

Family Support for At-Risk Second Graders to Improve Reading Fluency

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ABSTRACT

Parents and caregivers can play an important role in helping their at-risk children improve their reading skills. Parents generally want to be part of their children's academic achievement, but may not always know the most appropriate or effective way to contribute. Teachers encourage at-risk students to read consistently at home and supportive parents often ensure that their children get the proper amount of reading completed nightly. Parents may even sit with their children and listen to them read, making helpful corrections whenever needed. They may even read to their children with great expression. Parents can, however, be more effective during this reading time to help their children improve their reading skills.

The purpose of this study is to show that with teacher-scripted directions to parents or caregivers, read aloud practices at home will help at-risk second graders increase their reading fluency level. Previous research has shown that with specific and effective support and guidance from home, at-risk children made significant improvement in their reading skills.

INTRODUCTION

At my three-school district, student academic performance is heavily emphasized. Students are assessed three times a year using the district benchmark assessments in reading, writing and math. Students who do not meet the benchmark levels for reading, based on the first trimester assessment, are offered different intervention strategies and programs to improve their reading fluency and comprehension, with a strong emphasis on reading fluency for second graders.

At my Title I school, with a population of about 500 students, the students reading below grade level are considered at-risk students. Currently, my school offers these students two reading remediation programs. One program is the Reading Intervention Program, which is a reading remediation program that serves students who are reading below grade level and are at risk for retention. Another intervention program is something the second through sixth grade level teachers have integrated into our core reading program. This program is our homogenous skilled-based groupings for students. For example, in second grade, the four teachers teach different skilled-based reading groups, ranging from below grade level to advanced level. The lower reading group teacher instructs basic reading skills that at-risk students need to improve their reading ability. Another intervention program, which pertains only to second graders, is the second grade homework system, in which nightly twenty-minute readings are required. This reading time can be varied from independent reading, reading to or with someone, and being read to, or a combination of these choices.

Having taught second grade and working with at-risk students, I have noticed that most students who are supported in reading at home have made improvements in reading by

the next trimester assessment. Even at-risk students show signs of progress in their reading skills. Because academics is highly regarded in our district, towards the end of the year at-risk students who still don't meet the reading assessment benchmarks, as well as other criteria, become candidates for retention. These students are considered not ready for the next grade level, based heavily on their reading skills. After having to retain students in second grade for not meeting reading fluency benchmarks, I wonder how else teachers can directly or indirectly help at-risk students improve their reading skills, especially their reading fluency rate.

Statement of Problem

At-risk second graders, those reading below grade level, who do not have home support in reading, have a lesser chance to increase their reading fluency rate than those students who receive home support. Families who want to help their children achieve academically, may not have the resources or instructions to do so. These families may benefit from teacher guidance in helping their children succeed in school.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of consistent and directed home support, using teacher-scripted directions in helping at-risk second graders to gain reading fluency. This study examines the relationship between teacher directed family and home support and academic achievement. I also use the research findings to justify my own study on the efficacy of my training parents to tutor their own at-risk student on their reading

fluency rate. This five-week program is called “Parents As Tutors”, similarly named after Gray and Cowey’s Scaffolding Literacy program.

Research Question

Parents participating in this study have children who struggle with oral reading fluency or those reading below grade level. This home remedial support system is set up to give parents and guardians explicit instructions to teach or work with their struggling readers. There are specific procedures for the parents/guardians to follow in guiding their children in reading lessons in which the children are reading aloud as well as listening to their parents/guardians read.

What is the effect of teacher-scripted directions for read aloud exercises to guide parents/guardians on improving reading fluency for second graders who are reading below grade level?

THEORETICAL RATIONALE

There are many theories of how children learn. One learning theory comes from external factors, such as socialization. This type of learning was explored by Albert Bandura, social learning theory, and Lev Vygotsky, social development theory. Kearsley describes the work of two developmental psychologists who support the theory that humans learn through social interaction (2007). Bandura's study on aggression concluded with his social learning theory. Vygotsky's observation on the social aspect of learning, concluded with the sociocultural learning theory.

