The Effects of a Sustained Silent Reading Program on the Reading Attitudes and Habits of Second Grade Students

Laura A. Siracuse

The College at Brockport

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THE EFFECTS OF A SUSTAINED SILENT READING PROGRAM ON THE READING ATTITUDES AND HABITS OF SECOND GRADE STUDENTS

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the Department of Education and Human Development State University of New York College at Brockport in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Education

by
Laura A. Siracuse
State University of New York College at Brockport Brockport, New York May, 1991
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) program on the reading attitudes and habits of second grade students.

The subjects were two second grade classes from a suburban school in western New York. The control group of 25 students participated in a reading program using the basal and children's literature. The treatment group of 26 students participated in a reading program using the basal and children's literature plus a daily fifteen minute period of SSR. The treatment group participated in SSR for ten weeks.

The modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale and the Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits were administered to determine the mean pre- and post-treatment reading attitudes for both the control group and the treatment group. The Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR was also used to determine the treatment group's attitude toward SSR.

The statistical analysis indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean posttest scores of the control group and the treatment group as measured by the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale. The analysis also indicated that there was a significant difference in the mean posttest scores of the control group and the treatment group, in favor of the treatment group, as measured by the Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits. The responses
on the Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR showed that a majority of the students, 84.62%, had highly positive feelings toward SSR.
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Chapter I

Statement of the Problem

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) program on the reading attitudes and habits of second grade students.

Questions

1. Is there a statistically significant difference in the mean posttest scores on the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale given to second grade students who participated in an SSR program and those who did not participate?

2. Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean posttest scores on the researcher made Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits completed by parents for second grade students who participated in an SSR program and those who did not participate?

3. How do students who have participated in an SSR program feel about SSR according to the Student Attitude Survey toward SSR?
Need for the Study

Reading is a lifelong skill that needs continuous practice, development, and refinement. However, a survey conducted by a Book Industry Study Group reported that 80% of all books are read by only 10% of the people. The survey also shows a decline in book readers in the age group under 21, from 75% in 1978 to 63% in 1983 (cited in Cullinan, 1987).

Independent reading is thought to be a major source of reading fluency, vocabulary growth, and knowledge of text structure yet the amount of time school age children spend reading in or out of the classroom is small. According to Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson (1985), an estimate of silent reading time in the typical primary school class is 7 or 8 minutes per day or less than 10% of the total time devoted to reading. By the middle grades, silent reading time may average 15 minutes per day. In comparison up to 70% of the time allocated for reading instruction is spent on seatwork activities such as workbooks or skill sheets. Few of these seatwork activities increase reading fluency or require children to use any higher level thinking skills. Burkhart (1980) found that primary children often view reading as being in the reading group. They equate their ability to read by the number of words
missed when reading aloud or by the number of mistakes made on a workbook page. For them the goal of reading is to make little or no errors rather than to interact with and gain meaning from the text.

In the classroom, independent silent reading is often in the category of enrichment if extra time is available. Those students that finish their work quickly are given time in class to read. Levine (1984) thought that it was ironic that poor readers who often have negative attitudes toward reading are given the least time to read for pleasure.

Most children do not engage in silent reading or recreational reading at home. A group of fifth graders kept a daily log of after school activities for several months. For the majority of the children, reading from books occupied 1% of their free time, or less. However, the children averaged 130 minutes per day watching TV, or about one third of the time between the end of school and going to sleep (Anderson et al., 1985).

A very important part of the reading process is selecting something to read and sustaining silent reading long enough to get something out of the reading material (Sulzby, 1985). However, children often read only what is absolutely required of them. They do not set aside time to
read and often come from homes where they do not see adult role models reading and where there is no quiet time without television or some other activity.

Today's educators are concerned with fostering positive attitudes toward reading and forming the reading habit while they are developing reading skills. It is essential to deal with the affective domain of reading, since the individuals' attitude can remain long after instruction ceases. Attitudes may also tend to act as determinants of subsequent behavior and learning. In an effort to develop literate students that exhibit both the skills to read and the interest, desire, and habit to practice the art of reading some educators have established Sustained Silent Reading programs.

Research conducted to determine the effects of SSR on reading attitudes and habits has produced mixed results. However, most research has been conducted with middle and upper grade students (intermediate, junior high, and high school). Further research needs to be conducted at the primary level (Grades K-3) to see if exposing students to SSR at an earlier age will have positive results.

