How is Comprehension Affected When Reading Aloud Versus Reading Silently?

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How is Comprehension Affected When Reading Aloud Versus Reading Silently?

by

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A thesis or project submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of the State University of New York College at Brockport in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education
How is Comprehension Affected When Reading Aloud Versus Reading Silently?

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this research project was to examine how students comprehend reading best. There are advocates for both reading aloud and reading silently, therefore this project was purposeful to find out which seems to be the most effective for comprehension alone. The objective of this project was to determine if reading silently or reading aloud is more beneficial in terms of aiding comprehension.

Comprehension is a vital component to reading. It is the underlying goal in all areas of reading development. This study helped to determine how comprehension is gained more effectively. My goal for my research was to reveal which reading style is more helpful in terms of creating meaning for my students. This will provide educators with research that supports the more beneficial form of reading to use with their students.

This project was conducted in a fourth grade classroom. There are sixteen students in the classroom, seven males and nine females. For my research, I worked towards determining which reading style is more effective in terms of comprehension. I used the QRI to compare students’ comprehension scores between reading aloud and reading silently. The methods used to determine whether reading silently or reading aloud was more beneficial in terms of comprehension, was to have fourth grade students read in these two different ways, and to assess students' comprehension after each reading. The data for comprehension while reading aloud was then compared to that of reading silently.

Through my research I was able to determine that reading aloud is beneficial in terms of comprehension. When looking at all the data that was collected as a whole, it is
apparent that, when there were differences in the percentages, reading aloud was more effective in terms of comprehension; as seen especially in the retelling, explicit questions, and overall questions. The results that I found from the data that I collected were actually quite surprising to me. I expected to find more favorable results when students read silently, but this research proves that this is not always the case. Reading aloud has proven advantages.
Chapter One

Introduction
Introduction

According to Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell (1996), "Reading is the construction of meaning. Comprehending is not a product of reading; it is the process" (p. 156). Comprehension is a vital component to reading. It is the underlying goal in all areas of reading development. This study will help to determine how comprehension is gained more effectively. I want to determine if reading silently or reading aloud is more beneficial in terms of aiding comprehension. In my research I have not found research that identifies which has a higher advantage when referring to comprehension. My goal for my research is to reveal which reading style is more helpful in terms of creating meaning for my students. This will provide educators with research that supports the more beneficial form of reading to use with their students.

Problem Statement

How is comprehension affected when reading aloud versus reading silently?

The objective of this project is to determine if reading silently or reading aloud is more beneficial in terms of aiding comprehension.

Significance of Problem

The purpose of this research project is to examine how students comprehend reading best. There are advocates for both reading aloud and reading silently (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998), therefore this project is purposeful to find out which seems to be
the most effective for comprehension alone. In classrooms now, teachers incorporate both styles of reading, however with the results of this research; teachers may be able to format their teaching to instruct their students for a higher comprehension level.

This project will add to the general knowledge in the area of comprehension. It will provide information for educators in the area of comprehension, and how they can incorporate reading styles into their classrooms. This project will also be purposeful for me in providing me with a general knowledge on this specific topic. As a future educator, this project will give me an understanding of how students’ reading styles impact their comprehension. As educators, if we do not know which style is more effective for comprehension, we will not know how to incorporate them into our teaching.

**Rationale**

In coming up with my research topic I was wondering to myself how children understand what they are reading best, and what I can do as a teacher to promote this. It is vital to me that my students understand what they are reading, so I thought about all that I had learned in both graduate and undergraduate classes. I know that round robin is not the most effective means of instruction, and I wondered if this had anything to do with the fact that students are reading a passage aloud on the first read. I also took a personal view on my research topic. I know that when I am reading, sometimes I read aloud, instead of silently, to help myself truly understand a text. I wondered if this was the same for my students or if, perhaps, it varies individually. My research will impact not only my future teaching, but other educators as well as
children that are taught in the style that results show more beneficial.

**Definition of Terms**

**Comprehension**- The process of "constructing meaning" from a text. Comprehension is a "construction process" because it involves all of the elements of the reading process working together as a text is read to create a representation of the text in the reader's mind.

