Running head: EFFECTS OF THE FLUENT READER PROGRAM

Effects of the Fluent Reader Program on Reading Performance

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DRAFT

Abstract

The largest provider of educational software in reading had a new product called Fluent Reader. To test the efficacy of this product, an experiment was conducted in two elementary schools and one junior high school in St. Paul and Minneapolis. Students in the experimental condition worked on Fluent Reader for ten weeks. Control condition students worked on Accelerated Reader, a widely used and successfully tested program for building motivation to read. Students were pre and post tested and the gain scores on a variety of tests were used as the units of statistical analysis. Data analysis on gain scores on tests that measured speed of reading, a variable considered to be a valid and reliable indicator of fluency, showed that the students using Fluent Reader outperformed students in the control group. English Language Learners in the experimental condition also outperformed students in the control group.

Literature Review

Introduction

In order to become proficient at reading, beginning readers need to learn the basics. Often children start out by learning their ABC's, graduate to decoding words, and ultimately read a text independently and automatically. This end-goal of reading proficiency is referred to as fluency. Students who are less fluent may have difficulty understanding what they read (National Reading Panel, 2000). Often when we think of someone as a 'fluent' reader, we think of someone who has mastered all the intricacies of a language and can speak, read, or write that language with ease. Fluency is a level of language proficiency that all teachers desire for their students. The term 'fluency' is commonly used, yet many important questions about its definition remain. For example, deciding at what point a student has become fluent, how to measure this construct, and how we can teach students to become more fluent readers are questions that currently shape reading research and instruction. “Because the ability to obtain meaning from print depends so strongly on the development of word recognition accuracy and reading fluency, both the latter should be regularly assessed in the classroom, permitting timely and effective instructional response when difficulty or delay is apparent” (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The goal of this paper is to describe fluency, its definition, fluency instructional methods that have been found to be effective, and finally to describe the effects of the Fluent Reader Program on reading performance for regular education readers and English Language Learners.

Fluency

At first glance, fluency seems to be a fairly intuitive concept. However, there is disagreement among researchers as to what characterizes a fluent reader. Some questions include what skills constitute fluency, as well as how to distinguish fluent readers from non-fluent readers. Arriving at a definition of fluency that can be shared among teachers and researchers is important. Without a unified definition of fluency, we cannot be sure exactly what we are measuring in student performance, and we cannot successfully identify students who need help developing fluency. Furthermore, our research should inform our teaching just as our measurements should inform our evaluations of student performance. The topic of fluency is a hot topic for researchers and educators for the simple reason that there are many pieces of the fluency puzzle that are as yet amorphous and lacking in clear definition on which to base instructional judgments. Some generally accepted definitions of fluency include:

1. The ability to decode and comprehend a text simultaneously (Samuels, 2003).
2. Accurate, effortless, and rapid reading (Lipson & Bouffard Lang, 1991).
3. Accuracy of word recognition and reading speed (Samuels, 1979).
4. Reading with accuracy, speed, and comprehension (Samuels, 2003).

From Lipson & Bouffard Lang, 1991, several definitions of nonfluent readers have been proposed:

1. Readers with average or above average word recognition skills but whose skills are not automatic (Dowhower, 1987; Samuels, 1979).

2. Readers "who have not yet mastered the component skills of print processing [and whose reading] is characterized by substitution errors, long pauses, frequent repetitions, and inappropriate phrasing" (Barr, Sadow, & Blachowicz, 1990, p.70).
3. Beginning readers (Reitsma, 1988).
4. Slow readers (Herman, 1985).
5. Slow, choppy readers who have mistaken beliefs about the nature of skilled reading (Rhodes & Dudley-Marling, 1988).
6. Those who read word by word (instead of in phrase groups); whose reading does not preserve the syntax or meaning relations intended by the author (Aulls, 1978).

Furthermore, an individual can be fluent on certain materials or under certain circumstances and not fluent under other conditions, which makes defining this concept challenging. For example, as a reader masters decoding and becomes proficient on elementary-level texts, she may find herself not fluent as she begins to read intermediate-level texts or when she is introduced to a foreign language. As individuals grow, their level of fluency will fluctuate, depending on their reading experience and the difficulty of the material. At this time, fluency is defined as 'reading with accuracy, speed, and comprehension', and this definition was used for the purposes of this study.

Measurement

Another purpose of refining the definition of fluency is in the interest of developing a reliable and valid measure for the construct of fluency. Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) is currently the accepted measure of fluency. This measure is highly correlated

with many measures of academic achievement and has been a reliable indicator of reading speed measured in words per minute (wpm). CBM is used for "screening and determining eligibility of students for special programs (Marston, Mirkin, & Deno, 1984, as cited in Hasbrouck & Tindal, 1992). CBM can give a teacher a quick diagnosis of a student's reading speed by using materials readily available in the classroom. However, CBM doesn't measure students' comprehension of the materials just read – it is simply a measure of speed and accuracy. Since comprehension is an essential part of good reading, it is essential that a measure be constructed that incorporates comprehension along with speed and accuracy. If comprehension is not accounted for, it is unclear whether readers are simply performing quick word recognition at the expense of understanding. "In the words of Edmund Burke, 'To read without reflecting is like eating without digesting'"(Spangenberg-Urbschat, 1994). An assessment tool that permits the measurement of simultaneous decoding and comprehension or the measurement of accuracy, speed, and comprehension in reading, yet is quick and easy to administer, would be particularly useful for classrooms.

An assessment that provides some standard "so that teachers will know what is an 'average' or 'typical' performance to guide decision-making" (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 1992) would also be particularly useful for teachers. Also, "no large-scale norms currently exist for oral reading fluency" (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 1992). Norming problems might include use of a scale too broad for making instructional decisions, unclear scoring procedures used with the original norm group, and lack of information about the students in the norm group. Developing norms for fluency that can give teachers a method of assessing

student progress as well as comparing student fluency performance may be useful for directing instruction.

Automaticity

Automaticity is the degree to which a complex cognitive task has become learned to the point where very little effort or thought is required to perform the task. Once a complex cognitive task has been broken into its component parts and each part has been practiced repeatedly, the parts become automatic and require less cognitive effort on the part of the learner. To become automatic at reading, reading must be broken down into its component parts. For example, to break down a sentence into its component parts, one must first identify the features that make up certain letters. Eleanor Gibson is famous for her research on distinctive features. One must be able to distinguish a 'p' from a 'b' and differentiate among the many patterns of lines and curves that make up letters in order to adeptly decode a text. This process must become automatic if the reader is to progress from successfully identifying letters to identifying entire phonemes, which are the smallest units of sound that make up language. The English language is made up of 47 different phonemes, or 47 different sound units. Finally, one must be able to automatically associate each of the 47 phonemes with the appropriate letter or pair of letters that make each sound. Once a reader can automatically map the correct phoneme to the correct letter or letters, the reader can concentrate his cognitive energies on morphemes (the smallest meaningful units of language), and finally on words, vocabulary, and sentences. The key in this process is that as tasks become more automatic, they require less cognitive energy from the learner, and therefore the learner

can devote more energy to the big picture and is less absorbed in the small tasks that make up the parts of the activity. "According to automaticity theory, a fluent reader decodes text automatically – that is, without attention – thus leaving attention free to be used for comprehension" (Samuels, 1979). For a reader to be fluent, he or she must become automatic at decoding words in a text. If a reader is spending the majority of her cognitive energies on identifying individual letters and sounding out words, she has less cognitive energy left over for comprehending her effortful reading or for reading with accuracy or expression. Therefore, automaticity in reading is crucial for the development of fluency.