**Definitions**

Sustained Silent Reading, SSR, is the structured practice of involving students and teachers in daily
periods of silent reading using self-selected materials such as trade books, magazines, comic books, texts, and newspapers. This practice does not include any type of formal evaluation.

**Limitations of the Study**

The following are variables that could have limited the results of this study:

1. The subjects of this study were two second grade classes in a school district. The small number of subjects, n=51, may have limited the study. It is also possible that teacher style or other classroom activities during the length of the study may have effected the reading attitudes of the students.

2. Another limitation of the study was the length of the treatment. Ten weeks is a fairly short time for attitudes to change. A student's reading habits might also change before he or she is cognizant of a change in attitude.

3. Reading attitudes and habits are difficult to assess. Therefore, the instruments used, the modified version of the Estes Reading Attitude Scale, the researcher made Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits, and the modified version of the Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR
may not have accurately measured reading attitudes and habits.

**Summary**

The purpose of this study was to determine if the use of a Sustained Silent Reading program in the classroom promotes a positive attitude toward reading and aids in the development of the reading habit.

This study was important to conduct because increasingly, teachers are looking for effective ways to encourage children's love of reading as well as developing reading skills. Teachers would like to have students who not only know how to read but who also choose to read for information or enjoyment. This study was also important to conduct because there was very little research on the use of SSR with primary children.

Limitations of this study were the relatively small number of subjects and the time factor. The researcher was also unable to account for teacher style or classroom activities that may have influenced reading attitudes. Reading attitudes and habits are difficult to measure, so the instruments used may not have provided a truly accurate assessment.
Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to initiate a sustained silent reading program into a second grade classroom to determine whether such a program changes reading attitudes and habits. This chapter will examine the literature having to do with reading attitudes and Sustained Silent Reading.

Reading Attitudes

There are two important aspects to consider when evaluating the successfulness of a reading program: students' achievements and attitudes. There are many readily available tests to measure student achievement but reading attitudes, by their nature, tend to be much more difficult to assess. However, it is important to deal with the affective domain of reading since the effectiveness of a reading program should be based on how well students read and whether they do in fact read. Estes (1971) states that how students feel about reading is as important as whether they are able to read for the value of reading.
ability lies in its use rather than its possession. Fader (1968) maintained that student attitudes must be improved before one could expect to see any lasting effects upon reading performance. Trelease (1985) agrees, stating that if parents and schools want better readers--and consequently better writers, speakers, and spellers--it will happen naturally if children are interested in reading.

Strategies For Improving Reading Attitudes

Parents and educators need to be concerned with teaching children to want to read, as well as how to read. One way both parents and teachers can stimulate an interest in reading is by reading aloud to children. When parents read aloud to young children it exposes them to literature they wouldn't be able to read themselves and gives them a goal for learning to read. Durkin (1966) conducted a comprehensive study of early readers--those who come to school knowing how to read without formal instruction. She found that all of the seventy-nine children were read to on a regular basis and had parents that were avid readers themselves. A study of reading in fifteen countries also showed that children who came from homes that respected reading and who had been read to from an early age were the best readers (Thorndike, 1973).
Teachers can also improve reading achievement and attitudes by reading aloud to their students. Cohen (1968) initiated a year long read aloud project with ten classes of second graders in New York City. At the conclusion of the study, the experimental group was significantly ahead of the control group in terms of vocabulary and reading comprehension. Bruckerhoff (1977) surveyed 101 high school students and asked them what teachers had done to successfully promote reading. The most frequently cited responses were that the teacher read aloud to the class, was excited about books, provided time for free reading, and helped students find good books. Blatt (1982) also found that teachers were most successful in fostering reading interests when they gave children time to read, used literature to teach reading or regularly read aloud to their classes.

The use of the shared reading approach can also create an interest in reading for the beginning reader (Holdaway, 1979). This approach builds on the model of the bedtime story. The teacher shares a book, often a Big Book, with a group of children by reading it aloud and pointing to the words. The teacher reads through the story the first time and then invites the students to join in on the parts they know. When students read aloud as a group, they are
gaining knowledge about the reading process and no child is humiliated by lack of ability.

Another way to entice students into reading is to give them access to a wide variety of literature that will meet their individual interests and abilities. It is important for teachers to be familiar with a great deal of reading material and have an understanding of students' individual reading needs. Roettger (1980) interviewed intermediate students with a discrepancy between reading attitude and reading achievement (high attitude and low performance or low attitude and high performance). Both groups of students said that the teacher should give students time each day to read their own books, assist students in finding books based on their hobbies and interests, and help students build pictures in their minds about what they are reading.