**Fluency**- The ability to read at an appropriate rate smoothly.

**DRA**- Developmental Reading Assessment- A standardized method for assessing reading development and progress over time. It includes the use of running records to record reading behaviors.

**QRI**- Qualitative Reading Inventory- an authentic assessment of children’s reading abilities, which includes several different areas of comprehension; includes a retelling, concept questions, and comprehension questions through reading the text silently or orally.

**Automaticity**- Term that is often heard relating to fluency. It refers to the automatic response to words when reading. Words can be read with little effort, attention, or conscious awareness.
Chapter Two
Literature Review
Comprehension

Comprehension is the major focal point of my research, in determining which style of reading is more effective. *The Effects of Independent Reading On Oral Reading Fluency and Comprehension*, by Cynthia Seago-Tufaro (2002), is an article which talks a great deal about fluency and how to build fluency in children; however it also discusses how fluency affects comprehension. The effect of fluency on comprehension is vital information to include and consider in my research because it may affect my research participants’ comprehension if they are not fluent readers. Evidence suggests that students who read fluently, with expression and decode words automatically, have better comprehension when they read (Seago-Tufaro, 2002). Comprehension is achieved when a student is able to read a text fluently at their independent level. Studies have also shown that children who struggle with comprehension also read slower and have less automaticity (Seago-Tufaro, 2002). The ability to comprehend comes more easily when a reader is fluent and automatic with the text. Research has proven that there is a correlation between fluency and comprehension (Seago-Tufaro, 2002). These studies showed that children that had a difficult time with comprehension were also those that read slowly and dysfluently. It is questionable if fluency is a result of good comprehension, or if fluency leads to good comprehension, but many studies have proved that there is a strong, positive connection between the two.

*Guiding Readers and Writers Grades 3-6* by Fountas and Pinnell (1996)
discuss comprehension as reading for meaning. “It is the goal of every reading episode as well as of our teaching” (p 302). As teachers we strive to have our students make meaning from print. If there is no comprehension, there is no reading. Reading is a process that revolves around meaning. Creating meaning is the reason for reading. Also, according to Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell (1996), "Reading is the construction of meaning. Comprehending is not a product of reading; it is the process" (p. 156). Comprehension is a vital component to reading. It is the underlying goal in all areas of reading development. Because comprehension is such a fundamental element of reading, it is important that we know how to maximize the ability for comprehension to occur. Fountas and Pinnell believe that comprehension is crucial when reading, therefore it is equally important for teachers to understand how this process forms best in the mind.

Strategies that Work by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis (2000) discusses comprehension as a form of strategic thinking. They believe that “constructing meaning is the goal of comprehension” (p. 8). As teachers instructing for comprehension, we want our students to enhance their understanding, acquire and use their knowledge, monitor their understanding, and develop insight. According to Harvey and Goudvis, comprehension means that readers are thinking about what they are learning, and that readers think deeply about what they are taking from the text. When reading, and comprehending, people are building their schema. Harvey and Goudvis believe that teachers need to assist our students’ comprehension to enhance understanding. This study will help to determine how reading can be used in the
McCallum, Sharp, Bell, and Thomas (2004) compared the two forms of reading that I intend on examining for both comprehension and time. It stated that this topic has been the focus of numerous investigations, many with inconclusive results. In the 1970's, it was believed that oral reading created better comprehension, as found by many researchers. In this time period, oral reading was also used more by educators. More recently, the same outcome was found through additional research with seven and eight year olds. However, silent reading has been shown to be more effective in creating better comprehension in other studies that have been conducted in the past. These results showed that lower ability readers comprehended text with a higher score, while others with higher abilities produced equal scores when reading silently. This specific research showed no significant differences in comprehension between the two reading styles, but it did show that silent reading is more efficient, in that the silent readings took less time. It is interesting to me that there has not been a clear, significant answer to this question over many years. Although the question has not yet been answered, I hope to find significant differences between the two styles in my own research.

