

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF READERS' THEATRE ON FLUENCY, COMPREHENSION,
AND MOTIVATION ON PRIMARY STUDENTS

by

Holly B. Marshall

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Literacy Studies

Middle Tennessee State University
May 2017

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Amy Elleman, Chair

Dr. Jwa K. Kim

Dr. Alyson Bass

Dr. Joan Boulware

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are not enough words to express my appreciation to the ones who have supported me during this long journey. First, without sounding cliché, I give the highest credit and gratitude to God, with whom I have had many diverse and interesting conversations.

I have some amazing friends, especially during the hibernation and all night marathons of studying. Your texts and calls to make sure I was still breathing were thoughtful. Your offers to run chores, bring me food or whatever I needed was kind. I am most grateful for our friendship, thank you Joni and Sheila.

It is always a good idea to have a support of peers who are going through the experience with you. I do not want to unintentionally leave anyone's name out, instead, I will extend a heartfelt "thank you" and appreciation to fellow doctoral students who gave support and encouragement. An extended appreciation to the graduate assistants who had the mundane task of editing my work. (you know who you are)

It is impossible to achieve your goal without the faculty. I want to express the appreciation and gratitude to Dr. Bass and Dr. Boulware, thank you for your valuable time, experience, and knowledge reviewing my work. To Dr. Kim, thank you for your wisdom, time, and encouragement...and let's not forget about your humor. Your kindness and patience is well-acknowledged. I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the chair of my committee, Dr. Amy Elleman. I thank you for your support, guidance, and patience. You presented me with challenges and I am better for them. Your encouragement and belief stayed constant and never wavered. I thank you for the experience.

To my parents, Jerry and Marilyn Ross whose support and love I will always cherish. They are some of my biggest cheerleaders, never doubting that I wouldn't complete what I set out to do. (no matter how long it may take). Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, interest, and loving care. I love you.

I want to thank my sons, Ross, Grant, and Blake. If anyone was the most affected aside from myself, it was you. Your support and encouragement kept me going, I could not have, or would not have done it any other way. You never showed frustration when our lives took a long detour. Thank you for stepping up during the times when I couldn't. We say, "family first", and I love you for the many times that family could not be first. Thank you for asking how I was doing and showing interest. We have experienced many situations and events over the last few years and I am so grateful and thank God that I got to go through them with you. I would like to give a separate "thank you" to my daughter-in-law. Christina, you became part of our family the moment our son said, "she's the one." I enjoyed our talks and stories about our own experiences as educators. Thank you for your love and for taking care of my son.

Finally, there is not enough words that describe the overwhelming support that my husband Steve has given me. From the onset, you have endured this journey with me, only to give me encouragement, hope, confidence, and strength. You have been both mom and dad in the early stages, to now taking care of every task in our daily lives to keep moving forward. You have gone way above the call “for better or worse” and it hasn’t gone unnoticed. Thank you for your unconditional love. I am look forward to experiencing new adventures in life with you and I thank God for the day we met.

ABSTRACT

Seventy-five percent of third grade students who are at-risk will continue to struggle with reading through the years into adulthood, never to recover their potential reading development. Once less-skilled third grade readers reach ninth grade, one in six students are four times more likely to leave high school before receiving a diploma than those who are proficient readers. Whether students who read effortlessly or struggle to decode text, both cannot comprehend. This relationship between reading fluency and comprehension has educators seeking instructional resources to improve the reading deficit across the country. Readers' theatre, as a form of repeated reading, may be one solution to the problem. Readers' theatre is an instructional technique that engages students in heterogeneous groups providing motivation, socialization, and cooperation. An exhaustive search in this review found few quantitative studies in readers' theatre emphasizing fluency, comprehension, motivation, and knowledge acquisition. Out of the studies found, results have been mixed on the influence of readers' theatre on various reading components. The purpose of the study was to replicate and extend the existing studies and to further examine the effects of readers' theatre on fluency and comprehension using expository text and instruction. This study took place in an elementary school in the mid-south, with second grade students with diverse reading abilities. Random assignment was implemented for individual students within two classrooms to a readers' theatre condition or a repeated reading condition. The intervention lasted two weeks. Instruction consisted of expository text focused on social studies content. Students' progress was assessed with a standardized measure of reading comprehension, oral reading fluency measures, knowledge acquisition tests, and a

motivation measure. Although there were no statistically significant findings in this study, effect sizes indicated that repeated reading may be ~~more~~ beneficial for reading comprehension and fluency with samples such as the one used in this study and that readers' theatre may be more beneficial for knowledge acquisition. The motivation results were mixed with the survey indicating a decline in interest among both groups and interviews indicating that readers' theatre was interesting and motivating to the students. Practical implications and future research are also addressed in this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The ability to speak, listen, and comprehend provide the foundation for reading acquisition, beginning from birth through the academic years and progressing into adulthood. Reading is an important skill for an individual to obtain, yet, approximately 75% of less-skilled readers in third grade continue to have difficulties in the ninth grade, and sadly, into adulthood (Mercer, Campbell, Miller, Mercer, & Lane, 2000). A national study performed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2011) examined approximately 4,000 students and found that one in six-third graders were not proficient and four times more likely to leave high school without receiving a diploma. The percentages are greatest for the below-basic readers: 23% fail to complete high school (Hernandez, 2011). Literacy education needs improvement to not only help students achieve *functional* reading which is limited in skills, but to develop *critical* reading which advances students to be prepared to confront social issues (Jagger, 2008). To improve conditions, in 1997 the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) was commissioned by the U.S. Congress to create a committee to explore research-based studies and knowledge of best practices in reading education for children. The NICHD formed the National Reading Panel (NRP). The Panel's purpose was to review existing studies based on research-based knowledge, including the efficacy of various techniques to instruct children to read. The NRP's (2000) report indicated that one contributor to stagnating reading proficiency was a misunderstanding of the nature and importance of reading fluency instruction. The report concluded that for most of the 20th century and leading into the 21st fluency was thought of and taught primarily as

word recognition, disregarding other components of reading (NICHD, 2000). The report emphasized that fluency is a vital element of reading development (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002; Griffith & Rasinski, 2004; Rasinski, 2010; Samuels, 1979).

Oral Reading Fluency

Leading experts on reading acquisition, consider fluency an essential component of a healthy reading program (Adams, 1990; Allington, 2012; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1993), recognizing it as a critical contribution to learning to read and a necessary component in a well-balanced and rigorous reading curriculum (Deno & Marston, 2006; Dowhower, 1987; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). Fluency is formally defined as the clear, distinct, and simple written or verbal relaying of ideas (Harris & Hodge, 1995; Oxford University Press, 2010). The definition of fluency may dictate its measurement as how one defines fluency dictates the ways we measure it (Samuels, 2006). The following terms are clarified to assist in understanding the various definitions of fluency. *Automaticity* is the ability to recognize words without any forethought, while simultaneously using other reading skills (Samuels, 1979). *Accuracy* is the ability to decode printed words without error (Johnson, 2011). *Prosody* is the inflection of tonal quality, pitch, and rhythmic patterns of spoken language (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

The emphasis on improving fluency created an influx of research on fluency rate. Although many researchers were concentrating on rate, some noticed that other features of fluent reading were important to reading growth (Dahl, 1975). While Dahl (1975) and LaBerge and Samuels (1974) focused on rate and accuracy, other researchers examined phrasing, intonation, and prosody (Dowhower, 1987; Schreiber, 1980). More recently,

studies have suggested that fluency is a combination of multiple constructs working simultaneously and includes rate and accuracy, while also using proper intonation, phrasing, and expression (Keehn, Harmon, & Shoho, 2008; Martinez, Roser, & Stecker, 1999; Zutell & Rasinski, 1991). Clay and Imlach (1971) examined reading behaviors of beginning readers. They observed that readers who made the most progress read with intonation, prosody, and phrasing while increasing their fluency rate, while the readers who read in sequences of one and two word phrases at a time progressed more slowly. In addition, Clay and Imlach observed the more skilled readers self-corrected on an average of five to seven times more miscues than the less skilled readers, suggesting that self-correction, along with an appropriate focus on phrasing and natural intonation might promote better reading. The NAEP (2002) investigated the connection between oral reading fluency and comprehension and found that the higher reading comprehension scores aligned with oral fluency reading components. There have been many other studies that support this bidirectional relationship (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001; NAEP, 2000; Spear-Swerling, 2006) between oral reading fluency and comprehension (Jenkins, Fuchs, van den Broek, Espin, & Deno, 2003).

Repeated Reading

Oral reading fluency is the execution in verbalizing text with precision and skill to allow for sufficient comprehension (Rasinski, Blachowicz, & Lems, 2006). Acknowledging research that supports fluency as a critical component of reading development (Dowhower, 1987; Herman, 1985), the NRP (2000) strongly suggested that effective instructional methods for fluency include two reading methods: oral reading fluency and repeated reading. Many studies have been performed on the instruction of repeated reading to improve fluency

and in turn, comprehension (Fuchs et al., 2001; Roshotte & Torgeson, 1985; Schreiber, 1980).

Samuels (1979) developed repeated reading as a method to enhance fluency. As an advocate of theory to practice, he set out to create an instructional technique that could be implemented in classrooms. Repeated reading is based on multiple repetitions of a reading passage to reach a specific rate. To examine his new method, Samuels worked with children who have intellectual disabilities, explaining to them that to get better in anything, one must practice (Samuels, 2006). To test his method a story was deconstructed into 150 word segments. After listening to a model of the reading, the students individually practiced reading the passage aloud, and then read the passage orally to the teacher who recorded their reading rate. The students reread the passage until a rate of 85 words per minute was achieved. Once the criterion was met, the student received a new passage and repeated the same process. The students could see how their rate increased and the amount of fewer errors decreased with each reading (Samuels, 1979; Herman, 1985). Samuels (1979) demonstrated that slow readers could improve their automaticity through repeated readings.

The effect of Samuels' method solicited mixed views. Even though his method was favorably acknowledged, it did not explain how gains in reading rate achieved by reading one passage several times would transfer to passages that contained different and unfamiliar words. Chomsky (1978) conducted a study that found a similar result. Working with five at-risk third-grade students, Chomsky asked the students to repeatedly follow and read along with a text that was simultaneously read on audiotape until a specific rate was achieved. Chomsky found that in over four months of intervention there were gains in fluency rate,

ranging from a few months to a year's growth. It was also determined that in transitioning from one text to a new text, there were fewer mistakes and the specific goal was achieved at a faster rate (Chomsky, 1978). Additional research supports Samuels (1979) and Chomsky's (1978) studies and found students who engaged in repeated reading improved in comprehension when moving from one text to another (Dowhower, 1987; Herman, 1985; Hiebert, 2005, Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Therrien, 2004). In contrast, other studies found students' comprehension was not improved when transferring from text to text (Carrick, 2000; Johnson, 2011; Roshotte & Torgesen, 1985). The method of repeated reading has been established as a viable reading method, however, additional studies are needed to examine possible influences that repeated reading has on the relationship between comprehension and oral reading fluency.

Comprehension

The NAEP (2015) report shows that many children have insufficient reading comprehension abilities. If not helped, children who experience difficulties in their early years of reading development can experience lifelong difficulties into adulthood (Cutting, Materek, Cole, Levine, & Mahone, 2009). Oral reading fluency is the execution in verbalizing text with precision and skill to allow for sufficient comprehension (Rasinski, Blachowicz, & Lems, 2006). Research has demonstrated that oral reading fluency predicts comprehension (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp & Jenkins, 2001) moving beyond word identification to understanding (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Pikulski & Chard, 2005; Rasinski, 2010). In Perfetti's (1985) explanation of the verbal-efficiency theory, immediate word recognition provides the foundation for reading comprehension. Any processing deficits as automaticity expend

attentional resources and working memory, and in turn, affect the construct of meaning. However, Perfetti (1985) argued that the process can be improved with guidance and practice. As word recognition increases, so does the available attentional resources and working memory, increasing the ability to construct meaning from text. In comparison, less skilled readers who may have difficulty increasing automatic word recognition, evoke greater demands on attentional resources and working memory, reducing the availability of those resources for comprehension.

Perfetti's (1985) theories have found support in subsequent studies (Cutting, et al., 2009; Jenkins, et al., 2003). In addition, studies have determined that extracting meaning from text can be interrupted by slow arduous reading, indicating reading rate and not just accuracy alone, is just as vital in text comprehension (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Perfetti & Hogaboam, 1975). Being able to comprehend a text is an essential skill students must develop. However, it is an extremely complex activity that skilled readers take for granted. It is a complex process requiring multiple skills to develop relationship between text and reader (Durkin, 1992; Harris & Hodges, 1995; NICHD, 2000; Rasinski et al., 2006).

Only within the past fifteen years have studies implied that comprehension requires more than just fluent reading but is instead a composition of critical thinking, experience, background knowledge, and instruction. There is empirical evidence that word-reading automaticity and passage-level skills are integral to the development of critical thinking, grammar, vocabulary, questioning, and inference skills in language acquisition in the emergent stage of reading development (Cain & Oakhill, 2007; Duke et al., 2011; Durkin, 1992; Fielding & Pearson, 1994; Rasinski et al., 2006; Spear-Swerling, 2006).

Studies indicate background knowledge is the most important requisite skill based on its dependency on awareness of the world and its connection with text (Fielding & Pearson, 1994). Kintsch's (1988) construction-integration model of comprehension which is recognized as a prominent model in comprehension studies holds that knowledge and the integration of that knowledge to be the driving force of comprehension. As we read, we use our knowledge of the world along with the text to construct mental representations of what the text means. This information is integrated as new knowledge, establishing more information than we knew before we read (Duke et al., 2011). Readers' theatre not only provides the opportunity to incorporate multiple reading components between oral reading fluency and comprehension, but it may also help to translate text into meaning, to connect with the world, and to relay the information through a visual performance.

Readers' Theatre

History. Readers' theatre can be traced back 2,500 years ago to Greece, progressing through the medieval ages, and rapidly evolving in the early 19th century. In 1806, the author Gilbert Austin wrote the book, *Chironomia*. He described a specific type of performance of multiple persons reading various parts of a story, poem, or play with dramatic expression and gestures while sitting in chairs (Carrick, 2000, p. 16). In 1945, the term readers' theatre was first used when a theatrical group in New York put on a performance of *Oedipus Rex*. It was not until 1951, when producer, Charles Laughton asked his peer Paul Gregory, to conceptualize a "concert version" of George Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman*. Little did Laughton realize, his kind gesture was just the beginning of what later would be acknowledged as one of the most prolific and innovative theatre experiences. Many refer to

Gregory as the author of the readers' theatre movement. However, some historians believe its birth came from Ancient Greece, as it was not unusual for gatherings to meet in public institutions to participate in oral play readings (Maclay, 1982).

In developing readers' theatre as we know it today, Gregory recalled an experience when his eye caught the glimmer of four diamonds in the window of a prominent jewelry store. The diamonds were displayed on a small black stool against a black velvet drape. The vision became the inspiration of the next performances that he and Charles Laughton would present, as four actors, dressed in black, sat on stools and participated in lively recitation. This epiphany came to fruition in 1951, with the historical presentation of George Bernard Shaw's, *Don Juan into Hell*. The performance is considered the fundamental framework and development of readers' theatre in America (Johnson, 1981). As *Don Juan in Hell* extensively toured the country, a 3 reader, 50 voice choral production of Steven Vincent Benet's *John Brown's Body* also toured, achieving critical success. What would later become known as readers' theatre was not only perceived as a form of entertainment, but as an innovative, professional event, seen across the country by thousands. The era marked the newly constructed form of theatre as an education resource, dominantly in the speech and theatre departments of colleges and universities (Maclay, 1982).

The 1960s saw the growth of readers' theatre in popularity, within the collegiate theater programs and soon into the secondary English education. As interest in readers' theatre grew, all levels of education began to incorporate it as an integral part of the reading curriculum, even branching into various subject areas (Coger & White, 1973). While readers' theatre was becoming more popular in education, Coger (1963) and Brooks (1962)

collaborated to establish the framework for discussions and “rules” that would define readers’ theatre for future generations.

The 1970s presented a period of challenges as readers’ theatre continued to develop. Literacy theorists began to analyze the complexities of literacy texts, as readers theatre flourished. Theorists, directors, and educators often would debate the significance of the text, not just as a performance of spoken text, but more relevant as a purposeful artistic representation of a dramatic experience. The controversy continued with differing interpretations of readers’ theatre and how its text influenced the overall experience. Although the debate was gaining momentum, it would never replace the traditionalists view of readers’ theatre (MacLay, 1982).

Post (1972), coordinator of readers’ theatre at the University of Washington, inspired classroom teachers to incorporate readers’ theatre as a part of the reading curriculum, supporting its influence on comprehension and appreciation of literature. The content should be one that involves multiple interactions of meanings and emotions. At a teacher’s conference, Crain and Smith (1976) demonstrated how readers’ theatre in a primary educational classroom differed from the performance and entertainment factor that existed within the higher levels of education. Crain and Smith stated that readers’ theatre enhanced oral fluency skills and reading development, was motivational, and encouraged positive peer interaction.

There is not much documentation published on readers’ theatre history and development from 1980 to the present. Any reference to readers’ theater is generally defined as a literacy format and its implications in reading development. Currently, readers’ theatre

is still very present in the theatrical world and is performed as an alternative way for the audience to experience live theatre. Readers' theatre is most commonly referred to as "a reading" or if a musical, "concert version or rendition". Readers' theatre has played a role within the classroom for over 30 years. However, it has only been within the last 15 years that empirical research has been conducted. Research has indicated that readers' theatre is an example of a teaching method and as a form of repeated readings. When implemented, repeated reading enhances the progress of other elements of oral reading fluency: accuracy, rate, and prosody. Readers' theatre allows practice for repeated reading, and in turn affects rate and prosody when implemented into a curriculum daily (Flynn, 2004; Johnson, 2011; Keehn, 2003; Martinez et al., 1999; Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Young & Vardell, 1993).

Readers' theatre is text written in the form of a script. Its content is character driven, prosodic and fluent, while enhancing diction and expression in the deliverance of the meaning of words and conversation. The story is delivered with the performers standing in front of the audience with the script and using voice to project the story through their characters. The script is not memorized as in other theater performances, movement is not required, sets are not created, actors perform in a concert-type of setting, and many times, the actors wear black so as not to distract from the dialogue (Flynn, 2004; Griffith & Rasinski, 2004; Groff, 1978; Harris & Hodges, 1995; Martinez et al., 1999; Young & Vardell, 1993; Young & Rasinski, 2009).

Readers' theatre advocates contend that it is a good method for increasing not only fluency but comprehension as well. As Stayter and Allington (1991) suggested, readers' theatre accentuates students' ability to understand and reconstruct text. Students begin to

synthesize and develop their characters through each reading. The readers make changes from their first impression to a more complex character after several readings of the script. They read multiple parts to experience other characters rather than themselves. By the time the students analyze the characters' actions, behavior, and relationships with others (Flynn, 2004; Millin & Rinehart, 1999), they have a relationship and understanding with their character (Busching, 1981). Students have proclaimed that through their own observation of their character, and listening to peers, they have gained a wider perspective of their own knowledge and of the world (Stayter & Allington, 1991). Readers' theatre allows students to interact with each other, actively working together in response and interpretation (Carrick, 2000).

Drama in the Classroom

Nathan and Stanovich (1991) indicated that incorporating drama within the classroom has distinctive and defining elements of language development. Readers' theatre is a reading method which drama can be implemented, providing a whole class activity for all ability levels with no boundaries of socio-economic status and linguistically diverse children. Educators have the opportunity to use readers' theatre to promote social awareness through careful consideration of scripts and creating an atmosphere for discourse about societal issues. Readers' theatre transforms the classroom into another time and place. A place where language has no barrier, where "aesthetic and educational values exist in harmony" (Combs, 1987), creating drama that allows children to experience literature, through real or imaginary characters, with expression and identification.

Drama becomes a centralized element of language development with multiple rehearsals of dialogue incorporating expression, tone, pitch, and emotion in developing the character (Morgan & Saxton, 1988). As students analyze their characters, they discuss relationships, attitudes, situations, and opinions, while comprehending the text by eliminating any interferences and gaining a deeper understanding on what they already knew (Booth, 1985). As the performing students participate in the development of language, speech, and thinking skills, the audience is unknowingly enhancing listening skills (Courtney, 1987).

Pelligrini (1980) conducted a study to examine the effects of drama on comprehension skills with early learners by comparing kindergarten children who were active in dramatic play to children who were minimally active. He found that the children in dramatic play had significantly higher scores in word and retell skills. A meta-analysis conducted by Kardash and Wright (1987) suggested that drama overall has a positive effect on reading comprehension, oral reading, communication, personal self-awareness, and acting skills. Readers' theatre and drama are widely used in education and performance theatre, despite the limited amount of research promoting its efficacy. The empirical research that has been conducted reflect mixed results on readers' theatre as an effective influence on various reading elements.

Research to Practice

Allington (1983) indicated the importance of fluency as an integral element of the reading process that shows positive improvements for the struggling reader. Even with the strong probability of improvement, Allington stated that fluency has been neglected and its importance has not communicated and emphasized to classroom practitioners, administrators,

and publishers of educational materials. Studies repeatedly emphasize the need for well-trained teachers who can implement effective reading instruction and ameliorate reading difficulties (Denton, Vaughn, & Fletcher, 2003). As an attempt to improve instructional methods, the NRP recommended that teachers design their instruction built on best evidence-based research studies (NICHD, 2000). The International Reading Association defines evidence-based practice as “easily accessible research to make sound instructional decisions” (International Reading Association, 2015). The panel’s assumption was that evidence-based methods would increase students’ achievement if properly applied (Eash, 1968). Educators seem to have a renewed interest in research and its contribution to their classroom instruction as there is of researcher’s desire to inform them. Yet, the process of establishing a researcher and teacher relationship has not been without obstacles. Bates (2002) argue that frustration exists between researchers and teachers, because teachers want solutions to existing instructional problems, while researchers are searching for new information and knowledge.

Summary

Readers’ theatre is an extension of repeated reading translated into performance art, in which actors engage in conversation as they interact with literature to induce an emotion from the audience (Tanner, 1993). Readers’ theatre contributions and benefits as an instructional tool for improving reading have been discussed in the literature (Busching, 1981; Coger & White, 1973; Tanner, 1993, Stayter & Allington, 1991). Studies focused on readers’ theatre generally examine fluency with comprehension. It has been established that many fluency experts emphatically express the importance of concentrating on effective

fluency instruction due to the strong correlation between fluency and comprehension (Fuchs et al., 2001; Keehn et al., 2008; Rasinski et al., 2006).

