

What happens when struggling readers and writers produce and read their own
scripted stories?

by

Sara Aileen Speer

Master of Science in Education; Childhood Literacy

August 2007

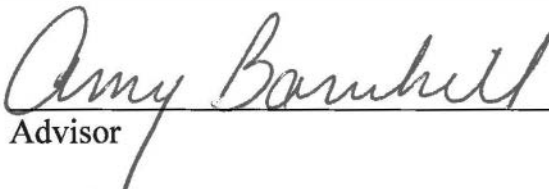
A thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development
of the State University of New York at Brockport in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education

What happens when struggling readers and writers produce and read their own
scripted stories?

by

Sara Speer

APPROVED BY:



Advisor

7-18-07
Date



Director, Graduate Programs

7-18-07
Date

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Tables..... | iv |
| Abstract..... | v |
| Chapter 1: Introduction..... | 1 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review..... | 7 |
| Chapter 3: Methodology..... | 14 |
| Chapter 4: Results..... | 25 |
| Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion..... | 42 |
| References..... | 48 |
| Appendices..... | 50 |

Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1: Grouping of Students for Research..... | 15 |
| Table 2: Procedure for Implementation of Research..... | 19 |
| Table 3: Comparison of Group A’s Reading Rates..... | 27 |
| Table 4: Comparison of Group B’s Reading Rates..... | 27 |
| Table 5: Comparison of Group A’s Fluency Scales Ratings..... | 29 |
| Table 6: Comparison of Group B’s Fluency Scales Ratings..... | 30 |
| Table 7: Group A Comparison of Retelling Rubric Scores..... | 31 |
| Table 8: Group B Comparison of Retelling Rubric Scores..... | 31 |

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN STRUGGLING READERS AND WRITERS PRODUCE AND READ THEIR OWN SCRIPTED STORIES?

Sara Aileen Speer

Candidate for Master of Science in Education in Childhood Literacy
State University of New York, College at Brockport, 2007

ABSTRACT

This research study is an attempt to determine what happens when struggling readers and writers produce and read their own scripted stories. The purpose of the study was to take a successful method of supporting struggling readers; reader's theater, and integrate student created scripts to see if reader's theater could be used to support struggling writers as well. This study was conducted with eight second grade students struggling with both reading and writing. Research took place over three sessions where the reader's theater process was implemented each time. The first session was done in original reader's theater format with scripts provided by the researcher. The second session incorporated a script that was created interactively by the students and researcher. The third session the script was created independently by student groups. Research resulted in improvements in fluency, especially in the area of reading pace, overall comprehension, and self-esteem in terms of confidence in reading and writing ability, self-awareness of strengths and needs for improvement in both reading and writing, as well as social interaction, and group work abilities.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Statement

Numerous educational professionals have researched and applied various methods of repeated reading and have found that one of these methods; reader's theater, has been especially beneficial for struggling readers in a variety of areas, specifically word recognition, fluency, and comprehension (Rasinski, 2003). According to Buzard, Jarosz, Lato and Zimmerman (2001), "reader's theater is a form of group storytelling in which two or more readers present a piece of literature by reading aloud from hand held scripts (p.110). These scripts can be based on a variety of pieces of literature, ranging from poetry to short stories or even excerpts from novels or text books (Buzard et al., 2001). Scripts are generally selected or created by teachers and occasionally students.

Although my research has reinforced the benefits of reader's theater on struggling readers, my interest is in what happens when reader's theater is taken a step further and the focus is put on student created reader's theater scripts. I want to know what happens when struggling readers and writers produce and read their own scripted stories and specifically, what happens to the reading and writing abilities of these students.

The struggling students I selected to conduct my research with are in second grade. Based on a school specific assessment very closely related to the Developmental Reading Assessment II or DRA II (with the addition of a writing composition piece), four of these students were slightly below the second grade level

in their reading and writing skills as of April 2007, and the remaining four were right at second grade level. These students were of significant concern at the time because there were two months left of school and their abilities in reading and writing should have been closer to expectations for the beginning of third grade. Their literacy instruction throughout their second grade career has incorporated guided reading and writing which is supplemented with literacy centers that include independent and paired reading and writing experiences and appropriate extensions, as well as differentiated word work practice. Their teacher expressed a genuine concern over these students' abilities to progress and we determined together that small group opportunities to help these students improve on their reading and writing through reader's theater could be very beneficial.

Significance of Problem

This research is important because there are numerous students who struggle with various components of reading or writing or both. There are a wide variety of reasons students struggle with reading from biological factors to language barriers to just a lack of the right educational support. By taking a successful method of supporting struggling readers; repeated reading through reader's theater, and further extending it through student created scripts, I hope to discover a strategy that can be used to support students in both of these areas of literacy at the same time.

My research will impact the students I am working with because they will encounter a more engaging and authentic approach to incorporating the skills needed to be successful readers and writers. Their teacher(s) will be a benefactor as well

because they will learn about a successful method of repeated reading that can support not only reading instruction but writing instruction in their classroom.

This will benefit them as teachers throughout the remainder of the school year and in their classroom for years to come. This research will also impact future teachers and administrators I work with as I promote its positive results throughout collaborative work sessions and professional development experiences. In particular, it is my hope that I can have a successful impact on these students and my future students as my philosophy develops and changes due to my research results.

Purpose

Based on the data from my research, I hope to see improvements in these second grade students' fluency, comprehension, and general self-esteem. Also, I hope that this research is able to inform the instructional practices of both myself and other teachers that are a part of these eight children's education currently and in the future. Additionally and most importantly, I hope to make these students aware of the benefits of repeated reading on both their reading and writing.

Rationale

Throughout my masters program in childhood literacy, my cohort members and I have been introduced to various methods and strategies to support struggling readers and writers. I found that reader's theater sparked my interest and I wanted to use it to support the struggling students I was encountering in my internship for the program. As I used it to support some of my fourth grade students I work with, I found the benefits it had on improving fluency, comprehension and their general self-

esteem. I felt that if this strategy could results in benefits in all of these areas as far as reading, it might be able to do the same with the integration of writing. According to Rasinski (2003), “when students turn stories into scripts, it is a variable scaffolding experience. In other words, the original text acts as a model or support for students writers” (p.114). I hope to prove this to be accurate through my research.

Definition of Terms

Accuracy: Percentage of words read correctly.

Cognitive/Cognition: “The process of recognizing, conceiving, judging and reasoning” (Flippo, 2003, p.G-364).

Comprehension: Involves using “all the complex operations of the brain before, during, and after reading a text- cognitive, linguistic, sensory-motor, emotional, artistic, and creative” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p.4). All of these factors work together to problem solve, make meaning, and therefore comprehend (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006).

Developmental Reading Assessment II or DRA II: “The Developmental Reading Assessment, Second Edition (DRA2) helps educators identify each student’s reading ability and level, document progress, and tailor teaching to drive effective reading instruction. Use the tools in DRA2 to assess accuracy, fluency, and comprehension” (Pearson Learning Group, 2006).

Expression: Indication of feeling, spirit, character, personal reaction etc., as on the face, in the voice, or in artistic execution (Dictionary.com, 2006).

Fluent Reading/Fluency: “Using smoothly integrated operations to process the meaning, language, and print.” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p.62). It incorporates four main dimensions; accuracy in word recognition, phrasing, smoothness and pace (Rasinski, 2003).

Frustrational Reading Level: The reading level at which the student reaches complete frustration (Flippo, 2003).

Independent Reading Level: The reading level at which the student is able to function independently in reading (Flippo, 2003).

Instructional Reading Level: The reading level at which the child can profit from teacher-directed reading instruction (Flippo, 2003).

Linguistic(s): The science of language and its various components.

Miscues: Deviations from the actual wording of a text that a child makes when reading orally (Flippo, 2003).

Oral Reading: Reading out loud.

Pace: The rate at which a student reads.

Phrasing: The way in which “readers put words together in groups to represent the meaningful units of language. Phrased reading should sound like oral language, although more formal. Phrasing involves pausing at punctuation as well as at places in the text that do not have punctuation” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p.69).

Reader’s Theater: According to Buzard, Jarosz, Lato and Zimmerman (2001), “reader’s theater is a form of group storytelling in which two or more readers present a piece of literature by reading aloud from hand held scripts (p.110). These scripts can

be based on a variety of pieces of literature, ranging from poetry to short stories or even excerpts from novels or text books (Buzard et al., 2001). Scripts are generally selected or created by teachers and occasionally students.

Repeated Reading: Reading a piece of text more than once.

Running Records- A means of assessment used to closely observe a student's reading behaviors as a student reads a text. As a student reads, the teacher records the words read correctly as well as the miscues (Fountas and Pinnell, 2006).

