7-2005

The Impact of Student Attitudes About Reading on Reading Progress

Nadine Rose Avallone

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The Impact of Student Attitudes About Reading on Reading Progress

by

Nadine Rose Avallone

June 2005

A thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of the State University College at Brockport in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education
The Impact of Student Attitudes About Reading on Reading Progress

by

Nadine Rose Avallone

APPROVED BY:

[Signatures and dates]

Advisor

2nd Reader

Director, Graduate Studies
Table of Contents

Abstract......................................................................................................................... iv

Chapter One: Introduction.............................................................................................. 1
  Background.................................................................................................................... 1
  Research Questions...................................................................................................... 1
  Limitations of the Study............................................................................................... 2
  Definitions..................................................................................................................... 3

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature........................................................................... 4
  Introduction.................................................................................................................. 4
  Reading at the Intermediate Level............................................................................... 4
  Expectations for Fourth Grade Students...................................................................... 4
  Characteristics of Good Readers................................................................................. 7
  Characteristics of Struggling Readers.......................................................................... 8
  Importance of Attitudes.............................................................................................. 10
  Influences that Effect Attitude.................................................................................... 10
  The Effects of Attitude on the Reading Process.......................................................... 14

Chapter Three: Methodology......................................................................................... 15
  Purpose......................................................................................................................... 15
  Statement of the Question......................................................................................... 15
  Subjects....................................................................................................................... 15
  Research Design......................................................................................................... 16
  Data Collection........................................................................................................... 16
List of Graphs

Graph 1: Growth in Reading Levels From September '04 to April '05 ....................... 20
Graph 2: Participants Grouped on Progression Levels ........................................ 21
Graph 3: Average Group Scores on Garfield Attitude Survey ................................ 23
Graph 4: Book Logs ............................................................................................. 24
Graph 5: Scores on Parental Surveys .................................................................... 25
Graph 6: Average Number of Incomplete Homework Assignments ...................... 26
Chapter 1

Introduction

Examining students’ attitudes toward reading is an important and essential part of assessing their reading progress. In turn, literacy development determines children’s future success both in and outside of school. This study will examine students’ attitudes about reading and the impact of students’ attitudes on their ability to read.

Background

During the 2004-2005 school year, the researcher taught in an urban elementary school while completing a Master’s Degree in elementary education. Typical characteristics of the students in school include poverty and single parent homes. The school placed great importance on the development of reading skills for these children as a means for helping them overcome poverty and live successful lives.

It is widely thought that attitudes affect a child’s ability to succeed in reading, and that both parents/guardians play a key role in the development attitudes toward reading. Do students’ attitudes impact their ability to read? Does parental involvement impact reading attitudes? In this study the researcher will interview students and parents to determine if attitudes toward reading impact student reading achievement.

Research Questions

Do students’ attitudes toward reading impact their ability to read? What characteristics describe a good or struggling reader? Does parental involvement influence students’ attitudes toward reading?
Abstract

This study looked to examine the impact of students’ attitudes toward reading and their reading progress. The study targeted fourth grade students in an urban elementary school in Western New York. The research examined the impact of students’ attitudes toward reading and their ability to read, characteristics of good and struggling readers and the impact of parental involvement on student attitudes toward reading. Data was collected through analysis of surveys, weekly quizzes, homework assignments, and book logs given to students and surveys given to parents.

As children grow and develop throughout elementary school, they may encounter some barriers that alter the process. They may also face helpful strategies that will aid them to move forward in the reading process. Above all, successful performance leads to positive attitudes and attitudes affect reading progression. Many factors may alter the attitude of children about reading. Some of these factors include self-concept, teacher and classroom environment, socioeconomic status and parental involvement. There are many steps of actions parents and teachers could take to lead children to be successful in the reading process and develop positive attitudes towards reading.

Overall, children who develop positive attitudes toward reading are more likely to enjoy reading, be willing to read and be life-long successful readers.
Limitations of the Study

Findings from this study are limited to one fourth grade inclusion classroom in an urban school district in upstate New York. The classroom consists of twenty students, six of whom are special education students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEP).

Given the small number of students in one classroom setting, the data collected is not generalized to other fourth grade classrooms. In addition to the small number of subjects, the study is also limited by the low socio-economic status and educational level of parents and the duration of the data collection. The results of this study would be more generalizable had data been collected with a larger group of fourth graders, in diverse settings, across all socioeconomic groups and for a longer period of time.
Definitions

**Inclusion**-
A classroom that involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the services) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students).

**Independent Reading Level**-
Individual students read a text and comprehend the text independently.

**Guided Reading Level**-
A small group of students with similar reading strategies work with a teacher to learn more about reading and the reading process.

**Attitude**-
For the purpose of this study, attitude will be defined as student or parent perception toward or about the reading process.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

There are many steps and interactions that can be taken by parents and teachers to increase a child's chances to become a successful reader in elementary school. As children grow and develop throughout elementary school they may encounter some barriers that alter the process. They may also encounter some helpful strategies that will help them to move forward in the reading process. Above all, successful performance leads to positive attitudes and attitudes affect classroom behavior.