To close the gap between research and the classroom, researchers have enlisted educators to implement readers' theatre to promote fluency and comprehension, motivation, language, and reading development (Busching, 1981; Carrick, 2000; Corcoran & Davis, 2005; Flynn, 2004; Keehn, 2003; Rinehart, 1999). An abundance of research exists validating readers' theatre as a performance genre with educational benefits, yet, there is minimal research on readers' theatre and its effectiveness as an instructional method to influence reading development.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Readers' theatre is a technique used to strengthen reading abilities through the multiple rehearsals in reading of text. Through repeated practice, a dramatic and effective performance is conveyed to an audience (Griffith & Rasinski, 2004). Differing from a theatrical production, readers' theatre does not require memorization of lines, but instead, content is read from a script while focusing on the interaction of speech (Griffith & Rasinski, 2004; Martinez et al., 1999).

Prior to 1990, readers' theatre had long been acknowledged in literature. For example, Maberry (1975) compared readers' theatre and solo performance to a commonly used instructional technique of silent reading. Maberry's experiment involved 371 high school English students in grades nine and eleven. Two groups were created: those who silently read the content material and those who listened to an oral presentation of the content material. An assessment followed the task to determine which method scored the highest in comprehension and literature appreciation. Results showed that readers' theatre had the most influence on both variables. Maberry administered the same test ten days after the intervention to see if the students retained the information. Again, readers' theatre had a greater impact on both comprehension and literature appreciation. The study may not have been an experimental study, nevertheless, it provided interesting discussion on the positive effects of readers' theatre (Maberry, 1976).

In a separate study, Walker, Salverson, and French (1983) compared various reading strategies for children with reading difficulties. The children received approximately 20 hours of tutoring in a reading clinic. The sessions did not focus on one specific reading strategy, instead, tutors differentiated lessons to meet the strengths and weaknesses of the student. Methods of instruction used included alternate readings, repeated readings, readers theatre, cloze method, timed readings, and word games. The tutorials were conducted to examine concerns regarding comprehension, fluency rate, accuracy, decoding, word recognition, and syntax. Students who received treatment showed gains in fluency rate, word recognition, decoding, syntax use, and comprehension (Walker, Salverson, & French, 1983). Outcomes were based on the individual students and the strategy used most often to improve his or her reading skills. Collectively, in the category of oral reading fluency, majority of students increased their rate using the strategies of repeated reading, readers' theatre, and timed readings. In addition, repeated reading and readers' theatre influenced comprehension.

Selection Criteria and Literature Search Procedures

Research is needed to better inform educators on how to implement readers' theatre as a reading method to increase reading development. This literature review will explore current research using readers' theatre as an influence on multiple reading elements. An exhaustive search of literature confirmed the lack of empirical and quantitative research examining readers' theatre and its effectiveness on reading development, with only 12 studies found considering readers' theatre with primary students. The literature review was generated through a methodic selection of literature according to qualifying criteria. To be included in this review, studies had to be published in peer-reviewed journals or as

dissertations. Case studies and action research studies were accepted due to the limited research availability. All studies included participants within grades one to five. All studies included one or more of the following dependent variables: fluency, comprehension, and motivation. All studies were quantitative, experimental, and or quasi-experimental design. Studies in this review did not include studies with readers' theatre with techniques with computer technology or subject areas other than literacy, because the methods used did not pertain to readers' theatre as an instructional method within reading development.

Electronic databases, *ERIC*, *JSTOR*, *PsychoINFO*, *MTSU JEWL*, *Google Scholar*, *Education Source*, *Info Search*, *EBSCO*, and *ProQuest* databases were searched. Additional information was collected to inform this author of current readers' theatre practices, influences and instruction through journals, articles and educational websites as, *The Reading Teacher*, *Reading Horizons*, *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *Review of Research in the Classroom*, *Journal of Reading*, *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, and *Journal of Educational Psychology*. Twelve studies were found with search terms that included "Readers Theater" spelled in its various forms and combinations ("Readers," "Reader's," "Readers'," "Theater," "Theatre"). Additional search terms were added to each of the above-mentioned readers' theatre spellings as individual searches, such as "Fluency", "Comprehension", "Motivation", "Elementary Fluency", "Elementary Comprehension", "Elementary Fluency and Comprehension", "Oral Reading", "Instruction", "Elementary", "Second graders", "Elementary Classroom", and "Elementary Education". Other terms were used in isolation for additional studies related to elements of reading pertaining to this study, such as "Fluency", "Comprehension", "Motivation", "Fluency and

its impact on Comprehension”, “Expository content in elementary schools”, and “Influence of Expository content”. Additional sources were found through the articles’ bibliographies, and appendices of the primary sources (Carrick, 2000; Dixon, 2007; Forney, 2013; Gummere, 2004; Jagger, 2008; Johnson, 2011; Keehn, 2003; Morris, 2011; Mraz, Nichols, Caldwell, Beisley, Sargent, & Rupley, 2013; Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Smith, 2011).

The initial search resulted in 1,198 peer-reviewed studies, articles, and dissertations between the years of 1935-2016. All were reviewed and out of these initial abstracts, 328 were read to discern the contents regarding relevance and to meet the inclusion criteria for this study. Only 12 studies met the inclusion criteria. The review discusses type of article with case studies, followed by action research studies, then concludes with unpublished dissertations. This investigation found 1 case study, 1 action research study, 3 peer reviewed study, and 7 dissertations. All the studies included one or more of the measures identified in the search. Table 1 shows readers’ theatre effectiveness on fluency, comprehension, and motivation study characteristics.

Research on readers’ theatre and its effectiveness on comprehension, oral reading fluency, and motivation is relatively new, as majority of current information is written for instructional and informative purposes. The studies reviewed are the most current research meeting criteria, ranging from 1999-2016. See Table 1 for the study characteristics of the most current research found.

Table 1

Readers' Theatre Effectiveness on Fluency, Comprehension, and Motivation on Primary Students Study Characteristics

Study	Intervention	Grade	Student Description	Length	Study Design	Fidelity Reported	Standardized Assessment	Results
Carrick 2000 Dissertation	The effects of readers' theatre on fluency and comprehension on 5 th grade students in regular classrooms using traditional method, paired reading and readers' theatre	5th	179 total Large urban special needs district. Intervention took place in four different schools within same district.	12 weeks 60 minutes per day	Quasi-experimental Pre/post test Three groups: Readers' theatre Paired reading Control. Intact classrooms, ten classrooms, four schools.	Researcher observations, teacher checklists, journals, evaluations, and observations.	Pre-and Posttests: TerraNova Level 15 (McGraw-Hill) Analytical Reading Inventory (Woods & Moe, 1995) – passages used for voice recordings.	Readers' theatre had greater gains in fluency. Yet, there were no significant differences for fluency or comprehension. Motivation No effect given, through observations RT increase motivation.
Dixon 2007 Dissertation	Effects readers' theatre has on fluency and comprehension via expository text.	4th	85% and 87% Caucasian, 3%/4% African American, 11%/8% Hispanic, and 1% Asian-Pacific Islander	6 weeks	Non-equivalent Experimental Pre/post test Treatment and Control groups. Intact classroom, 2 campuses.	External evaluators, checklists, observations, and walk-thru.	Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE), Gates-McGinitie Reading Tests (GMRT).	Significant gains were made between treatment and control groups for fluency and comprehension.
Forney 2012 Dissertation	Teaching content material through readers' theatre	4 th	66 total Researchers school affiliated with a Florida University. Intact classrooms.	4 weeks	Quasi-experimental using three groups: readers' theatre silent reading and. round robin reading	No information given.	No pretest was given. Posttest: Researcher created multiple-choice test. Retention test: multiple-choice test.	Results show that there was no significant difference between the three groups. Scores for retention did show significant differences.

Table 1 (con't.)

Study	Intervention	Grade	Student Description	Length	Study Design	Fidelity Reported	Standardized Assessment	Rests
Gummere 2004 Dissertation	Readers Theater: Its impact on fluency, retell comprehension, and motivation in first graders	1st	Middle to upper socio-economic population Took place in one school, with intact classrooms.	7 weeks	Quasi-experimental Pre/post test Comparison group. Both groups used regular classroom curriculum, with the addition of readers' theatre. Intact classrooms.	All intervention material given to teachers before study, journal kept during intervention and researcher observation.	Multi-Dimensional Fluency Scale (MFS) DORF (DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency) Motivation to Read-Full Scale	There were no significant differences in oral reading rate. Comprehension, and motivation.
Jagger 2008 Dissertation	The effect of reader's theater on fifth-graders reading fluency and comprehension based on reading levels	5th	Total 82 Urban school One school, intact classrooms. No other information given.	8 weeks	Quasi-Experimental nonequivalent control group. Intact classrooms.	Researcher conducted observations	DORF (DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency) Gates McGinitie Reading Test (GMRT)	Treatment showed greater mean change scores than the control group in all three areas of measure, yet, none showed to be significant.
Johnson 2011 Dissertation	The effect of a readers' theatre instruction on second-grade student's fluency and comprehension skills	2 nd	44 total 68% African American 4% European Asia 9% Latino 13% Asia 4% multi-ethnicity One school, intact classrooms.	9 weeks	Quasi-experimental Nonequivalent pretest posttest. Treatment and Control. Intact classrooms.	Meetings and observations.	STAR (Renaissance Learning Center) DORF (DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency)	Results show a significant difference for fluency with treatment. There are no significant differences in comprehension

Table 1 (con't.)

Study	Intervention	Grade	Student Description	Length	Study Design	Fidelity Reported	Standardized Assessment	Results
Millin & Rinehart 1999	The effects of readers' theatre participants on oral reading ability, comprehension and motivation	2 nd	28 Low to middle socio-economic status, urban public Title 1 school	9 weeks 45 minutes daily	Mixed experimental pre/posttests. All participants took part in treatment. No control.	The reading specialist scored samples, researcher observations	Fluency: Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) for fluency Comprehension: Whole group retelling Motivation: Elementary Reading Scale Assessment (ERAS)	Results showed Treatment group showed a large gains in oral word recognition and comprehension. Study states that the pre-and post-test scores did not differ.
Morris 2011 Action Research	The effect of readers' theater on reading fluency and attitudes towards reading.	2 nd	22 total Suburban elementary school in San Francisco. Total student population 492 398 Caucasian 29 Asian 65 Other	12 weeks Researchers class all students participated in treatment at the same time.	Pretest, posttest repeated measure	None reported	Fluency: Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) Comprehension: Multi-dimensional Fluency Scale (MFS) Motivation: Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS)	Pretest showed 85% ($N = 15$) of higher readers reached the 77-wpm ceiling, Therefore, study focused on improvement and scores for the at-risk group ($N = 7$). Results showed improvement
Young & Rasinski 2009 Peer Review Study	Implementing readers' theater as an approach to classroom fluency instruction	2 nd ^d	29 Total Title 1 Mono-lingual students	Full academic year 20-25 minutes 2 times a week 5-10 minutes 2 times a week	Quantitative and qualitative research case study	Not given	Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI)	No statistical data analysis was reported. All students had treatment. Researchers indicated that fluency was increased.

A typical scenario and pattern of readers' theatre intervention would consist of the following activities (Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1998).

Day 1: Teacher reads script, discussion on character, plot, setting, and teacher gives out student scripts, teacher guides while students read, teacher assigned parts, activities with script.

Day 2: Students listen to tape of script reading while reading along. Students are put into pairs to read script.

Day 3: Teacher listens to groups, they polish reading parts, read aloud, students are given six questions regarding script, and students take home script.

Day 4: Dress rehearsal with teacher guidance, practice, and take home script.

Day 5: Performance

Case Study

Students with reading problems need multiple occasions and time to read if they are to attain competency in oral reading fluency. Unfortunately, many at-risk readers become frustrated, less motivated, and give up on reading. This results in the inability to develop word recognition skills, word rate, vocabulary, and prosody, working together to extract meaning from text (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991; Mraz et al., 2013).

In their review, Mraz et al. (2013) discussed recent strategies used to nurture fluency with struggling readers, emphasizing repeated reading. This case study is based on the authors involvement in an intervention led by a third-grade teacher. The school was reported as a high poverty school with 85% of students receiving free and reduced lunch.

All of the 19 participants were African American; 13 lived in single parent homes, 3 were repeating, and 3 qualified for special services. All of the students began the school year

below grade level. The intervention lasted six weeks, with 30-minute daily sessions. All participants performed identical activities and readings in the same session. The intervention was duplicated each week, with the exception of new texts. Each day began with a mini-lesson alternating forms of whole group reading; shared reading, paired reading, echo reading, and choral reading with expression. The mini-lesson was followed by small group instruction and individual or partner reading. While the teacher provided feedback and guidance, the session would conclude with a rehearsal to prepare for the weekly performance. A comparison of pretest and posttest scores showed readers' theatre as an effective reading method increasing fluency and comprehension scores. The study did not report data findings in statistical effects. Results showed that prior to the intervention, the class had an average fluency rate of 55 word-per-minute (WPM). The posttest results revealed a dramatic increase in reading rate, ranging from 21 to 47 WPM, and a collective average of 93 WPM. Comprehension scores reflected improvement, with 49% to 86% gain, going from a frustrating reading level to almost an independent reading level. Although there was an increase in both fluency and comprehension, it is difficult to attribute it to readers' theatre. The study did not include a control group for comparison as all students participated in the treatment. Since all the students simultaneously took part in the various reading methods, there was not a definitive way to discern which strategy or skill may have been the cause of improvement. It is unclear what skills and strategies the class may have achieved prior to the study, in order to make a valid assumption or statement of improvement. Additional information is needed to affirm readers' theatre as an effective tool for fluency, comprehension, and motivation.

Action Research Studies

Morris (2011) implemented an action research study with 22 second-graders at a suburban California elementary school. The construct of the 12-week intervention consisted of three, 4-week units of study. In the first unit, after a pretest was given, four weeks of regular fluency instruction was implemented. Regular classroom curriculum included a basal reading program, followed by a posttest. During the following four-week unit, treatment was applied along with the regular curriculum including a pre- and posttest. The third four-week unit mimicked the first week using regular curriculum with no treatment (except for the knowledge learned from the treatment application during the second unit).

Measures included oral reading fluency, comprehension, and attitude towards reading. Pretest indicated that 68% ($n = 15$) of students reached the target of 77 WPM. The higher readers remained consistent through the duration of the intervention, showing little change in the posttests scores. The result may have been influenced by the use of the same passage for the pretest and posttest, therefore, repeated practice may have had an effect on the increase of higher readers. In addition, details were not given on what the instruction entailed within the regular classroom curriculum that may have enhanced reading skills. The study did not include a comparison group, but as a whole group, with a subgroup of less-skilled readers. Morris (2011) indicated the at-risk readers improved their oral rate with three students meeting the 77 WPM target by the end of the intervention. Three students exceeded the target rate with an average pretest score of 55 WPM, posttest score of 100 WPM, with an increase of 30 words. The researcher did not conduct a statistical analysis, but used points and words per minute to achieve outcomes. The researcher reported that

readers' theatre maintained and improved oral reading fluency and comprehension for the less-skilled students. To assess motivation, Morris used the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) and indicated that readers' theatre did not have a strong effect on motivation.

Quasi-Experimental Research Studies

Millin and Rinehart's (1999) nine-week intervention, included a total of 28 students from five Title 1 reading classes in two neighboring elementary schools. The participants were randomly assigned within their intact classrooms to either the experimental group (i.e., readers' theatre) or control (i.e., regular classroom curriculum) group. Fourteen students that were assigned to Campus A, served as the experimental group, where they were then divided into two smaller experimental groups of six to eight. Another group of 14 students from Campus B or C, comprised the control group, and the remaining students from Campus C also served as a control group.

Resource books written for readers' theatre, trade books, and a basal provided the reading content for the study. The control group worked with the basal readers used in the regular reading curriculum. The intervention followed a researcher created protocol, with data collected at the end of the nine-week period. Results indicated that participation in readers' theatre showed a moderate influence in oral reading ability (word recognition, prosody, phrasing) and word meaning. Outcomes reflected significant effects for oral reading rate and comprehension, indicating readers' theatre as an effective tool for improvement. Millin and Rinehart's findings support other fluency research and the benefits of readers' theatre for at-risk readers (Carrick, 2000; Keehn, 2003; Mraz et al., 2013). Outcomes from interviews and observations indicated that readers' theatre had an impact on

students' motivation, attitude, and confidence. Teachers mentioned students' excitement about reading while exploring various genres beyond the basal reader. Teachers noticed improvement on word recognition, vocabulary, and knowledge of word meanings (Millin & Rinehart, 1999). Less-skilled students self-corrected, read in phrases, and used intonation. Once read word-by-word, students improved in retelling and comprehension (Millin & Rinehart, 1999).

To further examine how readers' theatre is an effective means of instruction in reading, Keehn's (2003) study investigated the effects of explicit instruction on fluency through different teaching methods. Research has advocated for explicit instruction in fluency and its components (Zutell & Rasinski, 1993). Keehn based his study on instructional methods that included modeling, rereading, and discussion. Research has found the combination of these components promotes oral reading growth and self-awareness of fluency performance (Keehn, 2003; Rasinski, Padak, Linek & Sturtevant, 1994). The participants were second graders from a rural Texas school district with a diverse ethnicity population. Out of the 66 students who received the readers' theatre intervention, two classes were randomly assigned to the treatment group with explicit instruction, while two classes received readers' theatre without instruction. The readers' theatre group with explicit instruction followed the intervention protocol designed by Martinez et al. (1999) which included steps to create critical thinking skills, teacher coaching, and student assigned parts. In addition, texts were chosen based on three reading level abilities to ensure students would be reading within their instructional level. The intervention included multiple readings of all parts by all the students, teacher modeling, and discussions on character attributes

(Martinez et al., 1999). At the conclusion of the nine-week intervention, data was collected using pretest and posttest measures. Results indicated both treatment groups made significant growth in oral reading fluency using rereading, modeling, and use of appropriate texts. However, there was not a significant difference between the two groups in rate, accuracy, comprehension, phrasing, expressiveness, and overall reading ability. However, the study indicates the combination of modeling, repeated reading, and discussion increased students' fluency. Keehn's (2003) treatment group of explicit fluency instruction did not support the theory that students who receive teacher feedback improves the benefits of repeated reading fluency development (Therrian, 2004). This may be explained by the inconsistency of the mini-lessons. After the initial mini-lessons were taught in the first week, further lessons were not taught again until the seventh and eighth week. Findings revealed that the most gains were achieved with the lower-ability readers; possibly due to the lower reading texts being so accessible. It also provided an opportunity to read at a faster rate producing comprehension. It is also noted that the lower-level readers had "more room to grow" (Keehn, 2003). Findings indicated that repeated reading of text based on the individual's reading level and ability is of crucial importance in fluency improvement. The primary intention of Keehn's study was to examine if fluency was increased with or without explicit instruction, using the method of readers' theatre. In doing so, both groups practiced repeated reading, which has been shown in other research to be effective in fluency development (Chomsky, 1978; Samuels S., 1979; Tyler & Chard, 2000). However, it is unclear how readers' theatre was the catalyst for the improvement when both groups used the

treatment. Stronger effects may have been produced with the inclusion of a control group that used the regular daily reading curriculum without readers' theatre.

Young and Rasinski (2009) also conducted an action research study that examined how readers' theatre may improve fluency and comprehension. The one-year study took place in a Title 1 school, with a total of 29 second-grade participants. Like Keehn (2003) all students participated in the readers' theatre intervention, which became a product of the daily 90-minute reading instruction. During the days of independent reading and workstations, the primary researcher conducted small-guided reading groups. Outcomes were not reported in effect sizes and no data was given to calculate effects. Information that was reported reveal substantial growth was made over the school year in fluency rate, automaticity, and word recognition. Students increased from 62.7 WPM to 127.6 WPM, reflecting an increase of 65 words. These results based on Hasbrouck and Tindal (2006) puts these students in the 50th and 75th percentile for second graders. The action research study included many variables that could have contributed to the fluency increase, finding it difficult to identify the dominant factor that produced the gains. Young explained that although readers' theatre, repeated reading, and fluency rate may not be entirely responsible for the fluency rate increase, it is likely that reader's theatre had a major impact. Young found treatment scores to be greater than the other second grade classes who did not implement readers' theatre. Young reports that through observer, student, and parent discussions, motivation improved with the implementation of readers' theatre.

Parents responded in dialogue about the positive impact that their child had in reading, while students claimed they looked forward to reading and enjoyed learning (Young & Rasinski, 2009). This study may have produced the positive outcomes the researchers had anticipated, but it does not provide sufficient information to state that readers' theatre was the cause of those changes. It is also vague in its description on the role of readers' theatre, apart from other forms of reading used within the literacy block and small group instruction. The alternating of different texts four days a week, did not allow for repetition, which has been shown to be effective for word recognition, accuracy, and rate (Samuels, 1979). It is uncertain if rehearsals, character discussions, and other essential elements of a readers' theatre study were included in the mini-lessons or small group sessions. Information is also lacking on the level of content used during the mini-lesson and small group sessions. Additional factors that may have compromised the results is the amount of intensity placed on other methods of reading the students practice, the amount of daily reading of each student, and the activities in the literacy workshop.

The effectiveness of readers' theatre. Carrick (2000) conducted a study of 179 diverse fifth-grade students from four different schools within the same district. The study's purpose was to examine the use of readers' theatre to improve reading rate, accuracy, and comprehension. This quasi-experimental study used three groups; an experimental group (readers' theatre), a control group (no treatment), and a paired reading group. Groups were not randomly formed, as administration had formed classes previous to intervention. It is also not clear whether the paired reading partners were matched by ability level, randomly chosen by teacher, or chosen by students. The experimental groups' protocol was based *on*

The Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide (1985), resembling protocols created by Millin & Rinehart (1999) and Martinez et al. (1998). The control group read to each other during each session and recorded responses in journals on how well they read and how well they listened. Different texts were given to the paired reading group each day, while the control group had daily direct instruction, using tradebooks and or basal readers.

Findings showed the experimental group significantly improved on both oral reading fluency and comprehension compared to the control group and paired reading group. Carrick stated that while it is clear that the experimental group would have greater gains than the control group in fluency rate, a few intervention elements may have contributed to the differences found between the experimental and paired repeated reading group in fluency. The readers' theatre group read the same script each day, while the paired reading group passages changed daily. Therefore, the treatment group had the advantage of repetition which could influence rate and automaticity. The students kept journals to record thoughts and ideas on the reading process and intervention. Overall, the readers' theatre group were engaged, motivated, and enjoyed performing. Several went as far as to say they were disappointed or frustrated if they would miss the sessions, due to pull-outs of other subjects. In contrast, most of the paired readers' expressed boredom, were underwhelmed, and tired of the paired reading process. Some students expressed the desire to withdraw after the first four weeks of the intervention. Teachers commented that the paired reading groups became more of a chore to get the students motivated and to follow through with the lessons.

