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The impact of Readers' Workshop in a first grade classroom

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In this research I describe the Readers' Workshop approach, the impact that it has on a first graders' motivation, self-selection, and comprehension. This study was implemented during the 2006-2007 school year over a six week period. The observations at the beginning of the study indicated that the three focus students in this study lacked motivation, struggled with self-selection, and were in need of assistance to develop their comprehension skills. However, as Readers' Workshop was implemented, the students began to develop motivation to read on their own. They developed interests in books, and their comprehension strategies improved.

The Impact of Readers' Workshop in a First Grade Classroom

A Graduate Research Paper

Submitted to the

Division of Literacy Education

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

In Partial Fulfillment

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Master of Arts in Education

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By

Tara Seery

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This Research Project by Tara Lynn Seery

Titled: The Impact of Readers' Workshop in a First Grade Classroom

Has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the

Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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Abstract

In this research I describe the Readers' Workshop approach, the impact that it has on a first graders' motivation, self-selection, and comprehension. This study was implemented during the 2006-2007 school year over a six week period. The observations at the beginning of the study indicated that the three focus students in this study lacked motivation, struggled with self-selection, and were in need of assistance to develop their comprehension skills. However, as Readers' Workshop was implemented, changes occurred. Throughout the study I collected data by using anecdotal records, student surveys, parent surveys, Diagnostic Reading Probes, and retelling rubrics. The students in the study began to develop motivation to read on their own, they developed interests in books, and their comprehension strategies improved. Implementation of Readers' Workshop developed a community of learners in my classroom. It provided an opportunity for students to find their potential and grow from their experiences.

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Introduction

A 1st grader enters his classroom in the fall with high hopes of learning to read. He is full of excitement and determination to learn reading skills that will help him develop a lifelong love of reading. As the year progresses he develops some of these beginning reading skills, but is struggling with making continual gains. He may eagerly read during guided reading with the support of a teacher and will share this book at home. Yet, when it comes to SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) time in the classroom, he cannot find a book that is appropriate for him and seems at a loss of what to do during this reading time. He often times draws or visits with friends instead.

The teacher is tired of the constant battles during Sustained Silent Reading time. She spends her time redirecting children who are off task and is overwhelmed with the number of children that are having difficulty choosing their own books. She knows that giving children the opportunity to self-select their own books and time to read is important, yet she has been unsuccessful with Sustained Silent Reading time in her classroom. Her goal is that she will not only provide the beginning reading skills and strategies for her students, but also give them the opportunity to develop and share a lifelong love of reading. She would like to implement a new literacy component in her classroom- the Readers' Workshop (Hagerty, 1992). She hopes and wonders-- will Readers' Workshop enable the students to become more motivated and independent in their self-selection and allow them to see the true joy of reading?

Rationale

I was introduced to Readers' Workshop in 2006 during a workshop provided by a professor. I was intrigued with the students' involvement in their reading. I chose this

topic for my research because as a 1st grade teacher, I struggled each year with Sustained Silent Reading time in the classroom. Most students were off task and losing opportunities to practice their skills in books that were at their level and books that they truly enjoyed. I was impressed with how the students were involved in self-selecting appropriate text and how the mini-lessons of Readers' Workshop allowed students to become independent readers. As an educator, I believed that it was my responsibility not only to provide students with the strategies and skills they need to read, but also to give them an opportunity to practice and share these skills in books that they were self-selecting. It was with this practice that I hoped to see students immerse themselves in books that they enjoyed and have the opportunity to develop their reading and comprehension skills.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to develop Readers' Workshop in my first grade classroom and research the effectiveness of the program in a classroom setting. I wanted to see whether the students engaged in reading books that were at their reading level and whether Readers' Workshop impacted their motivation, self-selection, and comprehension of reading. I was particularly interested in assessing the impact of the Readers' Workshop on children who seemed to struggling during independent reading time in my classroom.

Importance

Guthrie (1996) stated that a child's perception of reading is developed early on. Therefore, it is important that children are given not only the skills and strategies to read, but also the attitude that will result in a lifelong love of reading. Participation in Readers'

Workshop was a way to encourage students to develop the ability to self-select books that they enjoyed and continue to encourage them to put their skills to use in meaningful texts. Through self-selection, self-pacing, sharing, listening, and reading, children not only learn to read, but also discover what reading is about (Hagerty, 1992).

Terminology

A term that was used in this paper was *sustained silent reading* time, also known as *SSR* time. SSR time refers to regular fixed time for voluntary reading. Daniels & Murray (2000) state that during this time all other work is put aside and the teacher and students read.

Another significant term for this paper was *Readers' Workshop*. Orehovec & Alley (2003) state that Readers' Workshop provides students with the opportunity to read, the choice of what they read, and chances to engage in conversations about their reading. It provides a supportive environment that focuses on the strengths and the needs of individual students.

A third term referred to in this paper was *motivation*. Motivation in this paper refers to a student's involvement, curiosity, and satisfaction during Readers' Workshop. Guthrie (1996) states that, as literacy motivations increase, children increasingly take charge of their learning opportunities.

The final term to clarify was *self-selection*. Self-selection refers to the idea that with guidance, students are given the opportunity to select quality literature. Students are taught how to make appropriate choices. Hagerty (1992) indicates that those students who choose their own reading material are much more likely to be involved with the text they are reading.

Research Questions

The primary research question guiding this project was: How will Readers' Workshop affect 1st graders' motivation, self-selection, and comprehension in reading? The secondary questions evolved from the primary question and they were as follows:

- Will participation in Readers' Workshop improve struggling students' motivation to read and improve their self-selection during Readers' Workshop time?

- Will struggling student's comprehension improve through participation in discussions during Readers' Workshop?

These questions were explored further in the following review.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Due to ongoing frustration about the way some of the children responded to Sustained Silent Reading time in my classroom, I looked for an approach that would allow students to continue to self-select, yet guide them to develop and practice reading strategies in self-selected material. Hagerty (1992) states that students need the opportunities to select from a wide variety of quality of literature, but also need to be taught how to make appropriate choices. The Readers' Workshop model incorporates the elements of time, choice, response, community, and structure (Hagerty, 1992). This literature review looked at the important elements of Readers' Workshop, the factors of motivation and engagement, self-selection, and how Readers' Workshop affected comprehension.

Important Elements of Readers' Workshop Format

Hansen (2001) concludes that everything takes time. There needs to be time for evaluation, time for instruction, time for writing, and time for reading. Students need to grow into their identities as readers. Readers' Workshop is an instructional approach that allows students to grow into these identities. Like the time that students need to grow as readers, teachers also need time to implement and set up their classrooms for Readers' Workshop.

Hagerty (1992) does not believe that students learn simply by reading. Students learn through observations of models of what good readers use and through the provision of ample time to practice reading with self-selected material. To provide students the opportunity to read and practice, a teacher needs to be prepared for Readers' Workshop.

Orehovec & Alley (2003) state there are three top priorities for setting up a Readers' Workshop in the classroom. These three priorities include: setting up the classroom, scheduling time, and encouraging on-task behavior.

When setting up the classroom it is important for teachers to take into account their philosophy and what they want to see happening in their classroom during Readers' Workshop. Orehovec & Alley (2003) state that a requirement of Readers' Workshop includes a well-stocked library. It is very important that students have all the books they need. A teacher can find books in many different places to begin building a quality classroom library. Resources include finding books at sales, cashing in book points, requesting parent donations, checking local libraries and school libraries, and being aware of any kind of book grants. The authors caution that teachers must make a commitment to providing quality literature to their students (2003).

