

Silent and Oral Reading Comprehension Abilities of Second Grade Students
Completing the Second S.T.E.P. Program

Thesis

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By Lockley T. Platt

State University of New York
College at Brockport
Brockport, NY
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SUBMITTED BY:

Lockley T. Platt 5/14/99

APPROVED BY:

_____ / /

James Z. Berg 5/19/99

Thesis Advisor

Arthur E. Smith 5/22/99

Second Reader

Scott D. Robinson 5/24/99

Director of Graduate Studies

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Abstract

This study focused on the silent and oral reading abilities of second grade students completing the Second S.T.E.P. Program. There were approximately seven second-grade students that participated. All 7 of the students are presently attending an elementary school located in western New York.

The research questions concentrated on were:

1. Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score of the posttest for unprompted memory, unprepared reading?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score of the posttest for prompted memory, unprepared reading?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score of the posttest for unprompted memory, prepared reading?
4. Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score of the posttest for prompted memory, prepared reading?

Each of the seven participants was administered in a one-on-one setting a

pretest and a posttest version of the Bader Reading and Language Inventory in a 30-40 minute period. The pretest and the posttest each contained four sets of scores: unprompted memory (retelling), prompted memory (cued recall) after a unprepared (silent) reading and unprompted memory (retelling), prompted memory (cued recall) after a prepared (silent /oral) reading. The data were tallied and categorized into four sets of scores. Each set of scores was calculated utilizing a t-test of dependent means.

The results of the t-test of dependent means indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean pretest and mean posttest scores for all four sets of scores.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Since the beginning of the century educators and researchers have been investigating the increased use of particular reading strategies. As the social climate continues to change in the American school system the need for teaching alternative reading techniques is required. Educators as well as researchers have been investigating thoroughly the use of oral reading and silent reading in the classroom. Some of the leading authorities believe that oral reading is more effective than silent reading, especially in the early years, when children are developing a concept of how written language works. Other leading authorities strongly believe that silent reading provides the reader more time to think, thus making silent reading more applicable to written material (Mendak, 1986). Nonetheless, most agree that both silent reading and oral reading, in conjunction, lead to stronger comprehension skills and language development.

Kragler (1995) parallels Vygotsky's theory of language development with the concept of the development from oral reading to silent reading. Kragler obtained this theory from prior researchers (Bear 1989; Crowder & Wagner, 1992).

The beginning stages of reading are social in origin. Significant others read to babies, point out signs, labels, and other literacy events in the environment. As children gain literacy knowledge, they read out loud.

Just as children go through the egocentric stage of speaking to develop inner thought, they might need to mumble read for silent reading to develop (p. 397).

As children embark into the world of language and reading it is important to keep in mind that as oral and written language are developing children need the opportunity to verbalize. Some research has indicated that there is not an adequate amount of time in the classroom spent on allowing children to verbalize or recall written information. Gambrell, Pfeiffer, and Wilson (1985) cite (Sirotnik, 1983) "...it is interesting to note that, by, and large, the information we have with respect to classroom interaction indicates that children are given little opportunity to verbalize" (p.216).

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine if there is any statistically significant difference between the Second S.T.E.P. students' pretest and posttest measures of silent and/or oral reading comprehension. The Bader Reading and Language Inventory was used as the assessment to determine any possible difference between silent and oral reading comprehension.

Questions to be Answered

1. Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score of the posttest for unprompted memory, unprepared reading?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and mean score of the posttest for prompted memory, unprepared reading?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score of the posttest for unprompted memory, prepared reading?
4. Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score of the posttest for prompted memory, prepared reading?

Need for the Study

As educators it is important to supply children with the necessary tools to become successful readers. One of the many reasons why children have difficulty

reading successfully is because they lack the ability to comprehend effectively the message or messages a story is trying to convey. A technique that enables a child to comprehend effectively a message conveyed by a story is to engage in a story retelling. Gambrell and Koskinen (1991) state in their research that "...engaging in the retelling results in significant learning with respect to comprehension and recall" (p.357). Some children lack the ability to retell a story effectively. One method currently utilized by educators to enhance reading comprehension and story retelling is repetition. Gambrell et al. (1991) discovered through their research that the "quantitative hypothesis holds that repetition primarily adds more information to memory" (p.360).