Self-Assessment: A process in which a student engages in critiquing ones own work, usually for the purpose of improving future performance.

Sensory-Motor: When the brain organizes sensory input from the body and environment for use. These factors need to be coordinated for a student to read and manipulate a text appropriately. Examples of appropriate coordination would be tracking a text while reading using their eyes or using a one-to-one correspondence with the text and a finger. Another example could be holding a book correctly and turning its pages (Lyons, 2003).

Smoothness: An even, uninterrupted flow of text when orally reading.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Why are there struggling readers and writers?

Currently, there are no universal causes or related symptoms that can be used to diagnose the various problems that a struggling reader or writer may have. Because of this, there are no “hard and fast rules” that define a struggling reader or writer or student with a learning disability. Therefore, state education departments and school districts policies and procedures for identifying and classifying a student in need vary significantly. Generally, students have learning issues that are organic in origin. These issues tend to center around a lack of perception, language and memory. With these factors in mind, it is important to also consider a student’s physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional maturity. If one of these happens to have a large discrepancy between what is and what should be, then that student is considered at-risk (Lyons, 2003).

Some students struggle due to a lack of support at home, as well as in school. These factors can either create learning issues or worsen problems that already exist. Because of this, teachers must carefully identify a child’s learning needs through the use of various forms of formal and informal assessment and input from the student, their family, past teachers, and paraprofessionals that the student has worked with. In this way, teachers can be most effective in creating a learning environment and experiences that promote a student’s strengths as well as respond to their needs accordingly (Lyons, 2003).

Why use reader's theater to support struggling readers?

Vygotsky's sociolinguistic theory of learning revolves around the fact that students learn best through social interaction. Because of this, it is necessary for teachers to "plan instructional activities to incorporate a social component" (Tompkins, 2003, p.6). A well researched and practiced strategy for helping struggling readers; reader's theater, "a form of group storytelling in which two or more readers present a piece of literature by reading aloud from hand held scripts," (Buzard et al., 2001, p. 110), enables struggling readers to receive support from more capable readers through a scaffolded form of social interaction. Students work together, speaking lines alone or in groups where they can see and hear the words they are saying simultaneously (Flynn, 2004, p.361). In order to achieve this, students must practice reading their scripts together, repeatedly (repeated reading). This promotes team work whether there are just two students or a group of students as they focus their efforts on accuracy in word recognition, phrasing, smoothness and pace, as well as special attention to individual parts, cues, and gestures (Rasinski, 2003; Flynn, 2004). This form of performance reading, a tool for incorporating social interaction is powerful because:

"it requires students to use repeated reading in preparation for their performances, and to read for meaning and understanding before and during their performances. It requires plenty of planning and practice time. But the end result- students who read with expression, fluency, and meaning-will show that this is time well spent" (Rasinski, 2003, p.102).

Reader's theater is also successful at motivating struggling readers because of the performance piece. This works as an encouraging factor for all students because they are reading repeatedly for an authentic purpose: performing for an audience of their classmates and teacher. This makes reading text multiple times seem much more practical and results in students feeling even more motivated to participate as they are able to see their gained improvements (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1998; Rasinski, 2003; Flynn, 2004). Additionally, reader's theater creates a forum for students to share information, interests, and promote learning language for students who do not speak English as their first language. It also can be used to address state language arts standards and be used by teachers to monitor, assess, and support students with their reading (Optiz & Rasinski, 1998).

How does reader's theater improve fluency?

Reader's theater has the ability to "orchestrate" the many components of fluency; accuracy, phrasing, pace and expression (Martinez et al., 1998). This orchestration is created through the combination of a few general strategies which are all applied in the process of implementing reader's theater. The first is giving students access to text that they are able to practice either at their independent or instructional level. If they reach a level of frustration with the text they are reading they will not be able to build word recognition and the high demands of the text will discourage rapid reading (Martinez et al., 1998; Rasinski, 2003). When students read and practice text at their independent or instructional levels, they are able to increase

reading rate and “devote more attention to meaning and the interpretation of meaning through phrasing and expressiveness” (Martinez et al., 1998, p.327).

The second strategy is to ensure students receive good models of fluent reading as defined in the previous paragraph. This can be done through teacher modeling of reading text appropriately as well as with partnering or grouping students heterogeneously or having students listen to recorded materials (Martinez et al., 1998; Rasinski, 2003). The third strategy that is the main contributor to improvements in fluency is repeated reading. The more students have the opportunity to hear effective reading models and then practice what they hear and apply it in their own reading, the more fluent they will become. Students often get discouraged when asked to re-read text, but they must have plenty of practice opportunities (Martinez et al., 1998; Rasinski, 2003).

The fourth and final strategy is to give students constant and specific instructional support and feedback. This can come in several versions, “guidance can occur informally as teacher and children talk about a just-completed performance, or it can be a more planned demonstration of a strategy that fluent readers use” (Martinez et al., 1998, p.328). Using these strategies through the use of reader’s theater improves students’ fluency and “provides a vehicle for direct explanation, feedback, and effective modeling” (Martinez et al., 1998, p.333). Improvements in fluency can be measured (and were applied in this study) through pre and post readings of the same text by referencing the “Student Fluency Norms Based on Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM)” chart and formula for calculating reading rate

as seen in Appendix A, as well as with the use of the two fluency scales depicted in Appendix B and C.

How does reader's theater improve comprehension?

According to Rasinski (2003) and various other researchers, reader's theater is yielding improvements in comprehension among other factors (Deasy, 2002; Rasinski, 2003; Flynn, 2004). Students are more engaged and can more easily identify story elements through the use of drama whether they are the audience or performers. These key elements are the main idea and character identification and motivation. Seeing and hearing a story dramatized also promotes recall of the story's sequence, details and vocabulary. All of these elements are important for making meaning and increasing comprehension. Students are also able to develop comprehension as they are introduced to how to use "specific language as well as typographical cues such as punctuation marks, bold print, italics, and different size print as a signal for reading" (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998, p.5).

How does reader's theater improve self-esteem and encourage self-reflection?

For struggling readers, seeing improvements in their performance has the potential to be highly motivating. Students tend to not want to re-read stories, but are more willing when given an authentic purpose (like through reader's theater) to perform for an audience of their peers and teacher (Martinez et al., 1998; Rasinski, 2003; Flynn, 2004). Using reader's theater as performance literacy with the use of drama that literature can provide "encourages *expressive* and *interactional* language, as opposed to *informational* language, which [can tend] to dominate regular

classroom life” (Deasy, 2002, p.50). This language encourages exchanges between students as they work together on their scripts to practice their reading and performing skills (as discussed in previous sections), which promotes high levels of reflection and social-interaction. Interactions and reflection between students can happen when they are working together on a performance or as they receive feedback from their peers and teacher after a performance. As they see and hear what they are doing well and receive feedback on it, not only are they more motivated to read, but students are able to reflect more easily on their strengths and needs for improvement (Deasy, 2002; Rasinski, 2003). This motivation and self-reflection is enabled because of the strong connection between social learning opportunities and emotional connectedness, “emotions and thoughts interact, shape each other, and *cannot* be separated” (Lyons, 2003, p.171).

So, why use reader’s theater to support struggling writers?

According to Rasinski (2003), “having students create their own scripts is a natural extension of reader’s theater” (p.114). Teachers often adapt texts for reader’s theater, therefore, students should be able to do the same. The act of writing a script and performing it through reading and speaking connects the three processes (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998). Students are either provided with or select a text that is most likely at an independent reading level, whether it be a poem, short story, textbook etc. Students can follow the text as closely or as lightly as they wish; following the original texts. The use of any text acts as a model or means of support for the student.

“To write their scripts, students must analyze deeply the well-formed writing of the author. They need to emulate the work of a good writer. This is a ‘variable’ form of scaffolding” (Rasinski, 2003, p.114). Using the text as a model, students can create their own context for presenting the details of the text as well as determine narrator and character lines as and what individual will be performing them. This is highly motivating for students as they are able to “infuse their writing with humor, contemporary references and expression, sarcasm, and other uses of language” (Flynn, 2005, p.363). It is also motivating as stated throughout this review because students are creating their writing or script for an audience beyond themselves, and therefore they tend to produce a higher quality of work (Dillingham, 2005).

