Effectiveness of Repeated Reading Along With Self-Evaluation on Reading Fluency

Lindsay Rae Strassner

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Effectiveness of Repeated Reading Along With Self-Evaluation on Reading Fluency

by

Lindsay Rae Strassner

A thesis or project submitted to the
Department of Education and Human Development of the
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Effectiveness of Repeated Reading Along With Self-Evaluation on Reading Fluency

by Lindsay Rae Strassner

APPROVED BY:

Amy Barnhill
Advisor
7-24-07
Date

Sue Naiberg
Director, Graduate Programs
7-24-07
Date
DEDICATION

This past year has been filled with more obstacles, challenges, and important decisions to make than I even care to recall. It hasn’t been the easiest and many times, I wanted to simply throw in the towel and give up on all of my dreams and passions. A much overdue thank you is in store for my mother, my best friend and sister, my grandma, and the second love of my life, Douglas. You have all been there for me, and held me up when I didn’t have the energy, strength, or desire to keep going. I am proud to be a Strassner and everything that entails and thank you for proving to me, that there is hope for happiness after such tragedy.

To my father, the first man I ever loved, and the only man that I can’t live without. Thank you for always believing in me, even when I didn’t believe in myself. Thank you for pushing me to accomplish everything I have ever dreamed. Thank you for always loving and supporting me, no matter what I did. Thank you for knowing when to pick me up and when to let me fall, because this is how I grew into a self sufficient and confident woman.

To all of my Literacy Cohort peers and professors, thank you for all you have done for me and all I have learned from you. You all are such great people and great educators. I am confident in your skills and determination that each and every one of you will make a positive change in children’s lives. Thanks for the fun times, the extra long hours, and the great friendships and memories that we have made. Best of luck to all of you, I will miss you dearly.
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The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of immediate repeated reading and self-assessment of short passages, poems, and phrases on all aspects of oral reading fluency and reading accuracy reading rate.

Two male and one female third grade students were selected based on classroom teacher recommendation. The children who were chosen were not considered “at risk” students, they just needed a little extra push to reach and stay at grade level.

Repeated read aloud opportunities were created for the children, by the researcher, in regular one-on-one sessions for the duration of two week periods. The children were given a choice of several passages, poems, or group of phases and asked to read them a total of three times in one session. The text choices were matched by the researcher upon prior assessed reading level by classroom teacher. The fluency interventions, including echo reading, repeated reading, audio book modeling, and teacher modeling. The one-on-one fluency sessions gave the students the opportunity to think critically about their own reading, and discuss areas of strengths and how they can improve. Results indicate that using manageable text while working independently with a child on specific fluency strategies was positively associated with overall oral reading fluency and accuracy rate.
Introduction

Think about fluent reading dealing with a public speaker. Listening to a speaker that talks choppy and monotone, is boring and almost impossible to comprehend. For a public speaker to get their point across, they need to read smoothly and with expression.

For children to become fluent, they need lots of successful reading practice. Practice may not always make perfect, but it almost always improves performance. Allington (2004), states, to provide successful practice, it's important to help children choose reading material using the "Goldilocks" principle--books that are not too easy and not too hard, but "just right." If the book doesn't offer the right level of challenge (if it's too easy or too hard) chances are students will get either bored or frustrated. That's when they tune out.

Allington (2004), states that kids with a low degree of fluency are less likely to understand what they read. The skills of summarizing, analyzing, and synthesizing material, which are essential for high-level thinking, seem to require fluent reading. When kids read fluently, paying attention to phrasing and intonation, it's obvious that they understand what they're reading. But when kids read word by word, syllable by syllable, or even phrase by phrase in that familiar monotone, it's a signal that their attention is not directed at making sense out of the text. Instead, they're spending their cognitive energy on decoding.
Problem Statement

The objective of my project is to study the effectiveness of repeated readings along with self-assessment in improving reading fluency.

My exploration of the effects of rereading on fluency is grounded in the recent theories and research of Dr. Tim Rasinski, professor of education at Kent State University and author of "The Fluent Reader". Dr. Rasinski argues that “repeated reading is a very powerful tool for reading development and fluency” (Scholastic, 2003, p. 23). Rasinski explains that children need to polish five key skills to become proficient readers. They must develop phonemic awareness, the understanding that letters have sounds. They must master phonics, the ability to decode and sound out words. They need to acquire vocabulary, develop fluency, and put it all together for comprehension. The objective of my project is to study the effectiveness of repeated readings along with self-assessment in improving reading fluency. Repeated reading is effective in becoming a fluent reader, according to Rasinski (1990). Findings from a study which compared methods for improving students' reading fluency indicate: (1) both repeated readings and listening-while-reading treatments were effective in improving reading fluency and, (2) neither treatment was superior to the other in improving reading fluency. In Rolheiser’s (1996), research he indicates that self-evaluation plays a key role in fostering an upward cycle of learning. When students evaluate their performance positively, self-evaluations encourage students to set higher goals and commit more effort.
Reading First is a nationally focused effort to enable all students to become successful early readers. Reading First indicates that: “Students who read and reread passages orally as they receive guidance and/or feedback become better readers. Repeated oral reading substantially improves word recognition, speed, and accuracy as well as fluency. To a lesser but still considerable extent, repeated oral reading also improves reading comprehension. Reading First also indicates that “Repeated oral reading improves the reading ability of all students throughout the elementary school years. It also helps struggling readers at higher grade levels.” Researchers have found several effective techniques related to repeated oral reading:

1. Students read and reread a text a certain number of times or until a certain level of fluency is reached.
2. Oral reading practice is increased through the use of audiotapes, tutors, peer guidance, or other means.

Significance of Problem

As a literacy education student and certified teacher, my research centers on issues related to literacy development in general and reading fluency in particular. This study was undertaken to further accumulate evidence about the implementation of explicit instruction of fluency measures. For decades researchers have studied specific aspects of reading and reading comprehension. More recently, the focus has expanded to fluency and the different aspects of fluency that expand and encompass a “good reader”. “When children repeat their reading, their amount of word
recognition error decreases, their reading speed increases, and their oral expression improves” (Samuels, 2002 p. 42). In the past few years, fluency has seemed to be swept under the table and not a big focus in the classrooms. Some of the main focuses that I have seen in the classes include comprehension and word attack. Repeated readings result in reading fluency, in turn will result in more comprehensive readers. My research plays a key role in my school’s pilot study on the effect on fluency by repeated readings. If my results show a great degree of improved fluency, they will continue the program for years to follow. If my data proves not so effective, they will modify and adjust the program until they find something that works. Not only will the fluency program positively impact students reading, it will also help raise awareness of the importance of fluency. My research will add to the wealth of knowledge on reading fluency and will help teachers understand and implement fluency work into their classrooms.

Even when students recognize many words automatically, their oral reading still may be expressionless, not fluent. To read with expression, readers must be able to divide the text into meaningful chunks. These chunks include phrases and clauses. Readers must know to pause appropriately within and at the ends of sentences and when to change emphasis and tone.

According to:

www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading_first.fluency: Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the words, they can
focus their attention on what the text means. They can make connections among the ideas in the text and between the text and their background knowledge. In other words, fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time.

More fluent readers, focus their attention on making connections among the ideas in a text and between these ideas and their background knowledge. Therefore, they are able to focus on comprehension. Less fluent readers, however, must focus their attention on figuring out the words, leaving them little attention for understanding the text.

**Rationale**

Reading for meaning is the overall goal of reading in general. As readers we need to be efficient as possible so we can focus on comprehension of the text. When students make gains in reading fluency, they are able to put their energies into comprehension. When reading fluently, the reader can focus on making connections.

Fluency provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension, (Reading Links, 2002). A fluent reader is not constantly stopping to decode and figure out unknown words. Meaning is not disrupted. Even when students recognize many words automatically, their oral reading still may be expressionless, not fluent.
Definition of Terms

All of the following terms were devised from:


- **Fluency**: Recognizing words accurately and automatically, reading aloud effortlessly, with expression and at an appropriate pace, concentrating minimally on word pronunciation so your brain can focus on comprehension.

- **Fluency rate**: The calculated speed (words per minute) and pattern of an oral read.

- **Self-Assessment**: Students’ take a lead role in assessing (critiquing) their own work, and setting goals towards improvement.

- **Miscue**: Deviations from the actual wording of the text that a child makes when reading orally.

- **Cold read**: Reading a text orally, having never previewed or read prior.

- **Independent Reading Level**: The highest grade equivalent level at which a learner can read with high accuracy and comprehension is her/his Independent Reading Level.

- **Automaticity**: Although the terms automaticity and fluency often are used interchangeably, they are not the same thing. Automaticity is the
fast, effortless word recognition that comes with a great deal of reading practice. In the early stages of learning to read, readers may be accurate but slow and inefficient at recognizing words. Continued reading practice helps word recognition become more automatic, rapid, and effortless. Automaticity refers only to accurate, speedy word recognition, not to reading with expression. Therefore, automaticity (or automatic word recognition) is necessary, but not sufficient, for fluency.