Nation and Norbury (2005) look into the problems that occur in the reading process that effects comprehension. Nation and Norbury (2005) discuss comprehension as a complex process that requires numerous cognitive processes, which range from letter recognition to interpreting meaning and connecting it to world knowledge. They discuss the idea that if a child cannot decode, or read with
sufficient fluency, it has been found that comprehension is compromised. However, there are other factors in comprehension, as shown by the authors. Some children, as found through their research, can decode accurately but still are unsuccessful in making meaning of text. They found that some children read “superficially”, meaning that they do not think constructively during the reading process. Also, failure to comprehend may be a whole language difficulty. If readers have difficulty in oral and written language, reading comprehension will suffer. The article discusses the aspects of language which effect comprehension, in that it is important to consider both phonological skills and nonphonological language such as semantics, morphology, pragmatics, and syntax in reference to comprehension. When any of these characteristics are a difficulty for a reader, comprehension may be affected.

**Constructivism**

In my research, it is important to consider how individual students will comprehend and create meaning differently. Each individual child constructs knowledge and meaning differently and creates their own interpretation of that knowledge. There are many aspects that influence each student’s comprehension that go beyond reading styles, such as prior knowledge and motivation to read. Constructivism is how each child makes meaning and constructs information in their minds. *Tools of the Mind: A Case Study of Implementing the Vygotsian Approach in American Early Childhood and Primary Classrooms*, by Elena Badrova and Deborah Leong, discusses this idea. It states that “developmental outcomes and processes that were typically thought of as occurring ‘naturally’ or ‘spontaneously’ were, in fact,
substantially influenced by children's own learning or 'constructed' (Badrova and Leong, 2001). This will be helpful in determining other factors that will affect the process of making meaning that occurs in the participants in this study.

**Assessment**

The Qualitative Reading Inventory-4 (QRI) is an assessment which is used to determine the reading comprehension level of a student. This assessment consists of word lists, reading passages used in conjunction with running records and miscue analysis, a retelling, and comprehension questions which are all leveled according to grades. The comprehension questions are separated into literal and inferential questions. Reliability of the QRI-4 is quite high, especially across similar genres. Creators of the QRI-4 have made scoring very consistent, as to not result in bias scores by the administrators. When measured against norm-referenced achievement tests, the QRI-4 correlations were statistically significant and all positive. Because the QRI-4 is a qualitative assessment but still has a reliable scoring system, I determined that this would be the appropriate assessment to use for my research. There are a widespread range of questions to check for comprehension, as well as a large span of levels to use with the variety of abilities of the children used for my study.

**Reading Aloud**

Reading aloud is one of the styles of reading in which I will be examining closer in my research. *Good-Bye Round Robin* (Opitz & Rasinski 1998) is a book
which talks a great deal about both the positives of oral reading and the negatives of round robin, which often includes reading aloud. I would like to take a closer look at the difference between reading aloud and oral reading. Michael Opitz and Timothy Rasinski state that “silent reading is the key to effective reading” (1998, p.1). It discusses why as teachers we have children read aloud, if in fact silent reading is the key to effective reading. The reasons for having students read aloud include: to share texts, to develop listening skills and vocabulary, to build confidence, develop strategy use, and to assess students. In this book it also states that we, as teachers, use oral reading to develop comprehension. If students read aloud, they can better understand the author’s purpose and the meaning of the text. Although this text gives reasoning for teachers to use the different styles of reading, it only creates questions for me. The authors believe that silent reading is the source of successful reading, and yet reading aloud helps students to create meaning. I hope to create a clear cut understanding between the two through my research.

Fountas and Pinnell (2001) bring up the topic that almost all the reading we do in life is silent in their book, *Guiding Readers and Writers Grades 3-6*. They state that silent reading is faster, and more importantly, the reader is able to concentrate better on meaning when reading silently. Research has shown that when people read aloud, they are less attentive, which in turn affects their ability to engage in discussion, remember, and retrieve information. However, oral reading is purposeful to include in the classroom as well. Some positive effects of oral reading include: access to more difficult texts, developed fluency, closer attention to punctuation and
typographical cues, and practice with syntax. It is definitely true that the majority of reading we do as adults is silent, but everyday reading is usually not complicated in terms of comprehension. Newspapers, instructions and directions, signs and environmental print, most media print, and even entertainment reading are often at an independent level for adults, so it is unclear if reading silently is truly better in terms of comprehension. In speaking with colleagues, I have discovered that many times when we read aloud, many times our minds are elsewhere and distractions play a big part in how we comprehend a text. This is true, but it can also happen when reading silently. However, if more focus is going towards how the reader sounds than to the meaning of the text, comprehension could suffer. I will be paying close attention to the readers’ behavior as I conduct my research to help me examine these ideas.

