreases. There is little or no enjoyment from the reading process, and the reader’s self-esteem often suffers (Bashir & Hook, 2009). The more difficult it is for a person to read and understand what is read, the less likely it is that he or she will want to read, thus perpetuating the cycle of reading difficulty. Studies have shown that most children develop into fluent readers by the third grade (Corcoran, 2005). Approximately 75% of students who are poor readers in the third grade continue to be lower achieving readers in the ninth grade and, in essence, do not recover their reading abilities even into adulthood. It is therefore imperative for reading fluency to become an integral part of the early elementary reading instruction (Corcoran, 2005).

Theory of attitude and change. According to Cherry (2015), as written in her article *Attitudes and Behavior*, “an attitude is a set of emotions, beliefs, and behaviors toward a particular object, person, thing or event” (p. 1). Attitudes are often a result of experience and can have a powerful influence over behavior. Cherry stated that while attitudes are enduring, they can also change. There are a number of different factors that

can influence how and why attitudes form. Attitudes form directly as a result of experience. They may emerge due to direct personal experience, or they may result from observation. Social roles and social norms can have a strong influence on attitudes. Social roles relate to how people are expected to behave in a particular role or context. Social norms involve society's rules for what behaviors are considered appropriate. While attitudes can have a powerful effect on behavior, they are not permanent. The same influences that lead to attitude formation can also create attitude change (Cherry, 2015).

Learning theory of attitude change. Classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning can be used to bring about attitude change (Cherry, 2015). As reported by Cherry (2015), classical conditioning, first described by Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov, involves placing a neutral signal *before* a reflex and focuses on involuntary, automatic behaviors. This type of learning, according to Cherry, can be used to create positive emotional reactions to an object, person, or event by associating positive feelings with the target object. Cherry also reported that operant conditioning, first described by B. F. Skinner, an American psychologist, involves applying reinforcement or punishment *after* a behavior. The focus here is on strengthening or weakening voluntary behaviors. Cherry stated that this type of learning can be used to strengthen desirable attitudes and weaken undesirable ones. People can also change their attitudes after observing the behavior of others (Cherry, 2015).

Zanna and Rempel (1988) viewed attitude as having many causes. They believed that attitude is not a stable or predisposed thing but rather something that can be changed based on internal or external cues (Zanna, & Rempel, 1988). Current research suggests that motivated readers hold positive beliefs about themselves as readers (Guthrie &

Wigfield, 2000). Conversely, struggling readers assume they are responsible for their reading difficulties. Recurring failures to succeed and self-concept issues often complicate a student's ability to learn any of a variety of reading skills. Schunk and Zimmerman (1997) found that students who doubt their ability to learn give up quickly when faced with new challenges. Therefore, reading instruction for struggling readers should focus on the rebuilding of damaged self-concepts. This can be accomplished through successful experiences.

Berliner (1981) found that success rates had a substantial impact on student learning. His studies produced strong, consistent evidence that tasks completed with high rates of success were clearly linked to greater learning and improved student attitudes, while tasks where students were moderately successful were less consistently related to learning and hard tasks had a negative impact on learning. Hard tasks also produced off-task behaviors and negative attitudes.

When students have a strong interest in what they read, they can frequently transcend their reading level (Worthy, 1996). Many educators and researchers consider interest to be an essential factor in all learning (Hidi, 1990; Schiefele, 1991). Students who do not enjoy typical school texts often fail to engage in reading and may develop a lifelong aversion to reading. Even if they are not initially struggling readers, "reluctant readers tend to gradually lose some academic ground, because page reading is related to increases in general knowledge and reading comprehension" (Williamson & Williamson, 1988, pp. 204-212).

According to the most recent NAEP results, which is our nation's report card, about 60% of fourth graders read at or above basic levels and fewer than 30% read at proficient levels or above (FCRR, 2015). Although research-informed reading

instruction has truly helped many children learn to decode and read words, many continue to have difficulty understanding what they read in books (FCRR, 2015).

Students who choose poor strategies or do not have adequate skills to solve problems may develop a lack of confidence in their ability to succeed (Galbraith & Alexander, 2011). This will cause those students to begin avoiding situations where they may feel embarrassed because they do not want to take the risk of failure (Galbraith & Alexander, 2011). Contemporary reading theories underscore the importance of readers' self-concepts and attitudes toward reading as factors influencing reading comprehension. A basic premise in this regard is that these affective aspects influence readers' motivation to read and make an effort on the reading task (Ghaith & Bouzeineddine, 2003). Specifically, readers who are interested in the material are more likely to persist in reading than their uninterested counterparts (Ghaith & Bouzeineddine, 2003). Similarly, readers with positive self-concepts enjoy their reading experience, identify with what they read, and are likely to be intrinsically motivated. Conversely, readers with negative attitudes and poor self-concepts avoid reading, which may have a negative effect on their comprehension (Ghaith & Bouzeineddine, 2003). Research by Sainsbury and Schagen (2004) showed that a student's attitude about reading is a motivator for reading. High motivation to read and positive attitudes about reading are related to higher reading achievement and more frequent reading (Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004). According to Stoffelsma and Spooren (2013), students who enjoy reading and who perceive themselves to be good readers usually read more frequently and more widely, which in turn broadens their reading experience and improves their comprehension skills. Students at the high level of the index of positive attitudes toward reading had substantially higher average reading achievement than those at the medium or low levels (Stoffelsma & Spooren,

2013). Response to texts and the affective factors that shape responses cannot be divorced from the reading situation as they also make a considerable contribution to the reading process (He, 2008; Lipson & Wixson, 1997). This component of reading involves attitudes, motivations, and behavior; it determines one's responses to a given text. In 1998, Day and Bamford referred to the affect as "the secret garden of reading" (p. 21). Wolf (2008) aptly described the importance of affect in reading as "emotional engagement is often the tipping point between leaping into the reading life or remaining in a childhood bog where reading is only endured only as a means to other ends" (p. 132). It appears that positive reading outcomes assist in the development of a positive attitude, whereas negative outcomes of reading tend to discourage further ventures into reading (McKenna et al., 1995). McKenna (2001), in his model of reading attitude acquisition, suggested that each reading experience makes a difference to one's attitude towards reading and one's beliefs regarding reading outcomes.

Rasinski (2000) noted that slow, disfluent reading leads to frustration for the reader. Slow reading negatively impacts students. These readers take more time to complete reading assignments than other classmates. The lack of comprehension and additional time needed to keep up with reading assignments can lead to frustration, which can lead to less reading resulting in slower progress in reading than students reading at an appropriate rate (Rasinski, 2000). An inefficient reader has difficulty keeping up with classmates reading assigned texts. Students need to be exposed to a variety of genres so they are more likely to find reading materials that match their interests and are relevant and enjoyable. Early readers, as noted by McKenna (2001), need successful reading episodes in order to develop positive attitudes towards reading. If a student is continually unsuccessful and frustrated by reading, it is predicted that the student will develop the

expectation of reading to be a negative experience, resulting in a poor attitude. Success needs to be confirmed by supportive, effective reading instruction to enable students to develop positive attitudes towards reading (McKenna, 2001). According to McKenna, the reading attitudes between good and poor readers widen as students get older. This gap may be reduced by effective reading instruction and intervention in the early grades (McKenna, 2001).

Research-Based Reading Strategies

There have been a number of research-based strategies for improving reading fluency and comprehension. Among these strategies are Guided Reading/Small Group Instruction, Whole Class Choral Reading (WCCR), The Daily Five, Reading Workshop, Repeated Oral Reading, and Reader's Theater, all of which will be briefly discussed below.

Guided Reading/Small Group Instruction. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) defined *guided reading* as “a context in which a teacher supports each student’s development of effective strategies for processing novel texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty” (p. 2). During guided reading, the teacher works with small groups of students who are similar in their reading ability level. As each child reads, the teacher acts as a guide: listening, taking notes, and supporting the reader (Linder, 2011). According to Brummitt-Yale (2011), Guided Oral Reading is “an excellent strategy for improving reading fluency” (p. 10). This strategy aids in the development of accuracy and word recognition skills, which are two of the components of reading fluency (Brummitt-Yale, 2011). Guided Reading provides teachers with the opportunity to choose what strategies they will teach to meet the ever-changing needs of their students (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991).

Small Group Instruction allows the teacher to focus his/her attention on the needs of the children and provides the children more opportunities to participate in the group (Wasik, 2008). The focus of Small Group Instruction is on the presentation of specific concepts and skills to children and engages them in learning experiences (Wasik, 2008). According to Philips and Twardosz (2003), when students read in small groups, the average number of comments and questions double.

WCCR. WCCR is an instructional strategy in which all students read aloud with the teacher at the same time. The teacher models accurate pronunciation, the appropriate reading rate, and expression (Paige, 2011). WCCR can be implemented through repeated readings (Samuels, 1979, 1997), reading the same text multiple times, or through wide reading where various texts of similar difficulty are read (Kuhn et al., 2006). Studies have shown that using WCCR as a fluency strategy improves decoding ability and reading fluency (Rasnski, 2003; Samuels, 2006).

The Daily Five. The Daily Five consists of five literacy tasks for students to complete while the teacher is meeting with small groups: (1) read to self, (2) read to someone, (3) listen to reading, (4) work on writing, and (5) word work (Boushey & Moser, 2006). The Daily Five literacy block contains alternating periods of time for whole-group and small-group instruction (Linder, 2011). It is a student-driven strategy that fully engages students in reading and writing (Linder, 2011). This strategy encompasses all of the components of literacy while providing a plan to manage each piece and helps students develop independent literacy habits allowing teachers to work with small groups or have individual conferences (Boushy & Moser, 2006).

Reading Workshop. During Reading Workshop, students receive instruction during mini-lessons and are given large amounts of time to participate in guided or

independent reading. During the mini-lesson, the teacher models proficient reading. During reading time, the teacher meets with one small group and conferences with several individual students while the remaining students read and respond (Linder, 2011).

Repeated Oral Reading. According to Brummitt-Yale (2011), Repeated Oral Reading is a strategy for improving a reader's fluency as well as his or her vocabulary. The student reads a selection that is at or slightly above his or her independent reading level aloud several times with the teacher providing feedback each time the text is read. Students can work one-on-one with the teacher or be paired with another student (Brummitt-Yale, 2011). Repeated Oral Reading is considered the most commonly recommended strategy for improving the rate of reading fluency (Armbruster et al., 2001). The repeated reading of a text aimed at developing fluency may also be linked to the improvement of reading comprehension (Reutzel & Hollinsworth, 1993). According to Rasinski (1989), "research has shown that repetition is most effective when students meet target words in a variety of texts or through repeated exposures to one text" (p. 691). Repeated reading increases understanding and leads to shared insights (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). According to research, repeated reading increases reading fluency (Goldstein, 1999). Repeated Oral Reading activities help to improve reading accuracy and reading comprehension (Tompkins, 2005). In a study conducted by O'Conner, White, and Swanson (2007), it was determined that repeated reading not only improved the rate of reading but also word identification and reading comprehension of readers who were below-level in second through fourth grades. Research conducted by Dowhower (1994) on the positive effects of the Repeated Oral Reading strategy led him to the conclusion that the positive effects are so strong that repeated reading should be a part of every aspect of the daily literacy instruction. The National Reading Panel (2000)

determined that guided, repeated oral reading positively impacts word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. In a study conducted by Goldsmith-Conley and Barber (2011), repeated reading was found to be a practical and effective strategy with many benefits, ranging from improving reading skills and increasing enjoyment in reading. In addition, Repeated Oral Reading is also particularly effective with low-performing students (Goldsmith-Conley & Barber, 2011).

Selected Solution Strategy: Reader's Theater

History of the term Reader's Theater. According to Coger and White (1973), the earliest use of the term *Reader's Theatre* dates back to 1945 when a professional group in New York who called themselves Readers Theatre, Inc. produced *Oedipus Rex*. The group's purpose was to give the people of New York an opportunity to witness great dramatic works performed which were rarely, if ever produced (Coger & White, 1973) . Radio plays are also a form of *Reader's Theater*. The actors perform using scripts and no staging is used. This form of drama began in the 1920s and reached its peak in the 1940s (Coger & White, 1973). During the 1960s, *Reader's Theater* became popular among college theater departments and from there it spread to secondary English education. The graduates then brought the practice into their high school English classroom. More recently, educators have discovered the connection to literacy, and thus *Reader's Theatre* has now been employed in middle and elementary school classrooms (Coger & White, 1973).