- **Decoding**: The ability to decipher printed words by recovering the spoken word that a printed word represents.
Introduction

In this chapter I will be reviewing various literature and discussing the different areas and aspects that are pertinent to this study; such as reading fluency, repeated readings, and self-assessment. Fluency has been an aspect of reading that has simply been forgotten about or misconstrued in the past few years, in which I am very interested and find very important for the reading process. It is my goal to further educate myself on the subject as well as inform and educate others.

Fluency

Fluent reading involves three components that combine to create a unified process: accuracy of decoding, automaticity of word recognition and the appropriate use of prosodic features such as stress, pitch and suitable phrasing (Kuhn, 2005, p. 128). When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression (Pikulsk & Chard, 2005). It is hypothesized that fluency is the result of automatic decoding and, therefore, word recognition skills must be intact before fluency can be developed. However, according to Allington (1983), automatic word recognition should not be mistaken for fluency, as fluency does not depend solely on reading rate.

Fluent reading sounds natural, as if the reader is speaking. Nonfluent readers typically read in a piece-by-piece, word-by-word manner and are slower and less
accurate than fluent readers in decoding. With such inadequate reading patterns, nonfluent readers typically fall behind their peers and do not find enjoyment in reading (Pikulsk & Chard, 2005). Moreover, because their reading is laborious, understanding of text is interrupted. More fluent readers can focus their attention on making connections among the ideas in a text and between these ideas and their background knowledge. Therefore, they are able to focus on comprehension. Less fluent readers tend to focus their attention primarily on decoding individual words. Therefore, they have little attention left for comprehending the text.

According to automaticity theorists, reading is composed of several synchronized elements, including decoding and comprehension (Laberge & Samuels, 1974). Due to the limited amount of attentional resources available during reading and any cognitive task for that matter, if all the attention is spent on decoding, none is left for comprehension (Kintsch, 1998).

Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension” (National Institute for Literacy, 2007). Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the words, they can focus their attention on what the text means. They can make connections among the ideas in the text and between the text and their background knowledge. In other words, fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time. Less fluent readers, however, must focus their attention on figuring out the words, leaving them little attention for understanding the text (Rasinski, 2005).
Fluency develops gradually over considerable time and through substantial practice. "At the earliest stage of reading development, students' oral reading is slow and labored because students are just learning to "break the code"--to attach sounds to letters and to blend letter sounds into recognizable words" (Goldstein, 2001, p. ?). Even when students recognize many words automatically, their oral reading still may be expressionless, not fluent. To read with expression, readers must be able to divide the text into meaningful chunks. These chunks include phrases and clauses. Readers must know to pause appropriately within and at the ends of sentences and when to change emphasis and tone (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, Morris, Morrow, Woo, Meisinger, Sevcik, Bradley, & Stahl, 2006).

Kuhn (2006, p 361), brings up an excellent point “Does the effectiveness of repeated reading approaches stem from the repetition of texts or from the more general benefits that may be derived from extensive scaffolding of oral reading practice?” In the 2003 review of fluency-oriented instruction, Kuhn and Stahl found that the amount of reading carried out in a classroom is not extensive enough to support the development of fluent and automatic reading for many students.

Repeated Readings

Repeated reading is one strategy used to improve reading fluency. According to Rasinski (2003, p. 75) “applying basic skills automatically is usually achieved through practice”. Repeated reading is effective as an intervention to build student reading fluency because it gives the student lots of reading practice. I like to think of repeated reading practice as similar to an athlete perfecting their game by practice.
The idea is that with repeated practice of the same reading selection, students will acquire the skill of more fluent oral reading. Repeated reading is a low cost, low tech, easy to implement strategy that does not take a lot of class time to see results.

Repeated reading is simply the practicing of rereading text until it is fluid, flowing, and facile (Dowhower, 1991). Rasinski, (2003) offers clarification that although repetition is often translated into repeated exposures to words in isolation, research has shown that repetition is more effective when students meet the words in a variety of texts or through repeated exposures to one text. Therrien (2004, p. 79), states that there are three essential instructional components to repeated readings “one, passages should read aloud to a competent teacher, two, corrective feedback should be provided, and three, passages should be read until a performance criterion is reached”. By giving the student corrective feedback, they have something specific to work towards in the subsequent readings. Corrective feedback can include things such as discussing any miscues they may have had, commenting about the pace of the reading, and pointing out if there are repeated clauses in a text that may enhance fluent reading.

Dowhower (1991), explains why and how repeated readings work to improve reading fluency. Dowhower, says that multiple readings may facilitate readers to determine appropriate syntactic phrasing in the written words and to group words to sound like the reader is talking. Dowhower, continues to enlighten that repeated readings allow a succession of approximations to be made by the reader and that it not only improves speed and accuracy, but helps with prosody as well. Dowhower
(1989, p. 67), identifies proven benefits of repeated reading: “Repeated reading helps good and poor readers to recall facts from their reading, improves comprehension, is an excellent study strategy, and it promotes faster reading with greater word recognition accuracy”

Repeated readings are not only a strategy to improve reading fluency for beginning and young readers. Stayer and Allington (1991), studied repeated readings with seventh graders, and described how through the repeated readings of short dramas, the students had a better understanding of characters and text, and started to read with more expression.

**Self Assessment**

Involving students in the assessment and evaluation process is an essential part of balanced assessment. When students play an active role in the learning process, I have noticed that they gain a better sense of themselves as readers, writers, and thinkers. When students reflect on what they have learned and on how they learn and examine their work and think about what they do well and in which areas they still need help, they develop the tools to become more effective and reflective learners. After students have become comfortable assessing and reflecting on their learning, they are ready to set new goals for themselves.

Students that engaged in self-assessment indicated to other students that they must take their performance in class seriously (Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005). Self-assessment was therefore very worthwhile as was the opportunity for students. There
has been a lot of debate over student self-assessment throughout the past few years. Tan (2004), takes a close look at the power behind student self-assessment and how it can both enhance and hinder the power of the student. Topping (1998), is somewhat cynical and suggests that the evidence is limited; particularly with regard to actual the benefits of self-assessment. Other researches find it very successful, for example, Ellis (2001), suggests that the advantages of self- and peer assessment relate to student involvement, independence and assertiveness. Self-assessment seems to be a hot topic, and the research that I am conducting, will hopefully prove it to be effective in this particular instance. The student graphs enable me as the teacher to make instructional decisions at a glance, while can be very motivating at a learner.
Objective

The objective of my project is to study the effectiveness of repeated readings along with self-assessment in improving reading fluency.

My exploration of the effects of rereading on fluency is grounded in the recent theories and research of Dr. Tim Rasinski, professor of education at Kent State University and author of "The Fluent Reader". Dr. Rasinski argues that “repeated reading is a very powerful tool for reading development and fluency” (Scholastic, 2003, p. 23). Findings from a study which compared methods for improving students' reading fluency indicate: (1) both repeated readings and listening-while-reading treatments were effective in improving reading fluency and, (2) neither treatment was superior to the other in improving reading fluency. As I stated previously, attention has shifted away from reading fluency, and part of my research is to place some of the focus back on the importance of reading fluency in my school and in my future work. My goal is for teachers, staff, and students to gain awareness of what reading fluency entails, as well as why and how it plays such a major role in our reading and comprehension. There are some misconceptions about reading fluency, and I want to get away from people just using it as a buzz word, and thinking it only has to do with reading pace. There is so much more that goes into reading something fluently than the speed at which it is read, and my students have begun to understand this by participating in this study.
Reading First indicates that: “Students who read and reread passages orally as they receive guidance and/or feedback become better readers. Repeated oral reading substantially improves word recognition, speed, and accuracy as well as fluency. As the students grow and develop knowledge about what reading fluently entails, it is to their benefit that confidence with reading will grow as well. It is human nature, that when we get better at something, the more confidence that we have. Greater confidence in reading can, in the long run, develop a positive and more confident feeling about school and learning in general.

Rolheiser’s (1996), research indicates that self-evaluation plays a key role in fostering an upward cycle of learning. When students evaluate their performance positively, self-evaluations encourage students to set higher goals and commit more effort. In this study the students were asked to evaluate their reading every day, and set possible goals for future reads. Having the students score themselves on a rubric was a great way to have them think critically about their reading behaviors. Students no longer could rely on the “teacher” for feedback; they were forced to point out both their strengths and areas that were in need of improvement. By the end of this study, it was my goal that the students involved would be more aware of their reading fluency, and how it directly relates to reading comprehension. I wanted them to be able to self-monitor their reading, and become a more efficient and effective reader, both orally and silently. In the long run, I wanted this experience of self-evaluation to spill over into other aspects of the students’ lives, both academically and personally. I want them to have the confidence and power to know that they can
improve anything they work towards, as long as they have the knowledge to guide them in the right direction.