Reading at the Intermediate Level

In the intermediate grades, teachers encourage students to read many types of text to expand their knowledge about reading. Some students in intermediate grades develop confidence and read voluntary, while others only read when they are told to do so and have a negative view of reading. Teachers can make a critical difference in their students' attitudes about reading.

Expectations for Fourth Grade Students

The state of New York specified standards for English Language Arts (ELA) for all students in grades kindergarten through grade 12. From these standards, each school district develops the curriculum for ELA which sets the expectations for students at each grade level. This research deals with the ELA standards for grade four that are described below.
Fourth Grade Reading Standards

There are four major standards that students must meet at the fourth grade level for reading. The first standard is that all fourth grade students must read and comprehend twenty-five books outside of school in their own spare time. The books that they read must be from a variety of genres and recorded on a reading log. To demonstrate comprehension, students must participate in book talks (National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), 2001).

The second standard deals with comparing information that is read. The students must read and understand either four books about one issue or subject or four books by the same author. Using the information from the four books students should be able to make connections between the books and recognize writing strategies that may be similar and compare the author’s craft (NCEE, 2001).

To meet the third standard the student must read and understand informational materials and demonstrate their understanding through written or oral work. Students should be able to relate the new information to past experience or knowledge and summarize the information that was read in order to verify comprehension of the material (NCEE, 2001).

The fourth standard deals with students and their ability to read aloud accurately and provide an idea for strategies that they use as readers when they read aloud. To meet the standard each student must read aloud with an accuracy rate of 85% or higher. While the student is reading aloud the student should be able to self correct any miscues that interfere with meaning, use multiple cueing systems to figure out unfamiliar words, and read fluently with rhythm and flow (NCEE, 2001).
The New York State Standards are for all students in the state and each year tests are administered in grades 4 and 8 to check the level of performance of the students.

A system of book leveling developed by Fountas and Pinnell (2001) supports the New York State English Language Arts Standards.

**Fountas and Pinnell System**

Fountas and Pinnell’s (2001) leveled book system classifies students from level A (Emergent readers) to level Z (Advanced readers). According to Fountas and Pinnell (2001) there are three types of readers that will generally be identified at the fourth grade reading level. The three types of readers include Transitional, Self-Extending, and Advanced.

Transitional readers at the fourth grade level are reading between a level H and level M which is below a fourth grade reading level. These readers are at a second or third grade reading level (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001).

Self-Extending readers are students that are reading between a level M and level Q. It is expected that students entering fourth grade should be reading within these two levels. According to Fountas and Pinnell (2001) students that are self-extending readers are reading at a very high third grade or low fourth grade reading level. Students entering fourth grade as self-extending readers are meeting expectations.

The final type of reader that will generally exist in a fourth grade classroom is an advanced reader. Advanced readers are reading between level R and level Y type books. According to Fountas and Pinnell (2001) by the time a student completes the fourth grade the expectation is for the student to be reading at a level R. Fourth grade teachers
encourage the readers in their classroom to acquire the skills necessary to achieve this goal.

According to Fountas and Pinnell (2001), it is important to teachers to focus on a students’ reading level more importantly however, teachers should focus on the levels that are advanced over time. Some readers may be classified as a transitional reader however, they advance three reading levels in an academic year. According to Fountas and Pinnell (2001) these students are developing their reading ability at a very high rate. It is averaged that within a academic school year students should advance 3-4 reading levels (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

**Characteristics of Good Readers**

Students who have developed proficient reading skills display certain recognizable characteristics. Fluent readers are able to quickly scan through the book and predict several events that might occur in the story. When proficient readers predict, they use their prior knowledge and background experiences to make an appropriate and educated prediction (Blaha, 2001).

Successful readers do not view reading as a forced task that they do only when they are told to do so. They believe reading to be an enjoyable experience that may also be done as a leisure activity (Blaha, 2001; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Proficient readers have good comprehension of what they have read and are able to retell difficult story lines that include the plot of the story along with many details (Blaha, 2001). Being able to respond to a wide variety of genres with comprehension is a key component of reading. Students who are able to read different genres including, but not limited to,
poetry, fables, fantasy, and fairytales are able to analyze text in different contexts to gain meaning (Blaha, 2001).

Proficient readers incorporate cues and strategies that they have learned to monitor themselves and problem solve independently (Blaha, 2001). These comprehension strategies include predicting, summarizing, questioning, and visualization (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Successful readers rely on their background knowledge, or schema, to make inferences about text. When readers make inferences they use clued or ideas from the text and make it relative to their own lives (Blaha, 2001; Harvey & Goudvis, 2000).

Self-Monitoring understanding of text is another essential factor for successful readers to possess. When readers self-monitor they pause to check for understanding of the text. They are able to problem solve unfamiliar words independently by using strategies such as chunking root words, using letter-sound relationships or context clues (Blaha, 2001). The key to becoming a successful reader is using multiple strategies to either comprehend or develop meaning of text while being engaged in reading.