Skeptics of Reader's Theater

According to the results of a study done by Callard (2008), there was a difference in the DIBELS posttest percentage results between the control group (students who had not participated in *Reader's Theater*) and the experimental group of students (those who

participated in *Reader's Theater*). The experimental group had a growth of 44.11%, and the control group had a growth of 27.5%. However, after performing a *t* test, the researcher found no statistically significant growth for either group. The experimental group had made greater growth in comprehension with a mean percentage increase of 23.99%, compared to a mean increase of 15.79% for the control group. When a *t* test was performed, the researcher once again found no statistically significant growth for either group. Lastly, not only did Callard find that *Reader's Theater* was not a motivational reading strategy to the participants, but just the opposite was true. The experimental group had a decrease in the Motivation to Read Profile with a mean score change of -5.06% (Callard, 2008).

Rationale for Choosing Reader's Theater

Students are more likely to practice and rehearse assisted and repeated readings if they know they will be performing a reading in front of an audience (Young & Rasinski, 2009). *Reader's Theater* creates an academic avenue to proper oral reading fluency because it provides motivation and confidence for readers to “practice, refine, and perform texts” (Young & Rasinski, 2009, p. 12). *Reader's Theater* provides a motive for the countless number of times a text must be reread (Young & Rasinski, 2009). The mundane act of repeated reading is masked by the opportunity to practice with classmates and perform in front of an audience (Young & Rasinski, 2009, p. 12). According to Education World (2015), a complete online resource that teachers, administrators, and school staff can visit each day to find high-quality and in-depth original content, *Reader's Theater* blends student desires to perform with their need for oral reading practice. This strategy offers an entertaining and engaging means of improving fluency and comprehension (Education World, 2015). *Reader's Theater* incorporates repeated

reading in an engaging manner (Clementi, 2010). It connects quality literature, oral reading, drama, and several research-based practices (Worthy & Broaddus, 2002). It differs from what one traditionally thinks of as theater in that it does not require any costumes, props, or actions other than the facial expressions or gestures of the readers (Moran, 2006). Students practice roles within scripts that are at their individual reading level. Participants are not required to memorize their lines, reading from their scripts, which allows them the opportunity to focus on their reading, vocal and facial expressions, and comprehension (Clementi, 2010). The students' voices are the only tools they use to communicate meaning or to bring their characters and story to life (Casey & Chamberlain, 2006).

Students typically read only the part that is assigned to or chosen by them (Casey & Chamberlain, 2006). By focusing on one part, students, particularly those who struggle with reading, have more time to focus on their oral reading skills as opposed to just decoding the words (Moran, 2006).

Incorporating elements of reading fluency. Rasinski (2004) was concerned about fluency instruction over emphasizing reading speed at the expense of reading with expression. *Reader's Theater* combines fluency practice with reading at an appropriate pace and with expression, assisting readers to construct meaning from the text. "Fluency instruction leads to impressive gains when it provides regular opportunities for expressive reading through assisted and repeated readings" (Rasinski, 2004, pp. 49-50). Reading with expression is evidence that the reader is constructing meaning from the text (Rasinski, 2004).

Reader's Theater can successfully incorporate the many elements of reading fluency (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1999). It is a very flexible strategy which allows

teachers to adapt the scripts to meet the instructional needs of the students (Clementi, 2010). Any book can be adapted and all subject areas may be used (Clementi, 2010). *Reader's Theater* provides students with the opportunity to read, repeat, and understand the vocabulary in the content areas (Clementi, 2010). Teachers can also use different genres including poetry, plays, fiction, and nonfiction (Garrett & O'Conner, 2010). *Reader's Theater* exposes students to basic sight words needed in order to build recognition, allows for repeated reading opportunities in order to increase fluency, and can affect comprehension through the actions and gestures used to carry out the performance (Corcoran & Davis, 2003). *Reader's Theater* provides students of varying learning needs the opportunity for authentic participation in rereading texts, in contrast to the traditional skill and drill approaches of reading texts by teacher direction (Prescott, 2003; Tyler & Chard, 2000; Worthy & Broaddus, 2002). The program uses materials that are meant to be read orally and performed for an audience (Rasinski, 2004). Readers do not read and reread just to increase their reading speed; they practice reading to recreate the voice of the author so that an audience will be able to fully appreciate the meaning that is embedded in the voice of the character (Rasinski, 2004). The most effective way to improve reading fluency is by reading and rereading, but students often grow bored or impatient. *Reader's Theater* gives students a purpose to read and reread a text, a quality that makes this strategy a wonderful tool for improving students' fluency (Armbruster et al., 2001). The daily rereading allows students the opportunity to experiment and play with language and provides students a chance to hear fluent reading when listening to their teacher and fellow students read (Casey & Chamberlain, 2006). *Reader's Theater* seems to especially suit the needs and abilities of the struggling reader while providing an authentic rationale for repeatedly reading the same text (Tyler &

Chard, 2000).

Attitude and motivation. Attitude plays an important role in reading. Sainsbury (2004) stressed that reading education has two fundamental objectives: developing reading skills and positive attitudes toward reading. Studies of reading should emphasize attitudes since attitude towards reading is a variable that predicts academic achievement (Hood, Creed, & Neumann, 2012; House & Prion, 1998). Reading attitude is an important factor that affects students' reading achievement and in-class reading activities and determines whether they will become independent readers (Logan & Johnston, 2009). Motivation is the key to having students read. Studies show that students who have participated in *Reader's Theater* enjoyed reading more after its implementation (Clementi, 2010). According to Casey and Chamberlain (2006) and Griffith and Rasinski (2004), teachers using *Reader's Theater* found that the activities encouraged students to choose reading over other activities at both school and home. Casey and Chamberlain stated that "within two months of using *Reader's Theater*, skills learned carried over to other reading activities, particularly with unfamiliar texts" (p. 25). In a study conducted by Prescott (2003), second-grade students who participated in *Reader's Theater* on a regular basis made, on average, more than a year's growth in reading. *Reader's Theater* has been described as a strategy that is both effective and motivating for improving the reading abilities of all students (Clementi, 2010). "Attitude toward reading has been defined as students' feelings toward reading, which result in approaching or avoiding reading tasks" (Cooter & Alexander, 1984, p. 97). Studies have found that attitudes towards reading can relate to student oral reading fluency (Rinehart, 1999; Samuels, 2002). Samuels (2002) believed that "the ability to read orally like a skilled reader after a few re-readings of a text is an important accomplishment and confidence builder for

nonfluent readers, who are often embarrassed by their poor oral reading skills” (p. 179). *Reader’s Theater* provides the format to improve student reading fluency, therefore fostering positive student attitudes towards reading. This is accomplished in part because students who struggle in reading often feel frustrated; and when their frustration is alleviated, they enjoy reading more. Rinehart (1999) found that “positive changes in attitudes about *Reader’s Theater* for many of the children emerged as they became successful through the *Reader’s Theater* event” (p. 85). Based on observational data, Rinehart discovered that using the *Reader’s Theater* method builds student confidence as well as excitement towards practicing reading.

Reader’s Theater and the (English Language Learner) ELL Student

Mauro (2015) stated that *Reader’s Theater* “focuses on repetition and increasing reading comprehension to eventually increase fluency in reading” (para. 2). ELL students will typically need to read a story many times in order to gain the fluency that non-ELL students have when they read an unknown text the first time. In the average class, students often read a story one or two times and then move on. The ELL student needs more time to practice with a story and in order to understand what they are reading (Mauro, 2015). Mauro stated that *Reader’s Theater* is beneficial for this population “because it gives them time to really understand what they reading without being rushed” (para. 2). ELL students can benefit from *Reader’s Theater* the same way struggling readers do (Young & Rasinski, 2009). Robertson (2009) stated, “ELLs benefit greatly from having opportunities to read a text many times because it helps them develop fluency, vocabulary and comprehension” (para.4). In addition, Robertson stressed that this work “focuses on enhancing speaking skills like pronunciation, inflection, expression and varied volume” (para. 5). These elements will then increase student engagement in

the story. When students are actively engaged in a lesson, it is easier to learn more than if they are not engaged (Robertson, 2009). Boudreault (2010) stressed that “using drama helps the students develop confidence in students ability to learn the new language and that will in turn have impact both in school performance and also developing more engagement in school overall” (para. 5).

Summary

In 1986, Stanovich called the phenomena of the poor reading cycle The Matthew Effect. Research has linked reading fluency with comprehension (Johns & Berglund, 2005; Samuels, 2002). Fluency is a multi-faceted process and requires a reader to use multiple skills at the same time (Manzo, 2005). Students who can read text passages aloud accurately and fluently are more likely to gain meaning from what they have read (Manzo, 2005). There are many possible causes for poor reading fluency which include, but are not limited to, a student’s family’s literacy level, the lack of fluent role models both at home and in the school environment, lack of reading practice, lack of motivation, and a lack of enjoyment. Another possible cause is the student’s inability to grasp the skills necessary in order to become a good fluent reader. When reading becomes a chore, when a student’s self-esteem has been damaged, when there are no fluent readers to act as role models, when there is no motivation to read or enjoyment from reading, and when the student lacks the skills to improve their reading, the student may become reluctant to and even fearful of reading. This, in turn, keeps the poor reading cycle turning, commonly known as The Matthew Effect (Stanovich, 1986).

The researcher chose to implement *Reader’s Theater* with the students in six regular second-grade classrooms in order to determine to what extent this strategy affects the reading fluency rates and comprehension levels and attitudes of the participants. This

strategy was chosen because it incorporates repeated reading in an engaging manner (Clementi, 2010). *Reader's Theater* connects quality literature, oral reading, drama, and several research-based practices (Worthy & Broaddus, 2002). *Reader's Theater* is a very flexible strategy which allows teachers to adapt the scripts to meet the instructional needs of the students (Clementi, 2010). This strategy also gives students a purpose to read and reread a text, a quality that makes this strategy a wonderful tool for improving student fluency (Armbruster et al., 2001).

Chapter 3: Methodology/Expected Outcomes and Procedures for Data Analysis

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent using *Reader's Theater* affects the reading fluency rates and comprehension levels of second-grade readers. This study also sought to discover to what extent participating in *Reader's Theater* impacts student attitudes toward reading. Chapter 1 set the stage for this study by exploring the problem, the theoretical framework, the purpose and significance of the problem, a description of the community and worksite that was the location of this study, definition of terms, and research questions. Chapter 2 provided a research-based study of the problem and its significance. Chapter 3 discusses the research design, sampling design, ethical issues, data collection, validity and reliability, and statistical methodology. The sampling criteria, data collection procedures, and the survey instrument are presented in this study. Data analysis includes a discussion of coded themes generated from the survey instrument.

It is the goal of this researcher that all second-grade students at this worksite will be able to read fluently and expressively with a high level of comprehension. The researcher analyzed the quantitative data from the *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® (DORF) progress monitoring report for reading fluency, the *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC, and *STAR*™ pre and posttest comparisons, along with the data gathered from student and teacher interviews, to determine how the reading fluency rates and comprehension levels of the second-grade readers at this worksite have changed after participating in *Reader's Theater*. The researcher then compared the qualitative data gathered from preimplementation and postimplementation teacher and student interviews to determine what effect the participation in *Reader's Theater* had on second-grade students' attitudes

toward reading.

Restatement of the Research Questions

The researcher sought to answer the following questions.

1. To what extent does participating in *Reader's Theater* affect the fluency of second-grade readers?
2. To what extent does participating in *Reader's Theater* affect the comprehension levels of second-grade readers?
3. To what extent does participating in *Reader's Theater* affect second-grade students' attitudes toward reading?

Research Design

This mixed-methods study addressed to what extent *Reader's Theater* affects the reading fluency rates and comprehension levels of second-grade readers. It also addressed to what extent participating in *Reader's Theater* impacts second-grade readers' motivation to read and attitudes toward reading. The inability to randomly assign students to classes necessitated the use of nonequivalent groups consisting of intact, previously established classes.