When setting up a classroom library for students it is very important that the library area be comfortable and inviting. Orehovec & Alley (2003) believe that a library ought to be safe, warm, inviting, and accommodating. The way that a teacher sets up the books in the library should reflect how he or she wants to organize the books. For the primary grades a teacher may want to set up books by using a color coding system for the levels of books. A teacher could also set up books by genre. Again, it is important that a teacher's library reflects his or her own beliefs and needs and the students' needs.

Orehovec & Alley (2003) also emphasize the need for scheduling the time of Readers' Workshop carefully. Readers' Workshop is more than just reading. It is an approach that allows students to read, share, respond, and confer. It also allows teachers the ability to instruct using mini-lessons. Hagerty (1992) and Fountas & Pinnell (2006)

state that Readers' Workshop includes: Mini-lessons and activity time when students read, confer, or write, and a sharing session. All parts of the Readers' Workshop are taught to the children and modeled throughout each part of lesson. Modeling what Readers' Workshop looks like, sounds like, and the expectations is crucial to the success in a classroom. All parts are essential and modeling is a key to each component.

Mini-lessons start Readers' Workshop. The teacher has an area delegated for the entire class to receive instruction on reading. Mini-lessons should last only 5 to 10 minutes (Hagerty (1992); Fountas & Pinnell (2006). These mini-lessons always have a genuine purpose for informing children about reading skills and strategies. (Atwell,1998; Hagerty, 1992). The first kind of mini-lesson is the procedural mini-lesson. These mini-lessons include procedures for how the students participate in the Readers' Workshop to work in the classroom. These procedural lessons may include how you pick a book and put a book away from the library, how you share a book, or how you confer with a classmate.

Another type of mini-lesson is literary mini-lessons. Literary mini-lessons include strategy work. These mini-lessons could include differences between fiction and non-fiction, quotations, dialogue, descriptive words, embedded phonic instruction, or how illustrations enhance stories (Atwell, 1998).

The last mini-lesson is strategy mini-lessons. Hagerty (1992) states that these mini-lessons often demonstrate the "how to" in Readers' Workshop. These mini-lessons include how to choose a book, ideas for reading aloud, how to summarize, or how to make predictions. The lessons do not have a prescribed order in which a teacher should

teach (Atwell, 1998). Rather, as Swift (1993) states, these mini-lessons should be chosen to meet the needs of one's students.

After students have spent 5 to 10 minutes in mini-lessons the students need time to read. This reading should be a time of enjoyment for students. Book choice during this time is crucial to the success of Readers' Workshop (Orehovec & Alley, 2003). Students need to know how to choose a "just right" book. A just right book is a book that a student can read on his or her own with little assistance from others. Teachers can lead students to choose books that they are comfortable with and encourage them to challenge themselves.

As students are reading, a teacher is conferring with students about their reading. Hansen (2001) believes that conferring with small groups allows students a chance to be heard with more assurance than in a large group. Conferring with a student also allows a teacher to meet the individual needs of students. Fountas & Pinnell (2006) state that reading levels allow you to determine how well students are processing and understanding the texts they are reading. Orehovec & Alley (2003) and Fountas & Pinnell (2006) believe that careful observations allow teachers to provide on-the-spot lessons for a particular student. During conferences teachers can provide instruction on oral reading, reading strategies, appropriateness of books, comprehension of text, and help students determine goals. Fountas & Pinnell (2006) state that a teacher can demonstrate or show something about effective reading. A teacher can assess students with anecdotal records, running records, checklists, written responses and questions on what students are reading.

Peer conferences are also encouraged during this time. Hagerty (1992) suggests designating specific days and specific locations for peer conferences. During these

conferences students are encouraged to share their books, get help with understanding books, and learn about new books to read. Students may also share with peers written responses to their reading. Written responses allow the children to think about what they are reading and develop an understanding of their reading.

After students have had the opportunity to read and confer with the teacher, they then have the opportunity to share their reading with an audience. Orehovec & Alley (2003) believe that this time allows students the opportunity to listen and respect others readers. It is again important to remember that good sharing doesn't just happen. Teachers must demonstrate and model the opportunities that arise during sharing time. During sharing students have the opportunity to get positive feedback about the books they have read, they have the opportunity to discuss strategies they used to figure out words, and they can share their reactions to the books. Orehovec & Alley (2003) stated it best when they said that sharing is a time to come together as a community of readers. It is the opportunity to share and an opportunity to build a classroom community of readers.

Motivation and Self-Selection

Within Readers' Workshop children have the opportunity to become motivated in the books that they read. Engaged literacy learners are motivated to read (Guthrie,1996). They choose to read on their own and they pick out books that they are interested in. Readers' Workshop allows students to find the opportunities to become motivated by their involvement in books. When students are allowed the opportunity to self-select reading material that interests them and that they are able to read independently, they become motivated and engaged in reading. Guthrie (2000) states that children who like to share books with their classmates and who are involved in a community learning

experiences are more likely to be intrinsically motivated learners. Readers' Workshop allows children to be involved in all aspects of their reading with their peers and encourages sharing.

Guthrie (2000) also refers to strategies that support motivation and engagement within the classroom. The first of these strategies is "autonomy support." Autonomy support involves teacher's guidance in helping children make choices. This is accomplished through the mini-lessons, when a teacher models how to choose a "just right" book or shares books that will be of interest to children in the classroom. The teacher also provides autonomy support during the sharing sessions of Readers' Workshop. A teacher meets and discusses the book the child is reading and gives support on the strategies he or she is reading and books he or she is choosing.

A second strategy to encourage motivation and engagement is to involve students in interesting texts (Guthrie, 2000). A Readers' Workshop must be filled with books that reach the widest variety of readers. Orehovec & Alley (2003) argue that the most important task of setting up Readers' Workshop is building a substantial classroom library. Teachers must continue to add to their collection and continue to learn more about their students so they can provide books that interest them.

Guthrie (2000) also supports collaboration within the classroom. Teacher collaboration activates and maintains students' intrinsic motivation. Hagerty (1992) establishes that in Readers' Workshop students actively support each other as readers and a community is established. Students' help each other learn, they assume leadership roles, they encourage each other, and they are involved with each others learning experiences.

A classroom community empowers students to appreciate each others learning and motivate each other to do their best.

Motivation is affected by teacher involvement. An involved teacher knows about student learning (Guthrie,2000). An involved teacher cares about student learning and set positive goals for his or her students to reach. Readers' Workshop encourages teacher involvement. A teacher must stay in touch with what his or her students are reading, how they are responding to literature, and what strategies they are using in their reading. Hagerty (1992) concludes that when teachers involve their students in sharing sessions they are opening up the doors to developing a close relationship with each student. Students benefit from the opportunities to share. Guthrie (2000) notes that teacher involvement has a significant benefit, which is student motivation.

Turner (1993) set up a study observing 84 children in 12 first grade classrooms. Half of the class used traditional basal approach and the other half was instructed with a literature-based language arts approach. A literature-based language arts approach is the same as or closely related to the Readers' Workshop approach. Turner found that students in the integrated literature-based language arts classroom used significantly more learning strategies. She also discovered that the students in the literature-based language arts classroom had great potential to influence young children's emergent motivation for literacy. Turner (1993) concludes that several characteristics of tasks influence student motivation. These tasks include autonomy, choice, and collaboration. All of these tasks that Turner lists are parts of Readers' Workshop. Readers' Workshop involves the opportunity for students to be supported and guided through the process. Readers' Workshop encourages teachers to meet daily with students to build on the strategies they

are using and also to encourage students to use new strategies. Teachers who have in mind the needs of their own students reach these students with the best questions (Hagerty, 1992). Hansen (2001) explains that the more we know about the overall lives of our students, the more likely we are able to help them with their learning. If a teacher is aware of each student's needs they will guide them to discover the opportunities that lie in literature.

