The Use of Interactive Notebooks in the English Classroom to Improve ELLs Content Vocabulary Acquisition and Comprehension

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The American education system is constantly changing to meet the needs of all students (Lynn, & Hemmer, 2011). Laws are constantly updating to create the changes to ensure that all students have equal access to rigorous curriculum. For example, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was implemented to ensure that all students have fair and equal access to a high-quality education. NCLB has been reauthorized every four years to update and expand its coverage (OPSI, 2011). The most recent reauthorization of NCLB is the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Meibaum, 2016). NCLB requires each state to test students in grades 3-8, as well as one grade in high school, in the areas of reading and math; when the students are tested they must benchmark, or at least reach a minimum proficiency level on the standards (OPSI). NCLB was designed to close gaps in student achievement, focusing on the following: accountability, flexibility, research-based educational practices, and options for parents in regard to Title I schools (OPSI). Each state is required to establish state standards along with an accountability or assessment system.

NCLB finally made provisions for all students including ELLs (English Language Learners) and LEPs (Limited English Proficient) (CITATION). Under NCLB, ELLs must benchmark in their core academic areas, specifically, Title III of NCLB, and now ESSA is aimed at improving the English ability of ELLs, including having highly-qualified teachers, and valid, reliable tests (Hoang-Thu, 2009). NCLB made it more difficult for states and school systems to ignore special populations (CITATION). The constantly increasing number of ELLs in school systems made NCLB a necessary course of action to ensure the progress and success of ELLs in the American education system. ESSA continued all of the supports for ELLs that NCLB had put in place. However, the difference in assessment between ESSA and NCLB is that ESSA allows the states to exclude recently arrived immigrants from one Reading/English Language Arts test

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administration who have been enrolled in one class less than 2 months (OPSI, 2011; Meibaum, 2016). According to Fernandez and Inserra, the ELL population has grown by more than 51% from 2000 to 2010 (2013). Linn and Hemmer reported that 21% of school-aged children speak a language other than English at home (2011). With the increase in the number of ELLs in schools, there is a need for instruction that targets their specific needs. Despite the laws that have been established to ensure the progress of ELLs within the general education curriculum, students still struggle to comprehend and correctly use academic vocabulary in the general education classroom setting (Linn, & Hemmer).

ELL Services Are Not Enough

East Limestone High School is part of a small, rural county school system in North Alabama. The school serves students in grades six through twelve, with approximately 1,200 students on campus. The school is on a seven-period day, with each class lasting 48 minutes. The school day is structured so that there is a twenty-minute intervention time between sixth and seventh periods designed to allow students to receive targeted interventions for reading, math or failing grades. One problem that the school is facing is that the ELL teacher is not able to provide enough services to the ELLs on campus due to her itinerant position which has caused delays in student testing and IELPs (Individualized English Learning Plans). These delays result in teachers not realizing that a failing student has ELL needs and a lack of teacher knowledge of how to properly accommodate for ELLs. This problem is not unique to one school site, the school system only has seven ELL teachers to provide services to just over 300 students at twenty different campuses which is not an issue that can be addressed through action research. However, one site-specific problem which is a byproduct of the global issue that can be addressed with action research is the lack of ELL acquisition and comprehension of academic

vocabulary. ELLs struggle to learn and comprehend the academic vocabulary necessary to be successful with so little support in their core classes (CITATION). The literature offers several possible interventions that teachers could implement within their classrooms to reinforce academic vocabulary.

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Collaborative Learning Models

Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) is the term used to describe academic content instruction for ELLs who are at an intermediate or above a beginner academic level (Sobul, 1995). SDAIE strategies ensure that the core academic material for ELLs meets the same rigorous standards and is not diluted. SDAIE strategies are also specifically designed for use with ELLs (Sobul). SDAIE strategies emphasize collaborative learning groups, allowing for heterogeneous grouping so that students can share experiences (Sobul). While SADIE strategies do not solely focus on peer groups as a whole for the methodology, peer groups are an integral part of the strategy. Pyle et al. also discussed the benefits of peer-assisted learning or group learning opportunities as being beneficial for all ELLs (2017). Pyle et al. specifically stated that ELLs need ninety minutes weekly of peer interaction within their classes, going on to say that group work/peer interaction is one of the most undervalued resources within all classrooms. Peer groups have been found to be highly effective at improving both oral and written language for ELLs, including phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension (Pyle et al.). Effective peer group activities suggested by Pyle et al. are paired read aloud, repeated reading, and reading with retelling and questioning.

Visual Cues and Graphic Organizers

Campbell and Cuba emphasized the need for an abundance of visual information for ELLs in the classroom (2015). They reminded their audience that beginning readers rely on visual cues rather than the printed words for information (Campbell, & Cuba). Visual cues can add a further dimension to the printed word and lessons to enhance the learning experiences of ELLs. Campbell and Cuba discussed the use of video clips as an excellent visual cue for ELLs providing more of an impact than that of a still image. The main discussion emphasized by this study was teacher use of graphic organizers as visual cues to support prediction-making abilities of ELLs. The use of graphic organizers coupled with other visual cues and the text helped ELLs think critically about the presented material.

Preteach Vocabulary Words

Some of the literature reviewed suggested pre-teaching the target vocabulary words. Pre-teaching vocabulary words using pictures or visual cues to help ELLs make connections to their first language is another strategy discussed by researchers. August, Artzi, and Mazrum found that ELL performance in science classes was improved when the target vocabulary for the unit was taught prior to the lesson and visuals were used to help ELLs make connections to their first language (2010). Vaughn et al. also discussed that explicitly teaching target vocabulary prior to a lesson in a meaningful context enhanced comprehension (2017).

Interactive Notebooks

Concept notebooks, or interactive student notebooks, are another useful tool for working with ELLs. In a study conducted by Huerta, Irby, Lara-ALecio, and Tong, concept notebooks were a very effective tool in helping students construct understanding in a subject area (2016). Students used the notebooks to record vocabulary, questions, findings, drawing, visual cues, pictures, graphs, lists, definitions, and other artifacts (Huerta et al). Huerta et al. further

suggested that the notebooks are excellent to use because even if ELLs did not have the correct language to write a sentence about what they observed in a class like science, they could draw a picture or other visual representation of what they had observed and learned in class that day. One study conducted found that notebooks fostered more structured arguments and more complexity within student writings and reflections in their notebooks (Hughes et al., 1998). One necessary component of a good interactive student notebook is a strong scoring rubric, which should be glued into the front of the notebook (Frels, et al., 2011; Young, 2003). By using interactive notebooks, students are able to record information, figures, data, vocabulary, as well as reflect upon the lessons and material (Young). Young goes on to say that it is crucial that students do not tear any pages out of their notebooks. Notebooks also allow for writing across the curriculum (Young). Stencel found that interactive student notebooks improved students' grades because the notebooks give students a way to stay organized, interact with lectures, have a study guide for tests, have access to vocabulary and handouts prior to class discussion, and fosters quantitative thinking (1998).

Research Question

The number of ELLs in the American education system continues to grow. This growing population need teachers to use scaffolding techniques to help ensure comprehension and attainment of academic vocabulary. Collaborative learning groups are excellent to use with all students across grade levels and subject matters, however, ELLs still require targeted vocabulary intervention. Visual cues and graphic organizers could be used with all students to increase understanding, but depending on the subject matter, such as math, options may be limited. Preteaching vocabulary is an effective strategy to increase comprehension for ELLs but may not always provide adequate support. The use of interactive concept notebooks incorporates the best

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of all effective strategies. Students complete work in their notebooks while in peer groups. Concept notebooks hold visual cues and graphic organizers. Teachers use concept notebooks to pre-teach vocabulary and add visual cues. Students benefit from all of these strategies when using a concept notebook. The description of concept notebooks by Huerta et al. gives educators an option for scaffolding and adapting curriculum that incorporates the highlights of many other methods all with proven positive results for the comprehension and retention of vocabulary concepts for ELL students.

Research Question

Research on the use of interactive notebooks, coupled with the fact that interactive notebooks incorporate three other strong intervention strategies for ELLs, has led to the question: how will the use of interactive notebooks at East Limestone High School improve the comprehension and correct use of vocabulary of ELLs in their core academic classes?

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Methodology

Participants

There is a total of thirteen participants in the study. One of the participants in the study is a Swiss-French foreign exchange student, who came to the United States to learn better English so that she can one day become an ambassador to the United States. English is her fourth language; she also speaks French, Spanish, and German. Another participant in the study is also a foreign exchange student form Kyrgyzstan; English is her fifth language, her primary language is Kurgis. The remaining eleven participants are of Hispanic heritage and speak various dialects of Spanish as their primary language. Of the eleven Hispanic students, one has only been in the United States six weeks. Another two of the eleven have been in the United States less than two

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years. Three of the eleven students are on ELL monitoring status only. The remaining five of the eleven students are at varying levels on the WIDA (World Class Instructional Design and Assessment) scale. The WIDA scale is how the state of Alabama rates the ability level of ELLs based on a assessment of his or her English skills (ALSDE, 2016).

Setting

The interactive notebook intervention will take place in the core English classes which will involve four different teachers. One of the teachers will be the researcher, who will monitor and support the intervention, while the other three teachers will be English content teachers. The intervention will begin on the first day of the third grading period and last nine weeks, which is the duration of the third grading period. English classes are 48 minutes long, giving the students 45 days of 48 minute intervention periods. English classes are scheduled for the individual students at various times throughout the day.

Materials

Each student will be given a college ruled composition notebook with the cardboard cover and the pages that are stitched into the notebook. Each student will receive a rubric with notebook grading criteria to glue into the front cover of their notebook. Each student will also receive a description of how the notebook is to be used. The right side of the notebook is for notes, vocabulary, and handouts. The left side of the notebook is for diagrams, reflections, and questions. The students will continue to do all of the required work for their English class, but the change will be that all of their work will be completed in the notebook daily, with extra time given in class for students to reflect on the lesson of the day. Students will also need to have access to glue, colored pencils, and a variety of colored copy paper to make foldables or add to their notebooks. The researcher will compile a list of participant grades on relevant tests

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assessing comprehension of vocabulary as well as the results of participant scores on initial Performance Series Assessments. Performance Series Assessments are computerized content related assessments that all students must complete for each core subject area. The Performance Series Assessments are given three times per school year to serve as a pre-test, benchmark, and post test to measure growth in a subject area for the student. Each student at the school is given a year-end growth goal that they should strive to achieve. The Performance Series is currently in use in various systems across Alabama but will be replacing the ACT Aspire to assess students in grades three through ten. Once the intervention period has been completed, the researcher will collect Performance Series post test or year-end results along with grades on in class vocabulary comprehension assessments and compare the two.

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Procedures

First the English teachers will be trained on the set up, grading criteria, and use of the interactive notebooks. Each teacher will have an example notebook to use. Each teacher will also have the exact same materials so that the types of materials is not a factor in the outcome of the notebooks. The teachers will also each participate in a mock lesson to see how to incorporate the notebook into a daily routine. The teachers will be shown how the use of notebooks can streamline their grading by having all classroom writing and reflection completed in one place. The teachers will also be given a sample timeline for his or her daily lesson plans so that he or she can see how to schedule enough time within a class period to allow proper implementation of the intervention strategy. The other thing that the teachers will need to be trained in is using group work with the notebooks. The teachers will need to make sure that each student does his or her own work in the notebooks but that groups can be used to facilitate discussion and understanding of concepts addressed in the notebooks. Teachers will be expected to preteach unit

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vocabulary by having the students write the words, their definitions, a graphic or picture, as well as an antonym and synonym for each vocabulary word into the notebooks. Notebook grades, vocabulary grades, vocabulary test grades, and Performance Series testing scores will all be recorded, so both summative and formative assessments will be recorded. Student grades from the previous grading period on vocabulary definitions and vocabulary test scores will be compared to see if the notebooks improve student scores in those areas.

Potential Issues

One potential issue is that it will be difficult to implement the use of notebooks during the third grading period of the school year. Sometimes students react negatively to new procedures taking place while the school year is in progress. Another potential issue is that the 48-minute class periods will not allow for reflection within the notebook on a daily basis. The teachers who will be implementing the notebooks within their classrooms will need a great deal of support to ensure that the method is correct. Those teachers will also need support to ensure that they do not become frustrated with the process of using and grading the notebooks. The findings may also show that one grading period is not enough time to determine the effectiveness of the use of interactive notebooks in this setting.

Potential Findings and Discussion

I will share the findings of this study in a professional development setting with the remainder of the school's staff to show a practice that the teachers could use with students to help acquisition and comprehension of academic vocabulary. The supporting literature along with the results of the study can offer other teachers as well as myself an approach to scaffolding material for all ELLs across content areas. Other core subjects could potentially complete a trial time period of implementing the intervention to see if it is a practice that would be beneficial for

other subjects. I have seen the notebooks used in a Geometry classroom with outstanding results. Having other subjects with success in using the notebooks demonstrating what the literature details will help to encourage teachers to use the intervention in their own classes.

This study will be able to help ELLs be more successful in their core academic subject areas. The use of the interactive notebook can allow them to use a variety of proven strategies to foster success with their acquisition of academic English. ELLs will be able to express themselves and produce written work that is thoughtful and focused on quality as opposed to just quantity of production. ELLs will be able to use their notebooks as a study tool for all tests. ELLs will have their notebooks as a resource for future courses to look back on to refresh their memories on foundational skills or concepts.

Through the action research process I have been able to share many valuable insights and tools with my colleagues. Some of the best conversations I have had with one of my colleagues had to do with one of the articles I read about making the required literature for the 11th grade English culturally relevant to the students. Through our discussion we were able to pick a novel the students would emotionally connect to and have personal discussions about. I have also collaborated with fellow teachers to help them change their teaching approach when working with ELLs. Without the implementation of the intervention, the process of discussing the literature has helped me to guide others towards seeing the need for an intervention. Most recently I have discussed with one of my administrators the possibility of helping her do research to support schedule changes in the middle school period schedules to extend the amount of time that students are in reading and math classes. I have also come up with other areas where the action research process will guide her next steps in her career possibly toward an administrative certification focusing either on interventions for special education students or

ELLs. The action research process also forced me to more closely examine the professional development information that is presented at my school site. I often sit in meetings and ask myself where the presenter is getting his or her information. I personally want to see the citations so that I can read the literature and decide for myself on best practices to fit my unique group of students. After reading approximately fifty articles for this course, I have told my students that I am a little bit of a nerd because I enjoy the research and paper writing process.

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ED 690 Action Research Paper.docx

Assessment

Grade out of 100

90

View Rubric

Action Research Project Paper	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Introduction to the Problem	**No details** **Comments** Too global. 15 / 17 pts
Research Question and Literature Review	**Provided a research question that either does not address the need or contains an intervention that is loosely connected to the literature.** 14 / 17 pts
Methodology 1: Participants, Environment, Materials	**Each section provided information that lacked some detail or appropriateness. The materials section may be missing details regarding the instruments.** 14 / 17 pts
Methodology 2: Procedures and Potential Issues	**No details** 15 / 17 pts
Reflection (Discussion)	**Answered the questions clearly with a clear understanding of the impact of action research in the classroom.** 17 / 17 pts
Grammar and Mechanics (15 points; 5 points per category)	**Grammar and mechanics skills exhibited are exceptional with minimal errors (less than 3).** 8 / 8 pts
APA Styling (15 points)	**APA Styling is consistently correct within the text and in the references (minimal errors, less than 2).** 7 / 7 pts
	Total Points: 90

Assignment Comments

See attached files.

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Explicit Vocabulary Instruction for ELLs

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ED 690

University of Alabama in Huntsville

24 November 2017

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction for ELLs

The focus of each classroom should be to create an environment that is language-rich, so teachers and students alike can be exposed to all forms and contexts of language including orally, in writing, and reading (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000). At the forefront of a language-rich classroom environment is explicit vocabulary instruction (Newman & Dwyer, 2009). Explicit vocabulary instruction may involve exposure to both student-friendly and formal definitions, different word forms, word meaning (idioms, phrases, contexts), pronunciation, and spelling (Calderon, 2011). "Knowing a word" means that students can comprehend meaning across texts, can correctly pronounce and spell the word, recognizes multiple meanings, and can use it naturally in writing (Calderon).

Vocabulary words are categorized into tiers that enable teachers to sort and instruct students on the words that are a priority (Kindle, 2009). Tier one vocabulary words (conversational words) are concrete words that can be demonstrated easily to students through visuals, and gestures (Kindle, 2009). Tier two and tier three vocabulary words are interconnected and related to the academic content areas. Tier two vocabulary words can be disseminated across content areas, while tier three vocabulary words are content specific (Calderon, 2011). For example, the word *environment,* a tier two vocabulary word, can be used across content areas, such as the political environment in social studies or an environmental impact in science. Differentiating between the tiers of vocabulary words could support explicit vocabulary instruction in the ELL classroom because ELLs need access to words that have greater application within an academic text (Newman & Wright, 2014). What impact will explicit vocabulary instruction have on growth in reading comprehension for ELLs?

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Literature Review

Vocabulary instruction for ELLs helps to accelerate student learning and produces confidence (Calderon, 2011). Students' vocabulary knowledge is key to growth in reading, communication, and writing for all content areas. ELLs need explicit vocabulary instruction to support their second language acquisition (Calderon). When ELLs access a text, they must be able to sort through the entire page of words to find meaning. Sometimes a partial understanding of a text is enough to decode a word, but more often than not, ELLs need a more in-depth and through understanding of vocabulary (Wood, Vintinner, Hill-Miller, Harmon, & Hendrick, 2009). Students need a well developed oral vocabulary's they will be able to better understand a word when they see it in a text. Vocabulary is "knowledge" for an ELL, meaning they are able to access a world of reading content, not just a list of words (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009). This "knowledge" of word meaning represents the concepts that are connected to the words and the interconnectedness that supports reading comprehension (Newman & Wright, 2014). As ELLs begin to learn new vocabulary words, their knowledge of the world around them and their ability to communicate their ideas can be greatly enhanced.

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Vocabulary may be one of the most important areas within reading comprehension and supports each individual student's vocabulary background (NICHD, 2000). For example, some ELLs may be newcomers that are not even able to speak anything in English, while other ELLs may be a level two or level three. Additional aspects of vocabulary development include support at home and access to reading resources. Some students may enter school with vast exposure to text and supportive oral language experiences, while others enter school with a limited knowledge of language (Coyne, 2007). When students are lacking in background vocabulary knowledge, they are missing the key elements that enable them to decode a text. Significant gaps in vocabulary may contribute to reading failures before students even enter the school doors

(Neuman & Wright, 2014). Vocabulary development is the "key that unlocks the door" to reading, comprehension, and communication abilities for all students.

Although words may appear to be distinct, separate entities, they are not (Jalongo & Sobolak, 2011). Words are connected experiences that encompass the linguistic contexts in which they are found. Vocabulary instruction helps to develop phonological awareness and reading comprehension in ELLs (Beck, Perfetti, & McKeown, 1982; Nagy, 2005). Explicit vocabulary instruction is interconnected with phonological awareness and reading comprehension because it supports students' understanding of how each word within a passage supports the entirety. Explicit vocabulary instruction may involve exposure to both student-friendly and formal definitions, different word forms, word meaning (idioms, phrases, contexts), pronunciation, and spelling (Calderon, 2011). Explicit vocabulary instruction exposes students to words as they related to the text.

Vocabulary instruction encompasses four main components, which include rich and varied language experiences, teaching individual words, teaching word-learning strategies, and fostering word consciousness (Graves, 2006). Each vocabulary word may be categorized into a tier/s that support instruction. Tier one vocabulary words (conversational words) are concrete words that can be demonstrated easily to students through visuals, and gestures (Calderon, 2011). Tier two and tier three vocabulary words are interconnected and related to the academic content areas. Tier two vocabulary words can be disseminated across content areas, while tier three vocabulary words are content specific (Calderon). Differentiating between the tiers of vocabulary words will support explicit vocabulary instruction in the ELL classroom.

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Calderon, Slakk, and Montenegro (2017) have designed a system of explicit vocabulary instruction that includes seven steps that build on the four components of vocabulary instruction. This process lends itself to tier two and tier three vocabulary words due to their complex nature. The following is the seven-step process of explicit vocabulary instruction (Calderon, Slakk, Montenegro):

1. "The teacher says and shows the word, an ask students to repeat the word three times. This helps pronunciation and introduces the ring version.
2. The teacher reads and shows the word in a sentence (context) from the text. This helps the students remember the word in context when they begin to read.
3. The teacher gives the dictionary definition/s. This provides exposure to formal English and what the students will encounter later when they are proficient enough in English to use a dictionary.
4. The teacher explains the meaning with student-friendly definitions or gives an example a student can relate to. The teacher uses simple language, familiar examples, pictures, props, movement, or gestures to help students comprehend the meaning or multiple meanings.
5. The teacher highlights an aspect of the word that might create difficulty: spelling, multiple meanings, false cognates, prefixes, suffixes, base word, synonyms, antonyms, homophones, grammatical variations, and so forth.
6. The teacher engages all of the students in an activity to orally use or own the concept.
7. The teacher assigns peer reading with oral and written summarization activities and explains how the new words need to be used or how students will be accountable for these words" (2017, pp. 38-39).

Each of the seven steps above can be integrated into any content area vocabulary lesson. Explicit vocabulary instruction should be incorporated before, during, and after a content area lesson, while the seven steps are primarily used before a lesson (Calderon, 2011). When students participate in explicit vocabulary instruction, as detailed in the seven steps, they are more likely to think about the words being used, which will enhance their language comprehension and production. Although the steps mentioned within explicit vocabulary instruction may help to support ELLs' language acquisition and reading comprehension, vocabulary instruction needs to be long-term and comprehensive (Nagy, 2005; Calderon & Minaya-Rowe, 2003). This research process should occur and be studied over time to determine effectiveness.

Methodology

Participants

The participants will include 40 fourth grade students, parents, and the classroom teacher. Of the 40 students, (15) are level three ELLs, (8) are level two ELLs, and (5) are level one ELLs. Of the ELLs being served, 17 are boys and 11 are girls. Collinsville Elementary School is comprised of 90% economically disadvantaged students, of which 56% are English Language Learners (ELLs), as determined by Collinsville Elementary School student registration data.

Setting

The study will be conducted in the self-contained classroom setting within each content area (math, science, reading, and social studies). Vocabulary instruction will take place from the beginning of the school year until ELLs take the WIDA ACCESS test in early spring.

Materials

WIDA ACCESS testing will determine effectiveness of vocabulary instruction on a quantitative basis. These test results will determine effectiveness of the explicit vocabulary instruc-

tion. Information from the WIDA ACCESS test will be used to determine instructional supports, including explicit vocabulary instruction for ELLs for the upcoming school year. "ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is a secure large-scale English language proficiency assessment administered to Kindergarten through 12th grade students who have been identified as English language learners (ELLs)" (ACCESS for ELLs, n.d.). The WIDA ACCESS test focuses on the four ELL language domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The purpose of the test is to determine an ELL's language proficiency level and to help educators prepare programs for ELLs.

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Procedures

Commented [DS4]: This section should explain how you intend to implement the intervention and collect data. You talked about "explicit vocabulary instruction". Here you would discus how the teacher would be trained, how it would be implemented ("during reading time for 20 minutes"), and how data would be collected.

A quantitative approach of data collection will be used during the research process (Mills, 2014). WIDA ACCESS scores will be used to determine effectiveness. Results will relate to the literature and be applicable to most classrooms that serve ELLs because the core of the research relies on the integration of explicit vocabulary instruction. Additional schools or classrooms may use the findings and methods to determine effectiveness in their own environments. Due to the school demographics, the methods and research may not be valuable to some schools who have unique demographics.

Validity and reliability of research will be measured with meaningful assessments that target vocabulary deficiencies and accurately describe student achievement. WIDA ACCESS testing data is accurate, valid, and reliable to the content associated within the research. Result from each method of data collection will ensue a wholesome outcome that could be integrated into any fourth grade content area vocabulary focus.

Potential Results

Commented [DS5]: You don't really have results so this is "potential results" or how you plan to analyze the data.

If the research process is conducted correctly, the fourth grade ELLs' vocabulary development should accelerate, including their vocabulary knowledge. Explicit vocabulary instruction will support ELLs to become more effective vocabulary learners and in result, better readers.

Ending results also will display gains in vocabulary testing data derived from the WIDA ACCESS. Environmental and emotional factors that can be linked to vocabulary deficiencies will also be examined and modified to aid in the research process. If developed successfully, this research could lead to an effective pathway to reading comprehension for all ELLs. While results focus on grade four vocabulary development, outcomes are generalizable to other fourth grade classrooms and other grade level content areas. Modifications are necessary.

Potential Findings & Discussion

Using a mixed methods approach of data collection will make the research process difficult, but will paint a colorful picture of student needs in vocabulary instruction. The fourth grade ELL students mentioned in the study need vocabulary supports, so they will have greater opportunities in high school, college, and career. If the study is conducted correctly, the fourth grade ELLs will show gains in vocabulary development and reading comprehension as determined by WIDA ACCESS scores and teacher running records. With qualitative methods of research, the study will seek to find ways to impact the environmental issues that hinders ELLs' ability to learn vocabulary, with the support of a community tutor. The research lends itself to success with explicit vocabulary instruction, but factors such as teacher participation and student participation may affect the results.

Possible Limitations

As with any study, there are possible limitations to the effectiveness of the application of the program or strategy. There are several possible limitations to the study of explicit vocabulary instruction for ELLs, such as consistency of teacher and/or student participation, differing language proficiency levels of ELLs, and home-environment/parental impact. With explicit vocabulary instruction in all content areas, teachers and students should actively participate in the process in order to produce substantial growth towards reading comprehension. Another limitation

Commented [DS6]: For this section, you were provided:

1.Reflect upon the research proposal and explain how this project might support evidence-based practices.
2.Explain how the results (in various ways) could impact the students and/or teacher (and instruction).Do not focus on only positive results but possible-negative results.
3.Explain how you will use the Action Research methodology in your future as an educational professional

I am not sure you ever looked closely at the "Skeleton Outline for ED 690" in the Modules section. This provided an explicit outline for what should be included in the paper.

Commented [DS7]: This should be in your Methods section.

is the varying language proficiency levels of the ELLs participating in the study, combined with non-ELL learners. There are level one ELLs who struggle to identify single words and level three ELLs who are able to make connections between words. This is particularly challenging because the teacher must differentiate the explicit vocabulary instruction to fit the diverse needs of each learner. Finally, each student's home environment can impact learning. A student's learning ability at school is affected by the situations he or she is experiencing at home. The study should remain fluid, to be as effective as possible.

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82

View Rubric

Action Research Project Paper	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Introduction to the Problem	**No details** 16 / 17 pts
Research Question and Literature Review	**Provided clearly articulated and appropriate research questions with an intervention connected to clearly discussed literature.** 17 / 17 pts
Methodology 1: Participants, Environment, Materials	**Each section provided detailed and appropriate information. The materials section includes all applicable instrumentation with evidence for its use.** 17 / 17 pts
Methodology 2: Procedures and Potential Issues	**Each section was provided but lack major detail regarding the procedures or potential issues.** 11 / 17 pts
Reflection (Discussion)	**Answered the questions minimally and did not demonstrate reflection on the project** **Comments** This section did not address the questions outlined in the directions (the Outline that was provided in the Modules). 6 / 17 pts
Grammar and Mechanics (15 points; 5 points per category)	**Grammar and mechanics skills exhibited are exceptional with minimal errors (less than 3).** 8 / 8 pts
APA Styling (15 points)	**APA Styling is consistently correct within the text and in the references (minimal errors, less than 2).** 7 / 7 pts
	Total Points: 82

Assignment Comments

Dr. Smith,

I added additional information about the WIDA ACCESS test with a reference. I also added the possible limitations section. I am so proud of this final product. I appreciate your support throughout this writing process. I could not have done it without your help. I have gained wonderful writing skills that I will continue to use as I transition to the Ed.D program after Christmas.