Many of the reading programs that are implemented in our schools today are designed by educators whose goals are to supply the necessary tools which will enable troubled readers to become able or successful readers. Devices that will help the troubled reader to become more proficient in the area of reading are the comprehension of written and spoken language. Haines (1997) directly quotes a statement made in an article completed by Catts (1997) " '...problems in the comprehension of language can significantly influence children's ability to understand what they read. Written language is highly decontextualized and its

comprehension relies heavily on a well-developed vocabulary and a clear understanding of the structural components and rules of language....' ” (p. 6).

The particular goal of this study was to determine whether or not a Second S.T.E.P. Early Intervention Program effectively aids children in becoming stronger in the area of reading comprehension. The secondary goal of this study was to further examine the effects of silent reading and comprehension and prepared oral reading and comprehension. Some research has indicated that students with reading needs lack the ability to adequately comprehend, only the reasons vary. It is clear that more research needs to be conducted in the areas of reading comprehension after a silent reading as well as reading comprehension after a prepared oral reading.

Since there is no specific diagnostic test for the Second S.T.E.P. teacher to apply during the school year to test comprehension, the Bader Reading and Language Inventory was selected based on its validity and reliability in testing reading comprehension.

Definition of Terms

Silent Reading Passage	-Student reads the passage once silently.
Prepared Oral Reading Passage	-Student reads the passage once silently then reads the passage once aloud.
Unprompted Memories	-Student does a retelling of the passage based on memory of what has been read from the silent and prepared oral reading passages.
Comprehension Questions	-Student is asked comprehension questions that are based on the silent reading and oral prepared reading passages read by the student.
Graded Word List Test	-Student reads through graded lists of vocabulary words. This helps to determine the basal level.
Retelling	-Definition derived from Wittrock (1981), "...that retelling engages the

reader in relating the parts of the text to one another and to the readers own background knowledge” (Gambrell, Pfeiffer & Wilson, 1985, p.217).

Limitations of the Study

This particular study focused on a small group of children. All of the children in the study were tested in the same manner. The participants were not placed in separate groups and tested as a control group and/or as an experimental group.

The study subjects were the ages of seven to eight years, and were reading below grade level. As a result of having such a focused sampling of participants the results of this study cannot be said to apply to the general population of low level readers of the same age.

For the reason that intervention programs are designed differently and contain a varied number of students, it is difficult to say if the outcome of this study would be similar if carried out at an alternative intervention program.

Due to the limitations of this particular study it should not be deduced that children of the same age with similar reading difficulties would demonstrate the same results.

CHAPTER II

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine if there is any statistically significant difference between the Second S.T.E.P. students' pretest and posttest measures of silent and/or oral reading comprehension. The Bader Reading and Language Inventory was used as the assessment to determine any possible difference between silent and oral reading comprehension.

Review of the Literature

Children seem to have a natural curiosity toward reading. At first, children seem to rely on visual input. As children approach the Kindergarten years they make the transformation from visual feedback to oral feedback. As the oral language starts to develop, children start to gain meaning from print. At this point of language development researchers start to hypothesize, and to make educated decisions as to the effective and developmentally appropriate techniques educators should utilize when teaching. As children become more proficient readers, teachers need to make a crucial decision; researchers call it a rational decision, as to which technique promotes and supports the reading process; silent reading or oral reading. Taylor and Connor (1982) explored in their research a historical, and a theoretical point of view:

A position common among reading theoreticians is that silent reading reflects the true reading process and that oral reading during instruction should be minimized. Some insist that oral reading is avoided at all cost. At the same time, some teachers appear to equate oral reading fluency with reading ability (p. 440).

Silent Reading Vs Oral Reading

Many teachers may not be aware of the rationale that underlies the silent reading and oral reading position (Taylor & Connor, 1982). Educators have taken different stances on how they feel about silent reading and oral reading. Mendak (1986) reveals a contrasting view that dates back to the early part of the century. Mendak writes, “Thorndike (1917) noted that silent reading should replace oral reading, which might encourage poor reading habits” (p. 636). Rowell (1976) confirms Mendak’s (1986) study stating, “In the last half century there has been a gradual increase in the amount of silent reading and a decline in the amount of oral reading in American schools” (p. 367). Researchers’ Taylor and Connor went back as far as the 19th century and stated in their 1982 study that “... few authorities would go so far as to endorse the 19th century position that oral reading was the most important aspect of reading”(p. 441). Holmes (1981) claimed, “Historically, there has been considerable controversy as to whether oral and silent reading are the same process” (p. 546).