Another benefit to having students write their own script is that they are able to read the stories over in their own hand-writing and in their own words. This is important because the language is coming from the student and is based on their own schema, making the text they have created easier to read. “Reading and writing are connected, because students are actively involved in reading what they have written” (Tompkins, 2003, p. 123).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Objective

The objective of my research is to determine what happens when struggling readers and writers produce and read scripted stories. I determined what happens by evaluating students during three consecutive reader's theater sessions as I have outlined in the procedure section of this chapter (see Table 1). This evaluation took place generally through the use of anecdotal notes and video-taping. My evaluations of fluency, comprehension and self-esteem took place in more specific ways. For fluency, I determined changes through two fluency scales (Appendices B and C) and by referencing the "Student Fluency Norms Based on Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM)" chart and formula for calculating reading rate (Appendix A). To determine changes in comprehension, I had students retell the story they were assigned for each session at the end of each session and evaluated them based on a retelling rubric (Appendix D). To determine each sessions influence on self-esteem, I conducted one-on-one interviews consisting of reflective questions (Appendix E) between each student and myself. The evaluation of writing growth was done through the use of anecdotal record taking and through analyzing completed scripts. The specific session 3 interview questions were also taking into consideration for writing growth.

Participants

I conducted my research with eight, Caucasian students in second grade. These students all came from the same classroom that was in a small suburban school

in Western New York. These students were selected based on their reading and writing levels as of April 2007. These levels were determined by a school specific assessment that very closely related to the Developmental Reading Assessment II (DRA II) with the addition of a writing composition piece. The assessment's results determined that four of these students were slightly below the second grade level in both the areas of reading and writing and the remaining four were right at second grade level. These students were of significant concern at the time because there were two months left of school and their abilities in reading and writing should have been closer to the school's expectations for the beginning of third grade. I felt that because of this factor, these students would work well for this study and benefit from going through the process of reader's theater. Below I have included Table 1 stating the pseudonym for each student, their gender, whether or not they were slightly below or right at second grade level and what group they were in once the reader's theater process started for purposes of comparison in the following chapters.

Table 1

Grouping of Students for Research

| Pseudonym | Gender | Slightly Below Grade Level or At Grade Level | Group |
|------------------|---------------|---|--------------|
| Caitlyn | Female | Below Grade Level | A |
| Kristy | Female | Below Grade Level | A |
| Bailee | Female | Below Grade Level | B |
| James | Male | Below Grade Level | B |
| Kenny | Male | At Grade Level | A |
| Cooper | Male | At Grade Level | A |
| Autumn | Female | At Grade Level | B |
| Jacob | Male | At Grade Level | B |

Measures

When I started my research it was very broad and exploratory. Once I was able to start working with the students I realized I needed more standard methods of measuring the different areas of growth I might be seeing a.k.a. fluency, comprehension and self-esteem and reflection. To evaluate growth in fluency, I referenced the “Student Fluency Norms Based on Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM)” chart (Appendix A) from Rasinski’s (2003) book, *The Fluent Reader* (p.170). Based on that chart, I used a formula that is also referenced in Rasinski’s (2003) book to determine students correct words per minute (word accuracy) for each time they read the actual story’s text (this took place at the beginning and end of each of the three sessions) that can also be seen in Appendix A. Also, in order to evaluate progress in fluency, I decided to use two scales that are also from Rasinski’s (2003) book and referenced in Appendices B and C. These scales are titled the “Adapted Version of NAEP’s Oral Reading Fluency Scale” and “Multidimensional Fluency Scale.” These scales were also used each time the actual story text was read during every session. I used these to help break down the different aspects of fluency I focused on; accuracy, phrasing, smoothness and pace, and give them a specific rating in order to more easily analyze my data.

In order to more closely evaluate comprehension, I reviewed several retelling checklists from the book *Revisit, reflect, retelling: Strategies for improving reading comprehension* by Linda Hoyt. Based on my review, I created a simple culminating rubric for retelling (Appendix D) that was used at the end of each session after the

second rereading. I felt that due to the fact that all of the text read was of fictional content that this would be the most appropriate method for evaluating comprehension. The characteristics I looked for in the retelling of the story are outlined in the rubric and were based upon the child simply giving an introduction to the story, stating the setting, characters, character motivations and main idea (problem and solution).

To more closely evaluate growth or change in self-esteem I created a set of self-reflective interview questions based upon tasks students were expected to do during each session and these questions were asked at the end of each session (see Appendix E). These questions were differentiated for each session based on how the script was selected or created in each session; teacher provided, group interactively created, and group independently created. There were main questions asked during all three sessions and then specific questions that were added for session 2 and session 3.

Also, in order to triangulate my data, I video-taped and took anecdotal notes during every day of each session. I used these to reflect on student progress and needs as well as my own teaching methods as well as to informally assess student writing abilities (sessions 2 and 3). I paid close attention to both individual and group strengths and areas of improvement during times of script creation.

Every day of every all three sessions I had students for 60 minutes except for the day of their performance when I had them for 80 minutes. I attempted to maintain validity and reliability by using the same assessment measures for each session for fluency, comprehension, and self-esteem. I also did this by ensuring that the first and

last five days of every session's procedure were exactly the same (except students were able to select the stories they read for the third session). Also, students remained in the same groups throughout all three sessions. Additionally, all the texts that were distributed were at the same reading level (whether that meant the text was independent or slightly instructional for the child since they were arranged heterogeneously) and every text had a similar number of words with a difference of no more than seven words.

Procedure and Instructions:

The procedure and instructions for my research took place over a span of three reader's theater sessions as depicted in Table 2. Every session started by introducing or reviewing the process of reader's theater for the students. Every session also started with an introduction to the text they would be reading that was at their independent or slightly closer to their instructional (depending on whether or not those students were slightly below or at grade level) reading levels in addition to the script based on that text. Each session differed slightly during the second and third days. During session 1, these days were used purely to introduce students to the process of reader's theater. During session 2, the procedure on these days still went through the same process of reader's theater, but instead of giving students the scripts, they were provided and participated in an interactive model for how to write a script based on the text they were reading. Session 3 also went through the same process of reader's theater as the previous two sessions, but was used to actually let students write their own scripts in their groups. The remainder of each session was

exactly the same. Students had two to three days to practice their script and their specific roles with their groups, and in the remaining days the opportunity to perform the script, return back to the original text, retell the text, and reflect on the experience.

Throughout every day of all three sessions, I closely observed students as they worked in their reader’s theater groups through the use of anecdotal notes and video taping. I used this information to appropriately support students throughout the remainder of their time with me as they worked through each session. In order to triangulate my data and track student growth, I specifically assessed growth in fluency through pre and post testing based on Appendices A-C. Also, at the end of each session I had students re-tell the story to evaluate comprehension based on the checklist as referenced in Appendix D, and used the interview questions as referenced in Appendix E to evaluate student self-esteem and reflection.

Table 2

Procedure for Implementation of Research

| Session 1 |
|--|
| <p>Day 1: Group A Meeting</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students received introduction to what reader’s theater is/Discussion was had and questions answered 2. Every child was given the book <u>The Gingerbread Man</u> /Introduced story through a guided reading format; picture walk, short introduction to the text, and discussion of confusing words, text structures or typographical cues. 3. Students read text independently 4. Students read text with partner <p>Specific Observations and Assessment taking place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each student’s first independent read was timed and evaluated based on Appendices A-C. <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p>Day 2: Group B Meeting</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students received introduction to what reader’s theater is/Discussion was had and questions answered |

2. Every child was given the book Goldie Locks and The Three Bears
3. Students were introduced to the story through a guided reading format; picture walk, short introduction to the text, and discussion of confusing words, text structures or typographical cues
4. Students read text independently
5. Students read text with partner.

Specific Observations and Assessment taking place:

- Each student's first independent read was timed and evaluated based on Appendices A-C

Day 3: Groups A & B together

1. Students looked over scripts in the back of their books. We discussed what they knew about scripts and compare and contrast the scripts to the actual text
2. Students and myself worked together to generate a list of ideas over what is important to remember when reading a script (how do you follow it?, what should your voice sound like?, how will we know which student is which character? etc.)
3. Based on ideas generated in step 2 of Day 3's procedure, students read through script independently
4. Students read script with a partner from their respective group
5. Students get into their respective groups, pick roles, and practice a run through of the script twice.