Jacob

Jacob D Brown, Nov 24, 2017 at 9:51pm

Please read the comments in the attached paper. (javascript:void 0;)

Brown graded.docx

Derrick W Smith, Nov 29, 2017 at 4:56pm

Improving Spelling Instruction for Third Graders

November 25, 2017

Joy Meredith

University of Alabama in Huntsville

Teachers across the nation rely on traditional ways to instruct spelling in the classroom, according to a study conducted by Mary Jo Fresch (2003) of The Ohio State University at Marion. Teachers may be taught how to teach spelling while using various tools or techniques. Fresch found teachers may not always use the various teaching reading and spelling techniques they learn in professional development instruction. Some teachers use the traditional way of teaching spelling words through memorization. While studies show, "memory does play an important role in learning to spell," it is not the only strategy employed in the process (Templeton & Morris, 1999, p. 102). In other words, some students are not receiving the most effective spelling instruction.

In this research study, students in the resource classroom are very

make it clearer from the beginning of the parag that they are struggling with spelling

diverse in their learning styles; what works for one may not work for another. As previously stated, memorization alone is not always a key component for learning to spell words. Often students learn to spell their spelling words through the read, spell, read technique; however, in this classroom the technique has proven to be ineffective. ~~Everyone learns differently and All learners benefit when information is put forth in diverse ways that engage a multitude of the senses (Paul, 2012).~~

Students reading and writing skills can be affected as a result of the inability to produce words that are spelled correctly. Due to poor spelling performance, the students in this study are falling further behind their peers. The students responses to short essay questions on their weekly math

test are difficult to understand due to misspelled words. They have a difficult time reading words that are found throughout their text and the students are not able to pass their weekly spelling test despite extra one on one instruction throughout the week.

statement of the problem could be stronger and clearer

Literature Review and Research Question

Spelling instruction can be approached in many different ways such as teaching through spelling phonemics letters and sound, the whole word approach, and/or through the morphemic approach where students learn the prefix, base and suffix of a word (Moats, 2005). A concern cited by Dixon (1993) states, "Many English words are not spelled like they sound or have irregular spellings. Given this perception regarding the difficulties surrounding spelling, one should not wonder at the numbers of children and adults who reportedly have trouble with spelling." (p 97). The next sections of this paper will talk about the various spelling interventions for teaching students with learning disabilities.

discuss

Phonics

Expecting a student to understand what is needed to pronounce a word must be addressed when teaching how to sound out words (Perfetti & Zhang, 1995). Identifying patterns in a word list and grouping them together while introducing spelling words can help student identify the spelling rule. The teacher should model the spelling rule found in the spelling list when students are not able to figure it out on their own.

to spell them

Students are instructed to sound out words that they do not know, when spelling writing or reading.

As Dr. Gentry (2013) suggests, introduce sounds of letters first and then teach the poem, “How to Sound Out Words.” The poem reminds the student to say the word slowly, and to write each letter that they hear. This poem is useful when students begin to write words. Students need to understand that they will write each sound that they hear in the word. The student is then able to correct their mistake with ~~the~~ assistance. “With a solid process for sounding out words they want to spell, and a quick clean up strategy for arriving at correct spellings, kids learn to both write and read at the same time” (Gentry, 2013, para. 30). Using the “How to Sound Out Words” poem in spelling lessons; auditory learning takes place, as students hear how the words are pronounced and spelled.

Spelling Words Visually

Students are successful spellers when they can visualize the spelling of their words (Graham, 1999). Strategies such as tracing, writing or having the student spell a word with their eyes closed can be effective. Younger students may enjoy sky spelling. “Practice, repetition, and generalization. Whether students use a systematic study strategy, play games, engage in cooperative learning activities, or use some combination of these techniques, it is essential to remember that distributed practice is superior to massed practice” (Graham, 1999, p 564). By using strategies like the ones mentioned

here to spell words, students are able to visualize not only the word, but its meaning as well. Thus the retention of the word is greater.

Word Walls

Word walls have become an important asset for students learning to spell. The word wall is a place where the teacher places words of the week as well as those learned in previous weeks. The words are arranged alphabetically and serve as a constant reminder for students. According to Sue Watson (2017) spelling tests only ensures students are able to memorize words and does not focus on teaching the students to necessarily help them to learn to spell. Students use the word wall to reference words that they may need when writing sentences or answers to questions on test not related to spelling. new parag Utilizing Word Walls in the classroom can benefit the students in various ways. As Patricia Allen (2017), a teacher from Maine states in an article from Education World, “Young children are very visual learners. Some students may be stronger visual or auditory learners, but they *all* are affected by what they see.” Word Walls help students in many ways, such as building curiosity as to how words can be used in a sentence, as well as spelling and writing them correctly.

Word Card File

Florida Curriculum Guide (1998) for teaching reading offers many suggestions for teachers. One that may be useful is the Word Card File. The Word Card File can provide students individualized instruction in order to improve their reading and spelling skills. Students either place a picture or

a sentence on individual cards in order to help them remember the word. The Florida Curriculum Guide states that students should keep their words alphabetically in a file card box. Students are to review their words periodically (Manual, p. 22). Students will find the Word Card Files helpful, as they will choose which words to put in their file card box. By having a personal word card file, a student can have access to spelling words that they struggle with on a daily basis.

Multisensory Approach

By using the Spelling Finger Technique, as described by Gentry (2013) students can learn to pinpoint each letter in a word by their sounds. The Spelling Finger Technique was inspired by Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky (1978). With the Spelling Finger Technique, a student holds up his thumb for the first sound that he hears in the word then proceeds to hold up the other fingers as he sounds the word out. After holding up his fingers the student will "draw the word back" by pulling his hand back while saying the word. "A multisensory approach is one that integrates sensory activities. The students see, hear, and touch."(Moustafa, 1999) Multisensory techniques for spelling allows students to have something tangible. ~~This approach would is to be implemented gradually with ASD students, as overstimulation may occur (Albert Einstein College of Medicine, 2010).~~

explicitly state that the spelling finger technique is a multisensory activity

first time this has been mentioned, is out of place here

in this study

Due to poor spelling performance, the students have a difficult time reading words that are found throughout their text and they are falling further behind their peers. Simply having the students to memorize their

spelling words each week is not feasible. The students are not able to retain the spelling of their words, nor are they able to make the connections with sounding out the words. The third grade students in the resource room learn best when they have something that they can "own or hold on to." Through multisensory students are given opportunities to learn beyond paper, pencil and memorization.

cite/pg # for quotes

The research question guiding this study is

What impact will multisensory learning have on third grade spelling scores in the resource classroom?

change to multisensory spelling techniques

Methodology

Participants

The research will focus on the eleven students in the third grade Reading Resource classroom. The third grade student's ethnicity, background and gender are as follows: seven caucasian male students, two caucasian females and two African American female students. The students have an array of learning disabilities, ranging from Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ASD with an Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) to students having a specific learning disorder (SLP) as well as a student with vision impairment.

s'

state age

this info needs to be described/applied to each individual participant

The students have a wide range of learning abilities. Some of the students are independent and can complete assignments with simple instructions. Other students are very dependent on their teacher, and rely on step by step guidance. Overall the students do not display the ability to spell grade level words efficiently as their grade level peers. The third grade

again, give the specific assessment data for each participant

students in the resource classroom are below grade level and age norms according to Standardized Testing for the Assessment of Reading (STAR) and Kaufman Test for Educational Achievement-3 (KTEA-3). Research has found students with learning disabilities find spelling extremely challenging and often employ strategies for planning and revising that require little effort and are ineffective (Graham,1999; Graham, Harris, & McKeown, 2013).

The students reading and writing skills are affected as a result of their inability to produce words that are spelled correctly. Anecdotal data collected at the beginning of the school year reflects spelling to be a major problem across all instructional areas. The students responses to the short essay questions on their weekly math test are difficult to understand due to misspelled words. The students are not able to retain previous words taught through memorization. The students are not able to pass their weekly spelling test despite extra one on one instruction throughout the week.

I would move this parag to statement of the problem section

Setting

The intervention will take place in a third grade resource classroom at ABC Elementary School in a rural county in Alabama. The eleven students are broken up into two different groups, so that those with more intensive learning needs can receive extra instruction. These students receive their reading and spelling instruction daily in the resource classroom. The largest group, which consist of seven students comes in the morning at 9:40 for one hour. The remaining four students receive their instruction in the afternoon

at 12:40 for one hour. There are advantages and disadvantages with both groups. The morning group of seven students, is almost too large, as they are a talkative group that is full of energy. This group is difficult to settle down. The afternoon group of four, is almost too quiet, appears to be unmotivated to learn, but is very settled; the lack of energy after lunch can be daunting. Both groups has learning potential and enjoys kinesthetic learning.

have

good description

Materials

look at outline for the requested information here; need description of tools that will be needed to implement this project. Some of this does not fit

The multisensory intervention for spelling will be measured throughout of each week. Students will continue to take their weekly spelling test. Students will be able to recall words from previous weeks through the use of repetition. Students are given short brief informal assessments each day. Students are asked not only during spelling instruction to spell a word from their current list, but during other instruction times as well.

using what?

what does this come from?

this is procedure

where are these coming from?

this is procedure

In other areas of assessments (spellingcity.com, IXL, osmo, and individual instruction) the teacher keeps an ongoing record of all of the spelling words and records the date of the individual assessments. The teacher will collect individual data generated reports on each student from spellingcity.com and IXL. All of the information will be used later to determine if these methods of multisensory learning for spelling instruction are beneficial to the students in the resource classroom.

unclear what is on these reports

Everything from here to the end of the section is procedure. See ** below. This info should be presented in chronological order, step by step as it will be implemented with the children.

The true test of multisensory learning and to determine if it is an effective way to teach spelling will take place at the end of each nine weeks. Students will be asked to recall words that they learned throughout the nine weeks. Students will not be given a list to study prior to the data collection, as students will not be graded. Students will be asked to write a few words and then be directed to spell others aloud.

The study will be conducted over the second nine weeks grading period for this school year. Several areas of spelling will be observed. The teacher will take notes regularly throughout each week. Those notes will indicate whether there is progression or regression when using multisensory techniques in the resource classroom. Data will be taken from spellingcity.com, IXL.com and along with teacher anecdotal notes.

During center time, students enjoy some activities over others. Some of the students in the resource classroom enjoy using colored pencils to complete assignments. Incorporating activities where students "hunt," read or scan a passage for their spelling words will increase their spelling knowledge. The students will be instructed to find their spelling words hidden in the reading material. They will become more familiar with words from their spelling word list. Another activity will require students to write their words using various colors in different shapes and/or objects, for example seasonal themes, pyramids, sailboats or rainbows. All of the methods mentioned here are designed to provide a student the opportunity

to use both his/her visual-spatial and tactile senses (Minnesota, 2015, p 9-12).

Another approach will be to have students to build a particular word given by the teacher during small group settings. Students are given letter cards and asked to spell a particular word. Students are asked to identify any letters that are missing and use a dry erase marker to fill in the missing letter. Students also work with letter tiles that can be found in board games. Students are instructed to say the word and identify each sound when building their word through segmenting sounds and sequencing the letters in order to spell the word correctly. A word building study program is a cohesive approach that addresses word recognition, vocabulary, and phonics as well as spelling (Zutell, 1992). Auditory, visual and kinesthetic approaches with word building approaches as students are hearing, seeing and moving as they learn to spell words. **procedure info stops here

Some students are audio learners. They are able to learn to spell and read words when they are encouraged to make or identify rhyming words. Audio learners also learn through read alouds. This classification of learners benefit by singing or chanting the spelling words. “The main goal of such instruction is to help children figure out the alphabetic system of written English and become comfortable with that system as they become readers” (Lyon, 1998). This last paragraph is lit review info.

Procedures

this should be in materials

During whole group instruction the Reading Horizons instructional techniques will be used for the next three quarters. With Reading Horizons instruction three of the multisensory techniques are incorporated. This type of instruction allows a student to learn through the sensory approach.

this list needs only commas

Multisensory techniques include: visual; learning through visuals, auditory: hearing, kinesthetic; movement,and/or tactile; learning through touch, hands on approaches.

The following will take place daily during spelling instruction. An area in the classroom ~~was~~ will be designated for multisensory learning. The entire spelling process must be taught to each student. Each student will have an assigned place marked with tape. For effective learning to take place, each student must be trained to stand in his designated area. The students will stand in a semicircle in order to be trained as to what their part is with each step when learning to spell words. Once the each student is trained how the process works, they are ready to learn.

The intervention will take place by having the student find his designated standing place (front left corner, where there is plenty of room for movement) for “catching his words.” The student will stand with his hands out in front of him as if they were catching a ball, when in reality they will be catching the words that the teacher says. The students must be shown how to catch their word, a small ball will be used. Once a student catches his word, then they bring their hands toward their face and will repeat the word that they have heard. The student catches each word twice

watch subject/verb agreement--see highlight

(for encouncation purposes) before repeating it back to his teacher. The same catch technique takes place for spelling; however, the student will move their cupped hands back away from his face in small strokes (more like ocean waves). The student also says the word each time before spelling takes place.

this is good detailed info

are all the techniques from pg 10 being implemented? I'm confused about what is actually being implemented as intervention.

During spelling instruction the students are instructed to identify the patterns and write them, as part of learning to spell their weekly words. The ultimate goal is to have the student become familiar with each word. Students must practice writing their words in the correct letter formation throughout the week in order to be successful when writing their words. Letter reversal is a major factor with this group of students, the teacher is continuously prompting students to check their letter formation. The students will see each individual word throughout the school day in various assignments. The visual-spatial, auditory and tactile senses are used while identifying the spelling pattern of each word.

period

each of these needs to be connected to the the actual student action

In order to determine if this intervention is effective, spelling test from weeks three and five will be reviewed and compared to weeks fifteen and twenty-five of the 2017-2018 school year. The teacher will review the following information: the student's ability to identify spelling patterns and phonics versus information identified at the beginning of the school year. Each student's weekly spelling test scores will be placed on a graph. For those students that have a tediousness to reverse letters, their tests will be reviewed weekly, comparing words that have similar letters or letter

are the tests of these weeks the same?

tendency

patterns in order to identify areas to focus on in future lessons. The spelling section of the KTEA3 will be reviewed from the spring of 2017 and compared to the testing that will take place in the spring of 2018. The end of the school year STAR score will be compared to the beginning of the school year's score. The teacher will take the information and document her findings on a bar graph in order to show areas of growth for each individual student. She will also plug the information into a pie graph to show the percentages of overall growth for her class. The teacher will use the information to show if the multisensory learning methods are effective or ineffective in the resource classroom.

all of these tests should be listed in materials

Potential Issues

One thing that could possibly prohibit this research, is an interruption of internet services. The cable and internet services in the county are not very dependable and the services tend to be interrupted frequently. Another potential problem is the school district losing or not renewing their subscription to the IXL program. Other things that hinders much of the instruction within the classroom are frequent absences of students. Also the instructor's ability to continue implementing multisensory techniques that are age appropriate for each student; not too childish. All of these would hinder the collection of data and the extra instruction in the area of spelling.

explain why this would impede the project

comma

Potential Findings and Discussion

Conducting this type of research will show growth throughout the school year in both the teacher and her students. The students' spelling and

reading skills will blossom as they incorporate spelling rules and learn new words. Each school year brings a new set of learning abilities. The research must continue as the dynamics of the classroom changes throughout one's career. As an educator, one must question themselves the following question: The method that is currently being used, does it fit the needs of the current caseload? "Scientific thinking in practice occurs when teachers engage in action research. Action research is research into one's own practice that has, as its main aim, the improvement of that practice" (Stanovich, P.J. &. Stanovich, K.E, 2003). Educators should consider research projects each school year, in order to discover techniques for instructing each student along with developing new ideas and sharpening their professional skills. Researching different areas of instruction and discovering new projects periodically could benefit both the educator and her students.

The teacher will further her research as she is able to identify areas of improvement professionally. As the teacher furthers her research, she has a greater understanding of instructional material; therefore, her students are able to benefit in the classroom. By sharing her research with her colleagues, the educational community benefits. The research will be an ongoing process, as new professional development is introduced in the world of education. The teacher will improve her methods of instruction as new information is presented from companies like Reading Horizons. The teacher will not solely rely on professional development classes to be offered in the

area of teaching spelling to those with disabilities by her district and/or state. However, she will participate in other means of professional development of teaching students to read and spell words more proficiently. If the area of teaching students to spell proficiently is truly a passion, the educator's research will continue beyond this paper, as different learning styles and learning abilities are introduced throughout her teaching career.

nice reflection--it's okay for this to be in 1st person

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period after year

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period after year--check all these

italicize vol #

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preiod period

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Fall 2017

Grade 84 out of 100

Action Research Project Paper	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Introduction to the Problem	No details 15 / 17 pts
Research Question and Literature Review	No details 15 / 17 pts
Methodology 1: Participants, Environment, Materials	No details 13 / 17 pts
Methodology 2: Procedures and Potential Issues	No details Comments be sure to clear up what intervention(s) will be implemented in your presentation (see comments in paper) 13 / 17 pts
Reflection (Discussion)	Answered the questions clearly with a clear understanding of the impact of action research in the classroom. 17 / 17 pts
Grammar and Mechanics (15 points; 5 points per category)	Grammar and mechanical skills are good with minimal errors (3 – 6). 6 / 7.5 pts
APA Styling (15 points)	No details 5 / 7.5 pts
Total Points: 84	

Rebecca Alderton
ED 690 Action Research
Story-mapping Action Research Proposal

Reading comprehension is a skill that is needed in almost every aspect of education. Whether it is word problems in mathematics, experiments in science, or passages in social studies, reading comprehension is essential to success in the classroom. In addition, comprehension is a skill with which many students struggle, especially those with learning disabilities (LD) or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (Burke, 2004; Shaw, 2012; Therien, 2004). A lack of comprehension skills can be attributed to many different causes. For some students, a lack of reading skills can be a result of a learning disability itself, a lack of mastery of prerequisite skills, a deficit in working memory, or a lack of vocabulary knowledge (Hulme, 2011).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress reported that in 2013, 69% of fourth grade students with disabilities fell below basic in reading compared to 27% of students without disabilities (Cortiela, et. al., 2014, p.18). Therefore, over two thirds of students with disabilities are not meeting proficiency in reading. In addition, Therrien and Hughes (2008) report "36% of fourth graders have not obtained a basic skill level in reading and 74% of children who are poor readers in third grade remain poor readers in ninth grade" (p.1). Considering how essential reading is to students' success both in and out of school, the percentage of students with disabilities not mastering reading skills is concerning, at the least.

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Reading comprehension is a skill that many students with special needs struggle to master. After the students have learned how to read and have become fluent readers, they continue to struggle with tasks that involve reading. This is due to a lack of comprehension skills. This particular research focuses on students with learning disabilities and Autism. The participants in this study all have deficits in reading comprehension but can read fluently. As a result of these comprehension deficits, these participants struggle in many areas of education. It not only affects their ability to answer comprehension questions about a text, but it also affects their ability to

answer word problems, complete science experiments, make inferences, and many other academic skills. This often results in failing grades, feelings of helplessness, and eventually lack of motivation in anything school related. In order to find solutions to this problem, many studies have been conducted that research the effectiveness of various reading strategies.

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Research Question/Literature Review

One strategy used to increase reading comprehension is question generation. With this strategy, students create their own questions about a passage in order to aide in their comprehension of that passage. Higher order thinking is needed to produce questions so, this technique encourages active, more thorough processing of a text. (Davey & McBride, 2001, p.43). Therrien and Hughes (2008) state, "a majority of studies that investigated the use of question generation to improve students' reading comprehension reported significant findings" (p.4). In addition, Therrien and Hughes found "four of these studies reported significant comprehension improvement for students with LD" (p.4). Looking at the findings, question generation seems to be a promising intervention strategy for reading comprehension. However, a study conducted by Davey and McBride (2001) found that this strategy only had significant improvements for inferential questions. In this study, 52 sixth-graders were assigned to a question-generation group or a read-reread group. In the question-generation group, students were asked to generate two questions after reading a passage. After students generated their questions, they answered both literal and inferential questions based on the passage. The study found that students who were able to create questions of high quality were also able to accurately answer the inferential questions. However, the study found that these students only had increase comprehension on the inferential questions.

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Another study conducted by Therrien and Hughes (2008) sought to determine the effects of question generation compared to the effects of repeated reading on the comprehension skills of students with learning disabilities. In the question generation group, students were asked to read given questions and then read a passage. Students were then asked to adapt and answer the question orally. In the repeated reading group, students were asked to reread the passage a minimum of two times and then answer the comprehension questions. The question generation group was determined to have less increased factual comprehension than the repeated reading group. Therrien and Hughes state "through rereading, students are also exposed to the facts of the passage numerous times" (p. 10). This study corroborates the findings of Davey and McBride (2001), which found that question generation seems to only improve inferential comprehension. Therrien and Hughes (2008) hypothesized that the increased inferential comprehension, as opposed to literal comprehension, is a result of the fact that question generation "directly targets inferential knowledge by having students ask and answer questions in order to integrate information within the passage and with the reader's prior knowledge" (p. 11). Therefore, while this strategy may be effective for students who are able to generate high quality questions, it may not be an effective strategy for special education students, who struggle with question generation. In addition, this intervention lacks an increase in literal comprehension, which is a major component of comprehension.

Repeated reading is another popular intervention for improving both reading fluency and reading comprehension. In repeated readings, students read a passage aloud and are typically given corrective feedback and then asked to reread the passage. The rationale behind this intervention relates to the automaticity theory. According to Homan, Klesius, and Hite (1993), the automaticity theory states "comprehension difficulty among some readers may be caused by the fact that conscious attention is consumed with decoding the words in the text" (p.94). Given this theory, it

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is then reasonable to assume if students are allowed to reread passages and are given corrective feedback, less of their conscious attention will be dedicated to decoding words. Therefore, repeated readings, in theory, should increase reading comprehension.

The study conducted by Homan et. al. (1993) compared repeated readings to non-repetitive reading strategies. For the repeated reading, students were put in pairs and read a passage four times. In the non-repetitive group, several strategies were used, such as, cloze reading, echo reading, and unison reading. In this case, the study found that both interventions resulted in significant improvement of the students' reading comprehension.

While the findings in this study are encouraging, a meta-analysis by Therrien (2004) found that repeated reading interventions, overall, showed greater improvement for fluency rather than comprehension. In another study by Hawkins, Marsicano, Schmitt, McCallum, and Musti-Rao (2015) the repeated reading intervention appeared to have the same impact as the listening-while-reading intervention. Therefore, it is possible that the positive findings in these studies are not necessarily a result of the repeated reading interventions specifically, rather it is a result of simply spending more time on a single passage. This idea is corroborated with the findings in the review conducted by Strickland, Boon, and Spencer (2013), which state, "it appears from the research literature that among studies that compared the use of repeated reading to other reading interventions, the results indicate that other interventions proved to be as effective as repeated reading to improving the students' reading fluency and comprehension skills" (p.15). Therefore, these strategies may not be the most effective means of increasing comprehension.

Another strategy used to increase comprehension is story-mapping. Story maps are graphic organizers that help students comprehend a passage. These graphic organizers address characters, setting, problem, and solution. When using a story-mapping intervention, students have a story map they complete either during or after reading a passage. This intervention has shown success in

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numerous studies as it "directs students' attention to relevant elements of stories using a specific structure" (Boulineau, Fore, Hagan-Burke, and Burke, 2004, p.106). In addition, story maps help students organize information from a passage. In a study conducted by Grunke, Wilbert, and Stegemann (2013), fifth grade and eighth grade students with intellectual disabilities were provided instruction in story mapping and were given opportunities to practice using story maps with teacher prompting. Students were then assessed on their ability to read a passage and complete a story map independently. All of the students in the study were able to "dramatically increase the number of correct responses" (Grunke et. al., 2013, p. 61). The use of the story map can provide a way for students to organize a passage, which can lead to increased comprehension.

Another study on story-mapping conducted by Boulineau et. al. (2004), sought to not only determine the effectiveness of story-grammar instruction with the use of story-mapping on students with learning disabilities, but also if students were able to maintain that progress after instruction had ceased. This study found the story-grammar instruction significantly improved the students' abilities to identify story elements with the use of a story map. Perhaps even more significant is the finding that "the story-mapping procedure also appeared to maintain once instruction was terminated" (p.120). The findings in this study are corroborated with the findings in a study conducted by Stagliano and Boon (2009). These researchers studied the effects of story-mapping on the comprehension of students with learning disabilities and found after story-mapping instruction and modeling, the students' "percentage of comprehension questions answered correctly immediately increased." In addition, the students were able to maintain that progress after a two-week break.

From research of the literature, story-mapping has been shown repeatedly to improve the comprehension skills of students with learning disabilities while Browder, Root, Wood, and Allison (2017) found that story-mapping can also be an effective comprehension intervention for

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students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. In this study, students were taught how to use story maps on iPads. Adapted stories were used and students were given an interactive story map to aid in their comprehension. The results showed the students were able to master story element definitions and were able to identify story elements in a passage with the use of the story maps.

One thing many of these studies had in common was the implementation of teacher, or interventionist, instruction prior to students working independently. However, Grunke and Leidig (2017) conducted a study in which students were taught how to use story map by a peer, rather than an adult. This study still had positive findings even without the instruction from a teacher. The study was completed with three fourth grade tutees and three fourth grade tutors. The results showed "treatment had a positive effect on the tutees' ability to correctly answer the comprehension questions about the short stories" (p. 52). This study supports the view that story-mapping can be beneficial for students' comprehension skills even when teachers are unable to provide direct instruction.

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According to findings from the literature, story mapping successfully gives students a way to sort out important information and focus on the important parts of a passage. It has been proven repeatedly to improve comprehension for typical, LD, and ASD. Students with various ways of implementation. Therefore, after reviewing the positive findings of numerous studies, this study will seek to determine how well students with disabilities, specifically LD and ASD, comprehend passages with the use of story maps compared to their comprehension of a passage without the use of a story map.

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The research question guiding this study is 'to what extent does the use of story mapping increase reading comprehension of students with learning disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder'?

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Methodology

Participants

The participants in this study consist of five fifth grade students and five fourth grade students. All participants are in the general education classroom but receive special education services to address deficits in reading comprehension.

Fifth grade participants: Student 1, male, is identified as having a learning disability (LD). In addition to the learning disability, he also has attention deficits. He has mastered fluency skills for his grade-level during the current school year and performs on grade level in math. Student 2, male, is identified as having Autism Spectrum disorder (ASD). He has deficits in math, social skills, and reading comprehension. However, he has no deficits in reading fluency. Student 3, female, is identified as having LD. She is also an English Language Learner (ELL) student and has deficits in math. She has had no fluency deficits. Student 4, male, is identified as LD. He has severe reading comprehension and math deficits. Student 5, male, is identified as LD. He has mastered grade-level fluency skills during the current school year but has mild comprehension and math deficits.

Fourth grade participants: Student 6, male, is identified as having ASD. He has severe reading, math, and social skills deficits. However, he has had no deficits in reading fluency. Student 7, female, is identified as having LD. She has severe comprehension and math deficits. Student 7 has had fluency deficits in the past as well but is close to mastering grade-level fluency skills. Student 8, female, is identified as having LD and is also an ELL student. She has severe deficits in reading comprehension and mild deficits in math. She has also had deficits in reading fluency but is close to mastering grade-level fluency skills. Student 9, female, is identified as LD. She has mild reading comprehension and math deficits but she has no fluency deficits. Student 10,

female, is identified as LD. She has mild reading comprehension deficits but she has mastered grade-level fluency skills this year and performs on grade-level in math.