Turner (1993) also concludes that "open tasks" are the best predictors of motivation. Open tasks include the opportunities for children to use strategies incorporated in the use of trade books. Turner states that the major finding in the study was that classroom tasks had a great potential to influence young children's motivation for literacy.

According to Hidi (2001), research conducted over the last 20 years has demonstrated that both individual interests and their situational interests contribute to motivation. Research studies over the last two decades conclude that interest has a powerful influence on children's learning. The literature indicates that an individual interest is a critical factor of academic motivation and learning (Hidi, 2001). The more interest children have in an activity, the more able they are able to focus their attention, enjoy their engagement, and use strategic processing. Readers' Workshop incorporates the component of self-selection, which allows students to find their interests and build their reading around those interests.

Swift (1993) did a school year study in which she used Readers' Workshop in her classroom. She implemented mini-lessons, reading time, dialogue journals, conferencing, and sharing time. Swift (1993) states in her findings that because of their experiences

with Readers' Workshop, her students improved in their enjoyment of reading. She states that Readers' Workshop won't solve all children's reading problems, but it can make a difference in their motivation.

Swift (1993) also collected qualitative evidence of the students' perceptions in the study. Her findings included anecdotal records on student's responses to the two different teaching methods. Her findings indicated that when the students were receiving Readers' Workshop instruction their attitude towards reading was positive.

Wakerly & Young (2002) believe that children that have the opportunity to make choices and decisions in their education are able to take ownership of their learning. If children are in charge of their learning, they have the opportunity to make the decisions in their learning. Wakerly & Young encourage teachers to involve students in decision making the moment they walk they walk into the classroom. Choice is the key characteristic of an environment where inquiry can thrive. Hagerty (1992) concludes that students who chose their own reading material were more likely to be involved with text. Students also expressed a liking for choosing their own reading material. When students had individual interests they then had the opportunity to use their interests to become motivated to learn.

Many factors encourage motivation and self-selection for students in the classroom. Students who are part of Readers' Workshop experience teachers who support autonomy, collaboration, and choice. The act of giving children choices has given educators the opportunity to see what children can do in a supportive community (Wakerly & Young, 2002).

Comprehension

Reading engagement is an essential part of active reading and can be achieved through experiences like Readers' Workshop (Borgia & Owles, 2007). When students are not engaged in discussions of their reading and experiences, they will be left with the feeling that reading is simply word calling (Opitz & Ford, 2001). When students are engaged, this leads to increased student motivation and higher achievement in reading comprehension.

Fountas & Pinnell (2006) state that book discussions should be a rich and continuous part of every child's reading program. Throughout these book discussions children have the opportunity to share their ideas and also benefit from the thinking of others. The authors believe that students enjoy talking with peers about books and when they do this they understand the value of reading. Comprehension is an integrated part of Readers' Workshop. Like all parts of Readers' Workshop, the teacher provides the modeling of strategies and then students gradually use these strategies independently.

Swift (1993) looked at the effects of Readers' Workshop on comprehension. In her study she had four classes of mixed sixth-grade students. Two classes were involved Readers' Workshop in the fall for four days a week. The other two classes did Readers' Workshop in the spring for four days a week. When the students were not doing Readers' Workshop, they were involved in a basal curriculum. After the fall and spring classes, Swift used the Gates-MacGinitie comprehension component to analyze the differences in the two groups. She found a highly significant difference in the students' test scores between the two groups in favor of Readers' Workshop instruction. The students who ended the year with Readers' Workshop showed more growth than the students who

ended the year with basal instruction. The mean improvement using Readers' Workshop was 5.27 normal curve equivalents, while mean improvement using the basal method was -1.18. The difference was highly significant in favor of the Readers' Workshop instruction (Swift, 1993).

Readers' Workshop provides the framework for teaching comprehension. Students should observe teachers modeling their own thought processes to begin to understand how to construct meaning of text (Miller, 2002). Students need time for guided practice (Miller, 2002). During guided practice students are encouraged to practice a strategy and then collaborate with their peers and small groups. Personal involvement leads to the construction of meaning when teachers and students work collaboratively together (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1996). A teacher's role is to be the facilitator.

After students have had opportunities for guided practice, Miller (2002) suggests independent practice. During this situation students begin to apply comprehension strategies to real texts and real situations. This is the perfect opportunity for students to apply their strategies during Readers' Workshop. Miller (2002) believes that when students are involved in independent practice, it is essential for teacher to give feedback through conferences. Teachers must encourage students to challenge their reading and use comprehension strategies to become thoughtful thinkers.

Reading is the construction of meaning (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Comprehension is not the product of reading, but part of the process. Comprehension can be assessed in many different ways. Running records are a way to gather evidence of comprehension strategies (Fountas & Pinnell). Additionally comprehension can be

assessed with various retelling forms and also during teacher conferences with students. Fountas & Pinnell (2006) state that when students are given the opportunity to practice retelling they begin to internalize the process.

Comprehension is an integrated part of Readers' Workshop. There are no substitutes for individual interactions with students around their reading lives (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Having the opportunity to discuss books reinforces and expands the student's thinking. Children don't always know that they know something (Miller, 2002). It is teacher's job to model, guide, and reflect to show them what they know. This modeling allows students to take ownership of their reading and their understanding.

Readers' Workshop gives students the opportunity to become motivated in books that they self-select, and develop their comprehension skills through books that have a purpose for each student. Readers' Workshop involves children in all aspects of their learning. The teacher has the opportunity to model and set up the expectations for Readers' Workshop and then the students are in charge of their reading. Not only does it give children control over their learning, but it also creates an environment that is supportive. Wakerly & Young (2002) agree when children have opportunities to make choices and decisions in their education, they are able to take ownership of their learning. Readers' Workshop allows students to take ownership of their literacy learning.

Chapter III

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to develop Readers' Workshop in my first grade classroom and research the effectiveness of the program in a classroom setting. I looked at how Readers' Workshop affected struggling students' motivation, self-selection, and comprehension throughout the course of the study. The study took place for six weeks in the fall of the 2006-2007 school year.

Participants

The participants in this study had characteristics that showed lack of motivation to select and read books independently. Participant selection was based on anecdotal records that were taken during assessment time, free reading times, and guided reading times. From my current first grade class, I focused on students that were not engaged in reading during free reading time and students that demonstrated a lack of confidence in reading skills. I also looked for these qualities when district assessments were given at the beginning of the year. District assessments included finding each child's instructional reading level using Diagnostic Reading Probes (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2001) developed by the district (See Appendix 1). This kit consisted of leveled books to determine the child's guided reading level.