Day 4: Groups A & B together

1. Groups practiced scripts in respective groups for 30 minutes
2. Each group took turns for 30 minutes performing for each other and received positive feedback and suggestions (Discussion was had over what positive and feedback suggestions should sound like from audience and reviewed in remaining sessions)

Day 5: Groups A & B together

1. Groups practiced scripts in respective groups for 30 minutes
2. Each group took turns for 30 minutes performing for each other and received positive feedback and suggestions
3. Groups performed their script for 20 minutes for class, teacher, and parents

Day 6: Groups A & B together

1. Students re-visited the original text and were timed and evaluated with Appendices A-C

Day 7: Groups A & B together

1. One-to-one meetings were conducted that incorporated retelling

(Appendix D) and interview questions (Appendix E)

Session 2

Day 1: Group A Meeting

1. Every child was given the book Little Red Riding Hood (Reviewed methods of reader's theater)
2. Students were introduced story through a guided reading format; picture walk, short introduction to the text, and discussion of confusing words, text structure or typographical cues
3. Students read text independently
4. Students read text with partner

Specific Observations and Assessment that took place:

- Each student's first independent read was timed and evaluated based on Appendices A-C

Day 2: Group B Meeting

1. Every child was given the book The Three Billy Goats Gruff
2. Students were introduced story through a guided reading format; picture walk, short introduction to the text, and discussion of confusing words, text structure or typographical cues
3. Students read text independently
4. Students read text with partner

Specific Observations and Assessment taking place:

- Each student's first independent read was timed and evaluated based on Appendices A-C

Day 3: Group A Meeting

1. Students were introduced to the idea of creating an interactive script; we reviewed scripts from session 1 and generated a list of what things we needed to include in the script we wrote
2. I modeled the process of script writing including the characteristics from step 1 of Day 3 and scaffold the students as they took over the script writing process

Day 4: Group B Meeting

1. Students were introduced to the idea of creating an interactive script; we review scripts from session 1 to generate a list of what things we need to include in the script we will write
2. I model the process of script writing including the characteristics from step 1 of Day 3 and scaffold the students as they took over the script writing process

Day 5: Groups A & B together

1. Scripts that were created interactively were distributed. Students practiced scripts in respective groups for 30 minutes
 2. Each group took turns for 30 minutes performing for each other and received positive feedback and suggestions
-

Day 6: Groups A & B together

1. Groups practiced scripts in respective groups for 30 minutes
 2. Each group took turns for 30 minutes performing for each other and received positive feedback and suggestions
-

Day 7: Groups A & B together

1. Groups practiced scripts in respective groups for 30 minutes
 2. Each group took turns for 30 minutes performing for each other and received positive feedback and suggestions
 3. Performance for 20 minutes for class, teacher, and parents
-

Day 8: Groups A & B together

2. Students re-visited the original text and were timed and evaluated with Appendices A-C
-

Day 9: Groups A & B together

1. One-to-one meetings were conducted that incorporated retelling (Appendix D) and interview questions (Appendix E)

Session 3

Day 1: Group A Meeting

1. Every child was given the book Frog and Toad Are Friends, and skimmed the book to select a short story from it (Reviewed methods of reader's theater)
2. Students then came together and discussed their favorite short story and selected 1 story (This group selected "The Story")
3. Students were then introduced to the story through a guided reading format; picture walk, short introduction to the text, and discussion of confusing words, text structures or typographical cues
4. Students read text independently
5. Students read text with partner

Specific Observations and Assessment taking place:

- Each student's first independent read was timed and evaluated based on Appendices A-C
-

Day 2: Group B Meeting

1. Every child was given the book Days With Frog and Toad and skimmed the book to select a short story from it
2. Students then came together and discussed their favorite short story and

- selected 1 story (This group selected “The Kite”)
3. Students were then introduced story through a guided reading format; picture walk, short introduction to the text, and discussion of confusing words, text structures or typographical cues
 4. Students read text independently
 5. Students read text with partner

Specific Observations and Assessment taking place:

- Each student’s first independent read was timed and evaluated based on Appendices A-C

Day 3: Groups A & B together

1. Formats for student created scripts were distributed (Appendix F) (Script format was put together based on what students thought were important during interactive script creation in session 2)
2. Formats for student created scripts were modeled
3. Students worked on script creation in respective groups

Day 4: Groups A & B together

1. Students worked in groups on script creation

Day 5: Groups A & B together

1. Copies of scripts that were created by each group were distributed. Students practiced scripts in respective groups for 30 minutes
2. Each group took turns for 30 minutes performing for each other and received positive feedback and suggestions

Day 6: Groups A & B together

1. Groups practiced scripts in respective groups for 30 minutes
2. Each group took turns for 30 minutes performing for each other and received positive feedback and suggestions

Day 7: Groups A & B together

1. Groups practiced scripts in respective groups for 30 minutes
2. Each group took turns for 30 minutes performing for each other and received positive feedback and suggestions
3. Performance for 20 minutes for class, teacher, and parents

Day 8: Groups A & B together

1. Students re-visit the original text and are timed and evaluated with Appendices A-C

Day 9: Groups A & B together

1. One-to-one meetings were conducted that incorporated retelling (Appendix D) and interview questions (Appendix E)

Data Analysis

The greater part of the data I collected was of qualitative form because it was either done through rating scales (Appendices B and C), a rubric (Appendix D), or through interview questions (Appendix E). This meant information collected was of a very subjective nature. The data I collected that was quantitative instead of qualitative was the fluency reading rate. This was of completely quantitative nature due to the fact that all of the information: words correct, was based on how many words the child said correctly as well as how many seconds it took.

When reviewing my data, I realized I needed to organize it in a way that would make it easy to analyze and compare. I decided the best way to do this was in table form. The data I collected was already either given a numerical representation (fluency and comprehension data) or had to be discussed totally in a collective format (self-esteem data). The additional data I collected through videotaping and anecdotal records also needed to be discussed more collectively and the majority of the information was used as supporting evidence in chapter five. Once my fluency and comprehension data was put into chart form, it was easy to compare first and second trial reads. The self-esteem data and data collected from videotaping and anecdotal notes had to be summarized. Once summarized, it was easier to look at each individual student summary data and draw conclusions.

Once again, triangulation of my data was done through the separate tools I used to analyze fluency, comprehension and self-esteem as already mentioned, as well as through videotaping and anecdotal note taking.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Results for what happened when the eight second grade struggling readers and writers produced their own scripted stories and the effects on their reading and writing abilities are presented in the main focus areas as discussed throughout the previous chapters; fluency, comprehension, and self-esteem. Fluency was the only focus area that was evaluated quantitatively (reading rate based on correct words per minute, Appendix A) in addition to qualitatively (fluency scales, Appendices B and C). Although these are two different types of information, all of the fluency data was able to be equated to specific number results and therefore organized into tables for review. Comprehension results from the retelling rubric (Appendix D) were also organized into table form, though purely qualitative data. The results from the one-to-one reflective interviews (Appendix E) for self-esteem and self-reflection are simply presented through the description of each child's answers. The discussion of results and growth in writing will be done in the following chapter. The evaluation of writing growth was done through the use of videotaping and anecdotal record taking and through analyzing completed scripts and therefore the data gathered is of a very subjective nature.

Fluency

Reading Rates. Comparisons were made of reading rate based on words correct per minute during the two reading trials of the text (in regular form, not script form) assigned to each group in each session. Therefore, the first reading trial of a

text was done at the beginning of a session and the last reading trial of a text was done at the end of the session. In Tables 3 and 4, each child's reading rate is depicted by session and then by reading trial (1st or 2nd). These trials were all referenced in comparison to student norm reading levels in the second column of Table 3 and Table 4 as determined by the fluency norms per grade level in Appendix A. In every table, the names of each student are highlighted in either orange or purple. If their names are in orange, they were the four students whose reading and writing abilities were slightly below grade level at the beginning of the study. If their names are in purple, they were the four students who were right at grade level at the beginning of the study.

All four of the students highlighted in orange were able to achieve a reading rate that was either at 60 WCPM or slightly above for the first trial readings during every session. Additionally, all four of the students were also able to increase their rates during the second trials of every session. The student highlighted in orange increased an average of 5.5 words for the first session, 7.25 words for the second session, and 8.5 words for the third session.

All four of the students highlighted in purple were also able to achieve a reading rate that was either at 78 WCPM or slightly above for the first trial readings during every session. As well as the orange group, students were able to increase their rates during the second trials of every session. The students highlighted in purple increased an average of 4.5 the first session, 8.5 the second session and 9.75 the third session.