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Setting

The interventions for this study will take place in the resource room at the participants' elementary school. The resource room is a typical classroom size. There are two small group tables as well as a group of desks set up in a U-shape. There is a classroom library as well as a cool-down area. The interventions will take place in same-grade small groups at a u-shaped table. Students will participate in the interventions during their regularly scheduled morning pull-out times. The interventions will occur three times a week during 30-minute sessions. Students will participate in the interventions for 4 weeks.

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Materials

In order to measure participants' comprehension before, during, and after the interventions, ReadWorks passages will be used. ReadWorks is a nonprofit organization that creates reading passages based on different grade-levels, reading skills, and interests. This organization works with advisors who are in the academic field to create passages and questions that accurately measure various reading skills. Passages can be read and answered online or can be printed and completed on paper. For the purpose of this study, passages will be printed for participants to read independently. The passages chosen will be differentiated according to each student's comprehension level. The Renaissance Learning Star reading assessment will be used to determine each student's current comprehension level. This is an online, adaptive assessment that measure students' reading comprehension according to state standards. Each student is given a grade level equivalency that will be used to determine which passages will be used. Passages for the pre-test, interventions, and post-test will be one grade-level above the student's current comprehension level. For example, if it is known that a student can comprehend passages at a third-grade level,

then giving that student a fourth-grade level passage before, during, and prior to interventions will allow researchers to determine if the interventions were effective in increasing the student's comprehension level.

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Procedures

Prior to the implementation of the interventions, students will be given a grade-level reading passage with corresponding comprehension questions. Students will be asked to silently read the passage and answer the questions independently. This will be used as a baseline of students' comprehension.

The interventions will occur three different days each week. On day 1 interventions (the first intervention of each week), the researcher will introduce or review story maps. The researcher will have students share what they know about each story element and will write down correct responses on an anchor chart, providing guidance as needed. The researcher will explain how story maps can help students understand what they are reading. The researcher will model how to complete a story map while reading a passage. On day 2 interventions, the researcher will review the story elements. Students will read a passage and complete the story map independently. The researcher will provide corrective feedback to each student. On day 3 interventions, the students will be asked to read a passage and complete the story map independently. The students will also be given comprehension questions to complete independently. These questions will be used to track students' progress throughout the interventions. Students will have different passages and questions based on their comprehension level. After students have completed the story map and questions, the researcher will provide corrective feedback to each student as needed.

After the four-week intervention, students will be given a reading passage, based on their individual comprehension levels, and story map. Students will be asked to independently complete the story map while reading the passage. Students will then be asked to independently answer the

corresponding comprehension questions. This data will be compared to the baseline data to determine effectiveness of the intervention.

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Potential Issues:

There are several potential limitations to this study. One such limitation is the size of this study. With only ten students participating in this study, approximation to the student population in general are weaker. In addition, participant absences could affect the implementation of the interventions. If students are absent during an intervention day, results could be less accurate. Also, interruptions, such as other students and teachers coming in and out of the room, fire and weather drills, and school announcements, could also occur during the interventions. This could result in distractions to the participants. Additional studies should be done on a wider scale that includes more participants from various schools and parts of the world in order to determine the effectiveness of this intervention for all types of students.

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Potential Findings and Discussion

Part of being an effective teacher is learning how to implement evidence-based practices into the classroom. This action research has shown me how so many components can affect the efficacy of an intervention. I have also learned how to analyze other studies for effectiveness. I believe this will help me when I am determining what types of strategies to implement in all areas of the classroom, be it reading, math, writing, or classroom management. Before deciding on a type of strategy or intervention to use, I will be able to use other studies to help me determine the best possible strategy to implement, which will save me valuable time in the classroom. In addition, I will also be able to reflect on the strategies I do choose once I implement them. This will help me determine if the strategies have been effective or if they need to be changed.

The findings of this study could potentially have a significant impact on reading instruction for students with learning disabilities and Autism. If the findings of this study are positive, this intervention could be used for all students who struggle with reading comprehension. Teachers could use this intervention as a part of their regular instruction in order to support struggling learners. Conversely, if the findings of this study are negative, teachers currently using this intervention maybe be persuaded to find other, more effective, interventions for their struggling readers.

In the future, I plan to use the action research methodology with more areas of my classroom. One specific area in which I want to implement action research is behavior. I have found extrinsic ways to motivate my students to complete work. However, I want to conduct more research to determine how to fade those extrinsic rewards and increase intrinsic motivation within my students. Since I have now been through the process of setting up an action research proposal, I feel more confident in my ability to use this type of research in my classroom.

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VERY minor grammar spots and APA style correct throughout paper.

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Spring 2018

Grade 99.5 out of 100

Action Research Project Paper	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Introduction to the Problem **view longer description**	Provided thorough and logical explanation of the problem. Appropriate data is provided to support the need for intervention. 17 / 17 pts
Research Question and Literature Review **view longer description**	Provided clearly articulated and appropriate research questions with an intervention connected to clearly discussed literature. 17 / 17 pts
Methodology 1: Participants, Environment, Materials **view longer description**	Each section provided detailed and appropriate information. The materials section includes all applicable instrumentation with evidence for its use. 17 / 17 pts
Methodology 2: Procedures and Potential Issues **view longer description**	Each section provided detailed, logical, and appropriate procedures to carry out the action research project. Potential issues addressed were applicable. 17 / 17 pts
Reflection (Discussion) **view longer description**	Answered the questions clearly with a clear understanding of the impact of action research in the classroom. 17 / 17 pts

Action Research Project Paper	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Grammar and Mechanics (15 points; 5 points per category) **view longer description**	No details 7 / 7.5 pts
APA Styling (15 points) **view longer description**	APA Styling is consistently correct within the text and in the references (minimal errors, less than 2). 7.5 / 7.5 pts
Total Points: 99.5	

How will implementing Read-Alouds Impact the Reading Comprehension of Fourth-Grade Students?

DAWN K BATTS
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE
ED 690

In many classrooms across the country, 90-180 minutes is dedicated to a Reading or English Language Arts Block. During this time, a Core Reading program is often implemented as students tackle reading skills, strategies, and literacy activities. Sadly, amidst the story excerpts, workbook pages, and weekly tests that frequently consume the bulk of the reading block, students are still having trouble comprehending grade level text. As a result of a monotonous cycle that can be formed, by using a basal system from week to week, children often loose or do not develop a love for reading and comprehension continues to suffer.

Wood Elementary (WES) school services 78.02% of students' that receive free and reduced lunch. The schoolwide breakdown is 43.34% Black, 31.33% Hispanic, and 23.24% White. These statistics place Wood Elementary in the Title 1 category. Like many Title 1 schools, a great number of students are living in low socioeconomic environments and do not have the same resources and exposure needed to assist them in school success. For example, fourth grade students at Wood Elementary, collectively scored 28% on the Scantron Performance Series ® winter reading assessment. The Performance Series ®, is Scantron's computer adaptive diagnostic testing solution, which provides educators with instant test results, personalized to each student, that ensures correct overall student placement at, above, or below grade level (How it Works," 2017). By the end of this school year, these fourth-grade students are not expected to reach their growth goal of 88% proficiency on the reading portion of Scantron Performance Series ® Reading Assessment. Many of these students rarely enter a school year on grade level. Often times, a vicious rotation of trying to get students to gain a full grade level or two in one school year is thrust upon teacher and student.

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The aforementioned sequence of events, pushes some teachers to put aside important literary practices such as Read-Alouds. "Reading aloud is the foundation for literacy development. It is the single most important activity for reading success" (Bredekamp, Copple, & Neuman, 2000). The art and beauty of reading aloud to students can open up a world of adventure and deep understanding. All students can be successful during the class read-aloud as a result of purely listening and thinking and not having to read the text themselves. "Learning from excellent texts is highly engaging in any instructional context, but read-aloud is an equal-opportunity instructional strategy because the barrier of the text is eliminated" (Burkins & Yaris, 2016, p. 34).

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Research Question

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From a review of literature on the topic of improving reading comprehension, one teaching technique found that enhances reading understanding is, reading aloud to students. **Will implementing Read-Alouds impact the reading comprehension of fourth-grade students?** Research by Lane and Wright (2007) supports the fact that reading aloud to students promotes a range of skills related to emergent literacy and can yield important academic benefits for children. Through this action research project, a plan will be devised to implement read-alouds in the classroom in hopes of deepening students' reading comprehension.

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What Does the Research Say?

Although read-alouds can be engaging and allow students to conquer topics that may be more complicated in nature, how can reading aloud to students increase their comprehension? One way reading aloud to students is beneficial is it helps build background knowledge. Often times using a read-aloud to lead into a new area of study helps to build the foundation for students to make connections to text, self, and the world. Many children don't have the experiences needed to understand certain concepts, the read-aloud can bridge that gap for them. "Read alouds give teachers a wonderful opportunity to directly scaffold learning for all students who lack the background for deep understanding of topics before we move them into more complex subject matter" (Wadsworth, 2008).

Read-Alouds and Comprehension.

Sadly, teacher read-alouds in the classroom seem to have become a past-time when students reach the intermediate grades. These students seem to be ready for independent reading, so deeper levels of comprehension should be the natural outcome. "But there are differences in reading abilities and listening abilities. A child's reading level doesn't catch up to his listening level until eighth grade" (Trelease, 2013). Knowing this piece of information should encourage teachers to make read-alouds a daily occurrence in the classroom. According to Scharlach (2008), the most important strategies to model during read-alouds are; predicting, visualizing, connecting, questioning, main idea, summarizing, and making adjustments. Rotating these skills as a read-aloud is being shared with a class, which allows students to keep solid comprehension strategies at the forefront of learning.

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Discussions.

The purpose of comprehension is for one to gain meaning from what they have read or listened too. Since the teacher is doing the reading during this time, he or she must allow time for discussion before, during, and after reading. Facilitating discussions helps teachers clear up any misconceptions about a topic and allows the teacher insight into what students are thinking. "In highly effective classrooms conversation is modeled and taught throughout the year. Learners depend on one another's thinking to deepen their understanding and construct meaning (Nichols, 2006).

Connections.

"Regular interactions throughout a read-aloud have the potential to help students recognize connections between the text, their lives, and the larger global community" (Strachan, 2015). Guiding students to make connections while they read or listen to a text, will usually lead to deeper understanding of the text. Students that make connections are taking time to make meaning and they notice relationships between characters and how settings can play a major role in the plot of a story. These same students are also able to extract the message the author wants to relay to their audience.

Listening Comprehension.

"Comprehension skills have two dimensions: reading and listening comprehension" (Tok & Mazi, 2015). Students can't follow along with the text during a read-aloud, they must depend on their listening skills. In a study by Hemmati, Gholamrezapour, & Hessamy (2015), it was found that storytelling and read alouds were avenues to effectively practice and enhance listening skills. Listening comprehension is an important way to grasp meaning from a piece of literature.

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"Children can listen on a higher language level than they can read, so reading aloud makes complex ideas more accessible and exposes children to vocabulary and language patterns that are not part of everyday speech. This, in turn, helps them understand the structure of books when they read independently" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Vocabulary Instruction.

It was mentioned earlier in this study that teachers should facilitate discussion with students before, during, and after sharing a read-aloud. This strategy often leads to greater understanding of the text for students and for teachers help redirect any faulty thinking. Text-talk is another form of discussing read-alouds with students, however, the focus of this strategy is vocabulary instruction. "Text-talk is another strategy that focuses on vocabulary development. The teacher uses text-talk by beginning deep discussion with children and then targeting several words from the story to discuss more in depth" (Beck & Mckeown, 2001). "Text-talk can also be used to develop comprehension skills and provide time for students to reflect on the storyline" (Santoro, 2008).

Methodology

Participants.

The fourth-grade students participating in this action research project attend Wood Elementary School which is identified as a Title 1 School. There are 75 students in the fourth-grade at WES, however, 25 students will be the focus of this investigation. In this class, 72% are African American, 25% Hispanic, and 3% Caucasian. According to Scantron Performance Series ®, only 25% of the class are projected to reach the spring benchmark.

Settings.

Commented [DS26]: APA: more than 40 words, block quote. Also does not need to be a parag by itself.

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Commented [DS27]: Make sure each sentence of the parag support the topic sentence (and that you have a clearly stated topic sentence).

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Commented [DS29]: Is this a pseudonym?

Deleted: →The purpose of this study is to determine if implementing read-alouds in fourth grade classrooms will increase reading comprehension

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How many boys/girls?

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The intervention that will be detailed in this project will take place during English Language Arts Block 1. Twenty minutes, five days a week will be devoted to building reading comprehension by using read-alouds. Four weeks will be dedicated to the project.

Materials.

In this study, a variety of fiction and nonfiction picture books will be used. Books will be chosen based on common core standards requirements, research, and personal choice. Formative assessments such as exit tickets, Kahoot, and Reading Response journals will be used to determine comprehension growth. In addition, teacher created Scantron Achievement Series ® assessments will be administered by the teachers as well.

Procedures.

Before the study begins, the teacher will review the latest Scantron scores to determine which reading standards need the most attention. If reading literature standards need the most attention, the teacher will choose a picture book that can address the standard and other comprehension strategies that were mentioned in the research section of this study. Nonfiction text will receive the same preparation as fiction.

Day 1, the teacher will have students consult the anchor chart that correlates with strategies that will be introduced during the 20-minute lesson. Briefly, before reading strategies will be discussed with the students, the teacher will share the text of the day. During and after reading, the teacher will facilitate a discussion to gage comprehension, and to clear up any misconceptions students may have about the topic. Students will write their reasoning's and wanderings in their reading response notebook.

Day 2, the teacher will begin the lesson with a shared retelling of the previous days reading. This allows the teacher to see who recalls key details from the text. If students do a

Commented [DS31]: Also describe the environment. How will the children be sitting during read aloud? Where will the reader be? Do students change classes or are they with one teacher all day?

Commented [DS32]: Is there more than one teacher involved? Isn't it one classroom?

Commented [DS33]: No apostrophe

poor job, the teacher will reread parts of the text in order to redirect their thinking. In addition, the teacher will begin focusing on the standard/strategy that was chosen to be taught during this read aloud session.

Day 3, the teacher will re-read aloud excerpts from the text and allow students to discuss or write about the targeted skill. For example, if the focus of the read-aloud is to determine point of view of which a story is narrated, students will share their thoughts on the point of view of the text and us evidence from the book to support it.

Day 4, a new book will be shared with the class with similar beginnings as day 1, however, students are listening to the text to solely see if they can determine the point of view of which a story is narrated or whatever standard is being highlighted.

Day 5, a formative assessment will be administered to check comprehension. This format will continue for the duration of the study.

Potential Issue

A potential issue that can possibly affect the outcome of this study is students being pulled out of the classroom during read-aloud time. Each day various students leave the classroom to attend gifted classes, dyslexia class, special education, and a plethora of intervention classes. Because the fourth grade at WES switches classes, 20 minutes at the same time each day is all that is allotted for implementing read-alouds in an already full academic schedule.

Potential Findings and Discussion

Commented [DS34]: Is this when explicit instruction of the comprehension strategy occurs?

Commented [DS35]: List those options again which you put in materials.

Commented [DS36]: 4 weeks? State that. What happens at the end that will allow you to determine if there's a change in comprehension skills?

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"Read-alouds have long been accepted in primary classrooms, but by the time students move to the upper grades—including high school—many teachers give up the practice as the day becomes more focused on content area" (Wadsworth, 2008). For all ages, read-alouds motivate, promote literacy, activate prior knowledge, and celebrates great literature. By using high interest read-alouds to teach comprehension skills and strategies along with common core standards, read-alouds can be extremely beneficial to comprehension development. Allen (2000) writes we should remind ourselves that those same benefits occur when we extend read-alouds beyond the early years.

Reading aloud to students should happen every day in the intermediate classroom. Whether it's to help students build background knowledge for an upcoming topic or just for the enjoyment, read-alouds are a priority. Many upper level teachers, feel overwhelmed by the demands and rigor associated with standardized testing and feel reading aloud to students is not necessary. "We can't read the test aloud to them, so utilizing our time for only independent reading is best". Many intermediate teachers have shared this sentiment when encouraged to implement a consistent read-aloud time in their classrooms. Read-alouds are highly engaging and often times students are more engaged in discussions and comprehension strategies can be taught in a stress-free way.

As a result of my research and experience in the classroom, teaching comprehension strategies through read-alouds will be a priority. Using fiction and nonfiction text will aid in covering reading literature and reading information that is related to common core standards. In addition, implementing read-alouds in the classroom will help build community and foster a love

Commented [DS37]: Since the study focuses on 4th grade, this parag doesn't really apply. Plus, this is not the content requested per the skeleton outline.

Commented [DS38]: This is not the content requested per the skeleton outline.

How could the results of your research impact students and other teachers? What about negative results?

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for reading, that will carry over into each student's independent reading time. Independent reading and understanding is the goal of reading comprehension.

Dawn, I tried to be explicit in the comments throughout, but don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the feedback.

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Commented [DS39]: Needed discussion of your experience with designing action research; how will you use it in the future if at all?

References

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Fountas, I.C., Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children.* Heiinemann

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Spring 2018

Grade 66.5 out of 100

Action Research Project Paper	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Introduction to the Problem **view longer description**	Provided a strong explanation of the problem. However, there is a lack of noted evidence for the need. 14 / 17 pts
Research Question and Literature Review **view longer description**	No details Comments research question cannot be yes/no; lit review needs more research to back up intervention plan 11 / 17 pts
Methodology 1: Participants, Environment, Materials **view longer description**	Each section provided information that lacked some detail or appropriateness. The materials section may be missing details regarding the instruments. Comments setting missing much information, participants and materials need slight clarification 14 / 17 pts
Methodology 2: Procedures and Potential Issues **view longer description**	Each section was provided but lack some detail regarding the procedures or potential issues. Comments This was the strongest section but procedures was missing information on how you were going to determine any change to students' comprehension. 14 / 17 pts

Action Research Project Paper	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Reflection (Discussion) **view longer description**	Answered the questions minimally and did not demonstrate reflection on the project 4 / 17 pts
Grammar and Mechanics (15 points; 5 points per category) **view longer description**	No details Comments watch run-ons, comma usage, parag indentions, skipping lines to add space 3 / 7.5 pts
APA Styling (15 points) **view longer description**	No details Comments references should be hanging indent; see paper for other details 6.5 / 7.5 pts
Total Points: 66.5	

Action Research Proposal:

Using Role-Play to Teach Functional Self-Help Language Skills

Emily Canfield

ED 690

Dr. Hiles

November 18, 2018

Introduction of the Problem

Students with significant disabilities require additional repetitive practice to acquire and maintain functional daily living skills. Research supports teaching functional skills to increase quality of life by including daily greetings, placing restaurant orders and requesting emergency help (Ashok, 2015), decrease dependence on caregivers with more independence for the person with disability (Umadevi VM, 2012), and improve social skills (Reichow, 2010). Students with severe disabilities and below average Intelligence Quotient (IQ) often need explicit instruction in the area of asking for help as it relates to social and adaptive behavior needs.

The action research will be completed in a self-contained special education classroom at a middle school in Huntsville City School System. Within the self-contained classroom setting, students with disabilities will be making progress towards social language skill goals from their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and adaptive behavioral goals that are considered needed for students to function from day to day. The students participating in the action research have previously struggled to gain help from trusted adult in both the classroom and hallways, which hinders their ability to be independent. Students have gotten into trouble flapping their hands in the bathroom and hallway when their zipper is broken or stuck on either a jacket or pair of pants. They have had difficulty requesting help when they struggle completing math problems, and will usually turn in the work with incorrect math processes. Additionally, students will often stand in front of the classroom door, without knocking, when the door is not unlocked from the outside. The lack of functional skills and ability to locate a trusted adult has made these elements prioritized in the process of organizing this action research. Teaching these functional skills using role-play has a large body of literature supporting it as a teaching method for social and functional skills (Jarrett, 1997, Haynes, 2007, Gordon, 2012, Reichow, 2010, & Morgan, 2015)

Commented [KAH1]: I'd break this down into separate sentences.

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The expectations of this research for the students is to improve the functional skills as they relate to locating and requesting help for common problems both within the classroom and hallway setting. The policies and procedures within the special education department and the middle school require each child to have adaptive behavior goals and objectives (ALSDE 2017). The classroom consists of seven students, from seventh to eighth grade, six boys and two girls. Developmentally, one student have functional skills equal to that of a toddler, three are on a preschool level, and the last three perform on the 2nd-3rd grade level. These levels are all based on Adaptive Behavior Assessment System (ABAS) testing protocols completed during the most recent special education testing.

Research Question and Literature Review

The overall action research question would consist of, *"How will the use of in-person role-play scenarios increase students' functional skills in the area of requesting assistance?"* This action research will investigate using the strategy of role-play to increase student effectiveness in asking questions appropriately. Teaching functional skills to students with disabilities has strong research support (Haynes, 2007, Gordon, 2012, Reichow, 2010, & Morgan, 2015). Learning these skills will help students' increase their overall level of independence and quality of life for people with disabilities.

Teaching academic, functional and social skills using role-play activities has a strong basis in establish educational theories. These interactive role-play activities have a strong foundation in the educational theorists Piaget and Vygostky. Piaget's Theory of Assimilation and Accommodation claims that "students learn best when they are active" (Pardjono, 2016, p. 168) . Vygotsky positioned that imaginative play as the basis for children's development (Thibodeau,

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Commented [KAH4]: You have some good information in this section, but you need to funnel from a global perspective of the problem, to your school, to your classroom. Some of this information (i.e., information about participants) does not go in this section. The introduction is to define the problem and create a case for why you chose to focus on this particular topic.

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Commented [KAH9]: This section feels redundant or awkward.

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Gilpin, Brown, & Meyer, 2016). Interactive teaching methods are useful for all groups of children, not only students with severe disabilities.

Within the category of severe disabilities, the two specific populations of students that were served with the action research were intellectual disabilities and autism, and there is research supporting using role-play to teach functional skills for both (Hunsaker, 2018, & Palmen, Didden, Arts, 2008). Palmen, Didden, Arts (2008) used a time-limited training package in the area of asking correct questions using self-management strategies, visual cues, multiple stimulus and response exemplars. They used verbal feedback and role-play during simulated small group conversations to help improve the adolescent's accuracy. This research is supporting the use of role-play as the method of instruction with the use of small group training in order for students to increase their functional skills in the area of requesting for assistance. Hunsaker (2018) identifies adaptive behaviors scores, which include functional skills, as the first step to deciding the least restrictive learning environment for students with disabilities. These skills were discussed in the research as a priority over academic skills although there is promising research in using role-play to enhance academic learning tasks.

Additionally, research supporting the use of role-play to increase literacy strategies (Alabsi, 2016), and using vocabulary at a mastery level (Choiril, 2016) is reviewed. Most students receive speech language services and need to use the words taught in the academic environment. This research has a basis in using role-play to enhance learning ability and language skills needed to perform functional tasks in their environment. Increasing speech and language skills is a main focus on reducing frustration in the area of communication; providing more functional language skills can help reduce problem behaviors noted in the classroom and hallway setting.

Commented [KAH11]: Doesn't make sense

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Commented [KAH13]: "included those with intellectual disabilities and autism." Furthermore, there is….

Commented [KAH14]: When listing multiple references within the same parenthesis, you would just use a ; to separate the references.

Commented [KAH15]: and

Commented [KAH16]: This paragraph continues to lack a clear focus. See previous feedback about constructing a paragraph.

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Commented [KAH18]: Are you talking about your specific students?

When writing lit reviews, you don't talk about your participants or reference your project. The purpose of the lit review is simply to summarize/synthesize what the literature says about topics that pertain to your study. So, again, I would encourage you to look at the lit review outline I provided previously.

Many of the students functionally perform on the preschool level and have goals in the area of decreasing instances of problem behavior. Researchers Luczynski and Hanley (2013) uncovered through research with pre-school classrooms that the use of role-play during instruction increased the functional communication skill set of all students who participated and also influenced the frequency of problem behaviors. As a result, this can research helps support using role-play to decrease distracting behaviors and increase on-task behavior time for instruction and review of skills.

Using role-play to reinforce functional skills is also supported by Ferentino (1991) in which the intervention included a social skills intervention using puppets as the role-play activity visual aide for a large preschool special education program. According to the What Works Clearinghouse review of data, the social emotional development outcomes of this research were found have statistically positive effects.

The literature provided supports using role-play as a teaching strategy for functional skills in a classroom serving students with severe disabilities. Role-play activities can be engaging activities that increase students literacy, functional skills and overall confidence in performing everyday tasks with increased independence. Using this research, using role-play to teach functional skills will be implemented in a middle school self-contained special education classroom for a consecutive three week trial.

Methodology

Participants

The students are seven middle school age students in the self-contained special education setting for more than 60% of the day. There are seven students, two are more non-verbal and two

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Commented [KAH21]: This paragraph is lacking detail and support.

Commented [KAH22]: Students'

Commented [KAH23]: Again, your lit review is definitely getting better, you just need to work on remaining focused within each paragraph. I think you might benefit from developing a solid outline before you begin writing. Review my previous feedback on a possible way to frame your lit review.

Commented [KAH24]: All of these headings should be bolded and flush left

Commented [KAH25]: All have a diagnosis of intellectual disability or autism, correct? Include this info.

have extensive verbal ability. he remaining three students have intellectual disabilities. All students in this setting require functional/language skills as part of their Individualized Education Program per Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE, 2016).

Using psuedonyms, the participants of the research will have access to adult support at all times. The students Aaron, Kylie, and Isaac all sit together at the same group. Aaron is an 8th grade student with autism and a below average IQ who performs on the 5th grade level in reading and English writing skills, but performs on the 4th grade level in various areas of math. His understanding of science is on 6th grade level, he often fixates on learning about the natural world and prehistoric history. He often forgets to brush his teeth and will apologize for not showering daily, but not change his hygiene habit. Kylie is a 7th grade student with a below average IQ who performs on the kindergarten level in the area of reading and writing skills. She performs on the pre-school level in all areas of math. She is currently taking home additional homework in the area of math practice per parent request. Kylie will often come to school without clean clothes on or clean hair or skin. She struggles to maintain feminine hygiene and struggles to independently self-monitor her cleanliness. Isaac is an 8th grade student with a below average IQ who works on the 5th grade level in reading skills, 4th grade level in literature comprehension and writing skills. He works on the 4th grade level in the area of math with the use of a calculator and other functional math tools. He maintains a high level in the area of self-management and cleanliness, and requires more instruction in the area of respecting personal space and maintaining socially appropriate behavior across many settings.

Donatello and Juno sit in an independent group of desks. Donatello is a 7th grader with an intellectual disability that performs functional skills on a 5th grade level. Donatello performs on the 4th and 5th grade level for all academic subjects in the self-contained classroom. Donatello is

from a big family that recently lost their mother and grandmother and the eldest sister had to take custody of all six children. As a result, he has learned how to cook for himself and siblings and knows more advanced functional skills such as laundry and fixing hair. Juno is an 8th grade student with autism and will need explicit instruction in managing problem behaviors and preparing to ask questions for functional skill help. Juno reads on the 5th grade level but comprehends on the 3rd and 4th grade level. Juno does not tie his own shoes and will often flap his hands instead of using his verbal ability to explain what is wrong in a situation. He toilets, eats, asks for wanted items and participates in leisure activities independently.