Teachers can also promote an interest in reading by letting students respond to literature in a variety of formal and informal ways. Students need to be surrounded by reading, art, and writing materials of all kinds so that they can extend and interpret books. High school students in Bruckerhoff's 1977 study reported that teachers stifled their interest in reading by overdissecting books, asking too many questions for each story, and requiring book
There are numerous ways for parents and educators to promote positive feelings about reading. It is important to create or strengthen a positive attitude because a positive attitude is the foundation upon which you build the habit of lifelong reading.

**Sustained Silent Reading**

Lyman C. Hunt (1970) introduced SSR or what was originally referred to as USSR, Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading. R. McCracken (1971) shortened it to SSR due to negative publicity concerning the acronym. Underlying Hunt's concept of SSR is the belief that silent reading is far more significant than oral reading and that contextual reading is of greater importance than are skills of recognition at the word/letter level. Hunt feels that SSR is the "pinnacle of reading skills," that is the ability to sustain reading over long stretches of print without interruptions or breaks.

Since its origination, SSR programs have taken on other names such as "High Intensity Program" (HIP) (Oliver, 1970), "Reading Breaks" (Petre, 1977), "Booktime" (Hong, 1981), and "Some Quiet Uninterrupted Reading Time" (SQUIRT) (Benedict, 1982). Essentially, these programs all provide a given period of school time for silent reading where
students and teachers read self-selected material for their own set purpose. The rationale behind these programs is that reading, like any skill, needs practice and that the only way to develop the act as a whole is by sustained interaction with print.

SSR is the structured practice of silent reading and is not meant to be a total reading program. R. McCracken (1971) established some rules for setting up an SSR program. These rules are:

1. Each student must read silently.
2. The teacher reads.
4. A timer is used.
5. There are absolutely no reports or records of any kind.

McCracken's rules serve as a framework for SSR though they can be modified to meet the needs of any given classroom.

Elements of an SSR Program

It is important to provide students with time to read silently during the school day. For many children, school is the only place they have the opportunity to read. The influence of media, a frequently noisy environment, and social activities after school often detract from leisure
reading. Mork (1972) states that unless the educational atmosphere in the home is one that regularly includes periods of silent reading for all members of the family, it is unlikely that a child will go home and read even when told to do so by the teacher. Moore, Jones, and Miller (1980) agree. They feel many young people do not read because they lack a quiet place to read or have no adult role model to foster the desire to read. SSR programs try to give students both a quiet place to read and an adult role model.

During SSR, students are asked to read quietly to provide an atmosphere conducive to reading. Reluctant readers are often convinced to read because of peer pressure or boredom from non-participation. Students engaged in SSR are also free from the stigma of error. Hunt (1970) states that oral reading can be harmful to low-powered readers because too much perfection can be expected by both the student and the teacher. Students can be overly sensitive to mistakes made and a teacher's preoccupation with keeping track of and correcting errors can interfere with a student's comprehension. According to Johns (1982) meaningful oral reading should occur only after silent reading has taken place.

Advocates of SSR believe that students need a lot of
practice to become skilled and avid reader. Oliver (1970) states that efficiency in the application of reading skills would seem to be developed from about 20% instruction and 80% practice. Allington (1975) views the SSR process as the missing link between skill exercises and fluency (p. 815). SSR programs provide students with the time, setting and opportunity to practice reading as a holistic language activity.

Teacher modeling is an essential part of SSR. McCracken and McCracken (1978) reported that the majority of SSR failures was due to a lack of teacher participation or a shortage of books from which children may choose. The teacher has to be committed to the concept that practice and example are both vital components of the program. The teacher's active involvement in the reading process conveys the message that reading is an important lifelong skill that needs practice. By commenting on their own reading after SSR, teachers can show that reading is communication with an author. It is an assimilation and reaction to an author's ideas.

Sulzby (1985) states that many children never read anything that is not assigned by the teacher and are at a loss as to how to find a good book. In an SSR program, reading material is self-selected to give students practice
at finding material that interests them and to provide motivation to read for enjoyment. The students determine their purpose for reading and set their own pace. As with adults who are engaged in leisure reading, they can slow down, speed up, reread a section, or simply skip parts if they choose.