**Characteristics of Struggling Readers**

Struggling readers are not identical, however, there are many common characteristics that differentiate struggling readers from good readers. Students that are struggling readers do not feel comfortable reading new text. They tend to read easy patterned text that they have memorized through prior experience with the same text (McKenna, 2002; Campbell & Kelly, 2001). One of the obvious characteristics of struggling readers is the difficulty they have in decoding text (McKenna, 2002).
McKenna (2002) states that, "this not only affects reading fluency and comprehension but also diminishes the student’s interest in reading for learning or entertainment" (p. 8).

Struggling readers often have a negative perception toward reading. They view reading as a task that they should only participate in when they are directed to do so by a teacher or adult. Their perception of reading is not that it can be done for enjoyment but rather, it is a task that they do when they are forced to do so (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Struggling readers often have very little prior knowledge or experience with different types of text (Wang, 2000). Children who do not have experience with text tend to have an incorrect or incomplete base of prior knowledge. Acquiring prior knowledge and experiences with print is a crucial factor for children when dealing with reading comprehension (Gunn, Simmons & Kameenui, 1991; McKenna, 2002).

Many students who struggle with reading have poor self-regulation skills. These students struggle with understanding and comprehending what they read. In order for students to self-regulate they must monitor their understanding. Struggling readers do not understand the strategies or techniques used to monitor their understanding, self correct themselves, or set goals for their reading achievement (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; McKenna, 2002).

Blends of all of these characteristics have an impact on students’ motivation to read and their interest in reading. For many struggling readers interest in reading is lost and engagement in reading is nonexistent. Engagement and interest in reading impacts students’ views, perceptions, and attitudes toward the reading process which may ultimately determine success in reading (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; McKenna, 2002).
The Importance of Attitudes

Alexander & Fuller (1976) define attitude toward reading as, “a system of feelings related to reading which causes a learner to approach or avoid a reading situation” (p. 1). The reading process requires children to have certain cognitive skills, such as translating signs and symbols into meaning, and an affective component, which are their attitudes (Alexander & Filler, 1976). Many believe that there is a relationship between attitudes, achievement and success in reading (Popham, 2005; Laurice, 2004).

Influences that Effect Attitude

There are a number of factors believed to have an influence on attitude toward reading. These factors include: self concept, teacher and classroom environment, socioeconomic status, and parental involvement (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Laurice, 2004; Wang, 2000). All of these factors can have a positive or negative impact on a student’s attitude toward the reading process.

Self Concept

Individual self-concept may weigh heavily on reading achievements. According to Alexander and Filler (1976) self-concept is, “an individual’s perception of himself; that is, what he believes he is” (p. 6). According to Laurice (2004), “Children with positive self-concepts tend to be willing to read, enjoy reading, become proficient, and become life long readers (internet source).” Self concept may directly affect the way a child views the reading process. Students who have a poor self-concept about themselves as readers tend to develop a negative attitude toward reading. In turn, they do not participate in reading for a fun or enjoyable activity; they perceive reading as a task that should only be done when told to do so (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Fountas & Pinnell,
2001). On the other hand, students who believe they are good readers tend to enjoy reading and engage in reading for a leisure activity. These children tend to develop a positive attitude toward reading that impacts their development and progress as a reader. Generally, children chose to read or not depending on their attitude toward reading (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Laurice, 2004).

**Teacher and Classroom Environment**

The atmosphere of the classroom and the teacher may affect the development of positive attitudes. The attitude that the teacher has toward reading directly impacts the way students perceive reading. A study completed by Arthur Combs (cited in Alexander & Filler, 1976) reinforced that the teachers’ attitude toward themselves as readers and toward reading development can either promote a positive or negative classroom atmosphere. As a result, the students in the classroom will develop either a positive or negative attitude toward reading.

There are a variety of approaches that a teacher can take to promote positive attitudes toward reading. To promote a positive attitude toward reading, teachers should provide a wide range of reading materials from a variety of genres. This is important because students in the classroom have different interests. Providing a wide variety of texts allows students to find something that they will enjoy and be engaged in while reading (Laurice, 2004). Other practices teachers should use in the classroom include: modeling and demonstrating effective reading strategies, providing positive reinforcement, and guiding children through the process of reading (Laurice, 2004). According to Laurice (2004) it is important for the students to realize that becoming a better reader takes work, effort, and practice however, it will produce a positive outcome.
Overall, both the classroom environment and the teacher influence students' attitude toward the reading process.

**Socioeconomic Status**

It is assumed that students from lower socioeconomic levels will have a negative attitude toward reading compared to those students from higher socioeconomic levels. According to Gunn, Simmons & Kameenui (1991) there is no evidence that there is a direct connection between the socioeconomic status of families and their children's attitude toward reading. A study done by Patrick Groff (cited in Alexander & Filler, 1976) took 305 fifth and sixth graders examined the relationship between socioeconomic level and attitude toward reading. The researcher placed these students in categories based on their socioeconomic status. He then conducted attitude surveys with these students to see if he could identify a correlation between socioeconomic status and reading attitudes. His results indicated that there was an insignificant relationship between socioeconomic status and attitudes toward reading. Other family characteristics may impact attitude are academic guidance, attitude toward education, reading materials in the home, and conversations with children about education in the home (Gunn, Simmons & Kameenui, 1991).