Repeated Reading

Repeated reading is an instructional method used to develop automaticity in reading. The method of repeated reading is useful for enhancing reading fluency because it allows students to practice a text over and over until the text becomes more and more familiar and students can decode the text automatically, giving students more cognitive capacity for comprehension. In his classic article on the method of repeated readings, Samuels stated: "As reading speed increased, word recognition errors decreased. As the student continued to use this technique, the initial speed of reading each new selection was faster than initial speed on the previous selection. Also, the number of re-readings required to reach the criterion reading speed decreased as the students continued the technique. The fact that starting rates were faster with each new selection and fewer re-readings were necessary to reach goals indicates transfer of training and a general improvement in reading fluency" (Samuels, 1979). This method of reading instruction does enhance

fluency on a text-by-text basis. To elucidate Samuels' work, research by Carol Chomsky has shown that 4 repetitions of a text is usually sufficient for a reader to reach automaticity. Chomsky's contributions to repeated reading theory differ from Samuels' in that Chomsky had students listen to a tape recording of the text they were asked to read repeatedly, whereas in Samuels' approach students simply read a text repeatedly. "The procedure proved to be facilitating for slow and halting readers, increasing fluency rapidly and with apparent ease. Successive stories required fewer listenings to reach fluency...The work provided in addition a heightened sense of confidence and motivation. Within several months the children become far more willing and able to undertake reading new material on their own" (Chomsky, 1978, as cited in Samuels, 1997).

There are also questions of near and far transfer with repeated reading. A study by Fleisher, Jenkins, & Pany investigated the transfer of rapid decoding. The researchers took a text and had one group of children learn each individual word until they recognized the words automatically. They then presented the same children with the whole text to see if the children would be able to read the text fluently. The children could not read the intact text fluently, despite the fact that they had learned each of the words individually until they could recognize them automatically. The conclusion from this research is that, despite their automatic recognition of individual words, repeated reading of individual words to automaticity did not transfer into the fluent reading of whole texts. In conclusion, repeated reading and especially repeated oral reading are effective methods for increasing fluency when done on a text-by-text basis.

English Language Learners and Fluency

Importance of Literacy Instruction for English Language Learners

Students who are not exposed to English at home before entering school may require different strategies for acquiring reading fluency than students for whom English is their first language. Teaching this growing population of students to become fluent in English is challenging, but vital. Since the official language of the US is English, literacy instruction and good reading skills in English are crucial to the development of a healthy and educated populace. Full participation in American society requires certain basic English skills, and English is becoming the foremost language in global commerce. Language skills are not only for reading street signs, books, manuals, or voting, but "language learning and teaching is also about status, power, and voice" (Flores, as cited in Spangenberg-Urbschat, 1994). With reading skills providing students that much power or lack of power, it is essential to consider the specific needs of English Language Learners when discussing fluency instruction.

Demographics of English Language Learners

English Language Learners are becoming a larger proportion of students served by the public schools. "According to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual education and Language Minority Affairs, approximately 3.2 million children in public and private schools in the United States are classified as limited English proficient (LEP) (Elmore & Rothman, 1999 as cited in Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2004). "This is an increase from the 1991 estimate of 2.3 million and constitutes about 5.5 percent of the total K-12

population (Pellegrino, Jones, & Mitchell, 1999 as cited in Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2004). About 75% of these children speak Spanish as their native language, the rest mainly speak Vietnamese, Hmong, Cantonese, Cambodian, Korean, and Native American languages (Elmore & Rothman, 1999, as cited in Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2004). These languages are predominantly represented in the Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools, which are the students represented in this study. Many teachers feel unprepared to teach this unique population of students, and roughly 42% of all public school teachers have at least one English language learner in their classes (Olson & Goldstein, 1997, as cited in Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2004). Since this is a population with needs that are qualitatively different than those of native language speakers, it is essential that these children become fluent with English as soon as possible, before they are left behind by their native English-speaking peers. "Research indicates that it takes English-language learners between six and eight years to reach the oral skill level of their English-speaking peers" (Collier, 1987, as cited in Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2004). Since learning to read develops so rapidly in the early years of language development, as early as kindergarten through 3rd grade, English language instruction for ELL children early in their academic career is essential. Although the educational system in the United States has always been faced with a variety of student language backgrounds, at no time has it been more crucial that these students' specific language learning needs be addressed. In today's information age our concept of literacy has broadened. Concepts other than reading and writing, such as critical thinking, logical reasoning, and technology use (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991 as cited in Spangenberg-Urbschat, 2004), constitute essential literacy skills that English Language Learners and

all students need to be taught. If ELL students are to become competitive in today's educational system and later in tomorrow's marketplace, literacy skill development is absolutely essential.

Reading Challenges for English Language Learners

ELL students come to school with a considerable amount of language learning under their belts, just as native English speaking students do. However, these two groups of students face different challenges. The first challenge ELL students face is the fact that "there is a surface-level mismatch between the child's language and the language of the school...the oral language students know and the written language they must learn will have differing degrees of overlap" (Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2004). Some students will come to school without having experienced any concept of print, any notion of what a book is, what a book is for, what a book looks like, that English print is read from left to right, or that print represents meaning. The Hmong language, for example, was only recently transcribed into a written form, and only recently developed its own dictionary, so teaching children from the Hmong culture concepts of reading and written language presents its own set of literacy challenges. On the other hand, some cultures have very different concepts of print, such as Arabic or Hebrew, that are read from right to left, which interferes with the learning of English print concepts. These concepts could potentially produce interference in language learning. Also, English-language learners sometimes come from cultures that do not value a great deal of verbal behavior from children, perceiving it to be rude, such as certain Native American cultures. Some languages have more overlap with English in their sounds and syntax than others --

Spanish is more similar to English than is Vietnamese, for example (Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2004). Moreover, ELL students frequently cannot express what they actually do know, so this bias can hinder their academic growth.

Instructional Strategies for English Language Learners

Building children's oral English skills to help them succeed in matching new sounds and words to print is essential (Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2004). "Accomplished readers in their first language tend to use many of the same strategies that successful native English-language readers do – skimming, guessing in context, reading for the gist of a text – when they are reading in a second language" (Drucker, 2003). "Research indicates that about 20 percent of the process of reading in a second language is predictable on the basis of the level of first-language literacy" (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995; Brisbois, 1995; Hulstijn, 1991, as cited in Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2004). So if English language learners have strong language skills in their first language they are more likely to develop strong English skills. However, it is often the case that English language learners come from homes where a language other than English is spoken and learning English may or may not be encouraged.

