

THE EFFECTS OF SUSTAINED SILENT READING  
AND SUSTAINED SILENT WRITING ON THE  
READING ATTITUDES OF FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS

THESIS

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## Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of sustained silent reading and sustained silent writing on the reading attitudes of fourth grade students. The sample consisted of twenty-eight fourth grade students in a self-contained general classroom in a suburban community. Fourteen students made up the treatment group and fourteen students made up the control group. A modified form of the Estes Reading Attitude Scale was used as a pretreatment equivalency measure for both groups. The treatment group was involved with daily fifteen minute periods of sustained silent reading or sustained silent writing for a period of sixty school days. The control group was involved with daily fifteen minute periods of sustained silent reading for a period of sixty school days. Both groups were post tested using the same attitude scale. Data obtained from this measuring device was computer analyzed using a series of t tests. Results indicated that there is no statistically significant difference between the obtained mean scores on the Estes Attitude Scale for the treatment and control group.

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## Chapter I

### Statement of the Problem

#### Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a sustained silent reading and sustained silent writing program on the reading attitudes of fourth grade students. The following question was examined:

Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean pre and post test scores on the Estes Reading Attitude Scale for fourth grade students participating in a daily fifteen minute period of sustained silent reading or sustained silent writing?

#### Need for the Study

The English language is a mixture of many different languages. These languages all require the same traditional language arts skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Smelstor (1979) states that speaking and listening were learned simultaneously before children entered school. Speaking and listening seemed easy: everybody else was doing it: children did it too--and they learned. They had to actively take part to get what they wanted or needed. When children entered school, they spoke and listened. Here they would be taught how to read and write. This time not simultaneously. American schools would teach reading first and then writing.

This tendency, according to Hildreth (1963), to keep reading and writing apart in beginning reading instruction is unfortunate because of the mutual relationship between the two processes. Pushing reading far ahead of writing means that the two skills can not be mutually reinforcing to the fullest extent, and that writing, in contrast to reading, will seem to be a tedious, difficult task.

When asked, "How much writing do children do?" Clay (1982) answered, "Very little." Graves (1978) says

Writing is extolled, worried over, cited as a national priority, but seldom practiced. The problem with writing is not poor spelling, punctuation, grammar, and handwriting. The problem with writing is no writing. Reading has been overstressed, often at the expense of writing. Even more serious is our growing insistence that students be solely proficient in receiving information, rather than in sending it. This not only hurts writing, but reading as well (p. 636).

According to Starlin (1982), "On January 16, 1981, on the NBC nightly news, John Chancellor said, 'A ten year Department of Education study indicates that 25% of secondary students sampled are not proficient in one or more of the basic writing skills.' Students interviewed indicated there was little writing instruction in school, and little opportunity to practice writing" (p.11).

Mork (1972) explains that reading is overtaught and underpracticed. In an attempt to encourage reading and writing practice, some teachers began allowing students to practice daily sustained silent reading (SSR) and sustained silent writing (SSW). A specific period of time was set aside for daily practice in reading and writing, for both the student and the teacher.



Efficiency, according to Oliver (1970), in the application of reading skills would seem to be developed from about 20% instruction and 80% practice. Realizing how powerful practice influences academic development, one wonders if practice can influence positive attitudes toward a subject.

The intention of this study was to explore reading attitudes as they are influenced by daily sustained silent reading and sustained silent writing practice.

### Questions

In view of the supporting evidence concerning the need for more reading and writing practice in school, the present study was designed to explore the following question:

Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean pre and post test scores on the Estes Reading Attitude Scale for fourth grade students participating in a daily fifteen minute period of sustained silent reading and sustained silent writing?

### Definition of Terms

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR): The practice of involving the students and teacher in a given period of school time for silent reading wherein students and teachers read self-selected material without interruption for purposes of enjoyment and reading practice. Formal evaluation and reporting is excluded from this process.

Sustained Silent Writing (SSR): The practice of involving the student and teacher in daily periods of sustained silent writing. This is when the student and teacher will write or copy anything that he wishes: spelling words, letters, an addition to a diary or journal or just words, for a given length of time. The writer is not required to show his writing to his teacher.

#### Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study must be considered in terms of the following limitations:

The findings of this study are applicable only to classes of fourth grade students in a similar school environment and exposed to the same conditions as those of the study.

The results of this study are valid only with students who receive the same amount and type of training as the students in this study.