Some researchers feel that the oral reading approach is more developmentally appropriate, especially for young readers. Kragler (1995) taking the position that favors oral reading states, “Since beginning readers rely on their oral language to gain meaning from text, oral reading is the preferred mode of reading for students” (p.395). Taylor and

Connor (1982) claim in their study that a number of authorities (namely, Guszak, 1978; Kirk, Kliebahn, and Lerner, 1978) advocate oral reading in the early years, "...on the basis that oral reading provides a natural transition from speech to print" (p. 441). Taylor et al. (1982) expand upon this by citing a study completed by Goodman (1976):

...since written language is based upon oral language and children bring strong oral language to the new task of learning to read. Oral reading is a natural first step that should be encouraged until the child is ready to make the transition to silent reading (p.441).

How should teachers decide when and how to use oral and silent reading in their reading instruction? Taylor and Connor (1982) feel that teachers need to make rational decisions based on their understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of oral reading and silent reading:

Proficient silent reading has the advantage of being fast; readers can go directly to meaning. The search for meaning and the silent nature of the act shape the strategies used by the reader. Not having to worry about a word-by-word rendition of text, the reader can be highly selective about the amount of information sampled from print. In reading aloud at least beyond the initial years the reader must be concerned with more than deriving meaning (p.443).

Oral Reading, Silent Reading, and Reading Comprehension

In the years of 1985 and 1990 two researchers Samuel D. Miller and Donald E. P. Smith completed studies that focused on the relationship and the differences in comprehension after students read orally and silently. Miller and Smith (1990) cited their own study (Miller & Smith, 1985) as well as a study conducted by Swalm (1976). They

concluded that, "...oral reading (versus silent reading) is accompanied by increased comprehension for the low-achieving readers by increasing attention to individual words, thereby facilitating the self-monitoring or pacing of word-by-word reading"(p. 75). The results of an investigation concluded by Jones (1932), indicated that "...oral and silent reading varies with the individual; some pupils comprehend when reading silently while others comprehend when reading orally" (p. 295).

Oakan, Wiener, and Cromer (1971) focused on a study that specifically identified possible reasons why some children may struggle in oral reading comprehension. "It is hypothesized that the comprehension of both good and poor readers is impaired under conditions of poorly organized auditory input, and that poor readers show a differentially greater degree of impairment under these circumstances" (p.73).

Miller and Smith (1985) conducted an extensive study that focused on a large population of students. There were six classrooms, Grades 2 through 5, in an elementary school in the southeastern Michigan. Some of the classrooms were blended. As an effect of this study five conclusions resulted (p. 347):

1. The poor reader comprehends better during oral reading than during silent reading.
2. The poor reader tests better on inferential questions than on literal ones when inferential questions include items measuring main idea, cause-effect relationships, and use of implied meaning.

3. The average reader comprehends better during silent reading, than oral reading and handles all questions equally well.
4. The good reader is generally strong in both oral and silent reading on various measures of comprehension, and exhibits superior acquisition of details (this coincides with Jones, (1932) research that states, “a good silent reader is usually a good oral reader” (p.295)).
5. The best single indicator of competency is literal comprehension, that is, reading for details.

Swalm (1972) also completed a study that focused on the same population of students, as did Miller and Smith (1985) with the exception of fifth grade. Swalm discovered that 2nd grade students scored higher in the area of oral comprehension, “than both silent reading and listening comprehension” as opposed to grade three, and four (p.112). The below-average students “exhibited a different trend than the average and about average students. Listening became the most effective method for comprehension”(p.113).

Elgart (1978) referred to the Swalm (1972) study, concurring with Swalm’s findings, and extended upon those findings by stating, “ A possible explanation for the superiority of oral reading over silent reading is that by reading orally a student is forced to pay closer attention to the words.” This allows the student to utilize two senses, hearing and seeing, as opposed to silent reading, which only utilizes one of the senses, seeing (p.207).