An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was used. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design consists of two consecutive phases within one study. The first phase involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data followed by a second phase consisting of collecting and analyzing qualitative data (Creswell, 2014). A mixed-methods research design can provide strengths that "offset the weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research" (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011, p. 12). Quantitative research, according to Creswell, is often weak in the understanding of setting and does not allow for the voices of the participants to be heard (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Qualitative

research allows for the participants to be heard. Qualitative research is often seen as deficient due to the “personal interpretation of the researcher, the ensuing bias created by this, and the difficulty generalizing findings to a large group due to the limited number of participants” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011, p. 12). Thus, according to Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011), “the combination of strengths of one approach makes up for the weaknesses of the other approach” (p. 12). A mixed-methods approach also helps to answer the question, “do participants views from interviews and from standardized assessments converge or diverge?” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011, p. 12). Another question that a mixed-methods approach will help to answer is, “in what ways do qualitative interviews explain the qualitative results of the study?” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011, p. 12). This design was chosen due to its ability to provide a richer, deeper analysis and understanding of the topic being studied (Creswell, 2014), providing a more complete picture of the effect of *Reader’s Theater* by including the effect on test scores as well as student attitudes toward reading.

Instruments

The work done by this researcher incorporated two phases in which the researcher collected quantitative data in the first phase, analyzed the results, and then used the results to build on the second, qualitative phase (Creswell, 2014). In the quantitative phase of the study, beginning of the year (BOY) *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC for reading comprehension data, *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® (DORF) progress monitoring test for reading fluency data, and *STAR*™ reading measure for reading comprehension and fluency data were collected from the second-grade students at this site. Each of these measures were given again after the implementation of *Reader’s Theater*, and the

resulting data were compared with preimplementation data.

To evaluate student attitudes toward reading, a 20-question, pre and post multiple-choice surveys were administered from the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) designed by Dennis J. Kear, professor of graduate and undergraduate courses in reading at Wichita State University. The survey is located in Appendix A. Permission to use Dr. Kear's survey was obtained via email on September 11, 2014, and is located in Appendix B of this study. The survey instrument contains 20 items that employ a four-point response and measure the students' concepts of themselves as readers and the value they place on reading. This quantitative phase of the study addressed the research questions, "To what extent does participating in *Reader's Theater* affect the fluency of second-grade readers," and "To what extent does participating in *Reader's Theater* affect the comprehension levels of second-grade readers?"

The second, qualitative phase was conducted as a follow-up to the quantitative phase in order to help further explain the quantitative results. During this phase of the study, interviews with six of the participating teachers and 12 of the participating students were conducted. Teacher interview protocol/questions are found in Appendix C, and student protocol and questions are found in Appendix D of this study. These interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy. This qualitative phase of the study addresses the research question, "To what extent does participating in *Reader's Theater* affect second-grade students' attitudes toward reading?"

Participants

The participants for this study were drawn from the population of 135 second-grade students in a suburban school district in the southwestern United States. The participants selected were from six second-grade regular education classrooms. Two

students from each of the six second-grade classes were chosen at random to be interviewed (this process is discussed below). Those being interviewed included students reading below, on, and above grade level.

Procedures

The researcher began by obtaining written permission from the company representing the TRC (Directed Reading Assessment; Appendix E), the *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® progress monitor for reading fluency (Appendix E), and by obtaining permission to use data from the *STAR*™ reading test (Appendix F). Sample *STAR*™ tests can be found in both Appendix G and Appendix H. Written permission to conduct this research study was obtained from the principal/school (Appendix I). In the fall of 2015, *mClass* BOY assessments for TRC (Directed Reading Assessment) the *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® progress monitor for reading fluency, as well as the *STAR*™ reading tests were administered. The data were broken down into the subgroups (gender, race, AIG, ELL, and EC) and then recorded. The researcher then conducted preimplementation surveys and interviews and analyzed, coded, and presented the results in the form of a distribution table. The interview questions addressed student attitudes toward reading. Postimplementation interviews with teachers focused on their perceptions of the strategy's effect on student fluency, comprehension, and attitudes toward reading. The researcher provided professional development in *Reader's Theater* for all of the participating teachers. *Reader's Theater* was then implemented for 8 weeks, following the sample schedule found in Appendix J. Following the 8 weeks of implementation, the researcher conducted postimplementation surveys and interviews and analyzed, coded, and presented the results in table and narrative form. MOY assessments for TRC (Directed Reading Assessment), the *mCLASS:DIBELS next*®

progress monitor for reading fluency, and the *STAR*TM reading tests were also administered. Data from these assessments were collected, analyzed, and compared by running a paired *t* test to determine the effect of *Reader's Theater* on reading fluency and comprehension scores.

According to research done by Wireless Generation (2014), the TRC (Directed Reading Assessment) and *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® are validated, research-based assessments that have been proven to be reliable. *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® is consistent with the essential early literacy domains discussed in the 2000 National Reading Panel report and the 1998 National Research Council report (Wireless Generation, 2014).

Technical reliability and validity. The technical reliability and validity for each probe was established through a series of studies on each probe for each grade.

According to the website Wireless Generation, evaluations for the TRC (Directed Reading Assessment) measure were conducted by the Montgomery County Public Schools Office of Shared Accountability (“mClass Reading 3D”, 2014). The impact on instruction and its internal and external predictive validity was examined. It was shown that fall and winter benchmarks correlated to EOY performance. According to the website for Renaissance Learning (2011), data supporting the validity of *STAR*TM reading are collected and reported on a continuing basis, resulting in a large and growing body of validity evidence that now includes hundreds of validity studies. Permission was also obtained from the principal of the participating school.

Survey. To evaluate the students’ attitudes toward reading, 20-question pre and post multiple choice surveys were administered from the ERAS designed by Dennis J. Kear, professor of graduate and undergraduate courses in reading at Wichita State University. The survey instrument contains 20 items that employ a four-point response

and measures the students' concepts of themselves as readers and the value they place on reading. Norms for the interpretation of scores from this survey were created in 1989 by conducting a large scale study in which the survey was administered to 18,138 students in Grades 1-6 (McKenna et al., 1995). Participating students were drawn from 95 school districts in 38 states. All students participating in this study were given the opportunity to respond to the ERAS survey (McKenna et al., 1995).

Interviews. Postimplementation interviews with all six of the participating teachers and 12 of the participating students were conducted. Protocol for the interviews can be found in Appendix C. Each of the interviews was recorded and transcribed in order to be able to obtain the most information and ensure accuracy. Participants were informed that the interviews were being recorded, and they had the option of declining the interview at that time. All resulting data and information gathered from the interviews were stored in a locked file for security. The interviews with teachers focused on their perceptions of *Reader's Theater* as a strategy for improving student achievement in reading fluency and comprehension as well as student attitude toward reading.

Student interviewee selection process. Students being interviewed included those students reading below, on, and above grade level and were chosen at random by assigning each student a number from 1- N (N =total number of students participating in the study). A random number table was created for each class. The researcher selected two numbers from the table. The random sample provides a group that is highly representative of the population being studied (LAERD, 2015).

Confidentiality. The researcher ensured complete confidentiality in order to build an atmosphere of trust and to ensure complete honesty among teacher responses. Student interviews focused on student attitudes toward reading prior to and after

participating in *Reader's Theater*.

Written permission was also received from each participating student's parent or guardian (Appendix K). Written permission was received from the teachers at the writer's worksite (Appendix L).

Procedures for Interview Data Analysis

Determining codes and themes from interviews. The researcher used the following seven steps in determining codes and themes that emerged in this study as suggested below by Creswell (2014).

1. **Raw data.** The researcher collected field notes, transcripts, images, etc. (Creswell, 2014).
2. **Organizing and preparing data for analysis.** The researcher transcribed interviews, optically scanning material, typing field notes, cataloging and sorting and arranging data into different types (Creswell, 2014).
3. **Reading through all data.** The researcher read each transcript and reviewed handwritten notes in order to determine general ideas (Creswell, 2014).
4. **Coding the data.** The researcher color coded words and phrases that were repeated during the interview process. Data were organized by chunks or brackets and writing a word that represented a category (Creswell, 2014).
5. **Theme and discussions.** The researcher used the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis (description means a detailed explanation of information about people, places, or events in a setting). The researcher generated major themes that were used as major headings in the findings section of this document. Each theme was supported with diverse quotations and specific evidence

(Creswell, 2014).

6. **Interrelated themes/description.** The researcher used figures and tables to convey the findings of the analysis. This was accompanied with a discussion of themes, specific illustrations, multiple perspectives from individuals, and quotations (Creswell, 2014).
7. **Interpreting the meaning of themes.** The researcher determined the common theme present in relation to *Reader's Theater* and reading as well as what changes, if any, were noted from pre to postimplementation.

Creswell (2014) stated that the researcher can quickly locate all passages (or text segments) coded the same and determine whether participants are responding to a code idea in similar or different ways. Data were organized by chunks or brackets and writing a word that represents a category (Creswell, 2014). The information gleaned from the interviews provided richer insight about the effect of *Reader's Theater* identified in the quantitative phase of this explanatory mixed-methods design.

Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative and quantitative databases are analyzed separately in the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Creswell also stated that because analysis proceeds independently for each phase of the research, it can be easier to accomplish for the researcher since the data build upon the other and collection can be spread over time (Creswell, 2014).

Quantitative data. The independent variables consisted of the ages, grade level, race, ethnicity, and gender of the students as well as whether or not the students receive EC, AIG, or ELL services.

The dependent variables included (1) whether or not teachers implemented

Reader's Theater with fidelity and consistency; and (2) students being pulled from class and *Reader's Theater* for AIG, EC, and ELL classes, fieldtrips, and special programs.

Pre BOY and post MOY implementation scores on the *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC for reading comprehension were compared by running a paired *t* test to determine the changes, if any, and are displayed in the form of a simple distribution table. A distribution table allows the researcher to display how many people were similar in that they ended up in the same category or had the same score (Huck, 2012).

Prior to the implementation of this study, all students were given the BOY *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® (DORF) progress monitoring test for reading fluency. These preimplementation scores were then compared by running a paired *t* test to scores received on the same test given after the completion of the study, MOY tests. Pre and postimplementation scores were combined to obtain an average word count and overall score. Pre and postimplementation scores on the *STAR*™ reading measure for reading comprehension and fluency were compared by running a paired *t* test. The resulting data were then displayed using a simple distribution table. A paired *t* test allows the researcher to detect differences in the scores and provide a richer analysis of the data. According to “Statistical Testing for Dummies” (2015), paired *t* tests are generally used in before and after types of studies when the same individuals are measured before and after the application of some intervention or treatment. If the value of *p* is >0.5, the scores are considered of statistical significance (QuickCalcs, 2015).

Pre and postimplementation ERASs were given to the students to assess student attitudes toward reading. The data gathered from the surveys were analyzed by using a Likert scale. The survey uses pictures of Garfield as choices rather than words. To score

the test, four points are given for the Garfield on the left (happiest), three for the Garfield that is slightly smiling, two for the mildly upset Garfield, and one for the very upset Garfield (far right). Three scores can be obtained for each student: the total for the first 10 items, the total for the second 10 items, and a composite score. The first set of questions pertains to the attitude toward recreational reading, while the second set of questions relate to academic aspects of reading. The composite score is a reflection of the overall attitude toward reading.

All data gathered were compared and displayed in the form of a distribution table in order to determine the impact of participating in *Reader's Theater*. An increase in overall scores, for the purposes of this study, was considered a positive impact. Attitude and academic changes are displayed and discussed separately.

Qualitative data. Postimplementation interviews with six of the participating teachers and 12 of the participating students were conducted. Teacher interview questions can be found in Appendix C, and student interview protocol can be located in Appendix D of this research study. The interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy. The information gleaned from these interviews was analyzed by coding the dialogue, looking for commonalities and/or themes, and then determining how these themes illuminate the question of the effect of *Reader's Theater* on student attitudes toward reading. Coding involves dividing the text into small units (phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), assigning a label to each unit, and then grouping the codes into themes. The resulting codes can be grouped into related themes. The themes are the findings or results that will provide answers to the qualitative research. Based on Creswell (2014), this is appropriate because the qualitative data gathered provide a deeper understanding of the participants' views of the results of the trial and will determine the long-term

sustained effects of the intervention.