After eight students were identified as having the characteristics described above, parents were contacted using a recruitment script (See Appendix 2). The parents were first contacted via phone and given the explanation of the study. Then I sent consent forms that included a sealed envelope that the students returned to a colleague (See Appendix 3). The consent forms were collected and kept by the colleague and not shown

to me, the teacher-researcher. The colleague then randomly selected three students whose parents had given their consent from the group of eight, not telling me whether the parents of the other five children had consented. Although I focused my attentions and instruction on all eight students, the three identified students became the focus students for this study. Student 1 was a white female student who will be called "Chloe" in this paper. She was six years old during the study. Student 2, "Keegan," was a white male student. He was six years old during the study. Student 3 was a white male student who will be called "Jacob" in this paper. He was six years old at the time of the study.

Chloe received small group reading instruction as a kindergartener and was tutored throughout the summer. In the fall of 2006, Chloe was given the District Diagnostic Reading Probe. Chloe's instructional guided reading level at the beginning of the year was a level of three. The average reading level for the first graders at the beginning of the year was a level six. Her comprehension on the level three was 100% accurate. The strategies for identifying unknown words in context that she possessed at the beginning of the year included the use of picture cues and limited beginning sounds. Chloe received guided reading and small group reading instruction daily along with three days of Readers' Workshop per week, along with all of the other children in the classroom.

Keegan received small group reading instruction as a kindergartner and was tutored during the summer. The Fall 2006 Diagnostic Reading Probes (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2001) showed that Keegan was reading instructionally at a level two guided reading level compared to the level six average of the class. His comprehension on level two was 90% accurate. The word solving strategies that he

possessed at the beginning of the year were limited. He lacked one to one correspondence and used limited picture cues. He often appealed to me when he was unsure of a word. Keegan received guided reading, Reading Recovery, and three days of Readers' Workshop each week.

Jacob received small group reading instruction as a kindergartner and was not tutored during in the summer. The Fall 2006 Diagnostic Reading Probes (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2001) showed that Jacob was reading a level three guided reading level compared to the average level six of his peers. His comprehension on a level three guided reading level was 100% accurate. The strategies that he possessed at the beginning of the year included one to one correspondence and the use of picture cues. Jacob received guided reading, small group reading instruction, and three days of Readers' Workshop each week.

Procedures

Hansen (2001) states that everything takes time. Setting up and implementing Readers' Workshop in my classroom took time. Prior to the 2006-2007 year the students in my classroom normally participated in Sustained Silent Reading time. There was limited instruction on how to choose an appropriate book, few guidelines of what students should be doing during the reading time, and very little discussion about what they were reading. This year, I knew that for Readers' Workshop to be successful, I needed to teach my students how to choose an appropriate book, give them guidelines about behaviors when they were reading, and encourage students to respond to the books they were reading. This study was conducted over a six-week period from November 2006 to January 2007.

I started the study by developing mini-lessons to help my students with the routines of Readers' Workshop. Atwell (1998) states that Readers' Workshop should begin with procedural mini-lessons. I started Readers' Workshop by giving procedural mini-lessons on how students could choose an appropriate book, where to put books when they have finished reading, and how to interact with classmates during discussion times. They were guided to tubs that contained books that were at their reading level. During mini-lessons conducted at the beginning of the study, students were taught how to choose just right books. Mini-lessons guided the students on how to choose if a book was a just right, vacation, or too hard of a book.

As students practiced the procedural mini-lessons I journaled about the procedures that were going well and procedures that students need more practice on and then used the journal as guideline for the literacy and strategy mini-lessons. These mini-lessons included how to choose an appropriate book by using the five finger test, how to make predictions, and word work. I also taught students the differences between easy, just right, and difficult books. I stated that the reason I wanted to begin Readers' Workshop was because I noticed so much off task behavior and that students were not engaged in their books.

All students in the classroom participated in Readers' Workshop as a part of the ongoing curriculum. The students participated in Readers' Workshop three days a week. Each child in the study was observed once every two weeks for a six week time period. I kept journals throughout the study on each of the students in the study.

All students were provided mini-lessons on Readers' Workshop, were given time to read their books, took part in informal discussions, and also had the opportunity to share their reading during book shares.

Throughout Readers' Workshop and guided reading, the students were given mini-lessons on retelling. The students practiced retelling their books during Readers' Workshop. They practiced these skills in small groups, with partners, and during book sharing time.

Students and parents were involved in the study to show differences in their motivation, self-selection, and comprehension throughout the study. The students and parents were interviewed at the beginning of the study and again at the end of the study. Each child and his/her parents answered questions about his/her feelings about reading at school and reading at home. See Appendix 5 for the interview protocols.

Instruments Employed to Collect Data

For the purposes of this study, I chose to focus on students' motivation, self-selection, and comprehension during independent reading. The data that provided information about the students' motivation and self-selection came from journals that I kept on observations made of informal discussions.

The Reading Diagnostic Probes (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2001) provided by the district were administered at the beginning of the year and again at mid-year. The student reading levels and comprehension were tested at this time. Each child in the classroom was given the same assessment. A Linn Mar Retelling Rubric (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2005) provided by the district was also used to collect data on comprehension. See Appendix 4 for a copy of the rubric. The rubric includes the

variables of characters, setting, problem, solution, events, and order. I also used the Linn

Mar Retelling Rubric (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2005) to collect data on the

books that the students were reading at Readers' Workshop time. This Linn Mar

Retelling Rubric (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2005) was used for scoring students'

overall ability to retell using the characters, setting, problem, solution, events, and order.

This rubric contains three levels that include: high quality, acceptable, and needs

attention.

The last part of the data collection included parent/child interviews. Parent child

interviews were used at the beginning and the end of the six week study. This data

provided information on motivation, self-selection, and comprehension at home.

Analysis of the Data

As data were collected I organized the data to draw conclusions for my results.

My data on motivation and self-selection came from my observation journals, anecdotal

records, student questionnaires, and parent questionnaires. I read through each of these

data pieces several times and highlighted information on each of the focus student's

motivation, engagement, and self-selection. I then made comparisons to the comments I

had written about each student at the beginning of the study.

My data on comprehension came from the Diagnostic Reading Probes (Linn Mar

Assessment Committee, 2001) that were given to each student at the beginning and the

end of the study. I compared the comprehension scores from the beginning of the study

and the end of the study and noted any changes. Data were also collected during guided

reading sessions using a Linn Mar Retelling Rubric (Linn Mar Assessment Committee,

2005). The scores on the Linn Mar Retelling Rubric showed changes that occurred

throughout the study. Data that were collected from these Linn Mar Retelling Rubric

(Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2005) were compared from the beginning and the end

of the study.

IV

Results

The goal of this study was to see how Readers' Workshop affected 1st graders motivation, self-selection, and comprehension in reading. The questions that I wished to answer in this study included: Will participation in Readers' Workshop improve struggling student's motivation and self-selection? Will struggling student's comprehension improve through participation in discussions during Readers' Workshop? The results in the following sections provide the data that were was compiled from the analysis of the results. The sections are organized by research question. Within each section, I will describe the changes observed for each focus student from the beginning of the study to the end of the study.

Will participation in Readers' Workshop improve students' motivation to read and improve their self-selection during Readers' Workshop time?

My findings on this section were based on observations, anecdotal records and the surveys I conducted with the students and parents. The surveys were given at the beginning and the end of the study. See Appendix 4 for the survey used for students and parents.