Table 3

Comparison of Group A's Reading Rates

| Group A | Norms (Appendix A) Based on Student Reading Levels (Figure 1) for 2 nd Grade Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) | Session 1: <u>Little Red Riding Hood</u> | | Session 2: <u>Goldilocks and The Three Bears</u> | | Session 3: <u>Frog and Toad Are Friends: "The Story"</u> | |
|---------|---|--|-----------------|--|-----------------|--|-----------------|
| | | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd |
| Caitlyn | 60 | 62 | 68 | 62 | 69 | 64 | 73 |
| Kristy | 60 | 63 | 69 | 63 | 69 | 65 | 74 |
| Kenny | 78 | 79 | 84 | 78 | 88 | 79 | 87 |
| Cooper | 78 | 81 | 85 | 82 | 89 | 85 | 93 |

Table 4

Comparison of Group B's Reading Rates

| Group B | Norms (Appendix A) Based on Student Reading Levels (Figure 1) for 2 nd Grade Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) | Session 1: <u>The Gingerbread Man</u> | | Session 2: <u>The Three Billy-Goats Gruff</u> | | Session 3: <u>Days with Frog and Toad: "The Kite"</u> | |
|---------|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| | | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd |
| Bailee | 60 | 65 | 69 | 66 | 75 | 66 | 72 |
| James | 60 | 60 | 66 | 61 | 68 | 62 | 72 |
| Jacob | 78 | 79 | 81 | 80 | 89 | 80 | 92 |
| Autumn | 78 | 79 | 83 | 81 | 89 | 80 | 91 |

Fluency Scales. As with the reading rate comparisons, the fluency scales ratings were compared based on the first and second reading trials that took place each session. The comparison of the fluency scales ratings are depicted in Table 5 for Group A, and Table 6 for Group B. In each of these tables the “Adapted Version of

NAEP's Oral Reading Fluency Scale" or Appendix B's ratings are represented with one numerical amount per reading trial and evaluate the student's reading fluency overall. The "Multidimensional Fluency Scale" or Appendix C's ratings are broken down into specific trait of fluency that the scale evaluated and then one numerical score is assigned per trial to that specific trait.

In reference to the "Adapted" scale, all of the eight students proved to be generally fluent during the first reading trials in all sessions and were able to receive the highest rating of a "4" in the second reading trials of every session. In the "Multidimensional" scale, students were average or above in the first trial reading of every session in accuracy, phrasing, and smoothness. In the second trial reading for these three traits, they were able to maintain or improve scores, all achieving a "4." The main area of improvement in regards to this scale was in students' pace when reading fluently. Many started out a bit below average, scoring a "2" but again were able to increase their score to a "4" by each of their second trial readings. In comparison of both scales ratings (the "Multidimensional" scale averaged), students rated very closely not only in comparison of each student's individual scale ratings, but also in comparison to each other whether below or at grade level.

Table 5

Comparison of Group A's Fluency Scales Ratings

| Group A Session 1 <u>Little Red Riding Hood</u> | Adapted Version of NAEP's Oral Reading Fluency Scale (Appendix B) | | Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Appendix C) | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | | Accuracy | | Phrasing | | Smoothness | | Pace | |
| | | | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd |
| Caitlyn | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Kristy | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Kenny | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Cooper | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Group A Session 2 <u>Goldilocks and The Three Bears</u> | Adapted Version of NAEP's Oral Reading Fluency Scale (Appendix B) | | Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Appendix C) | | | | | | | |
| | | | Accuracy | | Phrasing | | Smoothness | | Pace | |
| | | | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd |
| Caitlyn | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Kristy | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Kenny | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Cooper | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Group A Session 3 <u>Frog and Toad Are Friends: "The Story"</u> | Adapted Version of NAEP's Oral Reading Fluency Scale (Appendix B) | | Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Appendix C) | | | | | | | |
| | | | Accuracy | | Phrasing | | Smoothness | | Pace | |
| | | | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd |
| Caitlyn | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Kristy | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Kenny | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Cooper | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |

Table 6

Comparison of Group B's Fluency Scales Ratings

| Group B Session 1 <u>The Gingerbread Man</u> | Adapted Version of NAEP's Oral Reading Fluency Scale (Appendix B) 1 st 2 nd | | Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Appendix C) | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | | Accuracy | | Phrasing | | Smoothness | | Pace | |
| | | | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd |
| Bailee | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| James | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Jacob | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Autumn | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Group B Session 2 <u>The Three Billy-Goats Gruff</u> | Adapted Version of NAEP's Oral Reading Fluency Scale (Appendix B) 1 st 2 nd | | Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Appendix C) | | | | | | | |
| | | | Accuracy | | Phrasing | | Smoothness | | Pace | |
| | | | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd |
| Bailee | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| James | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Jacob | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Autumn | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Group B Session 3 <u>Days with Frog and Toad: "The Kite"</u> | Adapted Version of NAEP's Oral Reading Fluency Scale (Appendix B) 1 st 2 nd | | Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Appendix C) | | | | | | | |
| | | | Accuracy | | Phrasing | | Smoothness | | Pace | |
| | | | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd | 1 st | 2 nd |
| Bailee | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| James | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Jacob | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Autumn | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 |

Comprehension

Evaluation of retelling rubric scores as depicted in Tables 7 and 8 were made through comparison of all three student scores. A retelling of each story read was done at the end of each session. The retelling scores show in Tables 7 and 8 are made up of six different retelling items that could receive up to two points if exact details

were provided (see Appendix D). The retelling items students struggled with the most were retelling in sequence and giving an introduction to their retelling. Overall, two of the students increased their retelling score every single session. The remaining students increased during the second session then remained the same in the third, or, remained the same for the first two sessions and increased during the third.

Table 7

Group A Comparison of Retelling Rubric Scores

| Group A <i>Retelling Rubric Scores</i> (Each Score is out of 12 points) | Session 1: <u>Little Red Riding Hood</u> | Session 2: <u>Goldilocks and The Three Bears</u> | Session 3: <u>Frog and Toad Are Friends:</u> “The Story” |
|--|--|--|---|
| Caitlyn | 9 | 10 | 12 |
| Kristy | 10 | 10 | 11 |
| Kenny | 9 | 12 | 12 |
| Cooper | 12 | 11 | 12 |

Table 8

Group B Comparison of Retelling Rubric Scores

| Group B <i>Retelling Rubric Scores</i> (Each Score is out of 12 points) | Session 1: <u>The Gingerbread Man</u> | Session 2: <u>The Three Billy-Goats Gruff</u> | Session 3: <u>Days with Frog and Toad:</u> “The Kite” |
|--|---|---|--|
| Bailee | 11 | 12 | 12 |
| James | 9 | 10 | 12 |
| Jacob | 11 | 12 | 12 |
| Autumn | 11 | 12 | 12 |

Self-Esteem and Self-Reflection

The information collected for this session was through one-to-one reflective interviews that were completed at the end of every session. The questions for these interviews can be referenced in Appendix E. In order to organize this information in the most effective manner, each student will be addressed individually. The standard interview questions asked for sessions 1-3 will be addressed by number and the addition of the specific questions for sessions 2 and 3 discussed as a whole.

Caitlyn. Caitlyn's interview for session 1 revolved very much around her saying she felt "shy" during her initial readings of both the story in regular text form and then the story in script form (questions 1 and 2). When I asked her to tell me what she meant by "shy," she said that she felt "nervous and quiet." For questions 3 and 4, she stated that she liked working with her classmates practicing the script and was excited to perform because she thought she did a "perfect" job using the voices of the mother and grandmother in Little Red Riding Hood. When she was asked to reflect on how she thought she did during the actual performance and where she needed to improve (questions 5 and 6), she said she thought she did "perfect, but would use a louder voice next time."

Caitlyn's second interview went exactly the same, except that she thought she did a "perfect" job pretending to be Goldilocks, especially when "she was running away really fast" (question 5). During this session, I added onto the questions about interactively created the script to the questions I asked in the original session (this

happened for every student). Caitlin again stated she enjoyed working with her classmates especially when she was the one writing.

In Caitlyn's third interview, she once again stated she felt "shy" for questions 1-2 because it was her "first time" (reading the text and script). Once again for question 3, she was happy to work with her group mates and said it felt "good." She changed her answer slightly for question 4 and said she "felt nervous" performing for the audience. When I asked her why, she said it was because she was sharing her writing, but she said she was also excited, "because everyone loves the way I write." In question 6, she once again felt that if she could improve anything, it would be reading louder. During this session, I added the questions that pertained to writing scripts produced independently (session 3 addition questions). Caitlin stated she was excited to write the script with her group. She said she was excited because "didn't used to like the people in her group, but now its different." When I asked her what was different, she said "we work well together." Caitlyn also stated she was "proud" when her group was the first to finish their script and was "very very proud" to perform it with her group.

Kristy. Kristy stated she felt "happy" reading the book for the first time during session 1. She felt this way because "she loves the book Little Red Riding Hood!" Kristy answered that she was "excited" for questions 2-3, but could not tell me why. When I asked her to try again, she became flustered and asked if we could move on. She stated for questions 5 and 6 that she did a "great job" when she performed the

script with her group because “she sounded just like a sly old fox.” She thought she did not need to improve but “would try and read louder next time.”

Kristy was more responsive for her second interview. She said she was excited about questions 1 through 4. She was excited and said she “can’t wait to read the new book and the new script. She was also excited because she “loves her group she is with, even though they talk too much” and “loves performing with her group.” This time for question 5 she felt that she was a perfect baby bear because she was small and spoke “really soft and quiet.” She said for next time she needs to remember to “keep reading like my character.” For the additional session 2 questions, she said that she “loved writing in the colored marker” and “liked helping her group figure out who should write next.”