Bandura's social learning theory proposes that, "most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling" (1977, p. 22). He suggests that after observing certain behaviors, the learner then uses these observations as a guide to conduct his/her behaviors according to what was observed (1977). This theory supports the idea that children need to observe good models in reading in order to become better readers. If struggling readers consistently observe oral reading from fluent readers, they will have samples to replicate, thus potentially helping them improve their own oral fluency rate.

Vygotsky shares a similar view to Bandura's social learning theory. Vygotsky proposed that learning is heavily influenced by a child's social environment (Thomas, 1999). As a result of this social interaction, he stressed that learning is at its optimum in what he called the *zone of proximal development* (Thomas, 1999). This "zone" is when the child is working with a competent person and the child receives feedback and guidance from the more capable person until the skill or task is learned (Thomas, 1999).

According to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and Bandura's social learning theory, students learn best when a new or challenging topic is introduced under the guidance of a teacher and the teacher is modeling the appropriate learning behavior. In working with a teacher, the teacher scaffolds, or provides constructive feedback and guidance to aid the student until she/he can independently accomplish the task or skill (Lyons, 2003). In following a Vygotskian concept of learning, struggling readers will benefit greatly if they read with adults who can provide proper guidance and feedback. As the teacher is modeling the behavior repeatedly, students are observing and internally registering this behavior until they can produce the same desired behavior (Bandura, 1977).

Fluency in reading comes with knowledge and recognition of words (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). Students who read consistently practice reading familiar words repeatedly, thus become more competent in decoding the passage. The idea of practicing and doing repeated reading was the main focus for Candyce Innot, cofounder of Read Naturally. Started in 1991, Read Naturally is a reading program that focuses on supporting non-fluent readers become more fluent. Reading fluency is an important part of comprehension when it comes to reading. Studies show that reading in a fluent or "natural" rate aids the reader to comprehend the literature better (Kuhn and Stahl, 2003). Read Naturally suggests that through repeated reading, students will get the practice they need to recognize words so that they can become more fluent.

Assumptions

Second grade is a time when most students start to become more fluent readers. Kuhn and Stahl (2003) define fluent readers as those who read at a rate in which is considered natural, with accuracy and expression. This skill helps the reader understand the context better. Students have been taught the basic reading skills in first grade. In second grade, they practice these reading skills daily with the guidance of their teachers through various instructional means. They continue practicing what they learn in school when they practice reading at home. Most second graders will become more fluent with daily practice at school and at home.

In school, teachers provide feedback and explicit instruction to at-risk students. For further support, these students may even participate in reading remedial programs, which resemble classroom lessons with explicit instruction. In order to help at-risk students at home, parents would benefit from teacher instruction on how to model reading and give feedback to their children. Parents can then provide a scaffold as they work explicitly with their children in a more productive and efficient manner, guiding them to become more fluent readers. With consistent instruction and feedback, it is possible for at-risk second graders to improve their reading fluency rate, thus increasing their chances of meeting grade level reading benchmark standards.

Background and Need

Previous studies on the topic of involving parents and families to help increase the reading levels of primary students have been examined. Some studies show that appropriate

tutoring from parents has significantly improved their child's word recognition and reading fluency rate. In a study by Rasinski and Stevenson (2005), the results indicated that the family group that received additional information and materials to assist their academically low first grade children had significantly higher posttest scores than their counterparts. Other studies concluded that properly trained parents in a rigorous literacy program can foster tremendous growth in their children. This is found in Axford's (2007) study in Australia. The majority of primary grade students who participated in the intense family literacy program were found to gain at least one-year level in their reading scores.

Being able to read is essential to learning. Oral reading fluency is an important indicator for successful reading comprehension. Welsch (2000) noted in the National Reading Panel report, that there is an existing national concern about the numbers of children who are not fluent. Classrooms and schools are working hard to teach children to read and for some children, it comes easier. Unfortunately, not all students learn the same way or at the same rate. For these students, schools have adapted different remedial strategies, such as assisted reading and repeated reading, to help struggling readers improve their fluency rate (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). One resource that often gets overlooked is the potential role of the child's family to aid their own at-risk children.