The results in this section were compiled from my anecdotal records on how the mini-lessons affected the three focus student's motivation and self-selection. I immediately noticed changes in the way the students were engaged in their books during Readers' Workshop. The short mini-lessons provided opportunities for the students to understand the steps in Readers' Workshop and then to have the opportunity to practice these steps. Throughout my observations, I would note things that were going well in

Readers' Workshop and things the students needed to work on. I noted that practicing the routine was a key to the success of the Readers' Workshop. Each day for the first 2 weeks we would go over the routine of getting books, reading, and sharing. After practicing I noted that students were doing these routines on their own. I also noted observations that guided my instruction in mini-lessons. Using mini-lessons for instruction made Readers' Workshop run much more smoothly than Sustained Silent Reading time ever ran in my classroom before. I also noted that the students in my study had difficulty choosing books. Chloe would often say, "I can't find a book that I like" or "I just want to look at the pictures." Time was crucial and they were spending more time choosing books than reading.

As a result of these observations I concluded that I needed to spend a substantial amount of time modeling how to pick out the appropriate books to give the students guidance in this area. As I continued to model, my need to redirect students on procedures lessened and lessened as the mini-lessons continued. The setup and planning of Readers' Workshop were essential to its implementation. Having the focus and reevaluating after each session were keys to Readers' Workshop running successfully.

At the beginning of my research I noted that the three students in the study lacked motivation for reading during Readers' Workshop. I observed that they employed many avoidance techniques during free reading time, such as drawing, daydreaming, and visiting with friends. As Readers' Workshop was implemented in my classroom, student's motivation and self-selection improved. These changes were seen at the end of the six week study. Student's behaviors began to change by the end of the study. It was noted in my anecdotal records, student surveys, and parent surveys that the students were

reading more than spending their time trying to find a book or visiting with friends. I noted in my anecdotal records that the students in the study were asking me for books that were interesting to them and to help them find books that were appropriate for their reading level. The students would ask things such as, "Mrs. Seery, could you help me find a just right book?" or "Do you know where I can find some books about pirates?" Parents also noted in the survey that their children were willing to read at home without struggles. Parents noted that the students had a positive attitude and became excited about sharing their books. One parent stated, "My child is wanting to read at home without me begging for him to read." Another parent commented, "My child is excited to read the books that they are reading from in school. They can't wait to share their book with me."

Chloe's beginning of study results. Observations of Chloe at the beginning of the year showed that she was easily distracted during reading times. She often avoided getting started in a book by talking to a neighbor or doodling on paper. Also, observations noted that she became frustrated easily. She frequently made comments, such as "I can't read" or "I need your help".

In the student survey at the beginning of the study, Chloe indicated that she would rather play than read. She stated that reading makes her go to sleep. She also indicated that she would rather have her mom and dad read to her than read her own book. Her feelings for reading her own book were not good. She didn't like when books are too hard.

However, the parent survey results concluded that Chloe loved being read to at home. She liked being read to more than reading to her parents. Chloe stated, "I feel

awesome when my parents read to me." Chloe's parents confirmed that Chloe never read on her own. Her parents stated, "If the book poses any challenge, she will not read." Her mood also affected her reading. Chloe's parents indicated that Chloe didn't like to spend her free time reading. She would only talk about books that her parents shared with her.

Chloe's end of study results. As observations continued throughout the study time I noticed a difference in Chloe's engagement. This was especially noted when she had the opportunity to share with her classmates. She appeared to enjoy the opportunity to share the book she was reading to the class and would be very engaged during reading time. She was very into the reading using great expression. She also would smile throughout the reading and would get excited when she was able to ask the other children for comments. She would be engaged in reading and very focused on practicing her reading skills and strategies. Her strong point was sharing about the books she read. She was very animated when talking about books and would grab the student's attention when sharing. She particularly enjoyed reading a *Thomas the Train* book (Awdry, 1990). This book had a repetitive and rhyming pattern. She used voice intonation and would use expression throughout the book. She told the class that she liked this book because she likes watching Thomas the Train on television with her brother. She seemed to enjoy being in front of the classroom and sharing with them.

The results of the end of study survey showed that she still enjoyed being read to by her mom and dad. She indicated in her student survey that she loves when her mom and dad read to her. When asked how she felt about reading her own book she stated, "I really like reading books that I am good at." However, there was also evidence that Chloe's motivation to read on her own had grown. She stated that she really liked

Readers' Workshop, especially when I help her find just right books. She stated, "I really like Readers' Workshop because it makes me feel awesome."

The results of the end of the study survey showed that Chloe's parents noticed maturity in Chloe's reading skills. They noted that she was more willing to engage in reading at home without being asked. Chloe's parents also stated that extrinsic motivators were beneficial to Chloe. The parent explained that she would often have Chloe read a page and then she would read one, or the mother would have Chloe read her book first and then read to Chloe. She stated, "Chloe is more willing and seems to have a better attitude about reading."

Keegan's beginning of study results. Observations of Keegan during the beginning of the study showed that he often looked through books, but did not read. He would rather have drawn pictures than to read books. He also expressed many times that he did not like to read. Keegan would often state, "I don't want to read" or "Reading is boring." He was hesitant to read to others during group sharing time.

When given the survey at the beginning of the study, Keegan commented that he gets kind of bored with books. He didn't like it when he had to read to himself. He said, "I feel sad about reading instead of playing because I like to play more than read." When asked how he felt about Readers' Workshop he stated, "Kind of good. I like it when it's quiet and I can concentrate." When asked how he felt about the teacher asking him questions about the book he read, he stated, "I am nervous because I don't know what to say."

Keegan's parents indicated in the survey at the beginning of the study that it was always a struggle to get Keegan to read at home. He did not enjoy reading and did not

find being read to enjoyable. He did not engage in any book talks. The parents noticed little changes in student's reading ability and motivation at home. His parents stated, "Keegan does not like to read books or discuss book that we read to him. He often avoids anything that has to do with reading."

Keegan's end of study results. The results of the end of survey showed that Keegan had dramatic changes from the beginning to the end of the study. He stated, "I like to read books on my own when I get to choose them." He said he is very interested in mummy books and he likes it when he finds new ones to read. When asked how he felt about asking questions about books he read, he stated, "I get excited when I share books and the class gets to ask me questions."

Observations of Keegan at the end of the study showed much more motivation. He was very involved in reading books about mummies and joke books. I noticed him checking the schedule each day to see if we were having Readers' Workshop. I also noted at indoor recess he was choosing books from his book box. He was very excited to share his books with me. He would ask me for ideas when he was looking for new books. I also noted that he was using the school librarian as a resource when he was looking for books. Keegan would ask to take books home to share with his parents.

The results of the parent survey at the end of the year also indicated changes in Keegan's feelings and motivation for reading at home. At the end of the study, he was willing to read the books that he brought home from school. He also was discussing his books with his parents and his older brothers. His parents stated, "Keegan enjoys reading his books to his brothers and talking about the books with us." They also stated, "We have seen a new level of confidence in Keegan." They noted that he found an interest in

mummies and that they saw him pick up these books without being prompted to read. They found his confidence had grown greatly and he was using reading strategies independently.

  Jacob's beginning of study results. Observations of Jacob during reading times showed that he often looked like he was enjoying reading time, but when probed it was evident that he was not reading during this time. He would be engrossed in the pictures of the books, but when I would ask him to read to me, he would put it down and say that he didn't want to read it. During guided reading times he would often be the first one done. He also would often pretend to be reading during free reading times.

  Jacob indicated that he did not like being read to at home and didn't like reading books at home himself. He stated, "Reading is too hard." His parents indicated that he would much rather play with legos than read a book. Jacob indicated that reading at school was O.K. Jacob said, "I like reading books that are easy and that don't have hard words in them." He didn't like reading the books that his mom and dad would choose for him to read. He indicated that he didn't like it when the teacher asked him questions about his reading.