At the final small group, there is a paraprofessional aide supporting two students. Alyssa a 7th grade student with autism who functions on a pre-school level and requires one-on-one attention from adult support at all times. Alyssa is nonverbal but will make random statements such as 'please' and 'book' but not always in reference to the actual object or statement. She will use hitting and biting to maintain attention from adults, and does not use verbal language to bring attention to herself. Jamal is an 8th grade student with autism who also functions on a kindergarten/1st grade level and will respond to yes or no questions on a consistent basis. Depending on his mood, he will use a thumbs up or down signal and/or say yes or no clearly. He will use the bathroom independently, open snacks and even clean dirty hands without prompting.

Commented [KAH26]: Again, since you're focusing on increasing functional skills—specifically to have your students request help from a trusted adult—you need to provide information on how each of them currently do this.

Settings

The learning environment will be the self-contained classroom at Huntsville Junior High School from October 15th to November 6th. The intervention will be implemented for 30 minutes (1:07-1:52 pm) every day for 15 consecutive days and will occur in small groups, the additional 15 minutes of the period will be used for transition and preparing materials and groups. Each small group will be supported by paraprofessional aides, an occupational therapist, and a speech

pathologist. Each student will participate in a different multi-leveled differentiated group and with each adult practitioner, as some students respond better to different instructors. Students will change groups and tables each day and will be prompted to engage in role-play for each scenario.

The two environmental settings where the intervention will take place is the classroom and hallway. These are necessary environments for students to learn how to request help, as students are usually without adult support when transitioning in the hallway due to increased independence in toileting and drinking from water fountain. The flowchart and role-play scenario will be discussed and reviewed at a small group table. After the adult reads through the procedure, they will prompt the student to interact in a role-play scenario either in classroom or in the hallway or near a door. The adult facilitating the role-play activity will use physical and verbal prompts for moving students to the designated area based on the scenario.

Materials

The pre and post assessment will use the Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders' Social Skills Assessment Tool (Stone, 2010). The actual intervention will use the role-play procedure from the Milwaukee Public Schools Classroom Survival Skills 1-3 (2017). Teacher made role-play cards (Appendix A) will be the main visual component to supplement the scripted procedure (Appendix B) and conducting the final performance assessment of functional skills gained in the area of requesting help (Appendix C). To ensure validity, I will have other researchers review these materials and determine them valid. To ensure reliability for the results of the learning, across different practitioners in the classroom such as paraprofessional aides, occupational therapists and speech pathologists, students will interact with an adult using the same exact scripted role-play procedure and role-play cards on the

Commented [KAH27]: So, will 1 group be working in the hallway while the other 2 groups are working in the classroom? Will each group spend 10 minutes on each of the 3 role-plays you've come up with? Will they do each of the 3 role-plays every day for 15 days? Details.

Commented [KAH28]: Explain a little more what this assessment measures. Are you going to administer the entire tool or just part of it. I'm not familiar with this particular tool. Does it have a section on functional skills? I'm just trying to figure out exactly what data you'll be collecting before implementing your intervention. What about a pre-assessment for your students who do not have autism? I'm sure this tool was normed for students with this specific diagnosis.

students' level for instruction and assessment. The staff was trained by the lead special education teacher previous to this during other role-play activities, but a review of role-play basics was conducted for the entire staff involved. Staff was trained to read the procedure word by word and only use prompting language to stimulate student learning. I trained them to give explicit instructions in the first and second week and then gradually fade the prompts and allow students to have more struggle time to remember the steps solve their role-play scenario problem.

Adults were also instructed to utilize props such as a jacket with a broken zipper, an advanced math problem written on a paper, and a locked door if students were still struggling to get above a 60% accuracy rate on the checklist rubric progress monitoring. Besides the door, all props were brought to the table that was conducting the intervention. Students were instructed to walk up to the door to use that role-play. This can cause some level of disruption but also helped students get less dependent on the flowchart and begin memorizing the correct sequence of actions independently.

The student level for instruction and assessment is determined by Unique Learning System software assessments (Unique Learning Systems, 2018) which determines the need for symbol supported text and simplified concepts. These levels are distributed among three levels, level one is on a lower functioning level with high levels of visual and sensory supports, level two is higher and requires moderate visual supports and level three includes minimal visual supports and the highest lexile level for reading. The following reading assessments results range from Level aa to Level K in the Fountas and Pinnell Levelled Book List (2006). Based on early assessment data and ongoing observations of student reading skills, Donatello, Isaac, and Juno read independently on Level K, which requires the least amount of visual supports (level three).

Commented [KAH29]: Were—staff is plural

Commented [KAH30]: What are examples of this prompting language?

Commented [KAH31]: Reword—sounds like the table was conducting the intervention.

Kylie and Jamal read on a Level C, which provide moderate visual supports and simplified language (level two). And finally Alyssa is the only student that requires text on the Level aa, the highest level of visual supports and very simplified text structure (level one).

There will be a collection of quantitative data in the form of role-play checklist (Appendix C) scores for pre-assessment and post-assessments of the appropriate verbal and nonverbal functional skills needed for asking help . The students' pre-assessment score will be collected the day before the intervention is implemented. Then the action research will be implemented throughout the following 15 consecutive days using role-play practice using the flowchart and picture-based symbols. The day after the intervention ends, the post-assessment of the role play rubric will be completed with students and scores will be compared and analyzed for further interventions.

Commented [KAH32]: Nice description of your materials.

Procedures

When in a small group setting with a trained adult practitioner, students will review the scripted procedure listed in Appendix B using problem cards on the students' academic/language level. The academic language level has been collected by Unique software assessments.
First, tell students, "Today we are going to learn a really important people skill. It's called asking for help." Then ask students, "When was a time you had to ask for help here at school?" Wait for a response up to 30 seconds. Tell students: "When something is hard, it is important to try it first. If you can't do it after you have tried, the responsible thing to do is to ask for help in a respectful way." Using the flowchart (Appendix A) as a visual aide, student will place problem card in the middle and practitioner will ask the student: "Ask yourself can I do this alone?".

- (point to no flowchart)"If not, raise your hand." Discuss with student that this is appropriate in class, not at home or with friends.

- (point to no flowchart)"Ask for help in a friendly way." Discuss with student to look for a trusted adult and give examples (i.e. mom, dad, babysitter, teacher, aide, etc.)

At the end, tell the student "We're going to do some role-playing now. I'm going to pretend to be different people that you know. I want you to show me what you would say and do in some pretend situations".

When presented with role play scenario, the adults will act out role-play and then prompt the appropriate response. Then adult will present scenario cards on the students' level, prompt him/her to mimic the problem with miming or a real prop (door, zipper, and upper level math work) and the adult will practice the appropriate response. These three scenarios have all happened and resulted in students displaying problem behaviors such as crying and running and jumping into students in both the hallway and classroom. Each problem and role-play scenario (three total) should be repeated by student at least three times every day for the three weeks of the action research project within the thirty minutes of the daily intervention.

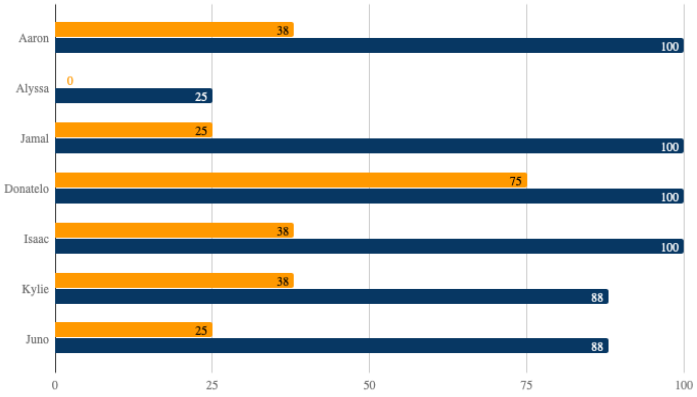
Commented [KAH33]: So each of the 3 role-plays will be practiced 3 times per day? So each student will do 9 role-plays each and every day? OR will each student practice each of the 3 role-plays each day?

Over the course of three weeks, students will be assessed by their performance on the role-play scenario checklist as a post-assessment for the functional skill of asking for help. After collecting pre-assessment data, the students will be provided a differentiated physical prompt that pertains to one of the three problem role-play scenario cards such as a broken zipper on a jacket, a locked door or cabinet, and academically frustrating level of math work. Students will select the corresponding role-play card. The student will then practice the selected role-play with adult and the student will be formatively assessed three times between the pre and post-assessment using the Role-Play Assessment Rubric (Appendix C).

Analysis and Findings

After conducting the research for three consecutive weeks, student data has shown measurable class-wide growth in all functional skills areas being tracked. The beginning and ending of this action research was measured with the procedure for role-play (Appendix B) with an adult using the checklist for functional ability as a pre-assessment (Appendix C) on October 15 and the same post-assessment (Appendix C) on November 6th, 2018. On the pre-assessment (Appendix D), there was an median average of 34% accuracy in demonstrating the ability to ask for help for one of the role-play scenarios. Each group had up to three students, so each scenario was tested only once and each student received a different scenario to ensure they would not copy each other. The post-assessment (Appendix D) resulted with a median average score of 85% performance on only one of the role-play scenarios. The overall rate of growth for the whole class was 51% increase in ability to perform the functional task of asking by the end of the training session. Figure 1 shows the stark difference between the pre (yellow) and post (blue) assessment.

Fig. 1 Pre and Post Assessment Data



Commented [KAH34]: This is different than how you said you'd measure pre- and post-assessment above. The autism screening tool.

Commented [KAH35R34]:

Commented [KAH36]: a

Commented [KAH37]: If you wanted to ensure that your students didn't copy each other, you could have conducted the pre-assessment without anyone else near. As is, it's kind of like measuring apples and oranges if they each did a different role-play.

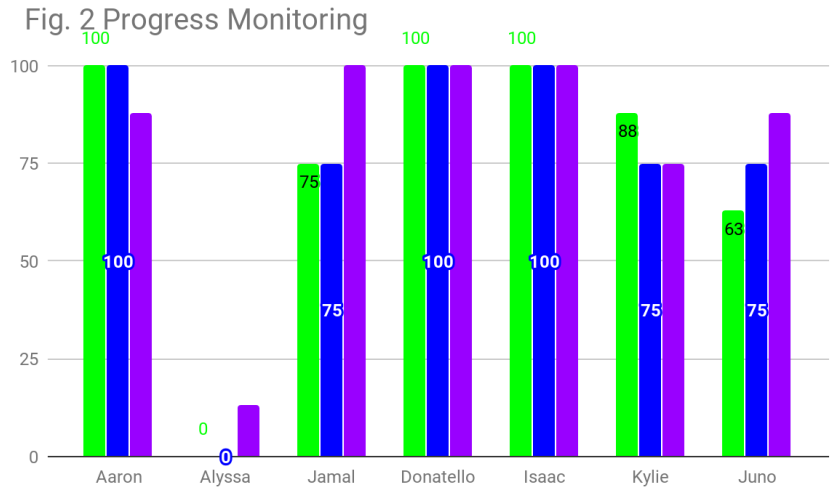
Commented [KAH38]: You really can't make this claim if the students weren't measured on the same role-play at both the pre- and post-assessment. The pre- and post- should be standard and remain the same across all students. The way it is, you aren't measuring the same thing, which is an issue with validity.

Only one student student, Donatello, was performing above the 50% performance level on the pre-assessment. Conversely, Alyssa did not respond to the activity on the day assessed. The rest of the class performed within the 25% and 40% accuracy range, which promotes the overall need for this intervention and the possible implications it can have for promoting the functional skills of students being served in this classroom. Using the data from figure 1, it is gleaned that the overall performance of the functional skill of asking for help from an adult increased over 50% in accuracy after a three week intervention.

The daily intervention began the week of October 16 until November 5th. This consisted of reviewing the role-play procedure and flowchart diagram (Appendix B) and role-play scenario and solution cards (Appendix A) and asking students to participate in a role-play once appropriate solution is reviewed and discussed with student. Students were progress monitored three times before they were assessed for the post-assessment on November 6th, 2018. Due to the Special Olympics field trip and a teacher illness on a few days of the intervention, the progress monitoring assessments were completed on the 10/24 (green bar), 10/29(blue bar) and

Commented [KAH39]: This isn't clear. So you collected data on a student's ability to request help after you reviewed each scenario and discussed appropriate solutions? If so, how do you know they weren't just repeating back what the adult said to them vs. independently coming up with an appropriate response?

10/31(purple bar). The three data points are displayed in Figure 2 Progress Monitoring chart



This data supports the observations made by adult instructors during the course of the intervention. Kylie did well on her role-play rubric checklist (Appendix C) after observing multiple students correctly model the role-play activity, but then began to regress for the next two weeks. The feedback given to the student included explicit instruction in modeling using props for each scenario, reviewing the visual cards and participating in specially-designed activities that focus on increasing the positive affective filter when speaking and advocating for self.

The only other student that showed regression from Figure 2 on the role-play rubric checklist was Aaron. Aaron will participate in activities with high participation and attention level. His mother recently quit her job and is solely depending on disability checks for her living expense. She has not been waking him up early enough for him to take a shower and brush his teeth. These are important components to reflect upon for further instruction as the students' oral

Commented [KAH40]: These data support—data are plural

Commented [KAH41]: So was she just mimicking the other students? Did you collect any qualitative data describing your perceptions of each student's responses?

Commented [KAH42]: Specifically, what did this feedback consist of? What language did you use? Were all of the adults consistent when providing feedback? What was the wait time between the time the student was struggling and the adult provided feedback?

hygiene and overall care for appearance reflects the level of stress he is experiencing in his environments. The feedback for this student included repeated modeling and a change of setting and instructor for each activity to ensure generalization of skill. Since Aaron will often know and be able to describe the correct functional behavior, but forget to do each step when conducting a performance assessment the feedback and differentiation of instruction included repeated modeling with props, change of seating, change of peer groups and the adult practitioner involved.

The speech pathologist saw the students engaged in the role-play activity during this intervention period and chose to focus the weekly? speech activities on the topic of identifying trusted adults in different environments. The additional instruction in this topic resulted in more accurate student choices for this functional skill. The speech teacher collected these data for her own progress monitoring data for the IEP goals for each student.

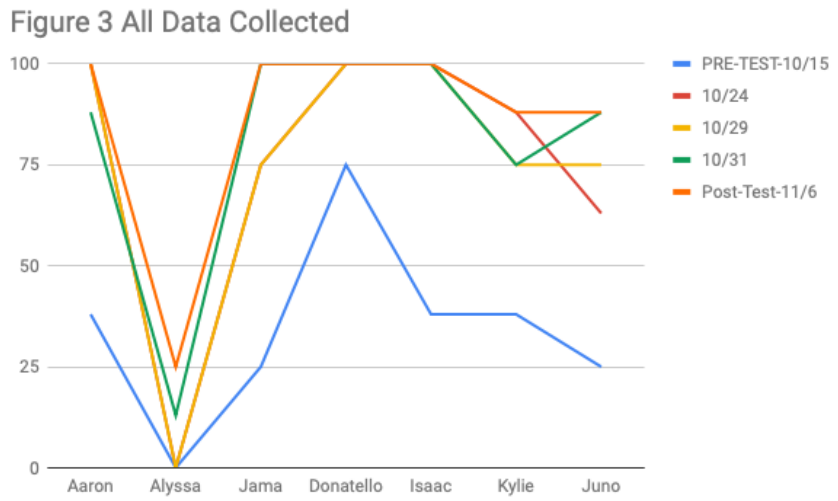
Commented [KAH43]: correct

Commented [KAH44]: pathologist—be consistent with your language.

For the post assessment, six out of seven students were able to request help using appropriate responses above 75% in accuracy. The overall growth is demonstrated in the following graph, the data includes pre-assessment, ongoing progress monitoring and post-

assessment in Figure 3 labeled "All Data Collected".

Commented [KAH45]: My concern with your graphs, in general, is that they are not broken down by the specific role-play. It would make more sense to have one graph representing the zipper scenario, one for the door scenario, and one for the math problem. Otherwise, I have no idea if one was easier for all or some of the students than the others. Does that make sense?



Based on this chart, Alyssa made the least amount of growth in using role-play cards as the main form of instruction. To differentiate the instructional process since student vision is poor, the role-play cards on level 1(Appendix A) were displayed on the ActivBoard at an enlarged size for increasing viewing potential after the first progress monitoring data check on 10/24/18. Other students were able to view these enlarged cards for the period of intervention, but many students preferred using the physical role-play cards (Appendix A).

All of the students would watch the role-play scenarios of each student at the group, with 2-3 students at each group. By the end of the intervention, students used role-play activity cards to play a matching game when waiting for students to be seated or during instructional breaks. Although the Adaptive Physical Education teacher did not partake in the intervention, she provided critical feedback and observations in student performance in the area of requesting help. Students were asking for help in tying shoes and fixing pants during the P.E. period, this is

an environment where the special education teacher is not present. When in the classroom or lunchroom, students also appropriately requested help using similar strategies to the role-play activity. Two of the less verbal students independently used the appropriate key vocabulary on the second and third week of the intervention when they needed help in the area of opening ketchup packets and milk cartons at breakfast and lunch.

The students were given feedback from all adults involved in the intervention. The feedback would vary slightly, but each adult would remind the student to go through the decision-making chart and review the steps to solving the problem. Oftentimes, students would begin their role-play by asking the question on the card without raising their hand or approaching the person and explaining the situation. This would require more prompting from adults which included commonly used phrases such as "explain your problem" or "use your words" based on the students' receptive understanding. Aaron would often explain alternative solutions that were not likely and would be redirected onto the solutions that were provided by the intervention.

Limitations

Limitations of this research include the level of energy some students have based on the day of the week and the amount of sleep they were able to have the night before. Also, some of the students experienced colds and absences during the weeks of instruction, and may have missed a few practice sessions. The other limitations included a paraprofessional aide quitting on the third week of the intervention and which required more instruction and assessment with the other two adult practitioners. Not all adults used the props for every intervention and the frequency of this tool could have been noted on the data collected. This may have caused inconsistent data based on the visual supports and level of interaction for each student. This removes a level of diversity of observers for the post-assessment data.

Commented [KAH46]: You have some really good information in this section. What it's missing are your observational data. You mention early on that you didn't want the students to copy each other, but here towards the end, you indicate that they would observe the others in their group going through their role-play. Wouldn't this then create a situation where some students might copy others rather than independently come up with their own solutions?

The other major problem is what you're basing your analysis on. The way it is, it appears that you're lumping all 3 role-plays together, but this has major flaws. You really needed to break your analysis down by each role-play since some students might do better at some than the others.

Commented [KAH47]: Explain this. How might these situations impact student performance?

Commented [KAH48]: So this is a reliability issue.

Commented [KAH49]: This is confusing.

Discussion

Kidd and Kral (2005) describe participatory action research as participating in something to bring about change, and through this research the students in the self-contained classroom demonstrated growth in the area of performing the functional skill of asking for help when confronting a problem that requires an adult's assistance. Implementing evidence-based practices in the area of teaching functional skills and participating in role-play activities has helped increase the use of social skills and track progress of some students' adaptive behavior goals. Using this research, future teachers or providers can apply these student-tailored intervention activities in the area of requesting help or other functional skills. Each functional skill that is reviewed and practiced in a role-play scenario should be assessed and then appropriate responses should be prioritized with a focus on increasing skills acquisition. Using the same structure to teach as to assess learning, ensures a fair process to students' learning. The process of using the same scripted procedure on a consistent basis helped to reinforce the structure of the activity and the appropriate responses. Overall, this research has positive effects in student independence in solving problems and reducing related problem behaviors.

Commented [KAH50]: Split this into two sentences.

This action research could be used in assessing transition skills for 8th graders as mandated by state law (ALSDE, 2017), but also used to determine the most appropriate adaptive behavior goals for the following year. Based on the data collected, the continued instruction can include role-play and interactive activities but a focus on skills that are more individualized for the student, rather than the small group. Students performed well in varying groups and this has implications for my small groups that I use for academic instruction in the morning. Additionally, information about the students' functional skill can be continued to be collected throughout the school year and for summer school, activities could include role-play scenarios

that are similar to ones worked on throughout the school year. Many students participate in summer school programs to maintain functional skills and this research helps provide more evidence to use it for these tasks.

Implications for Future Research

Each student and their respective need in functional skills should be consistently reviewed and discussed during their respective yearly IEP meetings and nine-week progress monitoring of goals. This research can have implications in teaching many functional skills. This intervention could include more teaching components and ongoing lessons including but not limited to: identifying and approaching trusted adults, appropriate behaviors in different environments, functional communication skills and community-based learning experiences as part of transition services in high school. The students are not limited to learning about these three scenarios and future research could be further tailored to individual student need. Additionally instead of teaching three scenarios at the same time, data can be collected on a students' ability to use role-play to learn one specific response to one specific problem. This would give more detailed results for future IEP information and student performance ability.

Commented [KAH51]: This might be easier especially for students with more significant disabilities.

Commented [KAH52]: You have a very solid discussion and implications for future research sections. Nice!

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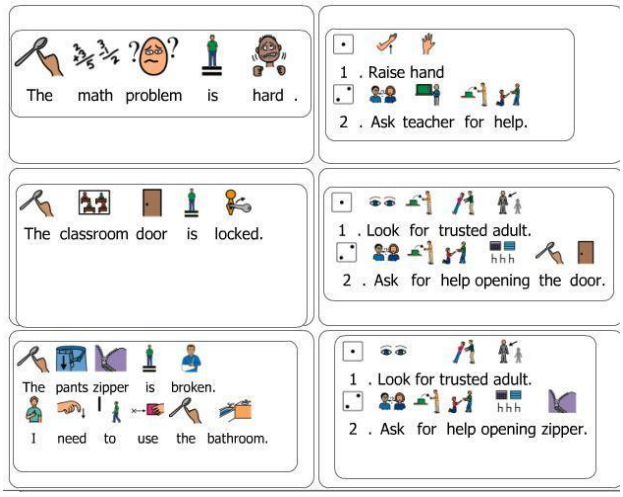
Appendix A
Role-Play Scenario Cards
The following role-play cards can be made for students to practice with teacher or peer:

Role Play Scenario: Hard math problem	Role Play Scenario: Locked classroom door	Role Play Scenario: Broken zipper
Role Play Modeling: Raise hand, ask for help.	Role Play Modeling: Look for adult, ask for help to unlock door.	Role Play Modeling: Look for adult, ask for help with zipper.

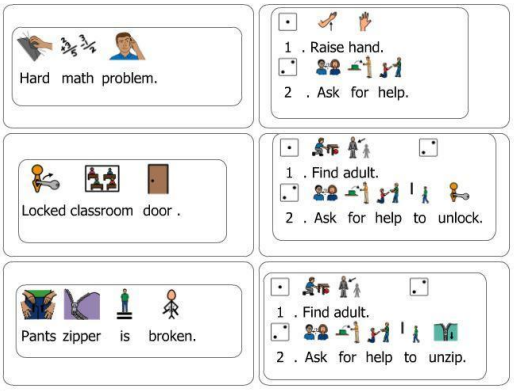
Level 3 Problem and Role Play Cards



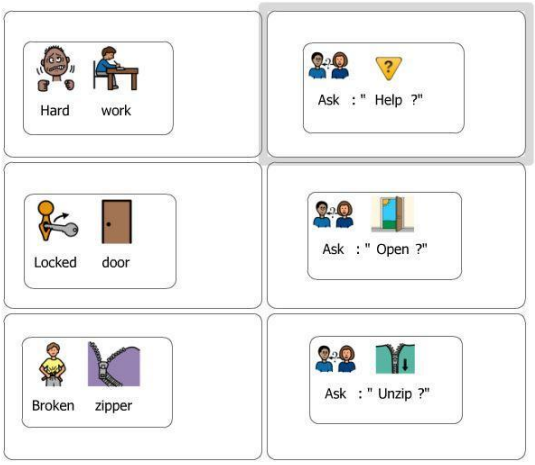
Appendix A

Role Play Scenario Cards

Level 2 Problem and Role Play Cards



Level 1 Problem and Role Play cards:



Appendix B

Procedure for Role-Play

(Milwaukee Public Schools, 2017)

Note: Use same-gender names and pronouns from student's immediate family and friend circle inside and outside of school for the role-plays. Continue the role-plays as appropriate to elicit conversational skills.

Tell Students: *Today we are going to learn a really important people skill. It's called asking for help.*

Ask Students: *When was a time you had to ask for help here at school?*

Tell Students: *When something is hard, it is important to try it first. If you can't do it after you have tried, the responsible thing to do is to ask for help in a respectful way.*

Then, using flowchart and problem card as visual for student, tell the student to:

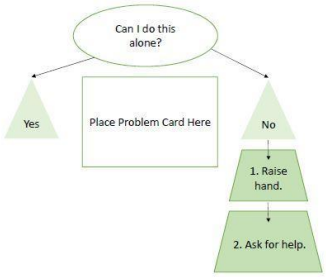
Ask yourself, "Can I do this alone?" (show flow chart below)

- *If not, raise your hand. Discuss that this is appropriate in class, not at home or with friends.*
- *Ask for help in a friendly way.*

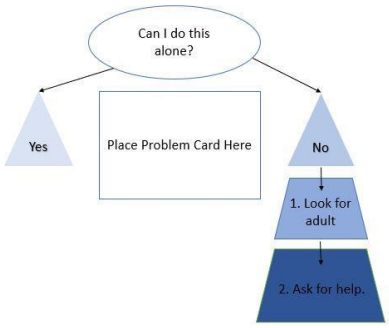
"We're going to do some role-playing now. I'm going to pretend to be different people that you know. I want you to show me what you would say and do in some pretend situations."

Appendix B

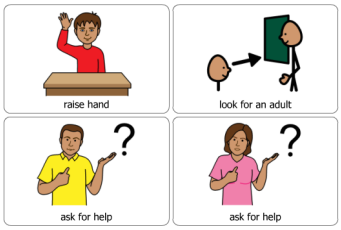
Flowchart for Procedure in Classroom



Flowchart for Procedure in Hallway/Classroom



Picture-symbols for flowchart (level 1)



Appendix C

Role-Play Assessment Rubric:

Verbal (1 or 0)	Nonverbal (1 or 0)	Scores
____ making a relevant statement about problem ____ asking a relevant question about help ____ take one turn talking	___ eye contact ____ appropriate tone of voice ____ appropriate physical proximity ____ matching gestures ____ facial expressions	8/8=100% ⅞=88% 6/8=75% ⅝=63% 4/8= 50% ⅜=38% 2/8=25% ⅛=13%

(Stone, 2010)

Appendix D

Student Data Link

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Jn4PVezbptXH7la8SxWrtEoiu92LFDQU/view?usp=sharing

Action Research Report

Misty Shearer
University of Alabama Huntsville

EDU 690-02

Throughout the world of education, teachers spend much time focusing on teaching students how to be successful, fluent readers. Although teachers spend much time in this area, there are still students who have a difficult time learning how to read fluently. When students get behind in reading, it interferes with their ability to complete the daily activities expected of them in their grade level. Since teaching students to read can be a very difficult task, it is important for teachers to find the best possible strategies that will be beneficial in the process of helping students become successful, lifelong readers.

Commented [KAH1]: Citation?

Throughout the hallways of Memorial Park Elementary School (MPS), you will see a diverse population of second- and third-grade students. These students enter the classrooms with a wide range of ability levels and have many needs that must be addressed. In trying to meet the needs of the students and ensure that they are successful learners, students at MPS "Walk to Read" each day. During "Walk to Read," students are levelized to help teachers pinpoint the specific needs of the students in each class. The daily "Walk to Read" routine consists of a 90-minute uninterrupted reading block where students receive whole group and small group instruction. It is the schools hope that through using "Walk to Read," teachers at MPS can take students where they are and push them to achieve success at new levels.

