Accelerated reader and sustained silent reading's impact on students' motivation to read

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Abstract
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A mixed-methods approach was used in this research design. Quantitative data were collected through the MRP survey, administered both before the introduction of SSR and after implementing SSR. Qualitative data were collected through an individual conversational interview. An embedded design analysis was used to allow the researcher to consider students’ responses from the MRP survey while studying the comments from each conversational interview.

The data from the MRP survey showed a 2% decrease in students’ motivation to read. The conversational interviews revealed that most students do not like to take Accelerated Reader quizzes and depend on levels when making book selections. During SSR the students felt that they read more and liked the quiet classroom atmosphere. This class still needs continued support in making book selections based on reading for enjoyment or for information.

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ACCELERATED READER AND SUSTAINED SILENT READING’S IMPACT ON
STUDENTS’ MOTIVATION TO READ

A Graduate Research Paper
Submitted to the
Division of School Library Studies
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by
Amy Benedict
May 2011
This Research Paper by: Amy Benedict

Titled: ACCELERATED READER AND SUSTAINED SILENT READING’S IMPACT ON STUDENTS’ MOTIVATION TO READ

has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Imagine an adult just finished reading the latest new mystery book from their favorite author. Would that person’s enjoyment dampen if they had to immediately go to the nearest computer and answer 10-20 multiple choice questions to test their comprehension? According to Renaissance Learning, the company that provides Accelerated Reader, over 75,000 schools in North America are having students do just that; read and then take a quiz (Renaissance Learning, 2009). This research will study the influence of Accelerated Reader and Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) on students’ reading motivation.

For educators responsible for teaching reading skills, the Accelerated Reader program provides data to track how much reading each student is doing and at what level (Nunnery, Ross & McDonald, 2006). Some students are motivated to read by the number of points they earn on a quiz or by the percentage correct on the quiz (Brisco, 2003). At the elementary school where this researcher is the teacher-librarian, intermediate students have been reading books and taking Accelerated Reader quizzes for four years by the time they reach fourth grade. Many of these students have associated reading a book with taking a quiz. According to Krashen and Sprecken (2002), some students do not understand that there are other reasons to read books, such as reading for enjoyment or information.

Most reading done by mature readers is recreational reading or free voluntary reading (Krashen, 2006). Reading just because you want to and what you want to with no
book report, assignment, or grade attached "may be the only way to help children become better readers, writers, and spellers" (Krashen, 2006, p. 43).

One recreational reading method schools have adopted is called Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). SSR is based on six principles. The first is that students select their own material to read. Second, the teacher models by reading at the same time. Next, a certain amount of uninterrupted time is scheduled. Students select one material to read the entire time. No reports or records are kept for what is read during SSR. Last, the whole class or school participates (Pilgreen, 2000).

After reviewing 10 studies that followed students that in SSR programs for 12 months or more, Krashen (2006) found that students who read during those programs outperformed students who did not have time set aside in school for free reading. Trelease (2001) also found that students who read the most pages for leisure daily had higher reading scores.

Accelerated Reader is another approach schools use to encourage free reading. Accelerated Reader is a computerized program that gives immediate feedback on students' reading practice through short multiple choice quizzes (Nunnery et al., 2006). Accelerated Reader is the core component of Reading Renaissance, a guided reading practice program. Reading Renaissance is based on six principles. The first principle is that students need time to practice reading, and Reading Renaissance recommends 30-60 minutes daily. Another principle is that students experience a high level of success while reading. Accelerated Reader complements that principle by monitoring students' comprehension through computerized quizzes with a goal for each student to have at least an average of 85% or higher. The third principle is that students mainly read books
matched to their abilities. One tool is determining the students’ zone of proximal development (ZPD), a grade equivalent, which the STAR Reading assessment will designate but can be adjusted by the teacher. The fourth Reading Renaissance principle is that students receive feedback through TOPS (The Opportunity to Praise a Student) reports and conferencing with teachers. The fifth principle is that students, along with their teacher, set personal goals for reading practice time, book levels, and performance levels on quizzes. The last principle is that teachers provide instruction for students based on daily monitoring and assessments.

SSR and Accelerated Reader have one positive aspect in common. They both allow time in school for students to free read. However, with SSR students can choose any reading material, while Accelerated Reader limits students’ choice. Students must choose books that have a quiz and that are in their level (Groce & Groce, 2005).

SSR differs from Accelerated Reader because SSR does not include any quizzing, conferencing, goal setting, or reporting. It was reported that when students are rewarded for reading a certain amount, the students often stop reading after they reach that goal, whereas students who read with no stopping point often read more because they became interested in the reading material (Krashen, 2002).

Ultimately, the teacher is responsible for creating a classroom that fosters a student’s love for reading (Gambrell, 1996). Instead of focusing on how to change the student, the challenge lies-in how to change the “conditions in which students learn” (Alvermann, 2004, p. 293). According to Krashen (2002) these conditions are not achieved by purchasing the Accelerated Reader software and matching quizzes and
having students test. Rather Krashen (2002) recommends providing intrinsic motivation through student access to high-interest reading material and time to read.

Problem Statement

After many years of using the Accelerated Reader program, there is growing concern among the George Washington Elementary staff that students are only reading for "points" and they are forgetting the joy of reading.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine if students’ motivation to read is influenced by the use of Accelerated Reader or SSR in their school.

Research Questions

1. If given 30 minutes a day to free read using SSR, will students’ attitudes toward reading improve?
2. What do students like and dislike about using Accelerated Reader and SSR?

Definitions

**Accelerated Reader (AR)** - “AR is a computerized information system that provides students and teachers with immediate diagnostic feedback on student reading practice through short quizzes” (Nunnery, Ross, & McDonald, 2006, p. 2).

**Free Voluntary Reading (FVR)** - An in-school program where part of the school day is set aside for reading (Krashen, 2006).

**Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)** - A type of Free Voluntary Reading where time is set aside in the school day for students to read anything they want. Students do not do book
reports, assignments or take quizzes over books that are read during this time (Krashen, 2006).