Displaying quantitative data analysis results. Data from each of the quantitative measures were displayed in the form of a distribution table and compared in order to show the total number of students whose scores improved in reading fluency and comprehension throughout the course of this study, the number of students whose scores remained the same, and the number of students whose scores decreased. The researcher displayed comparison data from the subgroups of gender, race, reading level (below, on grade level, above), English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, and EC (Exceptional Children). The results were ultimately used to determine if the strategy implemented was successful in increasing student reading fluency and reading comprehension. If the MOY scores for the students in this study had shown an increase from the BOY scores, bringing the students to the goal scores of proficiency: level L on the middle-of-year (MOY) *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC for reading comprehension, 72 words per minute (WPM) on the MOY *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® (DORF) progress monitoring test for reading fluency, and a grade equivalent score of 2.3 on the MOY *STAR*™ reading assessment, the strategy would have been considered effective.

Both quantitative data and qualitative data were also broken down into the following subgroups: girls, boys, race, AIG, ESL, students reading below grade level, students reading on grade level, and students reading above grade level. The resulting data provided the researcher and stakeholders at this site a more complete picture of areas showing growth as well as areas for improvement.

Calendar Plan

This study of the effectiveness of *Reader's Theater* on reading fluency ran for 9

consecutive weeks beginning with the gathering of pretesting data and ending with a final week for posttesting. A calendar plan and schedule are located in Appendix J of this study.

Summary

The researcher's goal as a result of this study was to determine if the research-based strategy of *Reader's Theater* enabled students to read fluently and expressively with a high level of comprehension. After implementing the chosen strategy for 9 weeks, pre and posttest scores from the *DIBBLES*® progress monitor for reading fluency, scores from the on *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC, and scores from the *STAR*™ reading monitor for reading fluency and comprehension were compared to determine if the chosen strategy had an effect on the reading fluency and comprehension scores of struggling readers. These results were displayed in the form of a distribution table. The researcher then analyzed and compared the qualitative data gathered from teacher and student interviews to determine what affect the participation in *Reader's Theater* had on second-grade students' attitudes toward reading. The researcher used a distribution table to display comparison data from the subgroups of gender, reading level (below, on grade level, above), ESL learners, and EC students. The results were ultimately used to determine if the strategy implemented was successful in increasing student reading fluency and reading comprehension.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent using *Reader's Theater* affects the reading fluency rates and comprehension levels of second-grade readers at this worksite. This study also sought to discover to what extent participating in *Reader's Theater* affects student attitudes toward reading. The study began with a look at reading fluency and why it is important for students to become fluent readers. This portion of the study also looked at the way reading fluency and reading comprehension are related. The second half of this study focused on *Reader's Theater* as a strategy for improving oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, and student attitudes toward reading.

Restatement of the Problem

During the last semester of the 2014-2015 school year, 31% of the second-grade students at this worksite were below expected state standards for reading fluency as reflected on the school's *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® progress monitoring report for reading fluency (District Internal Communication, n.d.). Twenty-eight percent of the second-grade students were below expected state standards for comprehension, having received below grade-level expectation on *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC at a reading level below an M (District Internal Communication, n.d.). The TRC reading levels run from A-Z: Levels A-E are kindergarten levels; E-J are first-grade levels; and J-N are second-grade levels. Twenty-eight percent of the students received scores below their grade-level standards on the *START*™ monitor for comprehension and fluency (District Internal Communication, n.d.).

Chapter Overview

The researcher began by obtaining permission from school, district, parents, and test and survey instrument owners. In the fall of 2015, prior to the implementation of this study, all students were given the (BOY) *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® (DORF) progress monitoring test for reading fluency. At that time, 43% of the second-grade students were below expected state standards for reading fluency, receiving a score of less than 52 WPM. Preimplementation scores on the *STAR*™ reading measure for reading comprehension and fluency showed that 40% of these same students were at a level below grade-level standards. Sixty-six percent of the second-grade students were below expected state standards for comprehension, having received below grade-level expectation on *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC at a reading level below a J (District Internal Communication, n.d.).

The data were broken down into the subgroups (gender, race, AIG, ELL, and EC) and then recorded. The researcher then conducted postimplementation surveys and analyzed the data. The researcher provided professional development in *Reader's Theater* for all of the participating teachers. *Reader's Theater* was then implemented for 8 weeks, following the calendar plan found in Appendix J. Immediately following the 8 weeks of implementation, the researcher conducted postimplementation surveys and interviews. The resulting data were analyzed and coded. MOY assessments for TRC (Directed Reading Assessment), the *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® progress monitor for reading fluency, and the *STAR*™ reading tests were administered. Data from these assessments were collected, analyzed, and compared by running a paired *t* test to determine the effect of *Reader's Theater* on reading fluency and comprehension scores. The resulting data are discussed in the following section.

Results

Research Question 1

“To what extent does participating in *Reader’s Theater* affect the fluency of second-grade readers?” Prior to the implementation of *Reader’s Theater*, student reading fluency was assessed using the *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® progress monitor for reading fluency. The data from this BOY assessment revealed that 43% of second graders were reading at a fluency rate below the expected state standards for reading fluency, receiving a score of less than 52 WPM.

After the implementation of *Reader’s Theater*, students were given the MOY assessments for TRC (Directed Reading Assessment). At that time, the resulting scores were compared to the scores received from the BOY TRC assessment. The scores are compared in the table below.

Table 4

2015-2016 Second-Grade BOY/MOY DIBELS Fluency Data Comparison

	Total Number of Students	Number and % of Students Below Proficiency	
BOY	126	54	43%
MOY	126	48	38%
+/- % difference	-5%		

The data above show that the number of students below a level of proficiency in reading fluency has decreased by 5% since the implementation of *Reader’s Theater* (an improvement of 5%). The data were then broken down into subgroups. The table below shows the comparative data for broken down by race.

Table 5

2015-2016 Second-Grade BOY/MOY DIBELS Fluency Data Segment Results by Race

Race	Total Number of Students	BOY Number and % of Students Below Proficiency		MOY Number and % of Students Below Proficiency		+/- % difference
Black/African American	10	3	30%	5	50%	+20%
Multi-Racial	5	2	40%	1	25%	-15%
Hispanic	8	3	38%	4	50%	+12%
Caucasian	101	43	43%	38	38%	-5%
Asian	1		0%		0%	0%
American Indian	1	1	100%	1	100%	0%

The data above show that when broken down by race, the percentage of students receiving scores below a level of proficiency for reading fluency increased, meaning that more students were below a level of proficiency after the implementation of *Reader's Theater*. However, multi-racial and Caucasian students showed growth, decreasing the number of students below a level of proficiency by 15% and 5% respectively.

A paired *t* test was run on the overall scores in order to determine if the results shown were of statistical significance. The results were as follows.

Table 6

*Paired t-Test Results for BOY/MOY DIBELS Fluency Data Segment Results by Race***P value and statistical significance:**

The two-tailed P value equals 0.7093.

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals -2.00.

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -15.02 to 11.02.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 0.3948$

$df = 5$

standard error of difference = 5.066

Review of data:

Group	Group One	Group Two
Mean	41.83	43.83
SD	32.54	33.29
SEM	13.28	13.59
N	6	6

The paired t -test data on the overall scores show that the difference in BOY and MOY scores is not statistically significant, whereas the value of p is <0.05 . It is important to note that the number of multi-racial and Caucasian students below a level of proficiency has decreased, meaning those students showed growth. A paired t test was run on the scores for multi-racial and Caucasian students to determine if the changes were of statistical significance. The results were as follows.

Table 7

Paired t-Test Results for BOY/MOY DIBELS Fluency Data Segment Results for Multi-Race and Caucasian Students

P value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value equals 0.2952.

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals 10.00.

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -53.53 to 73.53.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 2.0000$

$df = 1$

standard error of difference = 5.000

Group	Group One	Group Two
Mean	41.50	31.50
SD	2.12	9.19
SEM	1.50	6.50
N	2	2

The paired t -test data on these scores show that the difference in BOY and MOY scores is not statistically significant, whereas the value of p is <0.05 . The results for the BOY/MOY DIBELS fluency data were then broken down by gender. The results are shown below in Table 8.

Table 8

2015-2016 Second-Grade BOY/MOY DIBELS Fluency Data Segment Results by Gender

Gender	Total Number of Students	BOY# of Students and % Below Proficiency	MOY # of Students and % Below Proficiency	+/- % Difference
Male	54	23 43%	24 45%	+2%
Female	72	28 39%	24 34%	-5%

When broken down by gender, the data again show an increase in the number of male students receiving a score below a level of proficiency for reading fluency. The number of female students below proficiency has decreased by 5%. The results for the paired *t* test on this data are shown below in Table 9.

Table 9

*Paired t-Test Results for BOY/MOY DIBELS Fluency Data Segment Results by Gender***P value and statistical significance:**

The two-tailed P value equals 0.7422.

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals 1.50.

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -42.97 to 45.97.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 0.4286$

$df = 1$

standard error of difference = 3.500

The paired *t*-test data for the subgroups of gender show that the difference in BOY and MOY scores is not statistically significant, whereas the value of *p* is <0.05 .

Table 10 shows the comparison data for BOY/MOY DIBELS fluency when broken down into the subgroups of ELL, EC, and AIG.

Table 10

2015-2016 Second-Grade BOY/MOY DIBELS Fluency Data Segment ELL, EC, AIG Results

Category	Total Number of Students	BOY# of Students and % Below Proficiency	MOY# of Students and % Below Proficiency	+/- % Difference
ELL	4	2 50%	1 25%	-25%
EC	14	14 100%	14 100%	0%
AIG	0	0	0	0

The table above shows that the number of ELL students below a level of proficiency for reading fluency has decreased by 25%. These data show a growth in reading fluency rates for this subgroup. To determine if this amount was statistically significant, a paired *t* test was conducted. The results are below.

Table 11

*Paired t-Test Results for ELL, EC, and AIG***P value and statistical significance:**

The two-tailed P value equals 0.5000.

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals 12.50.

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -146.33 to 171.33.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 1.0000$

$df = 1$

standard error of difference = 12.500

The *t*-test results show that the percentage change in BOY and MOY scores is not statistically significant, whereas the value of *p* is <0.05 .

Even though the resulting *t*-test data failed to show a statistically significant change in scores, there were areas of growth in the subgroups female students, ELL students, and Caucasian students.

Research Question 2

“To what extent does participating in *Reader’s Theater* affect the comprehension levels of second-grade readers?” Following the implementation of *Reader’s Theater*, student comprehension levels were assessed using the TRC (Directed Reading Assessment) and the *STAR*TM reading tests. The table below shows the results of the resulting data as compared to the assessment given prior to the implementation of *Reader’s Theater*.

Table 12

2015-2016 Second-Grade BOY/MOY TRC Comparison

Category	Total Number of Students	BOY# of Students and % Below Proficiency	MOY# of Students and % Below Proficiency	+/- % Difference
TRC	100	66 66%	73 73%	+7%

The table above shows that following the implementation of *Reader's Theater*, there was a 7% increase in the number of students performing below a level of proficiency as measured by the TRC assessment. The data were then broken down by gender. The comparative data are shown below.

Table 13

2015-2016 Second-Grade BOY/MOY TRC Data Segment Results by Gender

Gender	Total Number of Students	BOY# of Students and % Below Proficiency	MOY# of Students and % Below Proficiency	+/- % Difference
Male	40	30 74%	32 79%	+5%
Female	41	24 58%	29 69%	+11%

The table above shows that the number of male and female students receiving a score of below proficiency for reading comprehension as measured by the TRC has increased by a total of 16%. To determine the measure of statistical significance, a paired *t* test was conducted. The results are explained below.

Table 14

*Paired t-Test Results for BOY/MOY by Gender***P value and statistical significance:**

The two-tailed P value equals 0.2284.

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals -8.00.