The students in the target third grade "Walk to Read" classroom, although levelized, are still full of diversity. There are 15 students in the class which includes six special education students, four English Language Learner students, and five regular education students who are performing below grade level. The students were chosen to be a part of this low-level reading class because they are struggling to read at grade level based on the results of the Star Reading Assessment. Throughout their second-grade year, these students were also making poor grades on their reading comprehension tests, many did not benchmark on their DIBELS assessment, and

many had trouble on assignments in other core areas where reading was involved. The goal for this action research project was to find a strategy that would help push these students toward the right direction to where they should be reading.

After observing these students for several weeks, it was very apparent that these students did indeed struggle in reading. Although comprehension seemed to be a factor that placed many of these students in this classroom, it was very clear that these students struggle with comprehension because they are not fluent readers. Beginning of the year fluency assessments assisted in determining that none of these students were reading at a correct pace, many were having to stop to sound out words, and their reading was very laborious. The students' reading fluency was not what it should be at the third-grade level; therefore, these students needed support in this area. Hopefully, if these students improve with their reading fluency where they spend less time focusing on reading, they would be able to improve in comprehension as well.

Throughout any third-grade classroom, it is important to find the best strategies that will help students become successful readers and become passionate about reading books. Since being able to read is so important in the day-to-day success among today's society, it is crucial to find strategies that will motivate students and help improve their reading skills, so they will be successful members of society. Teachers should strive to encourage students and work hard to find reading strategies that will motivate, while also improving the reading skills among students.

Commented [KAH2]: They did

Commented [KAH3]: will

Commented [KAH4]: Very strong introduction, Misty! Great job!

Literature Review and Research Question

Many students with or without learning disabilities struggle to reach an appropriate level of reading fluency (Pruitt & Cooper, 2008). Stickland, Boon, and Spencer (2013) state that, "Reading is one of the most important early academic skills for students to acquire

in school, yet learning to read continues to be a challenge for many elementary age students in our nation's schools" (p. 1). Students who do not learn to read fluently tend to encounter difficulties mastering content in academic areas, and have trouble succeeding in school. Therefore, it is the school's fundamental responsibility to ensure that all students read proficiently, although, this can be an elusive task to achieve (Lyon & Chhabra, 2004). Schmidt, Rozendal, and Greeman (2002) suggest that since students with varying abilities receive most of their reading instruction in the general education classroom, it is crucial for all teachers to adopt effective teaching methods to ensure that students make adequate gains in reading.

In looking at effective strategies for teaching reading fluency, educators must first have a deep understanding of the true meaning of fluent reading. Today, some schools tend to engage students in daily reading exercises that encourage them to increase their reading speed, and therefore emphasize speed over meaning (Rasinski, 2004). Rasinski (2012) states that, "In its fullest and most authentic sense, fluency is reading with and for meaning, and any instruction that focuses primarily on speed with minimal regard for meaning is wrong" (p. 517). Ming and Dukes (2008) advise that to be considered a fluent reader, readers must be able to automatically read words accurately, with correct expression, and then be able to draw intended meaning from texts. Berliner (1981) suggests that in order to develop fluency among students, there is a need for teacher-directed lessons where students spend a lot of time engaged in reading connected texts" (as cited in, Stahl & Kuhn, 2008).

Whole Class Choral Reading

One strategy that has been suggested in helping students improve reading fluency is the use of Whole Class Choral Reading (WCCR). Paige (2011) explains that WCCR is a classroom strategy where the teacher will model accurate pronunciation, appropriate reading rate and

expression as the whole class reads aloud together and then in the end, the teacher will provide corrective feedback from the read aloud. Ming and Dukes (2008) suggest that using choral reading will help improve students' word recognition, reading rate, and expressive skills. According to Paige (2011), not much research has been conducted on using WCCR, but in his study of 112 sixth-grade students who used WCCR in a Language Arts classroom, he was able to conclude that these readers benefited from WCCR through improvement in both the underlying phonological decoding process and in oral reading fluency.

Repeated Reading

Using repeated readings is another strategy that has been highly researched that teachers can use to help increase reading fluency among their students (Pruitt & Cooper, 2008). O'Shea and O'Shea (1981) suggest that using repeated readings allows students the opportunity to read passages many times which helps students improve in both word recognition and comprehension skills (as cited in Stickland, Boon, & Spencer, 2013). Therrien and Kubina (2006) mention that in previous research studies, repeated reading has shown to be effective with a variety of students, including students with learning disabilities. After looking at the results of many studies, Stickland, Boon, and Spencer (2013) concluded that repeated reading is an effective classroom strategy that can be used with students with or without learning disabilities to improve fluency and comprehension. However, the research also indicates that other reading interventions have also proved to be just as effective in the improvement of students reading fluency and comprehension skills. Although repeated readings have shown to be effective throughout short periods of time, it may not hold students' attention over a long period (Worthy & Prater, 2002).

Readers Theater

Readers Theater is another fluency intervention that can be used to improve fluency and overall reading achievement among primary grade students (Young and Rasinski, 2009). According to Concoran and Davis (2005), "Readers Theater uses guidance, modeling, and independent student practice, while students rehearse a play, speech, poem, or other appropriate text. They rehearse until they are able to perform it fluently and with expression for an audience" (p. 106). Garrett and O'Connor (2010) suggest that Readers Theater is an instructional strategy that can be used to engage students in a meaningful activity that helps progress reading fluency while also improving social development. Based on the finding of one research study, Clark, Morrison, and Wilcox (2009) suggest that Readers Theater is a research-supported form of repeated reading that can be used as an effective instructional tool used for fluency instruction and practice. By using Readers Theater, students are given an authentic reason to engage in repeated readings (Worthy & Prater, 2002). Corcoran and Davis (2005) report that in their study, Readers Theater had a positive impact on reading attitudes and confidence level of second- and third-grade students, and it was evident that the special education students also made progress toward increasing their reading fluency. According to a study completed at a Title I school in Dallas, Readers Theater had a positive effect on all second-grade readers and gave an opportunity for struggling readers to read fearlessly, while also motivating the unmotivated readers in the classroom (Young & Rasinski 2009).

Since the students that are going to be a part of this action research project struggle with reading fluency, they need a strategy that will hopefully help them make gains in this area. Martinez, Roser, and Strecker (1998) suggest that Readers Theater is a form of repeated reading but has a greater purpose and motivation for students and teachers than other types of fluency practice. Worthy and Prater (2002) state that, "Time after time, teachers have reported that

Readers Theater is the single most motivating, effective activity they have used" (p. 295). After looking at the research on reading fluency strategies, the research question that will guide this study is: What impact will using Readers Theater have on helping below level reading students improve reading fluency?

Commented [KAH5]: Your literature review is in excellent shape!

Methodology

Participants

The students that participated in this study consisted of 15 third graders that are reading below grade level based on their STAR Reading and Scantron scores. There is a very diverse population of students among this class, which includes four African American students, four Hispanic students, and seven Caucasian students, nine of which are girls and six are boys. Five students receive special education services due to an identified learning disability in reading. Additionally, four other students are going to be referred to the Problem-Solving Team (PST) for further interventions to put in place before the consideration of special education testing. There are also four English Language Learners who still have some language barriers that affect their reading ability. These students lack the fluency skills needed to be successful on a third-grade level; therefore, struggle with the day-to-day assignments that they are expected to complete.

Commented [KAH6]: who

Setting

The participants that were involved in this research study are in the third grade at Memorial Park Elementary School. These students are in the below level "Walk to Read" classroom, where they receive 30 minutes of whole group reading instruction followed by two doses of small group teacher-led instruction and one independent small group rotation each day. The students spend approximately 20 minutes at each station where they work on phonics skills, story elements, fluency, and vocabulary practice. The desks in the room are set up in tables

where students have easy access to working together at each station. The environment among this classroom is very welcoming, where students are encouraged to answer questions aloud, work with partners to solve problems, and are often reminded that making mistakes is a part of learning.

Commented [KAH7]: I still love this!!! ☺

Materials

The assessment tool that was used to determine the impact of using Readers Theater among this below level reading classroom was The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS Next). DIBELS Next is a breakthrough revision of the original DIBELS assessment. DIBELS Next is used to identify the intervention needs of students, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions implemented among classrooms, and support the Response to Intervention (RTI) Model (Good & Kaminski, 2011). DIBELS Next is comprised of brief, one-minute assessments that are used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. It is comprised of six measures, but for this study, only the third-grade DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) was administered. The DORF is a one-minute fluency passage where students read the presented text for one minute and then will have one additional minute to retell the information that they remember throughout their reading. DIBELS Next is set up to give students a benchmark assessment at the beginning, middle, and end of each year, while classroom teachers also administer weekly progress monitoring assessments to track the weekly improvements of student fluency (Good & Kaminski, 2011). For this study, the DIBELS Next progress monitoring assessments was administered as a pre-test and post-test assessment to determine if student fluency improved after the use of the Reader's Theater intervention.

Commented [KAH8]: delete

Procedures

This action research study took place over a three week period, where students worked on Readers Theater each day. On the first day of the study, a Monday, students were given the DORF progress monitoring assessment. The DORF assessment was used to look at students' fluency at the very beginning of this study, their accuracy percentage of words read correctly, along with how accurately they were able retell the passage that they read. After students were assessed, they were then given the weekly Readers Theater script. The teacher gave students an overview of Readers Theater and explained how they would use this to help improve their reading ability. On this first day, during each small group rotation students took turns reading each part and discussing how each character should be speaking. This allowed students to be given an opportunity to think about reading like they would speak in a normal day-to-day conversation. On Tuesday, students were assigned their role for the weekly Readers Theater script. Students were given roles according to the members in their daily small groups. There were five students in each small group, which was determined by the ability level of the students. During small group teacher-led instruction, the students practiced reading their lines while the teacher stopped to discuss the things happening in the story and corrected any mistakes in the way students should be reading. Students also discussed the point of view of their specific character in the story. At the second teacher-led station, students read the weekly story and compared how they read their script to how they read the story. The students began to understand that reading a story should be read in the same way they read their roles in a script. On Wednesday, students met with the teacher again to continue their practice on reading each line correctly. During this rotation, students also practiced answering questions that went along with the text. As students moved to their independent station, they carried their script and continued practicing with their group. On this third day, as students moved to their second dose

of teacher-led instruction, they worked on completing a graphic organizer of things that happen throughout the story script. On Thursday, students worked with the teacher one last day on reading their parts accurately with correct expression. Students were often reminded that reading a story is just like reading a script in the sense that they should read how they talk. Students then practiced once more in their independent station. On Friday, each group of students performed their Readers Theater script to the class. After each production, the audience of students had the opportunity to discuss the good reading of each student as well as anything they heard that was not read in the correct way. This allowed students the opportunity to really think and discuss the aspects that go along with being a fluent reader. This seemed to be very beneficial for these students and really allowed them to think about what good reading should sound like. This same weekly procedure was continued throughout the next 2 weeks. On day 15, after the last performance, students were given the post DORF assessment. The DORF post-assessment was used to compare to the DORF preassessment to see if growth was shown between the two assessments after the implementation of Readers Theater. Each Readers Theater script correlated with the weekly reading story and skill that the school district required to be completed. This helped students as they read the script and the story to start connecting that they should be reading both story and script in the same way.

Commented [KAH9]: Nice job incorporating all of my feedback from your proposal. The first half of your paper is very strong. The only suggestion I would make (which is nitpicky!) is to break down your procedures section into 2-3 separate paragraphs. As is, it's one looonnngggg paragraph. Like I said…nitpicky.

Commented [KAH10]: Hyphenate

Analysis and Findings

Before beginning the implementation of Readers Theater, the students in this third grade reading class were given a DORF progress monitoring assessment. By looking at this data, it was easy to distinguish that these students struggled with reading fluency. According to the DIBELS mid-year benchmark standards, students in third grade should be reading at least 86 words correct per minute (wcpm) to be considered as reading fluently at grade level. When the

students were given the DORF pre-assessment, there were only two students among the classroom whose scores indicated that they were reading at benchmark. This showed that there were 13 other students among the classroom who were not reading fluently. In looking closely at the data, it was concluded that on this preassessment, there were two students who scored at benchmark, eight students who scored below benchmark, and five students who scored well below benchmark in the area of reading fluency.

Along with fluency, the DORF preassessment was also used to look at the students overall reading accuracy and retell scores to help determine if students were at benchmark in these areas. According to the DIBELS mid-year standards, students should read at least 96% of words accurately and should be able to retell at least 26 words of information that happened throughout the passage. After looking at the students' preassessment, it was determined that there were seven students in this class that benchmarked on accuracy, which left eight students who did not benchmark. Of these eight students who did not meet benchmark standards on accuracy, two were below benchmark, while the other six scored well below benchmark. It was also determined from this assessment that none of the students in this class scored at benchmark in the area of retell. The scores on retell indicated that four students' retell scores were below benchmark, while the other 11 students scored well below benchmark in this area.

Commented [KAH11]: Students'

Commented [KAH12]: who

At the end of the fifteen-day Readers Theater implementation, the students in this classroom were given the DORF post assessment where the scores were compared to see if this intervention was a useful tool in helping these students improve reading fluency, accuracy, and retell. In looking at the post assessment data, there was a major improvement among the scores on the class' overall reading fluency. There were 12 out of the 15 students who improved their fluency scores at the end of the Readers Theater implementation. Figure 1 shows the students'

scores on their DIBELS fluency pre-assessment compared to the scores they received on their DIBELS fluency post assessment. Of the 15 students in this class, seven students reached benchmark status on the DORF post assessment score, four students scored below benchmark, and there were only three students who scored well below benchmark.

Commented [KAH13]: You need to make sure that you're consistent with how your write words. You sometimes hyphenate pre- and post-assessment while other times you write them as one word (i.e., preassessment).

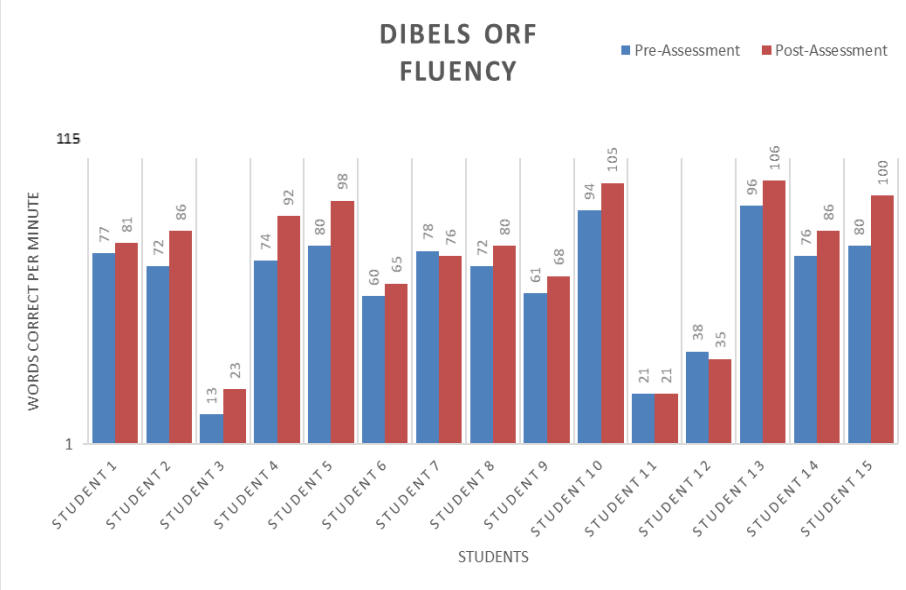


Figure 1: The DIBELS ORF Fluency graph compares the students' DIBELS fluency pre-assessment to their DIBELS fluency post assessment.

In looking at the students' overall accuracy and retell scores on the post assessment, it was also evident that there was improvement after this intervention was put in place. Among the 15 students in the class, 12 students reached benchmark status on DIBELS accuracy, and only three students scored well below benchmark on accuracy. All but two students improved on their accuracy scores, and of the two who did not improve, their accuracy score was the same as the preassessment. Figure 2 shows the students' scores on their DIBELS Accuracy pre-

assessment compared to the scores they received on their DIBELS Accuracy post assessment. The majority of students also made improvements on their retell ability based on the DIBELS post assessment whereas only two students did not improve their score. On the post assessment, four students scored at benchmark, seven students scored below benchmark, and four students scored well below benchmark. Figure 3 shows a comparison of the students' scores on their DIBELS Retell pre-assessment compared to the scores they received on their DIBELS Retell post assessment.

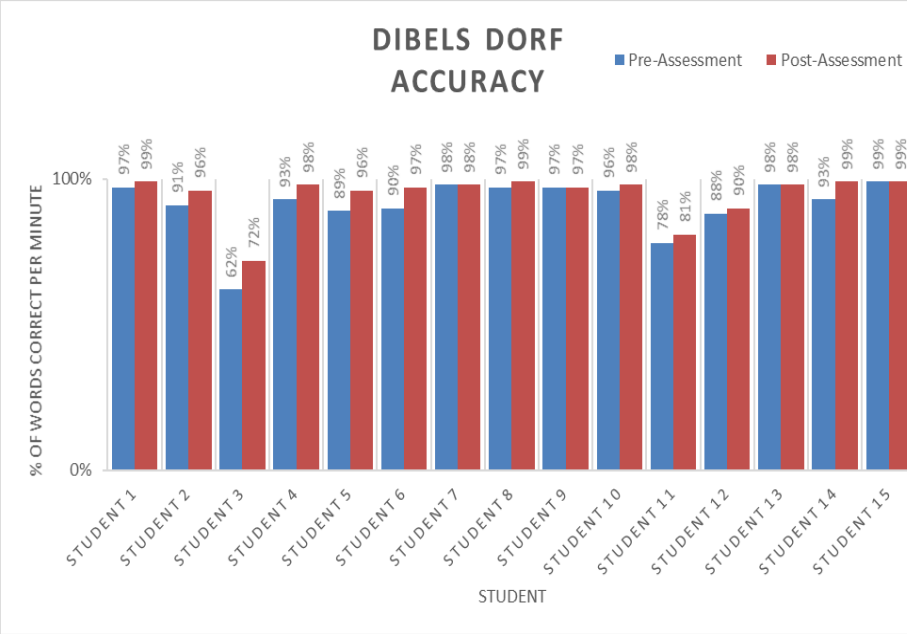


Figure 2: The DIBELS ORF Accuracy graph compares the students' DIBELS accuracy preassessment scores to their DIBELS accuracy post assessment scores.

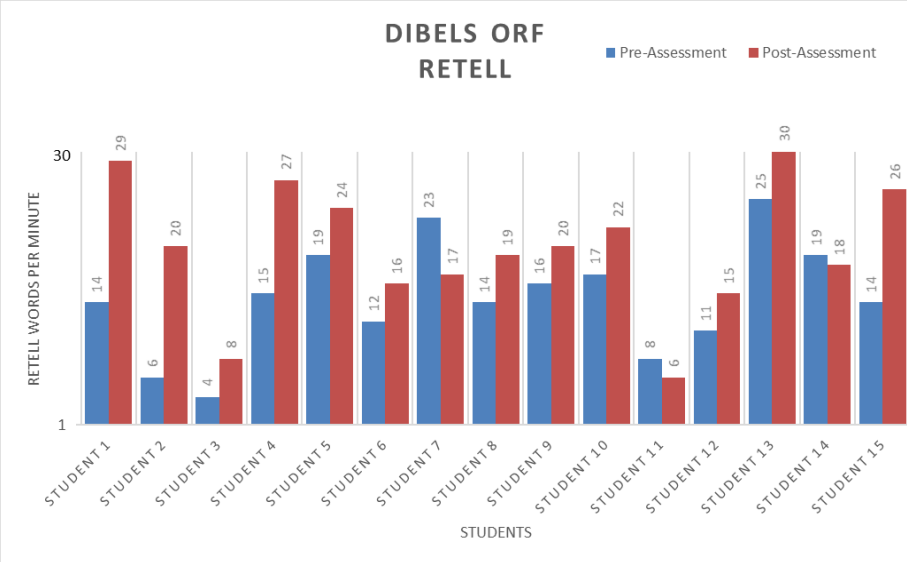


Figure 3: The DIBELS ORF Retell graph compares the students' DIBELS retell preassessment scores to their DIBELS retell post assessment scores.

Through daily observations, the teacher was also able to distinguish that students were indeed improving in their reading fluency and retell abilities. It was evident throughout the day-to-day routine, that students were becoming more capable of reading appropriately, and as students were noticing their success, there was an increase in motivation among these students. The students in this classroom would be excited each day about reading their scripts and began to really enjoy helping each other distinguish whether their reading was up to par or not. This excitement really seemed to help students want to get better, so they could be the ones that was acting like the teacher, helping students in need. The teacher tried to model and would specifically instruct students on how the reading should be read and how to give feedback to their peers. This is something that takes a lot of teacher modeling and requires the teacher to constantly be talking and correcting students as well as praising them, while working alongside

Commented [KAH14]: Who were

Commented [KAH15]: This is some really good qualitative data to include. My only suggestion would be to include 1-2 specific examples of something the students said or what the increase in motivation specifically looked like.

Commented [KAH16]: What specific feedback and praise did you provide the students? Provide 2-3 examples.

them to learn these things. Although some students still did not meet benchmark, the teacher was able to observe small improvements in all students throughout the classroom. Although these students still have work to do in the area of fluency and retell, these improvements were great to see as students began their way to becoming better readers. Throughout these observations and noted student improvements, it is the belief of the teacher that continued improvements would be made if Readers Theater was continued throughout this classroom.

Limitations

Throughout the implementation of this action research project, there were a couple of things that are believed to have inhibited the results of these students' reading fluency, accuracy, and retell ability. Although most of the class made gains, the two to three students who failed to make progress missed an average of two to four days throughout this project. This could have been a factor that resulted in these students failing to improve in their reading skills. These same students have missed several more days as well throughout the school year which is a potential factor in the reason these students are behind in their reading progress. Another factor that caused issues during this project was the fact that the teacher had to teach her original content along with her Readers Theater implementation. It is believed that the results may have been increased more, had she been able to only focus on the Readers Theater implementation. Since this took place during the allotted walk to read block, the teacher had no additional time to spend on this after the reading block was over each day. This meant that the teacher had to squeeze regular content in first and then work on Readers Theater afterwards. Although all the lessons were taught, and they did correlate with the expected content, it possibly could have benefitted students to have had the opportunity to have had more time to just focus on the Readers Theater and not have to spend any time on other things.

Commented [KAH17]: Your Analysis/Findings section was very thorough and well written! I appreciate that you included both quantitative and qualitative data. The only suggestion I have for your analysis section is to talk about growth, maintenance, or regression in terms of specific students. You provide a lot of information about the class as a whole, but not really at the individual student level. So, for example, how specific children progressed using Readers Theater. You mention that a couple of kids maintained their accuracy scores, for example. Why do you think this was? Was there something specific about these children's learning styles that made your intervention less effective?

Commented [KAH18]: Should this be capitalized? I think it was at the beginning of your paper.

Commented [KAH19]: This is a little awkward with two "have had's" back to back.

Commented [KAH20]: Your limitations make perfect sense! I wonder if the content you provide during your typical "Walk to Read" blocks is based on evidence-based practices. So often, I hear from teachers that they are provided with curricula from the district without any (or much) evidence that it is evidence- or research-based. If what you're using currently isn't, I wonder if you would feel comfortable talking to your principal or your curriculum team about the benefits of using evidence-based tools.

Discussion

Through the implementation of the Readers Theater intervention, it was determined that it had an overall positive effect on most students throughout this classroom. For the future, it is believed that it would be beneficial to continue the use of this Readers Theater intervention. With the love and motivation that these students had for this intervention, it is believed that it could be used to continue these students' growth in reading fluency, accuracy, and retell. In doing this research, it helped establish a new teaching practice among this classroom that was beneficial for teacher and students. Other teachers and educators may find the information found in this study beneficial as they implement the Readers Theater intervention among their own classrooms. In the continuation of this intervention, the teacher should ensure not to overuse Readers Theater, but use it as tool to work along side what is being taught. Since this was a new and exciting activity for students, the teacher needs to make sure that students do not get burned out, but keep it exciting and fun for them throughout each Readers Theater lesson. Throughout this entire action research process, the researcher learned how beneficial it can be to research and find new interventions, which can be helpful, motivating, and inspiring for students to use as they work on the improvement of their reading skills.

Commented [KAH21]: Absolutely!!!

Commented [KAH22]: One word

Implication for Future Research

Since the time allotted for the implementation of this intervention was very brief, it could be beneficial for the researcher to continue to gather data for analysis to track the future progress or lack thereof from the students' continued use of Readers Theater. This could help determine if the use of Readers Theater would be beneficial for students over a long period of time. The researcher could also benefit greatly from researching other interventions or other ways to use this Readers Theater intervention that may be useful as these below level students continue to

Commented [KAH23]: hyphenate

work on improving their reading skills. It is very important for teachers to research to find the best practices and interventions that will help the students throughout their classroom. Since each student is different, and each year teachers get a new group of students, the continual efforts to find the best practices should be at the forefront of the minds of all teachers. Through research, teachers can find interventions that have worked for others, can implement them in their own classroom, and through data collection and analysis, can determine the effectiveness of its use throughout the students in their classroom. If a teacher's number one goal is to meet the needs of every students, then research, implementation, data collection and analysis are all needed in order to find the best possible interventions to implement throughout any classroom. What works this year may not work the following year, so it is important to keep looking, researching, and experimenting in order to strive to help every student in need.

Misty, this is an extremely strong paper! You should be very proud of your efforts. I'm so glad that you found Readers Theater to be effective for your students and that you recognize the importance of implementing evidence-based interventions. Your reflections on the process were very insightful. Excellent job!

Commented [KAH24]: Yes!!!!!

Commented [KAH25]: Could you explain this to my undergrads please?

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Commented [KAH26]: Delete "Counsel for." The name of the journal is Exceptional Children. That's all you need.

Commented [KAH27]: I don't think this should be capitalized unless it's a proper noun.