**STAR Reading**- A computerized assessment to determine a student’s reading level created by Renaissance Learning. The acronym STAR (Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading) is no longer maintained and the test is currently called “STAR Reading” (Pavonetti, Brimmer, & Cipielewski, 2002).

**TOPS (The Opportunity to Praise a Student) report**- A report that prints immediately after a student takes an Accelerated Reader practice quiz. It gives feedback about the quiz just taken and shows cumulative data for the marking period and school year (*Reading practice TOPS report*, n.d.).

**Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**- “The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) defines the readability range from which students should be selecting books in order to achieve optimal growth in reading skills without experiencing frustration. STAR Reading software uses Grade Equivalents to derive a student's ZPD score. Specifically, it relates the Grade Equivalent estimate of a student's reading ability with the range of most appropriate readability levels to use for reading practice. The School Renaissance Institute developed the ZPD ranges according to Vygotskian theory, based on an analysis of Accelerated Reader book reading data from 80,000 students in the 1996-1997 school year” (Renaissance Learning, 2008, para. 1-3).

**Assumptions**

The researcher is assuming that all of the students in the study have been using the Accelerated Reader program and the Reading Renaissance principles to monitor their free reading for at least six months. These students are able to login to Renaissance Place,
take a quiz, print the TOPS report and seek feedback from their teacher. It is also assumed that these students can independently read the books that they have chosen. When these students are given the direction to choose a book based on their own interest and not Accelerated Reader levels, it is assumed that students will need some guidance on how to select those books.

Limitations

This study is limited to the use of the Accelerated Reader program at George Washington Elementary in one fourth grade classroom. The results obtained in this study will not be generalizable. They will be limited to George Washington Elementary, in Keokuk, Iowa in Lee County.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

There is growing concern among the George Washington Elementary staff that students are only reading for “points” and that after many years of using the Accelerated Reader program, many of these same students are forgetting the joy of reading. The purpose of this study is to determine if students’ motivation to read is influenced by the continued emphasis of Accelerated Reader in their school. Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) will be introduced to these students. Feedback and opinions will be sought from students based on their experiences with Accelerated Reader and SSR.

There are two main questions that this research will address. First, if given 30 minutes a day to free read using SSR, will students’ attitudes toward reading improve? And second, what do students like and dislike about using Accelerated Reader and SSR?

Upon the review of the literature, three main areas of research emerged that enlighten this study: the Accelerated Reader program, reading motivation and sustained silent reading.

Accelerated Reader

The Accelerated Reader program has been purchased by over 75,000 schools in North America (Renaissance Learning, 2009). According to a study completed by Nunnery, Ross and McDonald (2006), despite Accelerated Reader’s wide use, there have been no published well-controlled evaluations of its effectiveness on student achievement in reading. The researchers have found pre-experimental studies about Accelerated Reader that showed gains in students’ reading achievement, but none of the studies compared students using Accelerated Reader with a control group of students that did not use the program.
Mathis (1996) was also concerned with the lack of research that compared students who used Accelerated Reader to a control group. Mathis (1996) questioned “Does the use of Accelerated Reader cause an increase in the reading comprehension scores on the SAT [Stanford Achievement Test] of sixth grade students compared to the previous year in which they did not use the program” (p. 9)?

Mathis (1996) conducted his research in a rural community in north central Illinois. From the 37 total sixth grade students that attended the school, 30 students were chosen for the study. Seven of the students did not have complete data from fourth and fifth grade and therefore were not included in the reporting.

The SAT was administered each spring to the same group of students during their fourth, fifth, and sixth grade year. The raw scores were recorded for each student’s growth in reading comprehension from fourth to fifth grade. During that year Accelerated Reader was not used as part of the reading curriculum. The raw scores in reading comprehension on the SAT of those same students were recorded from fifth to sixth grade. In that school year Accelerated Reader was implemented (Mathis, 1996).

The data were reported using mean and standard deviation. In the year that students did not use Accelerated Reader, the students’ net gain score dropped .27 on the SAT. In the second year when Accelerated Reader was implemented, the scores fell .53 on the SAT. The declines both years were very small, however both school years the students gained approximately one year in their reading comprehension. A “t test (p<.05)” was used to determine if the difference in the net gain scores were statistically significant (Mathis, 1996, p. 10). This analysis showed that there was no statistically
significant increase in students’ reading comprehension scores after using Accelerated Reader for one year (Mathis, 1996).

In a later study Pavonetti, Brimmer and Cipielewski (2002) were concerned that many schools had implemented Accelerated Reader as a supplemental or main reading program. Accelerated Reader’s philosophy was that, because of the program, students became motivated readers and therefore read more books. Reading more was linked to better test scores. The researchers were concerned that there had been few peer-reviewed studies to support those claims. Their study investigated if seventh grade students who used Accelerated Reader in elementary school read more in seventh grade than seventh grade students who did not use Accelerated Reader in elementary school.

Pavonetti et al. (2002) used seventh grade middle school students from ten different schools located in both exurban (rural and small cities) and suburban areas. Out of the 1,771 students that were surveyed only 1,536 students’ results were used in the analysis of the data. Those students that were included attended fifth grade and seventh grade in the same district, and they were exposed to Accelerated Reader.

The students were administered the Title Recognition Test (TRT). This instrument included actual book titles along with made-up ones. It had been used to determine the levels of free reading done by upper elementary and middle school students. The TRT was utilized in this study to determine if there were differences in the amount of reading done by seventh grade students who used Accelerated Reader in elementary school to those who did not (Pavonetti et al., 2002).

After the questionnaire was completed, the quantitative data were analyzed using the discrimination index from the "two-high threshold model of recognition
performance” (Pavonetti et al., 2002, p. 305). For each student, the proportion of real
titles selected was subtracted from the proportion of made-up titles selected.