Breznitz (1991) completed a longitudinal study on a group of students that attended two separate elementary schools in an urban middle-class district in Israel. Breznitz discovered that Israeli children were subjected to an environment that was characterized by social and academic stresses. As a result of this students had a difficult time developing adequate learning habits.

If the pupil is able to read aloud, it assumed that the child knows how to read. Furthermore, if the pupil experiences difficulty in reading aloud, no attempt is made to test whether or not the child can read a passage silently and understand it” (p.90).

The relationship between oral reading versus silent reading comprehension is controversial. While some studies have found “silent reading comprehension to surpass that of oral reading (Gray, 1925; Jones & Lockhart, 1919; Judd & Buswell, 1922; Mead, 1915; Pinter, 1913), other studies have found oral reading comprehension to be superior (Collins,1961; Duffy & Durrell, 1935-36; Glenn, 1971; Rowell, 1976)” (p.546). However, several studies have found no consistent differences between oral and silent comprehension (Anderson & Swanson, 1937; Gray, 1958; Jones,1932; Poulton & Brown, 1967; Rogers,1937; Swanson, 1937),” (p.546, Juel & Holmes, 1981).

Recall, Retelling, and Reading Comprehension

According to research completed by Salasoo (1986), numerous previous studies of oral and silent reading “have used both on-line measurement of reading behavior and performance on subsequent memory/free recall and comprehension tests” (p.61).

Armbruster and Wilkinson (1991) further examined why students' recall differed after oral reading and silent reading, "...silent reading on recall of text was mediated by two major factors: students' *attentiveness* during reading and the nature of their post-reading *discussion*" (p. 154). When the students engaged in an oral reading exercise, "...oral reading provided an opportunity for errors, pauses, and interruptions, which disturbed reading, drew attention away from the text, and increased off-task behavior"(p. 154).

Gambrell enjoined two separate research studies: Pfeiffer and Wilson (1985), and Koskinen and Kapinus (1991). According to the study completed by Gambrell et al. (1985), "...limited research in the area of verbal learning indicates that verbal rehearsal improves memory and recall for children and adults" (p. 216). Gambrell et al. (1991) state once again a need for further research in the area of recall and retelling. "Only a few studies have been reported to date that investigate retelling as an instructional strategy for enhancing reading comprehension" (p.356). The findings indicated in Gambrell et al. (1991) research verify, "...that retelling may be an effective instructional strategy for improving the reading comprehension of both proficient and less-proficient readers" (p.360).

An article written two years prior to Gambrell's 1985 study by Holmes (1983) concurred with the Gambrell et al. findings. Her data indicated that after allowing a pre-reading both good and poor readers' accurately stored information, therefore, allowing the readers to effectively answer text explicit questions (p.14). Gambrell, Pfeiffer, and

Wilson (1985) emphasize in their study that there is "... a clear indication that we need to know more about what students might learn as a result of engaging in the process of retelling"(p. 217). Between the Gambrell et al. (1985) study and the Gambrell et al. (1991) study several findings resulted in regards to story retelling:

1. That children have little opportunity in the classroom to develop their ability to organize and retell information (Durkin, 1978-79; Sirontnik, 1983).
2. It is not known whether, with practice, students become more proficient in their retelling strategies.
3. Whether practice in retelling affects the subsequent process of text is an open question.

The facts listed in one through three are derived from the Gambrell et al. (1985) study (p.217).

4. The importance of creating ecologically valid communication situations.
5. The need to present directions that clearly signal the task (that is, recall or retelling).
6. The importance of using ecologically valid instructional text as opposed to altered or brief passages (this piece of data coincides with a study concluded by Meyer and McConkie, 1973).

The issues four through six were raised by Golden and Pappas (1987); incorporated into Gambrell et al. (1991) study (p.357).