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Commented [KAH28]: spacing

Fall 2018

Grade 14 out of 15

Effect on Student Learning	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Description & Intentionality of the Assessment	Partial Marks The pre- and post-assessments are described in the methodology section. Pre- and post-assessment plans are implicitly connected to the standards. 1 / 2 pts
Analysis of student performance and patterns of learning	Full Marks Analysis focuses on both quantitative (percent, mode/median/ mean, pass/fail rates) and qualitative data (student work samples). The analysis discusses patterns of learning among the whole class and individuals. 3 / 3 pts
Planning Instructional Next Steps	Full Marks A reflection is included with next steps clearly aimed to support specific student needs (individual AND groups) 2 / 2 pts
Student Data Graphic	Full Marks The graphic represents the data accurately, is labeled/titled, and well organized. The graphic is referenced in the reflection to support a claim about student learning. 2 / 2 pts
Student Samples and Candidate Feedback	Full Marks Paper cites specific examples of student work and what feedback was given. 2 / 2 pts

Effect on Student Learning	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Analysis of Teaching: Planning and Preparation	Full Marks Includes detailed and thoughtful modifications/recommendations of current instruction for future application in planning and preparation as related to instructional objectives or standards. 2 / 2 pts
Analysis of Student Learning	Full Marks There is a strong review of data documented by a chart or graph of learning results in the reflection as related to instructional objectives and standards. 2 / 2 pts
Total Points: 14	

Fall 2018

Grade 10 out of 15

Effect on Student Learning	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Description & Intentionality of the Assessment	Partial Marks The pre- and post-assessments are described in the methodology section. Pre- and post-assessment plans are implicitly connected to the standards. 1 / 2 pts
Analysis of student performance and patterns of learning	No details 1.5 / 3 pts
Planning Instructional Next Steps	Full Marks A reflection is included with next steps clearly aimed to support specific student needs (individual AND groups) 2 / 2 pts

Effect on Student Learning	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Student Data Graphic	Partial Marks The graphic represents the data accurately, is labeled/titled, and well organized. 1 / 2 pts
Student Samples and Candidate Feedback	Partial Marks Paper gives general comments regarding student work and what feedback was given. 1.5 / 2 pts
Analysis of Teaching: Planning and Preparation	Full Marks Includes detailed and thoughtful modifications/recommendations of current instruction for future application in planning and preparation as related to instructional objectives or standards. 2 / 2 pts

Effect on Student Learning	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Analysis of Student Learning	Partial Marks There is a review of data of learning results as related to instructional objectives and standards. 1 / 2 pts
Total Points: 10	

Fall 2018

Grade out of 85

Action Research Report	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Introduction to the Problem	Provided thorough and logical explanation of the problem. Appropriate data is provided to support the need for intervention. 15 / 15 pts
Research Question and Literature Review	Provided clearly articulated and appropriate research questions with an intervention connected to clearly discussed literature. 15 / 15 pts
Methodology 1: Participants, Environment, Materials	No details 14 / 15 pts
Methodology 2: Procedures	No details 13 / 15 pts
Analysis and Findings (with limitations) view longer description	See Effect on Student Learning Rubric 0 / 0 pts
Discussion and Implications	Answered the questions clearly with a clear understanding of the impact of action research in the classroom. 15 / 15 pts

Action Research Report	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Grammar and Mechanics	Grammar and mechanics skills exhibited are exceptional with minimal errors (less than 3). 5 / 5 pts
APA Styling	APA Styling is consistently correct within the text and in the references (minimal errors, less than 2). 5 / 5 pts
Total Points: 82	

Fall 2018

Grade 62 out of 85

Action Research Report	
Criteria	**Ratings**
Introduction to the Problem	No details 12 / 15 pts
Research Question and Literature Review	No details 12 / 15 pts
Methodology 1: Participants, Environment, Materials	No details 13 / 15 pts
Methodology 2: Procedures	No details 4 / 15 pts
Analysis and Findings (with limitations) view longer description	See Effect on Student Learning Rubric 0 / 0 pts
Discussion and Implications	No details 13 / 15 pts
Grammar and Mechanics	No details 3 / 5 pts

Action Research Report	
Criteria	**Ratings**
APA Styling	APA Styling is consistently correct within the text and in the references (minimal errors, less than 2). 5 / 5 pts
Total Points: 62	

Impacting Off-Task Behaviors

Alex Clark

ED690-01

9/15/2018

When working with students with disabilities, off-task behavior and engagement in instruction is often a critical dilemma for classroom and special education teachers. Hoff and Ervin (2013) explain, "Students who exhibit disruptive behaviors in the classroom are at increased risk for academic deficits, absenteeism, school dropout, and delinquency" (p.151). Moreover, managing these behaviors is often difficult for teachers in a way that satisfies the needs of all students in the classroom. Off-tasks behaviors can include talking while the teacher is talking, making noises during teacher instruction, students leaving their seat, and not completing work in a timely matter. However, it is often problematic to find one solution to alleviate all the off-task behaviors that occur within the classroom.

To effectively manage behavior, a concrete behavior system needs to be in place to support the on-task behavior of students in the classroom. Godwin et al. (2016) explains:

> "While eliminating all off-task behavior is not a realistic expectation, reducing rates of off-task behavior is an important goal given the challenges that off-task behavior causes for classroom management as well as the potential implications of off-task behavior on academic achievement" (p.12).

This system needs to support the needs of all students in the classroom to effectively address off-task behaviors and impact the amount of off-task behaviors taking place in the classroom. Research explains that students at all ages and cognitive levels can effectively learn to implement and profit from self-monitoring (Lafferty, 2010). Without a concrete system in place for teachers that works for all students, it can become difficult to rely solely on verbal reprimands and manage the off-task behaviors in their classroom. This is a problem for teachers with demanding school schedules and a curriculum that must be followed.

Commented [DS1]: Broad problem articulated

In the classroom which is the focus of this research, there is a high rate of off-task behavior. Behaviors such as, talking during instruction, not paying attention to teacher instruction, and making noises during teacher instruction have been observed. This classroom is a resource classroom with students of all age ranges and disabilities, ranging from learning disabilities to autism. There are students exhibiting these off-task behaviors in all ages of the pull-out groups throughout the school day. These behaviors affect classroom instructional time and the student's ability to learn the content being taught in a short amount of classroom time.

Commented [DS2]: Specific problem detailed

Literature Review

Off-Task Behavior

Off-task behaviors are present in most classrooms, and effect classroom instruction when students continue to exhibit these problem behaviors. Godwin et al. (2016) explains, "Loss of instructional time due to off-task behavior is a well-established problem in educational settings, recognized by researchers" (p. 128). However, how to best deal with off-task behaviors is still a debatable subject among teachers and researchers. Holifield, Goodman, Hazelkorn, & Heflin (2016) explain, "Of the many reasons that have been postulated for school failure, the inability to attend to task seems to be a major factor for students with and without special needs" (p.230). The need for attention in the classroom is a problem that can be solved through a concrete behavior system to encourage positive student behavior and academic achievement.

Self-Monitoring

While carrying out research on the problem of off-task behavior in the classroom and strategies to alleviate this problem, self-monitoring behavior strategies consistently appeared. Self-monitoring behavior systems rely on students to monitor their individual behavior during classroom instruction to decide whether they are effectively engaged in instruction. McConnell

(1999) explains, “Self-management is a cognitive-based intervention that teaches students to change and manage their own behavior” (p.16). The increase of student engagement in monitoring their own behavior can cause an awareness of their off—task behavior, which in turn can lead to a decrease in off-task behavior. “Self-monitoring encourages students to be conscious of their own specific behaviors, observe whether they occur, keep track of the occurrences of the behaviors, and reward themselves for improvements; this enables and encourages them to change those behaviors” (Ganz, 2008, p. 39). The importance of students understanding their behavior can be a key strategy in students changing this behavior and understanding it. Cavalier, Ferretti, & Hodges (1997) conclude, “The training of self-management skills holds the promise of reducing students' dependence on others and ensuring greater control over their own learning” (p. 168). Controlling their own learning and sense of independence can be a crucial element for students’ commitment to their behavior and learning.

What Works for Students and Teachers

Another important aspect to consider when choosing a behavior system is the effectiveness of the intervention for students of all age ranges and all disabilities. Self-monitoring has been successful with students with an assortment of exceptionalities including learning disabilities, development delays, autism, and other health impairments (Ganz, 2008). Another important factor is how teachers can incorporate this behavior strategy seamlessly into their classroom with minimal interruption to instructional time. Amato-Zech Hoff, & Doepke (2006) clarify, “These are important factors to consider, as interventions requiring low amounts of teacher time are likely to lead to increased follow-through and higher rates of treatment acceptability compared to time-intensive interventions or interventions that take away from classroom instruction” (p.218). A self-monitoring system relies heavily on student engagement

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of monitoring their own behavior. Research has found self-monitoring displayed a decrease in off-task behavior with minimal teacher participation (Dalton, Martella, & Marchand-Martella, 1999). A lack of teacher involvement can be a component that encourages teachers to implement a self-monitoring system to save teacher instructional time and impact off-task behavior.

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Lack of Engagement

Effective behavior management can be key to providing effective classroom instruction. Instruction is crucial to student success; however, a lack of engagement in this instruction is detrimental to student achievement. Rock (2005) explains, "The longer students remain disengaged from tasks, the more likely their academic performances will suffer, resulting in undesirable outcomes" (p.3). These undesirable outcomes can lead to a lack of student motivation and student participation in the classroom. However, by incorporating a self-monitoring system, students will be held responsible for staying engaged not only with the curriculum, but with their individual behavior. McConnell (1999) explains, "Students are active participants in the change process as they learn step-by-step procedures to monitor, control, and evaluate their behavior" (p.16). Implementing self-monitoring can help students become more aware and intensify their yearning to achieve (Prater, Joy, Chilman, Temple, & Miller, 1991). When students' desire to achieve is increased, their success in the classroom will also increase.

The results in these studies support that self-monitoring can make an impact on student behavior in the classroom. This intervention could be implemented in the classroom using an easy self-monitoring strategy for students to assess their behavior daily as they participate in classroom instruction, such as a self-monitoring recording card and graphing. Rafferty (2010) explains, "Although having a student graph his or her behavior is not a necessary component of self-monitoring, research results have suggested that a combination of having a student record

and graph his or her behavior may be more effective than using recording alone" (p. 52). Students overseeing their behavior will become more aware with a concrete system, which may improve their off-task behaviors. Rafferty also concludes "Students who effectively use self-regulatory processes or self-management skills tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy, motivation, and school achievement" (p.52). Therefore, the research will explore: How can a class-wide self-monitoring behavior system impact off-task behavior in a multi-age resource room?

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Methodology

Setting

Parkville* Elementary is a Title 1 school in Northern AL that services students in grades pre-k through 4th grade. Including pre-k classrooms, Parkville* services around 650 students. The classroom setting for this research is a multi-aged resource room where students are pulled out of their regular classroom to receive special education services. This environment includes organized flexible seating and a spacious classroom where students can come to work towards their personal goals. Within the classroom, there are multiple areas including a small group table situated in front of a smartboard. This is where small group instruction occurs in the classroom. There is also a book nook for students to read independently, and multiple tables for students to complete independent work.

Participants

The participants in this study are all students who attend class in this resource classroom throughout the school day and vary in age range from kindergarten to 4th grade. Out of these 21 students, 19 are Caucasian and two are African American. The demographics of this classroom are students who have been classified under the special education categories of specific learning

disability (SLD), other health impairment (OHI), developmental delay (DD), hearing impairment (HI), and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). These students contain approximately 16 male students and five female students. These students visit the resource room in their different grade levels for intervention services in reading and math based on their age and necessary instruction delineated by their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). These groups include a 2nd grade reading group, 4th grade reading group, 1st grade reading group, 1st grade math group, and a 2nd grade math group.

Materials

The materials needed for this research will be individual student self-monitoring card, dry-erase marker, individual student graphs, and frequency data recording sheets. In order to measure off-task behavior in the classroom, frequency data will be collected on the amount of student off-task behavior seen in the classroom in each class period. Frequency data can be measured by marking how often a behavior happens during a specified period of time. Each class will have their own teacher-made frequency monitoring sheet that will show the amount of off-task behavior per day. Off-task behavior will be considered talking when the teacher is talking, disrupting the class by making noises, or leaving their seat, and not completing work when asked. This will be considered the baseline data collection for the first five days of the intervention. Frequency data collection will also be used to collect data after the implementation of the intervention. Each student in the classroom will have an individual teacher-made self-recording card that will be laminated for the student to self-monitor by marking when they exhibit the off-task behavior. The students will use dry-erase markers to mark on their cards, so the lamination will allow the same cards to be used every day.

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Commented [DS6]: Are these teacher made? Give descriptions of the card, graphs, and sheets if applicable.

Commented [DS7]: Is this the frequency data recording sheet? If so, keep terms the same. Is the teacher filling this out or each individual student?

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When students exhibit the off-task behavior they will not be provided with a verbal reprimand but prompted to put a mark on their self-monitoring card through a visual cue or physical prompt. McConnell (1999) explains, "Cueing systems can be an audio beep, a visual cue, or a physical, or verbal prompt to remind the student when to record" (p.16). Students will also have an individual chart to graph each day how many times they exhibited the behavior. This way students can visualize how often they are demonstrating off-task behaviors in the classroom. Teachers should implement a graphing component to help foster a growth of self-regulation methods (Lafferty, 2010). Other researchers will view and validate the teacher made materials to ensure their face validity. These tools will allow student learning to be analyzed by measuring the frequency of each student's behavior in the classroom. This way not only will class-wide data be collected by the teacher, but also individualized data on each student in the classroom.

The first step in the research will be to collect baseline data through a frequency chart of each classrooms off-task behavior. This data will be collected for the first five days of the research for each class by the teacher. The next step will be to introduce students to the self-monitoring system and operationally define what off-task behavior is in the classroom. This will ensure that students understand and are aware of what off-task behaviors need to be marked on their self-monitoring cards. Students will be given examples of the off-task behavior and a demonstration of how to mark their cards and use their graphs at the end of class. This will take two days to ensure student competency with the intervention. After students have learned how to successfully implement the system on day seven, the next step will be to collect intervention frequency data to determine the effectiveness of the chosen intervention for the remaining eight days of the research. After the baseline and intervention data is collected it will be possible to see

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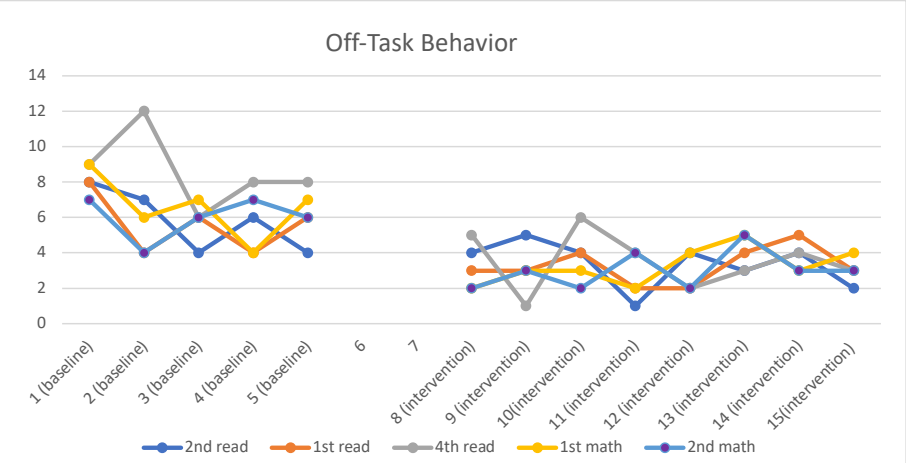
Commented [DS13]: Maybe detail how this will be accomplished, "Each of the first five days the teacher will keep a chart with her to mark all occurrences of off-task behavior in each class period. Marks will be tallied each day for each class to gain an understanding of how much off-task behavior is occurring…"

Commented [DS14]: Is this a continuation of the children self-collecting data or is the teacher collecting class wide post data to compare to the baseline data?

Reading into the analysis section, I see this is the student self-collected data?

if the self-monitoring system made an impact on student off-task behavior in the classroom. Reviewing that data will also help to demonstrate the class's overall off-task behavior, and the contribution that individual students made to the class's off-task behavior frequency count.

Analysis and Findings



Following the intervention, there was an impact on class-wide behavior. The graph helps to demonstrate the decline in class-wide off task behavior as the intervention was implemented. All classes showed a decrease in daily off-task behavior during their time in the resource room. Students were more aware of their behavior due to giving themselves a mark on their own card when they were exhibiting the off-task behaviors that were discussed. Students were also offered an incentive to further their desire to stay on task. At the end of the week, if the student had received less than five marks they were able to get a reward from the classroom treasure box. This further increased student on-task behavior and their aspiration to not get any more marks if they were getting close to the five mark limit.

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Commented [DS18]: This actually introduces a new intervention into the research and invalidates your results. I'm not counting off, but realize that now you don't know which impacted the behavior, the self-monitoring or the goal of receiving a tangible "reward." That's why we required only one intervention be selected for the research question.

This self-monitoring behavior system was especially useful for the students who were the sources of the most significant off-task behavior in the classroom. This can be shown through the significant decrease in off-task marks. Each class seemed to have at least one outlier who caused the most classroom disruptions. However, visually being able to see their behavior marks and having to monitor their self independently showed a positive change in the students. Midway through implementation one of the most disruptive students in the 4th grade class realized she was not on task and gave herself a mark on the card. Therefore, no outside reinforcement was needed for monitoring her behavior. Also, being able to graph their behavior and see decreases from day to day showed students that they could improve on their behavior. This also motivated them to try and get less marks from the day before.

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Throughout the intervention, students were encouraged to stay on task so they could receive a reward at the end of the week for their behavior. Students were also applauded when they received very few marks or no marks throughout a class period because they were engaged and focused with the content. Having their card in front of them served as a constant reminder that they were in charge of their behavior and if they received a mark. It also decreased the amount of verbal reprimands needed because students understood that a certain look or gentle touch meant that they were off-task and needed to give themselves a mark.

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Limitations

Limitations of this study include student attendance and time needed to implement the intervention effectively while taking away from classroom instruction. Student attendance had an effect on the amount of frequency data collected. In the classroom for this research, the class sizes were much smaller than a typical classroom. When more than one or two students were absent, data was affected. Therefore on same days of data collection, it may have looked like

there was less off-task behavior, but there was simply less students for that day. Also, students may have been pulled from the classroom to attend another specialized class, such as speech or occupational therapy (OT). Another limitation was the amount of time it took to implement the data collection along with allowing students to graph their results daily. Graphing was recommended by research to increase student accountability. However, this took time out of classroom instruction. In future studies, graphing once a week rather than every day would be recommended.

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Discussion

As a new teacher, learning to grow and evolve with the students in the classroom is a part of the job that I truly enjoy. It is important to for me to be current in my knowledge and always willing to try new ideas for the benefit of the students. Action research allows teachers to implement different intervention for their students and truly see the effectiveness of that intervention. Research from different sources can allow teachers to grow and help students in ways they had not previously thought of, which was the case for me while completing this action research. I have learned that evidence-based practices are a necessity to truly making a difference in the classroom and action research allowed me to see those differences in my classroom.

Positive results from this study can allow students to become more engaged in the content they are learning and more independent in the school environment. This also allows students to take ownership of their own learning and behavior. Based on the analysis and findings, the intervention in this study should continue to allow students more time to show even less off-task behavior in the classroom. Less off-task behavior from my students can result in more growth and learning from students who already experience many learning difficulties. Students monitoring their own behavior also caused less stress in the classroom on my part. The potential

negative results could be that self-monitoring cards do not continue to show decrease in off-task behavior for some or all of my students. If this was the case, I would complete more action research to find a different behavior strategy for the class as a whole, or an individual student the intervention may cease to work for.

Implications for Future Research

In the future, I would like to continue to complete action research to find the best systems to help my students with their behavior in the classroom. Completing this action research on a behavior system I had not previously thought of made me realize all the potential there is in completing new action research. Although this intervention was successful in impacting my classroom off-task behavior, I do not want to become complacent if this system does not work for future students. However, I would like to continue to rely on action research as a tool to help me grow and learn with my students. This action research has allowed me think outside of my usual realm of thinking and try something new for my students. It also allowed me to help my students grow in their independence, which is so crucial for students with disabilities. Researching this evidence-based practice has allowed me to make a positive change in my classroom that accounted for not only student growth, but my growth as well.

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Action Research Final Report

University of Alabama in Huntsville

Jessica Baker

ED 690

November 18, 2018

Learning to read is a challenging process for many young children. It is a complicated chain of events that involves more than simply decoding words on a page (Rubin, 2016).

Reading is a multi-skilled task that requires practice taught cross curriculum in order for proficiency to be obtained. This can be exceptionally challenging for students with learning disabilities (LDs), students of low socioeconomic status, students of English as a Second Language (ELs), or a combination of potential factors mentioned (Barr, Eslami, & Joshi, 2012). There is an immediate danger for said students falling behind in their reading proficiency; without early and consistent intervention executed, they will only continue to slip further behind in reading comprehension. Social growth and development will also be affected by this lack of understanding caused by multiple factors.

The student in question is an EL student of Hispanic descent and a first generation natural-born citizen of the United States. He has a generally quiet disposition; however, there are signs of academic problems in his reading fluency ability. This is shown through his reluctance to answer questions both written and verbally, especially amongst his peers. The student causes no behavioral issues in the classroom, only shows signs of an academic struggle. This struggle is highlighted by the imbedded desire to maintain family pride through his success. Through contact with other teachers of Hispanic students, we all came to the conclusion that the Hispanic families depend heavily upon the male children to do well in school. This family pride means that they will be able to help provide for the whole family through being highly educated. When said success is stunted by such factors as stated above, he is affected multilaterally. He feels he has failed the family and his teacher. This in turn causes him to retreat further within his shell.

This student was initially observed during summer tutoring sessions within a small group setting of EL students. When reading and/or answering questions verbally, there was obvious reluctance in trying; when the student would try, the end result required assistance, whether it be one word or a small paragraph. He wanted to please both the family and the teacher; this was in

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conflict with his ability to comprehend presented material. The material presented to said student was centered around the use of both everyday vocabulary and academic vocabulary. Vocabulary and reading material used was scaffolded using WIDA's EL-1 (Entering) through EL-5 (Bridging) on the student's grade level. Pronunciation was considerably low indicating a mounting issue among the decoding of terms using connotative skills. This commonality is due to the prior knowledge not being obtained at young ages like his non-Hispanic counterparts did. This student, even though a natural born citizen, did not obtain this concept due to his being in a non-English speaking home. Thus, the language barrier did not allow for the concept of a word's connotative meaning to be utilized. Is it strictly a culture and language barrier? If this is the case, prior knowledge could be established through an ongoing process. However, if other reasons have kept him from advancing in reading comprehension, those must be addressed. Regardless, there is an apparent struggle with the decoding of words indicating that interventions must be utilized. This can specifically be seen in areas such as vocabulary quizzes and picture to definition through Picture Word Inductive Model (PWIM) usage. There have been seven quizzes with accomodations made, and he has not made above a 60 on any of them. When PWIM pictures and definitions are utilized, he does a small percentage better. However, he is reluctant to verbally express opinions and ideas about said vocab for fear of further failure.

Commented [DLS7]: Awkward--reword

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Literature Review

Phonetic clues are often used as interventional techniques when many students have a feeling of failure. As children attain alphabetic knowledge, Willis (2008) explains, they learn phoneme-to-grapheme correspondence and use phonetic cues to decode words, such as finding patterns inside words in order to recognize them when seen again. For example, the color word

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green has double ‘e’s in it and begins with the short ‘g’ sound. It is possible to pull from a variety of visual activities to emphasize patterns in word families, such as: spelling patterns, prefixes, suffixes, and word roots (Willis, 2008). Students recognize the repeating patterns in words, (hibernate, decorate, collaborate), make these patterns more obvious by emphasizing the repeating parts of the words with different colors on a whiteboard, by highlighting, etc. If this strategy is prefered and implemented, sound [auditory learning] patterns can be emphasized by voice pitch, slow speed, robotic speech, or volume emphasis (Willis, 2008).

Another reading intervention strategy suggested by Robertson (n.d.) is the use of hands-on activities to help teach letter-sound relationships; this can include using manipulatives such as counters, sound boxes, magnetic letters, or Scrabble tiles. Students can build word sorts ranging from primary level all the way through secondary level. This strategy could even be implemented with the next intervention to be discussed.

A next strategy that can been implemented to help students with decoding problems is the picture word inductive model (PWIM). The PWIM “involves pictures, memory, and vocabulary acquisition” (Li, 2011, p. 7). While the PWIM has uses from primary through secondary school, Calhoun (1999) explains, this intervention focuses on using it with students at the emergent and beginning stages of literacy. “The PWIM is an inquiry-oriented language arts strategy that uses pictures containing familiar objects and actions to elicit words from children’s listening and speaking vocabularies,” (Calhoun, 1999, p. 21). To implement a PWIM, the students study a picture chosen by the teacher; then, they begin to point out what they see in the picture for the teacher to label. Next, the students read and review the words recorded down by the teacher, (the teacher may need to model each word for students). As the intervention strategy progresses on in the days and weeks to come, the same pictures may be shown again along with the words that

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have been pre-recorded. For this purpose, the student can then develop titles, sentences, and paragraphs about the picture they examined. Calhoun (1999) mentions that the full sequence of a PWIM unit may take three days or two months: The length of units and number of lessons within a unit depend on the richness of the picture, the age and language development of the student. The picture word chart is the basic material for the PWIM lessons and units. The picture word chart comprises the picture and the words that are identified or "shaken out" of the picture by the students (Calhoun, 1999, p. 23). PWIM can be modified for whole group instruction, small groups, and one-on-one individual intervention to lead students into exploring words and adding words to their sight-reading and writing using posters.. " (McDonald, 2004, p. 1). The posters provide a visual "dictionary" for the students to reference (for Clarification of the word meaning) made up of authentic, relevant words that have been chosen by the students themselves. After looking through the different strategies presented, the research question that will guide this study is, what impact will PWIMs have on a 6th grade EL student and his decoding skills?

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Methodology

The researched based strategy utilized was PWIMs. The PWIM uses an inductive process (in which students seek patterns and use them to identify their broader meanings and significance), as opposed to a deductive process (where meanings or rules are given, and students have to then apply them)" (Ferlazzo, 2014). It utilizes three basic ideas: sight words utilized to build vocabulary as needed with the implementation of phonics and spelling generalizations, the building and/or obtaining of confidence in the student's ability to improve comprehension, and

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instilling the desire to inquire and obtain knowledge and skills to advance fully in his or her reading, writing, and participation in the process.

Participants

The participant in this action research was a 6th grade Hispanic 12 year old male. He is a first generation native born citizen. He is a loveable child with a natural inclination to please teachers. He is well-liked by his fellow classmates and has a great sense of humor. However, his embedded language barrier, due to the home being non-English speaking, is preventing his reading and reading comprehension to flourish.

Setting

The intervention occurred three times weekly during said student's enrichment period - 9:00 to 9:50 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. This class is composed of 6th grade general education, special education, gifted, and EL students. There were other students in the classroom; however, he received one-on-one intervention time. This general education classroom is organized into carousels that are designed to utilize each students' natural abilities and/or corresponding attributes. During this time, he would sit at the table adjoining my desk. The other students would be within assigned groups working on staton activities.

Materials

Research-based articles were read by the teacher to create a background of existing formative and summative assessments to be used. Teacher made vocabulary tests provided through the A+ Blue Ribbon Curriculum with rubrics were used to assess if said student was progressing with both general and academic vocabulary received during intervention time.

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Moved up [1]: This general education classroom is organized into carousels that are designed to utilize each students' natural abilities and/or corresponding attributes.

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Intervention began with Dolch sight words for pre-K through 6th grade levels. PWIM language experimentation with lined paper for recording was employed. Pictures of animals and their different ecosystems were used - beginning on a 4th grade level.. This, combined with conversations with fellow teachers of said student, aided in the adjustments needed throughout his intervention.

Procedures

Upon beginning the intervention, said student was introduced to the techniques during the three day a week enrichment period. On day one, a pre-assessment test was given. The test included the Dolch list to use as a baseline of information.

It showed that the student was on a 4th grade vocabulary level socially while academically he was on a 3rd grade level. The time with the student was now divided into three increments of reading levels and the techniques that were used. The first step was at the 3rd grade level and involved the use of the PWIM strategy in which picture and word associations helped to bridge the gap between social and academic vocabulary. We began with simple animal pictures being matched with a picture of its ecosystem. Once this occured, the next step involved moving toward the acquisition of 4th grade level vocabulary This time the strategy evolved to include verbalization and/or identification of each animal with its correct ecosystem. As this took place, the levels of comprehension through verbal justification by the student rose to include combining vocabulary, definition, and correct sentence usage. The final stage of this process centered around moving toward the upper level of 4th grade social vocabulary and the lower end of 4th grade for academic vocabulary. Reasements, reteaching, and reevaluation of performances by the student were utilized weekly and adjustments made as needed. This harmonization came

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in the form of how the PWIM models were used and adjustend. The analyses were measured through the readministration of Dolch sight words.