Cultural Capital for English Language Learners

Levels of background knowledge that come from exposure to a culture may differ among families who are not native to the U.S. The French anthropologist Pierre Bordieu originated the idea of cultural capital, or "the advantages that people acquire as a part of their life experiences, their peer group contacts, and their family backgrounds" (Corson,

2001). There are culture-specific thoughts, concepts, terminology and historical references that are often passed down through generations in families that share certain cultural characteristics. In addition to cultural capital, students also possess linguistic capital. "For Bourdieu, linguistic capital is more than the competence to produce grammatically well-formed expressions and forms of language. It also includes the ability to use appropriate norms for language use and to produce the right expressions at the right time for a particular 'linguistic market'"(Corson, 2001). Since ELL students' families have cultural backgrounds that do not include elements of history, media, and idiomatic expressions that most Americans share, it is difficult for students with another heritage to derive meaning from distinctly American cultural concepts or expressions. Simply decoding the language is certainly a formidable task, but deriving meanings from words that do not exist or are used as a figure of speech unlike those used in other cultures makes the task of comprehension for the ELL student doubly difficult.

Academic and Conversational English for English Language Learners

ELL students are often able to function well with conversational English (Basic Interpersonal and Communication Skills -- BICS), but academic English proficiency (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency -- CALP) is more difficult to develop. Furthermore, "second-language acquisition frequently occurs in unnatural contexts that emphasize linguistic accuracy rather than communicative fluency" (Spangenberg-Urbschat, 1994). "In most cases it takes an English-language learner as long as five to seven years to perform as well academically as native English-speaking peers (Collier & Thomas, 1999; Cummins, 1989, as cited in Drucker, 2003). Since ELL students need

much more exposure and repetition than native speakers do, repeated reading is especially helpful for this group of students.

Vocabulary for ELL Students

The limited vocabulary of ELL students is also a hindrance in their development of fluency. If the word "bacon" is a new word and also a new idea, then ELL students will not be able to comprehend this word since it is not part of their oral vocabulary or even their cultural capital. Presenting new vocabulary with graphics simultaneously will aid in supplying the missing link between foreign words and familiar objects or ideas. ELL students sometimes have trouble applying the vocabulary they have memorized in context. "According to Yeung (1999), 'Given a separate glossary, when readers encounter an unfamiliar word, they need to leave the text, turn to the vocabulary list, temporarily store its meaning, and then revert to the text and try to incorporate the meaning into the text'...he found that when definitions are placed next to the challenging lexical items, unfamiliar words become more readily understood. He suggested that in this integrated format, students' attention is not split, and the cognitive load is lowered" (Drucker, 2003).

To support vocabulary development, narrow reading is a method that helps ELL students develop vocabulary on a particular topic. Newspaper stories, magazine articles, books, novels, and the Internet can be used on a topic of interest so that repeated exposure to related vocabulary is promoted. Harnessing the power of students' passionate interests

can be powerful for developing reading skill. This approach developed by Schmitt & Carter (2000) is effective for building the lexicon of ELL students.

Computers

Computers are excellent tools for enhancing students' reading fluency. Computers make repetition of texts, exposure to vocabulary, goal setting and immediate feedback on an individual basis feasible for classroom teachers. Teachers have limited time to monitor students individually, but computers make it easy for students to take responsibility for their own learning and love doing it. Students are excited to use computers in their learning process. Usually students equate using computers with more real-world tasks. Plus, using computers acquaints students with computer usage in general, and allows them to become more comfortable with the computer itself as a learning tool. Computers provide much greater amounts of fluency-oriented practice than is possible in most traditional programs (Torgesen, 1986). "Computers have the capacity to deliver motivating, carefully monitored, individualized, and speed-oriented practice in concentrations far beyond those available in traditional instructional formats" (Torgesen, 1986).

Using computers also makes it easier for teachers and students to track progress. Since computers can graph student reading times almost immediately, students can see their progress as they improve, and this can be highly motivating. Graphing reading times in words per minute, the students can see their speed increase. "Without the graph, gains can at times go unnoticed. The graph provides visible proof of progress" (Samuels, 1979).

Prosody

Prosody is the stress, pitch, and intonation in speech or, to some extent, in writing. Prosody is often referred to as expression in reading. When someone reads with expression, their voice fluctuates in pitch and tone to indicate the feelings or connotations associated with the words in the text. Readers take their cues from the punctuation in the text, such as commas, question marks, or exclamation points. These punctuation marks give the reader clues about the meaning that the author is trying to convey to his audience. In Peter Schreiber's work on prosody he writes about the construction of sentences into noun phrases (NP) and verb phrases (VP) (Schreiber, 1980). Simply rearranging the phrasing in a sentence made up of the same words can change the meaning of a sentence entirely.

There is currently a debate as to the relationship of prosody to comprehension and thus to fluency as well. In a study conducted by Davis et. al., research suggests that, even before infants can read, they are babbling with prosody. This research would suggest that infants are picking up cues about how to use appropriate expression even though they may not be able to form a coherent sentence. In other words, infants comprehend the tone and expression of language perhaps before they can comprehend its individual words. This information has important implications for understanding how prosody can act as a cue for whether or not a reader is getting meaning from a text as they are reading. However, the relationship of prosody to comprehension is also problematic because a fluent reader can read a text with prosody and still not comprehend the text. For

example, the poem Jabberwocky by Lewis Carroll can be read aloud with proper expression, yet the reader may not be able to explain what it is they have read. Certain texts, such as poetry, are written with nonsense words or with ambiguous structure or phrasing so as to lend more room for interpretation to the text. It is unclear whether reading with expression helps the reader's comprehension and the reader's ability to simultaneously decode and comprehend text, or whether reading with expression is the result of a reader who has first comprehended the text and can now produce a more expressive rendering of the text. Put another way, does prosody facilitate comprehension, or is prosody an artifact of comprehension?

Fluent Reader Program

The Fluent Reader program is a product that Renaissance Learning designed based on research on reading fluency to enhance students' fluent reading skills. The program allows students to select passages of different readability levels, read them repeatedly, and score them by their words per minute read. Students can monitor their progress by watching their scores improve on a graph. Students can also click on an unfamiliar word to get a definition of that word. Students have many passages to choose from on a variety of topics. The students can listen to a modeled oral reading of the passage of their choice at three paces – slow, somewhat fluent, and fluent in order to hear the passage before an attempted reading. After students listen to the modeled readings, they can record themselves as they read aloud into their headset. The benefit of recording their own individual reading is the fact that they can replay their recording to hear problem areas and self-correct. The benefit of the modeled and student oral readings is that both the

oral and visual modalities are used, enhancing the probability that students' fluency skills will improve.

Summary

Since definitions of fluency drive its measurement as well as its instruction, a unified definition is essential for progress in this field of study. Fluency is made up of many subparts, such as speed, accuracy, comprehension, and prosody. Determining which subparts are essential to fluency will shape they way the term is used by researchers and educators. Developing an operational definition for this construct is easy when speed of reading is used as a fluency measure, but this becomes somewhat more difficult when prosody and comprehension are included as part of the definition. Since there is a lot going on with this concept, defining fluency and then developing a measure that taps all of its parts is essential for conducting solid research as well as for informing teachers and providing them with dependable information on which to base instructional decisions. Based on the literature reviewed in this paper, we have seen that repeated reading, automaticity, prosody, measurement tools such as Curriculum Based Measurement, and computer-based instructional programs are being designed to address these questions. Making sure the field is unified is paramount to further successful research and instruction in fluency.