Participants

The participants who were involved in this research were third grade children. Due to unfortunate time constraints during the school day and parental and participant consent, only three students were used in the pilot study; however, positive results will allow replication of the project with other students in the future. This elementary school is located in a suburb of a midsized city in Western New York. The average class size in this school is 18 students. 71.6% of the students are White, 3.9% of the students are Hispanic, 11% of the students are African American, and 3.6% of the students are American Indian, Asian, or Pacific Islander. 21.4% of the students at this elementary school were eligible for free lunch, 11.6% of the students receive reduced lunch. Thirty percent of the students in this school receive public assistance and 10.8% of the students have limited English. The children will be selected based on classroom teacher and the school’s literacy specialist’s recommendation. Gender and social and economic backgrounds of the children play no part in this study. The children who are chosen are not considered “at risk” students, they just need a little extra push to reach and stay at grade level. The data from this study will be preserved by the school for the purposes of determining program continuation.
Measures

Careful and cautious steps were taken to increase validity and reliability in this study. I was consistent with working with the same student at the same time everyday; the times I took the kids were either 9:40 AM or 9:55 AM, but stayed the same for each child. When each child was taken from their room, they all missed the same time of day, which was learning centers. The children were not asked to make up the missed work; therefore some stress was alleviated from being taken out of the classroom. Every single fluency session took place in the exact same place, my office. It is located in the corner of the skills center. The same kinds of distractions were experienced, such as quiet traffic from the reading specialists coming in and out of the office. The lighting the room was consistent and bright. The children always sat on my left at the same table with plenty of elbow room, to make it more comfortable. The participants always had a choice of at least two texts to read for each session.

Procedure/Instructions

Some materials that you will need to perform this fluency study include:

- **Folders** (One for each student to keep all the materials separate)

- **Fluency Graph** (Students can record daily reading performance. The x-axis should reflect the number of the session, and the y-axis should reflect the criterion number of words per minute. Intervals of five should be sufficient.) (See Appendix: Figure 3)
- Variety of Reading Passages (Ranging from 80-200 words: Short expository, poems, phrases, sections of chapter books. Begin with a level that is at least one level below the student’s current reading level determined by the classroom teacher’s Rigby Benchmark Assessment, which is not always the same as the student’s grade level)

- Stop Watch or Timer

- Fluency Skills Checklist (See Appendix: Figure 2)

- Fluency Rubric

- Reading Benchmarks Tool

- Tape Recorder with Ear Phones and Blank Tapes

- Red and Blue Colored Pencils

- Calculator

I work with ten “borderline” third grade students on reading fluency. They are not eligible for intervention services, but the classroom teachers feel that the specific students would benefit tremendously by this one on one fluency program. The researcher takes two students for eight day rotations. Each child met with the fluency instructor for eight days in a row. For the first six days the student will read short passages at an independent level, on the seventh day, the student will read two to four word common phrases directly taken from the Fry Instant Word List (1980), which represent 50% of all the words children will encounter on the elementary level, and on the eighth day the student will read another short text and tape record
themselves on the third read. After that the student will have a chance to listen to themselves read from the previous recording. On the beginning of the eighth day session with that child, he or she will listen to their previous recording and discuss with the researcher how they think their reading was, and set possible goals for the upcoming sessions.

_Before you begin_

It is imperative that the first lesson with the child is informational. The child needs to fully understand what reading fluency is, before they can explicitly work on it. I compare reading fluency to riding a bike, you don't want to ride too fast or too slow, because either way, you will fall off. Just like riding a bike, you need to read at "just the right pace". We also discuss the importance of the role of punctuation in reading, and go through what each punctuation mark is, and what a reader should do when they get to that punctuation in their reading. I also discuss with each child on the first day, how important appropriate expression and intonation is while reading. I relate reading to talking; we want to sound smooth and just like we were talking. It will be necessary to explain the procedure to the student before beginning the activity. Simply telling the student that the two of you will be taking turns reading in order to help him or her read more quickly and accurately may be all the explanation necessary. Then, reviewing a checklist of good fluent reading will help the student understand what is expected in order to be most successful.
The Process

The child will be given a choice of two texts to read at each session of the fluency program. Text choices should range from 80-200 words, depending on the participant’s reading level. Texts can include poems, expository texts, narrative, short stories, song lyrics, or pages from a chapter book. Three complete repeated reads of the same text will occur in each fluency session. On the first day, I chose passages that I was sure would be at the independent reading level of the participant; this was to ensure that frustration does not occur. If the passages that are chosen on the first day are too easy, you will go up in reading level for the next sessions. The teacher will go over any “tricky” words in the passage in order to keep the child away from any problem solving and keeping the focus on fluent reading. The child will read the passage for the first time, while the teacher scores it like a running record and times it. After the read, the correct words per minute and the child will color it on the graph in blue.

Next, the student will self evaluate themselves on their reading on the rubric or checklist, and state at least one thing they did well, and one thing they would like to improve on. The teacher will do the same, point out one thing that she liked about the reading, and one possible area for work. The student will keep a copy of the checklists in view to remind the student to perform the desired behaviors.

Then, the student will whisper read along with an audio tape, or echo read the text with the teacher. The purpose of this is to give the students practice with the text
as well as listen to a good model of fluent reading. The teacher and the student will discuss any differences between the first and second read.

After, the student will read the text for a third time, keeping in mind the reading behaviors to work on. The teacher will score it just like a running record and time the reading as well. The data gathered will be computed to find out correct words per minute. The student will graph the data on their bar graph in red. The student and teacher will discuss the goal of the read to see if the child "hit" the goal.

**Data Analysis**

I will mostly rely on quantitative data for this research study. I will measure the participants' oral reading fluency by using the correct words per minute formula on the Fluency Benchmark Assessment sheet (see Appendix 5). I will time the first and third read of the chosen text during each session. I will take the data gathered from each of the reads and then I will be able to decide whether or not the participant's oral reading fluency improved by repeated readings or not. I will graph these results in order to make the data easily accessible and easier to interpret. I will use informal running records to score the participant's first and third reading of the text to determine if reading improvements were made.

I will use qualitative data such as notes of observations I make on the participants as well as comments that the participants make. The tape recordings of the participants reading will also serve as qualitative data, although I can not measure their improvements, I will be able to hear them. I will triangulate both my qualitative
and quantitative data with my observations and notes, data gathered and graphs made, along with my literature review.
This research was guided by two main questions: (a) to study the effectiveness of consecutive repeated readings along with (b) self-assessment in improving reading fluency. By looking at appendices 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 you will see that 100% of the time all three participants increased their correct words read per minute from the first to third consecutive read. I will go into depth with each participant’s individual results from the data that was gathered.

Results Child 1: See Appendix 4.1

Child 1 is a third grade student, the classroom teacher considers this participant to be an “average” student with no behavior or emotional disturbances. The teacher has always considered Child 1 to be a pleasure to have in class, and always works hard to improve on areas in need of growth. The family of Child 1 is very active with the school and there is constant support and communication between home and school.
Figure 4.1: Oral Reading Fluency: Child 1
**Day 1**

According to the fluency benchmark assessment (see appendix: Figure 1) Child 1 was assessed by the classroom teacher as a level M and has a target correct words per minute of 80-100. On day one with Child 1, she read an expository text about winter that was at an independent reading level. On the first cold read of the text, 91 correct words per minute were read, on the third read 93 correct words per minute were read. Both of these numbers are well within the target fluency goal. On the first read, Child 1 had a total of 3 miscues: The word “A” was omitted and “it’s” was substituted for “it is”. On the third read, Child 1 had one miscue and substituted “winter” for “snow”. All of the miscues that were made in this story by Child 1 did not change the meaning of the text whatsoever, therefore are not cause for concern. Child 1 told me that the text was way too easy, and I definitely agreed. We went over some items on the fluency skills checklist, and Child 1 decided that on the upcoming repeated reads wanted to work on reading with expression and paying attention to punctuation. On the third and final read of the text, Child 1 and I noticed a big difference in the pacing of the read and the expression used. Child 1 stated to me that it was nice to know what entailed good fluent reading because no one had ever said that to them before.

**Day 2**

On day two with Child 1, I moved the text reading levels of the passages up, as you can tell by the graph a little too high. This was an expository text about giraffes and Child 1 read it with 61 correct words per minute on the first read and 73 correct words per minute on the third repeated read. Both the first and the third reads...
of this passage fell below the target fluency rate that we were aiming for, but an increase still was made. On the first read of this text two miscues were made. The word “stand” was substituted for the word “standing” and “African” was substituted for “Africa”. Yet again, these miscues didn’t change the meaning of the passage and are not a cause for concern. On the third read of this text, Child 1 read the complete text accurately. When Child 1 and I went to go over some of the items on the fluency skills checklist, Child 1 stated that they didn’t like this text and it was boring, yet still set a goal of reading the text in larger chunks of words instead of word by word. This made me question if Child 1 actually thought the text was boring because she chose it, or if it may have been a bit to difficult and that is why she didn’t like it. The main difference that was noted between the first and third reads was the third read was very smooth whereas the first was choppy and for me as a listener, hard to follow the story.