  At the beginning of the study Jacob's parents indicated that reading was a struggle every day at home. He would become very frustrated and in turn would make his parents frustrated. His parents stated, "Reading one book at home usually turns into a fight at night." He did not enjoy talking about books or doing any activities that related to books at home. Jacob's parents did not notice any positive changes in Jacob's reading ability or motivation in reading. They indicated, "We often feel like he just memorizes books and does not read the books".

Jacob's end of study results. At the end of the study, Jacob stated that he enjoyed reading at home. He stated, "I like reading to my mom and dad now." He said he liked reading the books that he brought home from guided reading and the books he chose at Readers' Workshop time. However, he did indicate that he still didn't like reading as much as playing. He stated, "I like Readers' Workshop because I get to pick the books that I want to read." He also liked it when the teacher asked him questions about reading.

Observations of Jacob at the end of the study showed that he was more involved when he was the focus student of the day or he was sharing his book with classmates. Anecdotal records still indicated he struggled getting started with a book without the assistance of a teacher. It was noted that he seemed to really enjoy the times he was sharing books with the class. Anecdotal records indicated that Jacob was excitable when sharing his book. When he knew it was his day to share, he would often ask me repetitively when it was time for him to share. He enjoyed taking on the leadership role and sharing his books with the other students.

At the end of the study, Jacob's parents had noticed some positive changes in Jacob's reading engagement. Jacob's parents stated, "We have worked on making reading more of a fun activity at home." They indicated that the struggles at home had declined drastically. He was more willing to read with to them and also had self-selected a book for them to read to him. They noticed that he had begun to use more reading strategies independently and was more confident in his skills. Jacob was also more willing to discuss books with his parents.

Summary of motivation and self-selection. At the beginning of the study all students displayed difficulty in finding just right books. They chose books that interested

them, but which were often too hard. I also noted that the students would choose books that their neighbor had read previously. During this time I noted in my anecdotal records that students in the study were not engaged in reading their books, but they were interested in the books' pictures.

As the students in the study received more instruction on how to choose just right book, their self-selection skills began to evolve. They began going to tubs and finding books that interested them and books that they were able to read. Through individual and group conferences I was able to hear more about their interests and lead them to find books that they were interested in. I noted that the students in the study became excited when they had the chance to choose their own book. The school librarian also noted changes in the books that the students in the study were asking for. She noted that the students were more aware of finding books that were at their reading levels. They took ownership in the books they chose.

Will student's comprehension improve through participation in discussions during Readers' Workshop?

The results on comprehension were compiled by comparing the Diagnostic Reading Probes (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2001) from the beginning and the end of the study. Comprehension results were also compiled by using the Linn Mar Retelling Rubric (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2005) during Readers' Workshop and guided reading time.

At the end of the study, I again used the middle of the year Diagnostic Reading Probe (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2001) to determine all of the children's guided reading instructional levels and comprehension levels. All three focus students made

improvements in their guided reading levels and scored much higher on the comprehension piece on the assessments. See Table 1 for students' results on comprehension.

Chloe's comprehension results. The middle of the year assessment showed that Chloe improved from reading at an instructional level of three at the beginning of the year to reading instructionally at a level eight at the end of the six-week study. Running records during guided reading time and Readers' Workshop showed that she was able to apply many more reading strategies independently. To identify unknown words in running texts, she was able to use beginning and ending sounds, she was breaking some words apart (e.g., like finding the word and in stand) and she was making associations to words that she knew to identify unknown words. She still lacked in her ability to correctly identify middle sounds (e.g., the *e* in the word *bent)* and relied too heavily on what would make sense, at the expense of using the letters and their sounds. She often skipped over words and had difficulty with tracking the print. However, her comprehension on both the level three passage (read at the beginning of the study) and the level eight passage (read at the end of the study) was 100% accurate. Chloe had difficulty in the beginning with retelling using the setting, events, and putting the events in order. Throughout the study she used more details in her retelling and showed these skills throughout the study.

Keegan's comprehension results. The middle of the year assessment showed that Keegan was reading instructionally at a level twelve, compared to his instructional reading level of two at the beginning of the year. Running records during guided reading and Readers' Workshop showed that he developed many more strategies for independent

use over the course of the six-week study. He was able to use beginning, middle, and ending sounds to identify unknown words in context. He was also able to break words apart and he used known words to help identify unknown words (e.g., like finding the word *and* in *stand*). He would appeal to me when he came to an unknown word before attempting the word. Keegan relied less on picture cues than before and was using meaning and the syntax of words to identify words. At the beginning of the year, his comprehension was 90% on the level two passage (instructional level) and at the end of the study he scored 100% on the level 12 passage (his instructional level). Thus, his comprehension scores show that he was able to comprehend accurately when reading at his instructional reading level. Throughout the study, Keegan had difficulty with characters, setting, events, and order. He struggled with all aspects of retelling and did not have confidence in his retelling skills. By the end of the study, his confidence improved and he was retelling using all the parts of the Linn Mar Retelling Rubric (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2005).

Jacob's comprehension results. Jacob was reading instructionally at a level eight at the end of the study, compared to reading at a level three at the beginning of the study. Running records showed that he had developed strategies such as reading for meaning and using beginning and ending sounds. He was beginning to make associations with words that he knew to solve to unknown words. He still struggled with middle sounds and relied heavily on picture cues. In the beginning, Jacob scored 100% at level three (his instructional level) at the end of the study he scored 100% on the level eight passage. Comprehension scores show that Jacob comprehends accurately at his reading level. Jacob improved adding details to his events and the organization of his ideas.

On the Diagnostic Reading Probes (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2001) at the end of the study the three focus students scored 90% to 100% on their retellings when reading texts at their instructional levels. The data collected at the beginning of the year on all three students showed that without teacher prompts all three students had a difficult time retelling a story. They needed to be prompted with specific questions to in order to retell the story accurately. When asked these specific questions the students were able to retell stories acceptably. The data at the beginning of the year also showed that all three students lacked the knowledge of setting and had difficulty retelling the events of a story in order. At the beginning of the year, on the rubric all three students fell in the "needs attention" category for the setting, events, and order.

At the end of the study the students' ability to retell began to change. (See Table 2 for the data that were collected on each student's retelling). All three students were able to retell the story with fewer prompts from others and included more details as they became more comfortable with the book talks. The students made notable changes in their ability to retell. Chloe was able to retell a story with a score rated "high quality," using characters, setting, problem, solution, and events. Chloe acceptably used order when retelling. Keegan was able to retell a story with "high quality" marks using characters, setting, problem, solution, and events. Keegan acceptably used order when retelling. Jacob was able to retell a story with" high quality" scores, using characters, setting, problem, and solution. Jacob acceptably used events and order when retelling.

V

Discussion

In this section I describe conclusions that were indicated by the results. In addition, I have listed recommendations based on the results of the study.

Conclusions

One of the challenges of this study was to set up Readers' Workshop in my classroom. Although the initial setup was a challenge, I found that the overall effects of Readers' Workshop in the classroom were positive, making time devoted to meeting the challenges worthwhile. In my anecdotal notes, recorded both things that were going well in Readers' Workshop and things on which the students needed further work. These observations then guided my instruction. When I used student's needs to guide my instruction, it made Readers' Workshop run more smoothly than SSR time ever ran in my classroom before. My need to prompt students on procedures lessened as the mini-lessons continued. I was reevaluating the students' reading after each workshop session and I felt that I gave my students instruction that was meeting each of their needs. My anecdotal records detailed the ways in which the students became involved in Readers' Workshop. The planning and continual instructional adaptations I made to my students' learning were essential for Readers' Workshop to be successful.