Due to the demands of the school schedule, the experimental subjects would not be exposed to longer sustained periods of silent reading and silent writing. Treatment periods could only be extended to fifteen minutes.

The study covered a period of only sixty school days.

The study involved only twenty-eight students.

The participating teacher's instructional approaches and personal attitudes toward his roles in the SSR and SSW activities could possibly influence his students.

## Chapter II

### Review of the Literature

#### Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a sustained silent reading and sustained silent writing program on the reading attitudes of fourth grade students. This would determine whether a portion of curriculum time devoted to silent reading and silent writing without instruction could improve positive reading attitudes as effectively as time devoted to direct instruction.

The following research relating to this study included: the reading-writing relationship, sustained silent reading research and sustained silent writing research.

#### Reading Writing Relationship

Reading and writing are intimately related and should be brought together. In the past, the natural way to learn language was in a predetermined sequence: listening, speaking, reading and writing (Kellogg, 1971; Wixson, 1982).

Reading and writing are both forms of language expressed with a common graphic symbol system representing the spoken language. Hildreth (1963) states that in writing, the writer proceeds to construct or produce words. In reading, the task is to identify or obtain words or parts within words for clues to

meaning. Whether a child is reading or spelling, he is dealing with the same set of phonic elements represented with the same graphic symbols, both having to do with meaning.

Both reading and writing share common goals. According to Smelstor (1979) they inform, entertain, persuade and are always intended for specific audiences. Karlin (1983) states that learning to read and write can occur concurrently. This will lead to improved learning in both reading and writing since both draw upon the same bases--language, experiences, and similar processes.

Goodman (1976) maintains that reading is language, and writing is a language process. Reading is receptive, while writing is generative. Furthermore, readers use language to discover the writer's intended meaning. According to Murray (1968), the purpose of writing is to explore and discover meaning. Murray (1968) and Smith (1982) explain that a good reader asks himself, "Does this make sense?" A good writer also asks, "Does this make sense?" The purpose of both reading and writing is to learn by "making sense." Miller (1982) found that reading and writing are both processes where children must be active participants. In other words, children learn to read by reading and write by writing.

Shanahan (1981), using 256 second and 253 fifth grade children, studied and measured the relationship between learning to read and learning to write. His results suggest a relationship between reading and writing, but in different areas at different grade levels. For children reading below the third grade level the

association between reading and writing was best described as a word recognition word production (spelling) relationship. This is basically thought of as general reading achievement and spelling. At the fifth grade level and above, the relationship between reading and writing is based on reading comprehension and writing ability. Shanahan's study explained that the nature of the reading writing relationship exists and changes over time. It appeared that spelling activities would be beneficial to word recognition for below third grade level readers. As reading progresses the benefits probably decline. At the fifth grade level and above, the impact of writing allowed for experiences utilizing vocabulary in composition. These changes in writing provided growth in reading achievement. The results of this study examine the need to teach both reading and writing. The suggestion that writing instruction could replace reading instruction is unlikely and would have a detrimental effect if one of these areas replaced the other.

In 1967, Maloney found, in a study of ninth grade students, that the reading comprehension of good writers was significantly better than that of average writers.

Grobe and Grobe (1976) found a similar relationship between reading comprehension and writing performance among college freshmen. They found that good writers have higher reading comprehension scores than average writers.

Zeman (1969) examined the relationship of second and third grade students' reading comprehension scores on standardized tests and the

syntactical complexity of creative writing samples measured by structural grammar criteria. It was found that significant differences in syntactic complexity were apparent for above average, average and below average readers; the best readers produced the most complex sentence structures in their writings.

Leone's (1979) study using kindergarten writers and non writers found that writers achieved higher on first grade reading readiness tests than non writers.

Shanahan (1979) states that considerable confusion exists about the place of writing instruction in the elementary curriculum. Some wondered if the language arts they were required to teach included writing instruction. When asked how frequently their students practiced writing, all but two teachers said occasionally. The frequency and duration were not significantly related to grade level. Some teachers said they practiced writing two hours per week, while others said they practiced only fifteen minutes per week. The average amount was slightly over one hour per week involving two or three short periods. This does not consume a significant amount of time in the curriculum. Evidence suggests that writing has not been accorded much instruction time in American elementary schools. Teachers stated that schools want good readers, time can not be taken away from reading. This renewed interest in increasing the amount of writing instruction in the elementary grades presents problems for curriculum designers.