Day 3

On the third day, I decided to find a couple of texts that were in the middle of day one and day two’s reading level. From the passages that I provided, Child 1 chose to read a short passage about soccer. For the first cold read 96 correct words per minute were read, and 99 correct words per minute on the third and final read. On the first read, Child 1 had one miscue the word “team” was substituted for the word “players”. Once more the miscue did not change meaning of the passage. On the third repeated read one miscue was made, the word “goalie” was substituted for the word “goal”. Child 1 set a goal to improve the pace of her reading throughout the repeated reads because they felt the first read was way too fast. While looking over
the running record of this text I would have to agree. In three separate instances, Child 1 had to reread the sentence to “make sense” of what they just read. Child 1 was using rereading as a way of self-monitoring comprehension of the text. Child 1 was successful on the third read; they read smooth, with only one miscue, and no repeated words or sentences.

**Day 4**

The three prior days of texts had an average of about 110 words, and the passage that Child 1 chose on day four had 126 total words in it. This was an expository text about volcanoes. On the first cold read, Child 1 read 47 correct words per minute, and on the third repeated read 75 correct words per minute. On the first cold read, Child 1 had five miscues. I had to tell Child 1 “eruption”, the word “from” was substituted for the word “form”, the word “etrupt” was substituted for “erupt” and “ecrating” for “erupting” and the word “some” was substituted for the word “small”. Every time Child 1 got to “erupt” they would look at me very quickly and then attempt to “sound it out”. The root word “erupt” really seemed to give Child 1 a problem, and after the first read we went over all of the different conjugations of the word. The first read was a bit slow and segmented, so Child 1 set a goal of a smoother, larger phrased reading. Child 1’s goal was clearly met as you can see by the 28 word increase between first and third reads.

**Day 5**

On day five, Child 1 read a text about the sun. On the first cold read, Child 1 read 54 correct words per minute and on the third repeated read 82 correct words per
minute. The first read did not meet the target fluency set, but the third read just made it. This text had a total of 121 words, but I was comfortable with keeping Child 1 at this reading level. It would give us a great opportunity to work on the different aspects of fluency that we were focusing on. On the first cold read, Child 1 had four miscues. I told Child 1 the word “billions”, the word “the” was inserted twice, and the word “it” was substituted for “in”. On the third repeated read, Child 1 omitted the word “the”. Again, these were what are considered minor miscues that don’t change the meaning of the text. On two separate occasions Child 1 went back to reread a sentence. On day five, Child 1 seemed to not need to look at the fluency skills checklist to make a goal for the reads. After the first read, Child 1 automatically told me one thing that she did well, and one thing she needed to work on. Child 1 told me that she paid attention and abided by the punctuation, but still needed to work on the smoothness of the read. As the numbers show us on day five, there was a 28 word increase in the correct words read per minute.

**Day 6**

On day six, Child 1 read a text about dogs. On the first cold read, Child 1 read 41 correct words per minute and on the third repeated read, Child 1 read 89 correct words per minute. On the first read Child 1 was way below her average target goal, but was up to par on the third read. On the first read, Child 1 had three miscues. The word “sleeping” was substituted for the word “sheep”, I had to tell Child 1 the word “cattle”, and the word “compan” was substituted for the word “companion”. On the third repeated read one miscue was made, the word “ceatle” was substituted for the word “cattle”. The miscues made definitely changed the meaning of the text,
so after the first read we went over those words, and talked about what each one meant. Child 1 decided to set the goal to read the repeated reads as if people were really talking. As you can tell by the 48 words read per minute increase the third read was very smooth and without hesitation.

**Day 7**

On day seven, Child 1 chose to read a poem about camping that was 151 total words. This was the longest text that Child 1 chose to read thus far. Child 1 read 65 correct words per minute on the first read and 88 correct words per minute on the third repeated read. On the first cold read of the poem, Child 1 had five miscues. The word “trees” was substituted for the word “tree”, the word “is” was inserted twice, the word “the” was substituted for the word “a”, the word “comic” was substituted for the word “comic”. Child 1 expressed how much she likes to read this poem; and said it was “more fun” than the other things that she had been reading. Child 1 set the goal of reading exclamations with emphasis and strong feeling. Both Child 1 and I agreed that the goal was met on the third read with flying colors. Child 1 mentioned that when she read the poem for the third time “it just sounded better”.

**Day 8**

On day eight, Child 1 chose to read a poem about seasons that was a total of 158 words. On the first read, Child 1 read 61 correct words per minute and 100 correct words per minute on the third repeated read. On the first read, Child 1 had three miscues. The word “brought” was substituted for the word “bring”, the word “ice” was substituted for the word “icy” and the word “jump” was substituted for the
word “jumping”. On the third read no miscues were made. The miscues maintained
the meaning of the story, and therefore were not cause for concern. Child 1 set a goal
of pausing at each comma and at the end of each sentence. The third repeated read of
the seasons poem was read smooth, and with a sense of rhythm that went along with
the punctuation that was included. Child 1 mentioned to me on day eight that she
really thought that her reading was getting better and more fluent, and that both her
classroom teacher and her mom had mentioned it to her. On day eight, Child 1 asked
if we were able to read both of the selections that she had to chose from that day,
instead of just one.

Day 9

On day nine, Child 1 chose to read a poem about exercise. On the first read,
Child 1 read 86 correct words per minute and 111 correct per minute on the third
repeated read. On the first cold and on the third reads of this poem the child made no
miscues. After reading this poem for the first time, Child 1 set two goals for the next
reads: one was to raise and lower their voice to show appropriate emotion and to read
with at a good pace which is not too fast and not too slow. Child 1 informed me that
she picked these goals because they thought that they sounded like a robot when
reading it the first time, and she wanted it to flow better.

Day 10

On the tenth day of our fluency work, Child 1 chose to read a short expository
text about hot air balloons. On the first read, Child 1 read 60 correct words per
minute and on the third, 90 correct words per minute. Throughout the first read four
miscues were made. The word “clothing” was substituted for the word “cloth”, the word “matches” was substituted for the word “machines”, the word “this” was substituted for the word “that” and I had to tell Child 1 the word “helium”. On the third read, Child 1 had absolutely no miscues. After reading this selection Child 1 made a text to self connection about when they rode in a hot air balloon on a family vacation. Child 1 set the goal of emphasizing important words or phrases by changing the tone in her voice, and after the third and final read of the text, she decided that she reached her goal.

Day 11

On day eleven, Child 1 chose a poem about the circus, which is the longest text read thus far, at 180 total words. Child 1 said that she chose this piece because she loved the circus and couldn’t wait for it to come to town again. On the first cold read, Child 1 read 49 correct words per minute and on the third repeated read, 75 correct words per minute. Both times that Child 1 read this poem; she fell below the target oral fluency rate for her specific reading level. I was afraid that this text may have been a bit too difficult for Child 1, so I asked what she thought about it. Child 1 said it was a bit longer, but it was fine to read, and that they actually enjoyed it. This poem practically doubled the first readings that the child did on days one-three, so all in all, I thought this was a great effort. On the first cold read of the poem Child 1 had six miscues. I had to tell Child 1 the word “absolutely” and “fro”, the word “blass” was substituted for the word “blazing”, the word “giant” was substituted for the word “great”, the word “won’t” was substituted for the word “wouldn’t”, and the word
“flake” was substituted for the word “fake”. Although these miscues did change the meaning of the text somewhat, I really wasn’t concerned with them because these are all words that are not in our everyday language and Child 1 may have never even seen them in text before. On the third and final repeated reading of the poem, Child 1 made no miscues. After the first cold read of the poem, Child 1 set a goal to read the poem more accurately on the next two times, and as stated above on the third read, no miscues were made. This proves that Child 1 reached the individual goal that she set for herself during this particular fluency session.

**Day 12**

On day twelve, Child 1 chose to read an expository text about Amelia Earhart. On the first cold read of this text, Child 1 read 56 correct words per minute and on the third repeated 89 correct words per minute. The first timed read did not fall within the target area for Child 1, but the final read was right within the limits. On the first cold read, Child 1 had two miscues. The word “the” was substituted for the word “that” and the word “this” was substituted for the word “these”. These are common miscues that even the best readers make and cause no meaning change and therefore are no major cause for concern. On the third repeated read, Child 1 had no miscues and the reading was smooth and at a just right pace according to the target words correct per minute scale. Child 1 mentioned to me that although she thinks her reading is definitely getting more fluent, that it is better when she reads poems as opposed to any other type of text. After reviewing the oral reading fluency graph of
Child 1, I would have to say that the days that poems were read, with the exception of
the circus poem, all of the correct words per minute are in the highest percentile.