Pavonetti et al. (2002) first looked at the results to compare students in all three
districts combined who used Accelerated Reader in elementary school, to those that did
not. There was no significant difference between the two groups. The data were further
analyzed breaking students up by district. Students who attended the exurban district
showed no significant difference whether or not they used Accelerated Reader in
elementary school. Although there was not a significant difference, the trend was that
students who did not use Accelerated Reader in elementary read slightly more in seventh
grade.

The results for the suburban school districts were mixed. In the first district,
which did not continue Accelerated Reader in middle school, the students who did not
use Accelerated Reader in elementary school had better reading results than students who
had used Accelerated Reader. In the second suburban district, where Accelerated Reader
was used in middle school, students who also used it in elementary school had better
reading results (Pavonetti et al., 2002).

This study did not confirm the claim that Accelerated Reader motivated students
to become lifelong readers. Pavonetti et al. (2002) summarized that students who used the
Accelerated Reader program in elementary school did not read more in seventh grade
than students who did not use the program. The researchers questioned what the long-
term effects of using Accelerated Reader would be for students. They also questioned
what the effects of reading ability and reading motivation had on students.
Whereas Pavonetti et al. (2002) found that the use of Accelerated Reader at the elementary level did not show significant long range improvements in middle level students’ reading, other researchers have narrowed their research focus to study specific methods and strategies with which schools have implemented Accelerated Reader. Groce and Groce (2005) conducted a pilot study to examine how teachers were implementing the Accelerated Reader program. The implementation of Accelerated Reader had been increasing and was “credited for its perpetuation of improved test scores and for fostering a love of reading” (Groce & Groce, 2005, p. 18), consequently the researchers wanted to further examine this program. Groce and Groce (2005) focused on four main aspects of Accelerated Reader: assessment, aesthetics and text interaction, motivation, and book selection. The researchers also questioned how teachers integrated those four areas into their curriculum. Additionally, they shared data from a pilot study conducted in classrooms using Accelerated Reader.

Groce and Groce (2005) used a mixed methods approach for their study. They supported the qualitative assessment with quantitative data. One hundred teachers were randomly selected from two different school districts in the Southwest. Sixty-seven teachers responded to the survey entitled “Teacher Survey Implementation of Accelerated Reader” (Groce and Groce, 2005, p. 28). The teachers rated their agreement to each of the 30 statements on a scale of one to five.

The researchers learned that 75% of the teachers surveyed used Accelerated Reader in their reading instruction. Groce and Groce (2005) discussed the STAR assessment that was used with the Accelerated Reader program to help teachers determine a reading range or zone of proximal development (ZPD) for each student.
Almost half of the teachers surveyed allowed students to read books that were above or below their reading level only some of the time. Twenty-four percent of these teachers never allowed students to read outside of their range. Additionally, over half of the teachers used students' results from Accelerated Reader quizzes to determine the students' level of comprehension skills.

Groce and Groce (2005) found that 40% of the teachers used aesthetic integration to supplement Accelerated Reader in the forms of: literature circles, story retellings, teacher-student conferences, and writing activities. Reading motivation, by using the extrinsic reward of points, was used by over half of the teachers. Groce and Groce (2005) observed that the students who were earning the most points were students that already showed high achievement in reading.

Groce and Groce (2005) indicated that a positive aspect of using Accelerated Reader was that students had a choice in what they wanted to read. They stated that “the choices that they [students] make will be meaningful and relevant to them, thereby increasing their internal motivation to read and making the educational experience match their realities” (Groce & Groce, 2005, p. 24). The researchers cautioned that book choices were limited with Accelerated Reader, depending on the school’s ownership of a quiz and the level of the book. Only a small number of the teachers surveyed permitted students to read books that did not have a matching Accelerated Reader quiz.

Groce and Groce (2005) encouraged districts and schools who have adopted Accelerated Reader to consider modifications that included the following: supplementing with authentic assessments, surveying students on what motivates them to read, and
allowing students more choice in their reading selections. These adaptations may foster students to become lifelong readers.

The research conducted by Mathis (1996) and Pavonetti et al. (2002) both showed no significant difference in students’ achievement in reading depending upon whether Accelerated Reader or traditional reading instruction was used. Groce and Groce (2005) cautioned that book choices were limited with Accelerated Reader, and they suggested modifications while using the program.

Reading Motivation

Although researchers have focused on the use and effectiveness of the Accelerated Reader program in influencing students’ reading skills, Sweet, Guthrie, and Ng (1998) examined teacher perceptions of students’ reading motivation. The researchers found “little evidence available regarding the extent to which teachers perceive student motivations to read in ways that are consistent with self-determination theory or with the teachers’ practices in the classroom” (Sweet et al., 1998, p. 212). After studying several aspects of reading motivation, six key areas emerged: individual (intrinsic) motivation, topical motivation, autonomy support, social support, competence support, and writing.

The researchers focused their study to four main questions: how teachers perceive the six areas of reading motivation, how teachers perceive student motivation in relation to reading achievement, to what extent teacher perceptions vary across grade levels, and how teachers perceive reading motivation of videotaped classroom situations (Sweet et al., 1998).

Sweet et al. (1998) used a quantitative approach for part of the study. First, three focus groups were formed consisting of third and fifth grade teachers. The teachers
described what they thought defined a motivated reader and described a motivated reader’s behavior. Based on the feedback from the groups, the researchers developed 31 questions for the “Teacher Questionnaire on Student Motivation to Read” (Sweet et al., 1998, p. 214).

The questionnaire was completed by 68 third through sixth grade teachers from an urban Maryland school district. Each teacher selected two students from their class that they considered high achievers, two that were average achievers and two that were low achievers. The teacher completed a questionnaire about the six students they selected and also submitted their students’ first quarter reading report cards grades (Sweet et al., 1998).

From the 68 teachers that completed the questionnaire, six were chosen to participate in a conversational interview to collect qualitative data. One investigator videotaped a student from each classroom during a 30 minute reading lesson. The teachers then watched the video and replied to questions about their student’s reading motivation (Sweet et al., 1998).