The need for more parental involvement in home reading practices is clear. Research has shown the validity of this process. At the alarming rate of how our children need to keep up with the increase in literacy knowledge, it is important that learning to read becomes a responsibility of everyone involved in children's lives.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Review of Previous Literature

There have been many studies and reviews on the effects of family involvement on improving the school success of at-risk students. These studies and reviews indicate that students who receive support from their families can make significant progress in academic achievement, specifically in reading. Many studies note positive outcomes for both parents and children.

In a study Stevenson (2005) noted the following potential advantages for home-involvement programs in reading:

1. extra practice at home...may increase reading skill
2. the child may experience a sense of security
3. a home reading program may help create ...consistent set of attitudes and expectations from both home and school
4. instituting a parental-involvement programs allows teachers to learn about family literacy practices

They describe their study of a reading program called Fast Start (Rasinski, 1995), which was originally a pilot program consisting of a five-week course. The 15 parents in the experimental group received training and materials for the eleven-week program. The 15 parents in the control group did not receive any materials or instructions. There were 30 first grade families who participated and were randomly placed after their children were given a pretest. Rasinski and Stevenson used different instruments to measure the pre and posttests of

these 30 first graders. Each group was then broken into high, middle and low subgroups based on their testing scores. After the 11 weeks, their findings indicated were significantly growth for the lower group of first graders. In the experimental group, the low subgroup of students scored significantly higher in all posttests than the control low subgroup. Rasinski and Stevenson's study indicates a positive effect on reading for at-risk primary students when their families were directly involved with their at home reading practices.

Axford (2007) examines the effects of parent involvement with the support of trained tutors in their child's reading, writing, and spelling, in a program called The Parents as Tutors Program, modeled after the Gray and Cowey's Scaffolding Literacy program. This 18-week program required parents to participate for a set number of hours per week. These hours included time for receiving training on explicit instructions, attending to a trainer who worked with both parent and child, and explicitly working with the children. There were 108 students involved, 100 of them were in the primary level. Pre and posttests were used to analyze the results. Of all the students who finished the program, "younger children gained an average 1-2 Year levels on reading scores" and "older children typically gained 2-4 Year levels" (p. 34). Axford also noted that because not all children achieve these milestones by the 12th week, extensions to this program are needed. But in the end, Axford's results supported the hypothesis children who receive explicit reading support from their parents would show higher posttest scores.

The results from Faires, Dee Nichols, and Rickelman's study, also showed positive results for first graders reading below grade level (2000). This was a five-week study with eight first graders. Four students were part of the control group and the other four made up the

experimental group. With the experimental group, training for parents were included as well as all appropriate materials and supplies. This study replicated Clay's Reading Recovery reading remediation program with an addition of a strategy called Helping Hand. Pre and posttest scores on the two groups were recorded prior to the start of the program and after the conclusion of the program. The outcome indicated that with the students in the experimental group, their posttest scores indicated significant increase, from 33% to 100%, in reading skills. With the control group, the increase was slight, ranging from 12% to 50%.

The fifteen-day study based on the Progressive Reading Practice by Noell and others also showed significant results on reading fluency for five first graders reading below grade level from five different classrooms of the same school (Resetar et al, 2006). This study looked at the pre and posttests of home tutoring sessions as well as pre and posttests given at school. The study also examined the treatment integrity, looking at how well the parents carried out the tutoring sessions. The study was conducted in a rural area in southeast Louisiana. The participating parents were trained to keep running records of their children's reading using Houghton Mifflin grade level reading materials. The results indicated the range of increase in wcpm (word correct per minute) was twenty-two in the at home tutoring session assessments. Assessments performed at school showed three students with significant improvement and the other two no significant improvement in their reading fluency rate.