**Day 13**

On Day thirteen, Child 1 chose to read a poem about being in the dark. On
the first cold read of this poem, Child 1 read 66 correct words per minute and on the
third read, 96 correct words per minute. As you can see by the numbers, Child 1
didn’t reach the target oral fluency rate for the first read, but fell well within the limits
for the third and final read. On the first read of this poem, Child 1 had four miscues.
The word “at” and “its” were omitted, the word “stairs” was substituted for “stair”,
and I had to tell Child 1 the word “tomb”. On the third and final reread, Child 1 read
the text with 100% accuracy and no miscues. On the thirteenth day, Child 1 was
tape recorded reading, and then listened back and talked about what they thought.
After Child 1 listened, they said that they couldn’t even believe it was them reading,
because it sounded just like talking, as if they were telling their friend a story or
something. Child 1 also noticed that they were no longer reading word by word, but
in longer phrases that coincided with the punctuation of the text.

**Final Data Analysis on Child 1**

During days 7-9 Child 1 read poems, and the initial first cold read correct
words per minute were higher than the others. I asked Child 1 what she likes to read
the best, they said poems. The margin of increase between the reading of poems and
the expository texts were relatively the same, however, the first and third correct
words per minute scores with the poems overall were higher than the expository first
and third reads. Almost all of the miscues that Child 1 made while reading the texts had no effect on the meaning, and are all common mistakes that are made by even the best readers. The miscues that were made that did change the meaning of the text, Child 1 informed me that they may have heard the word before but didn’t know what it meant and had never seen it before.
Results Child 2: See Appendix 4.2

Child 2 is considered to be an “average or just below average student” by the classroom teacher. Child 2 has been diagnosed with ADHD and takes medication for it on an inconsistent basis. The classroom teacher considers Child 2 to be somewhat of a distraction in class, but always gets the work done on time. Child 2’s family is said to be absent from school life and impossible to contact and communicate with.

Figure 4.2: Oral Reading Fluency: Child 2
Day 1

According to the fluency benchmark assessment (see appendix: Figure 1) Child 2 was assessed by the classroom teacher as a level L and has a target correct words per minute of 80-100. As soon as Child 2 came in for the session, the first words uttered were “am I going to be here long?” On the first day of our fluency work, Child 2 chose to read an expository text about winter. On the first cold read of this text, Child 2 read 55 correct words per minute and on the third and final repeated read, 88 correct words per minute. The first read was below the target fluency scale, but the third read was well within the target limits. On the first read, Child 2 had one miscue; the word “the” was omitted, there were five instances where the reader paused for more than three seconds, as well as reread two sentences that were already read. Throughout the third read of the text, the word “help” was omitted three times for a total of three miscues, and Child 2 did not pause or reread sentences. After looking over the Fluency Skills Checklist, (see appendix: Figure 3), Child 2 made a goal for himself. It was to not sound like a robot and to read the dialogue as if people were really talking and the data above proves that Child 2 met this goal.

Day 2

On day two of fluency work, Child 2 selected a short expository text about bats. For the first cold read, Child 2 read 54 correct words per minute and on the third and final read, 90 correct words per minute. This means that this participant did not get within the target fluency goal of between 80 and 100 for the first read but did for the third read. During the first read of this text, Child 2 had seven miscues; the
word "whorse" was substituted for the word "whose", the word "better" was substituted for the word "babies", the word "silk" was substituted for the word "skin", the word "becomes" for the word "bounce", the word the word "bumbles" was substituted for the word "bumblebee", the word "comfon" was substitutes for the word "common", and the word "the" was substituted for the word "they". When the child read the miscues on the first read of the text, they didn’t miss a beat, there was no hesitation and they kept on reading. With all of the miscues made on the first read, Child 2 informed me that he had no idea what he had just read. The goal of Child 2 for the next repeated readings was to read more accurately to understand what he was reading. On the third and final repeated reading of the text, Child 2 had one miscue; the word "the" was omitted. Child 2 definitely met his goal, and even commented on how cool it was that "bats use their ears to see their food in a way".

Day 3

On day three of fluency work, Child 2 chose to read a short, 128 word story about geckos. Child 2 told me he chose this story because his cousin who lives down in Florida has some pet geckos. On the first cold read of the text, Child 2 read 52 correct words per minute, on the third repeated read, 74 correct words per minute. Both of these numbers fall below the target fluency reading rate that we have set for Child 2. On the first read of the text, seven miscues were read; the word "the" was substituted for the word "and", the word "is" was substituted for the word "has", I told Child 2 the word "sticky", the word "strong" was substituted for the word "strange". The word "chase" was substituted for the word "catches"; the words "dry
time” was substituted for the word “daytime”, and the word “it” was substituted for the word “to”. After this reading of the text, I asked Child 2 how they thought it went, the response was “I was just trying to read it as quickly as I could”. We took a minute to then go over the Fluency Skills Checklist, and talk about how the good readers that we know read, and how fluency is not only reading fast. Again, Child 2 set the goal of slowing down the pace of the reading to concentrate more on accuracy and meaning of the text. Child 2 definitely met his goal, on the third repeated read, only one miscue was made; the word “the” was substituted for the word “and. Yet again, Child 2 commented on how “cool” the story was and they like that the tails can fall off and grow back.

Day 4

On day four, Child 2 picked out an expository text all about volcanoes to read. Child 2 did not meet the target fluency goal on either of the reads, the first cold read, 45 correct words per minute were read, and on the third repeated read, 75 correct words per minute were read. During the first cold read of the text, Child 2 had six miscues; the word “shot” was substituted for the word “shoot” twice, I had to tell the child the word “gases” and “thousands”, the word “from” was substituted for the word “form”, and the word “the” was inserted. Child 2 let me know that he understood what he had read in this passage the first time, which is something that had not happened on the first three days. Child 2 decided to set a new goal for himself; he thought that he needed to work on emphasizing important words and phrases by the tone in his voice. On the third read, Child 2 had three miscues that
were minor; the word “the” was inserted twice, and the word “can” was inserted as well. From the first and third read of the text, Child 2 improved by 30 words per minute, and decided that the expression was much improved, and he thought it may be exciting to listen to.

Day 5

On the fifth day, Child 2 chose to read a story about the sun. On the first read of the text, Child 2 read 52 correct words per minute and on the third and final repeated read of the text just missed the target goal and read 79 correct words per minute. On the first read, Child 2 read seven miscues; I told the child the words “billions” and the word “miles”, and the word “the” was inserted five times. The miscues on this read are far less worrisome than the previous day’s miscues. Child 2 merely inserted one of the most common words in the English language and it did not change the meaning of the text. The goal that Child 2 set for the next readings was paying attention to and abiding by the punctuation in the text. Child 2 told me that when he read “it is like a big run-on with no breaks or pauses”. On the third read, Child 2 had three miscues; they inserted the word “the” three times. Child 2 met his goal, and paused at each comma and period as well as raised his voice at the end of a question.

Day 6

On day six of reading fluency, Child 2 chose to read a short story about frogs. On the first cold read of this text, Child 2 read 56 correct words per minute and on the third and final repeated read of this text, 87 correct words per minute. Child 2
reached the oral reading fluency goal on the third read of the text. On the first read of the text, Child 2 read three miscues; the word “and” was substituted for the word “as”, the word “hams” was substituted for the word “humans” and the word “oranges” was substituted for the word “organs”. After the first read, Child 2 informed me that he knew that those words didn’t make sense in the story, but didn’t want to waste any time trying to figure out what they really were. Child 2 and I then discussed in great detail again how reading fluency entails so much more than just “fast” reading. After our discussion, Child 2 decided that they would try to improve their reading by not worrying about how fast they read. On the third repeated read of the text, Child 2 definitely hit his goal, and read with no miscues. I showed Child 2 that although he may have thought that he was reading “faster” on the first read of the text, it was actually slower; the first read took 117 seconds, and the third read took only 79 seconds. We decided that if Child 2 could keep his mind off of the “speed” he actually reads faster and more accurately.

Day 7

On day seven, Child 2 decided to switch up the pace a bit and read a poem about exercise. Child 2 swore to me up and down that he hated poems but still wanted to give them a try. On the first read of the poem, Child 2 read 60 correct words per minute, which was the highest number on the first read thus far. Child 2 had five miscues on the first read; the word “high” was omitted, the word “is” was added twice, the “stretch” was substituted for the word “stomp”, and the word “be” was omitted. After the first read of this poem, Child 2 admitted to me, that he actually thought that this text was fun to read, and he set the goal of reading it with
enthusiasm as well as emphasizing the exclamation points. Child 2 definitely met his goal on the third and final read. Child 2 read 88 correct words per minute on the third repeated read, as well as only had two miscues; the word “is” was inserted twice. Child 2 asked if there would be some poems for him to choose from for tomorrow’s fluency session.