Pfeifer (1983) states that it comes as no surprise to experienced teachers that students who read well often write well,

and that students who write poorly also read poorly. These poor readers and writers avoid both processes whenever possible. This avoidance which denies practice, experience, and feedback compounds the problem and promotes students to fear both reading and writing.

A more recent investigation discovered a strong correlation of sixth graders' reading comprehension scores with the syntactic complexity of their creative writing performances as measured by transformational criteria (Brooks 1977).

In two independent investigations conducted by Barbig (1968) and LaCampagne (1968) it was discovered that one of the characteristics distinguishing good and average writers in the ninth and twelfth grades was that better writers did more voluntary reading than average ability writers. They also found that those students who enjoyed voluntary reading were better readers.

Applegate (1963) stressed the value of combining the reading/writing process when she said, "...writing enriches reading...it tunes the ear to the rhythms in all life..." (p. 12). Judy (1980) explains that "I hate to read," generally means "I can not read very well," or it means, "I hate to have to sit still and be quiet when I would rather do something active." Yet students need to practice reading if they are ever going to improve. Judy explains that success as a reading teacher depends on whether or not the teacher can change negative attitudes toward this discipline.

Einhorn (1979) explains that to develop a life long reader, enthusiasm is needed. Stronks (1982) found by studying older

adults aged sixty to sixty-four years, that those reading very little at this age expressed a deep concern that schools not only teach children how to read, but also teach them to love reading.

Mork (1972) and Oliver (1970) believe that reading skills should be developed from 20% instruction and 80% practice. Pupils are encouraged to practice reading at home, after library period, or when they have completed their seatwork assignments. Children would have to read after school for four hours for every one hour of reading instruction.

Einhorn (1979) states that when planning a reading curriculum, educators are in agreement, "the major goal is promoting positive student attitudes" (p. 8). Oliver (1970) also agrees by stating that the long range goal of the elementary school is to prepare children to read for enjoyment and information. Yet, this goal may be lost in the current trends emphasizing skills instruction and diagnostic-prescriptive teaching.

Allington (1975) concludes that in many reading lessons, little actual reading of words in context takes place. In many commercial reading programs, the reading act is fragmented into hundreds of worksheet style practice drills devoted to a specific word or comprehension skill with only minor emphasis on interacting with a reading selection itself. Reading lessons rarely have children read. The tasks involved are decoding through round robin reading, followed by seatwork and reinforcement worksheets (Allington, 1975;



Hunt, 1970; Sadoski, 1980).

Sadoski (1980) explains that a specific period of school time should be set aside for silent reading when the student and teacher read selected material for purposes of enjoyment and reading practice without interruption. Reading, as a skill, needs practice.

### Sustained Silent Reading Research

To promote reading practice, educators have looked toward the Sustained Silent Reading Program (SSR) formerly USSR. Designed by Lyman C. Hunt in 1971, the program allowed sustained silent reading practice. The program provides a given period of school time for silent reading wherein students and teachers read self-selected material without interruption for purposes of enjoyment and reading practice. Through SSR, students will develop reading skill through application and practice; they will develop interests and taste through personal motivation. McCracken (1971) explains one major benefit of this program is that it is easily accessible to all educators and very simple to implement in the classroom.

Combs and Van Dusseldorp (1984) examined attitudes toward SSR of classroom teachers and students in grades three through six. SSR had been a part of the school for two years. Students in grades three through six were asked various questions about their schools SSR program. When asked about what they do during SSR periods, 84.4% of the one hundred and thirty-six students said they read most of the time. Only 2.3% said they did not read. Research

substantiates that SSR will be most effective if the teacher models. When teachers were questioned, 78.6% said they read most of the time. Three teachers or 21.4% who did not read most of the time said they were monitoring the classroom or working with individual students on a one to one basis. When asked if SSR increased interest in reading, 9.6% said no change, 42.2% replied that there was some more interest and 48.2% said there was a lot more interest. When teachers were asked whether they thought student interest in reading had increased, 8.3% said no, 41.7% said some, and 50.0% said a lot. When asked if they would want SSR to continue 87.4% of the students and 100% of the teachers said yes. 12.6% of the students said no. Based on these results from the questionnaire survey, SSR is an effective technique for improving students' attitudes toward reading.

Promoters of SSR suggest that reading is overtaught and underpracticed (Maynes, 1982; Mork, 1972; Noland, 1976; Schaudt, 1983). Sustained silent reading allows for practice, but the question is...Will it help readers? Huck believes so. Huck reminds educators that..."one of the best-kept secrets in education is that children learn to read by reading (p.600).