It has been suggested that children need to have access to literature based on their ability level to improve fluency and comprehension skills, and to strengthen their reading development (Adams, 1990; Hiebert, 2005). Gummere (2004) investigated the effects of readers' theatre on oral reading fluency, retell comprehension, and motivation on first grade students ability levels. This quasi-experimental study took place in two intact first- grade classrooms. The experimental group ($n = 20$) used readers' theatre integrated in the regular reading curriculum, followed the same intervention protocol as Martinez et al. (1998) which used scripts based on students' reading ability levels. The control group ($n = 19$) continued the reading program without readers' theatre. Data collected after the seven-week intervention showed that the treatment group did not improve on oral reading fluency. Gummere administered an additional fluency measure to assess prosodic elements of reading, stating that fluency is not only word-per-minute, but is comprised of multiple skills (Allington, 1983; Martinez et al., 1998; Zutell & Rasinski, 1991). Gummere contended that the prosodic skills assessment reflects significant improvement. This assertion presents conflict, as it appears there is a discrepancy in the reported data. The analysis did not report effect sizes, but included the posttest scores for the treatment with a means of 8.45 (3.35), control means of 7.63 (2.56), and an alpha of ($p = .07$). Using the information reported in Gummere's Table 4. *Childrens Performance on Pretests and Posttests*, the results indicated minimal improvement. To test for comprehension, a student would read a passage followed by retelling. As the student retold what they read, the assessor would count how many words were used in the retell for one minute. Results showed that the comparison group had a higher retell score when compared to the experimental group, but there was not a significant

difference between the two groups. Gummere suggests that a power analysis (with power at .328) may have been too weak to detect effects and would indicate 32.8%, or 13 (1 in 3) samples failed to detect effects through the statistic (Gummere, 2004). Most research studies select 80% power, hoping to explain potential effects can be attributed to differences between the groups to generalize to the population. The Central Limit Theorem suggests the bigger the sample, the greater the power to obtain greater effects (Field, 2009). This study would need 31 out of the 39 samples to achieve 80%. This study was underpowered and unable to substantiate effects for readers' theatre. It would have been beneficial and informative if this study would have conducted a statistical analysis to determine any effects. Even if significant differences were not found, the information might contribute to inform future research and instruction.

Results showed that readers' theatre was not effective on oral reading fluency or retell comprehension between the two ability groups. Gummere suggested that the above level readers had already reached a higher level of fluency, therefore, the comprehension effect was not as crucial. However, continuous instruction in the prosodic elements of reading is critical. It is possible the short duration of intervention and small sample size failed to detect differences between these ability groups. In respect to the below or on-level readers, there was no significant gains in comprehension.

Dixon (2007) extended prior readers' theatre studies and investigated the effect of readers' theatre on fluency and reading comprehension with a highly diverse ethnic population of fourth grade students using expository text. A total of 172 participants from two campuses took part in the intervention. The experimental group used expository reading

as cross subjects of social studies and science. The nine-week intervention utilized four days per week, with days alternating between the two subjects. Each subject was instructed by two different teachers who followed the same instructional pattern. Day 1 of both social studies and science, consisted of listening to the teacher read, model expression, prosody and gestures, followed by assigning parts to students. On Day 2, students rehearsed parts individually and in groups while the teacher gave feedback. The session would end with students blocking the placement of characters during the performances, proceeded by the performance. During the same six-weeks, the control group continued with district curriculum-based instruction, with no readers' theatre. At the conclusion of collecting data, results showed that readers' theatre did not reflect gains in fluency over the control group. Likewise, Dixon (2007) reports no meaningful differences between the two groups in comprehension.

Jagger (2008) examined readers' theatre as an instructional tool to determine if readers' theatre enhances fifth graders reading fluency and comprehension. Jagger also set out to examine if readers' theatre had differential effects based on reading abilities. This quasi-experimental control group design employed four 5th-grade classrooms, for a total of 82 participants. Two classrooms became the treatment group and two participated as the control group. A pretest and posttest were used to form groups based on ability levels. The treatment group consisted of a systematic intervention of readers' theatre, as part of the 90-minute reading block. The weekly routine took only 5 to 20 minutes of instructional time, with the remaining time dedicated to the basal reading curriculum. The control group continued with the district's basal-oriented reading curriculum for the complete 90-minute

literacy block. Supporting the district's adopted reading curriculum, the readers' theatre intervention was created as a complimentary tool to enhance the already established 5th-grade objectives and standards on reading of texts. The weekly intervention emulated Carrick's (2000) study using the *Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide* (1985). The first week consisted of mini-lessons discussing readers' theatre elements, fluency skills, effective rehearsal strategies, and group rehearsal protocol. Each week's intervention was as follows: Day 1, students received scripts prepared earlier by teachers who assigned and highlighted parts based on ability levels. Day 2 consisted of students self-monitoring the reading of script with expression, accuracy, and rate. The teacher would observe and provide feedback and modeling, which is a critical component of effective repeated readings during the transference into other texts (Chomsky, 1978; Samuels, 1979). Students then rehearsed the script several times. Day 3 was similar to Day 2; students rehearsed while the teacher observed and provided feedback. On Day 4, students rehearsed in groups, periodically stopping to provide their peers with constructive feedback. Day 5 the treatment group performed the readers' theatre play. Data was collected after the conclusion of the eight-week intervention and showed no differences between the readers' theatre and control group for fluency and showed minimal differences for comprehension.

In summary, Jagger (2008) found the results unexpected due to the amount of research that supports repeated reading to be highly effective on fluency rate (Dowhower, 1987; Hiebert, 2005; Samuels, 1979). Jagger used findings from Carver's (1989) study, that the average student will increase reading rate by 10 to 12 words per school year, 2.5 to 5 WPM per-quarter of the academic year. Using this information, the control group gained

5.02 WPM, while the treatment group increased 9.61 WPM in the length of eight weeks. In comparison, Fuchs and Fuchs (1993) found that for the average second grader, a weekly oral reading rate of 1.5 to 2 WPM, 12 to 16 WPM per-quarter, is adequate to show improvement. Jagger's calculation of 9.61 WPM for the treatment group is more aligned with Fuchs and Fuchs study. An observation to point out, is that Carver's study is based on silent reading rates obtained through comprehension, while Jagger's study is analyzed on oral reading rates. In using Carver's values, Jagger contends that a longer intervention period or a larger sample size may have increased the means in word per minute (Jagger, 2008).

Smith (2011) performed a quasi-experimental design used to examine readers' theatre as an instructional tool and a motivation factor in reading. The ten-week study used readers' theatre as the treatment group and an alternative treatment of repeated reading as the comparison group. Participants were 85 second-grade students from a small suburban Title 1 school in Pennsylvania. Two classes ($n = 43$) served as the treatment group, and two other ($n = 42$) served as the alternate treatment group. The treatment group supplemented the basal curriculum with readers' theatre, while the comparison group utilized the basal curriculum with repeated reading. Using the Harcourt, Inc. Storytown series, the treatment (i.e., readers' theatre) followed guidelines established in the basal program, similar protocol used in other research studies based on readers' theatre. The alternate comparison group (i.e., repeated reading) also utilized the Harcourt, Inc. Storytown reading series. The group activities included students independent reading and paired reading, while switching partners on a daily basis. During this time, teachers observed the groups and offered feedback. Smith found there were no significant differences between the treatment and alternative treatment

groups in any of the posttest variables with little effects for fluency, attitude, and motivation. The results in this study did not support the claim that readers' theatre positively influences oral findings reading fluency, reading attitude, and motivation.

Johnson (2011) included a writing component to serve a response to comprehension. The rationale was to test the theoretical framework of readers' theatre in a classroom setting to determine if readers' theatre can influence automaticity, oral fluency accuracy, and prosody. Previously explained in chapter one, automaticity is the ability to recognize words without any forethought while simultaneously using other reading skills (Samuels, 1979). Accuracy is ability to decode printed words (Johnson, 2011), and prosody is the inflection of tonal quality, pitch, and rhythmic patterns of spoken language (Harris & Hodges, 1995). Johnson explored readers' theatre and its effect on fluency and comprehension through a systematic instructional intervention. This study was conducted using data collected from a pretest and posttest. The study also determined if treatment differences were apparent in fluency and comprehension based on ability reading levels, especially low achieving readers. The nine-week study consisted of 44 second-grade students, divided into the two groups, readers' theatre and control. The treatment group (i.e., readers' theatre) was divided into four smaller instructional groups according to reading abilities. The weekly scripts were written on a first through third grade reading level based on the students reading abilities. The diverse reading materials enabled the students to read on an independent level, which was hypothesized to produce greater gains (Hiebert, 2005; Johnson, 2011; Young & Rasinski, 2009). The treatment group followed a daily protocol that included teacher modeling, role assignments, repeated practice, listening, teacher coaching and feedback, and performance. On the third day of the intervention, the

teacher checked for comprehension by asking questions on the text while students responded in writing. The business as usual control groups continued regular classroom literacy instruction using a basal program and activities. Information was not available reflecting the effects, means, and standard deviations. The study found that the students who participated in the readers' theatre group increased their fluency reading rate, but failed to show significant differences in comprehension between the two groups.

When reading text, what students learn is based on prior knowledge retrieved from stored memory to create new knowledge gathered from information in content material (Duke et al., 2011). Forney (2013) set out to examine readers' theatre as a method to comprehend and retain information compared to silent reading and round robin reading. Participants were three 4th-grade classes from a research lab- school affiliated with a Florida university. It was assumed the 66 participants had no knowledge on the topic of the intervention, therefore, a pre-test was not given. All students in each classroom, took part in all three reading conditions of silent reading, round robin and readers' theatre. All of the students read the same text, both narrative and expository using one of the three reading formats. Each session was preceded with a five question multiple-choice test. The protocol for the readers' theatre group included lessons, rehearsals, discussions, guidance, and performance. Detailed documentation was not provided regarding the activities the other two groups engaged in. However, standard application for silent reading lends itself by the title of the method, while round robin generally requires guidance. The researcher reported that on the last day of Week 1 the silent reading and round robin groups took a second retention test from the first day's reading, while the readers' theatre group took the same assessment at the start of the following week. The classes

alternated the reading approach using different texts each week. The intervention concluded with all groups taking the final retention assessment.

The studies' findings were mixed. Results conducted for comprehension showed a moderate effect for all reading methods. A limitation to the study might be the minimal training teachers received. Fidelity was not secured to ensure all teaching was identical, the four-week intervention did not allow adequate time, and students were restricted to each reading treatment only once. This study did not include adequate practice time for groups participating in readers' theatre to be as effective as other studies reviewed (Gummere, 2004; Jagger, 2008; Johnson, 2011; Keehn, 2003). Repeated reading has been shown to be critical for students reading development along with teacher feedback (Keehn, 2003), neither of which was present in this study. According to Forney (2013), the findings are not strong enough to conclude that reader's theatre is effective and worth incorporating into the reading curriculum.

Knowledge Acquisition

Retention is the ability to remember acquired information on a long-term basis (Harris & Hodges, 1995). Forney (2013) found that readers' theatre had greater effects on retention as opposed to alternate reading methods of silent reading and round-robin reading. The assessments were not given consistently, as two groups were tested at the end of the first week and the third group was tested three days later. This potentially provided time for discussion between the students who took the test and those who had yet to take it. The study does not provide adequate information on the content of the assessments, only to say that the groups alternated between narrative and expository text within a week's time changing texts each week. The final retention assessment was given in a whole group setting

at the end of the final week. However, the study's results are vague regarding the assessments content, scoring, and results. In addition, an assessment was not given to assess long-term comprehension following a duration of time after the completion of the intervention.

Motivation

In the early psychology studies, motivation became the dominant topic of research as theorists differed on motivational framework and mechanisms, while more current studies have focused on behavior and metacognition (Paris & Paris, 2001; Smith, 2011). While many factors can determine motivation, Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996) listed necessary elements in the classroom that can be considered motivational factors; (a) access to a plethora of books, (b) socialization with books, (c) exposure to genres, and (d) choice of books. In addition to providing texts and reading materials, it is equally important for educators to be conversant in the types of instructional reading methods such as readers' theatre to increase motivation for all readers (Prescott, 2003).

Readers' theatre promotes enthusiasm about the tasks involved in performance; from preparation, rehearsal, and peer interaction (Flynn, 2004). Students understand in order to be well-prepared for a performance, it is necessary to read the text multiple times to understand the meaning of the text as they focus on what other characters are saying (Flynn, 2004; Moran, 2006). Readers' theatre has been shown to motivate and excite students as they anticipate new scripts and performances (Casey & Chamberlain, 2006; Griffith & Rasinski, 2004). This literature review found limited research demonstrating that readers' theatre is effective for enhancing motivation. Some of the studies in this review chose to administer

pretests and posttests surveys to assess differences in motivation, while other studies used observation.

In a study examining fluency, comprehension, and student's attitude towards reading, Morris (2011) used the *Elementary Reading Attitude Scale* to consider motivation (ERAS; McKenna and Kerr, 1990). The Garfield pictorial assessment consists of questions pertaining to reading attitudes. Answers are coded with five Garfield cartoon figures, each exhibiting a different emotion from happy to mad. The student chooses the figure that best represents their answer for the specific question. Smith (2011) used the ERAS to examine motivation between readers' theatre and repeated reading before the intervention and after. The study did not show significant differences between the two groups, including across gender. There are several reasons for the lack of motivational differences: 1) the lack of focus, 2) inability to hear, read, or understand the question, 3) randomly chosen answers, 4) peer pressure, and 5) the exclusion of a comparison group.

Gummer's (2004) study was the only study that included a control group and a standardized measure of motivation, while other studies (Forney, 2013, Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Smith, 2011) did not include a control group in their design. The inclusion of a control group provides a baseline to compare results and isolates the independent variable to rule out other explanations from the results (Field, 2009). The outcomes of the current study did not show positive results, and the overall assumption that reader's theatre is a positive motivational factor is difficult to determine when both conditions took part in the treatment with no comparison.

In summary, a review of the 12 primary studies concluded that readers' theatre had mixed results, adding to similar outcomes of prior research. Seven of the studies utilized pretest posttest control group design. Out of the seven studies, Carrick (2000), Dixon (2007), Keehn (2003), and Johnson (2011) showed readers' theatre had some effect on oral reading fluency, while Jagger (2008) showed some movement in the mean gains, but no significant differences between the two groups. Dixon (2007) and Smith (2011) showed no differences between intervention and control. Only Dixon (2007) showed significant differences between the two conditions for comprehension. The remaining studies did not use a comparison group. Millin & Rinehart (1999) administered pretest posttest measures and found effects for oral reading fluency, while Gummere (2004) failed to produce effects. Mraz et al. (2013) and Morris (2011) reported positive outcomes, however, they elected not to use a comparison group and did not conduct a statistical analysis. While the studies may be informative, the design does not allow conclusions to be drawn about reader theatre's effectiveness. When examining readers' theatre as a motivational factor for reading, Gummere (2004), Millin and Rinehart (1999), and Smith (2011) used standardized assessments, with two of the three studies determined there were no effects for motivation. In comparison, all the studies that assessed using informal discussions, observations and interviews claimed that students became motivated to read, and saw a positive adjustment in their reading attitude. Here again, there is no evidence to substantiate the claim. The observations made by the educators are useful, yet, the possibility exists the results become skewed or subjective in the desire for a positive outcome. There is not adequate information to determine if reader's theatre was the cause of any potential increase in motivation in

research that did not include a comparison group and without appropriate design to assess a causal impact.

In this review, most of the researchers agreed that the duration of their intervention was inadequate to produce anticipated effects, and advise future studies to lengthen the time to obtain greater effects. Likewise, a majority of the studies concluded that the sample size was also a factor that affected the low effect sizes. A larger sample size produces greater statistical power, which enhances researchers' ability to find an effect if one exists (Field, 2009). In looking at the reviewed studies, there was not one that randomly assigned individual students into the condition groups. Random assignment allows for the equal opportunity for everyone to participate in each experimental condition. Random assignment ensures equality between the conditions to establish internal validity, in that, if there should be threats to the experiment, it would affect all treatment groups. School administrators and teachers usually prefer to have as little interruption as possible in the classroom, and to ensure all teachers and students are treated equally. To avoid administrators concern, studies that utilized classes from multiple locations, assigned all classes at each location as the same treatment group (Carrick, 2000; Dixon, 2007). Ten studies in this literacy review utilized multiple classes in one location, each intact classroom randomly assigned to either treatment group. It is more convenient for the researcher, teacher, and students in the same classroom to be involved in the same tasks, which possibly eliminates student competition or envy of separate group's activities and lessons. In the case of an treatment and control design, there would be less training, less interruptions, and possibly less instructional time with less groups. Although, assigned intact classrooms can be part of an adequate design, it is not without

limitations and biases, such as competition between treatment and control groups. A control group may feel less adequate than a treatment class, therefore, may be motivated to increase work and tasks to increase posttest scores. A teacher that has been assigned a control group may prefer to be a treatment and wants to apply the same lessons and ideas, therefore, diffusing the study by speaking with a treatment teacher and sharing materials. The obvious limitation of whole class treatment groups, is that there is not an equal opportunity for each participant to take part in either treatment group. In choosing to randomly assign the whole class to a specific treatment, it is possible that some classes are formed based on reading levels, special needs, gifted, and interests. Such predetermined groupings could affect the outcome of research done with intact classrooms assigned as one group. The benefit of using random assignment is to ensure equivalence amongst the conditions. This means that the difference between the groups is contributed to the treatment group on which they were assigned and not to any other pre-existing differences.

All but two studies chose to use narrative text, except for Dixon (2007) and Forney (2013), who used expository text, defined as written information containing facts. These texts are usually more difficult for students to understand, as expository text contains new words that are not part of a common daily vocabulary, have difficult concepts to relate to personal experiences, and are non-sequential in its written format (Hall et al., 2005). Dixon's (2007) results did not seem to differ on oral fluency and comprehension using expository text, compared to studies that used narrative. It is possible effects were not met because the research implemented both social studies and science only once a week, with the content material changing weekly. A longer duration of time with each subject may have allowed for

the difficult genre to be examined. In addition, it may be beneficial for the expository text to be on the same topic for a length of time due to its complexity. Further research is needed to investigate different types of expository text using readers' theatre.

This review examined literature in terms of historical development, theories on fluency and comprehension development, theories of motivation, research on fluency, comprehension and motivation, and instructional methods. Considered a relatively new area of experimental research, readers' theatre has been explored as a reading technique intended to impact reading development. Future studies are crucial to investigate various techniques and methods in using readers' theatre including the measurement of literacy elements (e.g., genres, text complexities) and the response of students with different reading abilities.

Summary

The ability to understand and derive meaning from text is central to reading development (Durkin, 1992; Rasinski, 2006). LaBerge and Samuels (1974) automaticity theory specifies that improved fluency may positively impact comprehension. Since the theory was first introduced, substantial research has been conducted supporting fluency as an influential component of comprehension (Fuchs et al., 2001; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Rasinski, 2010). Driving the urgency for fluency development, the National Reading Panel's 2000 report suggested oral reading and repeated reading to be included in daily reading instruction. Developed by Samuels (1979) repeated reading enlists multiple readings of text with a predetermined goal. This method was to improve fluency, comprehension, motivation, and attitude. As a form of repeated reading, reader's theater requires multiple practices of the script in preparation for the performance (Flynn, 2004; Martinez et al., 1999). Educators

recommend readers' theatre as a strategy to motivate all levels of reading abilities (Corcoran, 2005) and a dramatic art genre interacting with literature to present a vivid performance while seducing audience members into a spontaneous response (Carrick, 2001; Tanner, 1993), and as a beneficial and valuable instructional tool to enhance reading skills (Craig & Smith, 1976; Post, 1972). Although there seems to be a plethora of practitioner support for readers' theatre as an instructional method to improve skills (Busching, 1981; Tyler & Chard, 2000; Worthy & Prater, 2002), a paucity of experimental research has been conducted to corroborate these claims.

Purpose of Study

The purpose for this study is to extend current research on readers' theatre's effect on oral reading fluency, comprehension, and motivation. This study utilized expository text due to the limited experimental studies on readers' theatre using expository texts. Early education classrooms are underemphasizing expository texts while focused on narrative as there is insufficient research on how to implement effective instruction to expository text (Duke, 2000). Current research on expository text and its structure is important to students progressing reading development (Englert & Hiebert, 1984). This study uses expository text that is aligned with state standards and in cooperation with the classroom teachers (CCSS, 2016). This study is unique in that it is one of the only experimental studies to examine the effectiveness of readers' theatre on fluency, comprehension, knowledge acquisition, and motivation.

Through the limited amount of studies that have been conducted, research has indicated mixed-results in support of readers' theatre and its influence. This research investigation is to extend understanding about readers' theatre as an instructional tool for improving oral reading fluency, comprehension, and motivation. Specifically, this study will address the following questions:

1. What is the effect of using readers' theatre on the reading fluency of second graders?
2. What is the effect of using readers' theatre on the reading comprehension of second graders?
3. Does an intervention using readers' theatre motivate second-grade students' reading attitude?
4. What is the effect of using readers' theatre on students' knowledge acquisition two weeks after the completion of intervention?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Past research suggests mixed results regarding readers' theatre effectiveness at improving fluency, comprehension, and motivation (Keehn, 2003; Martinez et al., 1999; Millin & Rinehart, 1999). This study improves on the methods used in previous studies to test the effectiveness of readers' theatre on fluency, comprehension, and motivation. It also provides information about long-term knowledge retention by testing knowledge two weeks after the intervention. After receiving approval from the Middle Tennessee State University IRB, schools and classrooms were approached to participate in the study. A location was selected, and permission letters were handed out explaining the intent of the study. Only those students who returned the signed consent form could be participants in the study (See Appendix A and B for both forms).

This study used a pretest posttest control group design to examine the effects of readers' theatre using expository text on fluency, comprehension, motivation, and knowledge acquisition for second-grade elementary students. This chapter provides the methodology for the study including the intervention, description of the participants, study design, measures, procedures, and data analysis.

This study set out to address the following questions:

1. What is the effect of using readers' theatre on the reading fluency of second graders?
2. What is the effect of using readers' theatre on the reading comprehension of second graders?

3. Does an intervention using readers' theatre motivate second-grade students' reading attitude?
4. What is the effect of using readers' theatre on students' knowledge acquisition two weeks after the completion of intervention?