Using a true experimental design, the purpose of this study was to test the effect of the Fluent Reader program with elementary and junior high school students. There were two questions addressed in this study based on this purpose: (a) Does the FR program improve students' reading achievement? (b) Does the FR program improve

students' reading fluency as measured by tests that one could consider to be indicators of fluency? (c) Is the FR program effective with ELL students?

Methods

Overview of the Research

The purpose of this study was to test the effectiveness of the Fluent Reader program with elementary and junior high students using an experimental design. At the elementary school level, the teachers were asked to select twelve students in their class who were lowest in reading achievement. Of these twelve students, six were randomly assigned to the Fluent Reader program and six were randomly assigned to a control group that received instruction via the Accelerated Reader program. However, at the junior high school level, students who had done poorly on the basic skills tests of reading were assigned to remedial classes. Random assignment of students who were in these classes to treatments was not possible. Instead, intact classrooms were randomly assigned either to the Fluent Reader condition or to the control condition. The control condition at the junior high school consisted of individual reading combined with instruction. All students in the elementary and junior high school were pre and post-tested on a variety of measures such as Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM), STAR Test, and a test that combined CBM and comprehension test questions. The study lasted ten weeks.

Materials

Reading Test Passage for Curriculum Based Measurement. Curriculum based measurement is a technique that provides reliable and valid measures of reading ability in a short time period. The technique involves having an individual student read for one minute and the dependent variable is measured by number of words read correctly per minute. Six passages were selected from the *Standard Reading Passages*, created by Stanley Deno and colleagues (1987). Two passages designated as A or B with readability levels of third, fifth, and sixth grades were selected. Set A passages were followed by five multiple choice comprehension questions. Set B passages were not followed by comprehension questions. The six passages were each approximately 235 words long. (See attached appendices).

Quizzes. Three quizzes were created for Set A passages. Each quiz consisted of five multiple choice comprehension questions that focused on the main points in each passage. These questions were literal comprehension questions taken directly from the text. (See attached appendices).

Assessor Score Sheets. The examiner had a score sheet that had the same text the student was reading from, but at the end of each line the cumulative number of words was listed. Student oral reading errors were marked on the score sheet as the student read. For students reading from Set A passages, at the end of one minute the examiner marked the word the students was on, but the student was allowed to read for an additional one and a half minutes (total reading time was a maximum of two and a half minutes), which

was usually long enough for the student to finish reading the passage. Total reading time was recorded. When the student read from Set B passages, only one minute of oral reading time was allowed. Speed of reading was used as one of the dependent variables. Comprehension questions were used on Set A passages as another dependent variable. (See attached appendices).

Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR). Each student took the Renaissance Learning® STAR Reading test. The STAR test is an assessment tool created by Renaissance Learning that is administered on the computer. The examination takes only a few minutes and after the student completes the test it gives a "Readability Level" for each student, which was used in several ways. First, it determined the readability level at which the students could select books from the library for the control groups using the Accelerated Reader. For students using the Fluent Reader program, it determined the initial level of passages they would use for repeated reading. The Star test was validated using a representative sample of 60,000 students and the results on the test correlate well with other standardized tests.

Fluent Reader (FR). The Renaissance Learning® Fluent Reader program has the following components: 1. modeled reading where the students listen to a fluent reader read the practice passage with good expression 2. repeated oral reading 3. self-monitoring in which students record their own reading and assess these recordings noting where their reading needs improvement, monitor their own daily progress, and establish their own goal for oral reading rate for the passage they are practicing. This computer software program is designed to assist teachers to track and improve student’s reading fluency.

Accelerated Reader. The Renaissance Learning® program tests the students' comprehension on books at various readability levels. With this program the student reads books independently that are at the assigned level given by the STAR Reading test. When the student is finished reading the book, the student takes a computer administered comprehension quiz. Feedback is almost immediate and the student gets points based on the readability level of the book, the length of the book, and the score received on the test.

Participants

Participants for this study were elementary and junior high school students in the Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools. At the elementary school level, 72 students participated. Of the 72 students, 36 were third graders (18 experimental and 18 control) 36 were fourth graders (18 experimental and 18 control), and 24 were sixth graders (12 experimental and 12 control). As noted above, the teachers were asked to select the twelve worst readers in their classes. Then these students were randomly assigned either to the Fluent Reader experimental program or to the control condition. In the elementary school the control condition was the Accelerated Reader program, whereas in the junior high school the control condition received instruction in reading using TWI (Read To, Read With, Read Independently) in which the teacher read to the students, or the students read with a partner, or the students read independently.

At the junior high level, 41 students from the seventh grade participated. Two classrooms were randomly assigned to each condition. Nineteen students were in the experimental condition and 22 students in the control condition.

Procedure

Pre-Test Phase

First, all students were pre-tested on all CBM level passages. For Set A passages, we had the students read the whole passage orally with a maximum allowed reading time of 2 1/2 minutes. The examiner marked off after one minute the last word that the student was on so that word per minute rate could be determined. Word recognition errors were also noted. In addition, the student was given a multiple-choice comprehension test that was read orally to the student. For the set B passages, the regular procedure for curriculum-based measurement was used. A word per minute score was given minus errors in word recognition. Lastly, we collected data from the STAR test.

Treatment Phase

. The treatment phase of the study lasted 10 weeks, beginning in March 2003 and ending May 2003. At the elementary school, the experimental students used the Accelerated Reader program for 30 minutes and the Fluent Reader program for 20 minutes, and the control groups used the Accelerated Reader program for 30 minutes and traditional reading instruction for 20 minutes. At the junior high, the experimental students used the Fluent Reader program for 20 minutes, and the control groups used the TWI (Read To, Read With, Read Independently) instruction for 20 minutes.

Post-Test Phase

We used the same measurements that were used for the pretest to collect our posttest data. Gain scores based on growth from pretest to posttest were analyzed to determine differences in reading achievement between groups.

Results

This research examined several questions: (a) Does the FR program improve students' reading achievement? (b) Does the FR program improve students' reading fluency as measured by tests that one could consider to be indicators of fluency? (c) Is FR effective with ELL students? To address these questions we analyzed the differences between experimental and control groups at the elementary and junior high levels separately. The unit of analysis was the gain score from pretest to posttest for speed of reading on the CBM tests.

Elementary School

All Students

We used MANOVA to test the pretest result on STAR test. We found no differences between groups on the pretest. This is to be expected because students were randomly assigned to each group.

The results show that there were significant differences on WPM rates for these three passages (3a, 3b, and 5a). For passage 3a, the FR group had a significantly higher gain score on WPM rate (M=18.48, SD=13.48) than the control group (M=9.45, SD=9.32), (F=6.935, p<.05). For passage 3b, the FR group had a significantly higher gain score on WPM rate (M=18.44, SD=16.46) than control group (M=8.14, SD=11.66), (F=5.974,

p<.05). For passage 5a, the FR group had a significantly higher gain score on WPM rate (*M*=13.32, *SD*=12.28) than control group (*M*=6.91, *SD*=7.75), (*F*=4.432, *p*<.05). There were no significant differences found for WPM rates for the rest of the passages (5b, 6a, 6b). However, we did not find significant differences between groups on measures of total reading time. Since errors were not accounted for in total reading time, it is possible to find that WPM rate is significantly different between groups, whereas total time reading a passage was not. Differences between groups on WPM rates show that Fluent Reader is more effective at increasing WPM rates for reading passages of grade levels 3 and 5. The fact that groups had significantly different gain scores on passage 5a and did not show significant differences on passage 5b could be accounted for by the fact that passage 5a was followed by a comprehension quiz whereas 5b was not. The comprehension quiz may have been enough to prompt the students to remember the content of the passage so that content memory could be reflected in their reading rate, or fluency of reading at that grade level.