A review that shows comparable positive effects of family involvement on children's academic achievement is found in Darling and Westberg's meta-analysis (2004). Their meta-analysis concluded that parent involvement has a positive effect on children's reading fluency. Specifically, "training parents to teach their children reading with specific exercises produce

greater results than having parents listen to their children read with or without training” (Darling & Westberg, p. 775).

Academic improvement and motivation for reading were the target areas in Morrow and Young’s study (1997). In their study, the authors looked at selected families in an inner-city school district for a whole year. The control group of families received the regular school-based program whereas the experimental group received both the school-based program and a family program. The family program included a variety of materials and instructions for parents. The authors implemented a variety of quantitative and qualitative measures. After the one-year study, the results of the quantitative posttests showed that students made significant improvement in reading skills. The qualitative measures, including interviews, show a remarkable increase in motivation in reading. Morrow and Young discovered a direct correlation between parental involvement and their children’s academic achievement along with their children’s increased motivation in reading.

Senechal and LeFevre’s five-year longitudinal study is indicative that parental involvement and home support promotes short and long term literacy attainment for their children (2002). In this study, three areas were examined. First, the authors analyzed how exposure to language and print affects preschoolers. Senechal and LeFevre found that providing an enriching environment filled with “informal and formal literacy activities” (2002, p. 445) teaches these preschoolers the importance and function of print. Story- book exposures include both informal activities, such as talking about words in storybooks or talking about the letters or sounds of the letters. More formal storybook activities are the sharing of reading with the child and teaching them the actual words and literacy skills

(Senechal & LeFevre, 2002, p. 446). The results of this indicated that “exposure to storybook experience failed to predict emergent literacy skills alone and that these children need scaffolding from competent persons in order to acquire the reading skills” (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002, p. 456).

Their study also looked at how children’s oral language and emergent literacy experience affected their reading skills in first grade (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002, p. 447). The data collected indicated children who had parental support prior to starting school showed a significant increase in reading awareness in first grade. Their skill level was generally higher than students who did not share similar experiences. Furthermore, their study indicated that reading skills at the first grade level was a good predictor for reading fluency at the third grade level. The more a student mastered reading skills, the more fluent the student becomes in third grade.

Lyon (2003) analyzes multiple case studies examining how different interventions affect different struggling learners. One case study highlights a parent’s involvement in what her son’s doctor called the “ultimate intervention” (p. 174) because the time she spent reading with her ADHD son was building an emotional connection that would become a building block for his academic achievement and social well being. This parent, who is also a teacher, emphasizes in her autobiographical case study the importance of social interaction and learning based on her own experiences with her son.

Summary of Major Themes

The literature on the topic of home support for helping at-risk children to improve their reading fluency rate offers two key points. One important point is that programs that

involve families and include parent training with specific instructions and materials (Axford, 2007; Darling & Westberg, 2004; Faires et al, 2000; Morrow & Young, 1997; Rasinski & Stevenson, 2005; Resetar et al, 2006) show a positive effect on helping children improve their reading fluency rate. All the studies (Axford, 2007; Morrow & Young, 1997; Rasinski & Stevenson, 2005) that use quantitative measures, such as pre and posttest indicate that students, especially at-risk primary students, show significant progress, indicated in their posttest scores in comparison to their cohorts who did not receive such home services. Studies, like Morrow and Young's, which conducted more qualitative measures, such as interviews and surveys, conclude that the family supported programs have offered children support and motivation in becoming better readers. Children who most benefit from these family involved literacy programs are those who are reading below grade level (Axford, 2007; Rasinski & Stevenson, 2005).

The other key point is that families learn valuable strategies for helping their children improve in reading (Axford, 2007; Morrow & Young, 1997; Rasinski & Stevenson, 2005). These techniques, taught by teachers or special trainers, have been proven to be successful remedial strategies. Parents who have not been successful in aiding their children have a better understanding and more strategies for how to go about helping their children with reading. Now families have a more direct influence on their children's academic achievements. These studies show that collaboration between school and home play a very important role in building children's, especially at-risk children's, literacy (Axford, 2007; Morrow & Young, 1997; Rasinski & Stevenson, 2005).