Participants

The participants were from an elementary school located in a southern city in middle Tennessee. The Title 1 school is part of a rural special school district within the city limits. The teachers are the primary classroom teachers with their own intact classrooms. The participants ranged in age from seven to nine years of age and were in intact classrooms assigned by administration at the beginning of the academic year. A total of 27 participants consented to be in the study. Random assignment was implemented for individual participants within two classrooms to an experimental condition (readers' theatre) or a control condition (repeated reading). During the two-week intervention, one student withdrew from the study due to relocation out of the district zone area. The study maintained a total of 26 participants with 86% Caucasian, 7% African American, and 7% Hispanic/Latin ethnicities.

Design

This experimental study was used to determine if readers' theatre influences oral reading fluency, comprehension, and motivation. An experimental pretest posttest control group research design was chosen to test for differences between the intervention and the dependent variables. The independent variable in this study is readers' theatre. Readers' theatre was examined on the measures of dependent variables including fluency,

comprehension, and motivation. This design was used so that posttest differences can be attributed to the treatment and not to initial differences within the sample. This design method effectively controls for the eight threats of internal validity (e.g., history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, statistical regression, experimental mortality, and selection maturation; Campbell & Stanley, 1963). The school administration selected the classroom prior to the intervention based on the diversity of student abilities.

The participants rotated between two classrooms for reading and math instruction. The classroom teachers divided the students into groups based on reading abilities of either high to average or low average to low. This study's 2-week intervention took place in the classroom where the teacher conducted the reading instruction for two second grade classrooms. The 2-week intervention took place during the regular 90-minute literacy block for each group, totaling three hours per day, consisting of 40-minute sessions for each of the two treatment and two control groups. The experimental pretest posttest was selected, because random assignment across the selected grade level was not possible. There was total of two treatment groups and two control groups within each 90-minute literacy block. Randomizing the participants allows equal opportunity for each participant to take part in either group and to control for extraneous variables.

Intervention-Readers' Theatre as Treatment

This study's content material was based on a social studies common core state standard and school district standards written for the first-quarter grading period. The expository text was used to determine if readers' theatre increases comprehension and

mastery of informational content. (See Appendices C and D for readers' theatre lesson plans and script)

The following is a summary of daily lessons and activities:

- Day 1: Explicit instruction with introduction of readers' theatre, discussion for prior knowledge, mini-lesson on textual features, model reading, discussion on new words and vocabulary, group reading, discussion on content and check for understanding.
- Day 2: A mini-lesson on character descriptions in general terms; researcher assigned character parts, students highlighted parts, character analysis, and written response of character attributes. Students drew their character, group shared, individually practiced parts, researcher observed, listened, and gave feedback. Constructive and corrective feedback improves fluency, word accuracy and recognition, and comprehension (Pany & McCoy, 1988; Therrien, 2004).
- Day 3: A whole group mini-lesson on character development, students rehearsed individually multiple times, group rehearsed multiple times. A discussion followed on student progress, and researcher provided feedback.
- Day 4: Researcher reviewed readers' theatre definition, had group discussion on staging and blocking a scene, group rehearsed, researcher coached, and group discussed rehearsal. The last few minutes consisted of group discussion on readers' theatre and the group's opinions on the benefits, on content, and scripts. Session concluded with a comprehension assessment.
- Day 5: The performance from the week's work. Researcher and audience provided positive feedback on performance, followed by a whole group discussion on

performance. Student's self-awareness and efficacy is enhanced by positive reinforcement and feedback (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007).

Control Group

The researcher instructed the control group prior and after the treatment groups instruction. The control group instruction included repeated reading passages based on same content material as the treatment groups, mini-lessons, discussions, and activities. The instruction was explicit and systematic. A folder was given to each student which included a world map to label and color, a page to record facts and a reading passage. The control group would read the reading passage daily using various formats, such as, individual read, partner read, group read, and instructor read-aloud. The students read the passage on an average of two to three times per day. See Appendices E and F for the control groups lesson plans and reading passage.

Measures

The Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-third edition (WIAT-III). The WIAT III was used to assess comprehension before the intervention and after. It is a standardized, individually administered measure to examine the achievement of students from K-12. The WIAT-III includes 16 subtests. This study administered the reading comprehension, oral reading fluency, and word reading subtests only. The assessment measured untimed reading comprehension of various genres of text, such as fiction, nonfiction, instructional texts, and advertisements. The participant was given the choice of reading a passage aloud or silent, followed by a verbal response to literal and inferential questions read by the administrator. The WIAT-III was normative standardized in the United

States with 2,775 students. Internal-consistency reliabilities are over .80, excluding a subtest of Listening Comprehension and Sentence Completion, which report reliabilities of .75 and .79.

easyCBM (Curriculum Based Measure). Reading rate steadily increases when words are written in a purposeful context, as opposed to reading them in a separate word list (Jenkins et al., 2003; Stanovich, 1980). The easyCBM was used at pretest and posttest to assess oral reading fluency rate. A one-minute timed reading passage was selected and scores were obtained according to how many words were read per-minute, minus any miscues. The easyCBM test-retest reliability for second grade ranged from .88 to .96 with a median of .94, while reliability for the passage reading fluency report .91 to .95. Further, generalization showed a G-coefficient from .95 to .97, while predictive and concurrent validity ranges from .19 to .22, and construct validity for second-grade ranges from .91 to .98.

Motivational assessment. A researcher created 20-item Likert Student Reading Survey was administered as part of the pretest and posttest to measure students' attitude towards reading. The participants verbally selected a number from one to four that best stated their reaction to a specific question about reading. The number scale given reflected the following: 1—I don't like it, 2—It's okay, 3—I like it, and 4—I love it. The assessment was scored based on the total of each item's value that the participant selected. The assessment was given to obtain knowledge of the participants reading attitude and motivation prior to and after the completion of the intervention. Student interviews were also administered informally to obtain additional information on the students' perceptions on reading. The

open-ended questionnaire was used as observations only and not scored (See Appendix G and H).

Knowledge acquisition assessment. The researcher created test was administered each week during the two-week intervention to test the effects of readers' theatre. This researcher created assessment consisted of 20-items, based on the weeks' content material. The assessment was created using a multiple question format such as, multiple choice, fill-in the blank, true/false statements, and labeling (See Appendices I and J for the two knowledge acquisition tests). To ensure the weekly comprehension assessments were an effective measure of reliability, each assessment consisted of the following content attributes:

- The test items were similar, so the test scores were combined for analysis.
- To ensure that each test and its items would be at a similar level of difficulty and have enough questions to determine knowledge, the test was reviewed by experienced educators, doctoral students with a specialization in literacy and assessment.
- The tests were scored in the same manner with each quiz having the same number of items.

To eliminate the least amount of internal errors as possible, and to ensure a stronger reliability, this study followed criteria established by Cohen and Wollack (2003):

(a) same testing conditions for all participants; (b) test administered verbally; (c) instructions and questions easily understood, and (d) answers cannot be confusing as incorrect or correct (Field, 2009).

Delayed knowledge retention assessment. A knowledge acquisition test was administered four weeks after the intervention to determine if readers' theatre contributes to "mastery", and its effect on student retention of information. The assessment consisted of a 40-item questionnaire comprising of material learned in the two-week intervention to assess long-term memory and mastery of subject material. The questions were taken from the weekly comprehension assessments and written in a multiple question format such as, multiple choice, fill-in the blank, true/false statements, and labeling. To ensure reliability, the assessment was constructed with same items from the weekly comprehension assessments, which was created following reliability protocols. The scores of each participant's weekly comprehension assessments and the delayed assessment were scored separately (see Appendix K).

Fidelity of Researcher Created Assessments

All materials were provided for both treatment and control groups for the participants. The content material was entered seven reliability calculators to decide readability level, age, and grade appropriateness. The calculators are the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease Formula, FOG Scale, SMOG Scale Index, Coleman-Lieu Index, Automated Readability Index, and the Linsear Write Formula. The scores were totaled and averaged to determine an appropriate grade level. The Lexile analyzer was used to assess the same constructs as the readability calculators. In addition, assessors were asked to determine reliability and validity of the created assessments and content material. These assessors included professional educators in the second-grade level, an education specialist, a literacy specialist, a professor, and doctoral students of literacy to ensure reading text and content

was based on an independent to instructional average-level reading ability. The researcher received feedback with the assessors through email and verbal communication.

Reliability and validity was decided using a checklist following given criteria. A 90-percentile was agreed upon to meet expectations. The seven readability calculators were utilized and came to a consensus that all created assessments met a second-grade readability level ranging from grade 1.5 to 2.0. This was acceptable and met the criterion goal of the researcher to reflect the average reading ability of students at the second-week of their second academic year. Assessors found the content material (readers' theatre and repeated reading passage) to meet the required criterion from 99% to 100%.

Fidelity of implementation. The pretest and posttest measures were given by the researcher and two doctoral students who had experience administering the individual standardized assessments. The researcher gave instructions on the implementation of the Likert student reading survey and the reading attitude questionnaire. To insure fidelity of implementation, all the test and intervention sessions were audiotaped and 30% (80 tests out of 260) were randomly selected to be rescored. Fidelity was high on all pretest and posttest measures with an overall fidelity of 96.25%, including the WIAT III pretests, (100%) and posttest measures (90.5%), easyCBM pre-and posttest measures, (93.75%), Likert pre- and posttest measures, (100%). The knowledge acquisition tests were rescored, some discrepancies were found. The inter-rator and researcher consulted and in agreement scores were confirmed, therefore, obtaining 90%. Fidelity was high on administrator's implementation of tests with 100%. The researcher conducted the 12 intervention sessions. Each session was audiotaped and 25% were randomly selected for each condition. Fidelity

was assessed using a checklist to determine adherence to quality of implementation according to specific criterion. Fidelity met the 90% agreement with 96%.

Data Analysis

Four questions were examined during this study to determine the effectiveness of readers' theatre using expository text on oral reading fluency, comprehension achievement, and motivation in second-grade elementary students. In addition, this study investigated delayed knowledge acquisition, and motivation. The pretest and posttest scores were analyzed to determine the effects of the intervention.

The research questions investigated in the subsequent manner:

1. What is the effect of using readers' theatre on the reading fluency of second graders?
2. What is the effect of using readers' theatre on the reading immediate and delayed comprehension of second graders?
3. Does an intervention using readers' theatre motivate second-grade students reading attitude?
4. What is the effect of using readers' theatre on students' knowledge acquisition two weeks after the completion of intervention?

One-way ANCOVA's were conducted for each dependent variable to assess the effects of fluency, comprehension, motivation, and knowledge acquisition. Posttest scores for each dependent variable (i.e., fluency, comprehension, and motivation) were analyzed individually using an analysis of covariance with pretest scores serving as the covariate. A $p < .05$ levels was used to test the level of statistical significance.

Participants' pretest and posttest scores from the assessments of motivation and the WIAT-III subtests (comprehension, oral reading fluency, and word reading) were entered as dependent variables into the SPSS program. Participants' scores from the weekly comprehension assessments served as the covariates and were analyzed using a one-way ANCOVA with the two-week delayed knowledge acquisition as the dependent variable.

The researcher created motivational assessment utilized the Likert scale format with answer values of 1, 2, 3, or 4 for each item. Each value represented an emotion the participant felt best answered a given question. The value of 1—I don't like it, 2—It's okay, 3—I like it, and 4—I love it. A total sum from each item was used to determine any differences in motivation. Student interviews were also conducted to obtain additional information on students reading perceptions. The researcher created interview utilized an open-ended format. The survey was not scored but used as an observational tool.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This experimental study examined the influence of readers' theatre on comprehension, oral reading fluency, and motivation with primary students. This study examined readers' theatre impact on student mastery using expository content material. Four quantitative questions were addressed as follows: (a) What is the effect of using readers' theatre on the reading fluency of second graders? (b) What is the effect of using readers' theatre on the immediate and delayed comprehension on second graders? (c) Does an intervention using readers' theater motivate second-graders' reading attitude? (d) What is the effect of using readers' theatre on students' knowledge acquisition four weeks after the completion of the intervention? This chapter includes participant demographic data, pretest measures, the outcomes of each quantitative research question independently, and discussion.

Demographic Data

The intervention research took place August through early September of 2016, at a rural elementary school in middle Tennessee. The public elementary school qualified as a Title 1 school, meeting all required eligibilities by the state and district departments of education. The total student body enrollment was 630, with 72% Caucasian, 13.5% African American, 10% Hispanic/Latin, 2.5% Multi-race, and 2% Asian. A total of 27 participants consented to be in the study. During the two-week intervention, one student withdrew from the study due to relocation out of the district zone area. The study maintained a total of 26 participants with 86% Caucasian, 7% African American, and 7% Hispanic/Latin ethnicities.

Quantitative Data Results

This experimental study consisted of one standardized assessment utilizing three subtests of oral reading fluency, word reading, and reading comprehension; an additional standardized fluency measure; four researcher created measures (three comprehensions and one motivation); and one non-scored reading attitude questionnaire. All tests were conducted using raw scores from each assessment (Table 2). To ensure inter-rater reliability and fidelity, 25% of all test protocols were reviewed and rescored by a second trained researcher, except for the non-scored reading attitude questionnaire.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Pretest and Posttest Measures by Condition

Variable	Treatment (<i>n</i> = 13)				Control (<i>n</i> = 13)			
	Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
WIAT III								
Oral Reading Fluency	69.6	30.1	88.0	33.3	74.0	36.3	90.7	39.8
Word Reading	30.1	9.6	31.4	8.3	29.6	6.8	30.7	6.6
Word Reading timed	23.6	4.8	28.1	5.2	24.7	7.8	27.1	7.0
Comprehension	21.2	7.3	25.5	5.7	23.3	6.9	28.8	4.8
easyCBM	76.4	32.2	99.0	35.4	84.5	39.3	99.4	39.8
Student Reading Survey	59.0	11.9	51.3	12.2	61.3	9.2	60.6	10.9
	Treatment		Control					
	M	SD	M	SD				
Knowledge Acquisition Delayed	19.8	8.6	9.69	6.6				
Knowledge Acquisition 1	10.0	5.2	4.62	3.2				
Knowledge Acquisition 2	9.31	5.0	4.92	2.78				

Oral reading fluency. The Wechsler individual achievement test III (WIAT III) was used to help answer the research question, what is the effect of using readers' theatre on the reading fluency of second graders? The WIAT III was used for both pretest and posttest in administering the subtest of oral reading fluency and the subtest of word reading. The WIAT III subtest of oral reading consisted of two independent reading passages, timed one-minute each. Total words-read-per-minute were scored after eliminating any miscues.

The experimental and control groups were assessed prior to the research to determine if there was a significant pretest differences on the WIAT III measure. An independent samples t-test was conducted using the pretest scores on the dependent variable. According to the t-test in oral reading fluency, student scores in the control group were not significantly different from the experimental group ($t(24) = -.335$, $p = .205$).

Standardized residuals for the intervention was not normally distributed between the experimental group ($p = .590$), and control group ($p = .008$) as assessed by the Shapiro-Wilke's test. An ANOVA and Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney were conducted and results also showed normality was not met, however, the researcher proceeded to conduct the ANCOVA analysis despite the lack of normality. A test for homogeneity of regression slopes confirmed a non-significant interaction effect between the WIAT III oral reading fluency pretest scores and the group for the WIAT III oral reading posttest scores, $F(1, 22) = .081$ $p = .778$, validating that the pretest scores could be used as the covariate in the ANCOVA test. There was homogeneity of variance, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variance $F(1,24) = .004$, $p = .949$.

It was hypothesized that the intervention would show a significant effect between the readers' theatre group and the control group. To investigate possible statistical differences between the experimental and control groups on the WIAT III oral reading fluency measure, a one-way ANCOVA was performed between the two groups through SPSS, using the intervention (readers' theatre) as the independent variable, the WIAT III oral reading fluency posttest as the dependent variable, and the oral reading fluency pretest as a covariate. After adjustments were made for pretest oral reading fluency scores, results indicated that there was no-significant difference between the control group and experimental group on the post-intervention oral reading fluency scores $F(1,23) = .064, p = .803, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .003$ rejecting the hypothesis.

The easyCBM (Curriculum Based Measure) reading fluency assessment, as a second oral fluency measure, is an independent reading passage, timed for one-minute. Scores were configured as total words read after subtracting potential miscues. To determine if any pretest differences existed between the easyCBM experimental and control groups, an independent samples t-test was conducted using the pretest scores on the dependent variable. According to the t-test, student scores for the control group did not differ from the experimental group scores ($t(24) = -.573, p = .147$). A test for homogeneity of regression slopes confirmed that there was not a significant interaction effect between the easyCBM pretest scores and the groups, $F(1,22) = .128, p = .724$, validating that the pretest scores could be used as the covariate in the ANCOVA test. Standardized residuals for the interventions were normally distributed, as assessed by the Shapiro-Wilke's test ($p > .05$). Homogeneity of variance was met, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variance $F(1,24) = .840, p = .368$. between

the easyCBM pretest and posttest group means. To examine possible statistical differences between the experimental group and control group on the easyCBM oral reading fluency measure, an ANCOVA was conducted using the intervention (readers' theatre) as the independent variable, the easyCBM oral reading fluency posttest as the dependent variable, and the easyCBM pretest as a covariate. After adjustments were made for pretest oral reading fluency scores, results indicated that there was no significant difference between the control and experimental groups on post-intervention oral reading fluency scores $F(1,24) = 1.23, p = .279, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .051$. The ANCOVA findings indicated no significant differences for the easyCBM oral reading fluency between experimental and control pretest and posttest scores, therefore the hypothesis could not be confirmed (see Figure 4.1).

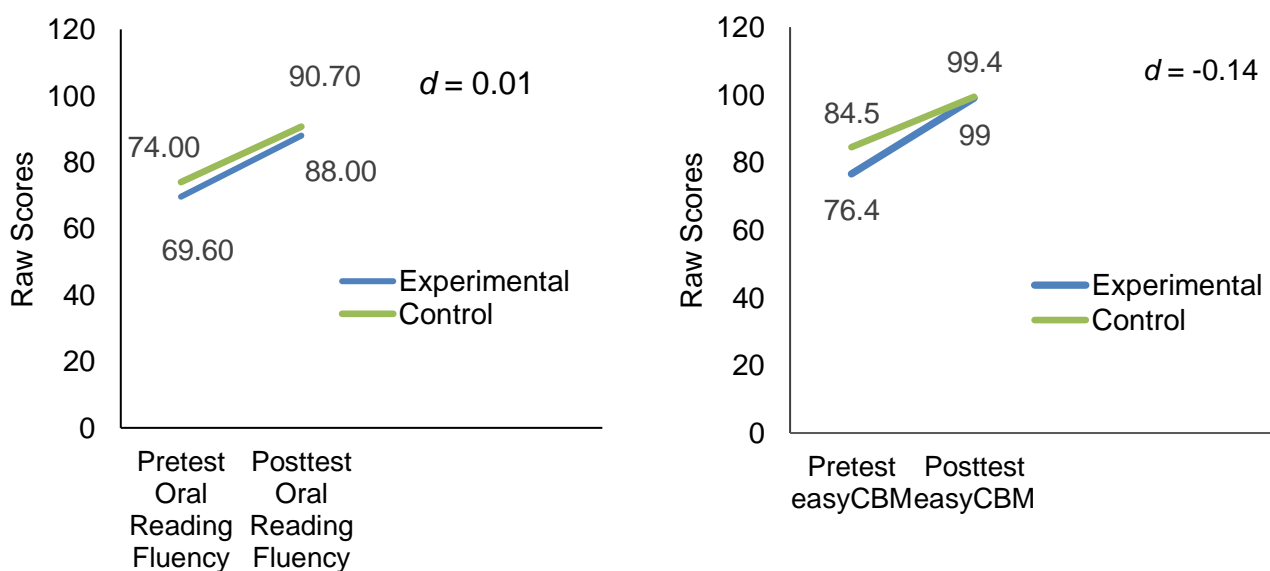


Figure 4.1. Graph comparison for the WIAT III oral reading fluency subtest pretest and posttest means and the easyCBM oral reading fluency pretest and posttest means by condition.

The WIAT III word reading subtest was used to examine oral reading rate using a word list beginning with one-syllabic words graduating to more difficult multisyllabic words. The treatment and control groups were assessed prior to the research to determine if there was a significant pretest differences on the WIAT III measure. An independent samples t-test was conducted using the pretest scores on the dependent variable. According to the t-test in word reading, student scores in the control group were not significantly different from the experimental group ($t(24) = .164, p = .648$).

Standardized residuals for the interventions were normally distributed, as assessed by the Shapiro-Wilke's test ($p > .05$). There was homogeneity of variance, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variance $F(1,24) = .506, p = .484$. It was hypothesized that the intervention would show a significant group effect between the WIAT III word reading pretest and posttest scores. To investigate potential statistical differences between the treatment and control groups on the WIAT III word reading measure, a one-way ANCOVA was conducted between the two groups, using treatment (readers' theatre) as the independent variable, the WIAT III word reading subtest as the dependent variable, and the subtest word reading pretest as a covariate. A test for homogeneity of regression slopes confirmed the interaction between the WIAT III pretest scores and the groups for the WIAT III posttest scores was not significant, $F(1,22) = .346, p = .562$, confirming that the pretest scores could be used as the covariate in the ANCOVA test. After adjustments were made for pretest word reading scores, ANCOVA results indicated that there was not a significant difference between the treatment- and control-group on the post-intervention word reading scores $F(1,23) = .039, p = .849$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$, therefore, the hypothesis was not accepted.

The WIAT III word reading subtest included a supplemental score which was a timed component of 30 seconds. The time was recorded by the administrator and was not revealed to the student as not to detour from reading the word list until the required four consecutive missed words were met. The first word read within 30 seconds was “an” with the hardest word read within 30 seconds was “custodian”. The treatment and control groups were assessed prior to the intervention to determine if there was a significant pretest differences on the WIAT III word reading supplemental measure. An independent samples t-test was conducted using the pretest scores on the dependent variable. According to the t-test, student scores in the control group were not significantly different from the experimental group ($t(24) = -.418, p = .073$).

Standardized residuals for the interventions were normally distributed, as assessed by the Shapiro-Wilke’s test ($p > .05$). There was homogeneity of variance, as assessed by Levene’s test of homogeneity of variance $F(1,24) = 1.07, p = .311$. A test for homogeneity of regression slopes affirmed the relationship between the supplemental pretest scores and the supplemental posttest scores did not differ as the interaction term was not statistically significant, $F(1,22) = .525, p = .476$, confirming that the pretest scores could be used as the covariate in the ANCOVA test. It was hypothesized that the intervention would find a significant effect between the treatment and control groups for the supplemental word reading scores.