The researchers reported that “correlations of teacher perceptions of intrinsic motivation and achievement in reading were positive” (Sweet et al., 1998, p. 219). Teachers perceived that students who had high achievement in reading also had more intrinsic motivation. Sweet et al. (1998) also noted that students who were perceived to be more intrinsically motivated had higher reading grades than students that were perceived to be more extrinsically motivated. The data showed a pattern that lower achievers needed more choices and opportunities to read. In most areas, teachers’ perceptions did not vary among third through sixth grade.
Sweet et al. (1998) suggested that teachers need to provide daily opportunities to move students from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic. Three areas that could help bridge the gap were: planning activities that connect to reading, allowing student choice, and doing related writing.

Palmer, Codling and Gambrell (1994) studied what students had to say about their own motivation to read, unlike the previous research that focused on the teachers’ perceptions. Palmer et al. (1994) “were interested in more fully understanding how children acquire the motivation to develop into engaged readers and how personal and situational factors influence students’ motivation to read” (p. 176).

About 330 third and fifth grade students participated in this year-long study. All of the students responded to a questionnaire that assessed: “self-concept as a reader, value of reading, and reasons for reading” (Palmer et al., 1994, p. 176). In addition 48 of the students from all ability levels were randomly selected to participate in a conversational interview. This interview was intended to provide the researchers with more in-depth information from the students about their own motivation to read.

After analyzing the responses from both the questionnaire and conversational interviews, Palmer et al. (1994) found four areas that influenced students’ motivation to read: “prior experience with books, social interactions about books, book access, and book choice” (p. 177). These four areas were consistent with students of all reading ability and motivation levels.

The students’ prior experience with books was most frequently mentioned. Students commented on reading books based on hearing a teacher or parent read it aloud. They also chose books that they had seen on television or at the movies. Another related
prior experience was reading books in a series. These types of books usually had similar characters, settings and structure. Palmer et al. (1994) also found that over 25% of the students liked to read books they have that they had heard about in social interactions with peers, teachers and parents.

Students’ access to books was another common aspect. Palmer et al. (1994) listed many places students obtained books: the classroom library, the school library, the public library, book clubs, gifts, and bookmobiles. All but one student reported having access to books at home as well as at school. The students also reported being more motivated to read when they could choose their own book.

The following are aspects that affect students’ motivation to read: book-rich classroom libraries, receiving books as gifts, choosing their own books, having a prior experience with the book, reading series books, and talking about books with others. Palmer et al. (1994) concluded that “teachers are in a position to have a positive impact on children’s motivation to read through careful planning with respect to the classroom literacy environment” (p. 178).

Whereas Sweet et al. (1998) and Palmer et al. (1994) both surveyed large numbers of teachers and students to help understand children’s motivation to read, Cole (2003) chose to do case studies with only four of her students. Even though the results of the research would not be generalizable, Cole (2003) felt that “students’ opinions, feelings, and choices were crucial to my [Cole’s] understanding of their [the students] intrinsic motivation to read and that this information would enable me [Cole] to be a more effective reading teacher” (p. 326).
Cole (2003) used a qualitative research approach for the seven month study. A second grade boy and girl were selected that were average to above average readers and another second grade boy and girl were selected that were average to below average readers. In this study the researcher was also the students’ classroom teacher. Cole (2003) collected data from six sources: field notes, videotape, reading logs, writing notebooks, audio samples of oral reading, three interviews with students, and two interviews with parents.

Cole (2003) questioned “What motivated the four case study students to read” (p. 330)? The researcher identified 19 different motivators for reading. One student showed 11 of the motivators, two students showed four motivators, and three students showed four motivators. None of the motivators were common among all four students. Cole (2003) concluded that all four students had unique “literacy personalities” (p. 330).

In order to develop reading motivation among students, Cole (2003) recommended: a print-rich classroom, varying reading styles, providing opportunities to share, using thematic units and incorporating author studies. Teachers that have an awareness of their students’ literacy personality can focus on “intrinsically motivating students to become independent, successful readers and learners” (Cole, 2003, p. 335).

Sweet et al. (1998), Palmer et al. (1994) and Cole (2003) all agree that reading motivation can be positively promoted with careful planning of teachers. All three research studies encouraged teachers to allow students to choose their own books and to provide opportunities for talking about books.
Sustained Silent Reading

Yoon (2002) described SSR "as a way of cultivating a love of reading. Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), is an in-classroom reading activity in which students are given a fixed period of time for the silent reading of self-selected material either for pleasure or for information" (p. 186). Yoon had found some studies that showed SSR had a positive effect on reading attitudes and other studies that did not. The purpose of Yoon's "meta-analytical approach" was to examine the effects of SSR on reading attitude (p. 190).

Yoon (2002) focused the research on these two questions: "(a) Does SSR enhance students' attitude toward reading, and (b) what contextual features of SSR are associated with students' reading attitude?" (p. 187). The purpose of these questions was to determine the effect of SSR on reading attitude and to find variables that influenced SSR's success.

Yoon (2002) discussed three characteristics that were important to SSR: self-selection, role modeling, and non-accountability. Several studies explained that when students choose materials that are of interest to them or self-select, they will be more motivated to read and learn from them. A second characteristic was role-modeling. Yoon (2002) stated "that a teacher role-modeling as nonverbal feedback plays a crucial role in fostering children's reading attitude" (p. 188). The third characteristic of a thriving SSR program was non-accountability. Students should not be required to create projects, write reports, record reading activity, etc. when reading during SSR.

To collect data for the meta-analytical analysis, Yoon (2002) identified 350 studies from the ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) and UMI (University Microfilms) databases. The studies were narrowed down to seven according to the
following criteria: compared a SSR group to a control group, included enough statistical data to estimate effect size, written after 1970, and measured reading attitude.

Yoon (2002) analyzed 11 effect sizes from the seven studies. It was determined that “there is empirical support for SSR affecting students’ reading attitude” (Yoon, 2002, p. 191). When comparing SSR programs with a duration of less than six months to those with a duration of more than six months, there was no difference in effect size. When comparing effect size of SSR used with students in lower grades with those in higher grades, SSR used with students in lower grades was found to be more effective.