Interest in a particular topic or book can be a strong motivator. Many teachers have seen students persevere in reading a book that was above their independent or instructional level because they were so engrossed in the story or fascinated by the subject matter. Students involved in SSR can develop interests as skills in reading grow. SSR frees their minds to enjoy reading on their own terms in materials they have selected (Berglund, 1983).

Children need help in learning to read silently for a sustained period of time. During SSR, each student is required to read for a fixed amount of time. A timer is used so that the teacher and students are freed up from watching the clock and can concentrate on their reading. The teachers familiarity with the class will help in starting with a realistic amount of time. Ganz and Theofield (1974) suggest starting with short periods of SSR, so that students can feel successful, and then gradually increasing the amount of time as students become
more proficient at sustaining silent reading.

No report or records are required of the students in order to relieve any anxiety over grades or errors and to encourage exploratory reading. Moore et al. (1980) states that because SSR places no demands on the student beyond reading something, the threat of failure is removed. After teacher modeling, students may be encouraged to share something about what they have read such as their favorite episode, the main idea, interesting vocabulary, or how a certain event relates to their own personal experience. Petre (1977) found that high school students involved in "Reading Breaks" requested time to talk with other students who had read the same book. During SSR, teachers give up control of the reading process and let students be independent readers. Einhorn (1979) states that teachers must place their trust in the students' abilities to read, comprehend, and evaluate their own material.

Benefits of SSR

There are many proposed benefits of using SSR. It can be utilized in a single classroom, schoolwide, or in an entire district. This program requires no special training or materials and it can be adapted to all grade levels. SSR can also be easily implemented into any school reading program. It doesn't interfere with a highly
structured skills program and SSR can fit right in as a complementary component of a whole language program. Oliver (1970) claims that when students are given time to engage in SSR there are many possible benefits for them. These include an increased attention span, improved self-discipline, increased sophistication in the self-selection of reading materials, improved acceptance and enjoyment of reading, and refined and extended reading skills. According to Petre (1971), Reading Breaks, a silent reading program established in 50 schools in Maryland, increased the number of students who read and who asked for help to read better, encouraged the exchanging of books, magazines, and materials, started new student-teacher relationships around reading interests, improved self-selection skills and lowered the number of disciplinary cases sent to the office.

Proponents of SSR believe that it will promote achievement, attitudes, and interests in reading by providing time for students to enjoy reading as a holistic recreational language activity. In a study of 202 second graders involved in the Hawaiian English Project, (HEP), Yap (1977) found that reading activity based on the number of books read by each pupil was strongly related to reading achievement as measured by a standardized test. In
comparison with IQ, the amount of reading activity was shown to be a much more substantial factor in reading achievement. Approximately 60 to 70% of the variance in reading achievement was accountable to the amount of reading activity while only 22 to 25% was accountable to IQ difference. Cline and Kretke (1980) found that an experimental group of junior high students who had SSR for three years had more positive attitudes towards reading than a comparable group of students in the control group. There was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of reading achievement. Langford (cited in Schaudt, 1983) tested 250 fifth and sixth graders to discover their attitudes toward reading and to determine their reading achievement. The groups who participated in SSR showed a more positive attitude toward reading than the students in the control groups, and their reading achievement increased 8 months as compared to 5 months for those in the control groups. Other silent reading studies (Bartelo, 1979; Burkhart, 1980; Sadowski, 1980; Wilmot, 1975) also report students having a growth of attitude and interests in reading after participating in SSR.

Participating in SSR can also be beneficial to the teacher. During SSR, teachers usually read books they want to read but often don't have time for such as paperback
professional books, activity books, and children's literature (Gambrell, 1981). Reading these books helps teachers keep up with new ideas in their profession, plan interesting lessons, recommend good books to children, and silently practice books appropriate for reading aloud. Petre (1977) ascertained that the "Reading Breaks" program lets teachers and students begin or extend the reading habit, made both aware of each others' reading preferences, and resulted in more conversations surrounding books. Collins (1980) also found that teachers involved in SSR were more capable of identifying students' reading interests and recalling more specific expressions related to the appreciation of a piece of literature.