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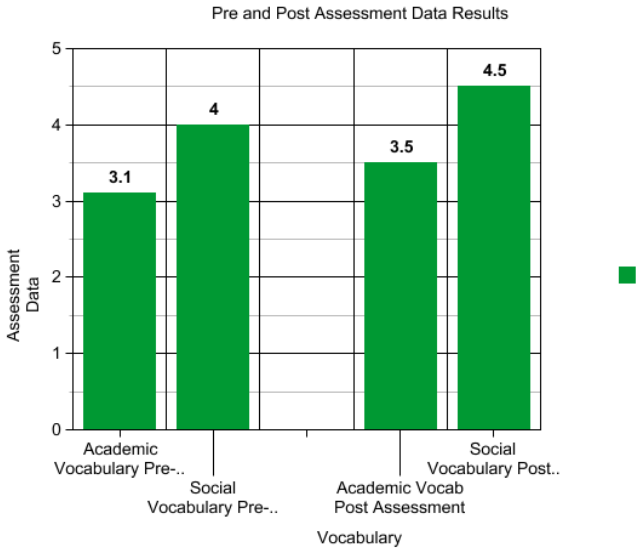
Analysis and Findings



The above chart lists the comparative findings of the pre and post assessments given to said student during his enrichment period. As can be seen, his academic vocabulary in both the pre and post assessments indicate a disconnect between academic and social vocabulary. While the implementation of the Frayer model, PWIM strategies, and tiered progressive interventions increased both vocabulary fields, there still appears to be a gap between the two categories. While this intervention would be deemed a success, there is much more that needs to be done to raise the student's reading and decoding of grade level vocabulary; its application must be intertwined with real world based exemplars for the needed progression of vocabulary acquisitions to occur. The student seemed to enjoy the success with the initial activity of

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matching animals with ecosystems. However, the moving to the next level that included using the definition correctly in a sentence. This is where he started to build back up the wall.

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Commented [DLS38]: How did this affect his reading fluency/decoding? Wasn't that the identified problem?

Limitations

As with any experimentation or strategic implementations, limitations will occur. In the case of said student, the limitations included location and time of the intervention. It took place only 3 days weekly in a class with 25 to 30 other students. The crowded space limited the time and individual attention he was able to receive. This, combined with his fear of failing and/or disappointing family and teacher, also impacted his slow progress.

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Discussion

The PWIM strategies have taught me a great deal about scaffolding for ELL students. "It is an integrated reading and writing strategy which respect children's ability to think" (Akhtar, n.d., para. 1). The EL student's ability is present. He just needs a noninvasive atmosphere and time. I can see that my student wants to please both his family and me. This desire needs to be redirectto wanting to do well for himself. Making the adjustments in lessons in accordance with the PWIM strategies, I will be able to tap into the higher level of social vocabulary by approaching the process in a calm and gent manner. " To be more specific, beside lessons, pictures are in the main focus. They might be used as; (1) a stimulus for writing and discussion, (2) an illustration of something being read or talked about, (3) a background to a topic and so on." (Nurani & Rosyada, 2017, p. 25). Nothing is more calming than drawing. What kid doesn't like to draw? That is the fun part of the models used along with the PWIM method, that I will start using with all my students.

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If the these strategies work for my EL student, they should also enhance the acquisition of academic vocabulary for all my other students - regular education and gifted students. The

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only drawback I can foresee would be found in the time allotted for this process. The 3 day per week time frame isn't sufficient when dealing with a student who is two to three grade levels behind his classmates in reading fluency / decoding and vocabulary expansion.

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Implications for Future Research

There is not a single answer to the question of what method works best for all students. This is because our students are not cookies, so why use cookie cutter ideas. To be a teacher, I believe, means to never stop learning. If I am not willing to learn and reach for new and improved methods, I will not be able to instill within my students the need and desire to seek new and different methods and ideas. This project has taught me that I am not perfect, and I do not have all the answers. The answers are there; I need only to research and find them.

Commented [DLS41]: A little more discussion specific to how this project did (or did not) change your view point of instruction and the strategies we choose, how we choose them, was needed.

References

Commented [DLS42]: Glad you got this up to 10 sources

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Improving Number Sense in First Grade Students by Building Mental Images

Ashley FitzGerald
EDU 690
April 18th, 2019

The Common Core State Standards in first grade require students to be fluent to 20 with addition and subtraction facts. According to the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2019) website, the specific standard is CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.1.OA.C.6: Add and subtract within 20, demonstrating fluency for addition and subtraction within 10. In the classroom of study, students did not meet the standard based on the middle of the year assessments. It is the purpose of this research to find strategies to increase fact fluency using manipulatives to build number sense and mental images. Number sense is a person's intuitive understanding of how numbers work. Hornigold (2017) refers to number sense as a child's fluidity and flexibility with numbers. By using manipulatives, students have a tangible way to work with numbers.

The school has undergone great cultural changes due to rezoning efforts mandated by a desegregation order in 2016. The desegregation order dramatically changed the demographics of this school, including an increase in student population. Over the past few years the school's test scores have gone down, several families in the community have transferred their children to private schools, and the overall rating of the school has dropped significantly. The increase in behavior problems resulted in less time on task and decreased instructional time. In this classroom, these changes are apparent. The students are not fluid with facts and time for academic intervention is difficult while behavior problems are a common distraction.

Several important foundations need to be in place before a student can achieve fact fluency with speed and accuracy. Boggan, Harper, and Whitmire (2010) indicate number sense and manipulatives are key factors in mathematical skills even going back to ancient times. Number sense is built with models, manipulatives, and teacher facilitated exploration results in positive math experiences (Way, 2011). By building number sense, the students are able to create a bank of mental images and strategies to use when computing math problems (Sood and

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Mackey, 2014). The more images and strategies students are comfortable and confident applying, the more automatic their computation will be. Through the use of dot images, targeted assessment, and plenty of opportunity to practice, students will increase their fluency in adding and subtracting to 20. Which leads to the action research question of: Can the use of dot pattern images build number sense and improve student addition and subtraction fluency to 20?

Review of the Literature

The experiential learning theory (Dewey, 1938) suggests children learn by doing. Cognitive growth is connected to experiences and providing students opportunities for hands-on learning will construct their own knowledge about a concept. Bruner (1973) emphasizes the stages of representation of learning. Meaning, students grow from a heavy reliance on physical objects to relying less on the physical representation (base-10 blocks, Cuisenaire rods, and connecting cubes). Eventually, students will begin to make conclusions based on pictures and symbols. In support of Dewey and Bruner, Montessori's (1914) work focused on self-directed learning, and incorporating a multi-sensory approach to teaching and learning for students to internalize content. Rosli, Goldsby, and Capraro (2015, p. 1719), describe these theories as, "the foundation for the use of manipulatives in the mathematics classroom." Combining the core of each of these theories, experiences, manipulations, and exploration with learning, leads the reader to believe the use of manipulatives is a successful approach to math instruction.

Manipulatives in mathematics have been essential since ancient times. Boggan et al (2010) explain ancient civilizations used clay counting boards covered in sand to draw or tally quantities. The Romans invented the abacus, and the Mayans used corn kernels on a string. Boggan, Harper, and Whitmire (2010), explain these ancient practices influence teaching and define manipulatives as physical objects which are used as teaching tools. "Kindergarten

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children should have individual counters, whereas upper grade students (third through fifth grade) could use colored wooden rods that represent different numbers. The manipulative must fit the mathematical ability of the child or it is useless," (Boggan, Harper, Whitmire, 2010, p. 3). When used correctly, students can understand the concepts being taught on a deeper level rather than just moving the objects around, and thus can grow from concrete to abstract reasoning. Boggan, Harper, and Whitmire (2010) state using manipulatives is especially useful for teaching low-achievers, students with learning disabilities, and English language learners.

Five components characterize number sense: number meaning, number relationships, number magnitude, operations involving numbers and referents for numbers, and quantities (Way, 2011). According to the NAEP (2017), national test scores indicate students in the United States are not showing significant growth in mathematics (specifically fourth and eighth grade). The data from nationalreportcard.gov (2017) shows only a one point increase from the previous year's score. Sood and Mackey (2015) suggest in order for students to obtain knowledge about the structure of numbers, they need to be able to view them in flexible and creative ways. Sood and Mackey (2014, p. 1) explain, "Students with good number sense develop a quantitative intuition that helps them to solve problems in a flexible manner." Markovits and Sowder (1988) studied an instructional program focusing on mental computation and how it could be enhanced by improving number sense. Markovits and Sowder (1988) explain building number sense can improve a student's higher order thinking skills and ability to mentally compute equations, which would also improve fact fluency.

Way (2011) states number sense can begin forming around the age of two. The majority of people, from preschool to adulthood, are able to form stable mental images revolving around the number five. Likewise the number six is easily recognizable due to the pattern recognized on

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most standard dice (Way, 2011). Having these patterns and mental images allows the brain to compute numbers in groups of a part-part-whole relationship, meaning how numbers can be split into parts and the relationship between the numbers. Such as, in an equation, the inverse, and place values. By building these images and patterns early, no counting or adding is involved and the brain will recognize the dice and see it as two groups of three, equaling six automatically.

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Teachers can use many strategies to promote early number sense and mental math. Way (2011) encourages using manipulatives and moveable objects, such as counters, to start these early number activities. Way (2011) explains that once students are successfully moving objects into groups, dot cards may be introduced. Dot cards are cards with number patterns in dots that look similar to a domino. Teachers can begin by showing various dot cards with the same number of dots, but in different patterns. Ask children to reason and rationalize which groups are easier to remember to encourage critical thinking and create images they can retrieve when presenting with an equation.

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In order to build number sense to improve fact fluency, memorizing facts is a concept that needs to be understood. Memorizing math facts is not quite as simple of a concept as one would believe it to be. Boaler (2015) explains students who are able to memorize facts easily is directly related to a specific region of the brain called the hippocampus. Since all students' brains are unique, a student who does not easily memorize facts, may conclude they are not good at math. This could have a negative effect on a student's academic motivation, causing stress and anxiety when presented with math problems, or timed fluency tests. According to Boaler (2015), mathematics is the leading cause of students' anxiety and fear. "The best way to develop fluency with numbers is to develop number sense and to work with numbers in different ways, not to blindly memorize without number sense," (Boaler, 2015, p. 3). A suggestion includes

number talks to provide students time to talk about numbers and find their own reasoning to a math problem. Another suggestion would be hands-on models or create games and scenarios to make math fun and engaging.

Commented [SL9]: Your literature review flows much better! Good job!

Methodology

Participants

The students are in a first grade class with a young, white, female teacher. The classroom is organized with multiple centers around the room. For example, there is a reading corner, technology corner, even a "cool down" corner of the room. The walls are colorfully decorated with tools and educational strategies for the students to refer to. The majority of the décor in the classroom comes from the district mandated programs, Pinterest, and Teachers Pay Teachers. The classroom demographics are nine male and nine female. There are five black students, 12 white students, one Hispanic student, and one Special Education student.

Setting

Students arrive to the classroom to finish breakfast, begin and complete morning work, then work on Accelerated Reader, or read with a buddy. After morning work, students have physical education daily from 8:20-8:55. Upon returning from PE, students proceed to morning meeting. Morning meeting involves days of the week, calendar, sharing, weather, etc. Next, they have reading, which includes coral reading, think-pair-share, the skill for the day, followed by literacy centers. The students rotate centers each day between writing, iPad time, small group with the teacher, and phonics activities. After reading, students go to lunch, then return for writing. The afternoon consists of a math lesson, math centers, and math small group. The day is concluded with science or social studies, a snack, recess, afternoon meeting, and dismissal.

According to the teacher, they are using Envisions Math Program through Pearson. Science and social studies are rotated and incorporated into other lessons.

Materials

The students will be using manipulatives including dominos, dot image cards, counters, and a large dice. The assessment portion will be a slide show of addition and subtraction facts to twenty and teacher observations. To focus on speed and accuracy together, the slide show will be set to change equations after five seconds. The teaching materials (dot cards, dice, counters) will be used to build the mental images over the course of three weeks. The teacher will make observations based on the lessons and student participation. The researcher will collect data from the slide show assessment and teacher observations to analyze.

Procedures

For Lesson One a pre-assessment was administered using a slide show. The teacher gave the pre-assessment to students one-on-one with 5 seconds to give a response to a slide. Data was collected on a spreadsheet for analysis.

In Lesson Two, the teacher created two small groups based on the pre-assessment. The activity involved dice and counters. The teacher rolled a dice and students created dot patterns using counters to represent numbers 1-6 for the first half of the lesson. Students shared their rationale for their patterns, then did the same thing for numbers 6-10.

Next, in Lesson Three, the teacher created equations using dominos. Students selected dominions and used counters to create a two part equation to represent both sides of the dominos. Student wrote their equations numerically and recorded their answers. This was followed by a group discussion on how to count up or down from certain patterns, such as a five dot pattern.

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In Lesson Four, the teacher began to focus more specifically on building mental images. The teacher used large dot patterns made on 6" by 4" cards. The teacher showed students the large cards with 5-10 dots on it for 5-10 seconds. The students were instructed to memorize the pattern and copy it onto a whiteboard without looking again. After several rounds of various cards, the cards progressed to be dot pattern equation. The card displayed a dot pattern, a + or - sign, and another pattern. For this, students wrote the answer to the equation on the card.

Lessons Five and Six were combined due to illness and absences. The teacher reviewed the previous lesson of copying dot images by memory. The lesson progressed to moving from all dot equations to numerical equations. Then, the lesson concluded with a game of "Domino Addition War." Students each selected one faced down domino. When they flipped the domino over, students added the dots; whoever has the higher number wins the domino and the student with the most at the end of 10 rounds wins. After the game, the teacher allowed students to make up their own equations and share with the group.

In the final instructional lesson (Lesson Seven), the teacher introduced a second game, the "Domino Subtraction Game." This was the same concept as the previous lesson, but with subtraction. Students selected one faced down domino. When they flipped the domino, they must subtract the dots; whoever has the lowest number wins the domino and the student with the most at the end of 10 rounds wins.

Lastly, for Lesson Eight, the teacher gave each student their final assessment. The assessment was done in the library, and one-on-one. This assessment was the conclusion to the research. The final assessment was the same slide show as the pre-assessment.

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Analysis and Findings

Based on student speed and accuracy from the pre-assessment, the teacher made two small groups. The teacher noticed strategies that specific students used such as using fingers, simply guessing, and several did not pay attention to the operation symbol in the equations. The students did well with their first lesson using dice and counters to make patterns. The students worked most easily with the number five. If both sides of the domino had a number greater than five, they took longer to achieve the answer. As the lessons progressed with equations, the students used some of the patterns they built to solve the problems. Students transferred the patterns to be a useful strategy in addition and subtraction. It seemed the students are begining to make gains in recognizing patterns for faster computation.

Once the first few lessons were going smoothly, the teacher had students play a game. Students were engaged in this activity more than the other lessons. At the end, the teacher added a review and let the students make up dot equations for each other, which the students did successfully. Some students were still using tallies, but some were seeming to remember certain patterns for faster computation. Unfortunately, students struggled with subtraction. The dominos' structure posed a challenge because the students needed to recognize that their domino to be placed so the larger number appeared first for make a positive subtraction equation. After two rounds of subtraction, the students seemed frustrated, therefore, the teacher had the students play one round of "Domino Addition War."

Based on the post-assessment using the same slide show, all students but one showed improvement on their second attempt at the slide show. Only one student remained the same as the first time. In addition, for one ELL student, the teacher dictated the equation on the slide to her and this significantly helped her solve the equations correctly. Although there was

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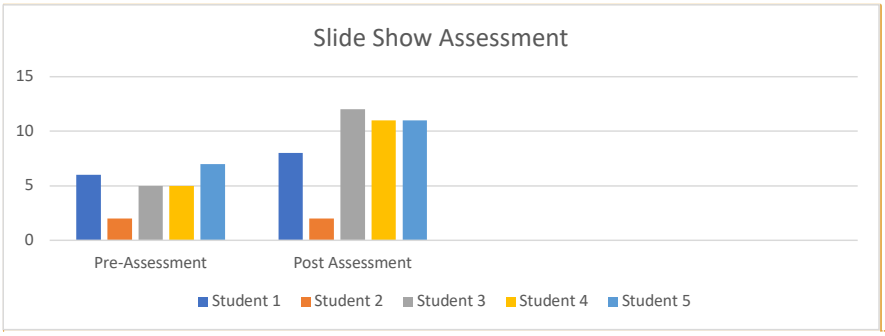
noticeable improvement, some of the students still reverted to counting on their fingers during this assessment. Anecdotal notes were taken on students' learning and the teacher recognized the students working faster and more efficiently in lessons.



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Commented [SL23]: In your proposal, I asked if the entire class was involved in the study because this was not made clear. It is clear here that you only used five students for the study. Why did you use these five students? What was the deciding factor? Tell me about these students in your paper. What was the demographic for the students that you chose? This was never discussed in your paper.

Limitations

Some of the limitations including the short time frame. Some students missed a lesson due to illness, absences, schedule conflict such as an assembly or class party. In addition, the researcher was working in a placement classroom and needed to find care for her own children during the intervention. This posed several problems when the researcher's children were sick and not in preschool.

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Other limitations included not having an actual classroom to work in. The intervention group was sent in the hallway. Although sometimes it was quiet, there were also many distractions due to the time of day. The intervention group was often interrupted by the lunch traffic of the school. Being in the hallway also allowed for many interruptions from peers walking by, insects on the floor, sitting on the cold tile, and overall not a comfortable work space. It was difficult to remain focused and on task without a quiet space. The constant disruptions would sometimes cause a lesson to end early.

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Discussions

It is important to build mental images and number sense for a child's success in mathematics. The literature revealed math is a stressful subject for many students, and having confidence and positive experiences early on can help change this. Ensuring students have the opportunity to manipulate numbers, have flexible thinking and understanding, and concrete examples are all critical in changing the way we teach mathematics. Doing action research for this intervention helps a teacher understand the basis of number sense in the elementary grades.

Although it takes a great amount of time to do this type of research, it is important for teachers to understand the basis of the strategies being used. For teachers, dot images should be used at the earliest possibly age. Beginning to building the images from Pre-K and into Kindergarten will set up future grades for more success with the CCSS fact fluency standard.

Implications for Future Research

After completing this research proposal, teachers need to thoroughly research and heavily consider why they are doing the intervention they are doing. Teachers should question the effectiveness on a greater level and be sure to provide students with the exact help they need to move forward. Teachers are faced with challenges during the day, and many unexpected things come up while class is in session, but that is no excuse to deny a child the right to reaching their potential. Additionally, doing an intervention without understanding the methodology or research makes it more a matter of "going through the motions" as opposed to actually teaching it with a purpose. This research has impacted the way teachers will think about intervention in the future from a mandatory part of their day, to an essential component to learning and growth.

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Action Research Report .docx

Assessment

Grade out of 85

67

View Rubric

Action Research Report

Criteria	Ratings	
Introduction to the Problem view longer description	Provided thorough and logical explanation of the problem. Appropriate data is provided to support the need for intervention.	15 / 15 pts
Research Question and Literature Review view longer description	Provided clearly articulated and appropriate research questions with an intervention connected to clearly discussed literature.	15 / 15 pts
Methodology 1: Participants, Environment, Materials view longer description	Each section provided information that lacked some detail or appropriateness. The materials section may be missing details regarding the instruments. **Comments** The participants needed to be explained. The fact that there was an intervention group should be discussed here. Also, a brief description of each of the participant's and why they were chosen for the study also needs to be included.	10 / 15 pts
Methodology 2: Procedures view longer description	Procedures provided detailed, logical, and appropriate steps to carry out the action research project.	15 / 15 pts
Analysis and Findings (with limitations) view longer description	See Effect on Student Learning Rubric	0 / 0 pts
Discussion and Implications view longer description	Answered the questions and did not demonstrate thorough reflection on the project. **Comments** There is no clear discussion of what this research answers for you and your students and this strategy. Did the use of dot pattern images build number sense and improve student addition and subtraction fluency to 20? You never connected your data to make conclusions.	5 / 15 pts
Grammar and Mechanics view longer description	Grammar and mechanics skills are average with major errors (7-12).	2 / 5 pts
APA Styling view longer description	APA Styling is consistently correct within the text and in the references (minimal errors, less than 2).	5 / 5 pts
		Total Points: 67

Assignment Comments

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Action Research Report -1.docx

Assessment

Grade out of 15

8

View Rubric

Effect on Student Learning

Criteria	Ratings
Description & Intentionality of the Assessment view longer description	**Full Marks** The pre- and post-assessments are described in great detail in the methodology section, along with the intentionality behind creating it. Pre- and post-assessment plans support classroom standards. The paper discusses how assessments will help analyze student learning. 2 / 2 pts
Analysis of student performance and patterns of learning view longer description	**Full Marks** Analysis focuses on both quantitative (percent, mode/median/ mean, pass/fail rates) and qualitative data (student work samples). The analysis discusses patterns of learning among the whole class and individuals. 3 / 3 pts
Planning Instructional Next Steps view longer description	**No Marks** A reflection is included with next steps that contain several deficits in candidate's thinking 0 / 2 pts
Student Data Graphic view longer description	**Partial Marks** The graphic represents the data accurately, is labeled/titled, and well organized. 1 / 2 pts
Student Samples and Candidate Feedback view longer description	**Partial Marks** Paper gives general comments regarding student work but no information on feedback was given. 1 / 2 pts
Analysis of Teaching: Planning and Preparation view longer description	**No Marks** Includes NO modifications/recommendations of current instruction for future application in planning and preparation as related to instructional objectives or standards. 0 / 2 pts
Analysis of Student Learning view longer description	**Partial Marks** There is a review of data of learning results as related to instructional objectives and standards. 1 / 2 pts
	Total Points: 8

Assignment Comments

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Sandra A Lampley, Apr 19 at 1:26pm

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Bringing Curiosity Back to Reading:

The Integration of Student-Generated Questions and the QAR Method

Claire Stewart

University of Alabama in Huntsville

April 18, 2019

Across all subject areas, students are expected to be able to read and write effectively, which places a greater emphasis on reading teachers (Raphael & Au, 2005). Building high levels of literacy for all children is the core responsibility of today's teachers in an effort to help students learn across the curriculum, build reading independence to engage with print on a personal level, and to later participate and engage with an economy and society that is increasingly becoming more and more information-based (Raphael & Au, 2005). The framework for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2017 reading assessment states that, regardless of the type of text, students must be able to access and understand the words on the page in order to make sense of the sentences and paragraphs to comprehend what has been read (National Assessment Governing Board, 2017). The cognitive targets, or level of questioning, that students encounter in the questions accompanying the texts call for higher-order thinking. In fourth grade, students will answer only 30% of literal-level locate and recall questions, 50% of questions that require the integration and interpretation of ideas, and 20% of questions that require students to critique and evaluate the text (National Assessment Governing Board, 2017). In order to be successful on these standardized assessments, students need high exposure to higher-order thinking and strategies to help them learn how to actively engage their curiosity through reading at an early age.

Early interventions that seek to improve reading skills through activating prior knowledge, self-monitoring, questioning, and building decoding skills have been shown to have a direct effect on reading-comprehension performance in middle and upper elementary grades (van den Broek, Kendeou, Lousberg, & Visser, 2011). However, the overuse of literal-level questions which only require students to locate and recall answers is still highly prevalent in many classrooms (Allington, 2014). Reading comprehension is an extremely complex process

that extends far beyond simply knowing how to read. Students truly show comprehension of text when they are able to tell key details, construct meaning from what they have read, and engage in meaningful conversations or written expression about the topic (Newmann & Wehlage, 1993). Beginning at an early age, students need exposure to higher-order thinking strategies that will help them actively engage the brain in the reading process. The reading process is only able to reach its intended purpose when the reader is able to synthesize, visualize, and make connections with the text (Sönmez & Sulak, 2018).

In the classroom of focus, there are currently 17 students. Seven of these students have consistently performed below grade-level expectations on the STAR assessment since the beginning of the year. The STAR Assessment, or the Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading, is a computer-adaptive test that will continually adjust the level of difficulty of each child's test by presenting test questions based on the child's previous response to measure reading comprehension and skills for independent readers (Renaissance Learning, 2015). While only seven students performed below grade-level benchmarks due to both decoding and comprehension issues, two other students have shown a lack of ability to understand and answer more complex questions. For instruction, the district of focus uses Reading Wonders, a research-based K-6 literacy solution from McGraw Hill that introduces reading skills through shared reading, guided reading, and independent practice with assessments both weekly and at the end of five-week units (McGraw-Hill Education, n.d.). The weekly and unit tests from Reading Wonders require more complex thinking than on the STAR test. While seven of these students face issues with comprehension due to their decoding abilities, all nine of these students struggle to use the text to answer more complex questions that require more than a literal-level, quick recall of information to answer, as exhibited both in small group discussions and on the Reading

Commented [SL1]: This sentence was a great addition!

Commented [SL2]: Another great addition to guide the reader..especially if they are not "in" education

Wonders assessments. These students can often become frustrated, confused, and feel helpless when trying to understand and answer these more complex questions. Therefore, these students tend to simply guess at an answer or write down sentences found at random from the text.

Commented [SL3]: I really like this part!

Research Question

After identifying the challenges and needs within the classroom and considering the current research surrounding reading comprehension, the focus for this research is, "Does using student-generated questions and the Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy affect the reading comprehension of first-grade students?" In many classrooms, the focus remains on providing content and not training students to effectively acquire this information (Dunlosky, 2013). Teachers cannot expect students to learn how to comprehend and answer complex questions on their own. Students must be trained how to comprehend and synthesize what they have read (Sönmez & Sulak, 2018).

When training students to comprehend and decode questions, the timing of these questions is of great importance. After investigating the timing of questions with a variety of grade levels, van den Broek et al. (2001) found that during-reading questions were beneficial only for students ranging from seventh grade to college but could actually deteriorate reading comprehension for fourth-grade students due to the higher demand on their working memory to process both the normal reading processes and comprehension. Van den Broek et al. (2011) noted that explicit instruction to help readers activate prior knowledge, self-monitoring, and questioning strategies was beneficial in improving comprehension at any age. A pre-reading strategy to activate prior knowledge and encourage self-monitoring and a questioning strategy to employ after-reading is beneficial to help primary students in an effort to allow them to actively engage their working memory, but not overwhelm it.

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Frazier, Gelman, and Wellman (2009) found that children are naturally curious about the world around them and ask the majority of their questions to understand causal relationships or gain new information. However, this curiosity can diminish if these students are faced with a classroom that is riddled with teacher-dominated questions and discussions (Ness, 2016). When this shift occurs, students begin to believe that the teacher and worksheets are the only source of questions within the classroom. Taylor, Pearson, and Rodriguez (2003) challenge that effective teachers should actively involve their students in literacy activities by shifting the responsibility of meaningful discussions about the text from the teacher to the students. When students are given ownership of their own inquiry and learning, they become more engaged, involved, and self-sufficient. However, students do not arrive to the classroom fully prepared to make the transition on their own from question-answerer to question-generator (Virgin, 2015). Teachers must be prepared to model and guide students through this challenging transition.

Self-questioning empowers students with the ability to expand and refine their understandings of topics and ideas in the text (Beuhl, 2017). However, younger students are not equipped with the skills to practice this self-questioning without guidance and support. Picture walks can serve as a meaningful strategy to encourage the question generation of young readers (Ness, 2016). The conversations during a picture walk typically occur as the teacher and students preview each page before reading to make predictions and discuss what will likely happen within the book (Stahl, 2008). By taking these predictions formed by the students during the picture walk and turning them into questions, students are able to connect the visual images to their own experiences and formulate questions to spark their self-monitoring while reading. By allowing students to generate their own questions, the students are better prepared to comprehend the text because the questions have allowed them to activate their prior knowledge, set a purpose for

Commented [SL4]: And I'm sure there is literature out there that make claims that many of the classrooms in the US primarily uses this strategy…..We need to do better. I really like this statement. ☺

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reading, and engage in rich conversations about the possible answers to their questions (Ness, 2016). By using picture walks in first grade, these students can build a background in student-generated questions to carry with them throughout their educational career.