To examine possible statistical differences between the treatment and control groups on the word reading supplemental score, an ANCOVA test was performed between the two groups using treatment (readers’ theatre) as the independent variable, the word reading supplemental posttest scores as the dependent variable, and the word

reading supplemental pretest scores as a covariate. After adjustments were made for pretest word reading supplemental scores, ANCOVA results indicated that there was not a significant difference between the treatment- and control-group on the post-intervention supplemental word reading scores $F(1,23) = 2.25, p = .147$, partial $\eta^2 = .089$, therefore, the hypothesis was not confirmed (see Figure 4.2).

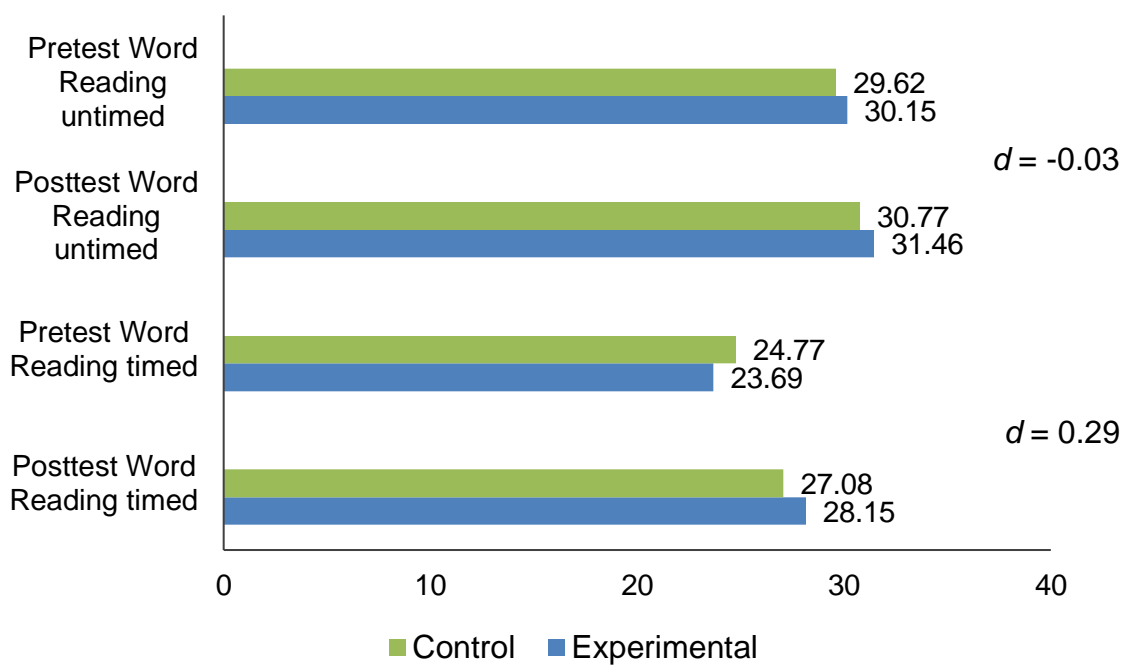


Figure 4.2. Graph of the WIAT III pretest and posttest means for the word reading subtest and the word reading timed subtest by condition.

Reading comprehension. The WIAT III was utilized to help answer the research question, what is the effect of using readers' theatre on the reading comprehension of second graders? A subtest of reading comprehension was administered as a pretest and repeated as a posttest. The WIAT III subtest of reading comprehension consisted of three individual reading passages, each preceded by comprehension questions.

The treatment and control groups were assessed prior to the research to determine if there was a significant pretest differences on the WIAT III measure. An independent samples t-test was conducted using the pretest scores on the dependent variable. According to the t-test, in reading comprehension, student scores in the control group did not indicate substantial differences from the experimental group ($t(24) = -.741, p = .452$). Standardized residuals for the interventions were normally distributed, as confirmed by the Shapiro-Wilke's test ($p > .05$). There was homogeneity of variance, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variance $F(1,24) = .546, p = .467$. A test for homogeneity of regression slopes confirmed there was no statistical difference between the WIAT III reading comprehension raw pretest scores and the WIAT III reading comprehension raw posttest scores, $F(1,22) = .53, p = .508$, confirming that the pretest scores could be used as the covariate in the ANCOVA test. It was hypothesized that the intervention would find a significant effect on reading comprehension between the treatment and control groups of second grade students.

To examine potential statistical differences between the treatment and control groups for the WIAT III reading comprehension measure, a one-way ANCOVA was performed between the two groups. The condition of experimental (readers' theatre) was used as the independent variable, the WIAT III reading comprehension subtest as the dependent variable, and the subtest reading comprehension pretest as a covariate. After adjustments were made for pretest reading comprehension scores, ANCOVA results indicated that there was not a significant effect on the WIAT III posttest scores after controlling for the WIAT III reading comprehension pretest as a covariate. The WIAT III reading comprehension means did not indicate a statistical difference

$F(1,23) = .232, p = .141$, partial $\eta^2 = .092$, therefore, the hypothesis was not confirmed (see Figure 4.3).

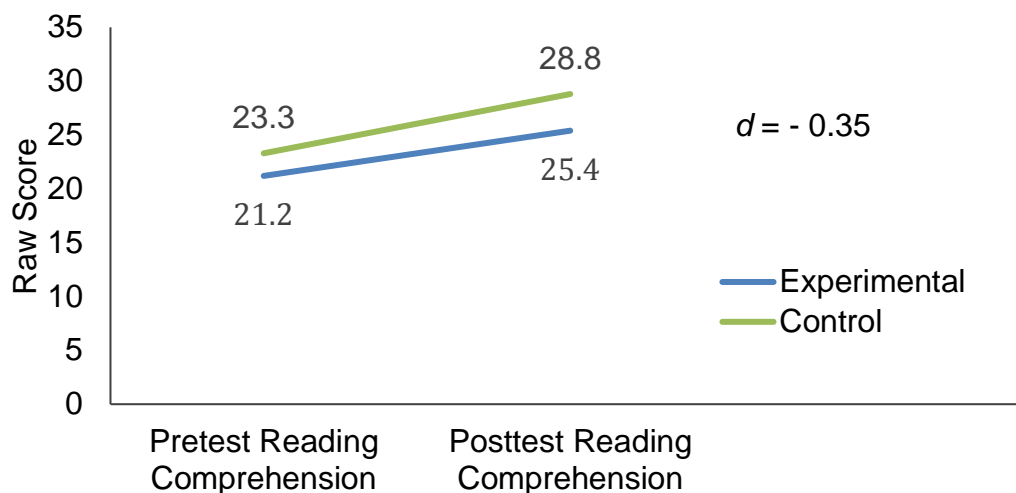


Figure 4.3. Graph on the WIAT III pretest and posttest means for the reading comprehension subtest by condition.

To test for mastery of content material, two knowledge acquisition comprehension assessments were utilized to help answer the research questions: (a) What is the effect of using readers' theatre on the reading immediate and delayed comprehension so second graders? and (b) What is the effect of using readers' theatre on students' knowledge acquisition two weeks after the completion of the intervention.

The comprehension tests were administered at the end of each week during the two-week intervention. To test for long-term mastery of content material, a delayed knowledge acquisition assessment was administered two-weeks after the conclusion of

the intervention. The research hypothesis predicted that the intervention would show significant effects between the treatment and control groups delayed acquisition scores. An independent samples t-test was conducted using the knowledge acquisition test one scores on the dependent variable. According to the t-test, student scores in the control group did not indicate substantial differences from the experimental group ($t(24) = 3.16$, $p = .131$).

A one-way ANCOVA was used to examine possible statistical differences between the treatment and control groups on the knowledge acquisition test one reading comprehension measure, using treatment (readers' theatre) as the independent variable, the knowledge acquisition delayed reading comprehension test as the dependent variable, and knowledge acquisition comprehension test one as a covariate. It was hypothesized that the intervention would find a significant effect on knowledge acquisition test one between the treatment and control groups. Standardized residuals for the interventions were normally distributed, as assessed by the Shapiro-Wilke's test ($p > .05$). There was homogeneity of variance, as by Levene's test of homogeneity of variance $F(1,24) = 2.32$, $p = .141$. A test for homogeneity of regression slopes confirmed the relationship between the knowledge acquisition delayed scores and the knowledge acquisition test one scores did not differ as the interaction term was not statistically significant $F(1,22) = 1.28$, $p = .269$, validating that the knowledge acquisition test one scores could be used as the covariate in the ANCOVA test. After adjustments were made for the knowledge acquisition test one covariate, results indicated that there was not a significant difference between the treatment and control groups for the knowledge acquisition test one and the delayed knowledge acquisition reading comprehension

$F(1,23) = 2.214, p = .150$, partial $\eta^2 = .088$, therefore the hypothesis could not be confirmed.

To examine possible statistical differences between the treatment and control groups on the knowledge acquisition test two reading comprehension measure, an independent samples t-test was conducted using the knowledge acquisition test two scores on the dependent variable. According to the t-test, student scores in the control group indicated differences from the experimental group ($t(24) = 2.74, p = .036$).

An ANCOVA test was conducted using treatment (readers' theatre) as the independent variable, the knowledge acquisition delayed reading comprehension test as the dependent variable, and the knowledge acquisition comprehension test two as a covariate. Standardized residuals for the interventions were normally distributed as assessed by the Shapiro-Wilke's test, ($p > .05$). There was homogeneity of variance, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variance $F(1,24) = 2.69, p = .114$.

A test for homogeneity of regression slopes revealed the relationship between the delayed knowledge acquisition test scores and the knowledge acquisition test two scores did not differ and were statistically significant $F(1,22) = 2.33, p = .141$, validating that the knowledge acquisition test two scores could be used as the covariate in the ANCOVA test. It was hypothesized that the intervention would find significant effects on the knowledge acquisition delayed performance scores after controlling for the knowledge acquisition test two as a covariate. After adjustments were made for knowledge acquisition test two covariate, ANCOVA results indicated that there was not a significant difference between the treatment and control groups for the delayed knowledge acquisition reading comprehension test $F(1,23) = 3.23, p = .085$, partial $\eta^2 = .123$, after

controlling for the covariate of knowledge acquisition test two, therefore the hypothesis was not confirmed (see Figure 4.4).

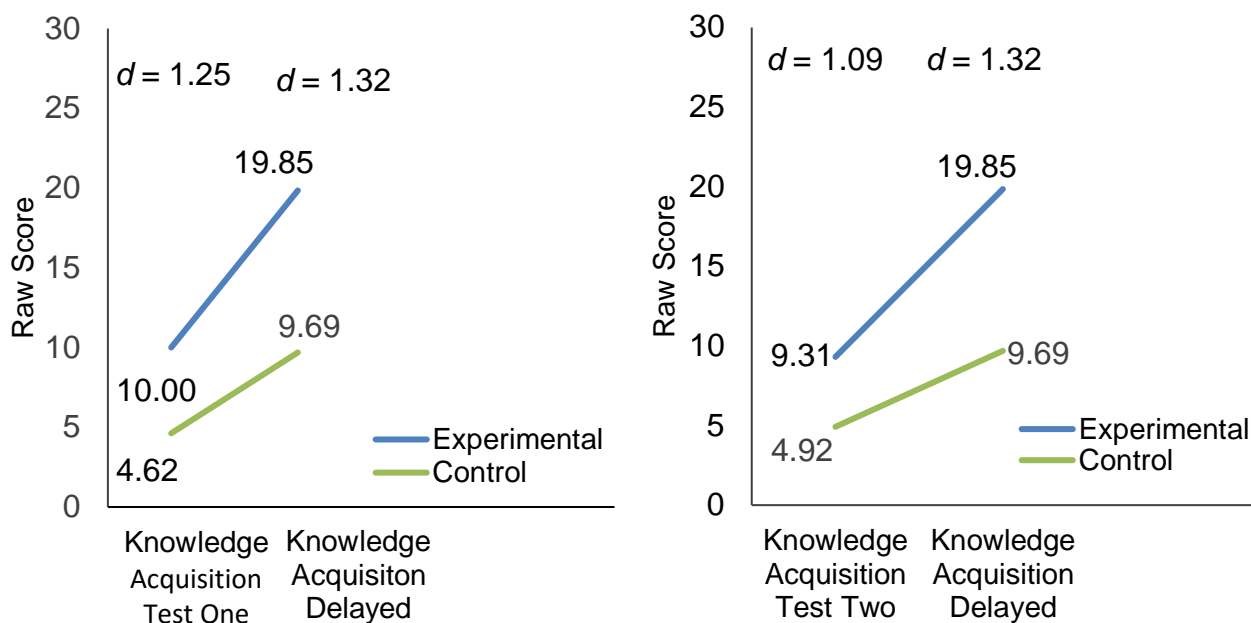


Figure 4.4. Means for the knowledge acquisition test one and knowledge acquisition test two with knowledge acquisition delayed (retention) by condition.

Motivation. Students enter second grade aware of their reading abilities gained from prior knowledge and experience. Students who are aware of their reading abilities develop attitudes and opinions toward the reading experience. To interpret students' literacy attitudes, a Likert student reading survey was administered to help answer the research question, how does an intervention using readers' theatre motivate second grade students reading attitude? A 20-item survey was administered prior to intervention and repeated after intervention. The questionnaire was based on a Likert scale of 1-4, coded as: (1) I don't like it, (2) It's okay, (3) I like it, and (4) I love it. Students would say the

number that best represented their opinion in relation to the specific question. Table 2 shows means and standard deviations for pretest and posttest for each of the 20-item questionnaire.

The treatment and control groups were assessed prior to the intervention to determine if there was a significant pretest differences on the student reading survey measure. An independent samples t-test was conducted using the pretest scores on the dependent variable. According to the t-test, student scores in the control group were not significantly different from the experimental group ($t(24) = -.459, p = .610$). It was hypothesized that the intervention would find a significant effect between the treatment and control groups for the student reading survey.

To examine possible statistical differences between the treatment and control groups on the reading attitude measure, an ANCOVA test was performed between the two groups using treatment (readers' theatre) as the independent variable, the student reading survey posttest scores as the dependent variable, and the student reading survey pretest scores as a covariate. Standardized residuals for the interventions were normally distributed for treatment, ($p = .405$) but not for control ($p = .010$) as assessed by the Shapiro-Wilke's test ($p > .05$). There was homogeneity of variance, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variance $F(1,24) = .723, p = .404$. A test for homogeneity of regression slopes affirmed the relationship between the student reading survey pretest scores and the student reading survey posttest scores did not differ as the interaction term was not statistically significant, $F(1, 22) = .851, p = .366$, confirming that the pretest scores could be used as the covariate in the ANCOVA test. After adjustments were made for pretest scores as the covariate, ANCOVA results indicated

that were no significant differences between the student reading survey pretest and posttest reading survey scores $F(1,23) = 2.11, p = .159$, partial $\eta^2 = .084$, therefore, the hypothesis cannot be confirmed (see Figure 4.5).

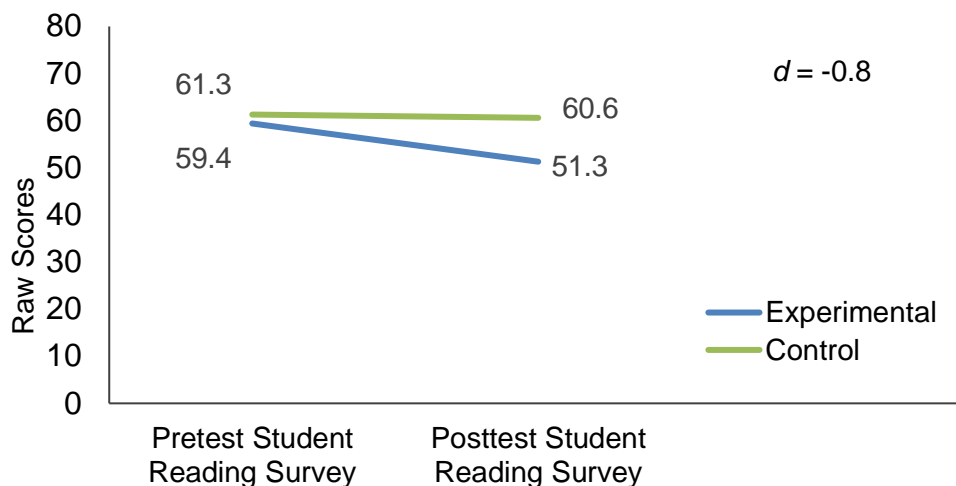


Figure 4.5. Graph for the Likert student reading survey pretest and posttest means by condition.

When looking at the 20-item survey responses, 54% of the 20 questions were answered “I love it. This study will discuss the top five questions that were answered “I love it!” A complete list is provided with the means and standard deviations for each of the twenty questions (see Appendix L). When students were asked how they felt about going to the library, 61.6% of students responded, “I love it” at pretest and 50% responded “I love it” at posttest. When asked how they felt about reading, students answered “I love it” with 73.1% on the pretest and 53.9% on the posttest”. These questions obtained the highest percentage for the response “I love you”, yet percentages decreased from pretest to posttest. The question, how do you feel about reading during

free time at school, showed the highest increase for the answer “I love it”, with 34.6% at pretest to 50% at posttest, an increase of 23.4%. The question with the least amount of change in percentages from pretest to posttest asked, how do you feel about reading one-on-one with your teacher. At pretest, 42.3% of students answered, “I love it” and 42.3% answered “I love it” at posttest. When asked how they felt about using their reading strategies, students responded “I love it” with 34.6 % at pretest and 34.6% at posttests.

Student interviews. Individual interviews were conducted pre-intervention and post-intervention to help answer the research question, how does an intervention using readers’ theatre motivate second grade students reading attitude? Pre-interviews and post-interviews were not scored and were not entered into a data analysis program, but served as observations. When looking at the student responses, patterns of answers can be seen in both the treatment and control groups. When asked about how they felt about reading, many of the student responses included “learn”, “fun”, “pictures”, “too hard”, “quiet”, “levels”, and “nothing”. Students also mentioned they read at home and named favorite book titles. When asked pre-intervention what they knew about readers’ theatre, all but one student answered “nothing”, and the one student responded they had experienced readers’ theatre in the prior grade.

When asked post-intervention what they knew about readers’ theatre, the treatment group could describe in detail: (a) what readers’ theatre looks like, (b) the elements of readers’ theatre, and (c) the subject material written in script form. When asked what they knew about readers’ theatre post-intervention, majority of the students in the control group answered “nothing” and some students responded readers’ theatre was “a play, it was practiced, and it was performed”. When asked about the subject matter,

majority of the students in the control group accurately responded with details and facts.

In comparison, the intervention groups answers revealed less details and facts than the control group.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This research study was conducted to examine readers' theatre and its influence on oral reading fluency, comprehension, and motivation with primary students. This study also investigated readers' theatre and its influence on mastery of content material. To add to the existing research, the discussion presents each dependent variable with its methods and results; comparing the findings to existing and historical research presented earlier in the dissertation. The chapter will provide a discussion of the limitations, relevancy, and recommendations for future studies in readers' theatre.

Oral Reading Fluency

Students who took part in the instruction of readers' theatre did not make significant gains in fluency rate compared to the students who did not take part in readers' theatre. Although, both conditions showed gains from pre- to posttest, the difference did not show statistical differences between the groups, which is comparable with current research of Carrick (2000), Dixon (2007) and Johnson (2011). There is a vast amount of research that has shown repeated reading significantly increases oral reading rate (Fuchs et al., 2001; Hiebert, 2005; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Mraz et al., 2013; Reutzel et al., 199; Schreiber, 1980; Smith, 2011; Therrien, 2004). As a form of repeated reading, it is surprising that readers' theatre enhanced reading fluency, yet, has not shown as robust an effect as the traditional method of repeated reading.

In 1989, Carver established norms showing that typical students average a yearly growth rate of 10-20 WPM. Jagger (2008) used the norms to examine word growth after a standardized measure did not obtain significant differences for oral reading fluency.

Jagger used the norms to illustrate the treatment groups increase of 9.61 WPM within one-quarter of the time set by Carver's established norms. In similar research, Hasbrouck and Tindal (2006) found the average yearly rate for gains in word reading to range from 36 to 38 WPM. In this study, the potential word increase for the WAIT III subtest shows 4 to 59 WPM for the treatment group (4 words pertained to an already high level of words read at 107 WPM) and 8 to 46 WPM for the control group. The easyCBM showed 4 to 54 WPM for the treatment group and 8 to 25 for the control group. Using Carver's norms, this present study indicates words gained in four-weeks' time, exceeded the established rate of 2.5 to 5.0 words in an eight-week period. It should be noted that Carver set up grade-equivalent norms in 1989, using norms written 20 years earlier by Taylor (1965), and showed that the norms stayed fairly the same during the 20-year gap (Hiebert, et al., 2012). In comparison to Harris and Touck (2006), the WIAT III and easyCBM, met the required 9 to 10-word increase in one-quarter of the school year, equating to 2 to 2.5 words per week. This research supports Fuchs and Fuchs (1993) study that found 1.5 to 2.0 to be enough for an average second graders weekly word growth, and with research by Young and Rasinski (2009) that found 62.7 to 127 WPM (1.24-3.6 per week), with an increase of 65 words in one school year. In looking at this information, it shows improvement for both types of treatment, though did not differentially distinguish the two groups.

Reading Comprehension

Current studies do not support oral reading fluency as a predictor of reading comprehension (Carrick, 2000; Dixon, 2007; Forney, 2013; Gummere, 2004; Jagger, 2008; Johnson, 2011; Keehn, 2003; Morris, 2011; Smith, 2011; Young & Rasinski,

2009). These findings contrast with past research that proved reading acquisition occurs when readers have achieved adequate fluency and can extract meaning from text (Fuchs et al., 2001; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Pikulski & Chard, 2005; Rasinski, 2010). LaBerge and Samuels (1974) theory of automaticity showed that automatic decoding of text enables attention to concentrate on text. Research conducted by Johnson, (2011) succeeded in finding significant main effects in oral reading fluency, but not in comprehension, therefore, the study did not support LeBerge and Samuels theory of automaticity. Only two studies (Miller & Rinehart, 1999; Mraz et al., 2013) showed strong effects for both oral reading fluency and comprehension, yet, both studies used whole groups as treatment, excluding a control as a baseline for comparison. This study used a standardized assessment for the pretest and posttest, and did not show effects. It is possible the two-week intervention was not long enough to develop the skills needed to gain effects.