In Kristy’s third interview, she was again excited about questions 1-4. She was excited in 1-2 because “she loves the books we read together” and “loves scripts.” She was excited in 3-4 because “she is always happy,” and “loves practicing and performing.” She said for questions 5 and 6 that she felt “good” performing because she “had a good time.” She decided that for next time, she should not “wobble” because “wobbling is not good when you read.” For the addition of the session 3 questions, Kristy felt “excited” as well. She said “she love writing and loves working with her group.” She also said she “loved writing her part as Frog.”

Kenny- In Kenny’s first interview he stated that he felt “pretty good,” about himself as a reader when reading the book in regular text form and in script form for questions 1 and 2. He said he felt this way because “it was really fun” and that he felt

like “a college student reading to a kindergartner.” Kenny stated for question 3 that he enjoyed working with his group because he “felt like he was in charge because he was the narrator.” He was hesitant when answering question 4 about how he felt to perform the script and when I re-worded the question for him he said, “I knew all the words, but I sunk in my chair so I don’t think anyone heard me.” For questions 5 and 6, Kenny continued to be hesitant and would not answer question 5, but said for 6 that he would have “better posture” and he would “say his words nice and loud.”

Kenny’s second interview he said he felt “very good,” about himself as a reader for both questions 1 and 2. His reasoning was the same in that “he enjoys reading.” For questions 3 and 4, he was “very happy” to work with his group and enjoyed performing more this time stating “I read loud and used my voice to fill the room.” For questions 5-6 he felt he did a “great job” and had no need for improvement, but said “I will keep thinking about it.” For the addition of the specific session 2 questions, he said that he enjoyed writing with his classmates, but stated “I got frustrated sometimes.” When I asked him why, he said “everyone needs to listen better when I am writing.”

Kenny’s third interview went exactly the same for questions 1-4. For questions 5-6, he felt he read his part as the robins well, and said he “felt French” when he performed and said “because of my accent.” He said for next time he needed to think of another accent to use for his character when he performs. For the addition of the specific session 3 questions, Kenny stated “I liked writing with my group but I like writing better on my own.” He also stated “I was proud” when he completed this

script and the same answer for performing it. When I continued to question him and ask him why, he said “We worked really hard. When you work really hard you should share your work.”

Cooper. In Cooper’s first interview, he said for questions 1 and 2 that “I was happy because I like to read books and plays.” For questions 3 and 4 he said he felt “very smart.” When I asked him what he meant by very smart, he said “I sound really good when I am reading and so do my group members.” When asked questions 5 and 6, he stated that he “read really good, but forgot one part” His improvement for next time was to “pay better attention and not miss my part again.”

During Cooper’s second interview, he answered he was “very excited” for questions 1 and 2 and once again similarly stated “I love reading books and scripts.” He answered questions 3 and 4 the same. He said for question 5 that “I did a good job paying attention when I read with my group” and that for next time (question 6) he would try and speak “louder and clearer.” For the addition of session 2 questions, Cooper stated that “I was very happy to write with everyone, I like working together.” He also stated that he liked having my help.

For the third interview, Cooper stated for questions 1 and 2 that he was “excited” again because he likes to read. He said for questions 3-4 that he felt “used to it” because “we have practiced in our groups before and it was easy.” For questions 5-6 he said he felt “shy” when performing but thought he had good “sound” when he was reading. For the addition of session 3 questions, Cooper stated “I wasn’t sure about writing with my group, but we got better after we practiced a couple

times.” He stated that “I liked performing for everyone, it was fun to be Toad. I love reading Frog and Toad books.

Bailee. For question 1, Bailey stated “I was scared when I first read it. I was happy I was the horse.” Her answer for question 2 was that “I felt lonely, but it was fun.” He reasoning for both questions was that she was “nervous.” For questions 3-4, she stated “I liked working with my group” and “I thought my group did a great job, everyone clapped at the end.” When asked questions 5 and 6, Bailee stated “I did okay when I performed. I need to talk louder next time so everyone can hear my words.”

Bailee’s second interview she said for questions 1 and 2 “I was ready to read because I had practice doing it before.” For questions 3 and 4, she stated that she “loved working with her group again, even though they got loud sometimes.” She also stated that “performing was more fun this time, I had practice from before.” For questions 5 and 6, Bailee said “I was a good narrator” and that for next time she would improve by “trying a new character and reading loud like I did when I was a narrator.” For the addition of session 2 questions, Bailee said, “I liked writing on the board and sharing markers with my group.” She said that “it was fun writing with my group.” She also stated that “she loved performing another script.”

In Bailee’s third interview, she answered question 1 stating that she “felt shocked” because she had “never read Frog and Toad before.” For question 2 she said she felt “happy” to be reading the script because she “loves scripts.” She answered questions 3 and 4 by stating that she was “proud” of herself and “is getting

good at performing.” When answering questions 5 and 6, she said “I am good at performing now and reading my script lines” and felt she had no need for improvement. For the addition of session 3 questions, Bailee said “it was hard to write the script in my group, I couldn’t focus.” When I asked her why she could not focus, she said “it was hard to keep track of what was going on.” She said she was “proud” when her group completed and performed their script because “we worked really hard” and said that she “loves Frog and Toad.”

James. In James’ first interview, he said for question 1 that “I was scared to read the book.” For question 2 when reading the script he said he was “proud” because he had already read the book and wasn’t scared anymore.” For questions 3 and 4, he said he liked working with his group mates, but was “scared to perform.” He said he was scared because “I got nervous when I talked in front of everyone.” When answering questions 5 and 6, he said that he thought he did a good job “following the script” and that for next time he stated “I will try and be less nervous. I think I need to practice more too.”

James answered the same for questions 1 through 3. He said for question 4 that “he wasn’t scared when he performed this time,” also stating that it “helped to take my script home and practice with my mom.” For questions 5-6, he said that he thought he read “much better” this time and that for next time he would “read the book more before the script.” For the addition of session 2 questions, James said he “liked writing with everyone” but that it was hard to follow along sometimes. He said “I am excited about writing a script with my group next time.”

During the third interview, James said for question 1 and 2 that he said “I was very happy because I wanted to do another play and we did.” For questions 3 and 4, he said he liked practicing with his group mates and when he performed, he said “I felt good, I was not nervous this time.” When he answered question 5 he said “I had my script down and used my loud voice and in question 6 said next time he wanted to get more into character, using his “character’s voice.” For the addition of session 3 questions, he stated that he “loves writing” and thought it was “so fun to write with everyone.” He also stated he thought it was “different” to perform the script that he had written with his group, when asked why he said, “because it was all our words.”

Jacob. For questions 1 and 2, Jacob said “I felt weird but happy, new stories always make me feel this way.” When answering questions 3 and 4, Jacob said “I liked practicing so I could hear everyone say their parts” and that “it was fun performing, but I was nervous.” For questions 5 and 6, Jacob said that for next time, he would “I read good, but next time I need to have better posture, you read better when you have better posture.”

For the second interview, Jacob answered exactly the same for questions 1 through 4. When answering question 5 this time, he said that he thought he “read nice and loud, everyone could hear what I had to say.” For question 6 he said that for next time he needed to do the same. When asked the session 2 questions, Jacob said he wasn’t sure how he felt about writing the script together. He stated, “I usually write by myself, it was weird writing with my group and the teacher.”

Once again, Jacob answered exactly the same for questions 1 through 4. For questions 5 and 6 he also said the same. When I asked him if he could think of something different to improve on, he told me that “it is okay to want to keep working on the same thing, I still need to.” For the addition of session 3 questions, Jacob said the same thing as he did during the session 2 questions that were added, except that he only mentioned his group and not the teacher.

Autumn. Autumn answered question 1 stating “I felt weird because I never read the book.” For question 2 she said she said, “I felt better because I just read the book.” Autumn answered questions 3 and 4 stating “I liked working with my group, it was fun” and “I liked performing, even though I don’t think it sounded as good as our practice.” When answering questions 5 and 6, Autumn said “I read loud so everyone could hear my words” and said for next time that she would “do the same.”

During the second interview, Autumn answered exactly the same for question 1-4. She stated for question 5 that “I did a good job being the troll, I really sounded like a troll would have sounded.” For question 6 she said “I will be more careful to wait for my group members to take their turns reading.” For the addition of session 2 questions, Autumn said she enjoyed working with her group members and that “it was interesting making the script” and that “she had never thought about trying to write a script before.”