Yoon (2002) discussed that “the reading attitude score of the average individual in the SSR group exceeds the scores of 55% of individuals in the control group” (p. 192). The researcher recommended implementing SSR with students in lower grades over a long duration to help develop positive reading attitudes in students.

Widdowson and Dixon (1996) also studied the benefits of SSR. One of the guidelines of SSR was that teachers should be role-modeling reading silently as the students are reading. The researchers focused their study on the effect of teacher role-modeling on students’ engagement during SSR.

A group of 12 second grade students were selected to participate in this study. High, average, and low-achieving groups were designated. Each group contained two boys and two girls. The students were all in the same class and had previously participated in SSR during the school year (Widdowson & Dixon, 1996).

Widdowson and Dixon (1996) used a “within-subjects reversal design (ABAB)” for this research (p. 171). For the first ten days of the study the teacher did paperwork or listened to students read during SSR. During the following ten days the teacher practiced
the recommendation of role-modeling while the students read. This method was repeated for an additional five days with no role-modeling, followed by five days of the teacher role-modeling.

During each SSR session one of the researchers would observe each student and the teacher and record time on task. Each participate was observed individually for eight seconds and then notes were recorded for two seconds. Widdowson and Dixon (1996) were able to observe each participate five times during each SSR session. If the student's eyes were on their book and they were not talking, that student would be recorded as on-task.

Widdowson and Dixon (1996) found that students in both the low and average achieving groups spent more time on-task during the SSR sessions when the teacher was role-modeling reading. When the procedure was repeated, time on-task dropped if the teacher was not reading and increased again when the teacher was role-modeling. The results were mixed with students in the high-achieving group; there was little difference in the time spent on-task reading during non-modeled and modeled sessions. Additionally, the high-achieving group had the highest percentage of time on-task reading throughout the study.

Widdowson and Dixon (1996) recommended that low-achieving students may need more exposure to SSR to help increase both their reading ability and motivation. For a successful SSR program, all guidelines needed to be followed, including the teacher role-modeling reading.

Chua (2008) went a step further than Widdowson and Dixon (1996) on the research of SSR. Chua wanted to know if students' reading habits and attitudes changed
as a result of using SSR. This study was not only concerned with reading done in school, but also by reading that students were doing after school.

Chua (2008) completed this study with about 200 secondary students. Using a “time-series design,” a questionnaire was developed for students to fill out three times over the duration of the school year (Chua, 2008, p. 181). All students attended an assembly and completed the questionnaire on the same occasion. Questions covered the following topics: reading habits during the SSR period, classmates’ reading habits during the SSR period, reading habits after school, and attitudes to leisure book reading.

The results showed that as the year progressed, the percentage of students that always or sometimes read books during SSR increased. Also, when students rated how long their classmates were reading, the percentage of the estimated number of classmates that read half or more than half the time increased (Chua, 2008).

Even though time reading during SSR increased, Chua (2008) found that the percentage of students who reported reading more than one hour after school decreased over the year. Chua (2008) concluded that in this study, SSR did not affect students’ reading habits outside of school. When analyzing students’ attitudes toward reading, it seemed that “the SSR program improved students’ affective reactions but not their cognitive reactions to reading books for leisure” (Chua, 2008, p. 183).

Yoon (2002), Widdowson and Dixon (1996), and Chua (2008) all agreed in their studies that when researching the effects of SSR, the methods used to implement SSR should be considered. Yoon (2002) and Chua (2008) both recommend that regardless of grade level, students should be exposed to SSR for a duration of longer than six months.
Widdowson and Dixon (1996) added that teachers should be reading their own book for leisure during SSR to model the behavior for the students.

Summary

Even though the research reported mixed findings on the use of Accelerated Reader and SSR, those studies all agreed with the research on reading motivation. Sweet et al. (1998), Palmer et al. (1994), and Cole (2003) found that in order to turn students into lifelong readers, the goal was to move students from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. Mathis (1996) and Pavonetti et al. (2002) both found that Accelerated Reader used some extrinsic motivation through students earning points and having quiz scores. Groce and Groce (2005) recommend that the Accelerated Reader program should be implemented with modifications. The goal was to get students reading and then move them towards intrinsic motivation. Yoon (2002), Widdowson and Dixon (1996), and Chua (2008) found that SSR was developed in the belief that students will develop intrinsic motivation for reading by having access to books, choice, and role-modeling.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

There is a concern among the teachers at George Washington Elementary that students are only reading for Accelerated Reader points and not because they are intrinsically motivated to read. Many of the students are forgetting the joy of reading. Research has found that in order to turn students into lifelong readers, the goal is to move students from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. This research refined the focus from motivation to read to attitudes about reading. The purpose of this study was to determine if students’ motivation to read was influenced by the continued emphasis of Accelerated Reader in their school. Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) was introduced to these students. Feedback and opinions were sought from students based on their experiences with Accelerated Reader and SSR.

There were two main questions that this research addressed. First, if given 30 minutes a day to free read using SSR, will students’ attitudes toward reading improve? And second, what do students like and dislike about using Accelerated Reader and SSR?

A mixed methods approach was used in this research design because “the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods, in combination, provides a better understanding of the research problem and questions than either method by itself” (Creswell, 2008, p. 552). Quantitative data was collected through a survey, administered both before the intervention of introducing SSR and after implementing SSR for two weeks. Qualitative data was collected through a questionnaire that guided the conversational interview. This type of questionnaire had open-ended questions that “allow a respondent to answer in his or her own words, and thereby, provide richer, more
detailed responses about what is being measured” (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2004, p. 903).

Population

The population for this research was fourth grade students from George Washington Elementary School in Keokuk, Iowa. A convenience sample of 15 students from the fourth grade class participated in this study. The class consisted of eight boys and seven girls. The students’ ages ranged from nine to ten years old. Twelve students were Caucasian and three of the students were other ethnicities.