If the goal of education is to produce lifelong readers who enjoy reading, educators must develop habits conducive to a lifetime of reading for enjoyment and learning.

Hanson's (1972) study directly examined the process of SSR and its effects on reading attitudes and independent reading

habits of students in grades two through four. During a six-month training period, attitudes were assessed with the San Diego County Inventory of Reading Attitudes. Out-of-school reading habits were judged using a parent survey; independent reading habits were measured through a book count technique including experimental students' SSR reading.

The experimental group had daily thirty minute periods of SSR practice. The control group was involved in comparable periods of self-selected language activities. Findings indicated no significant difference in expressed attitude toward reading between groups. Both groups made comparable positive gains in reading attitude. Similarly, both groups made positive gains in the amount and variety of out-of-school reading, with no significant difference noted between groups. The only significant finding indicated that SSR students at two of the three grade levels made greater gains in independent reading.

Harvey (1974) studied the effects of SSR practice in the elementary grades one through six classroom. Seventy-nine teachers and seven hundred children from three school districts participated in this study. Schools rather than individual children were selected for the SSR and control groups. Pre and post test attitude scores indicated that daily periods of SSR over a two month period did not significantly affect students' attitudes toward reading. A shorter treatment period could be responsible for these results. In addition, assessment of student attitudes appears secondary to the purpose of this study. Harvey's

examination concentrated on teachers' responses to SSR in-service training and their resulting opinions toward reading.

Wilmot's (1975) study revealed that SSR students in grades four and six had significantly better attitudes toward reading than control group students in those grades. Groups of second grade students displayed no significant difference in attitude. Results were obtained from a reading attitude inventory designed expressly for this study.

At the secondary level, Reed's (1977) study also examined student attitude toward reading. Although results are not significant between experimental and control groups, she notes that the requirement to read for sustained periods of time will not foster negative attitudes toward reading.

Other sustained silent reading studies that revealed a growth of attitude and interests rather than in achievement included: Mikulecky and Wolf (1977), Petre (1971) and Vacca (1976). All reported measureable or observable attitude improvement when comparing sustained silent reading to other strategies in their studies.

SSR supporters claim that daily practice produces avid readers and that a love of reading can better justify using SSR in the classroom. Allington (1975) states that "If the ultimate goal of teachers is to produce fluent readers and competent writers, learners must practice these activities as wholes" (p. 815).

### Sustained Silent Writing Research

To help aid in practicing writing some teachers have begun programs of daily writing. Collins (1981) used a simple act of daily writing without instruction to improve student reading comprehension, attitudes and feelings about themselves as readers. She stated that journal writing is available to everyone and that it can be used at any level of instruction.

In her study, sixty-nine second semester college freshmen whose grade point averages for the first half of freshmen year fell below the college requirements were divided into two groups. The experimental group consisted of thirty-five students. They would receive reading instruction combined with expressive writing practice. The control group of thirty-four students would receive reading instruction only. At the end of the semester, students were surveyed with questions concerning attitudes toward reading and instruction. Collins found no significant difference in regards to self-esteem or vocabulary gain. A significant difference was found among the mean scores of the experimental group with regard to comprehension and total scores. Collins then concluded that expressive writing practice combined with reading instruction has a positive effect on reading comprehension and attitudes toward instruction. She also stated that poor writers had a poor feeling about reading and writing, but they also had a deep sense of failure. Journal writing seemed to allow students' attitudes to improve and freed them to write expressively in a nongraded meaningful activity.

Oliver (1970) used a program entitled High Intensity Practice (HIP) to promote students' acceptance and enjoyment of reading. His HIP program combined SSR, SSW and self-selected activities (SSA). SSR let children read within the structure of a set of simple rules to keep the period silent, uninterrupted and to encourage the reader to sustain himself in silent reading. Everyone in the classroom, including the teacher, reads silently until the bell on a pre-set timer announces the end of the SSR period. SSW requires only that the pupil write for a given length of time. He may elect to write or copy anything he wishes: spelling words, friendly letters, an addition to his diary or journal, or just words. The writer is not required to show his writing to the teacher. He has only to write. The SSA period permits the pupil to engage in any activity that involves active response to words. He may read, write, study social studies, or work arithmetic problems that involve the use of reading for their solution.