The first research question in my study was whether Readers' Workshop would improve struggling students' motivation to read and self-selection during Readers' Workshop time. The results from observations, anecdotal records, and student and parent surveys indicated that the three students in the study lacked motivation to select books and spend time reading. They often avoided reading time at home and at school, using

distractions to avoid reading. At the end of the study, however, my observations indicated that the students became more engaged during reading time. They appeared to enjoy the opportunities to share their books and took part during the Readers' Workshop sessions. My observations also revealed that the three students did rely on teacher guidance to stay on track with the books they chose for Readers' Workshop at the end of the study. A key to students' motivation was the opportunity for students to share their books with classmates. They were very excited to read to their classmates and have the opportunity to discuss their books with each other.

Parents also indicated in the surveys that improvements in student motivation were noted at home. In the beginning of the study, parents of all three focus children had stated that it was difficult to get the students involved in reading at home. They also noted that it was a constant struggle to get them to read at home. End-of-study survey results indicated that parents noted improvements in the students' skills and their overall attitude in reading; the students were more willing to read at home. They also noted that the students had developed interests in books. Last, the parents indicated that they perceived more confidence in their children's reading.

At the beginning of the study, the focus children had difficulty finding books that were appropriate for their levels. Books they chose were often too difficult for them to read. The students were often interested in the pictures of these books, but not the words. At the end of the study, the students' self-selection showed improvement, particularly after students received instruction through mini-lessons. During workshops, the students went to tubs and found books that interested them. They exhibited a great deal of excitement about books that they chose on their own. The students seemed to take

ownership of the books they were reading. They appeared to be very proud of the books they read to their classmates. However, the students still needed some guidance when choosing books because they still relied on the guidance to find a book that was appropriate for their reading level. It was still essential that I checked in with the students on self-selections.

The second question of the study was whether students' comprehension would improve through participation in discussions during Readers' Workshop. The beginning data on the Diagnostic Reading Probes (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2001) showed that all three students scored 90% to 100% on the comprehension portion of the leveled tests. Therefore, the three students successfully comprehended information at their reading levels at the beginning of the study. Their comprehension seemed to stay consistently strong as they were able to read more difficult text. Data were also collected using a Linn Mar Retelling Rubric (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2005). Rubric scores indicated that at the beginning of the study all students had a difficult time retelling a story without specific guiding prompts from a teacher. Students lacked the knowledge of the setting and had difficulty retelling the events of the story in order. At the end of the study all three students were beginning to show improvement in their retelling abilities. The students' results indicated a marked change--from "needing attention" with the parts of retelling to "acceptable" or "high quality" retelling. It is likely that the students improved their retelling skills through experiences with our book talks and book sharing. They began to develop a greater understanding of how to retell a text.

Recommendations

The list of recommendations stem from the results that were found in the study. The recommendations include ideas for future Readers' Workshops in the classroom and ideas for parent involvement.

1.   Continue to provide Readers' Workshop for the classroom at least three times a week.

2.   Provide opportunities for students to participate in book talks during Readers' Workshop

3.   Provide mini-lessons that encourage students to develop and practice appropriate self-selection skills.

4.   Meet with students during Readers' Workshop to encourage students to develop their comprehension strategies through book talks and during student conferences.

5.   Provide a workshop for parents to help them better understand the importance of self-selection of texts and motivation for reading. This workshop could give them ideas that could be used at home to motivate their children to read and ways they can help their children to self-select books at their independent and instructional levels.

6.   Continue to learn about students' interests to help them develop their self-selection.

7.   Continue the mini-lessons to develop student's ability to self-select.

VI

Summary

Throughout the study I questioned how Readers' Workshop would affect students in first grade. Research on Readers' Workshop indicated that the implementation in my classroom showed positive effects with first grade students. Hagerty (1992) states that teachers who have in mind the needs of their own students reach their students. I found this to be true throughout the study.

Readers' Workshop allowed students to have the opportunity to choose books that they enjoyed reading, practice reading skills and strategies at their own level, and discuss the books they were reading in a collaborative setting. Student motivation was lacking at the beginning of the study. The students struggled with wanting to read books on their own at school and at home. Parents noted that reading at home was often a challenge and not enjoyable. At the end of the study, students were motivated to read on their own and share books with others. Orehovec & Alley (2003) state that sharing time is a time to come together as a community of readers. Readers' Workshop allowed that community to come alive in my first grade classroom.

Readers' Workshop also encouraged students' comprehension skills. Students developed these skills during book talks. They improved their abilities to retell stories using specific details in their retellings. The students were able to retell stories using more details and beginning able to retell stories in order. The more time students had to practice these skills and see them modeled, the more they improved. Fountas & Pinnell (2006) indicate that comprehension is an integral part of Readers' Workshop. Having the opportunities to discuss books reinforces and expands student learning. Students became

more comfortable talking about books with each other and applying their comprehension strategies to the books they were reading.

At the end of the study I wanted to know if the focus students were capable of self-selecting books on their own Hagerty (1992) has stated that students who choose their own texts are more willing to be involved in their reading. I found this to be true with the focus students throughout the study. Students learned to take pride in the books that they chose and demonstrated enjoyment when given the opportunity to choose the books that they wanted. The challenge does, however, still continue in this area because the students still need some support in choosing books at their levels. Through the continued use of mini-lessons and individual meetings, I believe these challenges can be met.

Readers' Workshop develops a community of learners. Wakerly & Young (2002) believe that children who have the opportunity to make choices and decisions in their education are able to take ownership of their learning. I felt this ownership evolved in my classroom throughout the study. Students were proud of the books they were reading and they were proud of the fact that they could share their accomplishments with others. Readers' Workshop is truly an opportunity for students to find their potential and grow from their experiences.

For future research I would suggest doing a year-long study. This would allow a teacher to track the growth of the students over a longer period of time. I also would like to observe the results of differences in implementation since this year was my first year implementing Readers' Workshop. A longer study would allow me the time to refine Readers' Workshop in my classroom. I would also like to increase the time of Readers

workshop in my classroom from three days a week to five days a week. With these

changes, students may be impacted even more.

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Appendix 1

Linn Mar Reading Probe

Harold's Flyaway Kite - Level 12
Running Words 166
Teacher Recording Sheet
Student's Name ----------------
Accuracy _
Date: _
Comprehension %
Homeroom Teacher:

Teacher Directions: This story is titled Harold's Flyaway Kite. In this story, Harold
wanted to fly his kite because it was a windy day. He and his father flew it, but it got
away. Look at the pictures in the book and tell me about them. (Recorder should make no
comments). I would like you to read this story for me. I won't tell you words you don't
know because I want to see how you read on your own. You will need to remember the
story so you can retell it to me when you are done. (Child reads the story out loud while
teacher records errors.)

It was a windy day.

The wind blew the leaves off the trees.

The wind blew Harold's hat down the street.

Harold's father said, "Today is a good day to fly your kite." Harold was happy.

He ran upstairs to look for his kite. He looked in his closet.

He looked under his bed.

He looked under the dog and under the cat. He could not find his kite. Then Harold
looked in his box.

There was his kite!

Harold and his father took the kite to the park. Harold's father tied a string to the kite.

Harold ran with the kite.