Data Gathering Instrument

Two instruments were used to gather data for this research. The first was the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) as developed by Gambrell, Palmer, Codling and Mazzoni (1996) (see Appendix A). The MRP survey consists of 20 items and uses a 4-point response scale. Ten of the items focus on students’ self-concept as a reader, and are designed to “elicit information about students’ self-perceived performance relative to peers” (Gambrell et al., 1996, p. 522). The remaining 10 items focus on students’ value of reading, and are designed to “elicit information about the value students place on reading tasks and activities, particularly in terms of frequency of engagement and reading-related activities (Gambrell et al., 1996, p. 522).

The second data gathering instrument was feedback from students about Accelerated Reader and SSR from an individual conversational interview (see Appendix C). Creswell (2008) states that qualitative data from this type of interview will “provide actual words of people in the study, offer many different perspectives on the study topic and provide a complex picture of the situation” (p. 552).
Procedures

Accelerated Reader had been used in this classroom for at least three quarters of the school year. Most of the students have been using Accelerated Reader since kindergarten. The students were informed that for two weeks they would not be using the Accelerated Reader program. Instead the 30 minutes set aside for free reading was changed to follow the guidelines for SSR described by Pilgreen (2000). These guidelines were: students selecting their own material to read, the teacher models reading by participating along with the students, the daily time allotment is 30 minutes, students reading one material each session, and no quizzes or reports over reading will be given.

At the beginning of each SSR session, the teacher shared some ideas about how to choose a book based on interest rather than an assigned level or available AR quiz. The teacher also ended each SSR session by briefly talking about what she read and how she enjoyed the book. Students were allowed to select books from their own collections, the school library or the classroom library before the SSR time started.

Before implementing SSR and at the end of two weeks after SSR, each student gave responses about their self-concept as a reader and their value of reading by completing the MRP survey (Appendix A). This survey allowed the researcher to analyze a “structured set of data” (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004, p. 1,103). The MRP survey (Appendix A) was administered by the teacher-librarian as a normal part of library time. Each of the 20 items and four possible answer choices were read aloud by the teacher-librarian while the class completed the survey. This instrument took about 15 minutes to administer.

The MRP survey was followed by individual conversational interviews (Appendix C) with the teacher-librarian. According to Creswell (2008) the one-on-one
interview is a “data-collection process in which the researcher asks questions to and records answers from only one participant in the study at a time” (p. 226).

Data Analysis Format

Each survey was scored using the MRP scoring sheet (Appendix B). The most positive responses were rated (4) and the least positive (1). A raw score was calculated for each student’s self-concept as a reader, their own value of reading, and their full survey. The percentages of change from the pre-SSR to the post-SSR scores were compared for each student and overall as a class. An analysis of each individual question was also made. The researcher noted items that had a significant change from the pre-test to the post-test for the class as a whole, along with individual scores.

The responses from the conversational interviews were coded and then analyzed using descriptions and themes (Creswell, 2008). Coding was based on positive and negative responses about Accelerated Reader, and positive and negative responses about SSR. Using the embedded design analysis for this mixed methods study allowed the researcher to consider the students’ responses from the MRP survey when studying comments from each interview.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

A mixed methods approach was used in this research to determine Accelerated Reader and SSR’s impact on students’ motivation to read. Quantitative data was collected through the MRP survey (see Appendix A) both before and after SSR was implemented. The researcher used the MRP scoring guide (see Appendix B) to calculate the students’ percent of change in self concept as a reader, value of reading, and for the full survey. A conversational interview (see Appendix C) was used to collect qualitative data to determine what students liked and disliked about Accelerated Reader and SSR.

Research Question 1

If given 30 minutes a day to free read using SSR will students’ attitudes toward reading improve?

Table 1 shows the raw score for the MRP survey for each of the 15 students before and after SSR was implemented.
Table 1

**MRP Survey Results for Full Survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Pre SSR Raw Score</th>
<th>Post SSR Raw Score</th>
<th>+ / - % Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>-1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>-7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>+7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>+2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>+1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>-7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>-3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>-3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>-3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>-7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the class had a 2% decrease in the full MRP survey. Individually three students' scores improved, three students' scores remained the same, and the remaining nine students' scores decreased. The students whose scores remained the same did not answer all of the questions the same. Some responses changed to a higher score while others to a lower score which balanced each other out to no overall change. According to the full MRP survey students' motivation to read did not improve after implementing SSR for two weeks.

Table 2 shows the raw score for the subset of questions on the MRP survey that address self-concept as a reader for each of the 15 students before and after SSR was implemented.
Table 2

*MRP Survey Results for Self-Concept as a Reader*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Pre SSR Raw Score</th>
<th>Post SSR Raw Score</th>
<th>+ / - % Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>+12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>+7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>+2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>29.46</td>
<td>-0.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Half of the questions from the MRP survey were used to determine each student’s self-concept as a reader. Comparing the class average pre-SSR to post-SSR there was a 0.85% decrease. Three students had no change, four had an increase, and the remaining eight students had a decrease in this score. SSR did not improve most of the students’ self-concept as a reader.

Table 3 shows the raw score for the subset of questions on the MRP survey that address value of reading for each of the 15 students before and after SSR was implemented.
Table 3

**MRP Survey Results for Value of Reading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Pre SSR Raw Score</th>
<th>Post SSR Raw Score</th>
<th>+ / - % Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>+2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>+2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>+7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>27.13</td>
<td>-3.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other half of the questions on the MRP survey determined individual students’ value of reading. This area showed the biggest decrease, 3.17%, for the class as a whole. There was an increase in scores for four of the students, three had no change, and eight decreased. SSR did not improve most students’ value of reading.