Timothy Rasinski (2003), in *The Fluent Reader*, also explains positive effects of oral reading in the classroom. He explains that critics are not usually fans of oral reading because most reading adults do is silent. However, he provides many ‘real life’ uses for reading aloud. For example, reading stories, giving speeches, announcing public proclamations and pledges, and reporting news. He also provides the reader with reasons that oral reading in the classroom is purposeful and should be included in literacy programs. These reasons include; oral reading builds confidence, creates community, connects written and spoken language, strengthens decoding skills, fosters fluency, boosts comprehension, and allows the teacher to see the reading processes occurring in the classroom. Rasinski offers many situations in which adults read aloud, however I still am curious if it could be used as a strategy to
help comprehension. There are many positive uses for reading aloud, but it is my hope to discover if it is actually useful to build meaning.

Another article that discusses reading aloud is *Oral Reading Dinosaurs*, written by Maryann Manning (2007) from the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Education. In her article she discusses why oral reading goes wrong in schools today. The factors that lead to negative oral reading experiences are that teachers are focusing too much on reading fast. This is not saying that teaching fluency is bad, but the focus on reading faster is overcoming that of reading for meaning. Another factor that affects comprehension with oral reading is the fact that many teachers believe that every word needs to be read correctly, causing them to correct students that are gaining meaning from the text. Lastly, Manning discusses that she believes that oral reading often occurs too often in the classroom. She believes that oral reading should be used for assessing and sharing, but that the majority of reading in schools should be silent. Manning brings up many valid points about oral reading in the classroom and I am curious to see if my research in terms of comprehension matches her beliefs of oral reading.

Silent Reading

"Read in Your Head": *A Vyotskian Analysis of the Transition from Oral to Silent Reading* by Prior and Welling (2001) is an article which discusses the fact adults normally read silently. It is typically an activity that is done privately, and without the involvement of others. This idea has been a commonality in my research, and it is a point with validity, however it does not answer the underlying question
about comprehension. Moreover, even though adults do tend to read silently more often, is reading aloud a strategy that can be used to build comprehension? The article also states that studies have proven that beginning and struggling readers “comprehend text better after reading orally rather than silently, whereas more advanced readers tend to show superior understanding after silent reading” (Prior, Welling, 2001). This idea was very interesting to me, in that I haven’t found a great deal of research directly comparing the two styles as this does. Vygotsky constructed a model of the transition from oral reading to silent, which seems to hold true in research and studies conducted. This model is the transition from early reader, when oral reading is more effective to the more advanced reader, when silent reading is effective because the process is internalized. I believe that as I draw conclusions from my own research, this model constructed by Vygotsky may play a part in my findings.

In *Guiding Readers and Writers Grades 3-6*, Fountas and Pinnell (2001) discuss independent reading as similar to a sustained silent reading time. In the classroom this traditionally requires little guidance from the teacher. It occurs independently, and usually with a book of the students’ choice. Independent reading is used to increase the time students read, enable reading practice, improve competence, and manage own reading. Independent reading, however, unlike sustained silent reading is extended in the classroom with discussions, book talks, minilessons, and record keeping. There is a difference between how the two are used in the classroom, and what is required of the teacher. My research will be done with
a given text, from the QRI, on the level of the students' ability. Therefore this differs than the typically seen independent reading. Although the purpose of the silent reading used in my research is different, I believe I will still be able to represent comprehension levels when reading silently.
Chapter 3
Applications and Evaluation
For my research, I worked towards determining which reading style is more effective in terms of comprehension. I used the QRI to compare students’ comprehension scores between reading aloud and reading silently.