The focus of the research presented by Berger and Perfetti (1977) examines the relationship between oral language comprehension and reading comprehension. Similar to Holmes, (1983), Gambrell, Pfeiffer, and Wilson, (1985), Gambrell, Koskinen, and Kapinus, (1991), Berger et al. (1977), focused their study on a population of skilled and less-skilled readers. The two tasks selected by the Berger and Perfetti, examined the effects of oral and written modes of passages. The passages read by participants focused on comprehension questions, and paraphrase recall. It became apparent to Berger et al. (1977), that “less-skilled readers were found to be significantly less able than skilled readers to recall as a result of ineffective encoding and integration of language input during processing” (p.15). It would appear, based on cited research studies, that organized recall and accurate comprehension are areas less-skilled readers’ require assistance.

Intervention Programs

Early Intervention programs can offer opportunities to children who are suffering in the area of literacy development. Pinnell (1985) expresses the importance of the implementation of intervention programs, “The key is to intervene at the time that reading instruction begins”(p.70). Slavin, Karweit, and Madden (1994) dedicated a chapter in their book, Preventing Early School Failure, to the benefits of intervention programs. Slavin et al. (1994) allude to Vygotsky’s theory of cognitive development by stating, “The distance between what a child can do when working alone and what he or

she can do with assistance of another person is labeled as the *zone of proximal development*” (p.145). Slavin et al. (1994) justify the importance of being aware of the *zone of proximal development*. “With a group of 25 to 30 students who all have varying cognitive abilities, it is difficult to teach within *each* student’s zone of proximal development” (p. 145). One of many intervention programs that are capable of focusing in on specific learning needs is the Reading Recovery Program. Iversen and Tunmer (1993) defined the Reading Recovery Program as a remedial reading program that was designed to focus on the specific needs of a child who is experiencing difficulties in reading (p.112). The use of the term “remedial” is unusual. Reading Recovery is generally termed “early intervention.”

A suburban Western New York school district has developed and adopted an intervention program titled (Strategies Taught for Excellent Progress) or First S.T.E.P. The program’s philosophy is based on research and observational studies conducted at local Western New York school districts. Haines (1997) the researcher and designer of the First S.T.E.P. Program cited quantitative facts discovered in a study completed by Juel (1988). Juel states, “the probability that a child who is a poor reader at the end of Grade 1 will remain a poor reader at end of Grade 4 is 88%. There is a near 90% chance of remaining a poor reader after three years of schooling” (p.6). The goal of the First S.T. E. P. Program is to implement instruction for reading writing, listening and speaking.

Oakan, Wiener, and Cromer (1971) specifically mention some the elements that should be an intricate part of reading instruction. Oakan et al. (1971) directly quoted Durrell (1958). The excerpt from the Durrell (1958) states, “ ‘ Most reading difficulties can be prevented by an instructional program which provides early instruction in letter names and sounds, followed by suitable practice in meaningful sight vocabulary and aids to attentive silent reading’ ”(p.71).

Generally, when students are placed in an intervention program they are evaluated by reading teachers and/or reading experts. The First S.T.E.P. (Strategies Taught for Excellent Progress) Intervention Program is currently evaluating participants; using a series of diagnostic testing designed by Marie Clay. The Bader Informal Reading Inventory has also been utilized as a valuable tool for diagnosing second year students currently participating in the First S.T. E.P. Program. Bader (1983) quoted a statement made by Powell (1971) in regards to the Bader Informal Reading Inventory (IRI). “The real value of the (IRI) is that is affords the possibility of evaluation of reading behavior in depth and that, further, it provides an opportunity to prepare teachers to evaluate reading” (p.8). More in-depth, the Bader also focuses on assessing comprehension, retellings (based on recall or unprompted memories) silent reading, and oral reading.

Summary

Reading is the foundation and the staple of how children, educators, researchers, and people in general obtain knowledge. If a child has difficulty with reading, than that same child will flounder, and will ultimately have a troublesome time in acquiring knowledge. It is the responsibility of the educators and adults that interact with that child, to become familiar with the child's needs, and to find out why the child is having difficulty.

Reading is a complex task that involves several variables. When a child comes to a reading specialist for help, the specialist needs to diagnose and to pin point the areas of difficulty. If the area of difficulty lies within the area of reading comprehension, there are a variety of techniques a reading teacher can utilize to build comprehension.

This study explored some approaches, intervention programs, and a diagnostic tool, that have been implemented by researchers and educators to build comprehension. Furthermore, this current study informs the reader of the advantages, as well as the disadvantages of utilizing certain techniques to promote reading comprehension. It became clear that with the proper balance of direct-instruction, and specifically designed materials a disadvantage reader will become a confident reader.