Criticisms of SSR

SSR is not completely endorsed by all educators. While Huck (1976) supports the use of SSR, she also notes the "artificial aspects" of having all children read at the same designated time instead of a time of their choice. Spache (1978) feels that giving students free choice of reading materials doesn't necessarily mean they are reading books that meet their needs and interests. He feels students need some teacher guidance when making book selections in order to avoid choices based on immaturity and easy availability. Gooch and Westermark (1970)
criticized SSR as a method which attempted to teach reading "through osmosis" but only succeeded in producing "quiet, non-committal permissiveness" (p. 27).

Sustained Silent Reading programs have not obtained favorable results in all studies. Manning and Manning (1984) conducted a study to determine the effects of three recreational reading models on students' reading attitudes and achievement. They discovered that the students involved in the peer-interaction model and the individual teacher-student conference model had a significantly higher score on a measure of attitude than those students in the SSR group. The students in the peer-interaction group also had greater gains in reading achievement than those in the SSR group. Minton (1980) studied 550 ninth graders and found that after one semester of SSR, the students had mixed feelings about the program and reading in general. At the conclusion of the study 6% more said SSR was an excellent idea but 27% fewer students said they were currently reading a book. When answering the question "What word best describes your feeling toward Reading?" 15% fewer students said they enjoyed reading and 12% more described their feeling as hate. Minton feels the SSR program may have flopped because of some implementation problems. Collins (1980) examined the attitudes and
achievement of 220 elementary students from grades 2-6. After a fifteen week study of SSR there was no statistically significant difference between the score of the experimental group and the control group in terms of word recognition, comprehension skills, and attitude. Students in both groups reported a decrease in the time spent reading at home and the attitudes of both groups toward reading became more negative during the year. Studies done by Einhorn (1979), Reed (1977), and Summers (1979) also concluded that neither attitude scores or reading achievement scores were affected by participation in a sustained silent reading program.

Summary

Children need to be motivated to read as well as taught how to read. Some strategies for improving childrens' attitudes toward reading are reading aloud to them, using the shared book approach, providing them with an abundant supply of high-interest reading material, giving them the opportunity to respond to literature in a variety of ways, and utilizing a Sustained Silent Reading program in the classroom.

SSR is the structured practice of silent reading based on the rules established by McCracken. The research dealing with SSR and reading attitudes is inconsistent.
Many studies reported that reading attitudes were favorably affected by SSR, while other studies found no significant change in attitude.
Chapter III

The Research Design

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a Sustained Silent Reading program on the reading attitudes and habits of second grade students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were investigated in this study:

1. Is there a significant difference between the mean posttest scores of the control group and the SSR treatment group as measured by the modified version of the Estes Reading Attitude Scale?

2. Is there a significant difference between the mean posttest scores on the researcher made Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits, as reported by parents who have a child in the control group or the SSR treatment group?

3. How do students who have participated in an SSR program feel about SSR according to the Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR?
Methodology

Subjects

The subjects for this study were 51 second grade children from two classes in a suburban school in western New York. The parents of these children also served as subjects by responding to the Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits.

Instruments

A modified version of the Estes Reading Attitude Scale was used to determine the pre- and post-treatment reading attitudes. The scale was modified to make it more comprehensible to primary students. A researcher made Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits was used to measure pre- and post-treatment home reading attitudes and habits as reported by the child's parents. A modified Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR was also used to determine the treatment group's attitude toward SSR.

Procedure

The modified version of the Estes Reading Attitude Scale was administered to the control group and the treatment group to determine the mean pretest score for each group. Pretest scores were obtained for each group to see if the two groups had comparable attitudes from the beginning.
The students were told there were no right or wrong answers, that the scale would not be graded in any way, and that they should try to be as honest as possible when answering. The scale, which consisted of twenty statements, was read aloud and the students were given time to circle whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The parents of students in the control group and the treatment group were asked to complete a Survey of Home Reading Attitudes and Habits concerning their child to determine a mean pretest score. The next day the SSR program began. The students in the treatment group were told that they would be given time each day for "free reading." They were told they could read something of their choice such as library books, books from home, comic books, or magazines. The SSR program was set up according to McCracken's guidelines for establishing an SSR program. The students were told to read silently for a fixed number of minutes. A timer was used to begin and end the SSR period. The students were told to select a single book or magazine to read. No book changing or moving around the classroom was permitted. However, a student who was stuck on a word could come up and ask the teacher how to pronounce the word or its meaning. The teacher would then just quickly tell the student what he/she needed to know,
so as not to interfere with the student's comprehension of the passage. The teacher also modeled silent reading in front of the class during SSR. At the end of the SSR period, the teacher would sometimes share something about what she had just read. Each day the students were also invited to share something about what they read if they wished to do so. Three to five volunteers would then be called on to share such things as a poem, a joke or riddle, a brief summary, or their favorite part or character. However, absolutely no reports or records were required of the students.