A writing program entitled Can't Stop Writing, involves an interval for Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Writing. According to Allington (1975) the program stresses quantity of writing, since nothing is learned without practice. Subjects involved with the Can't Stop Writing program begin writing and do not stop writing until a given time period is up. Writers will write about anything they want.

Prentice's (1974) project allowed a journal writing program to provide children with an opportunity to express themselves freely, and that would offer information to improve relationships

in the classroom. At the end of the school year, Prentice found that the children had expressed many interests and concerns in their personal writing. He found that his students could explore the different possibilities of style and self expression.

Hains (1982) found that children should have a wide variety of writing experiences and should write every day. By providing a wealth of activities, children will gain confidence in their personal writing ability.

### Summary

After reviewing this literature, it is evident that the development of positive attitudes toward reading is a recognized concern of today's educators. Based on the significant findings of research involving the reading-writing relationship, SSR and SSW, it is not premature to conclude that the two practices are highly effective strategies for producing fluent readers and competent writers who enjoy reading. These two methods need to be investigated in conjunction with reading attitudes.

## Chapter III

### Design of the Study

#### Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a sustained silent reading and sustained silent writing program on the reading attitudes of fourth grade students.

#### Null Hypothesis

There is no statistically significant difference between the mean pre and post test scores on the Estes Reading Attitude Scale for fourth graders participating in a daily fifteen minute period of sustained silent reading and sustained silent writing and a comparable control group.

#### Methodology

##### Subjects

This study was conducted in a suburban elementary school district in western upstate New York State, and used a total of twenty-eight fourth grade students. The subjects were divided alphabetically into two groups. The treatment group consisted of six girls and eight boys. The control group consisted of five girls and nine boys.

##### Instruments

This study attempted to assess an accurate measure of student attitude toward reading. The reading attitude scale from the Estes Reading Attitude Scales: Elementary Form (Grades 2-6) was



administered as a pretest and posttest to all subjects participating in this study. The Estes Reading Attitude Scale was modified to force all subjects to make a choice on the response sheet. The reading attitude scale is composed of nineteen statements, with a mixture of positively and negatively worded items. The students' reading ability is not a factor in their performance, since each statement and choices are read aloud by the teacher and each response is marked on the students' individual answer sheet. Subjects are presented with four possible responses on this adapted Likert-type scale. Scoring procedures allot four points for responses that reflect a strong positive reading attitude, three points that reflect a positive reading attitude, two points that reflect a negative reading attitude, and one point for a strong negative reading attitude. The scale yields a summated rating.

This attitude scale was adapted from and designed to parallel Estes version. Estes provides norms, reliability and validity information for the elementary form. A satisfactory degree of internal consistency is reflected in the .85 coefficient of reliability for the norm group. Evidence of discriminant and criterion-related validities has not yet been completed. However, the author's preliminary findings indicate significant correlations between attitude scores and students' self-ratings of reading performance, their amount of reading and their teachers' ratings of student reading attitude (Estes et al., 1976).

### Procedures

Prior to the initiation of the daily treatment session, the twenty-eight fourth grade students who would be participating in this study were administered a pilot test consisting of a short sports attitude scale (see Appendix A). The main purpose of the pilot testing was to familiarize the students with a Likert-type scale.

On the day before the treatment period was initiated, February 28, 1986, students were given the Estes Reading Attitude Scale in a large group situation. The participants carefully marked their answers on their individual answer sheet (see Appendix B).

Beginning on the following school day, the reading and writing treatment group received fifteen minutes of writing for ten days, fifteen minutes of reading for ten days, and fifteen minutes of alternating reading and writing for ten days (see Appendix C). A timer was used to assure that a full fifteen minutes of student involvement in the daily treatment period took place. During this same time, students in the control group received fifteen minutes of silent reading for thirty days.

After thirty school days, the same sequence of writing, reading and alternating was repeated for the treatment group for the next thirty school days. The control group continued with thirty more days of silent reading. The sixty day treatment period ended on June 9, 1986. At the conclusion of the sixty school days, each student was posttested using the Estes Attitude Scales: Elementary Form.

### Analysis of Data

Attitude scales were hand scored, producing individual summated ratings. A t test was performed on the pretest and posttest attitude scores for the treatment group and the control group. Results of the test would determine if the treatment group students displayed significantly better attitudes toward reading than the control group students following the sixty day treatment period. A .05 level of significance was used to examine the hypothesis in the study.