**Parental Involvement**

Regardless of the role socioeconomic status may or may not play, parents play a crucial role in the development and shape of their child's reading attitude. According to Joseph Laurice (2004), "the information and values that parents share with their children about the importance of reading can significantly affect the attitudes children develop" (internet source). Since parents are role models for their children, children tend to
acquire the similar attitude of that their parents acquired (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 2004; Laurice, 2004). A study done by Molly Kayes (cited in Alexander & Filler, 1976) involved fifth and sixth grade children. The children involved in the study were asked to state any factors that they believed influenced their feelings toward reading. The results indicated that the students believed that their parents influenced their attitudes the most. Simply providing reading materials at home does not result in the formation of positive attitudes toward reading. Parents must positively encourage and praise reading at home. Parents should be actively involved in the reading process with their children (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Gunn, Simmons & Kameenui, 1991).

There are many ways parents can promote positive reading attitudes at home. Parents can promote positive reading attitudes by providing a variety of reading material in the home including newspapers, magazines, and dictionaries. Parents should encourage their children to read by letting them know how much they enjoy and learn from reading. By doing so, parents enthusiasm and interest will transfer to their children. To encourage positive attitudes parents should read with and to their children, discuss the text they are reading, and provide positive encouragement to their children about reading. An activity that parents can engage in with their children to promote positive attitudes toward reading is to visit the library. At the library children can select their own reading material that is of interest to them (Laurice, 2004). The efforts that parents put forward to promote literacy development can have an impact on their children’s attitudes toward reading.
The Effects of Attitude on the Reading Process

Presently, children’s attitudes toward reading are getting little attention in the development of children’s literacy progress (Wang, 2000). A study of 170 fifth and sixth grade students (Groff as cited in Alexander & Filler, 1976) investigated whether there was a positive relationship between the attitudes of fifth and sixth graders toward certain content areas and their reading scores. Groff (as cited in Alexander & Filler, 1976) found that the correlation between the students’ attitudes toward specific content areas and their reading score in that specific content area was significant. He concluded that, “the reading comprehension of an individual child as he reads is influenced to a degree by his attitude toward content type of material being read” (p. 4). Although this study was done some time ago, it is still believed that excitement and student interest do play an important role in the development of a positive attitude (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Laurice, 2004; Wang, 2000). Children who develop positive attitudes toward reading are more likely to be willing to read, take pleasure in reading, become proficient readers, and enjoy reading throughout their lifetime (Laurice, 2004).

In this study, the research will use what is known about attitudes toward reading to investigate how it may have a positive or negative impact on reading development. This research will investigate if there is a considerable difference between student attitudes toward reading and reading development. Through the collection and analyzing of data the research will make generalizations comparing students’ attitudes and their reading development.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Purpose

It is believed that students’ attitudes affect their motivation to learn and their willingness to persevere when tasks become difficult. Many researchers have suggested that attitude is a contributing factor in student achievement (Popham, 2005; Laurice, 2004). This study focuses on students’ attitudes toward reading.

Statement of the Question

Do students’ attitudes toward reading impact their ability to read? Does parental involvement have an impact on students’ attitudes?

Subjects

This study was conducted in one school in a large urban school district in Western New York. The school’s population included 561 students, slightly over half of whom were African American. The majority of the students in the school came from low socio-economic families. Eighty percent of the students attending the school were eligible for reduced or free lunches.

The subjects in this study included 20 fourth grade students in an inclusion classroom. Six of the 20 students participating in the study were special education students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEP). Nine of the students were females and 11 were males. The ethnic make-up of the classroom included ten African Americans, six Hispanics, and four Caucasians.

Three teachers worked in the classroom: the regular education teacher, the special education teacher, and the researcher, who was an intern teacher 15 hours per week while
simultaneously completing graduate coursework. All three teachers in the classroom assisted students and worked together collaboratively to teach students throughout the school year.

**Research Design**

The researcher used a variety of tools including parental and student surveys and assessments of student performance to gather data about students' attitudes toward reading and the impact of their attitudes on reading development. The data was collected over a six week period during the second half of the academic school year. The data collected enabled the researcher to analyze student growth and progress in reading over time.

**Data Collection**

A letter of informed consent was sent to the participants and their parents to explain the purpose of the study (Appendix A and B). Parents and students were informed that no changes would be made in curriculum, teaching strategies, or assessments.

To ensure reliability and validity the data sources were triangulated and analyzed using a variety of data collection methods. Development Reading Assessment (DRA) scores from each subject, an unobtrusive source, were collected from the beginning in September 2004. To analyze student progress over time, the researcher retested the students in March 2005 to determine the progress that was made in decoding and comprehension. In addition, over a six week period, participants were given weekly quizzes (Appendix C) to assess comprehension of reading material taught during the week. Each participant took a quiz every Friday. Finally, students were given specific
homework assignments to assess reading comprehension (Appendix D) three times a week over a six week period. These three data sources were used to track and determine the amount of progress made in reading for each of the participants in the study.