DISCUSSION

In recent years, there has been a huge push for schools to improve children's academic achievement due to state and federal policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act. The focus has been on teachers and administrators improving their practice to ensure that all children achieve state standards before moving to the next grade level. All this pressure for school and teacher performance, however, has neglected an important part of student achievement, especially in the primary level, the family. This important part of children's academic learning takes place outside of school, specifically in the home. Unfortunately, little emphasis on formal family tutorial programs is being made, even though generally, families want to be involved in their children's academic learning. Studies have shown parent involvement in children's literacy has many benefits, from building emotional bonds, encouraging learning, and aiding in academic achievement. With more studies on this topic, hopefully educators, policy makers, and families will be more open to a collaborative teaching/learning program for children.

Summary of Major Findings

The studies on family literacy programs, involving trained parents and specific instructional materials, highlight many benefits. First, at-risk students are working with knowledgeable, familiar adults who can act as scaffolds, providing them with academic and emotional support during their lessons. Because the families have been trained, these lessons would be modeled on classroom practices, which the students have been exposed to at school, allowing more consistency in student reading practice and targeting the areas that need most improvement. These studies also show that involving parents in their children's academic

process creates a new dimension of learning for both parties. For the parents, teaching them more explicit strategies enables them to help their children directly and more efficiently. For the children, the involvement or interaction between them and their families builds a level of appreciation or motivation for learning and reading.

Limitations/Gaps in the Literature

Despite all the great efforts that underwent in reporting that family support has great benefits to, there were issues that arose. Most studies started with a certain number of participating families. But by the end of some studies, some of the families dropped out, making the number of participants in the experimental group smaller. Though the average and results were calculated only on the families who finished, the results would be more reliable if the pool was bigger. Another study, though with great results, was not done in the United States. It would be easier to generalize the findings if the demographics of the study related to what we see in American schools today. Although these studies confirm that these home programs benefit primary students, my focus is on at-risk second graders. A lot of the studies focused on first graders and some even into the high school level. It would be more reliable if these studies targeted the second grade population, the age where reading fluency is heavily spotlighted. Lastly, reading fluency was not always the specified reading goal in the studies. It was included as part of all or most aspects of reading, including comprehension, word recognition, and for some cases, phonemic awareness. Studies highlighting specifically on reading fluency for second graders would be more ideal.

Implications for Future Research

Future research studies should look more closely at second grade at-risk students because second grade is the time when development of efficient, fluent reading evolves. It is also one of the grades in which retention is most often considered for students who do not meet reading standards. Second graders need to be prepared to take on the rigorous amount of independent reading in third grade. Third grade is when more independent reading is required for learning and if second graders are not well prepared, they continue to fall behind their peers. Dependence on schools and teachers alone may not always be enough for these at-risk students. Schools should foster home literacy programs where parents or caregivers are trained and equipped with proper materials to be their children's emotional and academic support.

By second grade when teachers, like myself, require no more than twenty minutes of nightly reading, it is not too much to ask family members to support their children. But definitely, this is an area in the overall literacy program that need to be re-examined and implemented carefully if we want to build a nation of strong, fluent readers.

Overall Significance of Literature

The different findings in my review support the importance of involving families in children's academic achievement, specifically training family members to play the role of tutors for their at-risk children. At the early stages of literacy, it is important to build a solid foundation in reading. Boyer (1996) suggests that being literate is an important factor in our human society. Being able to read with clarity and accuracy leads to improved student

performance with increased comprehension of the written words. And since reading is ultimately the key to learning, we want to ensure that our students are given opportunities to develop their reading skills. This means we utilize all options in school and outside of school. In school, many teachers understand the Vygotskian concept of the zone of proximal development, and therefore regularly utilize reading scaffolding reading strategies (Lyons, 2003). Why not continue these strategies at home? Since previous research has detailed the positive effects of involving families in formal reading programs, teachers and schools should invest in this feasible resource.