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -46.12 to 30.12.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 2.6667$

$df = 1$

standard error of difference = 3.000

The *t*-test results show that the percentage change in BOY and MOY scores is not statistically significant, whereas the value of *p* is <0.05 . The table below displays the BOY/MOY TRC data broken down by the subgroups of race.

Table 15

2015-2016 Second-Grade BOY/MOY TRC Data Segment Results by Race

Race	Total Number of Students	BOY# of Students and % Below Proficiency	MOY# of Students and % Below Proficiency	+/- % Difference
Black/African American	20	14 70%	15 73%	+3%
Multi-Racial	5	2 40%	3 60%	+20%
Hispanic	16	10 62%	12 72%	+10%
Caucasian	101	67 66%	74 74%	+8%
Asian	1	0	0	0%
American Indian	1	0	100%	+100%

When the results of the TRC are broken down by race, the results clearly show an increase for all groups in the number of students receiving a score below a level of proficiency with the exception of the Asian students. A paired t test was conducted to determine the statistical significance of the increase.

Table 16

Paired t-Test Results for BOY/MOY TRC Data Segment Results by Race

P value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value equals 0.1913.

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals -23.50.

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -63.49 to 16.49.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 1.5107$

$df = 5$

When viewing the results of the t test, the changes in scores from the BOY to MOY are not statistically significant, whereas the value of p is <0.05 . The data were then broken down into the subgroups of students receiving ELL, EC, and AIG services. The results are shown below.

Table 17

2015-2016 Second-Grade BOY/MOY TRC Data Segment ELL, EC, AIG Results

Category	Total Number of Students	BOY# of Students and % Below Proficiency	MOY# of Students and % Below Proficiency	+/- % Difference
ELL	4	3 75%	3 75%	0%
EC	14	14 100%	14 100%	0%
AIG	0	0	0	0

There was no change in the scores for the subgroups of ELL, EC, or AIG.

Therefore, a paired *t* test was not conducted.

STAR™ Reading Results

Preimplementation scores on the STAR™ reading measure for reading comprehension and fluency showed that 40% of these same students were at a level below grade-level standards. Postimplementation scores showed that 20% of the students in second grade scored below grade-level expectations. This is a decrease of 20%. According to the standards set by the county and state, this is a noteworthy amount of improvement (District Internal Communication, n.d.).

Table 18 shows a comparison of the BOY and MOY overall scores for the TRC and STAR™ reading.

Table 18

2015-2016 Second-Grade BOY/MOY TRC and STAR™ Reading Comparison

Category	Total Number of Students	BOY# of Students and % Below Proficiency	MOY# of Students and % Below Proficiency	+/- % Difference
TRC	100	66 66%	73 73%	+7%
STAR™	100	40 40%	20 20%	-20%

A paired t test was run to determine if the changes were of statistical significance.

The results are as follows.

Table 19

BOY/MOY TRC and STAR™ Reading Comparison t-Test Results

P value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value equals 0.7143.

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals 6.50.

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -165.03 to 178.03.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 0.4815$

$df = 1$

standard error of difference = 13.500

The t -test results show that the percentage change in BOY and MOY scores is not statistically significant, whereas the value of p is <0.05 .

The data from the TRC test for comprehension show that the comprehension levels did not improve. In fact, the number of students below a level of proficiency increased. The data from the STAR™ testing show that scores improved even though the t tests did not indicate a level of statistical significance.

Research Question 3

“To what extent does participating in *Reader’s Theater* affect second-grade students’ attitudes toward reading?” Pre and postimplementation ERASs were given to the students to assess student attitudes toward reading. The data gathered from the surveys were analyzed by using a Likert scale. The survey uses pictures of Garfield as choices rather than words. To score the test, four points were given for the Garfield on

the left (happiest), three for the Garfield that is slightly smiling, two for the mildly upset Garfield, and one for the very upset Garfield (far right). The first set of questions pertained to the attitude toward recreational reading. A comparison of student responses for questions 1-10 (recreational reading) is shown below in Table 20.

Table 20

Pre and Post ERAS Response Recreational Reading Comparison

Time Given	Total Number of Students	Number and (%) Responses (Enjoyed it)		Number and (%) Responses (Did not enjoy it)	
		4	3	2	1
Pre	110	50 (45%)	23 (21%)	15 (14%)	22 (20%)
Post	110	54 (49%)	20 (18%)	13 (12%)	23 (21%)

Student responses on the recreational reading portion of the survey remained nearly the same after the implementation of *Reader's Theater*. A paired *t* test was run to determine if there had been a significant change in the percentage of students responding with a 3 or 4 in the area of recreational reading. The results were as follows.

Table 21

Pre/Post ERAS Data Paired t-Test Results

P value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value equals 0.9097.

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals -0.50.

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -44.97 to 43.97.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 0.1429$

$df = 1$

standard error of difference = 3.500

By conventional criteria, the t test showed that this difference in scores is considered to be not statistically significant, whereas the value of p is <0.05 .

To gain further insight, a paired t test was run on the actual number of students for each question responding with a 4 or 3. The results were as follows.

Table 22

Responses of 4 or 3 Paired t -Test Results

P value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value equals 0.9097.

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals -0.50.

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -44.97 to 43.97.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 0.1429$

$df = 1$

standard error of difference 3.500

The resulting data from the t test showed that this difference in scores is considered not to be statistically significant, whereas the value of p is <0.05 .

A paired t test was also conducted on the number of students choosing a 2 or 1 for each question. The results are below.

Table 23

*Responses of 2 or 1 Paired t-Test Results***P value and statistical significance:**

The two-tailed P value equals 0.7952.

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals 0.50.

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -18.56 to 19.56.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 0.3333$

$df = 1$

standard error of difference = 1.500

The data above show that the decrease in the number of students choosing a 1 or 2 (negative opinion) is not of statistical significance (the value of p is <0.05).

The second set of questions on the ERAS dealt with student attitudes toward academic reading. A comparison of the results from the pre and post implementation surveys can be seen below in Table 24.

Table 24

Pre and Post ERAS Response Academic Reading Comparison

Time Given	Number of Students	Number and (%) Responses (Enjoyed it)		Number and (%) Responses (Did not enjoy it)	
		4	3	2	1
Pre	110	48 (44%)	21 (19%)	15 (14%)	26 (23%)
Post	110	54 (49%)	24 (22%)	11 (10%)	21 (19%)

The percentage of students saying they enjoyed academic reading, responses of 3

or 4, increased by 8%. A paired t test was run to determine if there had been a significant change in the percentage of students responding with a 3 or 4 in the area of academic reading. The results were as follows.

Table 25

Pre and Post ERAS Academic Reading Response of 3 or 4 Comparison Paired t -Test Results

P value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value equals 0.1560.

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals -4.00.

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -16.71 to 8.71.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 4.0000$

$df = 1$

standard error of difference = 1.000

The data from the t test show that the changes in scores are not statistically significant, whereas the value of p is <0.05 .

To gain further insight, a paired t test was run on the actual number of students for each question responding with a 3 or 4 in the area of academic reading. The results were as follows.

Table 26

*ERAS Academic Reading Responses of 3 or 4***P value and statistical significance:**

The two-tailed P value equals 0.2048.

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals -4.50.

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -23.56 to 14.56.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 3.0000$

$df = 1$

standard error of difference 1.500

The changes in scores, as shown by the t -test results, were not statistically significant, whereas the value of p is <0.05 .

A paired t test was also run on the number of students for each question choosing a 2 or 1. The results are shown below.

Table 27

*ERAS Academic Reading Responses of 2 or 1***P value and statistical significance:**

The two-tailed P value equals 0.0704.

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals 4.50.

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -1.85 to 10.85.

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 9.0000$

$df = 1$

standard error of difference = 0.500

The *t*-test data show that the change in student responses of 1 or 2 is not of statistical significance, whereas the value of *p* being <0.05 .

Data gathered from the ERAS indicate that overall, even though the change was not shown to be of statistical significance, the students reported an increase in enjoyment of academic reading.

Postintervention Student Interviews

Postintervention interviews were conducted with 12 of the participating students. These students were chosen at random. When transcribing and reviewing the coding of the interviewees' responses, several common themes emerged. These themes are presented in the table below.

Table 28

Themes Revealed in Student Interviews Data

Theme	Number of Responses	Total Students
Enjoyed reading and performing with classmates	12	12
A hope that others would be able to participate in the future	4	12
Frustration when others lost their place when reading	4	12
Wanting to continue <i>Reader's Theater</i> /sad that it was over	12	12

Postimplementation interviews with 12 of the participating students revealed that the students enjoyed having the opportunity to read with and perform for their fellow classmates. Student A stated, "I hope we get to keep doing *Reader's Theater*. It's fun!"

Four of the students stated that they hoped other students would have the opportunity to participate in the future. When asked what the worst part of participating in *Reader's Theater* was, students stated that they got frustrated when other students lost their place. Student C added, "I didn't like it when I got 'little parts,'" with not much dialogue. All 12 of the students mentioned being sad that *Reader's Theater* was over and that they wanted to continue the program. Their reasons for wanting to continue included, as stated by student B, wanting "to learn more words and read more stories."

Postintervention Teacher Interviews

Interviews with five of the participating teachers were conducted following the implementation of *Reader's Theater*. Several common themes were revealed within each of the teachers' responses. These themes are presented in the table below.

Table 29

Themes Revealed in Teacher Interviews Data

Theme	Number of Responses	Total Teachers
The students enjoyed Reader's Theater	5	5
Reader's Theater is a good strategy for motivating students to read	5	5
Reader's Theater improved reading students' fluency and expression	5	5
Provides success for lower performing readers	3	5
Reluctant readers gained confidence	5	5

All of the teachers stated that their students enjoyed participating in *Reader's Theater*. They felt that this was a good strategy for motivating students to read, adding that their students were excited when given the opportunity to read with their peers and

that they wanted to do well when performing for their class. The teachers also felt that participating in *Reader's Theater* had improved their students' reading fluency as well as their ability to read with expression. Teacher B stated, "It increased vocabulary and fluency because they wanted to be 'on spot.' They had to pay attention and be on task to know when to read." Three of five teachers mentioned that their lower performing readers were able to be successful and excel because they could be given parts on their ability level and then paired with stronger readers. Teacher C added, "The EC kids were able to be successful, to perform and excel because they could be given parts on their level and then paired with stronger readers." All of the teachers felt that the more reluctant readers became more confident when given the opportunity to read and reread with their group. Teacher A noted that "Shy students who were normally reluctant to read became more confident and willing to read."

Summary

When looking at the overall data in terms of statistical significance, the implementation of *Reader's Theater* was not shown to have a positive effect on the reading fluency rates or comprehension levels of the participating second-grade students. Statistically speaking, neither did the participation in *Reader's Theater* have a positive effect on the attitudes of the second-grade students. It is important to note that both teachers and students expressed positive statements about *Reader's Theater*. Teachers stated that they saw an increase in their students' willingness to read as well as an increase in comprehension and expressive and fluent reading. Teachers also felt that this was a good strategy for motivating students to read. Students proclaimed a desire to continue *Reader's Theater* and added that they hoped other students would be able to participate in the future.

Chapter 5: Summary and Discussion

Introduction

Reader's Theater has been described as a highly motivational strategy that connects reading, literature, and drama in the classroom (Carrick, 2001). The purpose of this explanatory mixed-methods study was to determine to what extent using *Reader's Theater* affects the reading fluency rates and comprehension levels of second-grade readers. This researcher also sought to discover to what extent participating in *Reader's Theater* affects student attitudes toward reading. Chapters 1-3 were the foundation of this study. Chapter 1 laid out the problem, theoretical framework, purpose, research questions, limitations, delimitations, and significance of this study. Chapter 2 was a study of the problem as seen through the lens of a research-based literature review. Chapter 2 also explained the rationale for using *Reader's Theater* as a strategy for improving students' reading fluency, comprehension, and motivation to read. In Chapters 3 and 4, the researcher discussed the methodology used in this study and displayed the data gathered from the research. It is in this, the final chapter of this study, that the researcher summarizes the results and offers recommendations for future research and use of *Reader's Theater*.

