

Running head: THE EFFECT OF READERS THEATRE IN ELEMENTARY SPECIAL
EDUCATION

The Effect of Readers' Theatre on the Reading Ability of Elementary Special Education Students

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December 20, 2014

Keywords: Special Education, Reading Fluency, Readers' Theatre

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of the use of Readers' Theatre to improve the reading ability of elementary students receiving special education services. In this study, two groups of students were chosen to participate based on their academic Reading levels and their placement in the Special Education program. The students' exceptionalities included Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Other Health Impairment (OHI), and Autism (AUT). All of the students who participated were fifth graders and attended the same school. Through the use of pre and post oral fluency tests, results indicated that after six weeks of intervention, Readers' Theatre positively impacted students' reading fluency rate. Thus, confirming the effectiveness of the use of Reader's Theatre in the classroom. If students are to improve academically in reading, educators need to seek strategies that have been proven to be successful for all students, including those with special needs.

Introduction and Problem Statement

Reading is required in virtually every subject area and provides necessary information about the world in which we live. Consequently, students who struggle in the subject tend to be negatively affected academically across multiple subject areas and academic success is difficult to attain (Polcyn, 2012). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 mandated that schools and educators closely focus on reading skills instruction (Mercer & Mercer, 2005). This same act specified that students should be on grade level in the subject by grade three (Klingner, Urbach, Golos, Brownwell, & Menon, 2010). Schools, Administrators, teachers, parents, and government officials understand that reading is one of the most basic and important academic skills and plays a vital role in people being able to fully function in a societal capacity (Fry, 2010). This includes those students receiving special education services who also struggle in the area of reading.

Students receiving special services and who have reading difficulties are typically served under the category of Specific Learning Disability (Chard, Geller, Baker, & et al, 2009). These students often have difficulties with reading fluency and comprehension, which are both necessary skills in the reading process (Rabren, Darch, & Eaves, 1999). In 2002, the National Assessment of Educational Progress conducted a study in which forty-four percent of fourth graders were found to be disfluent readers. In this same study, it was determined that there was a significant relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension (Dixon, 2007). According to Cathy Block, author of *Literacy Difficulties*, students who struggle with fluency are not able to focus on the meaning of text when they are struggling to decode words (Block, 2003).

The Effect of Readers Theatre in Elementary Special Education

This suggests that if students are to comprehend what they are reading, they must become fluent readers.

In response to the growing number of special education students who have difficulty in reading, researchers, educators, and school districts are attempting to provide strategies and interventions that could help improve their deficits in the subject. Although eighty to ninety percent of the students diagnosed with a learning disability struggle in reading, other students who qualify for special educational services under different categories, have also been observed as struggling readers (Wei, et al., 2011). Teachers must be willing to research and use effective strategies that will help improve these students' reading abilities.

One of the strategies mentioned in research includes the use of Readers' Theatre. Over the years, significant studies have examined the use of Readers' Theatre and its effects on students' reading ability with various elementary students and grade levels. However, there is a limited amount of studies on the use of Readers' Theatre with elementary special education students with varying disabilities. This study will focus on how effective Readers' Theatre is on fifth grade special education students' (with varying exceptionalities) reading fluency.

Definition of Terms

Automaticity- The automatic, almost subconscious recognition and understanding of written text (Vacca, Vacca, Gove, Burkey, Lenhart, & McKeon, 2006)

Decoding- Listening and reading; the intake of language (Vacca, Vacca, Gove, Burkey, Lenhart, & McKeon, 2006)

Fluency- quality of oral reading which reflects appropriate rate, accuracy, and expression
(Vacca, Vacca, Gove, Burkey, Lenhart, & McKeon, 2006)

Review of Literature

Early Reading

For many years researchers have considered what methods, strategies, and interventions are most effective in teaching students how to read. Reading is a complex act that involves the bringing of meaning to and the getting of meaning from written text (Rubin & Opitz, 2007). According to research, there are five basic aspects of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension), in which students need to be skilled and proficient in (Oakes & Mathur, 2010). Children begin acquiring reading skills early in life through home experiences with various forms of print, direct play, magazines, books, and posters (Vacca, Gove, Burkey, Lenhart, & McKeon, 2006). Students who fail to acquire early reading skills are subject to fall behind during the late elementary grades (Kim, Samson, Fitzgerald, & Hartry, 2010). As children are involved with family literacy, experiences through storybook read alouds, repeated readings of familiar stories, and shared readings, they begin to grasp the concepts of text (Vacca, Gove, Burkey, Lenhart, & McKeon, 2006). Teachers must effectively increase and understand their knowledge of the reading process as students progress in grade levels and transition into more complex reading. This is critical if reading success is to occur with all students, including those with special needs (Rubin & Opitz, 2007).