METHOD OR PROCEDURE

Sample and Site

For my study, I wanted to use the entire population of second graders who are in the Reading Intervention Program at our school. There are about twenty students in this program and a sample this size would have been a reliable source. With time and resource constraint, however, I ended up using the at-risk students in my own classroom. These students have oral reading fluency levels below the second grade standard. They are receiving support in school in remedial programs. Most of these students receive consistent support at home with reading homework. Although I have seven at-risk students, five of the families responded to my request to participate in the study. Of these five families, four have been most consistent with helping their children in homework and returning forms in a timely manner.

Access and Permissions

I sent letters home to families of the seven at-risk students requesting conferences to better serve their reading needs. Only five parents responded. These five parents then set up individual appointments to meet with me to discuss in detail the program “Parents As Tutors” (borrowed from one of the previous studies). At these meetings, I asked that their children came along so they could be part of the training. The training sessions varied from forty minutes to an hour, all in my classroom. During the meeting, I explained the program, reviewed the consent form, and parents signed the forms. The five families started on different days because all were trained on different days. I shall name the students George,

Martin, Michelle, Andrea, and Jessica. This was a five-week program. Martin started the latest so we restructured the program so that he read for five days a week for four weeks instead of four days a week for five weeks. Andrea, unfortunately, after only the second day into the program, had to withdraw. The results are for the remainder four students.

Data Gathering Strategies

Each family had a gallon-sized zip loc bag filled with a record sheet, stories, a green colored pencil, red colored pencil, and a timer. The stories are from the Houghton Mifflin reading series called “Phonics Library.” These are leveled reading stories that both reinforce the phonics skills and high frequency words from the reading program.

The program is structured very similarly to the Read Naturally Program, in that the student starts out with an initial read and the parent records their oral reading fluency rate of words per minute. Afterwards, the parent reads the entire story to the student. Then the student reads the story to the parent with the parent providing any corrections or encouragement along the way. The child rereads the short story repeatedly, with a minimum of five rereads, until the parent sees progress being made by the student. Finally the parent records a second timed reading of words per minute. After all these steps have been accomplished, the student proceeds to the next story. Each reading session is twenty minutes long, the time required for daily reading homework.

Each student works at and advances at their own rate. The number of stories read varied among the students. Jessica finished 14 stories. Michelle finished 8 stories. Martin read 11 stories. George completed 7 stories. Martin’s mom misunderstood the instruction and had

him read only two times for four of the stories in the beginning. I had to re-instruct her about the minimum of five repeated readings before the final read timing. Even after this instruction, he read a subsequent story for only four times before the final read timing. The other families followed the instruction more accurately.

This study was designed for the students to increase their oral reading fluency rate. By doing repeated reading, the students are practicing and memorizing words to increase the rate of their reading. I measured the average words gained of the final read from the initial read words correct per minute. The results are (see Figure 1): Jessica, 36.5 wcpm; Martin, 26.1 wcpm; Michelle, 34.1 wcpm, and George, 38.7 wcpm. Next, I measured each student's oral reading fluency pretest scores to their posttest scores, respectively (see Figure 2): Jessica, 48 wcpm to 89 wcpm; Martin, 52 wcpm to 59wcpm; Michelle, 52 wcpm to 67 wcpm; and George, 29 wcpm to 46 wcpm. Within the five weeks, the students showed the gain of an average of 20 wcpm, with Jessica gaining the most with 41 wcpm. For the pre and posttests, I used the Houghton Mifflin Oral Reading Fluency Assessments, mid-second grade level.

Data Analysis Approach

The results from my study were very positive. As a teacher, I know that using repeated reading as a strategy is a reliable source. Teaching the parents of students who are reading below grade level this strategy has proven to show positive effects, based on the results from the record sheets. See Appendix.