Data was collected on students' attitudes toward reading using two reading attitude surveys (Appendix E-F). The first survey (Appendix E) was given to each participant at the beginning of the study. This survey was originally created by McKenna & Kear (1990) and was modified by the researcher. The second survey, developed by the researcher, was distributed to students in March of 2005 (Appendix F). These surveys were administered to participants individually. The researcher read the directions and questions to each participant to ensure reliability. In addition, the researcher collected weekly book logs (Appendix G) from each participant. The book logs were to be filled out daily by each participant explaining the reading activity they were involved in for the day. The book logs were given a grade of complete or incomplete. Data sources were analyzed to determine whether students had positive or negative perceptions of themselves as readers.

To determine parental involvement at the beginning of the study, a letter and a survey was sent home to parents in January 2005 (Appendix H-I). The letter contained information about the survey and also informed parents about the weekly homework that would be sent home. The surveys were expected to be completed and returned the next day to the researcher. Of the twenty participants in the study, fourteen parental surveys were returned. Questions on parent survey contained information (Appendix G-H) about reading activity or behaviors that occurred at home. These surveys were scored based on the responses and analyzed to determine parental involvement. Thus, data about parental
involvement was gathered from parent surveys, participant surveys, and the completion of the homework assignments.

The following table illustrates how data was collected and triangulated to determine parental involvement, reading attitudes, and reading development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Source 1</th>
<th>Source 2</th>
<th>Source 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determining Parental Involvement</td>
<td>Survey to Parents</td>
<td>Survey to Students</td>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining Reading Attitudes</td>
<td>Garfield Survey</td>
<td>Reading Attitude Survey</td>
<td>Book Logs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining Reading Development</td>
<td>DRA Scores</td>
<td>Weekly Quizzes</td>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To analyze the data, the participants were divided into “progress groups” based on the number of reading levels that they moved up over a period of time. There were three progress groups among the participants. Group A consisted of participants that did not move any reading levels or moved up one reading level. The participants in group B successfully moved up two reading levels. Finally, group C moved up three or more reading levels since the beginning of the academic school year (September 2004). In this study Group A consisted of 4 participants, Group B consisted of 8 participants, and Group C consisted of 7 participants. Generalizations were developed comparing students’ attitude and parental involvement within each progress group.
The generalizations developed in this study are limited to one fourth grade class consisting of twenty students in an urban school. Data gathered from this small number of participants can be used to speculate about the role of attitudes in reading progress, but can not be generalized to large groups of fourth graders in other school settings.
Chapter 4

Summary of the Data

Examining students’ attitudes toward reading is an important and essential part of assessing their reading progress. In addition, parental involvement may influence the success of children in school. In this chapter, the researcher will discuss data collected and the overall findings of the study.

Reading Levels and Growth

Growth in Reading Levels From September '04 to April '05

[Diagram showing growth in reading levels from September '04 to April '05]
The graph above indicates the reading level of each participant in September of 2004 and the growth in the reading level that was determined in April, 2004. All of the twenty students that participated in the study advanced in reading levels. However, some students increased a greater number of levels than others.

According to Fountas and Pinnell (2001) there are a few ways to analyze and interpret reading levels for students. Students that are reading at a fourth grade reading level are reading at the level R. Not all students in this study are reading at grade level, however, Fountas and Pinnell (2001) believe it is equally as important to determine the number of reading levels a student progresses in an academic year. According to Fountas and Pinnell (2001), students should increase on average 2-3 levels in an academic school year.

The graph below groups the students based on the number of levels that they progressed in a six month time period.
By analyzing the change in reading levels, the chart above was developed to classify students into three separate groups. All students were given Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) to determine progression in reading levels. Group A consists of participants who have improved their reading level by successfully completing a DRA at one higher level. Group B consists of participants who have improved their reading level by successfully completing a DRA at two higher levels. Group C consists of students who have improved their reading level by successfully completing a DRA three levels or higher. For the purpose of this study, these groups will be used to make overall generalizations concerning parental involvement, attitudes toward reading and reading development. By looking at the graphs the researcher found:

• 20% of the participants advanced one reading level in a six month time period
• 45% of the participants advanced two reading levels in a six month time period
• 35% of the participants advanced three or more reading levels in a six month time period.

Determining Attitudes Toward Reading

To determine the attitude toward reading of each participant, the researcher analyzed scores on the Garfield attitude survey (Appendix E), a student survey (Appendix F), and the collection of book logs (Appendix G) from each participant.
The graph above illustrates the average score that each progress group received on the Garfield attitude survey. The highest score that was possible on this survey was forty-eight points. The survey measures reading attitudes of each participant. The average score of each progress group was compared to the scoring guide for interpretation. The graph indicates the following:

- Group A received an average score of thirty on the Garfield attitude survey. According to the scoring guide, this score indicates that the student seems frustrated when reading and does not have a positive attitude about reading.

