Prosody: A Taught Means to an End or an End Result?

by

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of teaching prosody in a readers' theatre format. Prosody is traditionally defined as an end result that fluent readers inadvertently possess. In that case, struggling readers rarely have the opportunity to become proficient in the skill of reading with expression. The skill of prosodic reading should be attainable for all levelled readers.

In this experimental study, participants from five second-grade classrooms were randomly assigned to one of three reading conditions: repeated reading with word overlap with a readers' theatre emphasis, repeated reading with word overlap and repeated reading without word overlap.

In this study, the readers' theatre group was asked comprehension questions to assure that the students were accurately interpreting the text. The repeated reading with overlap group, after each reading, were asked comprehension questions and discussed with their teacher their personal goal by referring to their incentive charts and mark the amount of words read correctly.

The repeated reading group without word overlap had the same procedures as the aforementioned group. The treatments were 30 minutes each day for 12 days.

The researcher administered two pre-tests a week before treatments began. The researcher also administered a mid-assessment on the sixth day. The researcher finally administered three post-tests a week after the treatments ended. As hypothesized by the researcher, the readers' theatre condition made the greatest gains in comprehension. The readers' theatre condition from pre-test to post-test produced greater gains in comprehension

than the nonoverlap group condition. The large gains made by the readers' theatre group in comprehension support the hypothesis that prosody practice has a direct effect on comprehension.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The skill of prosody, which is oral reading with expression through the use of appropriate pauses and inflections, has long been seen as that which is obtained once a reader is fluent and their comprehension skills have been mastered. If prosody is only acquired once fluency and comprehension have been mastered, then most struggling readers will not be able to experience prosodic reading until much later in their academic journey. This presents a disparity between good readers and those readers struggling to make sense of reading. The skill of prosody should not only be attainable for strong readers, but it can and should be taught throughout any leveled reader's educational journey.

In Stanovich's Matthew Effects (1984) a phenomenon is explored in reading education where the gap between capable readers and poor readers gets wider and wider as they continue in school; strong readers continue to get better and struggling readers get weaker and weaker. The reasons for this phenomenon are varied; however one main factor could be that struggling readers spend less time reading, which inadvertently decreases their vocabulary acquisition.

Research has shown that the percentage of class time that poor readers spend on reading is surprisingly low (Allington, 1998; Nagy & Anderson, 1984). Fluent readers read 100,000 to 400,000 words a year in contrast; fluent readers read 4,000,000 words a year. Many resources that claim to help struggling readers are too simplified and elemental. One misconception is that poor readers cannot handle reading many words. So the text for these readers is very limited,

over simplified, and lacks imagination. These students really do not get a chance to read interesting text. When varied text is offered to these struggling readers, many times it is presented to them in a round robin format. Round robin is a type of teaching where the students read in a small group format, usually a circle. The teaching usually calls on each student in a predictable manner in which each student knows when it is their time to read, so the students are not listening while the others are reading because they are more concerned with knowing what page they are going to read (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

The role of prosody is a highly complex and debated factor in reading education. Many scholars believe that prosody, which is reading with expression, is something that inadvertently comes to us once we are fluent readers. A competing view on this belief is that prosody does not come once we are fluent; it is a process of learning through phrasing and intonation practice that should be taught from the earliest stages of language development even before a student can read. The latter philosophy finds that babies use a form of prosody as early as 10 months (Taylor, Wade, & Yekovich, 1985) and that it is a natural progressive factor in language that should be recognized much earlier than when a person becomes fluent. This view discusses the early existence of prosody in language development and how these primary prosodic explorations in inflection are our first cues to interpreting meaning through sound expressions.

One misconception of prosody is that it and fluency go hand in hand; if someone is fluent than they will read with expression. However, fluent readers do not always have the best expression while reading and they are not always accurate in word identification (Rasinski, 2009). A great deal of this phenomenon may be triggered by the Dynamic Indicator of Beginning Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). One component of this test consists of students

reading unfamiliar passages and being timed within one minute. One of the many critics of DIBELS is Samuels. He has criticized it as an assessment that produces word callers instead of thoughtful readers (Samuels, 2007).