Special Education

The Effect of Readers Theatre in Elementary Special Education

With the number of students served in the special education program, there stands a great challenge to meet the needs of these diverse learners. The law mandates that all special education students have specifically designed Individual Education Plans to meet their needs (O'Brien, 2005). The law is very specific regarding the components of required documentation and is designed and implemented for special education students, ages 3 through 21, with a disability. The components consist of levels of performance, annual goals, short-term objectives, special education, related services, description of services, dates of services, and evaluation (Henley, Ramsey, & Algozzine, 2006). In short, an Individual Education Plan dictates what, when, where, and how instruction is taught. The purpose of the plan is to ensure management, communication, and accountability (Mercer & Mercer, 2005). The document serves as an individual blue print to each student's physical, emotional social and academic need(s). Each person involved in the instructional process must be cognizant of what the document states is needed for the success of that student. Annual meetings are held between school personnel, parents, and if applicable, students to discuss present levels and to create new goals for the plan. Goals differ for each student and are tailored to address any deficits in academic, social, and/or behavior concerns. Progress is monitored through work samples, teacher observation, formal and informal assessments, and data collection (Overton, 2009). Students' reading levels and fluency rates are included in the assessments throughout the year.

Reading Comprehension

As mentioned earlier, reading comprehension is noted as one of the basic five aspects of reading. It is defined as the process of extracting and constructing the meaning of text (Egmon, 2008). Many students with special needs continue to struggle with reading comprehension (Williamson, Carnahan, & Jacobs, 2012). It is important to pin point what barriers may be

involved that hinder reading achievement. Teachers with special needs students must be aware of instructional modifications, accommodations, strategies, and interventions that are most conducive to the student's learning style and need. To assist students with reading comprehension, teachers are encouraged to break tasks up into chunks, allow students to preview the material text, and incorporate students' real life experiences during reading instruction. By breaking tasks into sections, students do not feel overwhelmed by the amount of reading and can better handle the learning task. In previewing the material, it allows students to be prepared and not feel anxious about the text. Also, learning is enhanced when students' real life experiences are related to what they are reading. This type of self-to-text connection gets students interested in what they are learning because they are able to relate to the material.

The National Reading Panel (NRP) reports that the explicit teaching of specific cognitive strategies will improve reading comprehension (Mercer & Mercer, 2005). In a study that spanned from 1976 to 1996, researchers determined that the best overall reading comprehension instruction combines "basic reading skills instruction, reading fluency instruction, self-questioning strategies, comprehension monitoring, and encouraging students to view their success as a function of their own efforts" (Mercer & Mercer, 2005). Designing activities and learning experiences that focus on these areas of reading, should provide students with the necessary tools to achieve success. Providing students with multiple opportunities and practice is beneficial and aids in reading proficiency. Also, targeting reading fluency is a critical step in comprehension success.

Reading Fluency

Being fluent in reading is a necessary step in developing competency in reading comprehension (Hubbard, 2009). The National Reading Panel characterizes readers as being fluent by their ability to read orally with speed, accuracy, proper expression, and with a good understanding (Dixon, 2007). There are three dimensions of fluency; accuracy in word decoding (sounding out words in a given text with few errors), automatic processing (using little mental effort to decode text), and prosodic reading (intonation, pitch, stress, pauses, and duration placed on specific syllables) (Vacca, Vacca, Gove, Burkey, Lenhart, & McKeon, 2006). Decoding and fluency skills are necessary to build upon other skills such as vocabulary and comprehension. According to Chard, a distinct and common problem among students with fluency difficulty is their inability to read sight words, decode words, and read phrases and sentences with automaticity (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002).