- Group B received an average score of thirty-two on the Garfield survey. According to the scoring guide, this score indicates that the student is indifferent about reading. They do not dislike reading, however they do not overly enjoy reading. They tend to have an indifferent attitude toward reading.

- Group C received an average score of forty on the Garfield attitude survey. According to the scoring guide, this score indicated a very positive attitude...
toward reading. The participants receiving this score tend to view reading as an enjoyable activity.

**Generalization 1:**

Attitude toward reading has a significant role on the progression of reading levels.

The graph above indicates the number of book logs, from each progress group, that were received by the researcher incomplete over a six week time period in each group. The following conclusions are based on the graph above:

- Participants in **Group A** had the highest number of book logs that were incomplete when turned in. This indicates that these students were not on task during reading workshop everyday. Students were reminded daily to fill out their book log during the last ten minutes of class.

- Participants in **C** had the least number of book logs turned in incomplete. Thus, indicating that these students were on task more than the participants in **Group A**.
Generalization 2:

Students that were off task and not recording work done on book logs during reading time tended to have lower reading development and poorer attitudes toward reading.

Effects of Parental Involvement

The graph above indicates the average scores of parental surveys (Appendix I) that were distributed to all parents of the students involved in this study. Each question was given a point value to determine the score. The survey contained questions relating to reading outside of the classroom and time spent reading with children. The highest possible score on the survey was a twenty-eight. The following conclusions are based on the above graph:
- **Group A** received the lowest average score on the parental survey indicating that there is not a lot of reading that is done outside of school. The low score also indicates that there is not a lot of parental involvement concerning reading done at home.

- Although **Group B** and **Group C** scored higher on the parental survey both groups still had a low average score on the survey indicating that there was not a lot of parental involvement for students in those two groups either.

The graph above illustrates the average number of homework assignments (Appendix D) that were either incomplete or not turned in for each progression group. Scores for incomplete homework assignments were recorded and averages within each group due to the fact the number of participants in each group varied. Letters were sent home to parents explaining that their child would be receiving reading homework 2-3 times per week. Parents signed a slip agreeing that they would help to ensure homework
was completed daily to be turned in. The following conclusions were determined by analyzing the graph:

- **Group C** had the highest average for incomplete homework assignments over a six week time span indicating that parental involvement was low and parents were not checking with their child to ensure homework assignments were complete and ready to turn in.

- Although **Group C** had the highest average number of incomplete homework assignments, **Group A** and **Group B** had a very close average of incomplete homework assignments.

- There was very little parental involvement in all three progression groups.

**Generalization 3:**

In this study, parental involvement was not a significant factor in the development of student attitudes toward reading because the data indicates:

- Scores on parental survey (Appendix I) did not have a significant variation of scores in each progression group.

- Although progression groups contained different numbers of students, on average each student turned in two incomplete homework assignments therefore, parental involvement was not a factor.
Chapter 5

Implications of the Research

Analyzing students’ attitudes toward reading is an imperative and vital part of assessing their reading progress. This chapter will focus on implications based on the research. In addition, the researcher has developed questions to further possible research in the future.

Implications of the Research

- Although attitudes toward reading impacted the progress of students in this study made in reading skills and comprehension, the study included only a small number of fourth graders. It is conceivable that, if the study was repeated with a larger group of students from various socioeconomic statuses and school settings, the results might be different.

- In this study, the role of parents in the development of their children’s reading skills and comprehension was not clear. This data did not indicate that parental involvement played a role in students reading development or impact their attitudes toward reading. However, this may have been due to the small number of students included in the study, the short period of data collection and the data collection methods. The literature does indicate that parents play an important role in reading development, but how that occurs is not clear.

Questions for Further Research

- Knowing attitude toward reading has an impact on reading development, research may be done to find different strategies to promote positive reading attitudes.
What can teachers do to promote positive attitudes toward reading in the classroom?

What can teachers do to promote positive reading activity outside of school?

What can parents do to aid in the development of positive reading attitudes?

Would results of similar studies change if data were collected in different school settings, with different socioeconomic groups or for longer periods of time?

Do attitudes toward reading change with different genres or in different content areas?
References
References


Appendices
Appendix A

Informed Consent that will be read and discussed with students

This letter describes a research study that will be conducted in your classroom. The purpose of the research is to learn about how attitudes of a student may impact their ability to read. The person that is going to be doing this research project is a student at the State University College of New York at Brockport. If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked questions about your feelings when reading, how you feel when you read, and different strategies, you use to figure out and solve words that you are unfamiliar with. You will also be asked about your reading habits when you are not in school. This research will not change your regular classroom reading routines at all. You will continue the regular reading curriculum and routines. The collection of the data is completely voluntary.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to fill out a survey asking about the way you feel when you read at different times and in certain situations. The survey has twelve questions and will take about 15 minutes to complete. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a self-evaluation each week for about 12 weeks. You will be asked to fill out a form and measure how much information you learned that week. This research and survey that will be used and collected in this study is part of everyday instruction. Normal routines and procedures will not be adjusted.