**Day 8**

On day eight of fluency work with Child 2, they chose to read a poem about family. On this day, and with reading this poem, Child 2 read the most words per minute thus far for both the first cold read (63 correct words per minute) and the third repeated read (91 correct words per minute). On the first cold read of this poem, Child 2 had four miscues; the word “tackle” was substituted for the word “tickle”, the word “he” was substituted for the word “she” twice, and the word “special” was omitted. After the first read of the text, Child 2 decided to set a goal of grouping the words of the text together in more meaningful phrases. Child 2 met the goal; no miscues were made on the third and final repeated read of the text. Child 2 read all of the phrases of the poem just as the author had intended them to; with following the rules of punctuation, he paused at commas and periods, and read the exclamations with strong feelings. After day eight of our fluency work was over, Child 2 told me that he wanted to stop in the library before heading back to class to check to see if they had any cool poem books to check out for his silent reading book.
Day 9

To my surprise, on day nine of fluency work with Child 2, he switched to read a short text about astronauts. On the first cold read of this text, Child 2 read 66 correct words per minute, which was the highest first read thus far. Throughout this first read, Child 2 had four miscues; the word “stapped” was substituted for the word “strapped”, the “bowdies” was substituted for the word “bodies” and the word “the” was inserted twice. After the first read of this text, Child 2 told me that this text was “pretty cool”, but “harder” to read than the poems, and set a goal to read it more like me and like talking and less like a robot. On the last read, Child 2 had three miscues; the word “are” was inserted for the word “work”, the word “and” and the word “is” were inserted. On the third and final repeated read of this text, Child 2 read 72 correct words per minute, and this falls beneath the fluency reading benchmark that was set. Although it did fall below the target goal, both Child 2 and I feel that the goal was accomplished, the third read was very smooth, and was read in larger groupings and phrases rather than word by word.

Day 10

On day ten of fluency work with Child 2, he wanted to try another short story to see if he could improve, just as he had with the poems. Child 2 decided to read a text about hockey. On the first cold read, Child 2 read 59 correct words per minute and on the third repeated read, 71 correct words per minute. Both of these are below the target fluency benchmark for Child 2 and is the second day in a row not meeting it. On the first cold read of this text, Child 2 had six miscues; the word “place” was
omitted, the word “glide” was substituted for the word “slide”, the word “now” was omitted, I had to tell Child 2 the word “glide”, and the word “the” was omitted. All of the miscues were minor and did not change the meaning of the text. The goal of Child 2 for the repeated reads was to read with a good pace, not too fast and not too slow while at the same time abiding by the rules of punctuation. On the third read, two miscues were made; two words were omitted, “is” and “the”. Child 2 had a big smile on their face after the third read, they thought that the read was very smooth, but a little slow, and I completely agreed with him, it was a huge improvement. After the third read of the passage, Child 2 told me that he wished there was still ice on the ground so that he could try to play ice hockey.

Day 11

On the eleventh day of fluency practice, Child 2 decided to take another shot at poetry. The Poem that Child 2 selected was a poem that was about the beach. Child 2 related this to his cousins down in Florida, as well as the gecko story we had read in the beginning of our work together. Now, Child 2 is not only making text to self connections, but he is making text to text connections as well. On the first cold read of this text, Child 2 read 62 correct words per minute, which is the third highest first read thus far. Throughout the first read, Child 2 had three miscues; the word “hot” was omitted, the word “then” was added, and the word “on” was substituted for the word “in”. Overall, Child 2 felt that this was a pretty good first read, and I agree. Child 2 set the goal to work on the monotone voice in which he was reading. Child 2 told me that he was going to read the poem, as if it was his story about the beach and
he wanted to tell his best friend about it. On the third repeated read, Child 2 read 81 correct words per minute, which is just above the fluency benchmark that we sent for him. Child 2 and I both feel he met his goal, after the third read of the text, I really wanted to go to the beach, he read it like a commercial, and it made me jealous of the experience at the beach.

**Day 12**

On day twelve of fluency work, Child 2 decided to pick another poem. This poem was about different types of hobbies. On the first cold read of this poem, Child 2 read 67 correct words per minute, which is the highest number for first reads thus far. During the first read of the poem, Child 2 had made four miscues; the word "flat" was substituted for the word "float", the word "is" was inserted, the word "real" was substituted for the word "really", and the word "a" was inserted. After the first read, Child 2 told me how "cool" they thought this poem was and not they wanted to try these new hobbies too. Child 2 also noticed that the last two sentences in each stanza were the same and that they ended in exclamation points. So, the goal of Child 2 for this poem was to read with expression and raise and lower his voice to show appropriate expression and punctuation. On the third repeated read of this text, Child 2 read 79 correct words per minute, which is just a on below the target goal. During the third read, Child 2 paused over 3 seconds' in-between the stanzas of the poem and I think that this played a significant role in not meeting the goal. Other than that, Child 2 hit his goal that he set for himself, there were no miscues, and the poem was read fluently.
Day 13

On day thirteen, Child 2 decided to read a poem about pizza because it was pizza day in the cafeteria. On the first cold read of this poem, Child 2 read 64 correct words per minute, which is the third highest number for the first read the entire time we were working on fluency. On the first read, Child 2 had four miscues; the word “very” was omitted, the word “don’t” was substituted for the words “do not”, and the word “and” was omitted. The goal that Child 2 had on our last day of fluency work together was to read the poem more fluently, using all of the components that he had been working on. On the third repeated, Child 2 read 83 correct words per minute, and made no miscues. Both Child 2 and I agreed that his overall knowledge of fluency and his oral reading fluency have improved tremendously.

Final Data Analysis on Child 2

On the first cold reads of the passages, Child 2 reached the benchmark goal of 80-100 correct words per minute 0% of the time. Overall, Child 2 had a steady increase on the first read of each text. On the third repeated read of the text, Child 2 met the benchmark goal approximately 54% of the time. Child 2 always had at least 3 miscues on all of the first reads of the texts. By the end of our fluency work, the classroom teacher has told me on numerous occasions that Child 2 is participating more in class during English and Language Arts time as well as staying on task during Silent Sustained Reading.
Results Child 3: See Appendix 4.3

Child 3 is considered an “average student” by the classroom teacher. Child 3 is also considered to be “shy and quiet”, and never a disruption during class time. Child 3 always puts forth their best effort and gets things accomplished. Child 3’s family is minimally involved in school life, but is always supportive and easy to communicate with.

Figure 4.3: Oral Reading Fluency: Child 3
Day 1

According to the fluency benchmark assessment (see appendix: Figure 1) Child 3 was assessed by the classroom teacher as a level L and has a target correct words per minute of 80-100. The first text that Child 3 chose to read was a short text about a Frisbee. On the first cold read of the text, Child 3 read 72 correct words per minute, and on the third repeated read, 84 correct words correct per minute. The first read was below the target rate and the third repeated read was in the target limits. During the first read of the text, Child 3 had one miscue; the word “the” was substituted for the word “a”. After reviewing the Fluency Skills Checklist, Child 3 set a goal of chunking larger phrases together, he thought that he was reading word by word and in a robotic sense. After the third read, the number proved, and the child agreed that he met his goal.

Day 2

On day two, Child 3 decided to read a short expository text on hot air balloons, which was 33 total words longer than the previous day’s text. On the first cold read, Child 3 read 53 correct words per minute and 78 correct words per minute on the third repeated read. Both of these numbers fall below the target goal for Child 3’s oral reading fluency. Throughout the first read, Child 3 had three miscues. The word “helium” was substituted for the word “heights”, the word “matches” was substituted for the word “machines”, and the word “clowth” was substituted for the word “cloth”. On the third repeated read, Child 3 had one miscue; the word “is” was
substituted for the word “in”. However, on the third read of the text, Child 3 repeated two separate times where he had previously made miscues. After looking over the Fluency Skills Checklist, Child 3 decided that work still needed to be done on reading longer phases as well as reading with expression and not such a monotone voice. An improvement was shown with the increase in words read, but Child 3 decided that all of the readings were still done in a monotone fashion, so that would be a continuous goal.

Day 3

On day three, Child 3 decided to read a short text all about frogs. This text was 20 total words shorter that the previous day’s selected text. On the first cold read, Child 3 read 48 correct words per minute, on the third repeated read, 65 correct words per minute. Both of these numbers fall way below the average target that was set for Child 3. I noted to the side on day three, that Child 3 did not feel well and was sniffling and coughing. During the first cold read, Child three had one miscue; the word “in” was an addition. On the third and final read, no miscues were made. The longer chunks of phrases was still the goal for today, and Child 3 told me that he didn’t feel that he hit the goal, although the numbers proved that there was an increase in the reading speed, but thought that expression of the reading was a bit better than the previous days.