Both the control group and the treatment group had a total time of 90 minutes designated for reading instruction each day. The control group of 25 students participated in a reading program using the basal and children's literature. The treatment group of 26 students participated in a reading program using the basal and children's literature plus a daily fifteen minute period of SSR.

At the conclusion of the ten weeks, both the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale and the Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits were administered again to both groups. The treatment group also completed the Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR.
Analysis of Data

The data obtained from the Estes Reading Attitude Scale and the Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits were analyzed through a series of dependent and independent t tests to determine the effects of a Sustained Silent Reading Program on the reading attitudes and habits of second grade students. The data obtained from the Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR were used to categorize the attitudes of the students in the treatment group as being negative, warm, or highly positive toward SSR.

Summary

This study initiated a Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) program into a second grade class to determine whether the use of quiet reading time in the classroom changes attitudes about reading. Two second grade classes participated in this study. One class served as the control group and the other class served as the treatment group. Prior to treatment, the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale and the Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits were administered. After ten weeks of treatment, both instruments were administered again. The Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR was also administered to the treatment group.
Chapter IV

Analysis of Data

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a Sustained Silent Reading program on the reading attitudes and habits of second grade students.

Findings and Interpretations

The following research hypotheses were investigated:

1. Is there a significant difference between the mean posttest scores of the control group and the SSR treatment group as measured by the modified version of the Estes Reading Attitude Scale?

2. Is there a significant difference between the mean posttest scores on the researcher made Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits, as reported by parents who have a child in the control group or the SSR treatment group?

3. How do students who have participated in an SSR program feel about SSR according to the Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR?
In order to establish that the control group and treatment group had comparable attitudes, a pretest of the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale was administered. The control group had a mean pretest score of 35.52 and the treatment group had a mean pretest score of 36.35. The \( t \) test for independent measures showed that there was not a significant difference in favor of one group over the other in reading attitudes as measured by the Estes Reading Attitude Scale. Also in order to establish that the control group and treatment group had comparable attitudes and habits, a pretest of the researcher made Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits was completed by parents who had a child in the control group or treatment group. The control group had a mean pretest score of 26.32 and the treatment group had a mean pretest score of 25.35. The \( t \) test for independent measures showed that there was not a significant difference between the two groups in terms of home reading attitudes and habits as reported by the parents. Therefore, the two groups were found to be comparable for the purpose of this study.

The first research hypothesis asks if there is a significant difference in the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale posttest scores of the control group and the treatment group. A two-tailed \( t \) test for independent
measures was used to test this hypothesis at the .05 level of significance. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Posttest-Estes Reading Attitude Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t val.</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>2-Tail Prob.</th>
<th>Eta Sq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>46.20</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>38.31</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>46.20</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The critical t required for the .05 level of significance is 2.00. The calculated t value for the posttest scores between the two groups was 1.77. Since the t value obtained was less than the critical t value required, there is no statistically significant difference in the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale posttest scores of the control group and the treatment group.

The second research hypothesis asks if there is a significant difference in the researcher made Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits posttest scores of the control group and the treatment group as reported by the parents. A two-tailed t test for independent measures was used to test the hypothesis at the .05 level of significance. The results are summarized in Table 2.
Table 2
Posttest-Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t val.</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>2-Tail Prob.</th>
<th>Eta Sq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>44.49</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>28.16</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>44.49</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The critical t value required for the .05 level of significance is 2.00. The calculated t value for posttest scores between the two groups was 2.50. Since the t value obtained was greater than the critical t value required, there is a statistically significant difference between the mean posttest scores of the two groups on the Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits, in favor of the treatment group. The eta squared was .12 so we can also conclude that the treatment effect was moderately important.

The third research hypothesis asks how students who have participated in an SSR program feel about SSR. The data obtained from the Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR were used to categorize the attitudes of the students in the treatment group toward SSR. The results are summarized in Table 3.
Table 3
Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Points</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>7.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Warm</td>
<td>7.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Highly Pos.</td>
<td>84.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results from the Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR indicated that 15.38% of the students had negative or warm attitudes toward SSR. The majority of the students, 84.62%, had highly positive feelings toward SSR.