Students who are taught and learn decoding strategies have greater automaticity with word recognition (Swain, Janssen, & Conley, 2013). One way to assist in word recognition is for students to practice words in isolation. Beginning in Kindergarten, teachers expose students to frequently used words, or sight words as often as possible. Word walls, sight word games, and sight word stories are just a few activities that increase recognition. Sight word instruction is provided in an effort to make certain that students begin to identify familiar words quickly and independently. If students struggle with word identification, the task of reading becomes difficult and tedious. When an unskilled reader spends an abundant amount of time trying to decode words, and has fluency difficulty, he loses meaning of the passage or text (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002; Corcoran, 2005), thus resulting in poor comprehension. Studies show that limited sight word vocabularies are a paramount characteristic of students with reading difficulties (Rasinski, Samuels, Hiebert, Petscher, & Feller, 2011). When students have difficulty in reading,

they are less apt to participate in classroom activities and become disengaged. This could lead to high levels of frustrations, anxiety, behavior problems, negative attitudes towards reading, and low scores on assessments.

Students' fluency rate is assessed by how many words they read per minute (according to their grade level) and can be determined by giving students informal and formal assessments (Overton, 2009). Teachers can use words from the Dolch and Fry sight word lists to increase word recognition and automaticity. Research indicates that when students read texts that contain practiced words, they do so more quickly and with fewer errors (Begeny & Martens, 2006). When students are fluent and are able to comprehend what they have read, they are considered proficient readers (Moore, 2001). To help students reach to a level of proficiency, oral reading strategies are suggested to build upon and increase word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. Research indicates that targeting reading fluency along with other weaknesses, improves reading comprehension among students (Hitchcock, Prater, & Dowrick, 2004). Rasinski states that oral reading connects spoken and written language. He also claims that oral reading strengthens decoding skills, fosters fluency, and boosts reading comprehension (Rasinski, T., 2003). In his research, he suggests that read alouds, choral reading, paired reading, repeated reading, and performance reading are effective means of improving reading fluency.

Readers' Theatre

One of the suggested strategies to improve reading fluency is performance reading. A type of performance reading is Readers' Theatre. Readers' Theatre is a scripted text in which teachers use as an instructional strategy and technique in the classroom. With guidance and modeling, students rehearse plays, scripts, poems, or other similar texts. These scripts vary in

length, and allow students the opportunity to practice reading aloud (Corcoran & Davis, 2005). The complexity of the script varies depending on students' independent reading levels and capabilities. They should not be too difficult or create high levels of frustration. Teachers should refrain from using scripts that are below the students' reading levels. The scripts can be teacher or student created, derived from books, or poems (Rasinki, 2003). Teachers are encouraged to use real life experiences such as field trips, school activities, special occasions, and individual student experiences to create scripts. Readers' Theater allows students to develop social, fluency, and comprehension skills. Also, the strategy can be integrated with science, social studies, and/or other content-related topics and subjects. When implemented correctly, Readers' Theatre provides students with many opportunities for growth in all areas.

Readers' Theatre has been observed as an effective strategy to promote reading success (Smith, 2011). This type of strategy has been proven to improve word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. Supporters claim that Readers' Theatre is innovating, entertaining, and gets students excited about reading (Rasinski, 2003). Readers' Theatre gives the students the opportunity to have fun by bringing characters to life in the classroom. Some of the best classroom experiences are when students are moving around and actively engaged with the learning process.

How teachers use Readers' Theatre is at Implementing Readers' their discretion, but researchers suggest using a guide prior to implementation. Rasinski provides a quick guide to assist with preparing and implementing script:

- Write or select script (have multiple copies)
- At the beginning of the week, introduce Readers' Theatre with the class

The Effect of Readers Theatre in Elementary Special Education

- Establish parts by student volunteers, auditions, or teacher direct assignment
- Have students practice parts for several days independently, in groups, or at home
- Prepare for showtime!

Research shows that Readers' Theatre has been beneficial for students of varying levels and abilities. In a study conducted in 2002, a group of second grade students participated in Reader's Theatre for several weeks. Although students were of varying reading level, researchers reported empirical evidence showing gains with the students' oral reading fluency, as well as the students' comprehension levels (Morra, J., & Tracey, D. H., 2006). In a 2005 study that involved second and third grade low achieving students, Readers' Theatre was proven to increase and have a positive impact on fluency scores, reading attitudes, and confidence levels (Corcoran & Davis, 2005). In another study of 28 participants, the results indicated an increase in oral reading fluency and comprehension (Millin & Rinehart, 1999). The use of Readers' Theatre has also helped to improve fluency as well as comprehension skills in English Language Learners (Centeno, 2007).