Findings

Research Question 1

"To what extent does participating in *Reader's Theater* affect the fluency of second-grade readers?" When broken down by race, data gathered from the DIBELS MOY assessment show that the percentage of Black/African-American and Hispanic students receiving scores below a level of proficiency for reading fluency has increased by 20% and 12% respectively, meaning more students were below a level of proficiency

after the implementation of *Reader's Theater*. However, multi-racial and Caucasian students showed growth, decreasing the number of students below a level of proficiency by 15% and 5% respectively. When broken down by gender, the data again show an increase in the number of male students receiving a score below a level of proficiency for reading fluency. However, the number of female students below proficiency has decreased by 5%. The number of ELL students below a level of proficiency for reading fluency has decreased by 25%. These data show a growth in reading fluency rates for this subgroup.

Research Question 2

“To what extent does participating in *Reader's Theater* affect the comprehension levels of second-grade readers?” The data comparing the BOY and MOY TRC assessment scores show that following the implementation of *Reader's Theater*, there was a 7% increase in the number of students performing below a level of proficiency as measured by the TRC assessment. When the results of the TRC are broken down by race, the results show an increase for all groups in the number of students receiving a score below a level of proficiency, with the exception of the Asian students. This subgroup's data remained unchanged. There was also no change in the scores for the subgroups of ELL, EC, or AIG. Preimplementation scores on the *STAR*TM reading measure for reading comprehension and fluency showed that 40% of these same students were at a level below grade-level standards. Postimplementation scores showed that 20% of the students in second grade scored below grade-level expectations. This is a decrease of 20%. According to the standards set by the county and state, this is a significant amount of improvement (District Internal Communication, n.d.).

Research Question 3

“To what extent does participating in *Reader’s Theater* affect second-grade students’ attitudes toward reading?” Pre and postimplementation ERASs were given to the students to assess student attitudes toward reading. The first 10 questions pertained to recreational reading. The data comparing preimplementation and postimplementation responses show no significant change in student attitudes toward recreational reading. The second set of questions on the ERAS dealt with student attitudes toward academic reading. A comparison of the results from the pre and postimplementation surveys showed that those students responding with a 3 or 4, stating that they did enjoy academic reading, increased by 8%.

Postimplementation interviews with 12 of the participating students revealed that the students enjoyed having the opportunity to read with and perform for their fellow classmates. Student A stated, “I hope we get to keep doing *Reader’s Theater*. It’s fun!” Four of the students stated that they hoped other students would have the opportunity to participate in the future. All 12 of the students mentioned being sad that *Reader’s Theater* was over and that they wanted to continue the program. Their reasons for wanting to continue included, as stated by student C, “*Reader’s Theater* makes reading fun!” Student D added, “I liked reading in front of the class with my friends.”

Interviews with teachers revealed that students enjoyed participating in *Reader’s Theater*. The teachers felt that *Reader’s Theater* was a good strategy for motivating students to read, adding that their students were excited when given the opportunity to read with their peers and that they wanted to do well when performing for their class. The teachers also felt that participating in *Reader’s Theater* had improved their students’ reading fluency as well as their ability to read with expression. Three of five teachers

mentioned that their lower performing readers were able to be successful and excel because they could be given parts on their ability level and then be paired with stronger readers. Teacher C added, “The EC kids were able to be successful, to perform and excel because they could be given parts on their level and then paired with stronger readers.” All of the teachers felt that the more reluctant readers became more confident when given the opportunity to read and reread with their group. Teacher A noted that “Shy students who were normally reluctant to read became more confident and willing to read.”

Discussion of Results

Information gleaned from the teacher and student interviews showed that participation in *Reader's Theater* was a good strategy for increasing a student's motivation to read as well as their ability to read fluently and with expression. Students reported enjoying *Reader's Theater* and expressed a desire to continue the program.

Although the use of *Reader's Theater* did not produce results considered to be of statistical significance, it did have a positive impact on certain subgroups. In the area of fluency, the following subgroups showed growth: Multi-racial students showed a growth of 15%; Caucasian students showed a growth of 5%; female students overall showed a growth of 5%; and ELL students showed the highest growth, having a decrease of 20% of the population below a level of proficiency. This ties in with the research discussed in the Chapter 2 Literature Review with regard to the Developmental Reading Theory which states that fluency is directly related to comprehension. A fluent reader decodes texts automatically, which leaves the attention to be used for comprehension (Tyler & Chard, 2000). It also concurs with the data shown by Robertson (2009) who stated that *Reader's Theater* focuses on repetition and increasing reading comprehension to eventually increase fluency in reading. ELL students need to read a story many times to gain the

fluency that non-ELL students have when they read an unknown text the first time. ELL students need more time to practice with a story and understand what they are reading (Roberts, 2009). This is why *Reader's Theater* is so beneficial for this population, because it gives them time to really understand what they reading without being rushed.

Another area showing a positive impact is the area of student motivation and enjoyment of academic reading. The ERAS survey data show that those students responding with a 3 or 4, stating that they did enjoy academic reading, increased by 15%. The student's increased enjoyment is important and adds to the Theory of Attitude and Change. Research done by Sainsbury and Schagen (2004) showed that a student's attitude about reading is a motivator for reading. High motivation to read and positive attitudes about reading are related to a higher reading achievement and more frequent reading (Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004). According to Stoffelsma and Spooren, (2013), students who enjoy reading and who perceive themselves to be good readers usually read more frequently and more widely, which in turn broadens their reading experience and improves their comprehension skills. Research done by Stoffelsma and Spooren has shown that students who enjoy reading read more. This leads to more fluent reading and ultimately better comprehension (Stoffelsma & Spooren, 2013). Students who participated in *Reader's Theater* for this study stated that they enjoyed *Reader's Theater* and wanted to continue the program. During postimplementation interviews, the participating teachers stated that they felt that *Reader's Theater* was a good strategy for increasing reading fluency as well as for increasing student motivation to read.

The postimplementation assessments also revealed negative impact data. The data comparing the BOY and MOY TRC assessment scores show that following the implementation of *Reader's Theater*, there was a 7% increase in the number of students

performing below a level of proficiency as measured by the TRC assessment.

Limitations

The *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC is comprised of an oral and written comprehension component. The students' reading levels yielded by the respective assessments were significantly different. The TRC systematically underestimated students' reading instructional levels, in most cases because testing was terminated prematurely, due to poor student performance on written comprehension questions (District Internal Communication, n.d.). Teachers stated repeatedly that the written component involves a completely different skill and does not reflect the students' ability to comprehend what they have read (District Internal Communication, n.d.).

Another limitation to consider is the time of year. This study was run for a period of 8 weeks. Three major holidays including Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas occurred from the implementation of *Reader's Theater* to the time of assessments. It is often difficult for students to perform at their best during this time of the year.

It is also important to consider the number of students participating in this study as a possible limitation. There may not have been enough students participating to be able to determine a change that was statistically significant. Only four ELL students participated in this study, yet the number of students receiving a score below a level of proficiency in the area of reading fluency decreased by 25%.

Recommendations

It is the recommendation of this researcher that in the future, reading comprehension levels be viewed separately from the written component. If this is not possible, the suggestion would be to use another measure to determine student reading levels. Although the *t* tests showed that the change was not statistically significant, the

data could be flawed due to the written component of the TRC. It would also be of value to implement *Reader's Theater* in the spring and compare EOY scores with those from the MOY. Another option to consider would be to run the implementation for a longer period of time.

Even though the data do not show changes that are considered to be of statistical significance, the use of *Reader's Theater* did have a positive impact on the subgroups of ELL, multi-race, and Caucasian students. Each of these subgroups showed a significant growth as determined by the district and state (District Internal Communication, n.d.). The fact that these subgroups showed growth indicates the need for further study.

Looking deeper into the available data, the teachers being interviewed reported that *Reader's Theater* does increase student reading fluency, comprehension, and motivation to read. Student growth, for example, showed that 32% of the participating students had an increase of two or more reading levels on the TRC assessment for reading comprehension. Fifteen percent of those students grew three to four reading levels. This is a noteworthy amount of growth as determined by the district and state (District Internal Communication, n.d.). Further research needs to be completed without the use of the written component of the *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC in order to conclusively determine the effect of *Reader's Theater* on the comprehension levels of second-grade students. The study also needs to be conducted for a longer period of time.

Due to the increase in student motivation as well as growth in reading fluency levels, it is recommended that the use of *Reader's Theater* continue as a strategy to improve certain populations of student reading fluency and motivation to read. Another strategy could be used in conjunction with *Reader's Theater* to improve student comprehension levels.

Due to the small population being studied, it was difficult to determine if the growth was of statistical significance. It is therefore recommended that future studies involve a larger population of students. This could be accomplished by including multiple grade levels or multiple schools within the district.

Summary

This mixed-methods study addressed the question as to what extent *Reader's Theater* affects the reading fluency rates and comprehension levels of second-grade readers. It also addressed to what extent participating in *Reader's Theater* impacts second-grade readers' motivations to read and attitudes toward reading. Two main theories were discussed, the developmental reading theory and the theory of attitude and change.

For the overall population of participating students, *Reader's Theater* did not produce change considered to be of statistical significance. However, participation did have a positive impact on certain subgroups. In the area of fluency, the following subgroups showed growth: Multi-racial students showed a growth of 15%; Caucasian students showed a growth of 5%; female students over all showed a growth of 5%; and ELL students showed the highest growth having a decrease of 20% of the population below a level of proficiency. Another area showing a positive impact is in the area of student motivation and enjoyment of academic reading. The ERAS survey data show that those students responding with a 3 or 4, stating that they did enjoy academic reading, increased by 15%. Looking deeper into the available data, it was clear to this researcher and to the teachers being interviewed that *Reader's Theater* does increase student reading fluency, comprehension, and motivation to read. Student growth, for example, showed that 32% of the participating students had an increase of two or more reading levels.

Fifteen percent of those students grew three to four reading levels. This is a significant amount of growth as determined by the district and state (District Internal Communication, n.d.). Further research needs to be completed without the use of the written component of the *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC in order to conclusively determine the effect of *Reader's Theater* on the comprehension levels of second-grade students.

The researcher recommends conducting further research using a larger population of students, possibly multi-grade levels or students from across the district or state, in order to determine whether participation in *Reader's Theater* produces changes of statistical significance.

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Appendix A

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS)

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Directions for use

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey provides a quick indication of student attitudes toward reading. It consists of 20 items and can be administered to an entire classroom in about 10 minutes. Each item presents a brief, simply worded statement about reading, followed by four pictures of Garfield. Each pose is designed to depict a different emotional state, ranging from very positive to very negative.

Administration

Begin by telling students that you wish to find out how they feel about reading. Emphasize that this is *not* a test and that there are no "right" answers. Encourage sincerity.

Distribute the survey forms and, if you wish to monitor the attitudes of specific students, ask them to write their names in the space at the top. Hold up a copy of the survey so that the students can see the first page. Point to the picture of Garfield at the far left of the first item. Ask the students to look at this same picture on their own survey form. Discuss with them the mood Garfield seems to be in (very happy). Then move to the next picture and again discuss Garfield's mood (this time, a *little* happy). In the same way, move to the third and fourth pictures and talk about Garfield's moods—a little upset and very upset. It is helpful to point out the position of Garfield's *mouth*, especially in the middle two figures.

Explain that together you will read some statements about reading and that the students should think about how they feel about each statement. They should then circle the picture of Garfield that is closest to their own feelings. (Emphasize that the students should respond according to their own feelings, not as Garfield might respond!) Read each item aloud slowly and distinctly; then read it a second time while students are thinking. Be sure to read the item *number* and to remind students of page numbers when new pages are reached.

Scoring

To score the survey, count four points for each leftmost (happiest) Garfield circled, three for each slightly smiling Garfield, two for each mildly upset Garfield, and one point for each very upset (rightmost) Garfield. Three scores for each student can be obtained: the total for the first 10 items, the total for the second 10, and a composite total. The first half of the survey relates to attitude toward recreational reading; the second half relates to attitude toward academic aspects of reading.

