Day 4

On day four, Child 3 chose to read a short text about volcanoes. On the first cold read, Child 3 read 46 correct words per minute and on the third repeated read, 75
correct words per minute. Both of these reads fall below the target goal for Child 3, but was a 29 word per minute increase, which is still impressive. On the first read, Child 3 had three miscues. I told Child 3 the word “gases”, the word “from” was substituted for the word “form”, and the word “noses” was substituted for the word “noise”. The third read of the text was read with 100% accuracy and no miscues were made. Child 3 wanted to stick with the same goal as the prior days and lengthening the meaningful phrases that were read. Child 3 stated that the reading was getting better, but still did not sound like the classroom teachers reading, which was stated to be perfectly fluent by the participant.

**Day 5**

On day five, Child 3 chose to read an expository text about polar bears. On the first cold read of the text, Child 3 read 55 correct words per minute and on the third repeated read, 77 correct words per minute. Both of these readings fell below the target fluency goal that was set for Child 3. On the first cold read of this selected text, Child 3 had one miscue; the word “panded” was substituted for the word “padded”. The third and final repeated read of this text was read with 100% accuracy. Child 3, again, would like to work on not reading word by word and in a smoother fashion as well as reading with expression, so the story will sound more interesting to the audience. Child 3 felt that on the third read, the goal of expression but not longer phrases was met.
Day 6

On day six, Child 3 chose to read a short story about wolves. During the first cold read of this selection, Child 3 read 43 correct words per minute and on the third and final reading, 60 correct words per minute. On the first read of the story, Child 3 paused for more than 3 seconds eight times, and repeated an entire sentence five times. On the first read there were two miscues; the word “the” was substituted for the word “a”, and the word “other” was substituted for the word “another”. On the third read, one miscue was made; the word “from” was substituted for the word “of”. These miscues didn’t interfere with meaning of the story and are considered very minor. Child 3 told me that this story was chosen because he had always wanted to learn about wolves, but really never had the chance to before. After the first read of the text, Child 3 set a goal, to not repeat sentences that were already read. Child 3 met the goal, and did not repeat any previously read sentences and improved the correct words read per minute by 17.

Day 7

Day seven was the first day that Child 3 decided to read a poem. The poem was about family. On the first cold read of the poem, Child 3 read 71 correct words per minute and on the third repeated read, 87 correct words per minute. This poem had 110 total words, which was the average of all the other texts that were read prior to this. On the first read, Child one had two miscues; the word “other” was substituted for the word “another”, and the word “friends” was substituted for the
word “friend”. The third and final read of the poem was read with 100% accuracy.

Child 3 said that he was very excited about reading poems, and thought that his reading was really good during even the first read, but set a goal to read exclamations with emphasis and strong feeling. At the end of the third read, Child 3 felt very confident with meeting the goal that was set, and asked if he could bring the poem home to read it to family members.

Day 8

On day eight, Child 3 chose to read another poem, this one was about fun things that kids can do. This poem has a total of 126 words and on the first cold read, Child 3 read 74 correct words per minute, and on the third and final read, 98 correct words per minute. Although the first read didn’t fall within the target, the third read is the highest that Child 3 has read thus far. During the first read two miscues were made; the word “horse” was substituted for the word “hose” and the word “even” was omitted. The final read was read with 100% accuracy. The goal that Child 3 set for this reading was to read it as dialogue as if people were talking. Child 3 agreed that goal was met, and even surpassed, by paying attention to punctuation and reading at a just right pace. Child 3 told me that there is a certain level of comfort when reading the poems as opposed to the expository text that we were reading in the beginning. Child 3 stated that he thought if he practiced fluency enough with poetry, then maybe his overall reading would get better.
Day 9

On day nine, Child 3 chose another poem to practice fluency with; this poem was about going for a walk. On the first cold read, Child 3 read 60 correct words per minute and on the third and final read, 99 correct words per minute. Although the first read did not fall in the target fluency range, the third read increase by 39 words per minute and was at the highest percentile of the target range. Both the first and third reads of this poem were read with 100% accuracy. Child 3 brought in a text to self connection when he informed me that this poem brought back a memory of him and his dad going fishing and all the things that they see. The goal that Child 3 set for this read was to read each line as a whole phrase, as it was set up on paper. Child 3 felt that the third read sounded just like talking, and couldn’t believe how much the graph improved, and asked again for a copy of the poem to read at home.

Day 10

On the tenth day of fluency work, Child 3 chose a poem about an apple being a toothbrush. On the fist cold read, Child 3 read 59 correct words per minute, and on the third and final read, 84 correct words per minute. The first read was below the target fluency goal for Child 3, but the last read was right on track. Both the first and third reads of this poem were read with 100% accuracy. Child 3’s goal was to really focus on the punctuation that was in the poem such as exclamation points and question marks. After the third and final read of this poem, Child 3 was so excited about the reading that we high-fived each other. Not only did Child 3 abide by all of the punctuation, but also emphasized important words and phrases by changing the
tone of the reading voice. Child 3 told me that he “needed a copy of this to read to his mom”.

Day 11

On the eleventh day of fluency work, Child 3 decided to switch back to an expository text about astronauts to see if the fluent reading would hold up. On the first cold read, Child 3 read 59 correct words per minute and on the third and final read, 69 correct words per minute. This was the first time in five sessions that Child 3 did not hit the target fluency goal on the third repeated read. On both the first and third reads of this expository text, Child 3 read them with 100% accuracy. Child 3 made nine pauses in the first reading of the text that were longer than three seconds, and repeated a sentence that was already read five times. For this reason, Child 3 set the goal to read at a just right pace and to read smooth instead of choppy and word by word. After the third read, Child 3 informed me that he did not think the goal was met, and that he felt very uncomfortable and unnatural reading short expository texts.

Day 12

On day twelve of the fluency work, Child 3 decided to return to reading poems instead of the expository text. The poem that Child 3 chose to read was about a day spent at the beach this was chosen because he said that he loved to go to the beach on school vacations. On the first cold read of this poem, Child 3 read 69 correct words per minute and on the third repeated read, 90 correct words per minute. The first read did not reach the fluency goal, however the third read fell right in the middle of the goal. On the first read, Child 3 had two miscues; the word “cold” was
substituted for the word “cool” and the word “to” was inserted; both of which did not
impede meaning. During the first read, Child 3 had eight pauses that were longer
than three seconds. On the third and final repeated read of the poem, Child 3 read it
with 100% accuracy and no pauses longer than three seconds, which was the goal of
the participant.

Day 13

On the thirteenth day, Child 3 chose to work on fluency by reading a poem
about pizza because they said it was their favorite food. On the first cold read, Child
3 read 70 correct words per minute and on the third and final cold read, 110 correct
words per minute, and the highest number throughout the entire fluency program. On
both the first and third reads of this poem, Child 3 read them with 100% accuracy.
On the first read, Child 3 read with nine hesitations that were over three seconds each,
and on the third read, there were no hesitations over three seconds. Child 3 set a goal
to work on reading smooth reading, which has no hesitations and longer phrases.
Child 3 met his goal completely by reading the entire poem in longer more
meaningful phrases, and told me that he was very happy with the way his reading has
progressed.

Final Data Analysis on Child 3

Child 3 did not hit the target fluency goal that was set any of the times texts
were read on the first cold read. On the third repeated read of the texts, Child 3
surpassed the fluency goal 54% of the time. Child 3 did not make over three miscues
in any given text selection that was read. 84% of the time Child 3 did not make any
miscues on the third and final repeated read. Child 3 paused a tremendous amount of
time during the reading of the passages, and then took the time to glance up at me and
then back down at the text. There was a lot of hesitation when reading the expository
text and this poses a problem when working with reading fluency. Child 3 only asked
to take home copies of the poems and not the expository texts. At the end of our last
fluency session together, Child 3 stated that he found himself reading more, and that
he thought that was "weird", but "cool" at the same time.
Attainment of Research Objective and Patterns Found:

The objective of my project was to study the effectiveness of repeated readings along with self-assessment in improving reading fluency.

By looking over my research data, it appears that 100% of the time, a higher oral reading fluency rate was reached during each session. Each of the three children increased their oral fluency rate at each of their sessions with all of the texts used. Not one time, did any of the children decrease their oral fluency reading rate from the first to third read. This tells me, that although we may not hit the nail directly on the head by saying that “practice makes perfect”, but I think that we were pretty close and can say “practice does make better readers”.