Summary

The data from the literature encourages teachers to implement a reading strategy that improves reading ability of elementary students. Readers' Theatre was found to increase reading fluency and comprehension among students with varying abilities and levels. The literature also suggests that the use of Readers' Theatre had a positive effect on students' attitudes and confidence levels.

Methods

Overview of the Project

As noted earlier, the purpose of this study was to examine whether the use of Readers' Theatre would improve students' reading fluency. It is suggested by Hoover that Readers' Theatre be implemented for a defined time period to increase intervention effectiveness (Hoover, 2013). The subjects in this study participated in the intervention for six weeks.

In a qualitative research model, the effectiveness of Readers' Theatre was determined by using a questionnaire. The questionnaire provided a baseline on students' attitudes and perceptions were about reading before and after participating in the intervention. This would inform the researcher whether or not students' perceptions were positively or negatively impacted by the use of Readers' Theatre. In a quantitative research model, measurements such as pre and post-tests were used to determine if Readers' Theatre increased reading fluency rates of the students participating. The researcher obtained the students' reading fluency rates, from the prior year. Additionally, a baseline was established for each student prior to the start of the intervention. All of the participants consisted of students who received special education services across varying categories. One group of students participated in Readers' Theater intervention (in the co-taught setting), while the other group of students remained engaged in interventions and strategies that were currently being used in the classroom (resource setting). At the end of the study, assessments were given to determine the present levels in reading. A report compiling the data compared the baseline data to current data to determine if this technique made a significant difference in students' reading skills.

Research Question

How effective is the use of Readers' Theatre in increasing the reading ability of Special Education elementary students?

Hypothesis

This study hypothesized that elementary special education students who participated in Readers' Theatre would significantly increase their reading fluency skills.

Participants

A group of ten fifth grade special education students were invited to participate in this study. Of those invited, six participated. Those who participated were placed in two separate groups. Group one consisted of three students in the co-teaching classroom of the researcher. These students were chosen due to their enrollment in special education and the convenience of being in the researcher's room. These students had similar reading fluency rates and reading levels. Group two, the comparison group, (those in the resource setting not participating in Readers' Theatre) consisted of three girls and three boys. Of the boys, two were African American and one was Caucasian. Of the girls, two were African American and one was Mexican. Two of the students were diagnosed with Specific Learning Disability, one student with Autism, and the remaining students were being served under the Other Health Impairment category (emotional/behavior, ADHD). Additionally, three of the students received Speech and Language therapy twice a week. It should be noted that the student in the comparison group all had higher fluency rates than the sample group. At the end of the study, the data were analyzed to determine if Readers' Theatre effected students with slightly higher reading skills.

The Effect of Readers Theatre in Elementary Special Education

Based on the fluency chart provided by the reading program, Fountas and Pinnell, students beginning fifth grade are expected to read at least one hundred and thirty words per minute. At the beginning of the study, all of the students who demonstrated fluency rates below grade level.

To help increase fluency rates, the students had previously been given specialized reading instruction to increase their academic performance in the subject. These strategies included, but were not limited to, direct instruction, choral reading, paired reading, guided reading, and frequent modeling. This instruction took place either in the general education classroom or resource classroom by whole group, small group, and/or one-on-one instruction.

Data Source

The West Georgia RESA School Improvement Team, in collaboration with West Central GLRS, West Georgia ETC and Safe and Drug Free Schools, work to support teachers and administrators in developing and implementing sound instructional practices to improve student learning. They have developed screening tools and probes that are aligned to state standards along with databases that are easy to use for tracking student data. These tools assist educators in identifying students in need of intervention and provide initial diagnostic information about students' specific needs. For the purpose of this study, the Georgia RESA Assessment of Student Progress was used as the assessment tool to determine students' baseline reading fluency rates and fluency rates throughout the study. During the six week intervention, the students' fluency rates were taken every five days to monitor academic progress.