English Language Learners (ELL)

The FR group (*M*=20.21, *SD*=12.66) had higher gain score than control group (*M*=8.27, *SD* =8.08) on WPM rate in 3a (*F*=9.311 , *p*<.05, and η^2 = .26), the FR group (*M*=20.07, *SD*=16.66) had higher gain score than control group (*M*=6.67, *SD*=10.54) on WPM rate in 3b (*F*=6.81 , *p*<.05, and η^2= .20), the FR group (*M*=17.93, *SD*=11.15) had higher gain score than control group (*M*=6.00, *SD*=8.95) on WPM rate in 5a (*F*=10.17, *p*<.05, and η^2 = .27), the FR group (*M*=19.86, *SD*=15.58) had higher gain score than control group (*M*=8.53, *SD*=10.97) on WPM rate in 6a (*F*=5.18 , *p*<.05, and η^2 = .16).

Junior High

MANOVA was used to analyze the data. The pretest results on the STAR test showed that there were significant differences on scale score, grade equivalent (GE), and normal curve equivalent (NCE). This might be expected because one class was assigned to the experimental group and one to the control group.

Gain Scores were used as the unit to analyze the difference between pre-test and post-test on reading time on three different grade level passages (third, fifth, and sixth). The results show that there were significantly different performances between groups (F= 7.90, p<.05).. The FR group had a higher negative gain score (M= -12, SD=10.23) than the control group (M= -.87, SD=8.40) on reading time for fifth grade level passage. A higher negative mean gain score reflects an increased difference in speed of reading time of the FR group over the control group.

Discussion

For the elementary level, there were significant differences between experimental and control groups on reading rates (words read per minute) on passages of readability levels 3a, 3b, and 5a. Since differences between groups on passage 5b was not found, we might conclude that having comprehension questions as part of reading instruction would benefit students' development of fluency, especially those students who are in need of a little extra push to become fluent at the next reading level.

In the elementary level, we also looked at the effects of the Fluent Reader program on English Language Learners. From our results, English Language Learners

became more fluent using Fluent Reader than using traditional reading instruction. English Language Learners in the experimental group had significantly higher gain scores on words read per minute than students in the control group, suggesting that reading rate performance improved with the treatment. This might be because ELL students benefit more from the repeated reading element of the program; the fact that Fluent Reader provides an opportunity to read texts repeatedly may allow English Language Learners to gain more exposure to the language and to familiarize themselves with vocabulary. This raises an interesting question. In this study, we did not examine the improvement of students' vocabulary. It would be worthwhile to investigate whether English Language Learners' vocabulary improves as a result of using the Fluent Reader program. This has important educational implications for reading instruction for English Language Learners in the public schools.

For the junior high level, there were four significant results for the junior high school. They included negative mean gain score for the fifth grade passage on reading time. This suggests that Fluent Reader has a positive impact on the reading rates of readers who are at the fifth grade readability level. STAR test results showed that students using Fluent Reader had a higher gain score for scale score, grade equivalent (GE), and normal curve equivalent (NCE). Thus, achievement scores for students who used Fluent Reader improved more than students receiving traditional reading instruction on these measures. The sample size of English Language Learners in the junior high sample was too small in this study. This might be a reason that the results showed no positive impact on English Language Learners in junior high. Thus, it would be interesting to have a larger sample size for English Language Learners at the junior high

level to see if the fluent Reader program has a positive effect on reading fluency or reading achievement.

Given our control group instructional method of AR, the spare significant results are not surprising. AR has been found to be an effective instructional tool, so comparing these two programs makes finding significant differences less likely. In further studies, comparing FR strictly to traditional instruction may yield more information. However, since these readers were the poorest readers from each classroom, seeing gains in reading achievement due to the program is particularly interesting. Another consideration for future studies might be to control for the first language of the ELL students involved in the study. There might be an effect for certain languages over others, which was not specifically addressed by this study.

Based on the results of this study, the Fluent Reader program is an effective method of reading fluency instruction for readers at the elementary and junior high levels. The Fluent Reader program has been effective in increasing the number of words students read per minute, as well as decreasing total reading time. The Fluent Reader program has also been particularly effective with English Language Learners, which is important for the fluency needs of diverse students in elementary and junior high classrooms. Future studies will continue to gather data on the long-term benefits of the Fluent Reader program.

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Table 1

Gain Scores on CBM for WPM (Word Per Minute) Rate for Elementary School

Reading Passages	Experimental (FR)		Control (AR)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Grade 3a*	18.48	13.48	9.45	9.32
Grade 3b*	18.44	16.46	8.14	11.66
Grade 5a*	13.32	12.28	6.91	7.75
Grade 5b	7.72	11.39	4.55	11.56
Grade 6a	17.16	15.42	10.32	12.99
Grade 6b	15.76	14.97	14.59	14.31
N	25		22	

Note: Fluent Reader (FR) are the experimental, Accelerated Reader (AR) are the control

Table 2

MANOVA for WPM (Word Per Minute) Rate for Elementary School

Reading Measures	df	Mean Squared	F	η^2	p
Grade 3a	1,45	953.242	6.935	.134	.012*
Grade 3b		1242.36	5.974	.117	.019*
Grade 5a		480.955	4.432	.090	.041*
Grade 5b		117.931	.896	.020	.349
Grade 6a		547.782	2.665	.056	.110
Grade 6b		15.994	.074	.002	.786

* P < .05

Table 3

Gain Scores on CBM for WPM (Word Per Minute) Rate for English Language Learners

Reading Passages	Experimental (FR)		Control (AR)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Grade 3a*	20.21	12.66	8.27	8.08
Grade 3b*	20.07	16.66	6.67	10.54
Grade 5a*	17.93	11.15	6.00	8.95
Grade 5b	10.79	11.46	3.67	10.74
Grade 6a*	19.86	15.58	8.53	10.97
Grade 6b	16.86	16.62	10.47	13.02
N	14		15	

Note: Fluent Reader (FR) are the experimental, Accelerated Reader (AR) are the control

Table 4

MANOVA for WPM (Word Per Minute) Rate for English Language Learners

Reading Measures	df	Mean Squared	F	η^2	p
Grade 3a	1	1033.68	9.311	.256	.005*
Grade 3b	1	1301.19	6.806	.201	.015*
Grade 5a	1	1030.38	10.17	.274	.004*
Grade 5b	1	366.999	2.981	.099	.096
Grade 6a	1	928.572	5.181	.161	.031*
Grade 6b	1	295.725	1.339	.047	.257