A myriad of research evidence has shown that beyond word-reading ability, verbal and written language skills contribute to reading comprehension outcomes: critical thinking, vocabulary, syntax, and inference skills, explain discrete differences in the development of reading acquisition in the beginning of reading development (Cain & Oakhill, 2016; Duke et al., 2011; Durkin, 1992; Fielding & Pearson, 1994; Rasinski et al., 2006). While automaticity in word reading may be a predictor of comprehension, it may also prove inadequate for substantiating comprehension gains. This may help in understanding the mixed results of repeated reading research in which some studies found increased acquisition was a product of repeated reading instruction (Dixon, 2007; Forney, 2013; Gummer, 2004; Jagger, 2008; Hiebert, 2005; Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Ruetzel &

Hollingsworth, 1993), while other studies did not detect significant differences in comprehension (Carrick, 2000; Johnson, 2011; Roshotte & Torgesen, 1985). Future research on readers' theatre needs to go beyond the basic reading elements and deeper into other reading skills such as; critical thinking, response, and engagement. If such skills were incorporated with readers' theatre, it would provide creative and differentiated instruction that has no limits on its use.

Knowledge acquisition. Knowledge acquisition tests one and two showed no significant differences and low effects. It appeared that conditions did not influence retention of content material assessed with the knowledge delayed assessment, two weeks after the completion of the intervention. When looking at the means, there was not a lot of movement from test one to test two. However, both the treatment and control groups showed gains for the knowledge acquisition delayed assessment, with the treatment showing the highest gain. This suggests that possible movement did occur through the intervention, due to the multiple readings of the script and the repeated reading passage. Multiple readings of the same passage allow the connection between the text and short-term working memory to store the information for later retrieval (Durkin, 1992; Fielding and Pearson, 1994). However, the means did not show a statistical differences between the tests one and two and knowledge acquisition test. This may have occurred due to the shorter intervention time and the duration between intervention and delayed assessment. It is also possible that while the regular classroom curriculum continued during the two weeks between the intervention and delayed assessment, some students did not have the ability for long-term memory. Students may have found it difficult as they had moved forward with the regular curriculum, to retrieve what was taught two to three weeks prior.

It is also possible with the small sample size, that significant differences are difficult to detect.

Motivation

This research found the student reading survey showed a moderate effect size, but did not show any significant differences between the treatment and control groups. This agrees with other studies that failed to determine significance for motivation (Gummere, 2004; Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Smith, 2011). The common link between the studies was the use of a Likert formatted test. This study used a Likert scale of 1 to 4, with 4 representing the most positive answer choice. The highest rated questions reveal students like starting new books and reading on their own or with a partner, as opposed to individual reading with the teacher, questioning, and small group time, which showed the largest drop in means. This may explain the drop in means as the intervention included the instructional methods that were least favored. This researcher observed a reoccurring pattern during the pretest as some students typically chose the greater valued response choices. This would explain potential response biases, such as, a desire to please the assessor, a lack of focus, mimicking peer choice, and realizing a positive response generates a greater score. (I like it, I love it) A comfort level may have been established after the intervention, as posttest answers were more diverse than at pretest. Although the student reading survey did not produce results, it still offered information on students' perception about reading. Research on readers' theatre that included a motivation variable discovered outcomes using observations, student journals, and interviews. This present study also conducted student interviews at pretest and posttest to examine students' opinions and attitude on reading. Other researchers who implemented

observations and interviews indicated that readers' theatre positively influenced reading motivation (Carrick, 2000; Gummere, 2004; Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Smith, 2011).

Researchers and teachers who observed the students expressed that readers' theatre had a positive impact on students reading behavior with renewed interest, a desire to read, and overall excitement for literacy. Observers witnessed student accountability for their own learning and self-monitoring. This study did not find any statistical differences between the two groups as pretest scores to posttest decreased. However, through individual interviews, students' answers seemed to be positive when asking about individual reading, going to the library and reading during free time. On the other perspective, majority of students were not as enthused when asked questions that pertained to reading with teacher, retelling, and small group instruction. Studies that reported motivation as a positive outcome (Forney, 2013, Millin & Rinehart, 1999, and Smith, 2011) used observation, and none of them used a comparison group.

This study used a comparison group and found there were no differences between the two groups, while Gummere (2004) also used a comparison group and found statistical effects. Both studies used a Likert Scale format, however, Gummere used a standardized assessment, while this study used a researcher-created assessment. Future work will need to be done to determine its validity, as an indicator of motivation and to determine its reliability.

Strengths and Limitations

One strength was the experimental pretest posttest control group design that manages internal validity eliminating any extraneous variables, and threats to validity. This experimental design allows for testing to detect potential causal interactions between

factors. To determine if instruction is evidence-based the inclusion of a control group serves as a guideline to compare findings and to confine the independent variable to eliminate alternate explanations from the results (Field, 2009). Another strength was the use of a statistical analysis of pre- and posttests that had established reliability and validity.

Limitations of this study are aligned with concerns with much of the past readers' theatre research. One limitation in this present study, was that there were only two classrooms each with small student enrollment. The small sample size served as the dominate factor explaining the lack of effects throughout the research analysis. The sample size predicts the statistical power, the greater the power, the great probability that effects will be detected if one exists (Field, 2009). Although analysis found no relationships between the groups, except for the knowledge acquisition assessment, other observations indicated possible changes.

An additional limitation was the length and the timing of the intervention. It is possible that the length of the 2-week intervention was not adequate to obtain strong effects. Although this study was designed to examine if treatment would increase mastery and retention of a specified learned standard. To extend the length of the research would not comply with the duration the standard is normally taught to achieve mastery within the normal classroom curriculum sequence. Current studies duration of interventions ranged from 4-12 weeks, with an average of 9-weeks, which may indicate an appropriate length to reach potential effects.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research contributes to prior studies that contend readers' theatre can be used as an effective instructional method when used in a purposeful and meaningful way. However, considering the results, further research is advisable in order to recommend readers' theatre for literacy development. This study struggled to show statistical effects, primarily due to the small sample size. Future research would benefit by recruiting a larger sample size that might potentially determine greater effects and generalize to the population. It is recommended that future work individually randomly assign students to the conditions. In educational research, majority of studies conduct a quasi-experimental design because of school administrators and teacher's hesitation, understandably, to allow researchers to assign students to condition (Smith, 2011).

This study incorporated text based on the CCSS (2010) second-grade standards including social studies and expository text. Dixon (2007) and Forney (2013) used expository text but interchanged the content material with other expository texts or with narrative text. Neither study produced adequate results to state that expository text contributed greatly to readers' theatres outcomes. Expository texts can be more difficult for students to comprehend due to the complexity of words that are not part of their everyday vocabulary and difficult concepts to relate to (Hall et al., 2005). Future studies would benefit by continuing readers' theatre with scripts that pertain to social events or issues, historical events or persons, and topics that are conducive to be constructed in script that helps students to understand difficult concepts, potentially increasing comprehension. Future research should extend into diverse student populations, including English language learners, providing a whole class experience for all

linguistically diverse children. A place where language has no barrier, where “aesthetic and educational values exit in harmony” (Combs, 1987).

This research was conducted based on the average second graders abilities, with one readers’ theatre script and one control repeated reading curriculum. It might be advantageous to create a script written for various reading abilities. The lack of diverse reading materials may have contributed to the small or no effects found in this study, as this study’s content material was created on an average second grade reading level for the specific time of the academic year. There is a very limited amount of current studies that considered ability levels. Keehn’s (2003) study included texts written on three ability levels based on different content material. Keehn did not report adequate information to calculate means or effects, but indicated that the lower ability reading students showed the most gains in oral reading fluency. Likewise, Young and Rasinski (2009) did not report statistical information, but through observations and word gains, suggested that all the students in the lower reading ability class increased their oral reading fluency. Reading materials written to meet the diverse needs of students enable them to read on an independent level which may increase oral reading fluency (Hiebert, 2005; Young & Rasinski, 2009).

Prior and current studies have mixed results concerning readers’ theatre and its influence on reading skills. A majority of the studies state that their sample size was either too small or too large to obtain the effects desired (Carrick, 2000; Gummer, 2004; Jagger, 2008). It is important in experimental research to include a comparison group as a measure of the interventions efficacy. The lack of a comparison group eliminates the

ability to apply outcomes to the general population. Although many studies show a lack of effectiveness for readers' theatre, prior research has shown it has many positive attributes (Flynn, 2005; Johnson: 2011; Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Young & Vardell, 1993) that make it worthwhile for at least limited use in classrooms. It also a worthwhile endeavor to continue research using larger samples, more varied measures, and longer intervention lengths to determine the impact of readers' theatre on literacy development. This work will help determine the efficacy of readers' theatre and what readers' theatre has the most influence on in literacy development.

Conclusion

Educators across the nation's schools are seeking effective instructional strategies to affect literacy development. The NRP (2000) highly suggested that teachers implement instruction on reading fluency and comprehension based on available research. Research is defined as the systematic collection of data and analysis of empirical data (Shanahan, 2006). This study is consistent with current studies providing information for educators to use in considering purposeful instructional methods. This study contributes to the existing studies on readers' theatre and its influence on oral reading fluency, comprehension, and motivation by providing a study that included a delayed retention assessment to test for mastery. This study's results indicate that readers' theatre was not influential on the WIAT III oral reading fluency and comprehension tests, likewise, for the knowledge acquisition tests. Although differences could not be found, some effect sizes indicated possible movement from pretest to posttest scores. It is possible that effects might be found if the sample size was larger. Readers' theatre did not promote motivation per the student reading survey, however,

through discussion, students' answers were positive. It is recommended that future research examine readers' theater and its influence on additional elements of oral fluency and comprehension, and its influence using various genres, including real world experiences and issues.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PARENTAL PERMISSION LETTER**Date:****Student Principal Investigator:** Holly Marshall**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Amy Elleman**Institution faculty advisor:** (Principal)

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am a doctoral candidate in the Ph.D. in Literacy studies at Middle Tennessee State University. As part of the completion of the degree, I will be conducting a research study in your child's classroom. I am asking for your permission for your child to be a part of this research. This study is being conducted to test whether Readers Theatre can help children's reading fluency, comprehension, knowledge retention, and motivation.

Purpose: Participation in the 4-week research study is voluntary. Your decision whether to allow your child to participate will not affect the services normally provided to your child by the school. There will be two groups of studies, one of Readers' theatre and one that will study the same subject matter through other alternate reading activities. Readers' Theater is an alternate reading method where reading is performed from scripts that are created based on various genres of literacy and subjects. It is a form of theatre arts without memorization, scenery, and costumes. The instruction provides alternate activities and strategies to learn and understand the subject material that may be more difficult to master. The readers' theatre group activities will include character analysis, genre study, the reading elements of fluency, expression, comprehension, plot and subject study, vocabulary study, and repeated reading. The activities for group two will consist of group and partner reading, creative writing, discussions, small projects on subject matter, and other reading activities. The lesson material used for both groups is created from required state and district curriculum standards

Your child's involvement in this study will not lead to the loss of any benefits to which her or she is otherwise entitled.

- a. Even if you give permission for your child to participate, your child is free to refuse.
- b. If your child agrees to participate, he or she is free to end participation anytime.
- c. You and your child are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your child's participation in this research study.
- d. There is no cost to you or your child for participation in this study.
- e. There is no compensation for participation in study.
- f. There is no compensation in case of study related injury.
- g. If your child does not take part in the study, they will continue with regular curriculum and activities.

Confidentiality: Any information that is obtained about this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of assigning numbers to the children who participate to eliminate using names.

- a. All materials will be collected each day by myself and kept safely for confidentiality; no one will have access to the materials except for authorized personnel if necessary. Such personnel would be: teachers, approved assistants from the university, principal, reading specialist. Sharing information would be only to use for educational reasons and possibly to incorporate into the curriculum depending on outcomes of research study.
- b. Testing materials will go through a process of de-identification. This means that a number system will be used for each participant tests to ensure privacy and autonomy. Student names will be taken off testing materials and replaced with an assigned number.

Procedures: The activities will be explained to your child clearly in a way they will understand.

- a. The lessons and activities are created to enhance the study and activity of each group. The lessons include cooperative learning and decision making, group discussions, readings, group response in writing, partner readings, individual readings, individual response in writing, and varied ways of learning to meet the diverse needs of the students.
- b. At times, the researcher (myself) and/or the teacher may observe or assist your child while he or she takes part in activities. Observations may, consist of listening to your child read, discussions between teacher and your child and teacher to child instruction.
- c. The sessions with a whole group and/or individual child may be audiotaped to check and ensure the study reliable and valid.
- d. The first and last week of the experiment will consist of testing. The pretest before the actual experiment of two-weeks, is to determine ability levels of fluency, comprehension and motivation. The same testing will be administered again, after the completion of the experiment to see any differences before and after the instruction. The tests include tasks of one of the following: multiple choice, open-ended questions, 1-5 rating scale, timed reading passages, reading passages and retelling.

Educators are required to teach curriculum standards in diverse ways to motivate, encourage, and guide students to master what they are learning. This study will provide an opportunity to discover if an alternate reading method that encompasses many elements of reading development improves reading abilities.

If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact your child's classroom teacher or myself.

The university of which I am obtaining my degree from, from the district that your child's school resides, from the principal of your school has approved this study.

Please see attached Consent Form, please fill form out, sign, and return by ____ 2016.

Thank you,

Holly Marshall
Candidate for Ph.D. in Literacy Studies
Middle Tennessee State University

APPENDIX B

PARENTAL / GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

I have read the information letter concerning the research project entitled *The Effectiveness of Readers Theatre on the Fluency, Comprehension, and Motivation of Primary Students*. This study is to be conducted by Holly Marshall, a doctoral student for a Ph.D. in Literacy Studies from Middle Tennessee State University.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions and receive and additional details I wanted about the study.

I acknowledge that all information gathered on this project will be used for research purposes only and will be considered confidential. I am aware that permission may be withdrawn as any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

I realize that this project has been reviewed by and approved by the Institutional Review Board at MTSU, the district level, and principal of the school.

If I have any questions about this study, I can feel free to contact the researcher, Holly Marshall, hbm2n@mtmail.mtsu.edu. Or Dr. Amy Elleman, Department of Literacy Studies, Middle Tennessee State University, Amy.Elleman@mtsu.edu

Please mark the appropriate box.

☐

Yes, I would like my child to participate in this study.

☐

No, I would not like my child to participate in this study.

Child's birthdate _____ Gender of Child _____ Male _____ Female

Parent or Guardian

Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Title Candidate for Ph.D. in Literacy Studies Department MTSU DOE

APPENDIX C

READERS' THEATRE LESSON PLAN WEEK ONE

Week One, Day One (Monday)**Length: 40 min.****Introduction: (to whole group)**

Question: Have any of you seen a play before? (*answers vary, yes/no, some may expand on what they saw*)

- a. Discuss a few of the plays that were kind, action, events, scenery, story, characters, etc.
- b. Reinforce what they saw and emphasize attributes of a traditional play.
- c. Does anyone know what readers' theatre is? (*answers vary, may be guesses, play, reading books in front of others, etc.*)
- d. Define and explain readers' theatre.
 - = Like a play you may have seen, RT is a play performed by actors who are different characters telling you a story. However, RT is different in many ways. RT actors read their parts, there is no costumes, and or scenery. (expand on the three points for clarification)
 - = Discuss what to "memorize" means. RT does not memorize the parts.
 - = Discuss limited movement and props.
- e. History Trivia:
 - = A condensed version of Paul Gregory and the Tiffany diamonds on how he came to vision what readers' theatre is.
- f. Recap what RT is and put on chart.

Instruction

- a. Read Act 1, Scene One to introduce beginning of script to also model characters, voice, expression, etc. without them really knowing it.
- b. Discuss the reading. What are the ways it was read? Was it interesting? What made it interesting or not? (*word questions depending on how they are asked or answered*)
- c. Hand out scripts in folders. (NO assigning parts, NO markings, discuss how to handle scripts.)
- d. Discuss text, how it is different from a paragraph/book format.
 - 1. Why is it different? (*so, the performers know whose part is speaking*)
 - 2. Why is that important?
 - 3. Read the same section read before as group follows along.

Setting: Discuss

Characters:

- a. Discuss reasons for different voices.
- b. Describe what they know so far about the characters. How do they know this?
- c. What is happening in the RT up to this point?
- d. predicts what may happen in story.

Content:

- a. Subject: Earth's makeup
- b. Prior knowledge

Reading:

Group Read in parts, but no specific part given for the performance yet.
=they read Act 1, Scene One

Word Analyze: Chart any difficult words, discuss.

= rotate reading different parts.

Conclusion:

- a. recap mini-lesson
- b. Discuss what they liked and what they found difficult.
 - c. Write any ideas to improve for the next day's work. (may include RT, scripts, words, and reading behaviors, respect, etc.)
- b. Collect folders

Week One, Day Two:

Time: 40 min.

Introduction: (whole group)

Greeting. Recap previous day's lesson with students, give guidance, but allow students to provide as much information as possible.

- a. Pull out ICharts and review and see what was remembered and not.

Instruction:

- a. Guidance of retelling of Act 1, Scene One.
- b. hand out scripts.
- c. Model Act 1, Scene Two.
 - Stop reading before the first continent. Discuss events up to this point.
 - Predict what is going to happen.
 - Analyze characters since there is more to know. (write on chart)
 - Continue modeling and read rest of Scene Two as they follow along.
 - Discuss content. Bring out blank Content and Ocean map. (not the one used for the performance).

- d. Reading and applying content knowledge:
 - a. Assign parts from listening the day before. (assigning by teacher eliminates arguments and time)
 - b. they highlight their part. Write their real name on top of script.
 - b. First reading as characters:
 - Discuss what first reading in parts means.
 - Recap ideas of how and who characters are.
 - Read Act 1, Scene Two.
 - c. Character Analyzation:
 - a. Hand out paper, have each student draw what their character looks like and write 2-3 sentences or words (depending on level) to describe their character.
 - b. Group share.
 - c. Group ideas for each other on characters.
 - d. Read through Act 1, Scene Two again with ideas. Stop if time does not permit.

Conclude: Collect folders.

Week One, Day Three

Time: 40 minutes

Introduction:

Review all previous lessons. Look at ICharts.

Instruction:

- a. Discuss expression, body movements, and minimal props for performance.
 - Expression:
 - Model a few character's line in a monotone voice. Discuss what is interesting and not interesting about it.
 - Why is expression important in reading and performance? *(so the characters come to life, real, interesting, to keep the audience attention)*
 - Expression not to be overdone.
 - Body Movements: In RT, keep to a minimum, but it is more appealing to interact with each other even if reading from a script through head turns, eye contact, hand and arm gestures. Possibly a bit of placement of where body stands. (rare) Should be lifelike and not overdone.

Props: not many are used, and if so, to add to point of story, not distract.

b. Read through script stopping to add the above elements. Try to let students decide, with guidance. Repeat.

c. Put into partners to read their own line and polish any issues as pronunciation, etc.

d. Whole group practices for the rest of session up to the last 5 minutes.
= rehearse with all blocking, expression, etc.

Conclude:

Discuss how they feel about their practice.

Week One, Day four

Time: 40 minutes

Introduction:

Greeting. Discuss a short recap from day 1,2, & 3.

Instruction:

Majority of session will be rehearsal and blocking.

- a. 1st run through: stop if need be for guidance.
=run through as many times as possible.
=Utilize map for all the remaining practices. Only label with marker.
=Time the last run through as if it is the performance.
- b. Individual practice of lines 3 times with expression, partner read to help each other with feedback.

Last 15 minutes of session:

- a. Discuss how they feel about the performance?

Content/Subject review: Study map.

- =go over the continents and oceans on the personal size maps.
- =Discuss where they live. They place figure on the map in the same order of the aliens visit as in the script.
- = They label the continents and if time, they may color.

Conclude: Take up folders.

Week One, Day Five
Time: 15 min. for RT
15 for FF (control)
followed by the schedule listed below

SCHEDULE OF DAY:

1. RT rehearsal (15 min.)
2. Control Lesson (15 min.)
3. RT Performance (15-20 min.)
5. Control presentation (10 min.)
6. Both groups: Knowledge acquisition assessment based on the week one material (20-25 min) Collect.

RT (15 min.)

Introduction:

Review performance elements of diction, expression, movements, etc...

Instruction:

Rehearse 2-3 times.

Conclude: if time allows

Discuss contents and oceans, look at their own ap.

Collect Folders, keep and hand back out before performance.

= this is to ensure all students are participating in being good audience members and to not have any distractions while the other group is performing or presenting.

Continue with Schedule of Day (listed above)

End of Week One Intervention

APPENDIX D

READERS' THEATRE SCRIPT

“What on Earth?”

(A readers' theatre play on The Seven Continents and Oceans)

2nd Grade

The following readers' theatre script is written to include the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) based on the Seven Continents and Five Oceans. The play was created and incorporated to serve as an intervention treatment for a doctoral study to examine “Readers' Theatre and its effectiveness on Fluency, Comprehension, and Motivation”. The standards are being taught using Readers' Theater within the allotted time frame that a standard is generally taught to determine mastery.

CCSS Standards:

2.14 Construct a globe depicting the four hemispheres, seven continents, and five oceans using the equator and prime meridian. **(The script will not incorporate the actual making of a globe, but the learning of the items. The constructing of a globe will be done during another time in the class schedule)*

2.15 Create a map depicting the current boundaries of the United States, Canada, and Mexico and recognize they are part of the North American continent.

“What on Earth?”

Synopsis: A group of Alien friends set out to discover how planet Earth is designed and some interesting facts about the Earth.

Number of characters: (7)

Narrator (1)

Alien friends (5) *may divide lines or share lines to decrease or add characters.

Earth citizen: (1)

Characters and Description:

Narrator: (not gender specific)
Someone who speaks to the audience by describing and giving information to the audience about the characters or what is about to happen or has already happened in the play.

Alien friends: (not gender specific)

Zella: Very smart. Likes to read, study, and learn. However, it can get on the nerves of other friends and Zeela is always writing down notes.

Gordok: A leader. A nice person who takes charge only to get things done.

Ahbit: A good friend to all who just wants everyone to get along.

Babeet: Babeet is always hungry and has allergies, so Babeet may sneeze quite a bit.

Orto: Orto is a rather nervous person and is a bit worried about many things on this adventure.

**more characters can be added to the Alien friends by dividing lines.*

Earth Citizens:

Emilio: (boy) From Antarctica who becomes their guide through the alien friends journey.
or Emme (girl)

**it is possible to have both characters if needed by dividing lines.*

Act One (week one)

Setting: A classroom on a planet called Arkon, far out in space.

Narrator: We begin in a classroom as Alien students talk about their homework.

(sounding like an Alien)

Zeela: Oh. Wow.... This is super far out! I can't wait until we begin our homework! Ork, Ork, Ork *(an alien giggle)*

Orto: I don't know about this sort of thing. It makes me nervous.

Babeet: I agree, this should be an interesting, however, I have no idea how to begin.

Gordeet: No problem, I can handle this, I've got it. We just..... uh..... well....

Zeela: We begin by looking at the map of the planet that is called Earth. Now, our job is to find out what it looks like and how it is made. That shouldn't be too hard.

Orto: Oh.... I don't know, looking at something we don't know that much about? I don't know.