There are no anticipated risks for participating in this study. If any questions make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them. You will be able to contact the researcher at anytime if you have any questions about the study.

The possible benefit from being in this study could be that information will be learned that will allow teachers to focus on strategies and certain attitudes to benefit students as readers. Using the information from this study will help teachers to understand the effect that attitudes have on the reading process.

Any information that you give in this study remains confidential, meaning that no other person will see any of the data collected and your name will not be used on any of the data that is collected. There will be many things that will be done to protect your identity if you decided to participate in this study. Your name will not be used during any interviews and they will not appear on any surveys or other data they may be collected. The students participating in this study will be assigned numbers so that names will not appear on the data.

If you have any questions during the study, you may address your concerns to Nadine Avallone.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. In order to participate in this study, your informed consent is required. You must agree to participate in the study. You are being asked whether of not you want to participate in this study. If you wish to
participate, and agree with the statement below, please sign in the space provided. Remember you may change your mind at any point and ask to not be included in the study. You can refuse to participate even if your parent/guardian says you can.

I understand the information that was just read and explained to me in this form and agree to participate as a subject in this project.

(Signature of student participating)  (Date)

Contact Information

Researcher:
Nadine Avallone

College Supervisor:
Linda Kramer Schlossar, Ph. D.
Appendix B

Statement of Informed Consent

The purpose of this research is to better understand the impact of attitudes toward the reading process and their impact on a student’s ability to read. The person conducting the research is a graduate student at the State College of New York at Brockport. This research will examine different reading levels in the classroom, characteristics of effective and struggling readers, student’s views and attitudes about the reading process, and parent’s contributions and attitudes about the reading process. Regular curriculum already in place will not change and students will continue regular reading routine. Collection of the data in this study is completely voluntary. In addition, this research project will fulfill the master’s requirements for the Department of Education and Human Development at the State University of New York College at Brockport.

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to fill out a survey concerning your child’s reading behaviors when they are at home. The survey will consist of 7 questions and will take about 5-7 minutes to complete. The questions you will be asked will be focused on certain reading behaviors and whether or not they occur at home or not. If your child agrees to participate in this study, they will be asked to fill out a survey as well. They will be asked questions pertaining to their feelings toward reading. This research and the methods used to collect any data are part of everyday instruction. Normally used routines and procedures will not be adjusted.

There are no anticipated risks for participating in this study. If any questions make you feel uncomfortable, you don’t have to answer them. You will be able to contact the researcher at anytime if you have any questions about the study.

The possible benefit from being in this study could be that information will be learned that would allow teachers to focus on certain attitudes to benefit students as readers. Information from this study will also suggest the impact that attitudes have on the reading process.

Any information that you give in this study remains confidential and will be known only to the researcher. Several steps will be taken to guard the anonymity of all participants involved for the project. Names will not be used during interviews, nor will they appear in written form on transcribed notes or observations records. Names will not be used on any participants completing surveys, nor will they appear in written form on transcribed notes or analyzed data. Subject materials will be assigned numbers 4-001 to 4-020. If any publication results from this research, no parties will be identified by name.

If you have any questions during this study, you may call Nadine Avallone.
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. In order to participate in this study, your informed consent is required. You are being asked whether or not you want to participate in this study. If you wish to participate, and agree with the statement below, please sign in the space provided. Remember you may change your mind at any point and withdrawal from the study. Your child can refuse to participate even if you have given permission for participation.

I understand the information provided in this form, agree to participate as a subject in this project, and am 18 years of age or older.

(Signature or Parent/Guardian) (Date)

(Name of your child)

Contact Information

Researcher:

Nadine Avallone

College Supervisor:

Linda Kramer Schlossar, Ph. D.
Appendix C

Quiz 2

Name: ______________________________________ Date: __________________

Directions: Read each of the following questions carefully. Then write or select the best answer for each question.

1.) When using the question strategy describe a thick question:

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

2.) What is self-monitoring?
   a. When the reader looks for the most important information and does not focus on unimportant details
   b. Using clues from the story and your background knowledge to make a guess in the text
   c. When a reader looks back through the story for key words to help answer a question
   d. When the reader stops every couple of pages to make sure you understand what you have already read

3.) Why is it important to wonder while you read?
   a. It helps you think about what your plans are for the weekend
   b. It helps you explore and learn about things you are interested in
   c. It helps you to make inferences when you are reading
   d. It helps you think about what you have to do for the rest of the day

4.) List two places that you can look to find answers to things you wonder while you are reading:
   a. ______________________________________
   b. ______________________________________

5.) In your own words, what is reading?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________
Appendix C

Quiz 3

Name: ___________________________ Date: __________________

Directions: Read each of the following questions carefully. Circle or write the best possible answer.