* P < .05

Table 5

Gain Scores on STAR Reading Test for Scale Score, Grade Equivalent and Normal Curve Equivalent for the Junior High School

Reading Passages	Experimental (FR)		Control (AR)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Scale Score	190.25	191.43	.6	171.74
Grade Equivalent	1.75	1.63	-.12	2.02
Normal Curve Equivalent	11.96	13.67	-1.47	13.47
N	14		20	

Note: Fluent Reader (FR) are the experimental, Accelerated Reader (AR) are the control

Table 6

MANOVA for STAR Reading Test for Scale Score, Grade Equivalent and Normal Curve Equivalent for the Junior High School

Reading Measures	df	Mean Squared	F	η^2	p
Scale Score	1	187654.55	5.89*	.27	p=<.05
Grade Equivalent	1	18.25	5.05*	.19	p=<.05
Normal Curve Equivalent	1	941.85	5.14*	.20	p=<.05

*P < .05

School:_____ Teacher_____

Grade_____ Name_____

Pretest Posttest circle one

	word count	# of errors
Bobby Goes Fishing	3	___
Bobby and Grandpa got up early to go fishing. Bobby was tired	15	___
and thought maybe he'd rather sleep. As soon as he smelled the bacon that	29	___
Grandpa was cooking in the skillet, Bobby was up and out of bed. Grandpa	43	___
cracked a few eggs over the hot skillet, flipped some pancakes and before	56	___
Bobby knew it, they had a feast for breakfast.	65	___
While eating breakfast, Bobby asked Grandpa what kind of fish they	76	___
would catch. "Well, Bobby," said Grandpa, "if we're lucky, we might catch a	89	___
rainbow trout."	91	___
"Wow, do they get really big?" asked Bobby.	99	___
"Some do," Grandpa replied, "but mostly, they're just hard to catch	110	___
because they're so smart." Grandpa then went on to tell Bobby how they	123	___
would try to fish along the river. He told Bobby there were rules he	137	___
had to remember. "First, you have to be very quiet. Second, you have to be	152	___
patient. And, third, you have to be lucky!"	160	___
Bobby said, "I feel lucky today!"	166	___
"Well, let's get going then," said Grandpa. "Remember to wear your	177	___
fishing hat. Not only will it keep the sun out of your eyes, but it might bring	194	___
us luck."	196	___
Soon they were in Grandpa's old, red pickup truck and on their way to	210	___
the river. Bobby knew that today he was going to be lucky.	222	___

Total Reading Time _____

DRAFT

Bobby Goes Fishing

Bobby and Grandpa got up early to go fishing. Bobby was tired and thought maybe he'd rather sleep. As soon as he smelled the bacon that Grandpa was cooking in the skillet, Bobby was up and out of bed. Grandpa cracked a few eggs over the hot skillet, flipped some pancakes and before Bobby knew it, they had a feast for breakfast.

While eating breakfast, Bobby asked Grandpa what kind of fish they would catch. "Well, Bobby," said Grandpa, "if we're lucky, we might catch a rainbow trout."

"Wow, do they get really big?" asked Bobby.

"Some do," Grandpa replied, "but mostly, they're just hard to catch because they're so smart." Grandpa then went on to tell Bobby how they would try to fish along the river. He told Bobby there were rules he had to remember. "First, you have to be very quiet. Second, you have to be patient. And, third, you have to be lucky!"

Bobby said, "I feel lucky today!"

"Well, let's get going then," said Grandpa. "Remember to wear your fishing hat. Not only will it keep the sun out of your eyes, but it might bring us luck."

Soon they were in Grandpa's old, red pickup truck and on their way to the river. Bobby knew that today he was going to be lucky.

Bobby Goes Fishing Questions

1. Who made breakfast?
   a. Grandma
* b. Grandpa
   c. Bobby
   d. Mom

2. What got Bobby out of bed?
   a. Grandpa called his name
* b. the smell of bacon cooking
   c. the bright morning sunlight
   d. the alarm clock

3. Why were the fish hard to catch?
* a. they're so smart
   b. they're not hungry
   c. there aren't very many of them
   d. they're using the wrong kind of bait

4. What was one of the rules Bobby had to remember?
   a. stay alert
   b. stay close by
   c. wear long pants
* d. be patient

5. What did Grandpa think might bring Bobby luck?
   a. rabbit's foot
   b. four leaf clover
* c. fishing hat
   d. fishing rod

School:_____ Teacher_____

Grade_____ Name_____

Pretest Posttest circle one

Bobby Goes Fishing Questions

1. Who made breakfast?
   a. Grandma
   b. Grandpa
   c. Bobby
   d. Mom

2. What got Bobby out of bed?
   a. Grandpa called his name
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   a. rabbit's foot
   b. four leaf clover
   c. fishing hat
   d. fishing rod

School:_____ Teacher_____

Grade_____ Name_____

Pretest Posttest circle one

	word count	# of errors
Summer Guests	2	___
One summer we had guests in our shed. The only problem	13	___
was that we didn't know who they were. All we could see of them	27	___
were signs or clues. We could see two very large holes dug under	40	___
the shed. We could see some animal footprints around the holes.	51	___
When we were very quiet, we could hear some rustling noises	62	___
inside, but we never saw them. Who were our summer guests?	73	___
I decided it was time to find out who these guests were. I had	87	___
a plan. I got a chair and a few snacks. I placed my chair behind a	103	___
bush. I moved it a little so I could see the hole. Then I sat down for	120	___
a long wait. I sat very quietly, and it didn't take long. A tiny fur	135	___
face peeked out of the hole. Then, two more furry faces peeked	147	___
out. Oops! A furry creature got pushed out of the hole by its	160	___
brother. It started to walk around. Out came another and another.	171	___
They started to play with each other. It looked like they were	183	___
having lots of fun. But what were they? The dark brown fur	195	___
seemed to cover their shapes. Another creature came. But it was a	207	___
lot bigger. A large mother Hedgehog waddled out. Now I knew	218	___
who our summer guests were!	223	___

Summer Guests

One summer we had guests in our shed. The only problem was that we didn't know who they were. All we could see of them were signs or clues. We could see two very large holes dug under the shed. We could see some animal footprints around the holes. When we were very quiet, we could hear some rustling noises inside, but we never saw them. Who were our summer guests?

I decided it was time to find out who these guests were. I had a plan. I got a chair and a few snacks. I placed my chair behind a bush. I moved it a little so I could see the hole. Then I sat down for a long wait. I sat very quietly, and it didn't take long. A tiny fur face peeked out of the hole. Then, two more furry faces peeked out. Oops! A furry creature got pushed out of the hole by its brother. It started to walk around. Out came another and another. They started to play with each other. It looked like they were having lots of fun. But what were they? The dark brown fur seemed to cover their shapes. Another creature came. But it was a lot bigger. A large mother Hedgehog waddled out. Now I knew who our summer guests were!