CHAPTER III

Research Design

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the Second S.T.E.P. students' pretest and posttest measures of silent and/or oral reading comprehension. The Bader Reading and Language Inventory was used as the assessment to determine any possible difference between silent and oral reading comprehension.

Questions

1. Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score of the posttest for unprompted memory, unprepared reading?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and mean score of the posttest for prompted memory, unprepared reading?

3. Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score of the posttest for unprompted memory, prepared reading?
4. Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score of the posttest for prompted memory, prepared reading?

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

There were approximately seven second-grade students participating. The seven students that were selected are presently participating in the Second S.T.E.P. Program. All 7 of the students that are participating in the study are presently attending an elementary school located in western New York.

Material/Instruments

The Bader Reading and Language Inventory developed by Lois Bader in 1983 was used.

Procedures

In the month of October 1998, the Bader Reading and Language Inventory was administered as a pretest to 7-second grade students. Each of the seven participants was administered the Bader Reading and Language Inventory in a one-on-one setting. All of the seven participants completed the pretest in one, 30-40 minute session.

The Bader Reading and Language Inventory (Bader IRI) was conducted utilizing a step-by-step procedure. First, each student was presented the Graded Word List portion of the Bader IRI, to determine the child's basal level. Once the basal level was decided each student was invited to read silently a passage that was slightly below his or her basal level. Immediately after the child completed the silent reading passage, the student was asked to do an oral retelling of the passage. During the retelling the examiner/researcher filled out the unprompted memory section of the Bader (IRI). Directly after the student completed the retelling, the examiner/researcher asked the student a series of comprehension questions. As the student answered the comprehension questions the examiner/researcher noted the responses in the comprehension portion of the Bader.

The first step in the second portion of the pretest was conducted differently. As stipulated by the examiner/researcher, each of the seven students was requested to read a passage silently that was at his/her basal level (the basal level was determined by the results of the Graded Word List Test). Immediately after the student finished the silent reading he/she was asked to reread the same passage aloud (orally). When the student completed the oral reading, the examiner/researcher asked the student to execute a retelling. Once again the administrator filled out the unprompted memory section as the student did the retelling. Finally, the examiner/researcher asked the student to answer a series of comprehension based questions about the passage just read. As the student responded to the questions the examiner jotted down the responses in the comprehension portion of the Bader. After the scores were tallied, each student received a total of four listed scores, two scores for each of the passages read. Each student read two passages.

To validate the data gathered from the pretest administered in the month of October 1998, the researcher/examiner readministered the Bader IRI as a posttest, in the month of April 1999. The seven-second grade students that participated in

the pretest also participated in the posttest. The posttest was conducted in the same exact fashion as the pretest, and controlled by the same examiner/researcher.

Analysis

The researcher compiled the scores from both the pretest and the posttest, from each student. The data were tallied and categorized into four sets of scores. Each set of scores was calculated utilizing a t-test of dependent means.

CHAPTER IV

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the Second S.T.E.P. students' pretest and posttest measures of silent and/or oral reading comprehension. The Bader Reading and Language Inventory was used as the assessment to determine any possible difference between silent and oral reading comprehension.

Question # 1

Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score or the posttest for unprompted memory, unprepared reading?

Table 1 t test difference of two means
Pre and Post, unprompted memory, unprepared reading

	df	\bar{X}	s.d.	t
Pre	6	2.29	1.98	
Post	6	2.29	2.059	.13 (NS)

crit $t = \pm 2.447$; $p < .05$

The data in table 1 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean pretest and mean posttest scores for unprompted memory, unprepared. Any difference was due to chance.

Question # 2

Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score or the posttest for prompted memory, unprepared reading?

Table 2 t-test difference of two means
Pre and Post, unprompted memory, unprepared reading

	df	\bar{X}	s.d.	t
Pre	6	3	1.41	
Post	6	4.86	2.12	-1.68 (NS)

crit $t = \pm 2.447$; $p < .05$

The data in table 2 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean pretest and mean posttest scores for prompted memory, unprepared. Any difference was due to chance.

Question # 3

Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score or the posttest for unprompted memory, prepared reading?