Participants

This project was conducted in a fourth grade classroom in a suburban elementary school located in a midsize city in western New York. The school is a predominantly white, low to middle class community. There were sixteen students in the classroom where the research took place, seven males and nine females. It was an inclusion classroom, which included students who were reading below, at, and above grade level as determined by the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). There were eight students that were classified as needing special education and as a result received Individualized Education Plans (IEP’s). Twelve of the students in the classroom were Caucasian, and four were African American. Students in the classroom were exposed to a wide variety of literacy experiences by the classroom teacher prior to and during the study. They engaged in both reading aloud and silently on a regular basis.

Some participants of this study may not have been able to provide reliable or valid data because of the fact that there are a couple children with emotional and behavioral issues. If they had a bad day, this could have potentially affected their ability to test to their highest potential. In the classroom, there was also a student that had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder. Although the testing duration is not long, focusing during the assessment may also have resulted in skewed results.
Measurements

The methods used to determine whether reading silently or reading aloud was more beneficial in terms of comprehension, was to have fourth grade students read in these two different ways, and to assess students' comprehension after each reading. The data for comprehension while reading aloud was then compared to that of reading silently. The students were assessed independently at an appropriate time determined by the classroom teacher.

Procedures for this project involved administering the Qualitative Reading Inventory-4 (QRI-4 Leslie & Caldwell, Pearson Publishing, 2006). In order to measure comprehension for this research, I administered the QRI at the students’ instructional level. I chose to collect data using instructional levels because this would allow me to assess the students’ abilities without the students reaching frustration during the assessments. This included having the student read a text, aloud then silently in two separate testing situations. After each reading, the student was asked to retell the story and then answer comprehension questions. The QRI assesses retellings by providing the administrator with all the events from the text. When the student includes events from the story, these are then checked off. The administrator can then retrieve data of how many events were remembered from the text. The next component of the assessment includes comprehension questions, both implicit (inferences from the text) and explicit (directly from the text). This allowed me to gain two different insights into the students’ comprehension. Reliability of the QRI-4 is fairly high, between 98 and 99 percent, especially across similar genres,
non-fiction and fiction. To ensure more reliability for my research, I used all non-fiction texts when assessing the participants. The reliability is quite high because the participant either answers correctly, or not. There is no in-between or possibility of giving half credit, ensuring that the same results would be retrieved time after time. The scoring of the QRI is also very consistent and valid. QRI-4 scores compared to norm referenced achievement tests resulted in all positive and statistically significant correlations. To increase the validity and reliability of my research I was consistent in my testing procedures. I assessed all children in a one on one setting, each time in the same setting.

As the researcher, I asked students to read a text aloud, and then assessed comprehension of that reading using the QRI. Then the same students read a different text that was at the same instructional level and of the same genre silently and independently. They were assessed on comprehension of this text through a retelling and answering implicit and explicit questions. This occurred in two separate sittings, one for reading aloud, and another for reading silently. Each sitting was about a half an hour. The results of both comprehension assessments were then compared. Instructional reading levels were used in both readings to ensure comprehension results were valid.

**Procedures**

Implementation of my research was to follow the procedures of the QRI. For the first portion of the research, I had students individually read a text from the QRI assessment. After the student read the text silently, I asked them to give me a
retelling and then asked the series of comprehension questions that corresponded to the particular text. On a different day, I would have the same child read a different text, on the same level, aloud to me. While the student read I recorded all miscues. I then proceeded with the same process from the first portion of the research, asking for a retelling and comprehension questions. I then compared the scores of how many details were given in the retellings of each student, as well as how they scored on the comprehension questions in order to determine which style of reading proved to have higher comprehension scores. Including literature reviewed, assessing text read aloud, and assessing text read silently triangulation of my research was produced. These procedures were done in alternate order for control purposes, meaning that half of the students in the study completed the reading aloud passage first, while the others were assessed silently as their first assessment.

Instructions.

Instructions given to the participants remained consistent throughout the entire duration of the research. For the collection of silent reading data, I explained to the students that they would be reading the text silently, which would be followed by a retelling and questions. After each student completed reading the text I started assessing their comprehension. For the retelling I asked the students to provide me a summary of the story remembering as many details as they could. I did not give any prompts to assist with the retelling. I then proceeded with the assessment by explaining that I would then be asking a few questions about the story they read. I asked the students both implicit and explicit questions aloud, which had designated
correct responses stated in the manual. Instructions for the second portion of the assessment were exactly the same for the retelling and comprehension questions. Instructions only differed in the second portion concerning the style of reading. The remaining instructions were consistent with those above.