### Summary

This study was designed to investigate the effectiveness of SSR and SSW on reading attitudes. One pretest and posttest were used as evaluating devices. Mean gain scores were examined for all tests. A t test was used to investigate any significant differences between the treatment and control groups.

## Chapter IV

### Analysis of Data

#### Purpose

This study analyzed the data obtained from mean scores on the Estes Reading Attitude Scale. This test was administered to the treatment and control groups at the beginning and completion of a sixty school day program involving a daily period of sustained silent reading and sustained silent writing for the treatment group and a daily period of sustained silent reading for the control group.

#### Null Hypothesis

There is no statistically significant difference between mean pre and post test scores on the Estes Reading Attitude Scale for fourth graders participating in a daily fifteen minute period of sustained silent reading and sustained silent writing and a comparable control group.

#### Findings and Interpretations

In an analysis of the data, the attitude scores for all treatment subjects were compared with the scores of all the control subjects to determine the effects of SSR and SSW on students' attitudes toward reading. Similar pretest mean scores for the treatment (61.786) and control (63.000) groups resulted in an obtained difference of -1.214 favoring the control group. This

difference in the mean scores was not significant at the .05 level of confidence (see Table 1).

The posttest mean scores for the treatment (62.786) and control (62.357) groups resulted in an obtained difference of .429 favoring the treatment group. This difference in the mean scores was not significant at the .05 level of confidence (see Table 1).

Differences in gain scores from the pre and posttest results for the treatment (1.00) and control (-.643) groups resulted in an obtained difference of 1.643. This difference in the mean scores was not significant at the .05 level of confidence (see Table 1). The hypothesis was not supported by the total sample.

#### Summary

A t test performed on the pretest and posttest mean attitude scores for the treatment and control group determined that there is no significant difference in the mean scores on the Estes Reading Attitude Scale for fourth graders participating in a daily fifteen minute period of SSR and SSW.

Table 1

Differences in mean scores on pretests and posttests from the Estes Reading Attitude Scale following sixty school days treatment period

<u>Treatment Group</u>			<u>Control Group</u>		
Student	Pretest	Posttest	Student	Pretest	Posttest
1.	58	61	15.	74	75
2.	67	74	16.	61	52
3.	69	67	17.	73	74
4.	63	64	18.	59	65
5.	56	65	19.	52	57
6.	50	44	20.	70	71
7.	47	51	21.	75	71
8.	61	68	22.	40	51
9.	67	71	23.	70	62
10.	66	57	24.	67	59
11.	76	70	25.	55	70
12.	57	61	26.	61	63
13.	67	66	27.	64	54
14.	61	60	28.	61	49
<hr/>			<hr/>		
Mean	61.786	62.786	Mean	63.000	62.357
SD	7.768	8.069	SD	9.695	8.924

Pretest:  
Hypothesized Difference: 0  
Obtained Difference: -1.214  
 $t(26) = -.366$   $p = .6765$   
Standard Error = 3.320  
Groups had equivalent means

Posttest:  
Hypothesized Difference: 0  
Obtained Difference: .429  
 $t(26) = .133$   $p = .6117$   
Standard Error = 3.215  
Groups had equivalent means

Differences in Gain Scores:	Treatment	Control
Mean	1.000	-.643
SD	5.421	8.215

Hypothesized Difference: 0  
Obtained Difference: 1.643  
 $t(26) = .625$   $p = .5432$   
Standard Error = 2.630

## Chapter V

### Conclusions and Implications

#### Purpose

This study investigated the effects of a daily period of sustained silent reading and sustained silent writing upon students' attitude toward reading.

#### Conclusions

The results of the  $t$  test indicated that there is not a statistically significant difference between SSR/SSW practice and SSR practice alone on reading attitudes after sixty school days of participation.

The results of the  $t$  test demonstrated that the SSR/SSW students did not benefit more from the use of writing than subjects who only had reading. When the mean gain scores for the treatment (1.00) group were compared with the mean gain scores of the control (-.643) group, no statistically significant difference was indicated.

#### Discussion

During the treatment period several informal comments were written down and common actions made by children in this study were observed. These comments and actions were noted as an attempt to supply further evidence to support the validity of practicing a mixture of SSR and SSW.

It should be noted that when this investigation began, both the treatment and control subjects were willing to take part in this study.