Table 3 t-test difference of two means
Pre and Post, unprompted memory, prepared reading

	df	\bar{X}	s.d.	t
Pre	6	2.29	1.11	
Post	6	4.00	1.83	-0.7 (NS)

crit $t = \pm 2.447$; $p < .05$

The data in table 3 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean pretest and mean posttest scores for unprompted memory, prepared reading. Any difference was due to chance.

Question # 4

Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score or the posttest for prompted memory, prepared reading?

Table 4 t -test difference of two means
Pre and Post, prompted memory, prepared reading

	df	\bar{X}	s.d.	t
Pre	6	4.14	1.57	
Post	6	4.57	1.51	-0.88 (NS)

crit $t = \pm 2.447$; $p < .05$

The data in table 4 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean pretest and mean posttest scores for prompted memory, prepared reading. Any difference was due to chance.

Findings and Interpretations

A series of t-test were performed to investigate possible differences in pretest scores and in posttest scores among second grade students who were participating in a Second S.T.E.P. Program. No differences were found between the pretest scores and the posttest scores. Though the goal of this study was not necessarily designed to focus on the student's reading level, all seven of the participants improved by two to three reading levels. Nonetheless, this particular finding does seem to have a direct correlation with the unprompted memory scores and the prompted memory scores. Even though the data remained consistent the students' ability to retell/recall and answer comprehension based questions coincided with the varied complexity of the passages read both silently or silently/orally. It is important to take into consideration that the data do not indicate nuances such as individual advancement in the areas or organized retellings, and more affluent oral responses to content explicate questions. Over time a significant percentage of the participants revealed an increase in their ability to carry out an organized retelling, as well as demonstrate advancement in the usage of oral language.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Implications

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the Second S.T.E.P. students' pretest and posttest measures of silent and/or oral reading comprehension. The Bader Reading and Language Inventory was used as the assessment to determine any possible difference between silent and oral reading comprehension.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate a range of conclusions that can be extrapolated from the silent and oral reading comprehension abilities of second grade reading students completing the Second S.T.E.P. Program.

The results of the pretest taken in the fall semester indicated that the reading levels of the Second S.T.E.P. student ranged from Preprimary to Third Grade. The number of unprompted memories recalled by the students ranged from 0-5 points out of a possible range of 7-11 points. The students' ability to achieve an accurate story retelling varied. After engaging in a prepared reading all but two students increased their unprompted memory score by one. By allowing a student

to read the same passage twice seems to slightly increase recall, as well as enhance story retelling. Also the students seem to read with more fluency, and there appeared to be fewer oral reading errors. Some students were unfamiliar with how to carry out a story retelling, directly impacting their unprompted memory score. A few of the students chose to read slightly below their reading level, because they suffered from testing anxiety, and lacked the confidence to challenge themselves.

The prompted memory (pretest) scores ranged from 0-6 points out of a possible range of 7-9 points. Four out of seven of the students increased their scores with a range of one to five points after engaging in the prepared (pretest) reading. The difference between the unprompted memory (pretest) scores and the prompted memory (pretest) score, after both a silent/unprepared reading and a prepared reading ranged from 1-4 points. There appeared to be an increase in the unprompted memory score and prompted memory score after a prepared reading, as opposed to the unprompted memory score and prompted memory score after an unprepared reading.

The results from the spring semester posttest revealed some interesting conclusions. First of all 100% of the students participating in the program

increased their reading level by 2 to 3 levels, as indicated by the results of the Bader (IRI). The scores gathered from the silent/unprepared and the prepared reading are certainly worth noting. The number of unprompted memories recalled by the students after taking the posttest ranged from 0-6 points (0-5 pretest range) out of a possible range of 9-14 points (7-11 pretest range). Indicating that the silent reading score remained consistent. The outcome of these data does not demonstrate the students increase in ability to conduct an organized retelling.

The prompted memory (posttest) scores ranged from **3-6** points (0-6 pretest range) out of a possible range of 8-10 points (7-9 pretest range). The outcome of these data was possibly influenced by a slight increase in reading comprehension, and a slight increase in an ability to correctly respond to questions based on cued recall, or prompted memory. The difference between the unprompted memory scores and the prompted memory score after a silent/unprepared reading and a prepared reading ranged from 1-5 points (1-4 points pretest). Similar to the pretest, there was a slight increase between the unprompted memory score and the prompted memory score after a prepared reading, in comparison to the unprompted memory score and prompted memory score after completing the unprepared reading.