Analysis of Additional Data

In addition to the three research questions, the pretest and posttest scores for the control group and the treatment group on the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale and the Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits were also analyzed.

A t test for dependent measures was used to analyze the pretest and posttest scores for both groups on the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale. It was found there was a significant difference between the pretest scores and the posttest scores on the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale for the control group and the treatment group. Both
groups had a favorable change in attitude.

A *t* test for dependent measures was also used to analyze the pretest and posttest scores for both groups on the Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits as reported by their parents. There was no significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores on the Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits for the control group. However, there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores on the Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits for the treatment group.

**Summary**

The statistical analysis indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean posttest scores of the control group and the treatment group as measured by the modified version of the Estes Reading Attitude Scale. The analysis also indicated that there was a significant difference in the mean posttest scores of the control group and the treatment group, in favor of the treatment group, as measured by the Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits. The responses on the Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR showed that 22 of the 26 students in the treatment group had highly positive feelings toward SSR.
Chapter V

Conclusions and Implications

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to initiate a Sustained Silent Reading program into a second grade classroom to determine whether the use of SSR changes reading attitudes and habits.

Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that there was not a statistically significant difference between the mean posttest scores of the control group and the treatment group, as measured by the modified version of the Estes Reading Attitude Scale. The Estes Reading Attitude Scale is meant to be used with students in grades 3 through 12. The researcher modified the scale to make it more comprehensible to primary students. However, it is possible that there might be another instrument that more accurately measures the reading attitudes of younger students.

The modified version of the Estes Reading Attitude Scale consisted of twenty questions with each negative
answer being worth one point and each positive answer being worth two points. Therefore, the range of scores could theoretically be from 20 to 40.

Both groups had a positive attitude toward reading based on the mean pretest score and both groups had a significant favorable gain in attitude on the posttest. The control group had a mean pretest score of 35.52 and a mean posttest score of 37.20. This is a gain of 1.68, or approximately one and a half points on the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale. The treatment group had a mean pretest score of 36.35 and a mean posttest score of 38.31. This is a gain of 1.96, or approximately two points on the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale. The favorable gain in attitude for both groups could be attributed to any number of factors such as maturation of reading skills or new classroom activities.

The results of this study also indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean posttest scores on the researcher made Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits, in favor of the treatment group. The Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits was completed by parents who had a child in the control or treatment group. The survey consisted of eighteen questions with each negative answer
being worth one point, each undecided answer being worth zero, and each positive answer being worth two points. Therefore, the range of scores could theoretically be from 0 to 36. The control group's mean score decreased from 26.32 to 25.00. The treatment group's score increased from 25.35 to 28.16. These changes might be attributed to the parents noticing a decreased or increased interest in reading or time spent reading on the part of their children.

The treatment group completed the Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR at the end of the ten weeks of treatment. This survey consisted of twenty questions with each negative answer being worth one point and each positive answer being worth two points. The majority of the students in the treatment group, 84.62%, had highly positive feelings toward SSR.

**Research Implications**

In future research, a larger or different testing population could be studied that might include a variety of ages, reading levels, and pre-treatment reading attitudes and habits to determine the effectiveness of SSR on different types of students. Further research could also investigate the long term effects of SSR on different types of students by conducting a series of longitudinal studies.
There can be many variations on the SSR format. Some of these include types of reading material allowed or available, length of the SSR periods, and the physical setting for the students (for instance, whether they are sitting at their desks or laying on pillows in a reading corner). Any of these variables could have an effect on the student's reading attitudes and habits.

**Classroom Implications**

Today's educators are concerned with facilitating positive reading attitudes and developing the reading habit. In this study the SSR treatment did not have a significant effect on the reading attitudes of the treatment group when compared to the control group, on the posttest of the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale.

However, the data suggest that teachers should at least consider using an SSR program in the classroom to foster positive reading attitudes and habits. There was a favorable significant change between the treatment group's mean pretest score and mean posttest score on the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale. There was also a significant difference between the mean posttest scores on the Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits, in favor of the treatment group over the control group. Also, most of the students enjoyed participating in the SSR program. The
majority of the students in the treatment group had highly positive feelings toward SSR according to the Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR.