1.) List three things that you should do when you are in a book club?
   a. ____________________________________________
   b. ____________________________________________
   c. ____________________________________________

2.) When you are in a book club everyone in your group should be:
   a. Reading the same book
   b. Reading from the same genre
   c. Quiet and not speaking to each other
   d. None of the above

3.) When you are at the listening center you should:
   a. Follow along with the text while the story is being read aloud
   b. Completing worksheets when the story is over
   c. Discussing the story with the other people in your group after it is read

Directions: Read each statement carefully. Determine whether the statement is a fact or opinion. Write the letter F if the statement is a fact or a letter O if the statement is an opinion.

____ 1.) Police officers have badges.
2.) Roses smell better than sunflowers.
3.) Some cars are bigger than other cars.
4.) You are in 4th grade.
5.) Cars are made of different colors.
6.) Everybody eats turkey on Thanksgiving.
7.) Christmas is a holiday in December.
Appendix D

Using Words As Clues

**Directions:** The following sentences are all opinions. They show how someone thinks or feels about something. Read each sentence and decide which clue word makes the sentence an opinion. Circle the clue words. The first one is done for you as an example.

1. July is the best month
2. Frozen yogurt pie is a great dessert.
3. Movies are so funny.
4. Making ice cream is easy for everyone.
5. String beans taste terrible
6. Turtles are very exciting animals.
7. The weather is so beautiful in St. Louis.
8. A fresh peach tastes good.
9. Cats are excellent pets.
10. The guitar is difficult to play.
Appendix D

Name: __________________________ Date: ________________

Using Similes As Context Clues

Directions: Read each sentence. Use the simile as a context clue to the meaning of the underlined word. Circle the meaning of the underlined word.

1. When Jana solved the problem, her brother said she was as profound as a college professor. That was his way of saying that Jana was _____________.
   a. old  
   b. intelligent  
   c. well-dressed

2. Mr. Smith was ravenous. When he sat down to dinner, he ate like a starving tiger. Mr. Smith was _________________.
   a. wild  
   b. very hungry  
   c. angry

3. The newly waxed floors were slick like a skating rink. They were _____________.
   a. very cold  
   b. very slippery  
   c. soaking wet

4. The sea was as serene as a sleeping baby. The sea was _________________.
   a. calm and peaceful  
   b. stormy  
   c. choppy

5. Their plan for a surprise party foundered like a ship that had crashed into a rocky coast. Their plan _________________.
   a. moved ahead  
   b. turned back  
   c. fell apart
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?

How do you feel about reading for fun at home?

How do you feel about spending free time reading?

How do you feel about starting a new book?

How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?
How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?

How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?

How do you feel about reading in school?

How do you feel about learning from a book?

How do you feel when it's time to pick books for you to read?
How do you feel about the stories you read in reading class?

How do you feel when you read aloud in class?
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey
Scoring Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Directions: Fill in the number that student received on each question according to the scoring Guide. Once all scores are determined for each question, add up the total of the scores of all twelve questions. Refer to the interpretation guide for the results.

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

Total of scores: _

Interpretation of Scores:

- **48-38 points**: Student has a very positive attitude toward reading. Student views reading as an enjoyable activity.
- **38-32 points**: Student has an indifferent attitude toward reading. They do not have an overly positive attitude or a negative attitude.
- **32-1 points**: Student seems to dislike reading. They have a negative attitude about reading and do not enjoy reading.
**Reading Survey**

**Directions:** Read each statement then circle to answer that your agree with the best.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>I don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am excited about reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel good about myself when I read</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I believe I am a good reader</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I know how to make an inference when I read</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I know how to visualize</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I know how to pick books that are just right for me</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am on task during reading time in school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>At school, my teachers encourage me to read</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are books from many genres in my classroom

I have a lot of time in school to read

I have a lot of books at home that I am able to read

I believe my teachers like to read

I go to the library with my family

My family and I read together every night

I talk with my family about what I am reading in school

My family encourages me to read

My parents are good readers

I am reading at a fourth grade reading level
### Book Club Weekly Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages Read</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Questions/Something you Learned/Discussion:

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Appendix H

Rochester City School District
Dr. Louis Cerulli School No. 34
An America’s Choice School

Principal: Debra Ramsperger
Vice Principal: Diantha Watts

530 Lexington Ave
Rochester, NY 14613
(585) 458-3210

February 2, 2005

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We would like you to know more about the reading program your child is part of at School #34. Every week we look at our reading program and try to improve it and meet the needs of every student in our classroom.

We are taking a closer look at our students’ reading behaviors outside of school. We want to make sure that your child enjoys reading both in and out of school. Attached is a brief survey. The questions on the survey deal with the reading process and your child’s reading behavior at home. We thank you in advance for your time and participation.

We are very excited and thank you again for your participation. Your continued support and dedication has helped us out immensely already this year.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact us at 458-3210.

Sincerely,

Mr. Oliver
Ms. Avallone
Appendix I

Please read each statement and place a check in the box that you believe is most appropriate. Thank you!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>I Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My child is excited about reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child is reading at his/her grade level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special reading assistance is available at my child’s school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am confident that my child will learn how to read at this school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I read to my child almost every day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My child’s teacher provides reading homework for me to do with my child.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My child is developing reading skills in other subjects.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>