For the last interview, Autumn answered that she was “excited” about reading the book because it was her first time. She said for question 2 that she felt “good” reading the script, stating “because we made the script.” For questions 3 she thought

practicing was “fun and easy” because “we worked hard to write the script and everyone already knew their parts.” For question 4 she said she felt happy, stating “because I practiced hard.” For question 5 she said “I felt good because I like reading.” Autumn answered question 6 stating that for next time she needed to use more expression so she would “sound more like the character.” For the addition of session 3 questions, Autumn said, “I liked writing the script with my group mates, but sometimes it was hard to make sure everyone was doing their job.” She said she was “happy” when they finished and that “this script was the easiest to perform because we wrote it.”

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The purpose of my research was to find out what happened when struggling readers and writers read and produced their own scripted stories and specifically, what happened to the reading and writing abilities of these students. As illustrated in the results chapter, students increased their skills in all of the main focus areas; fluency, comprehension, and self-esteem. In direct relation to reading, students were able to increase their fluency reading rates during every session and maintained or improved scores in accuracy, phrasing, smoothness, and especially pace where they made their greatest gains. In comprehension, two students made noticeable improvement each session, increasing their scores every trial. The remaining students increased their comprehension scores specifically during either the second or third session trials. Finally, the self-reflective interviews conducted to identify changes in self-esteem resulted in a gradual increase in confidence in reading and writing abilities, pride in completed written work, and awareness of strengths and needs for improvement in reading and writing as well as social interaction and group work abilities.

Fluency. Improvements in reading as related to fluency, especially in the area of reading pace can be attributed to the large number of re-readings students did of both the text and scripts every session. Repeated reading has proven to result in such benefits as researched in chapter two where it is stated that when students read and practice text at their independent or instructional levels, they are able to increase reading rate and “devote more attention to meaning and the interpretation of meaning

through phrasing and expressiveness” (Martinez et al., 1998, p.327). With this general knowledge and the results of increased fluency reading rates and scales scores of these students in every session, it is important to recognize that these rates continued to increase as students took over the writing component of the scripts read. This is evidenced in chapter two as well where it is stated that a benefit of having students write their own script is that they are able to read the stories over in their own hand-writing and in their own words. This is important because the language comes from the student and is based on their own schema, making the text they create easier to read because their “reading and writing are connected, because students [were] actively involved in reading what they [had] written” (Tompkins, 2003, p. 123)

Comprehension. Progress in comprehension can also be attributed to repeated reading of text and specifically scripts. As addressed in chapter two, students were more engaged and could more easily identify story elements through the use of drama whether they were the audience or the performers. Seeing and hearing a story dramatized promotes the recall of the story’s sequence, details and vocabulary (Rasinski, 1998). As with fluency, the increase in comprehension may also have improved due to the integration of student created scripts. This may explain the increase in comprehension (retelling scores) during either the second or third session of the procedure for the majority of students.

Self-Esteem. The changes in self-esteem as gleaned from the self-reflective interviews can be attributed to various factors. Although not directly stated by

students, the anecdotal notes and videotaping revealed an increase in overall confidence for all students as their abilities to read fluently and retell to demonstrate comprehension improved. This was evident in their facial expressions, body language, and interaction with their peers during practice sessions and assessment trials. This confidence was especially apparent during the last session when students were reading their own writing. There was a certain ease among to students as they read the scripts they created with their groups. It seemed as though it took less time for students to learn and practice their parts in their scripts and even less time for students to ensure the script was read with a cohesive flow as they practiced performing in front of the other group to receive feedback. The feedback students received plus what appeared to be an increase in self-awareness of strengths and needs for improvement (as evidenced in the interview results) also demonstrated a greater confidence and ownership of student work (both read and written). This self-awareness was also evident from anecdotal notes and by analyzing the videotape as social interaction and group work became unified each day of each session as students identified their specific niche. This improvement in self-esteem can be referenced back to chapter two during the specific correlation made to the relevance of social learning opportunities and emotional connectedness and their influence on motivation and self-reflection (Lyons, 2003).

Writing. The addition of interactive and independent group writing to the process of reader's theater proved to at least support if not enhance the process of reader's theater. As evidenced in the interview results section, students were excited

to both write their own scripts and specifically read their own scripts. As observed through anecdotal notes and videotape, students appeared to work together more cohesively during each session, especially as the act of writing was introduced. The act of writing caused students to have to be more attentive to their group role to make sure they were completing their own job responsibilities; as well support and ensuring the other students were maintaining their roles as well. This was an important aspect of these students work as they were going through each reader's theater session because they were used to doing high amounts of independent work in their classroom and very low levels of group work.

Another major benefit that was evident from the results of this research was the pride students took in their work, especially their writing and the completion of the script they were working on with their group. Students took care to ensure their scripts were organized appropriately and were very legible (see script samples in Appendices F and G). This can be attributed to several factors. One is that students were becoming increasingly more comfortable with the process of writing they were going through due to the fact that they had text to reference as a model or example. As discussed in chapter two, this "variable" form of scaffolding made it easier for these struggling writers to write and complete the task at hand. It also gave students the opportunity to use that text as little or as much as they wanted and let them be creative in determining factors such as scripts lines to character roles (Flynn, 2004).

Conclusion

For educators, this research reconfirms the strengths of reader's theater at improving fluency and comprehension skills in struggling readers when rereading text that is both provided for them or that they have written themselves. This research also supports the integration of written scripts to assist struggling writers as they benefit from the ability to view professionally written text as a model for with which to write their own scripted text. Additionally, this research confirms the use of reader's theater to increase self-esteem as students see themselves becoming successful readers, and in this case, writers. Although the integration of student created scripts has not been heavily researched or applied, it is necessary for educators to take this body of research and consider it as a starting point. It can be used to build a foundation for further research to improve upon an already successful means of support for struggling readers; reader's theater, and integrate writing to support struggling writers as well.

Limitations

The researcher recognizes this study is not representative of all second grade students who are struggling readers and writers nor is it representative of all struggling readers and writers in all elementary school grades. The researcher also recognizes that this was done under a time constraint and that additional trials for students to complete the three procedures as outlined in each session of the research conducted in this study would have provided a greater means for comparison and a stronger group of results.

Since the researcher is a graduate student, she has formulated her own assumptions regarding the integration of student created scripts into the reader's theater process. These assumptions are based on textbook learning, opinions of mentor teachers, professors and through her own observations. The research believes that further investigation of the integration of writing into reader's theater to support both struggling readers and writers is necessary. Future research might explore the following topics:

- Researching the application of this method with struggling reader's of all elementary school grades
- Completing research with different test groups that consists of multiple sessions of reader's theater applied in its original format, then completing multiple sessions of reader's theater with the integration of script writing as a means of comparison
- Using student created text to create and perform reader's theater
- Using a variety of genres as models from which students may use to write their own scripts for reader's theater

Lastly, since this study only researched short-term effects of this method of supporting struggling readers and writers, long term effects of this type of support might also yield useful results.

References

- Appleby, E. (1992). *The three billy-goats gruff*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.
- Buzard, B., Jarosz, D., Lato, K., & Zimmerman, L. (2001). *Motivating the reluctant reader*. Illinois: Saint Xavier University.
- Deasy, R.J. (Ed.). (2002). *Critical links: Learning in the arts and student academic and social development*. Washington DC: Department of Education.
- Developmental Reading Assessment, Second Edition. (2004). Retrieved July 9, 2007, from http://plgcatalog.pearson.com/program_multiple.cfm?site_id=2&discipline_id=807&subarea_id=973&program_id=23661
- expression. (n.d.). *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)*. Retrieved July 9, 2007, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/expression>
- Dillingham, B. (2005). Teaching tips: Performance literacy. *The Reading Teacher*, 59, 72-75.
- Flippo, R.F. (2003). *Assessing readers: Qualitative diagnosis and instruction*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Flynn, R.M. (2004). Curriculum-based readers theatre: Setting the stage for reading and retention. *The Reading Teacher*, 58, 360-365.
- Fountas, G.S. & Pinnell, I.C. (2006). *Teaching for comprehending and fluency: Thinking, talking, and writing about reading, k-8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Hoyt, L. (1999). *Revisit, reflect, retelling: Strategies for improving reading Comprehension*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Lobel, A. (1979). *Days with frog and toad*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers Inc.

Lobel, A. (1970). *Frog and toad are friends*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers Inc.

Lyons, C.A. (2003). *Teaching struggling readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Martinez, M., Roser, N.L., & Strecker, S. (1998). I never thought I could be a star: A readers theatre ticket to fluency. *The Reading Teacher*, 52, 326-334.

McCafferty, C. (2001). *The gingerbread man*. San Francisco, CA: Brighter Child.

Opitz, M.F., & Rasinski, T.V. (1998). *Good-bye round robin: 25 effective oral reading strategies*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ransom, C. (2001). *Goldilocks and the three bears*. San Francisco, CA: Brighter Child.