Babeet: *(Sniffle, snort...)* I agree with Zeela, we can do this. Now, let's have a look that ma...ah...ah..achoo! Oh goodness, sorry again.

Gordeet: Great. Looks like the map is a mess of squiggly lines and objects, it shows us where it is, but there is nothing to tell us what Earth looks like or anything.

Orto: Oh... no.... don't tell me things like that, there is nothing? How are we going to figure this out? We aren't going to get the project done in time.

Ahbit: Well now... this isn't a problem, if we work together, we can get this done.

Gordeet: Calm down Orto, hey, if we must, we'll just go to Earth.... *(laughs kiddingly)*

Orto, Babeet and Ahbit: What?

Zeela: Gordeet! Yes! That's it! What a great idea, can we take your Astroplane and see Earth for ourselves! This is perfect! I better write all of this down....

Gordeet: Uh... I was just kidding Zeela, I really didn't mean it.

Zeela: Gordeet, it is just what we need to do.

Orto: Oh, my.... This is not going to be good for me... I can just tell it.

Babeet: Do you think there will be food down there? I'm getting hungry.

Ahbit: Oh well.... I guess is we are going to do this; we might as well do it all the way!

Narrator: The friends decided to fly to earth the next day, since they didn't have school.

Zeela: Okay, Gordeet, I have a plan, let's start to fly up to this spot, here at the top of the map.

Gordeet: Whatever Zeela, we should have enough fuel to get wherever that is.

Narrator: As the five friends fly through the universe, they come upon what they have been told is earth.

Ahbit: Wow, Earth is kind of pretty, at least from up here.

Babeet: Gee, look at that! There is so much blue!

Orto: I hope we don't land in the blue; it doesn't look very safe to me. Huh... do you notice that Earth looks like a ball? Its round? Do they not fall off the planet? Interesting.

Gordeet: It does look cool from up here. Let's see if I can land where we think... ah oh....

Orto: What! No, no ah oh.... Not here, not anywhere. No, we don't say ah oh.

Zeela: What is it Gordeet? What's wrong?

Gordeet: I was wrong, our fuel is lower than I thought, we will have to land where I can.

Ahbit: Hey guys, it will be just fine, we will make it.

Babeet: I hope so; my stomach is making those gurgling sounds when I haven't had my fuel yet.

Narrator: Gordeet and his friends held on tight as he carefully landed the Astroplane on a body of land.

Gordeet: Whoohoo! Did it!

Zeela: Hey, where are we? It looks all white out there. Kind of strange.

Ahbit: Well there is only one way to find out. Let's go!

Narrator: As they stepped out of the plane, there was nothing to find except for a few small buildings and very few people.

Orto: This doesn't look good, let's go back.

Ahbit: Oh, come on, this will be fun. Let's see if there are any life forces here, there doesn't seem to be much of anything else.

Zeela: Be careful though, we don't know what to expect.

Narrator: As the friends walked to a small building, a door opened and in front of them stood a life force.... A human person.

Gordeet: Oh whoa... whoa... uh... we are students from planet Arkon and we are here to work on a project. (*whispers to the others*) This life force looks rather strange.

Emilio: Okay.... Seriously, guys, who put you up to this, huh? (*laughing*) Good, hey, did the guys doing the research on ice caps send you over? Okay, got me, you can take your costumes off.

Zeela: What?

Orto: I knew it; I just knew we shouldn't have done this.

Babeet: Hush Orto, maybe they have something for food.

Emilio: What? Are you kidding me? You are not the guys from research lab 12? Those... are... your... real clothes and you really look like that? Okay then.... Uh.... (*stammering*) wh...wh... what can I do for you and for how long are you planning on being here?

Zeela: Thank you, human life force for asking. We are in need to know more about this planet of yours called Earth. Our project is to understand what it looks like and any other facts we find.

Emilio: and I can be of help how...?

Babeet: Well, since you ask, my stomach is making some strange sounds.

Emilio: Excuse me?

Gordeet: We need fuel for our plane and I believe Babeet is asking for food.

Emilio: Got it. Your plane needs fuel and she is hungry. Yea, I can help with both of those.

Babeet: Yes, this is good, very good.

Narrator: Once the plane and friends were all fueled up, they began to ask questions and explore the unique land they were on.

Emilio: You are on a land called Antarctica. It is one of the Seven Continents of the Earth's makeup.

Zeela: Oh! Oh! Wait a minute, this is so important, I must write this down. Oh, Orto, pull out the map, maybe he can show us where this body of land is.

Emilio: Antarctica is right here, (*showing on map*) it is at the southernmost part of the Earth, down here at the bottom of the Earth. As you can see, what you landed on was frozen water called ice.

Ahbit: Yea, I found that out the hard way (*as he rubs his rear end*)

Emilio: Sorry, I had to get used to walking on it when I first got here. If you notice, there are not many people, uh... life forces as you call them, around. The only ones here are doing what you are doing, science, experiments, trying to find out more about our earth.

Zeela: Very interesting. I am going to write all of this down so we can share it when we get back to Arkon.

Babeet: I would like to know more too, and I also would like to have another snow cone please. These are so good.

Emilio: Well, the most ice that the earth is covered with, is right here in Antarctica.

Orto: Oh, what is that sound and what are those?

Emilio: *(laughing)*. See the black and white one? That is called a penguin, they are a type of bird species. Those over there on the ice hill are seals. They are just a few animals that can survive here.

Zeela: Wow. You know, this is so great, all this is good information. Would you be able to be our guide and take us around the Earth to show us other places? I mean, if you can leave right now.

Gordeet: Hey, that is a good idea and I can focus on driving while you tell us about Earth.

Emilio: You know, that would be fun. I have don't have to be back here until tomorrow at this time, we have 24 hours to get it done, I think we can do it. Let's go.

Narrator: The Aliens and Emilio begin to fly up from Antarctica going Northeast to another body of land.

Gordeet: Hey Emilio, do I need to worry, we are flying over that blue stuff we saw coming in.

Emilio: No, there is no worry if you have all the fuel you need.

Orto: Seriously? We are going to talk about that AFTER we have taken off?

Ahbit: Orto, it is fine, we have enough fuel. Look at the window it is pretty.

Zeela: Emilio, what is that blue stuff anyway? I need to write it down.

Emilio: That is the Southern Ocean, it is a large body of water that surrounds Antarctica. There will be four other oceans we will fly over. The five oceans make up 2/3 of the whole Earth surface, and the seven continents make up 1/3.

Ahbit: So, the earth is made up of more water than solid surfaces....

Emilio: Land.

Ahbit: Yea, land. Huh, more water than land on the earth. Crazy.

Babeet: Uh... hey, Emilio? Just for planning sake, how many stops will we be making? You know, just in case... uh... we may need more food?

Emilio: Ah, oh yes, Babeet, you already explored one of the seven continents, Antarctica, so now we are going to visit the other six. Will that work for you Babeet?

Babeet: Yes, I believe so, I will just have to plan for it.

Gordeet: Okay, well, where do I land, I see something below us.

Emilio: Alright! Land right there, yea, that's it. Friends we just landed on the continent of Australia. Don't be afraid of the kangaroos.

Orto: The what? What did you say? What are kangaroos and do they speak our language? Should we be afraid?

Emilio: No, no, Orto, they are an animal that is popular here. Australia is known for several animals that you can only find here.

Ahbit: Now, that is cool. What else about this continent?

Emilio: Well, it is the smallest of the seven continents.

Zeela: Hang on, I must get another page started here.

Emilio: Gordeet, let's continue our path and fly up North and to the left or west just a bit.

Ahbit: Whoa! Look down fellow aliens! That is a lot of land down there.

Orto: What?

Gordeet: We're not going to get lost Orto, Emilio knows what he is doing.... Uh... you do, don't you Emilio?

Emilio: Oh sure, we are doing fine. Hmmm... let's see, this is quite a large continent,

Narrator: The Alien friends and Emilio have explored four of the seven continents and are on their way to the next continent to see more of Earth.

Readers' theatre: "What on Earth?"
Act Two
(second week of intervention)

Narrator: The Alien friends and Emilio have explored four of the seven continents and have landed on the next continent to explore.

Zeela: Emilio, where exactly are we now?

Emilio: We are in Asia and yes, Babeet, I think you will find some of the food here very interesting.

Babeet: I... wasn't asking... oh well, since you brought it up.

Ahbit: All out! Let's explore.

Zeela: Wait! First Emilio, tell us about a little about Asia.

Emilio: Asia is the largest of the seven continent and, it is also where the most people live. Asia has many different sections of land they divide called countries. In those countries people speak differently from each other and have different ways of living.

Orto: Doesn't that make it hard to have discussions with each other if they do not speak the same way?

Ahbit: I bet it is kind of like where we live, there are ways to learn how the other Alien forms speak so we can understand each other, is that the same here Emilio?

Emilio: Yes, there are ways to learn to speak each other's language so that we can talk to each other.

Ahbit: See, that is all I wanted to hear, how we all can get along even though we may be different in some ways. I think I may like this earth so far. Can we continue?

Zeela: Hang on here, (*writing quickly*) I am a bout done with the last point here, largest continent, different countries, most human forms of all continents on earth. Okay, let's go.

Gordeet: Alright, let's get back in the Astroplane and take off for more places!

Emilio: We are going to fly down southwest a bit to the continent of Africa.

Babeet: Sounds different, but possibly an interesting place.

Emilio: It is an interesting place, Africa. It is the second largest continent and the second largest with the most people. There are 1,000 different languages here that are spoken.

Ahbit: Excuse me? 1,000 different types of speaking? Okay, now that may be stretching it in trying to learn all of them.

Emilio: Africa has many, many types of animals that get to run around in the open spaces on their own. It is really a great thing to see.

Orto: Huh... sounds good, but ... what happens if these animals come up to you?

Emilio: Well, you don't get that close to them if you can help it. Africa also has the longest river that in the whole world.

Ahbit: and that would be....

Emilio: Oh, sorry. The Nile River. It is a running body of water that begins in Egypt, a country of Africa.

Zeela: I can't believe that we have already been to four of the seven continents. This is so great. Are we going to be able to finish the trip?

Babeet: We will be stopping for a longer time at the next continent? Just asking.

Gordeet: Emilio, now where to and yes, Babeet, I will need to refuel the Astroplane again as well.

Babeet: Oh, no matter to me, I was just asking, but since you do have to stop to fuel the Astroplane...

Ahbit: Now where to?

Emilio: Europe, just direct the plane up North right above Africa.

Narrator: Emilio and the Alien friends take off for Europe to learn more about Earth.

Orto: Is Europe a good place to land? Just want to make sure.

Emilio: Oh yes, Europe is my favorite continent to go to, it also has many countries on the continent. Yet, like Asia, the countries are very close to each other, but the people have different ways of living and speaking.

Zeela: Very interesting, yes, I like that. What else?

Emilio: Europe is full of things to see, a lot of history, art, music, very old churches and good food.

Babeet: What? Excuse me, I am not sure if I caught that last statement.

Emilio: Ha! Yes, many of the countries in Europe are famous for wonderful food. Other facts to write down Zeela are...

Zeela: ready...

Emilio: Europe has no deserts like several of the other continents, but they do have the famous mountains called the Alps.

Zeela: Oooo... now that is interesting and I will go back to Arkon and explore more on that fact. However, tell us more about Europe.

Emilio: Well, like all the continents, there is so much more that can be told, we only have time to see where they are on the earth and a few facts.

Gordeet: Emilio, we are going to run out of time. We may want to keep going.

Emilio: Got it. Thanks for keeping watch on our time. If you noticed, we haven't crossed over any water for some time. We crossed over the Southern Ocean from Antarctica to Australia, from Australia to Asia, we crossed over the Indian ocean.

Zeela: Oh, Ahbit, did you get that? You are keeping up by marking the map with the continents and oceans, aren't you?

Ahbit: Yea, yea, got it, it's looking good, not much more to see.

Emilio: That is correct, we're almost done. We are flying across the Atlantic Ocean now from Europe to North America.

Zeela: I like the sound of that. What are a few facts about North America?

Orto: Are we there yet, I am beginning to have a bit of motion sickness.

Babeet: Here, you want to eat some of my pizza from Europe?

Orto: What? Really? do you want me to just lose it right here, right now? No thanks.

Babeet: Suit yourself.

Gordeet: Emilio, go ahead and tell us some about North America, but first where do I land?

Emilio: Land right there on The United States of America. It is one of the countries of the North America continent. North America is the third largest continent.

Zeela: Well if it is the third largest, and there are few countries with it, what are the others?

Emilio: Well, like I said, the United States is here in the middle, and above is Canada, and below is Mexico. North American is the only continent surrounded by three oceans, the Pacific, the Arctic, and the Atlantic

Zeela: Oh, give me a moment please, you are giving really good information but I need to catch up please. *(writing)* Whoo.... Okay, keep going.

Gordeet: Well, we have seen six of the seven continents alien friends, I guess we need to head to the last one and get Emilio back to where he needs to be.

Orto: Or maybe where WE need to be as well? What a trip, but I am beginning to worry about the interspace traffic as we fly back home.

Ahbit: It will be fine, we have enjoyed the day, let's hit the last continent Emilio.

Emilio: Gordeet, just fly south, that's it. South from North America.

Gordeet: Wow. Here already? That did not take very long.

Emilio: I know. This continent is easy to remember because it is also named an "America", but SOUTH America. Since it is south or below North America. However, they are different in their own ways.

Babeet: Look down there, what is that? Oh, is it another river?

- Emilio: Yes, Babeet, very good, that is the Amazon River, the second longest after the Nile River. The Amazon carries more water, so much that it can be seen from space.
- Gordeet: This is pretty. I wish we had more time to really explore more about the earth and more about the human life forces that inhabit the earth.
- Zeela: Oh, that would be wonderful! We can do that for our next project!
- Babeet: Oh, no, really? Can't we just give it a rest for a while?
- Orto: Yes, it has been a very nice trip, however, I do think it is time, yes, it is time to return to our planet Arkon to present our report to our alien friends at school.
- Zeela: I suppose you are all correct in your ideas. We will return to get our report ready.
- Gordeet: Emilio, let us take you back to Antarctica so you may begin your study.
- Emilio: You know guys, I was thinking, that I should study more about earth from your point of view. I would like to come with you and help you with your report. You know, there is still more I could teach you.
- Zeela: Really? You would do that? Oh, that is so great! Yes, come with us.
- Gordeet: Okay Alienators! We are on our way back to Arkon! Hang on!
- Orto: Oh, oh no, a bit too fast there, can we slow down please? I am still not feeling that great.

(SHIP TAKES OFF)

APPENDIX E

REPEATED READING LESSON PLAN WEEK ONE**Time: 40 min.****Day One**

Introduction:

Greeting.

“How are you today? (answers) I am excited to have you part of this experiment in reading. You are in a group that will be reading the same subject but in different ways than another group. We are going to see which way of reading works the best. Are you up for this? I hope so, it is going to be fun.”

Instruction:

1. Read Aloud: Read Passage One, Week One. (group listens, they have no materials in front of them)
2. Discuss what the passage was about. Minimal Retell.
“What was this passage about?” (put on IChart)
3. Pass out passage. Read aloud as they follow.
“Is there anything else that we can add to the chart?”
4. Put them in partners. “Now, before you read with your partner, I want to teach you how to “I read, you read.”

“I read, you read”.

- a. “One of you will read the passage as the other one listens. When the first reader is done, the person listening how to retell what they heard. Then, you switch reader and listener.”

*For right now, if you do not know or understand a word, maybe you are having a hard time saying the word, I want you to write the word down in your folder.

- b. They read and write.

Group Share:

- a. “How did it go? Were there any words that were hard to say or understand? Let’s write them down on a chart and discuss them together.”
- b. chart and discuss.
- c. “Great, okay, now go back with your partner and read the passage again, you read I read and if you are having a hard time with saying the words, here is what I want you to do.

1. If the reader can't say a word, the listener gives the reader a moment to try for themselves and then asks, "do you want help?" and the listener can help the reader with the word. "What should you do if neither one of you know the word?" (ask Mrs. Marshall)

- b. after they read once each again, pull into group.
- c. share any new words or how they figured them out together.
- d. "great job! Now, who can tell me what the passage is talking about?"

Conclude: do not retell to the full extent. Only minimal. Collect folders.

Fact Finders

Week One: Day Two:

Introduction:

Go over previous day's steps of reading the passage. Go over the word chart.

Instruction:

(hand out folders)

1. Model and read passage while they follow in folders.
2. After reading: "can you tell me what kind of story this is?" (nonfiction)
 - a. Discuss what Non-fiction is. Expository. (tells facts, teaches)
 - b. How is this different than Fiction? How could this passage be made into a fiction story? (characters, speaking, etc.)
 - c. "You are right, this is a reading with facts about the continents and oceans. Let's look at the map here and see where they are. I find it easier to understand when I can see where the places are."
 - *look in the back of your folder. You have a map that is also labeled with the continents and oceans. You can look at it as you read the passage to understand where the continent or ocean is.

Reading:

- a. "I am going to have you read by yourself now and then we will together again and discuss. I would like for you to write down any questions you may have on the passage in your folder. I would like you to read the passage one time." "How many?" (1x)
 - *have someone repeat the directions so everyone gets another chance to hear them and to make sure they heard them correctly.
- b. Individual reading around room if at possible, if not, spread apart not to distract each other.

Group:

- a. "How did it go? What questions do you have on the passage?"
- b. Discuss.
- c. "Can someone tell me what you have learned from the passage so far?"
- e. "Now, let's get back with your partner from yesterday and read the passage together. This is different from yesterday."

- = “You will read a different way today. You will read the same passage but take turns reading different parts. Let me show you what I mean.” (ask for a volunteer)
- = “Now, I am going to read first, (read a short section and stop). Now, (John) is going to continue from where I stopped.”
- = “After you finish reading, talk about how you read it and what it said. = “Ask each other to name the continents and oceans without looking at the passage or the maps.

Conclude: Group. Collect folders. If time, “How did you do? Did you find things out you didn’t know before?”

Control Group (Fact Finders)

Week One: Day Three

Introduction:

“How are you today? We have been working hard reading a passage this week. We are going to continue to read the same passage, but do a few different things with it. First, let’s review the first few day’s work.

Instruction:

Pass out folders.

1. Review map discussing the continents in the order they are written in the reading passage.

B. Reading-Partners

1. they read whole page. Assign paragraph passages for each student.
2. Read complete reading passage in partners.
3. In partners, reread Asia and write down two facts.
4. Discuss as a group their findings. Write on chart. See if there are any that were missed.
5. Model reading paragraph on Asia.
 - = during modeling, underline important facts of the continent.
6. Students mimic what was modeled. They are to reread passage and underline what they consider important facts. Give feedback as they do so in order to direct them in understanding.
7. Group discussion on findings. They write down any fact they may have not had and may hear from peer.

C. “Now, that you have read the passage, we have written down facts, discussed them, you are doing very well understanding the passage.” “Do you have any questions on the passage, facts, how you read it?”

D. Make sure individual maps has the continent of the day colored .

Collect Folders

Control Group
Week One: Day Four
(40 min.)

Introduction:

“How are you doing? I am excited because we are finishing up this passage today, but I hope you are remembering facts from it, because you will need to know them for other readings. Are you ready to start today’s activities?”

Instruction:

1. Whole group read through.
2. Discuss what Friday’s presentation will look like and how it will be done.
 - = stand in order of reading passage. (paragraphs)
 - = As each student begins to present their continent or reading passage, each student will point to the continent on the map they are representing.
 - = rehearse presentation.
3. Whole group read passage on Africa and write two facts.
4. Share
5. Color map

If time: individual reread whole passage.

Collect Folders

Control, Fact Finders
Week One: Day Five
Time: 15 min. for RT
15 for FF (control)
followed by the schedule listed below

SCHEDULE OF DAY:

1. RT rehearsal (15 min.)
2. Control Lesson (15 min.)
3. RT Performance (15-20 min.)
5. FF presentation (10 min.)
6. Both groups: Knowledge acquisition assessment based on the week one material (20-25 min) Collect.

FF:**Introduction:**

Review presentation expectations.

Instruction:

Practice.

Conclude: if time allows

Discuss contents and oceans, look at individual maps.

Collect Folders, keep and hand back out before performance.

= this is to ensure all students are participating in being good audience members and to not have any distractions while the other group is performing or presenting.

Continue with Schedule of Day (listed above)

End of Week One Intervention

APPENDIX F

REPEATED READING PASSAGE

The Earth is made up of a solid mass called “land” and a liquid called “water”. The water covers $\frac{2}{3}$ of the earth and the land covers $\frac{1}{3}$ of the earth. So, the earth is covered with more water than land.

The water that covers the earth is called **Oceans**, there are five of them. The *Pacific, Atlantic, Southern, Indian, and Arctic*.

The land is divided into parts. These parts are called **Continents**. There are seven continents of land. On most of the land, people live, eat, play, and work. Not all the people are the same. Their food, homes, languages, and lives may be different from each other. The seven continents are named: *North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and Antarctica*.

There are four continents that begin and end with the letter “A”. The first is ***Antarctica***. Antarctica is located at the bottom of the earth and is very cold and is covered with ice. In fact, Antarctica covers the earth with the most ice than any other continent. It is not a continent where many people live. However, there are some animals that can live in the very cold. These animals are called seals and penguins. They can find fish in the water below the ice for food.

Australia is North of Antarctica. It is the smallest of the Seven Continents. It has known for the Great Barrier Reef. The Great Barrier Reef is a water community in the Southern Ocean of thousands of different water plants and animals. The Outback is an area of land that many people do not live in because it is very dry, very hot, and does not get much rain. Several animals that live in Australia, are the kangaroos and koala bears.

Asia is the largest of the Seven Continents. Asia is the continent where the most people live on the whole planet of Earth. It is so big, that the land is divided into parts called countries. People live, eat, work, and play just like they do in the other continents. Asia has a wall called the Great Wall of China that is more than 2,300 years old and is over 13,000 miles long.

Africa is South of Asia and is also divided into different countries. Africa is the second largest continent there is. There are so many people living in different countries that there are over 1,000 types of languages. Africa can be dry in parts of the continent and very hot. It has many wild animals that walk around free in open parts of land. The longest river on earth is in Africa, in the country of Egypt. It is called the Nile River.

REPEATED READING PASSAGE Week Two

The Earth is made up of a solid mass called “land” and a liquid called “water”. The water covers $\frac{2}{3}$ of the earth and the land covers $\frac{1}{3}$ of the earth. So, the earth is covered with more water than land.

The land is divided into parts. These parts are called **Continents**. There are seven continents of land. The seven continents are named: *North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and Antarctica*.