**Data Analysis**

The QRI is a qualitative assessment, but can be easily transformed into quantitative data. To compare results, I retrieved a percentage of details recalled in the retellings, as well as of comprehension questions answered correctly. I was then able to compare the scores of reading silently to those when reading aloud. The number scores made it possible to compare students’ individual data, as well as styles of reading together as a whole to determine which was more beneficial in terms of comprehension. I chose to use a qualitative assessment so that students’ reading behaviors could be assessed on an individual level. However, the qualitative data combined with the quantitative data allows for a more thorough study and can be easily compared to similar studies.
Chapter 4
Results
My goal through this research was to discover which was more effective for comprehension, reading aloud or reading silently. I collected data from four comprehension areas of the QRI-4: retelling, explicit questions, implicit questions, and overall comprehension. For the assessments, the sixteen students were split into two groups, eight in each group. One group of students began by reading a passage aloud, and the other group began by reading a passage silently, and then alternated for the second half of the data collection. This helped to control for order of reading. The level of the passages varied and depended upon each individual’s independent reading level. Passages ranged from level three (third grade) to level six (sixth grade). The results are as follows.

Retelling

For this portion of the assessment, students were asked to read a passage, either silently or aloud, and provide as many details or events from the passage as they could in a retelling. Out of the sixteen students, only one student (student 11) was able to recall more events when she read silently. Her score was only slightly different, showing only one percentage higher than when she read aloud. The remainder of the students had a higher percentage of events recalled when they read aloud. Students 9 and 10 had only a one percent difference in their retellings; however they both recalled more events when they read aloud.
Implicit & Explicit Comprehension

To determine the percentages for the implicit and explicit comprehension questions, I looked at how many implicit or explicit questions each student answered correctly out of the total number possible, and changed that into a percentage so I could compare the results.

For the implicit questions, there were nine students who displayed no difference in their percentages between the two readings. Out of the remaining seven participants, three scored higher on the implicit questions when they read the passage silently and four participants answered more implicit questions correctly when they read aloud.
As for the explicit questions, I gathered similar data to that of the implicit questions. The results of the explicit questions reveal that exactly half of the sixteen participants remained constant on their percentages between the two readings. However, of the eight remaining, seven students scored higher on the explicit questions when they read aloud. Only one out of the sixteen total participants scored higher when answering explicit questions on the passage that was read silently.
To calculate the data for this portion of the results of my research, I used all of the comprehension questions and took the number of questions each student answered correctly and divided that into the total number of questions possible.

I encountered similar data to that of the implicit and explicit questions in that nine out of the sixteen participants showed no change in their comprehension scores between reading aloud and reading silently. However, of the remaining seven students, all had better total comprehension percentages when they read the passage aloud compared to reading silently.
Results as a Whole

The results of my research as a whole disclose thought provoking data. Although some participants showed no significant changes in the study, I was still given some answers to my initial question. When looking at all the graphs as a whole, it is apparent that, when there were differences in the percentages, reading aloud was more effective in terms of comprehension; as seen especially in the retelling, explicit questions, and overall questions. The one exception to this was when I took a closer look at implicit questions, where more students scored higher when reading silently than in any other area of my research. In conclusion, these results reveal that reading aloud is beneficial in some aspects; however reading
silently is also valuable in terms of comprehension. The students’ reading levels range from second to sixth grade in this group. The students who receive special education services are all reading below grade level (one at second grade level and seven at a third grade level). However, despite the differences in their reading levels, this did not create differences in the data. The students who read better aloud are a mix of students below, at, and above grade level reading, and likewise for the other data collected. There are no consistent patterns across students at similar reading levels.
Chapter 5
Discussion/Conclusion
Discussion

This study was intended to look at which style of reading is more effective in terms of comprehension, reading aloud or silently. As my data revealed, a significant difference was more prevalent when students read passages aloud and were asked to give a retelling and answer comprehension questions. However, especially in terms of implicit information, reading silently also allows for higher levels of comprehension. In addition, some of the data that I collected was considered to have no significant difference between reading aloud and reading silently. This was apparent mostly in the comprehension questions, but was less likely in the retelling portion.