As the study progressed, the subjects who displayed the most enthusiasm and active involvement in the program were those in the treatment group. This informal observation suggests that subjects in the treatment group enjoyed themselves more than subjects in the control group.

Treatment group subjects continually vocalized how much they enjoyed the variety between SSR and SSW. One constructive point to note was that students in the treatment group commented that they would enjoy even more freedom by being allowed to choose which activity in which to participate. Some even suggested that being allowed to switch whenever they became interested in the other would be more beneficial to the individual.

When examining the control group, it should be noted that these students seldom rushed to take out their SSR trade books. Students suggested that daily involvement with SSR books alone became tedious. The control group became envious of the experimental group having a rotating schedule and variety between SSR and SSW.

#### Implications for Further Research

Since this study was conducted using subjects of a specific age, research needs to be conducted on different populations to determine if the differences hold true for subjects of various ages.

Secondly, this investigation was conducted over a period of sixty school days. Significant results might be obtained if studies could be conducted over longer periods of time.

Further research should be undertaken allowing subjects to be exposed to longer sustained periods of silent reading and silent writing.



In addition, this study involved only twenty-eight students. Larger or smaller groups may yield different results.

#### Implications for the Classroom

This investigation's overall comparison between treatment and control groups implies that there is no statistically significant difference in the effects of daily SSR/SSW (treatment) or SSR practice alone (control) upon student reading attitudes. For this testing population, varying amounts of SSR/SSW is not detrimental nor will it retard student gains in reading attitude. In addition, it is noted that mean gain scores for the treatment (SSR/SSW) group were greater than the control (SSR) group. SSR/SSW may be a viable alternative to SSR by providing a way to practice writing and reading together.

#### Summary

This study demonstrated that SSR/SSW practice for fourth grade students did not significantly benefit more than only SSR practice.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

SPORTS ATTITUDE SCALE

A: strongly agree

B: agree

C: disagree

D: strongly disagree

Directions: Place a check mark in the appropriate box.

Statements	A	B	C	D
1. Football is the greatest.				
2. Ice hockey is for boys.				
3. Sports are for old people.				
4. After school sports waste time.				
5. Basketball is for tall people.				
6. Only strong people play sports.				
7. Wrestling is not for girls.				
8. Swimming is exciting.				
9. All girls love soccer.				
10. Track is very dull.				

## Appendix B

ESTES READING ATTITUDE SCALE (MODIFIED)

A: strongly agree

B: agree

C: disagree

D: strongly disagree

Directions: Place a check mark in the appropriate box.

Statements	A	B	C	D
1. Reading is for learning but not for enjoyment.				
2. Money spent on books is well spent.				
3. There is nothing to be gained from reading books.				
4. Books are a bore.				
5. Reading is a good way to spend spare time.				
6. Discussing books in class is a waste of time.				
7. Reading turns me on.				
8. Reading is only for grade grubbers.				
9. Books are not usually good enough to finish.				
10. Reading is rewarding for me.				
11. Reading becomes boring after about an hour.				
12. Most books are too long and dull.				
13. Free reading does not teach anything.				
14. There are many books which I hope to read.				
15. Books should not be read except for class requirements.				
16. Reading is something I can do without.				
17. A certain amount of summer vacation should be set aside for reading.				
18. Books make good presents.				
19. Reading is dull.				



## Appendix C

## Treatment Program Schedule

Monday March 3 Writing	Tuesday 4 Writing	Wednesday 5 Writing	Thursday 6 Writing	Friday 7 Writing
10 Writing	11 Writing	12 Writing	13 Writing	14 No School
17 Writing	18 Reading	19 Reading	20 Reading	21 Reading
24 Reading	25 Reading	26 Reading	27 No School	28 No School
31 No School	April 1 No School	2 No School	3 No School	4 No School
7 Reading	8 Reading	9 Reading	10 Writing	11 Reading
14 Writing	15 Reading	16 Writing	17 Reading	18 Writing
21 Reading	22 Writing	23 Reading	24 Writing	25 Writing
28 Writing	29 Writing	30 Writing	May 1 Writing	2 No School
5 Writing	6 Writing	7 Writing	8 Writing	9 Reading
12 Reading	13 Reading	14 Reading	15 Reading	16 Reading
19 Reading	20 Reading	21 Reading	22 Reading	23 No School
26 No School	27 Writing	28 Reading	29 Writing	30 Reading
June 2 Writing	3 Reading	4 Writing	5 Reading	6 Writing
9 Reading				