Europe is a smaller continent located by Asia and north of Africa. It is made up of countries. Europe has some of the oldest cities in the world. There are many things to see in Europe. It has a lot of history, art, music, very old buildings, and good food. It is easy to remember where Europe is, it has a country called Italy that looks like a lady’s boot at the bottom of the continent. Europe has many countries that have famous landmarks like “Big Ben”. It is a big clock tower in the country of England. Europe has no deserts like other continents, but they do have very large mountains called The Alps. Many people try to climb them, but it can be dangerous. Along time ago, many people lived in Europe before they went to North America.

North America is the third largest continent of the earth. North America is made of the United States of America, Canada, and Mexico. The United States is in the middle of North America with Canada north and Mexico south of the continent. Three oceans touch North America, the Pacific Ocean which is west of the United States, Atlantic Ocean, east of North America and Arctic, which is north. The United States has smaller parts called states.

South America is below or south of North America. It has many parts called countries. South America has the second longest river called the Amazon river. The Amazon runs so much water, that it can be seen from space. South America is also known for its rainforests and has the highest waterfall called Angel Falls.

There are **five oceans** on the earth. They are the **Pacific, Atlantic, Arctic, Southern, and Indian**. These oceans plus a few other bodies of water called lakes and rivers, cover $\frac{2}{3}$ rd of the earth. The oceans are the largest bodies of water and surround the seven continents. They are filled with sea life and plants.

Here is a fun way to remember the continents:

North America married South America,
And they went to Europe on their honeymoon!
They had four children,
Asia, Africa, Australia, Antarctica

APPENDIX G

STUDENT READING SURVEY (LIKERT SCALE)

STUDENT: _____ DATE: _____

ADMINISTRATOR: _____

Read each question and circle the number of the answer you choose. The numbers mean the following:

1-I don't like it 2-It's Okay

3-I like it

4-I love it

QUESTION	SCALE: Please circle 1, 2, 3, or 4. ONLY CIRCLE ONE ANSWER			
1. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?	1	2	3	4
2. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?	1	2	3	4
3. How do you feel about starting a new book?	1	2	3	4
4. How do you feel about reading during free time at school?	1	2	3	4
5. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?	1	2	3	4
6. How do you feel about reading during reading time in school?	1	2	3	4
7. How do you feel about the teacher asking you questions about what you read?	1	2	3	4
8. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?	1	2	3	4
9. How do you feel about having to write about what you have read?	1	2	3	4
10. How do you feel about learning from a book?	1	2	3	4
11. How do you feel reading out loud?	1	2	3	4
12. How do you feel about small reading group time?	1	2	3	4
13. How do you feel about taking a reading test?	1	2	3	4
14. How do you feel about reading with a partner?	1	2	3	4
15. How do you feel about reading one on one with your teacher?	1	2	3	4
16. How do you feel about reading your textbooks?	1	2	3	4
17. How do you feel about someone reading to you?	1	2	3	4
18. How do you feel about using your reading strategies?	1	2	3	4
19. How do you feel about going to the library?	1	2	3	4
20. How do you feel about reading?	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX H

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

*given at time of pretest and posttest

Date: _____ Administrator _____

Name: _____ Code _____

Script:

“I am going to ask you a few questions about how you feel about reading. There is no “right” or “wrong” answer with these questions. I want to know what you think about reading now. I will read some questions to you and write down what you say. Do you have any questions?”

Pre-Test

Questions:

1. What do you like about reading?
2. What are some of your favorite books you have read?
3. What do you like best about reading time at school?
4. What do you know about Readers' theatre?
5. What don't you like about reading?
6. Do you read at home?

Post test

Questions:

1. Which group were you in?
2. What did you like about the group you were in?
3. What do you like about reading?
4. What are some of your favorite books you have read?
5. What do you like best about reading time at school?
6. What do you know about Readers' theatre?
7. What don't you like about reading?
8. Do you read at home?

APPENDIX I

KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION TEST ONE

Name_____

ID_____

Group:_____

Date_____

Instructions: Listen to the following questions read to you aloud. Do not choose an answer until the question and choices are read to you completely. If you are not sure of the answer, choose and circle the best answer you think it may be. If you do not choose any answer at all, then the question will be marked wrong. Do your best! You can do it! ☺

1. Which planet do we live on?
 - a. Mars
 - b. Saturn
 - c. Earth
 - d. Jupiter
2. The Earth is made up of two things, what are they?
 - a. water and land
 - b. dry and hot
 - c. sky and sea
 - d. animals and people
3. The water that makes up the Earth is called...
 - a. rivers
 - b. ponds
 - c. streams
 - d. oceans
4. The land is divided into how many parts?
 - a. five
 - b. nine
 - c. six
 - d. seven
5. What is the land called that makes up the Earth?
 - a. cities
 - b. states
 - c. countries
 - d. continents
6. Which is the largest continent?
 - a. Australia
 - b. Africa
 - c. Asia
 - d. Antarctica

7. How many continents are there?

- a. nine
- b. eleven
- c. six
- d. seven

8. Which continent is at the bottom of the Earth?

- a. Africa
- b. Australia
- c. Antarctica
- d. Asia

9. There are seven continents.

- a. True
- b. False

10. Fill in the blank.

There are _____ oceans on the Earth.

11. Which continent has the most people?

- a. Africa
- b. Australia
- c. Asia
- d. Antarctica

12. Fill in the blank.

There are _____ continents of the Earth.

13. The oceans surround the continents.

- a. True
- b. False

14. Which continent is very hot.

- a. Australia
- b. Africa
- c. Asia
- d. Antarctica

15. The four continents that you have learned so far are the four “A’s”. Can you list them?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

16. From the four continents that you have learned so far, which continent is the smallest one?

- a. Antarctica
- b. Asia
- c. Australia
- d. Africa

17. Which continent covers the Earth with the most ice?

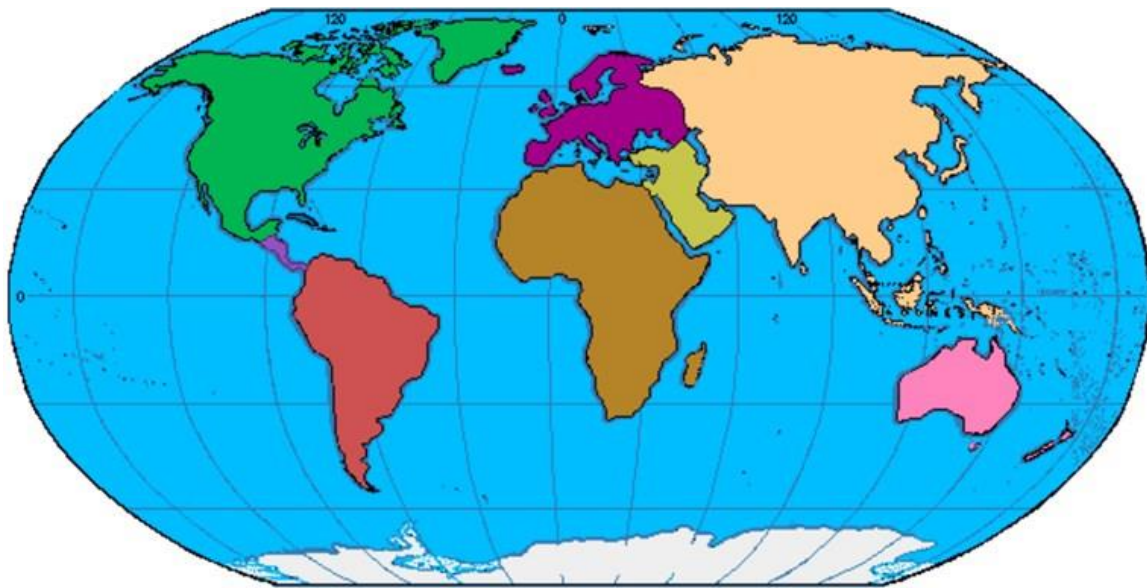
- a. Africa
- b. Antarctica
- c. Asia
- d. Australia

18. How many continents are there? _____

19. How many oceans are there? _____

20. On the map, put the number of the continent that matches the continent.

- a. Write the number 1 on Antarctica.
- b. Write the number 2 on Australia
- c. Write the number 3 on Asia
- d. Write the number 4 on Africa



Welcome to Continents and Oceans!

Bonus:

So far, which continent is your favorite? _____

APPENDIX J

KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION TEST TWO

Name _____

ID _____

Group: _____

Date _____

Instructions: Listen to the following questions read to you aloud. Do not choose an answer until the question and choices are read to you completely. If you are not sure of the answer, choose and circle the best answer you think it may be. If you do not choose any answer at all, then the question will be marked wrong. Do your best! You can do it! ☺

1. The Earth is made up of what two things?
What are they?

_____ and _____

2. How many continents are on Earth?

a. 5
b. 10
c. 7
d. 8

3. What name is given to all the bodies of the water on Earth?

a. seas
b. oceans
c. continents
d. countries

4. The land that makes up the Earth is divided into how many parts? _____

5. What country is between Asia and Africa and has a country that is shaped like a lady's boot?

a. Australia
b. North America
c. Europe
d. Antarctica

6. Which continent is the largest (biggest)?

a. North America
b. Asia
c. Africa
d. Europe

7. Which continent is the smallest?

a. Europe
b. Australia
c. South America
d. Africa

8. There are 8 continents on Earth.
a. True
b. False
9. Which continent do we live on?
a. South America
b. Europe
c. Africa
d. North America
10. Which country in North America do we live in?
a. Canada
b. United States
c. Mexico
d. Tennessee
12. What are the names of the five oceans?
a. Pacific, Atlantic, Southern, Indian, Arctic
b. Australia, Asia, Europe, Africa
c. North, South, East, West
d. Europe, South America, North America, Asia
13. Which continent is located below North America?
a. Asia
b. Australia
c. South America
d. Antarctica
14. How many oceans makeup the Earth? _____
15. Which one is a name of an ocean?
a. Northern
b. Southern
c. Equator
d. Western
16. The Arctic Ocean is located at the top of the Earth.
a. True
b. False

17. Name the Continents of the Earth: (1 pt. ea.)

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____
f. _____

18. Name the 5 oceans. (1 pt. ea.)

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____

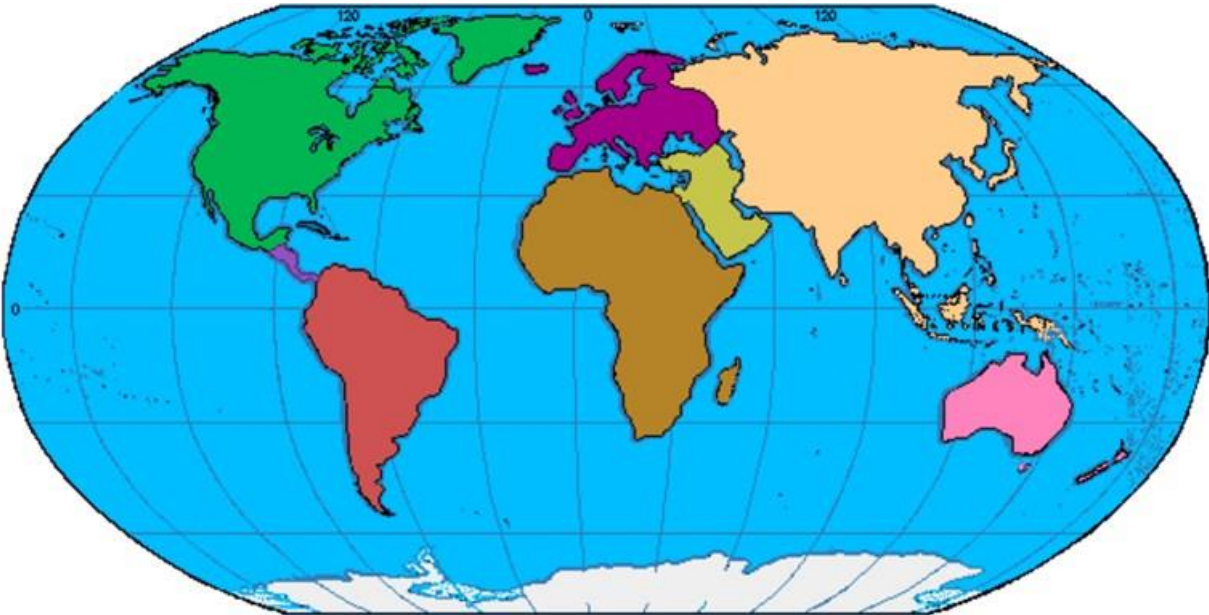
On the map below:

19. Continents:

- a. Write the number 1 on Antarctica
- b. Write the number 2 on Australia
- c. Write the number 3 on Asia
- d. Write the number 4 on Africa
- e. Write the number 5 on Europe
- f. Write the number 6 on North America
- g. Write the number 7 on South America

20. Oceans:

- h. Write the number 8 on the Pacific Ocean
- i. Write the number 9 on the Atlantic Ocean
- j. Write the number 10 on the Arctic Ocean
- k. Write the number 11 on the Indian Ocean
- l. Write the number 12 on the Southern Ocean



Welcome to Continents and Oceans!

APPENDIX K

KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION DELAYED

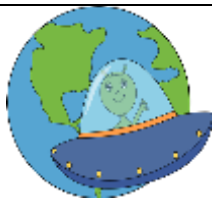
Name _____

ID _____


Group: _____

Date _____

Instructions: Listen to the following questions read to you aloud. Do not choose an answer until the question and choices are read to you completely. If you are not sure of the answer, choose and circle the best answer you think it may be. If you do not choose any answer at all, then the question will be marked wrong. Do your best! You can do it! ☺

1. What planet do we live on? a. Mars b. Earth c. The Moon d. Saturn	6. Which is the largest continent? a. South America b. Australia c. Asia d. Europe
2. From our lessons, the earth is made up of what two things? a. plants and trees b. gas and air c. land and water d. people and animals	7. There are _____ parts of water. a. 3 b. 7 c. 4 d. 5
3. The earth's land is broken up into how many parts? a. 5 b. 9 c. 6 d. 7	
4. The large parts of water on earth are called _____. a. states b. oceans c. continents d. countries	9. Which continent is the smallest? a. North America b. Europe c. Africa d. Australia
5. "Continents" is the name given to the pieces of _____ that makeup the earth. a. water b. sky c. land d. mountains	10. Which continent has a country called Italy that looks like a ladies' boot? a. Africa b. Europe c. Asia d. Antarctica
11. Which is a name of an ocean? a. Pacific b. Australia	19. How many oceans makeup the earth's surface? _____

c. Tennessee d. Northern	
12. How many continents are there on earth? _____	20. Which is a name of a continent? a. Atlantic b. Antarctica c. United States d. Arctic
13. There are 4 oceans that makeup the earth. a. True b. False	21. The land covers how much of the earth? a. 2/3 b. 1/3 c. 1/2 d. the whole earth
14. Which continent is covered with the most ice? a. Asia b. Antarctica c. Africa d. South America	22. The Arctic Ocean is at the top of Earth by the North Pole. a. True b. False
15. Which continent do we live on? a. South America b. North America c. Antarctica d. Europe	23. Africa is a continent or an ocean? _____
16. Which is a name of an ocean? a. Northern b. Southern c. Asia d. Australia	24. North America is _____ largest continent. a. 2 nd b. 4 th c. 3 rd d. 7 th
17. What is the name of the city you live in? a. Tennessee b. United States c. Lebanon d. North America	25. People live, eat, work and play the same way on every continent. a. True b. False
18. Which is a name of a continent? a. Europe b. United States c. Tennessee d. Atlantic	26. Which continent is south of North America? a. Africa b. Europe c. Asia d. South America
27. Indian is the name of an ocean. a. True b. False	33. Which is a name of an ocean? a. Atlantic c. Northern b. Australia d. Antarctica

28. The United States is made up of continents or states? _____	34. Which is a country of North America? a. Europe b. Tennessee c. Arctic d. United States
29. How many countries makeup the continent of North America? a. 4 b. 6 c. 3 d. 7	35. What is the land called that makes up the earth? a. water b. countries c. states d. continents
30. Which is a name of a country that is part of North America? a. Tennessee b. Canada c. Africa d. Lebanon	36. Oceans surround the continent of North America. a. True b. False
31. Which another country that is part of North America? a. South America b. Tennessee c. Lebanon d. Mexico	

Write the names of the **oceans**:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Write the names of the **continents**:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

On the map below, label the continents.

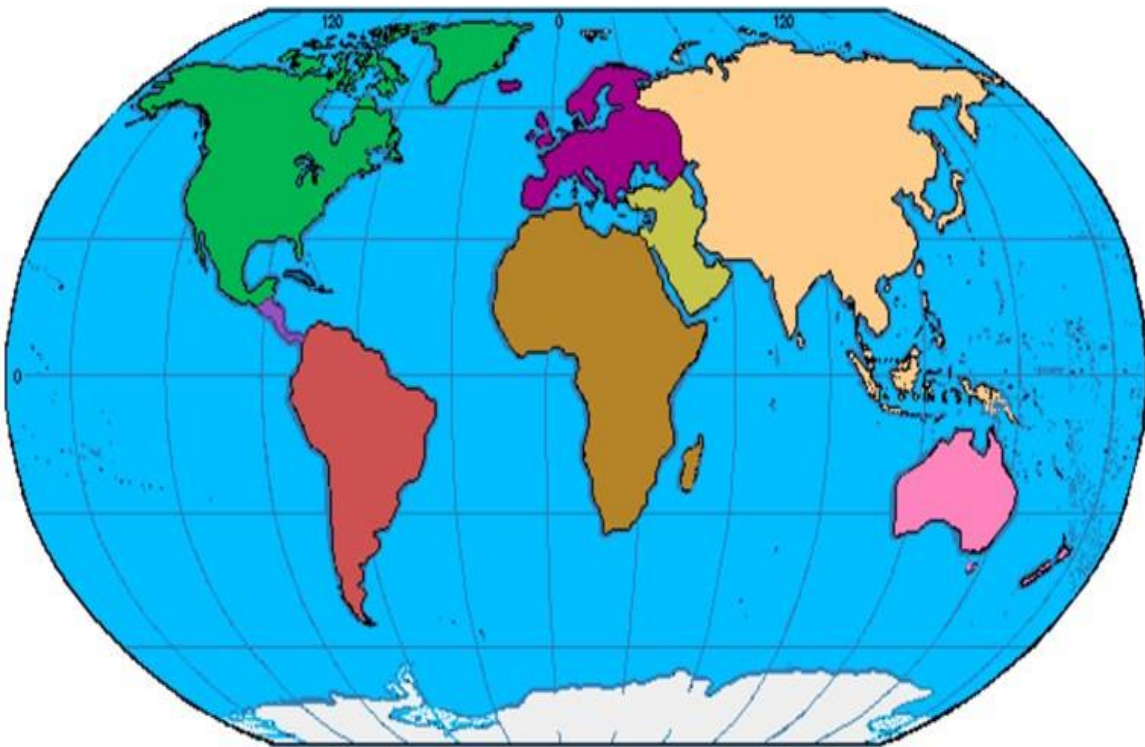
Write the number:

- 1 on Antarctica
- 2 on Australia
- 3 on Asia
- 4 on Africa
- 5 on Europe
- 6 on North America
- 7 on South America

On the map below label the oceans.

Write the number:

- 8 on the Pacific Ocean
- 9 on the Atlantic Ocean
- 10 on the Arctic Ocean
- 11 on the Indian Ocean
- 12 on the Southern Ocean



Welcome to Continents and Oceans!

APPENDIX L

**STUDENT READING SURVEY MEANS AND
STANDARD DEVIATIONS BY ITEM**

Survey Question	Pretest (N = 26)		Posttest (N = 26)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Reading at home	3.08	7.65	2.92	1.06
Getting a book for a present	3.23	0.84	2.88	0.86
Starting a new book	2.92	0.82	3.04	1.08
Reading during free time at school	3.04	0.93	3.12	1.11
Reading instead of playing	2.5	0.82	2.04	1.15
Reading during reading time in class	3.15	1.27	3.0	1.06
Teacher asking questions about book	2.54	0.88	2.35	1.09
Reading different kinds of books	3.35	0.95	3.08	0.98
Writing about what you have read	2.73	0.75	2.38	1.24
Learning from a book	3.15	1.15	3.08	1.09
Reading aloud	2.19	0.83	2.12	1.14
Small group time	3.08	1.2	2.73	1.12
Taking a reading test	2.77	0.84	2.85	1.19
Reading with a partner	3.15	1.11	3.31	0.93
Reading one on one with teacher	3.12	0.97	3.0	1.06
Reading your textbooks	2.77	0.95	2.62	1.06
Someone reading to you	2.92	1.03	2.65	1.16
Using your reading strategies	2.92	1.16	2.85	1.01
Going to the library	3.58	0.8	3.54	0.76
Overall act of reading	3.65	0.64	3.27	0.87

APPENDIX M

IRB APPROVAL FORM

IRB**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

Office of Research Compliance,
010A Sam Ingram Building,
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

**IRBN001 - EXPEDITED PROTOCOL APPROVAL NOTICE**

Friday, July 22, 2016

Investigator(s): Holly Marshall (Student PI) and Amy Elleman (FA)
Investigator(s) Email(s): holly_marshall@mtsu.edu; amy.elleman@mtsu.edu
Department: Department of Education

Study Title: *The effectiveness of readers' theatre on fluency comprehension, and motivation on primary students*

Protocol ID: 16-2304

Dear Investigator(s),

The above identified research proposal has been reviewed by the MTSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) through the **EXPEDITED** mechanism under 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110 within the category (7) *Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior*. A summary of the IRB action and other particulars in regard to this protocol application is tabulated as shown below:

IRB Action	APPROVED for one year from the date of this notification	
Date of expiration	7/22/2017	
Sample Size	100 (ONE HUNDRED)	
Participant Pool	Minors (Elementary school children)	
Exceptions	(1) Collection of participant name is allowed for normal operation; (2) Verbal child assent is allowed if the age of the minors is less than 12 years	
Restrictions	(1) Active parental consent must be obtained; (2) Child assent is mandatory; (3) Names of the participants collected during the initial stages must be destroyed and the data must be deidentified during analysis; (4) Allowed research site - Coles Ferry Elementary School, Lebanon, TN	
Comments	NONE	
Amendments	Date	Post-approval Amendments
	NONE	

This protocol can be continued for up to THREE years (7/22/2019) by obtaining a continuation approval prior to 2/22/2017. Refer to the following schedule to plan your annual project reports and be aware that you may not receive a separate reminder to complete your continuing reviews. Failure in obtaining an approval for continuation will automatically result in cancellation of this protocol. Moreover, the completion of this study MUST be notified to the Office of Compliance by filing a final report in order to close-out the protocol.