When reviewing the data, I was not surprised to see Jessica making most significant gain. She read the most stories, thus having practiced the most with reading. She nearly

doubled her wcpm from the pretest score. She is reading slightly above the second grade oral reading fluency rate of 70 wcpm. Although the other students have shown progress, they are still reading below the second grade oral reading fluency rate. George made the second highest gain, with 17 wcpm from his pre to his posttest. Although he is still reading below the second grade oral reading fluency rate, he made progress. He has the highest average in words gained from initial read to final read with 38.7 wcpm. Although Michelle read the least number of stories, she still made a considerable amount of gain in her posttest score of 15 wcpm. She is also still reading below the second grade oral reading fluency rate. I think if she had more practice with the stories, she would have shown a higher posttest score. As for Martin, he read a lot of the stories, although some of the stories he only read two times. His average gain was the lowest and he made the least gain in his posttest score, of 7 wcpm.

Ethical Standards

This study adheres to Ethical Standards in human Subjects Research of the American Psychological Association (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 2007). Additionally, the project was reviewed and approved by the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board, number 6056.

RESULTS OR FINDINGS

Description of Site, Individuals, Data

The participants show concern for their children being at-risk. They are willing and open to try strategies that will help their children be better readers. Jessica's family is very supportive in her academics. Her homework is always complete and turned in. She has good attendance. She is the only English Language Learner in this group. She came into the class at the beginning of January, having spent the first three to four months of her second grade in school in Mexico. Her father worked with her. He can speak English, although had some concern about his accent influencing the proper pronunciation of words. Martin's mother worked with him. He has been shown to have a hard time staying focus for a long period. This might have been why his mother did the final read timing after a few repeated readings. He has been retained in first grade for low academic and social skills. He also goes to the resource specialist for language arts and math. She works with him to complete as much homework as possible. Michelle's mother worked with her. She claims to have been diagnosed with dyslexia. She is also very supportive of Michelle's academics and monitors homework closely. She is also an active volunteer in the classroom whenever needed. Michelle started the year doing grade level work. As the curriculum progressed, she started to fall below second grade level. She also tends to lose focus easily, especially during reading. As for George, both mother and father attended the training session. Mother, however, was trained and worked with him. This family is very diligent with his school work, especially knowing that he is a favorable candidate for retention since he started second grade reading at

16 wcpm. George was assessed for reading problems in first grade, but passed all the assessments. He has low sight word memory and has to sound out almost every word before the study. It is interesting to note that even though his oral reading is very choppy, he can comprehend everything he has decoded. I have him signed up to be reassessed.

For the purpose of this study, I did not include pre and posttest comprehension data, even though it is known that reading fluency affects comprehension. I wanted to focus solely on oral reading fluency rate.

Analysis of Themes

All the participants were cooperative and willing to work closely with their children's teacher. The task of the study showed to be fairly easy to follow. There were comments that the students got bored after so many times of repeated reading, but the parents were diligent in working with their students to ensure progress was being made. The students expressed pride and confident as they turned in their record sheet and stories to obtain a new set. George even commented, "I can't wait to do the reading test with you, Ms. Luong." When I did my weekly contact over the phone with each family, they assured me everything was going well and that they are seeing the improvements in their children.

There are two important themes this study brought out. In an academic approach, this study has shown the positive effects of parents tutoring their children under the direct instruction of the teacher. All the students showed improvement. None of the scores were negative results. In a psychological approach, this study has shown create a positive emotional effect for both parents and children. As the parents see the progress their children make, they

may feel that their efforts are working. When the children are seeing their progress, they feel confident that they can be better readers. This study demonstrated that parents can be successful in using direct-instruction from the teacher to help their children become better readers and inadvertently created a positive emotional outcome for both parents and children.