Routine and Procedures

The Effect of Readers Theatre in Elementary Special Education

For this study, students were placed in two separate groups. One group (Group One) was placed based on their similar reading fluency rates, reading levels, and receiving special education services. The comparison group (Group Two) was selected based on their placement in the special education program. Each group consisted of one female and two males. Group One participated in the Readers' Theatre intervention in the inclusive classroom. Group Two remained in the resource classroom and continued to utilize the strategies and interventions set forth by the resource special education teacher. Group One was given scripts (determined by the co-teachers) that were similar to texts on their instructional reading levels. The chosen scripts were given to the groups to practice and become familiar with. Each play was practiced for two weeks before being performed to the class, with an average of 30 minutes being spent in the Readers' Theatre group session. During the first week of implementation, the group met with the researcher for mini lessons. These mini lessons included students observing the teachers reading aloud, modeling, and comparing and contrasting fluent and nonfluent reading. Also, students were given direction instruction on the format of the scripts and how to read them. Prior to beginning working on scripts, the students developed some group rules in order for the sessions to be more productive. The rules included: do not interrupt others during reading or discussions, pay attention your parts and the parts of others, and be polite while others are reading.

Each week thereafter the following procedure was followed. Day one, students were given scripts and roles were assigned by the researcher. Initially, the students read the scripts silently to themselves then aloud with the group. Careful attention was given by the researcher to assist the students to decode unknown and/or difficult word. Day two, the researcher modeled parts using correct inflection, intonation, chunking words, and fluency. The students were given the opportunity to reflect on the teacher modeling and determine how this type of reading can

improve their reading ability. The students would then practice the script several times until the end of the period. They were instructed to pay close attention to their own reading and improve by using the techniques modeled by the researcher. Day three, the researcher would read the script aloud to the group to model appropriate reading and then the group would practice individually. During this time the researcher would pay close attention to the students' reading and offer any assistance necessary to help improve their reading. At the end of each session, the researcher offered feedback to the group as a whole on their reading. The researcher also spoke individually with students to provide feedback on reading. Day four is much like day three in students continue to practice and the researcher offers feedback. The following week, the students continue to work practice on scripts and the researcher models reading when necessary, and continues to provide feedback to the students. This process continued for six weeks, allowing the Readers' Theatre group to perform three scripts. The second and final performance was recorded in order for the students to view and critique their reading. Consent to photograph and/or videotape students had previously been obtained. During this time, Group Two continued to work on their reading skills with the strategies already used in the classroom.

Results and Data Analysis

Between the months of January and April, the students participated in Readers' Theatre to improve their reading fluency. During the intervention, students' fluency rates were assessed every fifth day. Table 1.0 shows the students' baseline fluency data. The students that participated in intervention have been labeled with RT. All of the students were below the suggested grade level fluency rate of one-hundred thirty words per minute. Table 2.0 illustrates the Readers' Theatre group fluency rates during the weeks of intervention.