Teachers should also consider implementing an SSR program into their classroom because this program requires no special training or materials and it can be utilized at all grade levels.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of an SSR program on the reading attitudes and habits of second grade students. This study produced mixed results. There was no significant difference between the mean posttest scores on the modified Estes Reading Attitude Scale which was given to second grade students who participated in an SSR program and those who did not participate. There was a significant difference between the mean posttest scores on the research made Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits, in favor of the students who participated in the SSR program. Most of the students who participated in the SSR program had highly positive feelings toward SSR.

It is suggested that teachers consider incorporating SSR into their classroom to facilitate positive reading attitudes and habits. It is also suggested that further
research be conducted using different ages, ability and attitude levels of students, and variations of SSR formats.
References


APPENDICES
Appendix A

Estes Reading Attitude Scale (modified)

Directions: This sheet has some statements about reading which can be answered Yes or No. Your answers should show what you usually think about reading. After each statement is read to you, circle Y for yes or N for no.

1. Reading is for learning but not for enjoyment.   Y   N
2. Money spent on books is well-spent.           Y   N
3. There is nothing to be gained from reading books.  Y   N
4. Books are boring.                            Y   N
5. Reading is a good way to spend spare time.     Y   N
6. Sharing books in class is a waste of time.     Y   N
7. Reading turns me on.                         Y   N
8. Reading is only for people who want good grades. Y   N
9. Books aren't usually good enough to finish.    Y   N
10. Reading is rewarding to me.                  Y   N
11. Reading becomes boring after awhile.          Y   N
12. Most books are too long and dull.            Y   N
13. Free reading doesn't teach anything.         Y   N
14. There are many books which I hope to read.    Y   N
15. Books should not be read except for class assignments. Y   N
16. Reading is something I can do without.        Y   N
17. A certain amount of summer vacation should be set aside for reading. Y   N
18. Books make good presents.                    Y   N
19. Reading is dull.                             Y   N
20. Reading can be fun or exciting for me.        Y   N
Appendix B

Survey of Student's Home Reading Attitudes and Habits

Directions: This is a survey to see how you perceive your child's reading attitudes and habits. This survey will not affect your child's grade in any way. Please read each statement, then circle the letter or letters that represent how you feel this statement pertains to your child.

SD-Strongly Disagree
D-Disagree
U-Undecided
A-Agree
SA-Strongly Agree

1. Likes to purchase books or receive books as presents.
   SD  D  U  A  SA

2. Easily becomes bored with reading.
   SD  D  U  A  SA

3. Chooses to read during leisure time.
   SD  D  U  A  SA

4. Finds it difficult to sit still and read.
   SD  D  U  A  SA

5. Frequently chooses books from the school or public library to read.
   SD  D  U  A  SA

6. Likes to read to find out information.
   (ie. encyclopedias, non-fiction books)
   SD  D  U  A  SA

7. Expresses a dislike for reading.
   SD  D  U  A  SA

8. Reads only for assignments or when told to read.
   SD  D  U  A  SA
Appendix B (Continued)

9. Likes to read magazines or comic books.
SD D U A SA

10. Finds most books are too long and dull.
SD D U A SA

11. Discusses or shares books they have read with others.
SD D U A SA

12. Thinks reading is for school classes, but not something to do for enjoyment.
SD D U A SA

13. Reads a wide variety of books. (ie. poetry, picture books, non-fiction, fiction)
SD D U A SA

14. Feels they have better things to do than read.
SD D U A SA

15. Would rather someone just tell them information so that they won't have to read to find it.
SD D U A SA

16. Becomes so involved in a book that they don't want to put it down.
SD D U A SA
Appendix C

Student Attitude Survey Toward SSR

1. I look forward to SSR. Yes No
2. I'm not a very good reader. Yes No
3. SSR should be longer. Yes No
4. I'm glad when SSR time ends. Yes No
5. SSR is boring. Yes No
6. SSR has helped to make me a better reader. Yes No
7. I wish we didn't do SSR in school. Yes No
8. I really read during SSR. Yes No
9. SSR is the only time of the day that I read all by myself. Yes No
10. SSR doesn't help my reading skills. Yes No
11. Having an SSR time for reading is great. Yes No
12. I do other things besides reading during SSR. Yes No
13. Our class should continue to have SSR. Yes No
14. I don't like to read during SSR. Yes No
15. It's hard to put my book down when SSR is over. Yes No
16. I wish SSR was shorter. Yes No
17. I probably read more at home because of SSR. Yes No
18. I like to read. Yes No
19. I read better than most of the students in my class. Yes No
20. Reading is boring. Yes No