By making the students cognizant of what fluent reading is and making so many analogies, it really allowed them to start to internalize the definition of fluency, instead of just memorizing an educational buzz word. Seems like the different components of reading fluency started to get internalized throughout this process. They looked less to me for advice and took ownership and accountability for their reading and their improvements. Having the Fluency Skills Checklist was scaffolding the children to be self-monitors and independent more fluent readers. As the sessions passed, the children had to “rely” on the researcher less, and could self-assess all of their own readings, and even set goals for themselves while doing so. As the time went on, and their graphs grew in height, so did their confidence with reading. All of
the children that participated in this study, really didn’t view themselves as a good reading when coming into the program. After our fluency sessions were done with, they walked out of the office with their heads held high, reading more independently, volunteering more in class, and getting many compliments about how great their reading had been. I was fortunate enough to see attitude changes in all of the children from viewing reading as a “chore” and “something that you teacher and mom makes you do”, to getting real entertainment from reading.

After much analysis, it became apparent that the biggest increase in fluency rates occurred when the text chosen was poetry. Although all of the children did not say that their favorite texts to read were poems, but they sure did increase their oral fluency reading rate the highest. Poems versus other forms of text would be a good alternate way to approach this study. I think that the poems that I chose for the students seemed to have somewhat of a “beat” to them and they often had a repetitious clause. This is my thinking on why the days that poems were read the largest percentage of an increase was made.

Another aspect of this study that seemed to show a pattern was the number and kinds of miscues that the children were making. From the beginning of the sessions all of the children were making more miscues and focusing more on speed than accuracy, which was bringing their graphs down. The miscues in the beginning sessions of the fluency work seemed to misconstrue the meaning of the text either slightly or grandly. As soon as they seemed to really grasp what reading fluently is, they started reading a bit slower, and making less miscues. The miscues that were
made towards the end of the sessions also were maintaining the meaning of the texts. Toward the end of the fluency sessions, a couple of miscues were made that hindered comprehension, the students picked up on the confusion, and went back to reread. Although this added time to the read and may have lowered their graph but it is an amazing reading strategy for clarification and comprehension. All good readers do make some miscues and omissions, we do so because we tend to look at words in chunks and not letter by letter.

All of my findings seemed to correlate with the most recent research and studies. However, my study was the only one that I could find that had actually numbers and quantitative data to really compare and contrast the success of the study or not. I think that the next time that I conduct this study, or another researcher does, I would recommend having an informal observation notebook handy to write down anything that may be of interest or of relevance to the study. People’s general moods always play a role in productivity, and effort given in a certain day. All of my children were not held accountable for any work that they may have missed during our sessions, this helped keep the stress level low, and keep an opened and positive attitude about fluency practice.

Conclusion:

Repeated reading of short sections of text by young readers is commonly suggested as a means of increasing reading performance and research has repeatedly demonstrated that this method can be effective (Dowhower, 1994). I see most of the long term effects of this study coming from a high increase in reading self-esteem as
well as enjoying reading. Having the students record and track their reading growth may just have been the immediate gratification that they needed to realize that they are in fact great readers. All of the children’s teachers that were involved in the fluency sessions, made it a point to come back to me with positive news. All of the students had moved up a level in their reading groups, as well as are more attentive and more willing to participate in English and Language Arts times.

I think that one of the main strengths of this study is that it is so straightforward and anyone is able to duplicate it. All of the materials that are needed to do this research are more likely than not to be right at the tips of your fingers in the classroom. The daily structure and consistency of this study was also a major strength. The participants always knew what to expect, what was expected of them, and we never strayed from that continuity, this was to keep a low stress, high work and energy environment.

What I felt was another huge strength of this study was giving the children the opportunity to color in their own graphs to see how much their reading had improved everyday. At the end of each session, no fail, and the kids would all be very excited about their scores going up, even if it was a minute change. Giving something tangible that they could hold may have had some influence on the work and progress they made, it was hopefully a sort of intrinsic motivation.

The types of readings that you choose need to foster good fluency skills, and this can definitely be a limitation to this study. The researcher needs to be fully aware of and make wise text choices for the children to choose from. Factors that
could either help or hinder oral reading fluency may include number of total words, punctuation, exposure to the concepts and vocabulary in the texts. The purpose of this study is to set children up for success and growth, and this is very hard to achieve if they are reading text that is either too hard, or totally foreign to them. The best advice that I would give, is to truly get to know your students first, both academically and socially. Get their proper independent reading level, and get to know some of their favorite things to do so you can find texts about things that they like. Even as adults, we don’t like reading things that are boring, dry, and uninteresting to us, so please don’t expose your students to this.

When audio taping the children read on the last day, it seemed to be more of a distraction that a help. It seemed that they lost all train of thought before the record button was hit, but after they turned back to fluent readers. I wonder if one may want to introduce the tape recorders in the beginning of the year, this way it would become a norm in the daily school lives of the children. I think that tape recording their reading is definitely something that students can do in buddies, while the researcher pulls another child aside to help them one-to-one. I think that this would be the most time efficient way to go in further studies. I think it would be beneficial for the student to write up an assessment on their fluent reading weekly, then the teacher could have a conference and both decide what they can work on next, or if they need to go back and work on something.

Another factor of this study that I would like to see improved is the number of students involved in the study. Unfortunately due to time constraints only three
students were able to do this study with me. I feel that the small sample size makes it impossible to generalize my data and say that it would work for every child in every situation. Another factor that may have been a limitation of this study was me being their primary fluency teacher, but not their classroom teacher. If I were to replicate this study, I would try to get my whole class involved, and that way I would know them all personally and individually, and the comfort level would already be established.

One part of the study that I could not control completely was the fact that the students involved had a choice of their texts to read. I always gave them at least two choices to choose from, and from there it was up to them. There are may factors that went into the children choosing the texts that they did such as, the total number of words, word placement on the sheet of paper, and if there were illustrations or not.

This study was really focusing on speed and accuracy as opposed to all of the other components involved in reading fluency, and I think that is one major area that I would like to modify and adjust for the next time I do fluency research. This change is needed for the simple fact that accuracy and pace are only two small parts of what reading fluency entails. This would be a tricky and time consuming study, but the results and data collected from it would be well worth it. I think that having the students write out their fluency goals for the days reading would be an excellent way to get writing involved as well as help internalize all of the components of fluency. Perhaps different texts can be chosen that help work on and problem solve the different aspects of fluency may be helpful.
All of the students that I worked with during this study were at a different place with their knowledge of reading fluency. I think that one way to help this study the next time it is duplicated is to do whole group fluency lessons before you even start the research. Helping all the students get on the same page will enable the study to start on an even playing field.

Fluency is such an information packed subject, and I feel that educators and students would benefit a great deal if more research was collected, analyzed and shared. We need to make our educators and our students aware of reading fluency at an early age, so that it is something that can be learned, and developed while in the emergent phases of the reading process. All of the outcomes in my research were very favorable, and really were beneficial to the participants. I recommend that teachers try to work in weekly fluency work, either whole class, or small group and keep data on the sessions. I feel that most educators will see vast improvements on overall reading fluency in the class as well as class attitudes about reading and literacy.
Figure 4.1 ................................................................. -69-

Figure 4.2 ................................................................ -70-

Figure 4.3 ................................................................ -71-

Fluency Benchmark Assessment................................. -72-

Fluency Skills Checklist ............................................. -73-

Oral Reading Fluency Graph (Blank) ......................... -74-
Figure 4.1: Oral Reading Fluency: Child 1
Figure 4.2: Oral Reading Fluency: Child 2

Correct Words Per Minute

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Day

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

1st Cold Read
3rd Repeated Read
Figure 4.3: Oral Reading Fluency: Child 3

Correct Words Per Minute

Day
**Fluency Benchmark Assessment**

**Rate of Reading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Instructional Level</th>
<th>Oral Reading Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H-J</td>
<td>50-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-M</td>
<td>80-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-P</td>
<td>90-120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q-S</td>
<td>115-140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-U</td>
<td>125-150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V-W</td>
<td>135-160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Oral Reading Rate Formula:**
1. Time entire reading passage
2. Convert to total seconds
3. Apply formula \[ \text{total correct words} \times 60 = \text{WCPM} \]
   \[ \frac{\text{total seconds}}{\text{total correct words}} \]

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

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

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

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

Students should be asked to read passages at and below their assigned grade placement. Ratings of 3 and 4 indicated fluent reading. Ratings of 1 and 2 indicate that the student has still not achieved a minimal level of fluency for the grade level at which the passage is written.

**FIGURE 1**
Fluency Skills Checklist

Did you...

- Raise and lower your voice to show appropriate emotion?
- Read with a good pace... not too fast and not too slow?
- Emphasize important words or phrases by changing the tone of your voice?
- Pause at each comma and at the end of each sentence?
- Raise your voice at the end of a question?
- Read exclamations with emphasis and strong feeling?
- Read dialogue as if people were really talking?
- "Chunk" or group words together in meaningful phrases?
- Understand what you read?

Figure 2
REFERENCES