Summer Guests Questions

1. Where did the summer guests live?
   a. in a tree
   b. by the wood pile
   c. in the garden
* d. under the shed

2. What clues could be seen near the holes?
   a. dirt
   b. wood chips
* c. animal footprints
   d. fur

3. How did the child find out who the guests were?
* a. sat very quietly
   b. got up early to see
   c. set a trap
   d. asked his brother

4. What did the child first see?
   a. mother
* b. furry face
   c. brown nose
   d. mouse

5. Who pushed the furry creature out of the hole?
   a. father
   b. mother
   a. sister
* d. brother

School:_____ Teacher_____

Grade_____ Name_____

Pretest Posttest circle one

Summer Guests Questions

1. Where did the summer guests live?
   a. in a tree
   b. by the wood pile
   c. in the garden
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   b. furry face
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5. Who pushed the furry creature out of the hole?
   a. father
   b. mother
   b. sister
   d. brother

School:_____ Teacher_____

Grade_____ Name_____

Pretest Posttest circle one

	word count	# of errors
Class Party	2	___
The sixth grade class at Forest Glenn Elementary school had	12	___
been an especially close group. Most of the students had been	23	___
classmates for six years. They wanted to celebrate graduation together	33	___
before they moved on to different junior high schools.	42	___
Mr. Jacobs, their teacher, suggested that the idea be discussed in	53	___
a formal class meeting. So Alicia Martin, the class president, called the	65	___
meeting to order. "It has been suggested that we sponsor a class party	78	___
for graduation," Alicia began. "We need to talk about your ideas and	90	___
arrive at a decision. Some of the issues we must address include: the	103	___
time and date of the party, the location, food and beverages,	114	___
chaperones, and the cost per student. The floor is now open for	126	___
discussion."	127	___
Susan stood up next to her desk. "I think we should use the last	141	___
day of school to go to the beach for a picnic. We could swim, play	156	___
volleyball and have races. It wouldn't be very expensive."	165	___
Todd volunteered his ideas next. "I agree with Susan," said	175	___
Todd. "If we go to the beach we won't have to spend much money	189	___
decorating a party room. Besides, the weather is so nice, who wants to	202	___
stay inside? I'd rather be outside swimming and playing softball."	212	___
"But the beach is quite a few miles away," said Jenny. "It sounds	225	___
like a good idea, but who's going to drive all of us there? We need to	241	___
figure that out first."	245	___

Total Reading Time _____

DRAFT

Class Party

The sixth grade class at Forest Glenn Elementary school had been an especially close group. Most of the students had been classmates for six years. They wanted to celebrate graduation together before they moved on to different junior high schools.

Mr. Jacobs, their teacher, suggested that the idea be discussed in a formal class meeting. So Alicia Martin, the class president, called the meeting to order. "It has been suggested that we sponsor a class party for graduation," Alicia began. "We need to talk about your ideas and arrive at a decision. Some of the issues we must address include: the time and date of the party, the location, food and beverages, chaperones, and the cost per student. The floor is now open for discussion."

Susan stood up next to her desk. "I think we should use the last day of school to go to the beach for a picnic. We could swim, play volleyball and have races. It wouldn't be very expensive."

Todd volunteered his ideas next. "I agree with Susan," said Todd. "If we go to the beach we won't have to spend much money decorating a party room. Besides, the weather is so nice, who wants to stay inside? I'd rather be outside swimming and playing softball."

"But the beach is quite a few miles away," said Jenny. "It sounds like a good idea, but who's going to drive all of us there? We need to figure that out first."

Class Party Questions

1. What was the name of the elementary school?
   a. Wild Wood
* b. Forest Glenn
   c. Clear Water
   d. Lily Lake

2. Why did the class want to have a party?
   a. one of the students was having a birthday
   b. Christmas was near
* c. they were going to graduate soon
   d. they had won a school achievement award

3. How was the decision made to have a party?
   a. classroom parents decided
   b. teacher decided
* c. formal class meeting
   d. classroom vote

4. What is the name of the class president?
   a. Jake
   b. Susan
   c. Todd
* d. Alicia

5. Where did Susan suggest to have the party?
   a. at the park
* b. at the beach
   c. at the playground
   d. in the gym

School:_____ Teacher_____

Grade_____ Name_____

Pretest Posttest circle one

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School:_____ Teacher_____

Grade_____ Name_____

Pretest Posttest circle one

	word count	# of errors
The Band	2	___
"I'm answering your ad in the school paper. I play electric	13	___
guitar and I want to play in your group!" explained Michelle. Brian	25	___
had never considered that a girl might apply and wasn't sure if he	38	___
wanted Michelle in the group. "What can you play?" asked Brian.	49	___
"Here, listen to this," retorted Michelle, who began unpacking	58	___
her guitar. She plugged the guitar into Brian's amplifier and began	69	___
playing. The guys in the band were impressed. "Hey, you're really	80	___
good!" shouted Nicky. "Where did you learn to play like that?"	91	___
"My sister's in a band," explained Michelle. "She's pretty good	101	___
and spends a lot of time with me. Well, can I play with you guys?"	116	___
"We'd better talk it over," snapped Brian, still unsure about	126	___
having Michelle in the group. The guys huddled in the corner. "What	138	___
do you think?" Brian asked.	143	___
"She's great, let's invite her in," said Nicky.	151	___
"But she's a girl," complained Brian.	157	___
"So what," replied Nicky, "She plays terrific electric guitar, and	167	___
better yet, she wants to be in the group with us."	178	___
And so the boys voted. Michelle won 3 to 0, and the group had a	193	___
new member for their band. Now the band was ready to perform, and	206	___
Michelle had the perfect idea for where they should hold their first	218	___
show, the school talent show. The talent show was only three weeks	230	___
away, so the band had to work fast.	238	___

DRAFT

The Band

"I'm answering your ad in the school paper. I play electric guitar and I want to play in your group!" explained Michelle. Brian had never considered that a girl might apply and wasn't sure if he wanted Michelle in the group. "What can you play?" asked Brian.

"Here, listen to this," retorted Michelle, who began unpacking her guitar. She plugged the guitar into Brian's amplifier and began playing. The guys in the band were impressed. "Hey, you're really good!" shouted Nicky. "Where did you learn to play like that?"

"My sister's in a band," explained Michelle. "She's pretty good and spends a lot of time with me. Well, can I play with you guys?"

"We'd better talk it over," snapped Brian, still unsure about having Michelle in the group. The guys huddled in the corner. "What do you think?" Brian asked.

"She's great, let's invite her in," said Nicky.

"But she's a girl," complained Brian.

"So what," replied Nicky, "She plays terrific electric guitar, and better yet, she wants to be in the group with us."

And so the boys voted. Michelle won 3 to 0, and the group had a new member for their band. Now the band was ready to perform, and Michelle had the perfect idea for where they should hold their first show, the school talent show. The talent show was only three weeks away, so the band had to work fast.