However, after reading the passage, students still need to be taught how to interact with the comprehension questions they will encounter. The Question Answer Relationship (QAR) is a strategy to help students understand that the answer to a question can be located based on the question's relationship to the text (Kinniburgh & Prew, 2010). The QAR strategy encourages students to consider the relationship of each question to the text. Questions can either be categorized as "In the Book" or "In my Head" (Raphael & Au, 2005, p. 208-209). "In the Book" questions can be found directly in the text as a "right there" question or can be found by searching and compiling multiple details together as a "think and search" question (Fenty, McDuffie-Landrum, & Fisher, 2012, p. 29-30). "In my Head" questions require the reader to use information beyond the text to combine background knowledge with new information as an "author and me" question or answer solely based on background knowledge as an "on my own" question (Fenty et al., 2012, p. 29-30). Students are able to decide if purposefully rereading the text or a careful consideration of their background knowledge is necessary to answer each question. Categorizing questions based on the source of the answer can help improve reading comprehension and help students become more aware of their own metacognitive processes while reading and answering questions (Green, 2016). When students are engaged in metacognition, they are able to monitor and regulate their understanding and ensure that responses make sense (Wilson & Smetana, 2009). However, many students are unable to engage in metacognition without guidance and support from more experienced readers. Teachers must first become increasingly metacognitive with their own learning (Wilson, Grisham, & Smetana,

Commented [SL5]: Great transition sentence into the QAR

Commented [SL6]: We need so much more of this engagement in the classroom!

2009). When educators are properly trained in identifying the relationships between questions and the text, students are better trained to use these strategies independently. Ultimately, the goal of comprehension is to help students read and comprehend text on their own.

Many studies have found that the use of QAR in upper elementary, middle, and high school can improve reading comprehension by deepening their understanding and increase student success across multiple content areas (Raphael & Pearson, 1982; Raphael & McKinney, 1983; Ezell, Kohler, Jarzynka, & Strain, 1992; Ezell, Hunsicker, Quinque, 1997; Fenty et al., 2012). However, very few studies have explored the use of QAR in the primary grades (Kinniburgh & Prew, 2010). The classification of questions is beneficial to lay a foundation for continued reading success and comprehension. In grades K-2, Kinniburgh and Prew (2010) found that the QAR strategy was beneficial to help students build stronger comprehension skills, develop more understanding of the language of questions, and show improvement on reading tests from the basal reading series.

Commented [SL7]: Perfect!

There is also little research linking together the use of the QAR strategy with student-generated questions. However, student-generated questions offer the unique opportunity for students to engage their prior knowledge before reading in order to continue these connections during reading. The QAR strategy allows students to engage in metacognition after reading in order to label each question based on its relationship to the text. By identifying the thought process that needs to occur, students are presented with a clearer roadmap to answer these more complex questions. If students are exposed to this thinking early and with less complex texts, they can carry these strategies throughout their educational career as the text and vocabulary becomes more elaborate and complex. This type of instruction will require a shift from teacher-

focused instruction to student-focused instruction, which will likely help to improve both student motivation and engagement.

Methodology

Participants

The participants of this study are the 17 students in the classroom of focus. There are 10 boys and eight girls. Seven students in the classroom have performed below grade-level on STAR, DIBELS, and some reading assessments from the reading program since the beginning of the year. Of these seven students, three are English Language Learners (ELL). Two of these ELL students have resided in the country for less than three years with one student possessing an IEP for specific learning disabilities and the other is categorized as a selective mute. The third ELL student and the four other students in this group participate in SPIRE, which is a Tier III program that explicitly teaches and practices decoding skills through 45-minute interventions that occur five days a week. Six of these 17 students consistently perform on grade-level on all STAR and DIBELS assessments, but two students consistently struggle with reading assessments from the reading program. Of these six students, one is an ELL who has spoken English for less than three years. Four of these 17 students consistently perform above grade level on all reading assessments. Of these four students, one is an ELL who has recently exited the program and is currently being monitored.

Commented [SL8]: That equals 18 students

Settings

The intervention will take place in the classroom during the scheduled reading instruction time, which occurs in the morning and immediately follows the phonics lesson. The intervention will take place for 30-minutes a day, five days a week for three weeks.

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Materials

The effects of the intervention will be monitored through Reading Wonders Unit Assessments for Grade 1. Before beginning the intervention, the teacher will give each participant the Reading Wonders Unit 6 Assessment as a pre-test. Each Unit Assessment contains two stories which assess the comprehension skills that have been introduced throughout the unit. While grading the answers, the questions will be coded as their "In the Book" or "In my Head" questions in order to understand their current ability to answer these two types of questions. In order to ensure there are an equal number of "In the Book" and "In my Head" questions, four more "In my Head" questions will be added to the Unit Assessment to adequately measure each type of question. These questions will be reviewed by six other teacher researchers within the school of focus and University of Alabama in Huntsville to ensure their validity. At the conclusion of the intervention, the students will be administered the Reading Wonders Unit 6 Assessment again to determine the effect of the intervention. Students will be monitored weekly on their independent reading comprehension progress through the Reading Wonders Weekly Unit 6 Assessments. In this assessment, students are given a fresh read to allow them to demonstrate understanding of the weekly comprehension skill and encourage them to use the text as a support to answer questions ranging from literal-level to complex. Each question on the assessment will be coded as either "In the Book" or "In my Head" in order to track their progress with the two types of questions. Student progress will be measured through a pre-assessment and post-assessment format.

Commented [SL10]: Good

Procedures

On the first day of the intervention, the teacher will give each participant the Reading Wonders Unit 6 Assessment to measure their current comprehension of both "In the Book" and "In my Head" questions. On the second day, a Monday, the intervention will began. During each

Commented [SL11]: Gave...this now needs to be in past tense

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weeklong session, the class read a mentor text and established a different purpose for reading each day. The teacher introduced the book *Little Red and the Very Hungry Lion* (Smith, 2016). The students took a picture walk through the book with the support and guidance from the teacher. Students made predictions to the whole class and with partners through turn-and-talk. The teacher will guide the students to restate their predictions as a question by asking, "How could we rewrite our prediction as a question that the text could answer for us?" The teacher will provide the student with the question stems to begin their question: how, who, why, what, where, and when. The teacher will write all of the questions on chart paper for when the class begins reading the book.

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Deleted: will introduce

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Commented [SL12]: I'm going to stop here....the rest should be in past tense

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On the third day, the teacher will begin the lesson by reviewing the student-generated questions from the day before. The students will share what they remember from the picture walk. The teacher will introduce the two different types of questions that students can encounter while reading: "In the Book" or "In my Head." Due to their age, students will only code questions based on these two categories. The students will use their student-generated questions to practice coding questions. While reading, the teacher will stop the story to allow students to answer their questions that are found within the text. When the class can find an answer in the text, they will put a check mark by that question. At the end of the story, the teacher will review the questions that have not been checked with the class. These questions cannot be found within the text and must mean that these are "In my Head" questions, which require the students to think, discuss, and share their responses.

On the fourth day, the teacher will once again read the story aloud to the class. On this day, the discussion will focus on the "In my Head" questions from the day before. While reading aloud the story, the teacher will stop while reading to help students use clues from the text and

their own personal experiences to answer these more complex questions. The students will practice using turn-and-talk to share their personal experiences and connections with their partner and then share these experiences with the class.

On the fifth day, the teacher will read the story again with the class, but this time stop to ask more complex questions which will require the students to practice answering "In my Head" questions. At the end of the story, the students will be asked to answer a series of comprehension questions as a class to allow students to think, discuss, and share their ideas. The comprehension questions will include one "right there" question, two "think and search" questions, two "author and me" questions, and one "on my own" question that will be discussed orally. The questions will be reviewed by other researchers to ensure their validity. If the question is coded as "In the Book," the answer must be found within the text. If the question is coded as "In my Head," the students must make a connection with that question in order to answer it.

On the sixth day, the students will be given an independent reading assessment from the Weekly Reading Wonders Unit 6 Assessments to practice these skills independently. During the first week, the students will take a picture walk as a whole group and share their student-generated questions with the class. After this picture walk, the students will be given the text to read and answer questions independently. The teacher will code each question afterwards as either "In the Book" or "In my Head" to track their progression.

On the second and third week, the teacher will repeat days two through six with the story, *The Three Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* (Trivizas, 1997) and *The Mermaid* (Brett, 2017). However, the sixth day will be different for both week two and week three. On the second week of the intervention, the students will still take a picture walk as a whole class but will share their predictions and questions with their partner. On the third week of the intervention, the students

will take a picture walk with the class but will only independently construct their predictions and questions. After completing three full weeks of the intervention, the students will be given the Reading Wonders Unit 6 Assessment again without a whole group picture walk to measure the effect of the intervention.

Analysis and Findings

The pre-test identified that many students within the study were able to correctly answer most "in the text" questions, with the most success with "right there" questions. They had some success with "think and search" questions but experienced the most trouble with "author and me" and "on my own" questions. However, two students within the trial were able to correctly answer all but one of the questions on the pre-test before beginning the intervention, which left little room for growth for these students. The pre-test identified that my students answered 85% of "in the text" questions correctly, 72% of "think and search" questions correctly, 28% of "author and me" questions correctly, and 21% of "on my own" questions correctly. "In my head" questions posed the most issues with the participants of the intervention.

During the intervention, the students were able to most accurately answer their student-generated questions when they were given the opportunity to first discuss their answers with a partner through turn-and-talk. Without the opportunity to discuss, some students were reluctant to share their own ideas without the confirmation of another peer. During the intervention, some students wanted to answer all the questions immediately, but benefitted from seeing that not all questions could be answered right away because they were not directly in the text. However, this method did make it more difficult to answer "think and search" questions. Because the answers were found multiple places in the text, it was difficult for the students to realize when enough information had been provided to answer these questions. While both types of "in the text" and

Commented [SL13]: The focus students

Commented [SL14]: What was the percentage for in my head?

Commented [SL15]: A graphic for this would be beneficial

Commented [SL16R15]:

Commented [SL17]: How did you collect this data? When did students NOT do a turn and talk?

Commented [SL18]: What method are you referring to? The intervention?

"think and search" questions were easy for students to generate, they did struggle to construct "on my own" questions. These types of questions required very close guidance.

When answering, the students struggled to answer the "in my head" questions until they realized that these only required a personal connection. Many students would try to turn the question into a question found within the text. After the three-day exploration of the book, the students were given comprehension questions. During all three weeks, the students excelled with "right there" questions. However, students experienced more trouble with "think and search" questions than anticipated. Because they were unable to reference the text during these questions, they had to recall more events from their memory, which interfered with their ability to answer the question. The students also experienced a gradual increase of success with "author and me" questions and "on my own" questions.

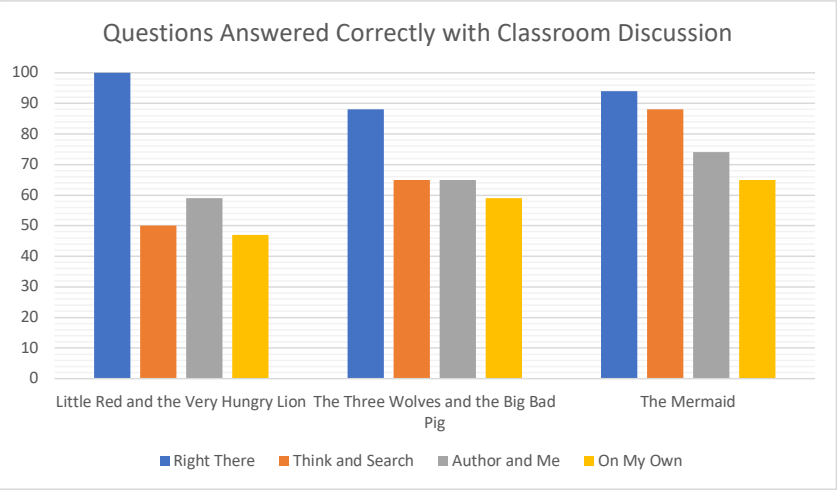

Figure 1. Types of questions answered correctly of read-aloud texts in percentages.

On the final day of each weekly session, the students were given a cold read assessment. The seven students that consistently perform below grade-level experienced issues with decoding

Commented [SL19]: This is your opinion inserted…so use that kind of wording…"Perhaps the reason is due to….."

Commented [SL20]: The axis are not labeled. I'm assuming you took an average of the students for each question type and this is showing percent of students…

Also, the figures need to be referenced in the text.

Commented [SL21]: Is this figure referenced anywhere in the text?

certain portions of the cold read assessments. Because of this issue, they experienced more trouble with all types of the questions. During week one and two, the students answered 100% of the "right there" questions, which was an improvement from the pre-test. However, on the third week, the students only answered 94% of the "right there" questions correctly. One student struggled with this assessment, as the cold read referenced a Native American tribe. They had difficulty understanding the concept of a Native American, which hurt her overall comprehension. In addition, some students struggled to make the required connections to correctly answer some "author and me" questions on this assessment, due to their confusion over some of the words in the text, such as their native language and dream catchers. Allowing the students to confirm their answers in the text created the greatest boost in their performance with "think and search" questions, which was higher than their performance with the stories that were read aloud. While the students experienced overall growth throughout the intervention on all types of questions, the varying types of stories did impede on their comprehension ability. Week one and week two cold read assessments were both fiction, while the week three assessment was non-fiction.

Commented [SL22]: So, I do not think that the above graph is referencing the weekly assessments because here it says week two should be 100% Right there, and it is not. So what is the above figure of?

Commented [SL23]: May have impacted

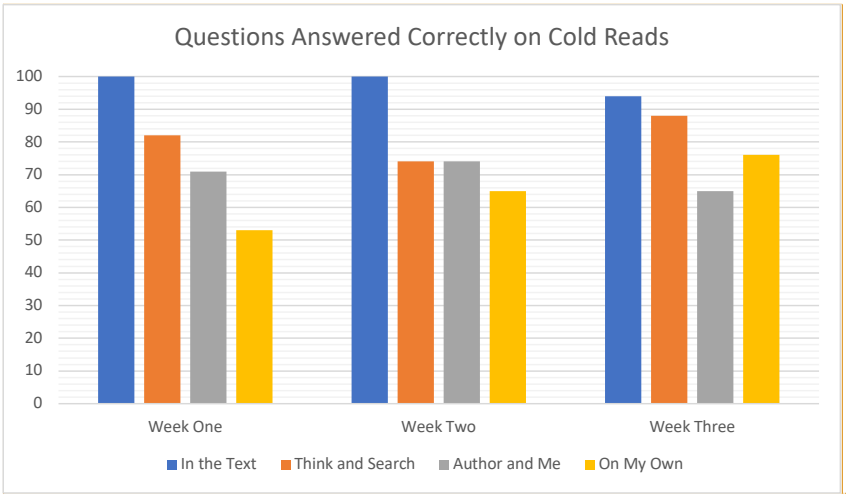

Figure 2. Types of questions answered correctly on cold reads in percentages.

At the end of the intervention, all types of questions experienced growth. However, the most growth was experienced with the "in my head" questions. Many of these questions required a verbal or written response, which was more difficult for students to answer as they had to compose their thoughts before answering. Due to classroom discussions and turn-and-talk techniques, the students were much more familiar with explaining their ideas and supporting it with evidence from the text, so these questions were answered more easily on the post-test. On the post-test, the students were able to answer 81% of the "author and me" questions and 71% of the "on my own" questions. For students who struggled to answer the on my own question, they could answer the questions, but were unable to provide a personal explanation even with prompting. The students did experience growth with the "in the text" questions, as well. During the assessment, I noticed many more of my students referencing the stories and underlining their answer for these questions. On the post-test, the students answered 97% of the "right there" questions correctly and 84% of the "think and search" questions correctly. However, as the

Commented [SL24]: Their "on my own" question demonstrated growth each week!!

Commented [SL25]: I would sub-divide that category into its components in your discussion here…because you subdivided them in the analysis

students had already been exposed to both passages, many students experienced less issues decoding as they were already familiar with the concept of the story and had previously decoded more difficult words, which allowed their decoding ability to create less of a barrier to their overall comprehension. The differences between the pre- and post-test indicate that the intervention was beneficial for all students in the classroom.

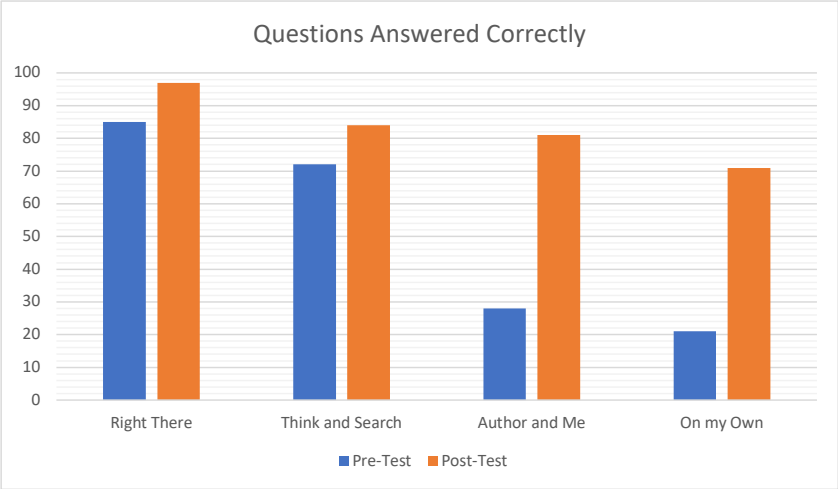

Figure 3. Types of questions answered correctly on pre-test and post-test in percentages.

Limitations

One limitation of the study was the use of the pre- and post-assessment. The Reading Wonders Unit 6 Assessment contained two stories with six questions to accompany each story. However, two students answered every question correctly on the pre-assessment, which did not offer an opportunity for growth for either of these students. In addition, the Reading Wonders Unit 6 Assessments contain grade-level passages. However, seven of the students in the classroom have consistently performed below grade-level, which means they are reading below grade-level. Since these passages are written at grade-level, these students experienced more

issues with decoding than the other students, which may have affected their ability to read, understand, and answer the comprehension questions.

Another limitation of the study was the use of read-alouds to teach both student-generated questions and the QAR method. As the teacher read these passages aloud, the students only needed to focus on comprehension during the intervention. However, on the weekly assessments and pre- and post-assessments, the students were expected to read the passage independently and answer the questions. Students with decoding issues were able to process and answer questions read aloud, while some students with superior decoding skills were able to perform better on comprehension questions in which the text was right in front of them to independently find their answers in the text. However, the read aloud also caused an unintended consequence in that students were unable to use the text to check their answers for "in the text" questions. The students experienced more success with "think and search" questions when they were able to use the text to confirm their answers.

Commented [SL26]: Great section…shows an understanding of the research process.

Discussion

In this study, interactive read alouds associated with the use of student-generated questions and the QAR method are highlighted. In many basal reading programs, interactive, student-led lessons are often discussed, but sometimes not put into practice during the day-to-day activities. These types of lessons are difficult to orchestrate on a large scale to ensure that every single classroom is maintaining the same level of rigor. However, in this study, it does show that student-led discussions and questions are possible, even in one of the youngest grades. With teacher guidance and support, the students were able to generate questions from the four different categories outlined through the QAR method. In addition, because they generated these questions themselves, they felt a stronger sense of ownership over finding and supporting the

Deleted: lessons

answer. In many classrooms, the questions are driven by the teacher. The teacher asks a question, the students think and answer the question, but still rely on the teacher to confirm whether the answer was correct or incorrect. However, through this study, the students began to take more control over the conversation in the classroom which then led them to begin correcting or redirecting their classmates.

The student-led discussions did not begin effortlessly. As they were not accustomed to serving the role of question generator and discussion leader, they did not transition into this role easily. In addition, the students did not naturally compose rigorous question. Many of the questions they first generated were simple, literal-level questions that only required a yes or no answer. However, with redirections from the teacher, they were able to understand more about the use of question words. "What" and "where" questions tend to produce more literal-level questions, so the students had to learn when to use these and when to use "why" and "how" questions to produce questions that require a more in-depth response. In the classroom, new discussion techniques had to be introduced to allow them to effectively communicate with each other. As the classroom began to shift away from the teacher serving as judge for correct or incorrect answers, the students had to learn how to respectfully agree with their classmates without interrupting and how to respectfully disagree with their classmates in a supportive manner. However, this study showed that it is possible to allow students to lead discussions and build their own questions to help them become more interactive in their reading ability. Many schools can be bound by the scripted program provided by the district, but these programs do not always allow students the chance to discuss ideas, build their own understanding, and expand their thoughts by actively listening to their classmates. In the study, the students experienced the most growth with "in my head" questions, which often require the reader to construct their ideas

Commented [SL27]: Yay!! ☺

Commented [SL28]: This part is important because it explains that students did not get here alone…it required scaffolding from the teacher, specifically, the teacher helped the students understand the use of words such as what, where, when, and how! Fantastic!

Commented [SL29]: Also important to discuss.

before answering. The opportunity to discuss their ideas through whole group discussion and turn-and-talk techniques gave the students more practice with constructing their own ideas and adding onto thoughts from other students. Even when material was above their independent reading level, many students were able to show growth with comprehension due to their ability to better understand what the question was asking.

In this study, the findings could help to produce a more student-centered classroom focus within many schools. Instead of asking the teacher or a scripted program to lead the lesson, students are able to take control of the lesson and their own learning. However, in a classroom that is not ready for this shift, this transition could be detrimental to student learning. While the students did the majority of talking during the discussion, the teacher did have to serve as mediator at some points to allow more soft-spoken students to have the opportunity to share their ideas. In addition, it was very easy for some of the conversations to drift away from the topic at hand. Without proper guidance and redirections, it is possible that not all classrooms would be able to produce the same level of rigor through the use of student-generated questions. Without a variety of questions to sort, the students would have been unable to identify each type of question when they began interacting with teacher-provided questions. Before implementing this study, teaching students proper discussion techniques is crucial. Without some discussion techniques already present in our classroom, the students would have not been able to effectively communicate with each other.

Commented [SL30]: Good point

Commented [SL31]: Yes

Implications for Future Research

For future studies, the assessment portion of this study needs to be altered. The STAR Reading assessment would serve as a better pre- and post-assessment. Because this assessment is a computer-adaptive program to adjust difficulty as the student takes the test, students would

have an opportunity to grow from their current level. Due to the time-constraints of the study, the STAR Reading assessment was not able to be used. Two advanced students in the study were unable to show growth because they correctly answered all of the questions in the pre-test. In addition, the weekly assessments offered questions that were the same for every student, but the large difference in reading ability negatively affected these results. In the future, leveled passages for the weekly assessments would offer the opportunity to monitor the comprehension of all students, without the negative impact that decoding had for some below-average students. By altering the assessment portion of the study, the growth of all students would be more measurable.

While the read alouds were able to create a student-led classroom environment, more opportunities for the students to independently read and construct questions would be beneficial to improve reading independence. Due to the large range of reading ability in the classroom, one text for all students to independently read would not be appropriate. Instead, the use of student-generated questions and the QAR method model in small group through leveled readers would help students independently apply the strategies that the students learned during whole group instruction. As the goal of this study was to improve reading independence, the study should offer students the opportunity to independently read, ask questions, and classify these questions aside from the assessment portion.

Commented [SL32]: Good point

Ultimately, the students benefitted from the opportunity to develop their independence as thinkers and collaborators. However, this independence did not come naturally. The students were very quickly transitioned into a new style of instruction that required each student to have a voice and become comfortable sharing their voice. This transition cannot be minimized. Instead, it should be one of the first steps of future interventions. In this study, I had to realize that my

students were in desperate need of instruction on how to interact with each other during classroom discussions through the use of sentence starters, question stems, nonverbal strategies to agree and disagree, and techniques to allow them to always track the speaker. While I considered my classroom a collaborative environment before the intervention, I realized that I was frequently leading the conversations. My students were talking, but I was leading the conversation. Transitioning out of this role was difficult for both myself and the students, but it was an integral part of their learning process. While this is still something we are still working to improve, my students have come a long way. During the first and second read of the story, I began letting partners take questions that they had generated and hold these questions while reading the story. These students became the experts on those questions, and it allowed me to take a step back from guiding the conversation. Instead of explaining answers to me, they began to explain their answers to the students who held the question. This action research project forced me to be completely honest with myself about my teaching techniques and make changes to our classroom discussion process to allow my students to take more control. If my goal was the help my students take ownership of their reading, I had to allow them to take ownership of our discussion and their learning.

Deleted: on perfecting

Commented [SL33]: Awesome!

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Assessment

Grade out of 15

14

View Rubric

Effect on Student Learning

Criteria	Ratings
Description & Intentionality of the Assessment view longer description	**Full Marks** The pre- and post-assessments are described in great detail in the methodology section, along with the intentionality behind creating it. Pre- and post-assessment plans support classroom standards. The paper discusses how assessments will help analyze student learning. 2 / 2 pts
Analysis of student performance and patterns of learning view longer description	**Full Marks** Analysis focuses on both quantitative (percent, mode/median/ mean, pass/fail rates) and qualitative data (student work samples). The analysis discusses patterns of learning among the whole class and individuals. 3 / 3 pts
Planning Instructional Next Steps view longer description	**Full Marks** A reflection is included with next steps clearly aimed to support specific student needs (individual AND groups) 2 / 2 pts
Student Data Graphic view longer description	**Partial Marks** The graphic represents the data accurately, is labeled/titled, and well organized. 1 / 2 pts
Student Samples and Candidate Feedback view longer description	**Full Marks** Paper cites specific examples of student work and what feedback was given. 2 / 2 pts
Analysis of Teaching: Planning and Preparation view longer description	**Full Marks** Includes detailed and thoughtful modifications/recommendations of current instruction for future application in planning and preparation as related to instructional objectives or standards. 2 / 2 pts
Analysis of Student Learning view longer description	**Full Marks** There is a strong review of data documented by a chart or graph of learning results in the reflection as related to instructional objectives and standards. 2 / 2 pts
	Total Points: 14

Assignment Comments

Wonderful job, Claire! Very well written and included a great discussion about your findings. ✕ (javascript:void 0;)

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Sandra A Lampley, Apr 20 at 8:49am

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Assessment

Grade out of 85

85

View Rubric

Action Research Report

Criteria	Ratings	
Introduction to the Problem view longer description	Provided thorough and logical explanation of the problem. Appropriate data is provided to support the need for intervention.	15 / 15 pts
Research Question and Literature Review view longer description	Provided clearly articulated and appropriate research questions with an intervention connected to clearly discussed literature.	15 / 15 pts
Methodology 1: Participants, Environment, Materials view longer description	Each section provided detailed and appropriate information. The materials section includes all applicable instrumentation with evidence for its use.	15 / 15 pts
Methodology 2: Procedures view longer description	Procedures provided detailed, logical, and appropriate steps to carry out the action research project.	15 / 15 pts
Analysis and Findings (with limitations) view longer description	See Effect on Student Learning Rubric	0 / 0 pts
Discussion and Implications view longer description	Answered the questions clearly with a clear understanding of the impact of action research in the classroom.	15 / 15 pts
Grammar and Mechanics view longer description	Grammar and mechanics skills exhibited are exceptional with minimal errors (less than 3).	5 / 5 pts
APA Styling view longer description	APA Styling is consistently correct within the text and in the references (minimal errors, less than 2).	5 / 5 pts
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