Interpretation

You can interpret scores in two ways. One is to note informally where the score falls in regard to the four nodes of the scale. A total score of 50, for example, would fall about mid-way on the scale, between the slightly happy and slightly upset figures, therefore indicating a relatively indifferent overall attitude toward reading. The other approach is more formal. It involves converting the raw scores into percentile ranks by means of Table 1. Be sure to use the norms for the right grade level and to note the column headings (Rec = recreational reading, Aca = academic reading, Tot = total score). If you wish to determine the average percentile rank for your class, average the raw scores first; then use the table to locate the percentile rank corresponding to the raw score mean. Percentile ranks cannot be averaged directly.

















Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

School _____ Grade _____ Name _____

















Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

1.	How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?			
				
2.	How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?			
				
3.	How do you feel about reading for fun at home?			
				
4.	How do you feel about getting a book for a present?			
				

















Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

5.	How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?			
				
6.	How do you feel about starting a new book?			
				
7.	How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?			
				
8.	How do you feel about reading instead of playing?			
				

















Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

9.	How do you feel about going to a bookstore?			
				
10.	How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?			
				
11.	How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read?			
				
12.	How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?			
				

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

13.	How do you feel about reading in school?			
				
14.	How do you feel about reading your school books?			
				
15.	How do you feel about learning from a book?			
				
16.	How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?			
				

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

17.	How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?			
				
18.	How do you feel when you read out loud in class?			
				
19.	How do you feel about using a dictionary?			
				
20.	How do you feel about taking a reading test?			
				

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Scoring Sheet

Student

Name _____

Teacher _____

Grade _____ Administration

Date _____

Scoring Guide

4 points Happiest Garfield

3 points Slightly smiling Garfield

2 points Mildly upset Garfield

1 point Very upset Garfield

Recreational reading Academic reading

1. ____ 1. ____

2. ____ 2. ____

3. ____ 3. ____

4. ____ 4. ____

5. ____ 5. ____

6. ____ 6. ____

7. ____ 7. ____

8. ____ 8. ____

9. ____ 9. ____

10. ____ 10. ____

Raw Score: ____ Raw Score: ____

Full scale raw score (Recreational + Academic): ____

Percentile ranks: Recreational

..... Academic

..... Full scale

© PAWS – www.professorgarfield.org

Survey designed by Dennis J. Kear, Wichita

Appendix B

Permission to Use ERAS Survey

ERAS: permission to use

From: **Cheryl Parker** (XXXXXXXXXXXX) This sender is in your [contact list](#).

Sent: Thu 9/11/14 12:04 PM

To: me (XXXXXXXX)

ERAS: permission to use

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bob Levy** <XXXXXX>

Date: Thu, Sep 11, 2014 at 11:37 AM

Subject: Re: ERAS: permission to use

To: Cheryl Parker <XXXXXX>

Hi Cheryl,

It's fine to use the survey for your dissertation. We just would like to see the finished "use of the work" when it's completed.

Thanks,

Bob Levy

The Professor Garfield Foundation

From: Cheryl Parker <XXXXXXXX>

Date: Thursday, September 11, 2014 10:21 AM

To: Odie <XXXXXX>

Subject: ERAS: permission to use

Dear Sir,

I am (a second grade teacher and) a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University. My dissertation topic is *The Effects of Reader's Theater on the Reading Fluency Rates, Comprehension Levels, and Attitudes of Second Grade Readers*. I would like to use the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (with modifications ... clarification captions) found on your website that was designed by Dennis J. Kear. What do I need to do to obtain permission? Thank you for your time and help!

Appendix C

Teacher Interview Protocol/Questions

Teacher Interview Protocol Form

Date _____

Time _____

Location : Location to be chosen by the interviewee

Interviewer : the researcher

Interviewee _____

Release form signed? ____

Notes to interviewee:

Thank you for your participation. I believe your input will be valuable to this research and in helping grow all of our professional practice.

Confidentiality of responses is guaranteed

Approximate length of interview: 30 minutes, two major questions

Purpose of research:

To determine to what extent Reader's Theater affects the fluency rate, comprehension levels and attitude of second graders.

Teacher Interview Protocol/Questions.

1. What, if anything did you learn through the use of *Reader's Theater*?
2. In what way (or ways) did participating in *Reader's Theater* affect your students' reading?

Methods of disseminating results:

The interviews will be recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy. The information gleaned from these interviews will be analyzed by coding the dialogue, looking for commonalities and/or themes, and then determining how these themes illuminate the question of the effect of Reader's Theater on students' attitude toward reading. Coding involves dividing the text into small units (phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), assigning a label to each unit and then grouping the codes into themes (Creswell, 2011). The

resulting codes can be grouped into related themes (Creswell, 2011). The themes are the findings, or results that will provide answers to the qualitative research (Creswell, 2011). Based on Cresswell, this is appropriate because the qualitative data gathered provide a deeper “understanding of the participants view of the results of the trial” and will determine the long-term sustained effects of the intervention” (Creswell, 2011).

1. What, if anything did you learn through the use of *Reader's Theater*?

Response from interviewee:

2. In what way (or ways) did participating in *Reader's Theater* affect your students' reading?

Response from interviewee:

Thank you for your participation and input!

Appendix D

Student Interview Protocol/Questions

Interview Protocol Form

Project: Exploring Learning of Assessment during a “Process Based” Faculty Development Workshop

Date _____

Time to be chosen by interviewee’s teacher

Location : Location to be chosen by the interviewee’s teacher

Interviewer : the researcher

Interviewee _____

Release form signed? _____

Note to interviewee:

Thank you for your participation. I believe your input will be valuable to this research and in helping grow all of our professional practice.

Confidentiality of responses is guaranteed

Approximate length of interview: 30 minutes, seven major questions

Purpose of research:

To determine to what extent Reader’s Theater affects the fluency rate, comprehension levels and attitude of second graders.

Student Interview Protocol/Questions.

1. Tell me about participating in *Reader’s Theater*.
2. Describe how you felt about reading before you participated in *Reader’s Theater*.
3. Describe how you feel about reading now that you have participated in *Reader’s Theater*.
4. What was the best thing about participating in *Reader’s Theater*?

5. What was the worst thing about participating in reader's Theater?
6. Do you want to continue *Reader's Theater*? Why, or why not?
7. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about participating in *Reader's Theater*?

Methods of disseminating results:

The interviews will be recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy. The information gleaned from these interviews will be analyzed by coding the dialogue, looking for commonalities and/or themes, and then determining how these themes illuminate the question of the effect of Reader's Theater on students' attitude toward reading. Coding involves dividing the text into small units (phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), assigning a label to each unit and then grouping the codes into themes (Creswell, 2011). The resulting codes can be grouped into related themes (Creswell, 2011). The themes are the findings, or results that will provide answers to the qualitative research (Creswell, 2011). Based on Creswell, this is appropriate because the qualitative data gathered provide a deeper "understanding of the participants view of the results of the trial" and will determine the long-term sustained effects of the intervention" (Creswell, 2011).

1. Tell me about participating in *Reader's Theater*.

Response from interviewee:

2. Describe how you felt about reading before you participated in *Reader's Theater*.

Response from interviewee:

3. Describe how you feel about reading now that you have participated in *Reader's Theater*.

Response from interviewee:

4. What was the best thing about participating in *Reader's Theater*?

Response from interviewee:

5. What was the worst thing about participating in reader's Theater?

Response from interviewee:

6. Do you want to continue *Reader's Theater*? Why, or why not?

Response from interviewee:

7. Is there anything else you would like tell me about participating in *Reader's Theater*?

Response from interviewee:

Thank you for participating and helping me today!

Appendix E

Permission to Use *mClass*TM TRC/DORF Data

Permission

Inbox x



9:53 AM (20 hours ago)

to me

Cheryl Parker has permission to use [REDACTED] County Schools data from mCLASS/TRC/DORF for her dissertation as long as no specific student names are included.



Executive Director of Elementary Instruction
XXXXXXXX

This message originated from [REDACTED] County Schools. All e-mail correspondence to and from this address is subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law as defined under N.C.G.S. §132.1, which may result in monitoring and disclosure to third parties, including law enforcement and the media.

Appendix F

Permission to Use *STAR*TM

[REDACTED] Elementary School

[REDACTED] Street

April 27, 2015

Dear Ms. Parker,

In order to partially fulfill your requirements for your graduate work toward your doctoral degree, you have requested permission for the following to take place during the 2015-2016 school year:



[REDACTED]

Principal

[REDACTED]

Assistant Principal

2. Conduct interviews with the second grade teaching staff
3. Conduct surveys with the Springfield teaching staff
4. Access DIBELS, TRC, and STAR reading data on second grade students.

This letter serves as written permission for the above, with the following criteria:

- Interviews and surveys will be conducted outside of teachers' work day so as not to interfere with their job responsibilities and so as not to take up collaborative or individual planning time.
- Participation in interviews and/or surveys by any staff member is strictly voluntary.
- Interviews with students will be conducted outside of students' academic day so as not to interfere with their academic learning time or daily schedule.
- Participation by students in individual interviews will take place only after written parental permission is received.
- Any student data from students whose identity is not anonymous to you may only be utilized by you in this research project with written parental permission to do so.
- Any and all written correspondence to parents must be approved by me in advance.

Should you have any questions or if I may be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact a signature.

Principal

Appendix G

*STAR*TM Sample 1



Pretest Instructions

Picture 1

This is what the questions in the first part of the test look like.

Alyssa Daly		1
I can tie my _____.		
1.	car	
2.	shoe	
3.	sky	

Appendix H

STAR[™] Reader Sample 2



Pretest Instructions

Picture 2

This is what the longer questions in the first part of the test look like.

Note: You will see these only if you are in grades 3–12.

Alyssa Daly21/25

Because of its ethnic and regional diversity, as well as the socioeconomic divisions within the population, Mexico is culturally heterogeneous. Among rural peoples there are strong regional affinities and allegiances, often referred to as "patria chica" [small homeland], which help to perpetuate cultural diversity. The large number of Indian languages and customs still extant, especially in the south, also _____ cultural differences. In an attempt to unite the nation culturally by identifying a uniquely Mexican culture, the government has supported indigenous folk arts and crafts as well as the European-inspired classical arts.

1. articulate	2. enunciate
3. captivate	4. accentuate

Appendix I

Principal/School Permission to Conduct Action Research Study

██████████ Elementary School

██████████ Street

██████████

April 27, 2015

Dear Ms. Parker,

In order to partially fulfill your requirements for your graduate work toward your doctoral degree, you have requested permission for the following to take place during the 2015-2016 school year:



██████████

Principal

5. Conduct interviews with the second grade teaching staff
6. Conduct surveys with the Springfield teaching staff
7. Access DIBELS, TRC, and STAR reading data on second grade students.

██████████
Assistant Principal

This letter serves as written permission for the above, with the following criteria:

- Interviews and surveys will be conducted outside of teachers' work day so as not to interfere with their job responsibilities and so as not to take up collaborative or individual planning time.
- Participation in interviews and/or surveys by any staff member is strictly voluntary.
- Interviews with students will be conducted outside of students' academic day so as not to interfere with their academic learning time or daily schedule.
- Participation by students in individual interviews will take place only after written parental permission is received.
- Any student data from students whose identity is not anonymous to you may only be utilized by you in this research project with written parental permission to do so.
- Any and all written correspondence to parents must be approved by me in advance.

Should you have any questions or if I may be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular box used to redact a signature.

Principal

Appendix J
Sample Schedule

Sample Schedule

Schedule

Prior to Implementation: Administer pretests: *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC, *STAR*™, and *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® progress monitor for reading fluency.