The Band Questions

1. How did Michelle find out about the group?
* a. school paper
   b. bulletin board
   c. local paper
   d. best friend

2. What did Michelle plug her guitar into?
   a. recorder
* b. amplifier
   c. speaker
   d. stereo

3. How did Michelle learn to play?
   a. brother
   b. father
   c. neighbor
* d. sister

4. Why does Nicky want to let Michelle in the band?
   a. she never criticized their playing
* b. she wants to be in the group
   c. she is smart
   d. she is nice

5. How did they decide to let Michelle join the band?
   a. Nicky decided
   b. coin toss
* c. the boys voted
   d. the band leader decided

School:_____ Teacher_____

Grade_____ Name_____

Pretest Posttest circle one

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School:_____ Teacher_____

Grade_____ Name_____

Pretest Posttest circle one

	word count	# of errors
Camping	1	___
Joey and James were camping out alone for the first time. Joey	13	___
was happy about their choice of the campground. The park had plenty	25	___
of woods, hills, a lake and a trout stream. Joey planned to go fishing	39	___
the next day. James, however, was looking forward to swimming in	50	___
the lake. He was hoping to try out his new snorkel, mask and fins.	64	___
That night they cooked a meal over the campfire. James was in	76	___
charge of the hotdogs and baked potatoes. Meanwhile, Joey made apple	87	___
crisp for dessert. Both boys thought they were doing a pretty good job	100	___
until James burned the hotdogs. Joey laughed so hard he knocked the	112	___
apple crisp into the fire. Oh well, they thought, maybe breakfast	123	___
would be better.	126	___
Soon it was time to sleep. It was getting late and the night air	140	___
was cool. After putting the fire out, both boys climbed into their tent	153	___
and zipped up their sleeping bags. It won't be hard to fall asleep,	166	___
thought Joey, as his brother began to snore. However, a few minutes	178	___
later a loud, crackling noise woke both boys. "What was that?"	189	___
exclaimed James. "I don't know," said Joey cautiously, "but we'd	199	___
better look." Joey found his flashlight and quickly climbed out of the	211	___
tent. His brother was close behind.	217	___
Outside the tent they continued to hear the strange noise. It	228	___
sounded like it came from the water. Joey turned to his brother and	241	___
said, "I think it's coming this way."	248	___

Total Reading Time _____

DRAFT

Camping

Joey and James were camping out alone for the first time. Joey was happy about their choice of the campground. The park had plenty of woods, hills, a lake and a trout stream. Joey planned to go fishing the next day. James, however, was looking forward to swimming in the lake. He was hoping to try out his new snorkel, mask and fins.

That night they cooked a meal over the campfire. James was in charge of the hotdogs and baked potatoes. Meanwhile, Joey made apple crisp for dessert. Both boys thought they were doing a pretty good job until James burned the hotdogs. Joey laughed so hard he knocked the apple crisp into the fire. Oh well, they thought, maybe breakfast would be better.

Soon it was time to sleep. It was getting late and the night air was cool. After putting the fire out, both boys climbed into their tent and zipped up their sleeping bags. It won't be hard to fall asleep, thought Joey, as his brother began to snore. However, a few minutes later a loud, crackling noise woke both boys. "What was that?" exclaimed James. "I don't know," said Joey cautiously, "but we'd better look." Joey found his flashlight and quickly climbed out of the tent. His brother was close behind.

Outside the tent they continued to hear the strange noise. It sounded like it came from the water. Joey turned to his brother and said, "I think it's coming this way."

Camping Questions

1. What did the park have plenty of?
   a. forests, rivers, ponds and hills
* b. woods, hills, a lake and a trout stream
   c. trees, hills, a lake and ponds
   d. orchards, trout stream, a lake and hills

2. What made Joey laugh?
* a. burned hotdogs
   b. burned marshmallows
   c. burned apple crisp
   d. burned baked potatoes

3. What did the boys do after putting the fire out?
   a. they went searching for fire wood
   b. they set up their tent
* c. they climbed into their tent
   d. they told ghost stories

4. What did the boys hear?
   a. a loud, crunching noise
   b. a loud, cackling noise
   c. a loud, crinkling noise
* d. a loud, crackling noise

5. Where did the sound come from?
   a. the wind
   b. the woods
* c. the water
   d. the wild

School:_____ Teacher_____

Grade_____ Name_____

Pretest Posttest circle one

Camping Questions

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School:_____ Teacher_____

Grade_____ Name_____

Pretest Posttest circle one

	word count	# of errors
The Haunted House	3	___
"How do you know this house is haunted?" asked Angie.	13	___
"There's no such thing as a haunted house, Jessica assured her. "Then	25	___
what just made that noise?" Jessica peered into the corner where they	37	___
had both heard a clicking noise. "It looks like an old grandfather	49	___
clock. It must still be running." "It looks to me like this place has been	64	___
abandoned for years!" Angie commented.	69	___
Suddenly, Angie felt alone in the room. A chill went up her	81	___
spine. "Jessica!" she called, "remember you promised we'd stay	90	___
together." There was no answer. "Jessica, the five minutes are up. I'm	102	___
leaving!" Still, there was no response. She could hardly leave now	113	___
without Jessica. What if she were in danger. Angie walked cautiously	124	___
toward the back of the house.	130	___
"Hey Angie," she heard, "look at this." There was Jessica	140	___
coming out from behind a built-in shelf on the wall. "It's a secret	153	___
passage-way. I only followed it part of the way and then I thought I'd	167	___
better come back for you. Let's see where it goes." Angie had lost	180	___
some of her fear and was enticed by the idea of a secret passage-way.	194	___
Both of the girls entered the passage-way that led down several	205	___
steps. It was cool, damp and hard to see. However, both could see a	219	___
glimmer of light ahead. As Jessica led the way down the tunnel, they	232	___
both heard a growling noise. "Oh, no," thought Angie, "now what?"	243	___

DRAFT

The Haunted House

"How do you know this house is haunted?" asked Angie. "There's no such thing as a haunted house, Jessica assured her. "Then what just made that noise?" Jessica peered into the corner where they had both heard a clicking noise. "It looks like an old grandfather clock. It must still be running." "It looks to me like this place has been abandoned for years!" Angie commented.

Suddenly, Angie felt alone in the room. A chill went up her spine. "Jessica!" she called, "remember you promised we'd stay together." There was no answer. "Jessica, the five minutes are up. I'm leaving!" Still, there was no response. She could hardly leave now without Jessica. What if she were in danger. Angie walked cautiously toward the back of the house.

"Hey Angie," she heard, "look at this." There was Jessica coming out from behind a built-in shelf on the wall. "It's a secret passage-way. I only followed it part of the way and then I thought I'd better come back for you. Let's see where it goes." Angie had lost some of her fear and was enticed by the idea of a secret passage-way.

Both of the girls entered the passage-way that led down several steps. It was cool, damp and hard to see. However, both could see a glimmer of light ahead. As Jessica led the way down the tunnel, they both heard a growling noise. "Oh, no," thought Angie, "now what?"

The Haunted House Questions

1. What was Angie's comment about the house?
   a. looks like it's time to go in
   b. looks like a witch lives there
* c. looks like it's been abandoned for years
   d. looks like it needs to be repaired

2. What happened when Angie felt alone in the room?
* a. a chill went up her spine
   b. a wind howled
   c. ghosts seemed to appear
   d. the door squeaked

3. Which way did Angie walk?
   a. up to the attic
   b. down to the basement
   c. toward the neighbors
* d. toward the back of the house

4. How far did they follow the passage-way?
   a. to the very end
   b. to the third corner
* c. part of the way
   d. until they saw the light

5. How far did the passage-way lead down?
   a. to the bottom
* b. several steps
   c. twelve steps
   d. until the broken step

School:_____ Teacher_____

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Pretest Posttest circle one

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