Table 4 shows each item from the MRP survey along with the mean score for all 15 students before and after SSR was implemented.
Table 4

*MRP Survey Results for Individual Items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item # and Line from the Survey</th>
<th>Pre SSR Mean Score</th>
<th>Post SSR Mean Score</th>
<th>+/- Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My friends think that I am...</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reading a book is something I like to do.</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I read</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>+0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My best friends think reading is...</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When I come to a word I don’t know, I can...</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I tell my friends about good books I read.</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>+0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. When I am reading to myself, I understand...</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. People who read a lot are...</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I am</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I think libraries are...</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I worry about what other kids think about my reading...</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Knowing how to read well is...</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>+0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, I...</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I think reading is...</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Reading is...</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>+0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. When I grow up I will spend...</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. When I am in a group talking about stories, I...</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I would like for my teacher to read books out loud to the class...</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. When I read out loud I am a...</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel...</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The item that received the highest score on the pre-test and post-test was number seven which asked “When I am reading to myself, I understand __”. The item that received the lowest score both on pre-test and post-test was number 17 which asked “When I am in a group talking about stories, I __”. Only five items (1, 3, 6, 12, 15) had an increased score, two items had no change (5 and 9), and the remaining 13 items had a decreased score after implementing SSR.
Research Question 2

What do students like and dislike about using Accelerated Reader and SSR?

The responses from the conversational interview were coded (Appendix D) and then analyzed using description and themes (Creswell, 2008). Coding was used to identify positive and negative feelings about both Accelerated Reader and SSR. The following themes emerged: quizzing and learning, book choice, amount of reading, and classroom atmosphere.

Table 5 shows brief notes or phrases from students' interview responses about Accelerated Reader, grouped by themes.

Table 5

*Conversational Interview Students' Responses about Accelerated Reader*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Students' Responses (Number of Responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Quizzing and Learning as a Positive** | • Gives you a score on how well you know the book (4)  
• Likes taking quizzes (2)  
• Making a point goal (2)  
• Learn more about reading (2)  
• Learn more about words (2)  
• Read at high levels and get a good score (1) |
| **Quizzing and Learning as a Negative** | • Don’t like Accelerated Reader (2)  
• Don’t like taking quizzes (2)  
• Freeze up while quizzing (1)  
• Forget everything (1)  
• Don’t like getting a low score (1) |
| **Book Choice as a Positive** | • Not getting books that are way too easy or way too hard (1)  
• Some books are good to read (1) |
| **Book Choice as a Negative** | • Could only get books at a certain level (1)  
• Harder to find books in my level that I like (1)  
• Not being able to reread books that I like (1)  
• Not being able to read books that I like because the level is too low (1) |
| **Amount of Reading as Positive** | • Read more (2) |
Table 6 shows brief notes or phrases from students' interview responses about SSR, grouped by themes.

Table 6

*Conversational Interview Students’ Responses about SSR*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Students’ Responses (Number of Responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Quizzing as Positive</td>
<td>• Like not having to take quizzes (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No worrying about scores (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Choice as Positive</td>
<td>• Could read any level (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Could read a book without a quiz (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Read a longer book (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Check out any book you want (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Everyone wanted to read my book (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Read the same book over and over (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Reading as Positive</td>
<td>• Read more (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Atmosphere as Positive</td>
<td>• Quieter (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No goofing around (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No one reading out-loud (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No distractions (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Easier to get into my book (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this fourth grade class students had both positive and negative comments about taking an Accelerated Reader quiz after reading a book. The majority of students said that they did not like taking Accelerated Reader quizzes. One student described that he freezes up during quizzing and forgets everything. Another student said that she did not like the feeling that she got after getting a low score. A few students liked to take Accelerated Reader quizzes. They felt that the quiz score gave them feedback on how well they knew the book. Those same students felt that they learned more about reading and learned more words. Others commented that they liked to set a point goal and try to reach that goal.
A second theme that emerged was book choice. With SSR students liked that they could choose any book. They did not have to select books by level, quiz availability, length, or difficulty. Students enjoyed reading books that their friends had read and rereading their favorite books. One student preferred choosing books by Accelerated Reader levels because “then he knew what books to read”.

Another theme from the conversational interview was the amount of reading students accomplished. Thirteen students said that they read more during SSR and two said they read more with Accelerated Reader. During SSR students had all of their books with them at the start of the 30 minutes. When the class used Accelerated Reader students could quiz and go to the library during the 30 minute free reading time. One student felt that he read more during Accelerated Reader because he read smaller books and another student felt that when the class used Accelerated Reader there was more time to read.

The fourth theme identified was classroom atmosphere. Students liked that the classroom was quieter during SSR than when free reading with Accelerated Reader. Explanations included: people weren’t bugging each other, no one was reading out-loud, classmates weren’t goofing around, and there was no talking. One student commented that she could “get into her book easier” without distractions during SSR.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if students’ motivation to read is influenced by the use of Accelerated Reader or SSR in their school. Fourth grade students at George Washington Elementary had been selecting books to read based on Accelerated Reader levels. After reading each book the students took a quiz. SSR was implemented for two weeks to determine if students’ attitudes towards reading would improve.

A mixed-methods approach was used in this research design. Quantitative data were collected through the MRP survey, administered both before the introduction of SSR and after implementing SSR. Qualitative data were collected through an individual conversational interview. An embedded design analysis was used to allow the researcher to consider students’ responses from the MRP survey while studying the comments from each conversational interview.

Conclusions

The results from the MRP survey showed a 0.85% decrease in students’ self-concept as a reader and a 3.17% decrease in students’ value of reading. One variable that may have played a role in the decreased scores was the time frame of the research. SSR was introduced to these students during the last month of school. Does students’ value of reading decrease anyway as summer vacation approaches?

The survey identified that most students understood what they were reading, could figure out unknown words, thought reading was easy for them, could think of answers when questioned about what they read, thought knowing how to read was
important, and liked receiving books for presents. It was surprising that in both the pre- and post-survey the highest ranked item was that when reading to themselves students understood most of what they read. This may be attributed to the fact that during Accelerated Reader the students were given an individual reading level range from their teacher.

The areas that students ranked the lowest on the MRP survey were sharing their ideas when talking in a group about stories and telling friends about good books they read. This was not surprising because when students use Accelerated Reader their first response about the book is to take a computerized quiz. To improve this the classroom teacher may want to model how to talk about books and provide time in class for students to share with each other about the books they are reading.