Ransom, C. (2001). *Little red riding hood*. San Francisco, CA: Brighter Child.

Rasinski, T.V. (2003). *The fluent reader*. New York, NY: Scholastic Professional Books.

Tompkins, Gail E. (2003). *Literacy for the 21st century*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Appendix A

Oral Reading Rate Formula:

1. Time entire reading passage
2. Convert to total seconds
3. Apply formula $\frac{\text{total correct words}}{\text{total seconds}} \times 60 = \text{WCPM}$

Adapted from:

Rasinski, T.V. (2003). *The fluent reader*. New York, NY: Scholastic Professional Books, 83.

Student Fluency Norms Based on Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM)

| Grade | Fall | Winter | Spring |
|-------|------|--------|---------|
| 1 | - | - | 60 WCPM |
| 2 | 53 | 78 | 94 |
| 3 | 79 | 93 | 114 |
| 4 | 99 | 112 | 118 |
| 5 | 105 | 118 | 128 |
| 6 | 115 | 132 | 145 |
| 7 | 147 | 158 | 167 |
| 8 | 156 | 167 | 171 |

Re-creation based on

Rasinski, T.V. (2003). *The fluent reader*. New York, NY: Scholastic Professional Books, Figure 8.6.

Appendix B

Adapted Version of NAEP's* Oral Reading Fluency Scale

Level 1: Reads primarily in a word-by-word fashion. Occasionally two-word and three-word phrases may occur, but these are infrequent. Author's meaningful syntax is generally not preserved. Passage is read without expression or intonation. Reading seems labored and difficult.

Level 2: Reads primarily in two-word phrases with occasional three- or four- word phrases. Some word-by-word reading may be present. Word groupings may be awkward and unrelated to the larger context of the sentence or passage. Passage is read with little or inappropriate expression or intonation.

Level 3: Reads primarily in three- or four- word phrases. Some smaller phrases may be present. Most of the phrasing is appropriate and preserves the author's syntax. Some of the text is read with appropriate expression and intonation.

Level 4: Reads primarily in longer, meaningful phrases. Although some regressions, repetitions, and deviations from the text may be present, these do not appear to detract from the overall structure or meaning of the passage. The reading preserves the author's syntax. Most of the text is read with appropriate expression and intonation. A sense of ease is present in the reader's oral presentation.

Students should be asked to read passages at and below their assigned grade placement.

Ratings of 3 and 4 indicate fluent reading. Ratings of 1 and 2 indicate that the student has still not achieved a minimal level of fluency for the grade level at which the passage is written.

**NAEP is an acronym for National Assessment of Educational Progress, an ongoing program sponsored by the United States Department of Education, that periodically evaluates students; educational achievement in a variety of curricular areas, including reading.*

Re-creation based on:

Rasinski, T.V. (2003). *The fluent reader*. New York, NY: Scholastic Professional Books, Figure 8.7.

Appendix C

Multidimensional Fluency Scale

Use the following subscales to rate reader fluency on the four dimensions of accuracy, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Scores will range from 4-16. Scores of 9 and above indicate that fluency has been achieved for the grade level of the passage read. Scores of below 8 indicate that fluency may be a concern.

A. Accuracy

1. Word recognition accuracy is poor: generally below 85%. Reader clearly struggles in decoding words. Makes multiple decoding attempts for many words, usually without success.
2. Word Recognition accuracy is marginal: 86%-90%. Reader struggles on many words. Many unsuccessful attempts at self-correction.
3. Word recognition accuracy is good: 91%-95%. Self-corrects successfully.
4. Word recognition accuracy is excellent: 96%. Self-corrections are few but successful as nearly all words are read correctly on initial attempt.

B. Phrasing

1. Monotonic, with little sense of phrase boundaries, frequent word-by-word reading; usually exhibits improper stress and intonation that fail to mark ends of sentences and clauses.
2. Frequent two- and three-word phrases giving the impression of choppy reading; lacks appropriate stress and intonation that mark ends of sentences and clauses.
3. Mixture of run-ons, mid-sentence pauses for breath, and possibly some choppiness; reasonable stress and intonation.
4. Generally well phrased; mostly in phrase, clause, and sentence unites; with adequate attention to expression.

C. Smoothness

1. Frequent extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound-outs, repetitions, and/or multiple attempts.
2. Several “rough spots” in text where extended pauses, hesitations, etc. are more frequent and disruptive.
3. Occasional breaks in smoothness cause by difficulties with specific words and/or structures.
4. Generally smooth reading with minimal breaks, but word and structure difficulties are resolved quickly, usually through self-correction.

D. Pace

1. Slow and laborious.
2. Moderately slow (or overly and inappropriately fast).
3. Uneven mixture of fast and slow reading.
4. Consistently conversational and appropriate.

Re-creation based on:

Rasinski, T.V. (2003). *The fluent reader*. New York, NY: Scholastic Professional Books, Figure 8.8.

Retelling Rubric- Reader's Theater

Student Name _____

Rating Scale for Rubric:

- 0= No Details Provided
- 1= Partial Details Provided
- 2= Exact Details Provided

Title of Book and Session #

| Retelling Items | One | Two | Three |
|---|-----|-----|-------|
| <u>Opening:</u> -Starts with introduction to text | | | |
| <u>Setting:</u> -Includes when and where the story happened | | | |
| <u>Characters:</u> -Provides information about main characters and their motivations | | | |
| <u>Problem:</u> -States the problem of the story | | | |
| <u>Solution:</u> -States how problem was solved -Includes how story ended | | | |
| Retelling was done in sequence | | | |

Adapted from
 Hoyt, L. (1999). *Revisit, reflect, retelling: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.*
 Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Interview Questions

For each short story/script introduced (All sessions)

1. How did you feel about yourself as a reader when you first read the book? Why?
2. How did you feel about yourself as a reader when you first read the script? Why?
3. How did you feel after practicing it with a partner or in a group? Why?
4. How did you feel when you performed the script in front of an audience? Why?
5. What did you think you did well when you read your script during the performance? Why?
6. What do you think you need to do to improve for next time? Why?

For scripts produced interactively (Just session 2)

How did you feel about learning how to create a script for the story you read? Why?

How did you feel about making the script with Ms. Speer and the other students in your group? Why?

For scripts produced independently (Just session 3)

How did you feel when you first started writing your script with your group? **Why?**

How did you feel when you completed your script with your group? **Why?**

How did it feel to perform your script with your group? **Why?**

Script 1, Title Page



Frog and Toad Reader's Theater



Name of Frog and Toad book:

Days with Frog and Toad

Name of short story from the book:

The kite

Names of Group Members:

1. Copper

2. Lillian

3. Kristy

4. Kenny

Characters:

| Character Name | Actor (Student Name) | Color |
|----------------|----------------------|------------|
| Frog | Kristy | yellow |
| Toad | Copper | light blue |
| narrator | Lillian | red |
| robins | Kenny | orange |



Frog and Toad



Script 1, page 1



Script Format

Narrator

(Character's name)

Frog and Toad went
out to fly a kite. They
went to a large meadow
where the wind
was strong.

(Use these lines to write what the character will be saying)

Frog

(Character's name)

Our kite will fly
up and up. It will fly all
the way up to the top
of the sky. Toad

(Use these lines to write what the character will be saying)



Toad

(Character's name)

I will hold the ball of string
you hold the kite and run.

(Use these lines to write what the character will be saying)

Narrator

(Character's name)

Toad ran across the
meadow. He ran as fast as
his short legs could carry
him. The kite went up
in the air. It fell to
the ground with a bump.

(Use these lines to write what the character will be saying)

Toad heard laughter.
Three robins were
sitting in a bush.

Script 2, Title Page



Frog and Toad Reader's Theater



Name of Frog and Toad book:

Frog and Toad

Name of short story from the book:

The Frog

Names of Group Members:

1. Bullee
2. Jake
3. Autumn
4. James

Characters:

| Character Name | Actor (Student Name) | Color |
|----------------|----------------------|--------|
| Frog | James | green |
| Toad | James | black |
| Autumn | Jake | black- |
| James | Autumn | red |



Frog and Toad





Script Format

Nallat

(Character's name)

Good day in sunny! Frog very hot
feeling well.

(Use these lines to write what the character will be saying)

Towl

(Character's name)

Frog you are looking
quite good.

(Use these lines to write what the character will be saying)

Script 2, page 2

2



Frog
(Character's name)

But I always look
green I am a frog

(Use these lines to write what the character will be saying)

Toad
(Character's name)

Today you look
very green even for
a frog. Get into my
bed and rest

(Use these lines to write what the character will be saying)