Table 1.0

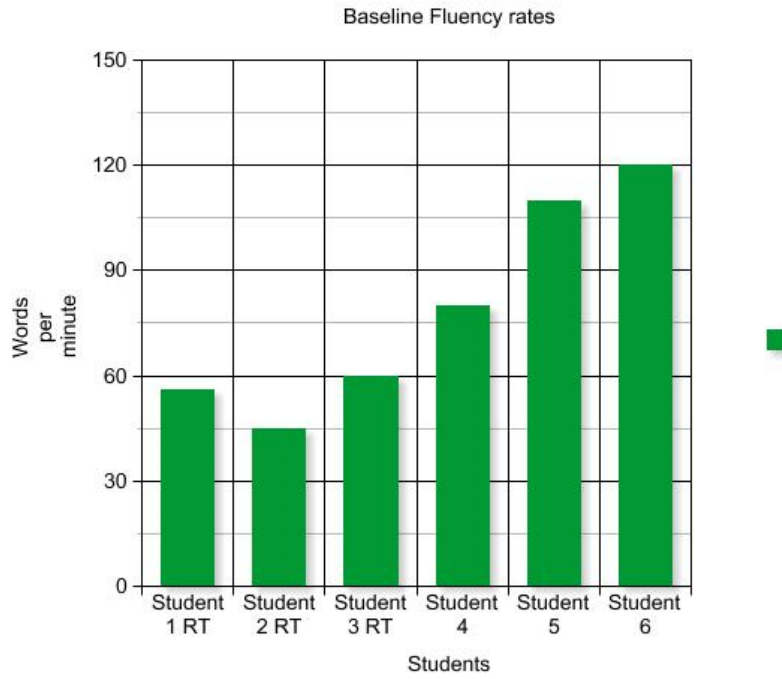


Table 2.0

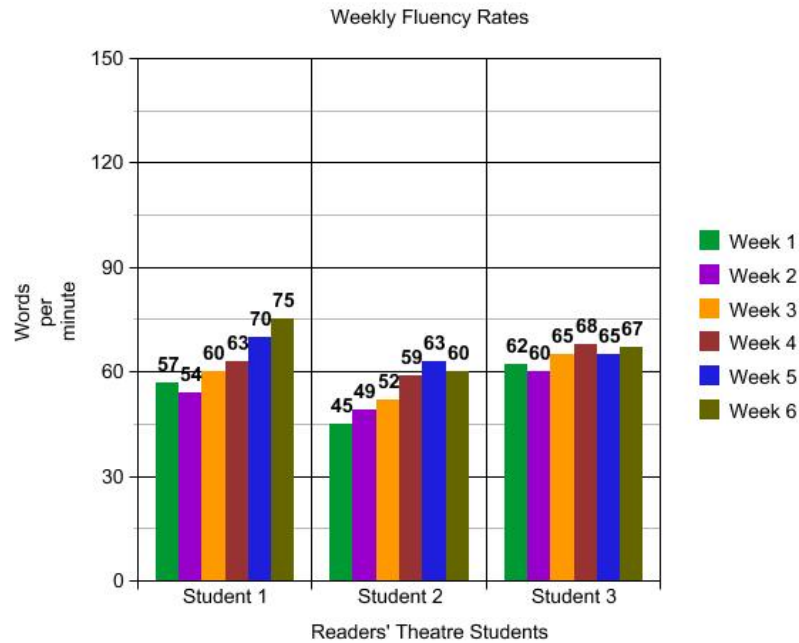


Table 3 Readers’ Theatre Group Data

Group	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Mean	53.67	67.50
SD	7.77	10.61
SEM	4.48	7.50
N	3	2

The two-tailed P value equals 0.1841

Table 4 Comparison Group Data

Group	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Mean	103.33	111.67
SD	20.82	12.58
SEM	12.02	7.26
N	3	3

The two-tailed P value equals 0.5848

Table 5: Student Pre and Post Fluency Scores

Students	Pre Fluency	Post Fluency	Change
<i>Readers’ Theatre Group</i>			
Student 1	56	75	+19
Student 2	45	60	+15
Student 3	60	67	+7
<i>Comparison Group</i>			
Student 4	80	100	+20
Student 5	110	115	+5
Student 6	120	125	+5

At the conclusion of the intervention, fluency data was compiled and analyzed to determine any change in fluency rates. A paired t-test was used to determine if the results reflected a statistically significant growth from the pre-test fluency scores to the post-test fluency scores with the use of Readers’ Theatre. Table 3 indicates the results from Group One (Readers’

Theatre) data. The results of the statistical analysis for the t-test demonstrated that the P value equals 0.1841. The mean difference of the pre-test and post-test was -13.83. The confidence interval of this difference is 95%, ranging from -39.45 to 11.78. There is a standard error difference of 8.048. By conventional criteria, the difference is considered not to be statistically significant. However, during the start of the intervention, the Readers' Theatre group average fluency rate was fifty-three words per minute. By the end of the intervention, the number of words read correctly per minute increased overall by the group by 13 words. Additionally, students individually increased their fluency rates; with seven being the lowest and nineteen being the highest, as shown in Table 5.0. At the time of completion, all of the students' fluency rates remained below the suggested rate per their grade level but progress was made. The students gained, on average, between two to five words per minute each week. It should be noted that at times the students' fluency rate remained the same or decreased slightly. While the second group of students did not participate in the Readers' Theatre intervention, they too showed some improvement with reading fluency with the use of the current strategies and interventions used in the class. However, by conventional criteria, the difference is considered not to be statistically significant. Overall, the comparison group's words read correctly per minute increased slightly. It should also be noted that the students in the comparison group demonstrated higher reading fluency rates at the time of the study. In addition, the students were given the questionnaire at the end of the study to determine if their attitudes had changed about reading. Two of the students reported that Readers' Theatre did make reading more enjoyable and not overwhelming for them. One student's attitude towards reading did not change and stated that she felt the same about reading and her fluency rate improved by five words.