The kite went up in the wind. Up and up and up. "Hold tight," Harold's father said.

Too late!

The kite flew away in the wind. Up and up and up. Harold and his father watched sadly.

Then they walked home.

The mailman was there. He had a big bump on his head. "Here is your kite, Harold. Please hold on tight next time."

Harold's Flyaway Kite - Level 12
Retelling Scoring Sheet
Directions: The teacher says… Now tell me the story in your own words. Check the retelling points that the student~ says. (Child retells -teacher marks on the retell side of the scoring sheet.) Give credit if underlined ideas are mentioned NO partial credit Ask prompting questions for those points not mentioned by the student independently. Mark on prompting side of scoring sheet.

Retelling Prompts:

What was the weather like?

His dad said it was a good day to fly the kite.

What did Harold's Dad tell him?

What was Harold's first problem?

Where did he find his kite?

What did Harold's father say?

What happened to Harold's kite?

How did the story end?

Critical Thinking Questions:

Possible Answers: (accept reasonable answers)

How do you know it was a windy day?

Possible Answer: Harold's hat blew down the street, the leaves blew on the trees.

Why do you think Harold's Dad was sad?

Possible Answer: He didn't think they'd get the kite back.

How did the mailman get the bump on his head?

Possible Answer: The kite hit him in the head.

Comments:

Appendix 2

Recruitment Script for Parents

My name is Mrs. Seery and I am a First Grade Teacher at Oak Ridge. I am doing a study to learn about your child's interests in reading and his or her engagement in reading. If you agree to participate and to have your child participate, I will ask you some questions about your child's reading. I am going to be asking you some questions about your child's reading. Your answers to these questions will be kept confidential. Whether you participate or not is your choice, and if you decide you don't want to participate, then your child's grade will not be affected. You should not feel pressured to participate. So that you won't, I am asking you to return this consent form to Ms. _____. She will choose 3 children from those of you who give your permission. She will inform me that those 3 children will be in the study. I will not know whether the other parents gave their permission until the end of the school year, after report cards are sent.

Appendix 3

Consent Form for the Study

PARENTAL PERMISSION

Your child has been invited to participate in an action research project conducted by Tara Seery as part of the University of Northern Iowa Graduate Program requirements. This project is titled, *The Impact of Readers' Workshop in a First Grade* Classroom. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to allow your child and yourself to participate in this project. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate.

I am interested in improving methods of engaging students in reading. I believe that the Readers' Workshop is an effective method for improving children's motivation, understanding of what they read, and their understanding of how to select books to read. I will be looking at your child's engagement during Readers' Workshop time, his or her comprehension of the books he or she is reading, and also how he or she chooses books to read. During this study I will be having discussions with your child about the books he or she is reading. I will be recording these discussions with an audio or videotape. No one other than I will see the audio or videotapes. I will also be taking notes and asking your child questions throughout the study. I am writing you to ask for your permission to use these discussions and tapes in my action research project.

I am also asking for your participation in the study. At the beginning and the end of the study I would like to ask you some questions. These questions will take approximately 20 minutes each time. These questions will give me a better understanding of your child's engagement and interests of books at home. I will be taking notes and your answers will be used in my researcher project.

Your child's name and your name will not be attached to any of the information I plan to use. Your child's grade will not be affected by his or her participation in this study. There are no foreseeable risks to participation. Although you or your child will not receive direct benefits from this study, you will potentially contribute to our society's understanding of how to improve student's engagement, comprehension, and self-selection of books. I will keep all the information I collect strictly confidential. Your participation and your child's participation in this study is voluntary.

If you would like further information about the study, please feel free to contact me at Oak Ridge School, (319)447-3410, or my UNI advisor, Dr. Penny Beed, at (319) 273-2070. You may also contact the Office of the Human Subjects Coordinator, University of Northern Iowa, (319) 273-6148 for answers to any questions you may have about participation in the study.

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation and my child's participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to allow my son/daughter to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement.

_____   _____
Your Signature   Date   Your Name (printed)   Date

_____
Your Child's Name (printed)   Date

_____
Signature of Teacher-Researcher   Date

_____
Signature of Advisor   Date

Appendix 4

Linn Mar Retelling Rubric (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2005)

Retelling

Retelling Element	High Quality 3 Student's retelling	Acceptable 2 Student's retelling	Needs Attention 1 Student's retelling
Characters	Told about the characters so others had a good idea of what they are like	Named the characters, but did not tell much about them	Confused the characters or did not name them. Think about who was in story and how they acted.
Setting	Helped others get a clear picture in their heard of when & where the story took place.	Gave some details about where and when the story took place.	Needs to describe when and where the story took place so the reader can picture it.
Problem	Told what the problem was the character faced.	Included part of the problem the characters faced.	Needs to twll what is the matter in story. What are characters trying to improve.
Solution	Told how problem solved or how story ended	Gave some idea of how solved or story ended.	Needs to accurately tell solution/how story ended.
Events-both quantity and quality	Told the main events in the story accurately.	Told some main events in story or gave accurate information for some events.	Needs to include main events/events important to story and give accurate info. for events.
Order	Keep the events in the correct order.	Keep some events in the correct order.	Confused order of the events. Need to think about what happened 1st, 2nd, 3rd. as retell

Appendix 5

Parent Child Interviews

Examples of Questions Asked During Interview (Student)
The same questions will be used at the beginning and the end of the study
Questions were adapted from the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey
Johns. J. & Lenski, S. (1994). Improving reading strategies and resources Fourth Edition.
Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

- How do you feel about having a book read to you?

- How do you feel about reading your own book?

- How do you feel about reading instead of playing?

- How do you feel when it's time to read in your classroom?

- How do you feel during Readers' Workshop?

- How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you are reading?

Examples of Questions Asked During Parent Interview (Parent)
The same questions were asked at the beginning and the end of the study
with the exception of the last question. The last question was only asked at the end
the study.

- How does your child feel about being read to?

- How does your child feel about reading on his/her own at home?

- Do you feel your child enjoys reading on his/her free time? What observations have you made that make you feel this way?

- Does your child like to talk about books that they have read?

- What changes have you noticed with your child's reading ability and engagement in reading?

Tables

Table 1

Guided Reading Level (GRL) and Comprehension (Comp.) Percentage at That Level

Student	Beginning GRL Level	End GRL Level	Beginning Comp. %	End Comp. %
Chloe	3	8	100%	100%
Keegan	2	12	90%	100%
Jacob	3	8	100%	100%

Table 2

Results on Linn Mar Retelling Rubric (Linn Mar Assessment Committee, 2005) at

Beginning and End of Study

Chloe	Beginning of Study	End of Study
Characters	Acceptable	High Quality
Setting	Needs Attention	High Quality
Problem	Acceptable	High Quality
Solution	Acceptable	High Quality
Events	Needs Attention	High Quality
Order	Needs Attention	Acceptable

Keegan	Beginning of Study	End of Study
Characters	Needs Attention	High Quality
Setting	Needs Attention	High Quality
Problem	Acceptable	High Quality
Solution	Acceptable	High Quality
Events	Needs Attention	High Quality
Order	Needs Attention	Acceptable

Jacob	Beginning of Study	End of Study
Characters	Acceptable	High Quality
Setting	Acceptable	High Quality
Problem	Acceptable	High Quality

Jacob	Beginning of Study	End of Study
Solution	Acceptable	High Quality
Events	Needs Attention	Acceptable
Order	Needs Attention	Acceptable