The students in this fourth grade classroom have been choosing books based on Accelerated Reader levels since first grade. They have also been taking Accelerated Reader quizzes since the same time. SSR was introduced and implemented for only two weeks. The shorter period of SSR implementation may not have provided enough time for adjustment in students' attitudes towards reading.

During the conversational interview most students expressed that they liked to read and that they read more during SSR. According to Krashen and Sprecken (2002) people read books for enjoyment or to obtain information. The interviews determined that the students in this class need more guidance on how to choose books. When asked “How do you pick out the books you want to read”, thirteen students described using Accelerated Reader levels as part of their selection process. Two students said that they pick books for fun and no one said they choose books for information.
Recommendations

Ultimately, the teacher is responsible for creating a classroom that fosters a student’s love for reading (Gambrell, 1996). The MRP survey administered at the beginning of the school year could be a valuable tool for teachers to plan for instruction. Results from the survey can be used with both individual students and classes to provide interventions to improve student’s attitudes towards reading.

This study could be replicated at different grade levels. The questions that guide the conversational interview can be changed to fit the needs of the new research. The students in this research had been using Accelerated Reader since first grade and SSR for only two weeks. It is recommended to lengthen the amount of weeks using SSR before administering the MRP survey a second time.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

MOTIVATION TO READ PROFILE

Name ___________________________________________ Date __________

Sample A: I am a _________.
   □ boy
   □ girl

1. My friends think that I am ________.
   □ a very good reader
   □ a good reader
   □ an OK reader
   □ a poor reader

2. Reading a book is something I like to do.
   □ Never
   □ Not very often
   □ Sometimes
   □ Often

3. I read ________.
   □ not as well as my friends
   □ about the same as my friends
   □ a little better than my friends
   □ a lot better than my friends

4. My best friends think reading is ________.
   □ really fun
   □ fun
   □ OK to do
   □ no fun at all

5. When I come to a word I don’t know, I can ________.
   □ almost always figure it out
   □ sometimes figure it out
   □ almost never figure it out
   □ never figure it out

6. I tell my friends about good books I read.
   □ I never do this.
   □ I almost never do this.
   □ I do this some of the time.
   □ I do this a lot.
7. When I am reading to myself, I understand ________.
   □ almost everything I read
   □ some of what I read
   □ almost none of what I read
   □ none of what I read

8. People who read a lot are ________.
   □ very interesting
   □ interesting
   □ not very interesting
   □ boring

9. I am ________.
   □ a poor reader
   □ an OK reader
   □ a good reader
   □ a very good reader

10. I think libraries are ________.
    □ a great place to spend time
    □ an interesting place to spend time
    □ an OK place to spend time
    □ a boring place to spend time

11. I worry about what other kids think about my reading ________.
    □ every day
    □ almost every day
    □ once in a while
    □ never

12. Knowing how to read well is ________.
    □ not very important
    □ sort of important
    □ important
    □ very important

13. When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, I ________.
    □ can never think of an answer
    □ have trouble of thinking of an answer
    □ sometimes think of an answer
    □ always think of an answer
14. I think reading is __________.
   □ a boring way to spend time
   □ an OK way to spend time
   □ an interesting way to spend time
   □ a great way to spend time

15. Reading is __________.
   □ very easy for me
   □ kind of easy for me
   □ kind of hard for me
   □ very hard for me

16. When I grow up I will spend __________.
   □ none of my time reading
   □ very little of my time reading
   □ some of my time reading
   □ a lot of my time reading

17. When I am in a group talking about stories, I __________.
   □ almost never talk about my ideas
   □ sometimes talk about my ideas
   □ almost always talk about my ideas
   □ always talk about my ideas

18. I would like for my teacher to read books out loud to the class __________.
   □ every day
   □ almost every day
   □ once in a while
   □ never

19. When I read out loud I am a __________.
   □ poor reader
   □ OK reader
   □ good reader
   □ very good reader

20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel __________.
   □ very happy
   □ sort of happy
   □ sort of unhappy
   □ unhappy
APPENDIX B

MRP SCORING SHEET

Student Name ________________________________

Pre-test Date: __________

Self-Concept as a Reader | Value of Reading | *Recoding Scale
--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------
*1. _____ | 2. _____ | 1=4
3. _____ | *4. _____ | 2=3
*5. _____ | 6. _____ | 3=2
*7. _____ | *8. _____ | 4=1
9. _____ | *10. _____ |
11. _____ | 12. _____ |
13. _____ | 14. _____ |
*15. _____ | 16. _____ |
17. _____ | *18. _____ |
19. _____ | *20. _____ |

Score: _____ / 40 | Score: _____ / 40
_____ % | _____ 

Post-test Date: __________

Self-Concept as a Reader | Value of Reading | *Recoding Scale
--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------
*1. _____ | 2. _____ | 1=4
3. _____ | *4. _____ | 2=3
*5. _____ | 6. _____ | 3=2
*7. _____ | *8. _____ | 4=1
9. _____ | *10. _____ |
11. _____ | 12. _____ |
13. _____ | 14. _____ |
*15. _____ | 16. _____ |
17. _____ | *18. _____ |
19. _____ | *20. _____ |

Score: _____ / 40 | Score: _____ / 40
_____ % | _____ 

Self-Concept as a Reader % of change: + / - _____ %

Value of Reading % of change: + / - _____ %

Full Survey % of change: + / - _____ %

Comments:
APPENDIX C

CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEW

Name__________________________________________ Date ____________

Tell me how you feel about Accelerated Reader?

Tell me how you feel about SSR?

Do you like to take an Accelerated Reader quiz after reading a book? Why or why not?

Tell me about how you feel about being required to choose a book at a certain level for Accelerated Reader?

Do you think that you read more during Accelerated Reader or SSR? Why?

How do you pick out the books you want to read?
APPENDIX D

CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEW CODING TRANSCRIPT

+ AR= positive AR   -AR= negative AR   +SSR= positive SSR   -SSR= negative SSR

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