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Appendix A
Figure1

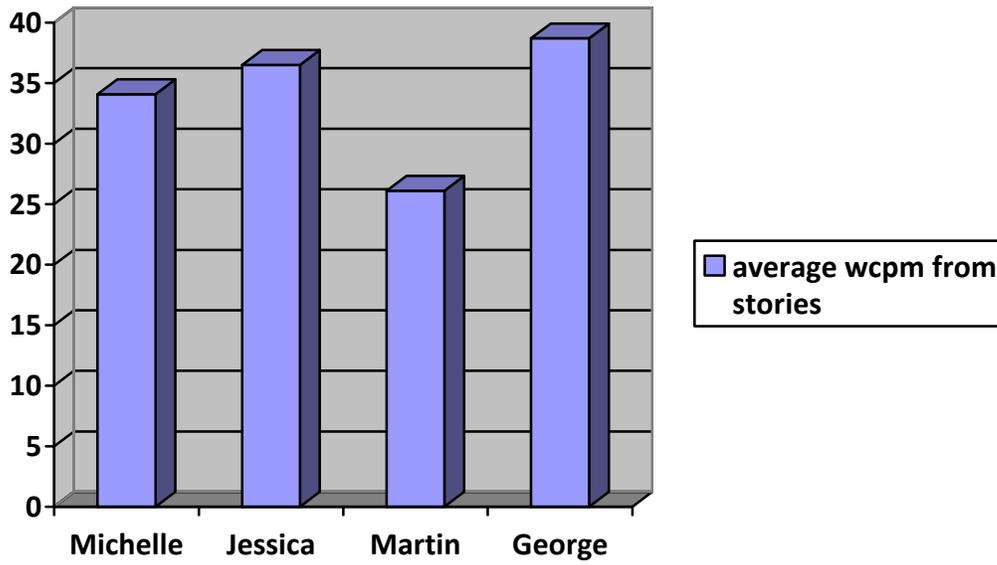


Figure 1: Average words correct per minute from stories

Appendix B
Figure 2

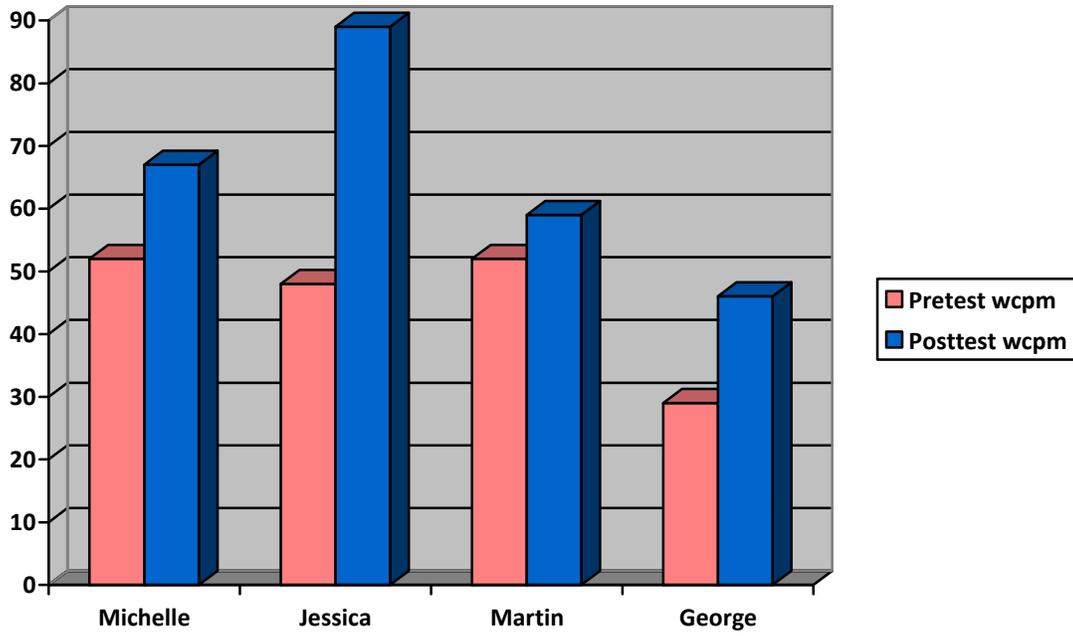


Figure 2: Pretest and Posttest Scores Words Correct Per Minute