Week One: Introduction of Reader's Theater

Table 2 Schedule for Week One

Monday	Introduce <i>Reader's Theater</i> to each reading group, comparing the program to traditional theater. Questions to ask: (1) What is a play? (2) What is a script? (3) What is an actor and what does he or she do? (4) What does a narrator do? (6) Why do you think this is called <i>Reader's Theater</i> ?
Tuesday	Introduce the first story/script <i>The Boy Who Cried Wolf</i> , to the group. Assign parts. (Highlight parts if needed). Introduce the vocabulary used in the story/script. It is important for these words to be taught and reviewed before reading the script. Discuss the meaning of each of the words. (Have these new vocabulary words on index cards and place on the word wall for the students to refer back to.) First reading: This should be as nonthreatening as possible. The goal here is for the students to learn the words and read through the text. Dramatic expression will come after repeated readings. The teacher guides and assists when necessary.
Wednesday	Second reading. As students read, the teacher monitors and assists with vocabulary errors. Discuss the meaning of the characters' words with the group. Model expressive reading. Talk about using "character voices", such as cackling like a witch, or using a deep voice for a giant. This adds fun, a bit of drama, and increases fluency.
Thursday	"Run Through Day" This is the day <i>before</i> the group "performs" for the rest of the students. The students practice expressive reading, using facial expressions and gestures to convey the meaning of their characters' words, and making their reading sound like conversational speech. Have the students give each other feedback on their expressive reading. If the students want to make some small prop (like a hat, or scepter) to help in the identification of their character, they may do so.
Friday	"Performance Day" The students perform for the rest of the class. As the students 'perform', the teacher will assess their reading fluency, expressive reading, and comprehension.

Week Two : Johnnie Appleseed

Table 3 Schedule for Week Two

Monday	Introduce the play, <i>Johnnie Appleseed</i> . Read the play to the students and allow them to choose their parts. Introduce the vocabulary used in the story/script. Discuss the meaning of each new word.
Tuesday	First reading. Go over any vocabulary that students are having difficulty with. This should be as nonthreatening as possible. The goal is for the students to learn the words and read through the text. Dramatic expression will come after repeated readings. Teacher guides as necessary.
Wednesday	Second reading. As the student reads, the teacher monitors and assists with vocabulary errors. Discuss the meaning of the characters' words with the group. Model expressive reading. Talk about using "character voices".

Thursday	<p>“Run Through Day”</p> <p>This is the day <i>before</i> the students “perform” for the rest of the students. The students practice expressive reading, using facial expressions and gestures to convey the meaning of their characters’ words, and making their reading sound like conversational speech.</p>
Friday	<p>“Performance Day”</p> <p>The students perform for the rest of the class.</p>

Week Three: The Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly

Table 4 Schedule for Week Three

Monday	Introduce the play, <u>The Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly</u> . Read the play to the students and allow them to choose their parts. Introduce the vocabulary used in the story/script. Discuss the meaning of each new word.
Tuesday	First reading. Go over any vocabulary that students are having difficulty with. This should be as nonthreatening as possible. The goal is for the students to learn the words and read through the text. Dramatic expression will come after repeated readings. Teacher guides as necessary.
Wednesday	<p>Second reading. As the student reads, the teacher monitors and assists with vocabulary errors.</p> <p>Discuss the meaning of the characters’ words with the group.</p> <p>Model expressive reading. Talk about using “character voices”.</p>
Thursday	<p>“Run Through Day”</p> <p>This is the day <i>before</i> the students “perform” for the rest of the students. The students practice expressive reading, using facial expressions and gestures to convey the meaning of their characters’ words, and making their reading sound like conversational speech.</p>
Friday	<p>“Performance Day”</p> <p>The students perform for the rest of the class.</p>

Week 4: The Prince Frog

Table 5 Schedule for Week Four

Monday	Introduce the play, <u>The Prince Frog</u> . Read the play to the students and allow them to choose their parts. Introduce the vocabulary used in the story/script. Discuss the meaning of each new word.
Tuesday	First reading. Go over any vocabulary that students are having difficulty with. This should be as nonthreatening as possible. The goal is for the students to learn the words and read through the text. Dramatic expression will come after repeated readings. Teacher guides as necessary.
Wednesday	<p>Second reading. As the student reads, the teacher monitors and assists with vocabulary errors.</p> <p>Discuss the meaning of the characters’ words with the group.</p> <p>Model expressive reading. Talk about using “character voices”.</p>
Thursday	<p>“Run Through Day”</p> <p>This is the day <i>before</i> the students “perform” for the rest of the students. The students practice expressive reading, using facial expressions and gestures to convey the meaning of their characters’ words, and making their reading sound like conversational speech.</p>

Friday	“Performance Day” The students perform for the rest of the class.
--------	--

Week Five: Christmas Around The World

Table 6 Schedule for Week Five

Monday	Introduce the play, <u>Christmas Around The World</u> . Read the play to the students and allow them to choose their parts. Introduce the vocabulary used in the story/script. Discuss the meaning of each new word.
Tuesday	First reading. Go over any vocabulary that students are having difficulty with. This should be as nonthreatening as possible. The goal is for the students to learn the words and read through the text. Dramatic expression will come after repeated readings. Teacher guides as necessary.
Wednesday	Second reading. As the student reads, the teacher monitors and assists with vocabulary errors. Discuss the meaning of the characters’ words with the group. Model expressive reading. Talk about using “character voices”.
Thursday	“Run Through Day” This is the day <i>before</i> the students “perform” for the rest of the students. The students practice expressive reading, using facial expressions and gestures to convey the meaning of their characters’ words, and making their reading sound like conversational speech.
Friday	“Performance Day” The students perform for the rest of the class.

Week Six: Anansi and the Talking Melon

Table 7 Schedule for Week Six

Monday	Introduce the play, <u>Anansi and the Talking Melon</u> . Read the play to the students and allow them to choose their parts. Introduce the vocabulary used in the story/script. Discuss the meaning of each new word.
Tuesday	First reading. Go over any vocabulary that students are having difficulty with. This should be as nonthreatening as possible. The goal is for the students to learn the words and read through the text. Dramatic expression will come after repeated readings. Teacher guides as necessary.
Wednesday	Second reading. As the student reads, the teacher monitors and assists with vocabulary errors. Discuss the meaning of the characters’ words with the group. Model expressive reading. Talk about using “character voices”.
Thursday	“Run Through Day” This is the day <i>before</i> the students “perform” for the rest of the students. The students practice expressive reading, using facial expressions and gestures to convey the meaning of their characters’ words, and making their reading sound like conversational speech.
Friday	“Performance Day” The students perform for the rest of the class.

Week Seven: City Mouse, Country Mouse

Table 8 Schedule for Week Seven

Monday	Introduce the play, <u>Country Mouse, City Mouse</u> . Read the play to the students and allow them to choose their parts. Introduce the vocabulary used in the story/script. Discuss the meaning of each new word.
Tuesday	First reading. Go over any vocabulary that students are having difficulty with. This should be as nonthreatening as possible. The goal is for the students to learn the words and read through the text. Dramatic expression will come after repeated readings. Teacher guides as necessary.
Wednesday	Second reading. As the student reads, the teacher monitors and assists with vocabulary errors. Discuss the meaning of the characters' words with the group. Model expressive reading. Talk about using "character voices".
Thursday	"Run Through Day" This is the day <i>before</i> the students "perform" for the rest of the students. The students practice expressive reading, using facial expressions and gestures to convey the meaning of their characters' words, and making their reading sound like conversational speech.
Friday	"Performance Day" The students perform for the rest of the class.

Week Seven: The Three Little Elephants

Table 9 Schedule for Week Eight

Monday	Introduce the play, <u>The Three Little Elephants</u> . Read the play to the students and allow them to choose their parts. Introduce the vocabulary used in the story/script. Discuss the meaning of each new word.
Tuesday	First reading. Go over any vocabulary that students are having difficulty with. This should be as nonthreatening as possible. The goal is for the students to learn the words and read through the text. Dramatic expression will come after repeated readings. Teacher guides as necessary.
Wednesday	Second reading. As the student reads, the teacher monitors and assists with vocabulary errors. Discuss the meaning of the characters' words with the group. Model expressive reading. Talk about using "character voices".
Thursday	"Run Through Day" This is the day <i>before</i> the students "perform" for the rest of the students. The students practice expressive reading, using facial expressions and gestures to convey the meaning of their characters' words, and making their reading sound like conversational speech.
Friday	"Performance Day" The students perform for the rest of the class.

Week Nine –Final week. Assessments - Administer *mCLASS:Reading 3D*® TRC, *STAR*™, and *mCLASS:DIBELS next*® progress monitor for reading fluency. Gather, graph, and compare data.

Appendix K

Parental Permission Form

Consent Form:

All The World's A Stage...
The Effects of Reader's Theater on the Reading Fluency Rates,
Comprehension Levels and Attitudes of Second Graders

I am conducting research on the impact Effects of Reader's Theater on the Reading Fluency Rates, Comprehension Levels and Attitudes of Second Graders.

I am investigating this because the research will help educators make informed decisions the use of Reader's Theater as a strategy for improving the fluency rates, comprehension levels and reading attitudes of second graders. All of the second grade students will be participating in Reader's Theater. However, should you decide to do this, your child will be asked to participate in interviews to describe their attitude toward reading. Students will participate in interviews before and after participating in *Reader's Theater*.

There are no risks to students in this study. All information is confidential, and no person or school will be identified in the study. All interview sessions are with the research interviewer only, and no individual information shared in the sessions will be used for any reason beyond the research study, nor will it be shared with school personnel.

If your child takes part in this project, he or she will have the opportunity to give input about the future use of *Reader's Theater* in schools. Taking part in this project is entirely up to you, and no one will hold it against your child if you decide not to do it. If your child does take part, he or she may stop at any time without penalty. In addition, you may ask to have your data withdrawn from the study after the research has been conducted.

If you want to know more about this research project, please contact me at [704-263-4091] or email me at [clparker@gaston.k12.nc.us]. This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Gardner-Webb University. Information on Gardner-Webb University's policy and procedure for research involving humans can be obtained from Dr. Doug Eury at Gardner-Webb University.

You will get a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,
Cheryl L. Parker

Consent Statement

I agree to let my child take part in this project. I know what he or she will have to do and that he or she can stop at any time.

Signature

Date

I do not agree to let my child take part in this project. I know what he or she will have to do and that he or she can stop at any time.

Signature

Date

Audio Recording Consent Addition

I agree to audio recording at [Springfield Elementary] during the months of August - December 2015.

Signature

Date

I have been told that I have the right to hear the audio recordings before they are used. I have decided that I:

_____ want to hear the recordings

_____ do not want to hear the recordings

[Cheryl Parker] and other researchers approved by Gardner-Webb University may use the recordings made of my child. The original recordings or copies may be used for this research project, teacher education, and presentation at professional meetings.

Signature

Date

Address

Appendix L

Teacher Participation Consent Form

Teacher Participation Consent Form:

All The World's A Stage...
The Effects of Reader's Theater on the Reading Fluency Rates,
Comprehension Levels and Attitudes of Second Graders

I am conducting research on the impact Effects of *Reader's Theater* on the Reading Fluency Rates, Comprehension Levels and Attitudes of Second Graders.

I am investigating this because the research will help educators make informed decisions the use of *Reader's Theater* as a strategy for improving the fluency rates, comprehension levels and reading attitudes of second graders. All of the second grade teachers will be participating in *Reader's Theater*. However, should you decide to do this, you will be asked to participate in interviews to describe your perceptions of *Reader's Theater* as a strategy for improving students' reading fluency, comprehension and attitude toward reading. Teachers will participate in interviews after the implementation of *Reader's Theater*.

There are no risks to students or teachers in this study. All information is confidential, and no person or school will be identified in the study. All interview sessions are with the research interviewer only, and no individual information shared in the sessions will be used for any reason beyond the research study, nor will it be shared with school personnel.

If you part in this project, you will have the opportunity to give input about the future use of *Reader's Theater* in schools. Taking part in this project is entirely up to you, and no one will hold it against you if you decide not to do it. If you do take part, you may stop at any time without penalty. In addition, you may ask to have your data withdrawn from the study after the research has been conducted.

If you want to know more about this research project, please contact me at [704-263-4091] or email me at [clparker@gaston.k12.nc.us]. This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Gardner-Webb University. Information on Gardner-Webb University's policy and procedure for research involving humans can be obtained from Dr. Doug Eury at Gardner-Webb University.

You will get a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,
Cheryl L. Parker

Consent Statement

I agree to take part in this project. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop at any time.

Signature

Date

I do not agree to take part in this project. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop at any time.

Signature

Date

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I agree to audio recording at [Springfield Elementary] during the months of August - December 2015.

Signature

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