The data suggests that Special Education students did benefit from the use of Readers' Theatre to increase their reading fluency skills. The students' reading fluency scores indicated an increase of words read correctly per minute.

Assumptions of the Researcher

The data suggests that if students showed an increase in fluency during a six week intervention, one can assume that they would definitely benefit from the intervention for the entire school year. Special Education students can succeed in the classroom when given tools that have been proven effective. With adequate support, these students can make progress in reading in the inclusive or resource setting. It is the belief that students with exceptionalities who are reading below grade level can experience academic progress in an environment that is enriched with effective teachers. These teachers must be willing to employ research-based strategies that are proven to be successful for these diverse learners.

Conclusion

The debate on what is the most effective reading instruction has been discussed for decades. Helping students to become skilled readers is a challenging and difficult task. In order to produce proficient readers, it is important that instruction focuses on reading fluency and comprehension. Automaticity with the ability to read sight words, decode words, and being able to read phrases, are all necessary in the reading process (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002). The use of many strategies have been researched and tested with students of varying levels and abilities. Readers' Theater has been proven in some cases to improve the reading ability in students (Smith, 2011). If teachers are to help students increase their reading ability, they must employ used strategies that have been proven to be effective. Also, teachers need to be mindful of the

barriers that shape reading difficulties. All students learn differently and need specific instructional strategies that meet their individual needs.

The purpose of this study was to measure the effect of Readers' Theatre on the reading ability of elementary special education students. The results indicated that the Readers' Theatre intervention had a positive impact on students' reading fluency.

Limitations of Results

In this study, there were some limitations that may have affected the study. The first limitation includes the limited to the number of articles that were found relating to Special Education students' reading fluency and Readers' Theater. Most of the articles focused on either on reading comprehension, reading fluency, or Readers' Theater. Some articles highlighted Readers' Theater and how it improves reading fluency with elementary special education students in younger grades. The second limitation of the study includes the sample size. The participants in this study consisted of six fifth graders. The students were chosen because they were all students at the same school in the same grade, a convenience sample. However, due to the small number of participants, it may have been difficult to find significant relationships from the data. The third limitation includes the length of time spent on the study. Although all of the students showed growth with their reading fluency rates, perhaps if the time spent on the intervention could have occurred for a longer duration, the data may have shown a significant difference. Also, perhaps both groups of the students should have had similar fluency rates and reading levels. The last and final limitation includes the varying ability levels and exceptionalities of the students. The researcher found it difficult to differentiate the scripts to

each student's interests. In the future, researchers should consider having a larger sample size, and lend more time to fully investigate the impact of Readers' Theatre in the classroom.

Implications for Classroom Practice

The information from this study can inform teachers on ways to help improve the reading instruction of students in the classroom. General Education students, as well as Special Education students' reading ability can improve with the use of effective strategies and interventions early in the reading process (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2009). Teaching students with special needs how to become skilled readers can be a daunting task. Implementing different teaching strategies during instruction is important because students with exceptionalities need multiple opportunities to grasp a learning concept (Henley, Ramsey, & Algozzine, 2006).

All students are capable of learning with the appropriate instruction. Special Education students are at huge disadvantage and are in risk of failure if specific instruction is not implemented. Further research is needed on the effects of special education students of various grades and disabilities. However, in addressing the needs of this diverse group of students, teachers need to provide effective researched-based strategies that increase and promote fluency.

Future Research

It is recommended that further research be conducted in the use of Readers' Theatre to improve the reading ability of Special Education students. Although there were previous studies on Readers' Theatre, most were conducted with students with specific learning abilities and who were in lower grades. It is the researcher's belief that all students could benefit in the use of Readers' Theatre to improve reading fluency.

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The Effect of Readers Theatre in Elementary Special Education

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The Effect of Readers Theatre in Elementary Special Education

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