There are several possible explanations for why these results were attained. When focusing solely on implicit comprehension questions, the students with significant differences in scores were able to answer more questions correctly when reading silently. One possible explanation for why this occurred is when students read silently they were given the freedom to use other thought processes and develop meaning based upon the text and their personal constructivism. When students read aloud, the process requires more thought to be directed toward the actual oral reading process, and reading silently eliminates this process making it possible for students to think beyond the text and make valuable inferences.

One possible explanation for the significance of the reading aloud percentages could be related to the fact that the students were reading a short, isolated passage as opposed to a longer book, where characters and events are linked throughout the text.
When students are reading a book, they are more likely to develop a significant meaning of the events and they are given the opportunity to internalize those events. The results that I found, including the success of reading aloud may not have been consistent if they had been asked to read a longer text.

My results showed positive correlations with reading aloud and providing a higher level of retelling and answering explicit questions correctly on a higher percentage. One explanation for this could be that when students read a passage aloud, the information has already been processed orally which in turn makes it easier for them to restate the information orally as well. When they read silently, they are processing the passage and information differently than they would if they were reading it aloud. Students reading silently tend to make their own meaning and internalize that meaning which sometimes makes it more difficult to verbalize information stated directly in the text. Both the retelling and the explicit questions required students to directly restate specific details from the passage.

As discussed in chapter two, reading silently is considered to be a more effective form of reading. Students are able to develop their own meaning and interpretations of a story without having to focus on the stresses of oral reading and decoding. When students are able to read silently for pleasure, they can gather more information from the text and use that information to form opinions, theories, and may even question the author’s intent along the way. Reading aloud often forces students to focus more on correct pronunciation and pacing which eliminates the joy of reading all together. They tend to get caught up on the phonemic process and
focus less on the meaning making process and comprehension. It is believed that reading silently is a more effective and is a higher level style of reading. Students should move away from strictly oral reading to more silent reading as they mature into adulthood. As adults, the majority of reading is done silently and therefore, children need to learn how to move through the process from reading aloud to reading silently. However, the results from this research study reveal that students at this age were able to comprehend at a higher level when reading aloud. I believe this may be a result of the fact that students at this age are still maturing and learning to move through the process from reading aloud to reading silently.

Constructivism, as discussed in chapter two, relates directly to this study. It has become apparent through my research that each individual creates their own meaning from reading a text. The meaning that they create draws upon their own prior knowledge and experiences and how those factors relate to the actual text they are reading. The constructivist theory as defined by Piaget, looks at how each individual makes meaning. In this study, I had the opportunity to take a closer look at students and their individual meaning making processes by comparing their comprehension to the comprehension of their peers. I was also able to observe their thought process as they verbalized their ideas and connections through their retellings and answering of implicit and explicit questions. In comparing their reading aloud responses to their silent reading responses I was able to receive a better idea as to how students create meaning based on their style of reading (aloud or silently).
Conclusion

The results that I found from the data that I collected were actually quite surprising to me. I expected to find more favorable results when students read silently, but this research proves that this is not always the case. Reading aloud has proven advantages, implying that it is important to also be incorporated into the classroom on a regular basis. As educators, we are consistently striving to set our students up for success, and reading aloud does create successful readers. This data also shows that both styles of reading have advantages, therefore educators need to provide a balance between the two in their classrooms, never focusing on only one style of reading.

Although I was able to collect some meaningful data, it is important to consider that each child is an individual and creates meaning and comprehension in their own way. There are limitations to this study. For example, it is not possible to state finally which style of reading is more effective with a small pool of sixteen students, especially because they were all the same age. Also, it is hard to determine significant differences in data with the limited research group that I used. For future research, it would be beneficial to look at a larger sample of participants across a broader age range. However, on the upside, the group of students in this research had a broad range of abilities, showing data from higher level students as well as students need special education. Receiving similar data from these ranges further proves that my results are valid.
References