This study corresponds with research previously completed by Swalm (1972), Harrelson (1923), Jones (1932), and Rogers (1937) indicating there is no significant difference in comprehension between silent reading and oral reading. Jones (1932) states simply and directly, summarizing the findings of this research, that "...comprehension in oral and silent reading varies with the individual; some pupils comprehend better when reading silently while others comprehend better when reading orally" (p.295).

The finding of this research also concur with a study completed by Gambrell, Kapinus and Koskinen (1991). Gambrell et al. (1991) indicates in their study similar insight about retelling. "Retelling is, by its very nature, a text-based activity that engages the reader in personal reconstruction of the text" p.360.

Implications of Future Research

After completing this study it became apparent that future studies need to be conducted in the area of second grade performance on free recall/retelling and cued recall/comprehension after an oral reading and/or silent reading.

Since this study focused on one group of second grade student that participated in a district based intervention program, it would be beneficial to conduct a

similar studies with another group of second grade students participating in a reading intervention program at an alternative location.

This particular study utilized the Bader Reading and Language Inventory also known as the Bader IRI (Informal Reading Inventory) to test for reading comprehension and recall. There are other reading and language inventories that are available to educators that can be utilized in the same fashion as the Bader. To further validate the abilities of second grade reading students, it would be pertinent for future researchers to conduct a comparative study that focuses on the performance level of second grade students after completing specific sections of a variety of language inventories.

A study completed by Miller and Smith (1990) posed an interesting, yet thought provoking statement and question for future research. Miller and Smith strongly suggested that further research is needed to test "...how a reader's performance is affected by factors in various texts needs to be examined. For example, how will a student's performance vary if he or she is asked to read passages that are longer than those which Informal Reading Inventories use?" (p. 83).

The research articles that were incorporated into this study were controversial as to which is the more effective mode of reinforcing comprehension and free recall/retelling, oral reading or silent reading.

In one study the researcher developed an interesting perspective categorizing oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension as the "...three modes of reception"(Elgart, 1978) p.203. The same researcher also indicated that future research is needed to help educators become more aware of what materials enhance the use of the *three modes of reception*. Signifying clearly that there is a need for increased knowledge in the area of receptive language. The students that participated in this study were hampered in the area of reading, because they had weaknesses in receptive language.

There appears to be a substantial amount of research that concentrates on oral reading, silent reading and comprehension, as well as oral reading, silent reading, and retelling. However, there is a need for research that focuses on the interaction of oral reading, silent reading, retelling, and comprehension.

Classroom Implications

This study indicates that students would benefit from the utilization of a combination of the *receptive modes*: retellings (free recall/unprompted memory) cued recall (verbal comprehension/prompted memory), in conjunction with silent reading and/or oral reading. Swalm (1972) states “Which method is used with which child appears to depend upon the student’s reading ability and the readability of the material to be learned” (p.115).

After reviewing closely several studies it became apparent that researchers have differentiating ideas as to how teachers should implement oral and silent reading in the classroom. Armbruster and Wilkinson (1991) incorporated into their study comprehensible and applicable classroom implementations:

1. Teachers need to hold their students accountable for what they read.
2. Teachers need to capitalize on student responsiveness to text content during discussions about text.
3. Simply changing from oral reading to silent reading will not automatically ensure greater learning.

4. Teachers need to encourage their students to read carefully, reduce motivation to skim through text, and minimize opportunities for distraction while waiting for peers to finish reading.
5. It is important for students to have a clear purpose for reading. This can be established through the use of a K-W-L.
6. Rereading the text.
7. Construct comprehension based questions that focus on main point(s) of the story.
8. Create a story map.
9. Engage children in a story retelling.
10. Write down story points that children wish to have clarified.
11. Assess and observe student's oral and silent reading behaviors and strategies (p. 154).

It is important for educators to keep in mind that each child will process printed and oral language differently. The major source of individual differences is how printed and oral language are interpreted, taught and internalized.

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