As research has taught us, just because a student can read fast does not guarantee that this student is a good reader (Samuels, 2007). Being a fluent reader entails many aspects. A fluent reader is one that reads with ease and can simultaneously comprehend and decode at the same time. The pace of a reader changes depending on the purpose of reading. A reader will read at a quicker pace if he is scanning lists or reviewing. If a reader is reading for information then his pace will decrease due to a calculated effort to glean information from the text.

Comprehension, like prosody has found itself in a highly debated position amongst reading professionals. Comprehension must be taught. A misconception of many reading teachers is that if they have taught their students to read or identify words then they do not have to teach comprehension. The gist of this misconception is that comprehension does not need to be taught; it is inadvertently learned by those who can read words. When teachers do focus on comprehension it is more assessing than teaching students how to comprehend (Durkin, 1979).

In order for students to become fluent, they need to be able to have excellent word attack skills (Ehri, 1998). The key to being a fluent reader is to become free of decoding codes and phonics rules (LaBerge, & Samuels, 1974). The reader should experience the whole text from beginning, middle and to the end without having to doubt their reading skills. The story should be able to take them into an imaginative state where they can get lost in the story. This can only be achieved once a student has their basic word identification skills mastered.

The method of repeated reading has been shown to efficiently prepare students to becoming fluent (Dowhower, 1991; Samuels, 1979). Rashotte and Torgesen (1985) found that

word overlap promotes the most success in the repeated reading method. Word overlap is the existence of repetitive content words in a text when one is rereading a text.

Due to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, a focus for the best overall strategies for teaching children comprehension has developed. The search for the best strategies to teach comprehension and fluency has been ongoing. Put Reading First stemmed from the No Child Left Behind Act. In this study, readers' theatre (RT) has been found to improve fluency and comprehension. Readers' theatre is a repeated reading strategy that uses performance-based practices to increase pace, expression and comprehension. In Put Reading First, it states that repeated and monitored oral reading most effectively improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement (Put Reading First, 2001).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the effectiveness of teaching with prosodic elements. It examined the role of prosody as an essential element of comprehension and fluency instruction through RT. This study will comparatively explore the effectiveness of teaching prosody to teaching repetitive reading strategies to second grade students. The reader's theatre condition will consist of decodable chapter books written in a readers' theatre script format. The repetitive reading condition consisted of decodable chapter books that contained specific word overlap.

The most significant study that explored the benefits of utilizing repetitive reading with word overlap was the Rashotte and Torgesen study (1985). It explored the question: Does improved fluency and comprehension across different stories in repeated reading depend on the degree of word overlap, and is repeated reading more effective than an equivalent amount of non-repetitive reading? It explored the essential elements of repetitive reading and helped to

answer specific questions. a) What really makes repetitive reading effective? b) Is it the amount of words read or is it more specific than that?

This study showed that gains in word reading speed were affected by the degree of word commonality among the stories. The current study explored the word commonality factor in comparison with the effectiveness of teaching through a RT format of the same text. The RT format will consist of the added element of a teaching emphasis on prosody.

This study used an experimental design with random assignments. The purpose of this design was to ensure that a true random study existed without any preconceived awareness about the conditions or the teachers. The type of design was a Pretest-Posttest Control group design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).

Research Questions

This study addressed the following questions:

1. Will prosody practice with word overlap in RT improve second-grade students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension?

2. Will the method of repeated reading with word overlap in RT improve second-grade students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension?

3. Will prosody practice without word overlap in RT improve second-grade students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension?

4. Will prosody practice with word overlap in RT improve second-grade students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension more than the method of repeated reading without word overlap?

5. Will the method of repeated reading with word overlap improve second-grade students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension more than the method of repeated reading without word overlap?

6. Will prosody practice with word overlap in RT improve second-grade students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension more than the method of repeated reading with word overlap?

7. Did participants' attitudes from a reading attitude survey differ on the basis of whether they were assigned to prosody practice with word overlap in RT, the method of repeated reading with word overlap, or the method of repeated reading without word overlap?

8. Did participants' attitudes toward the reading treatment differ on the basis of whether they were assigned to prosody practice with word overlap in RT, the method of repeated reading with word overlap, or the method of repeated reading without word overlap?

My belief was that second grade students benefitted more from prosodic instruction than from repetitive reading with specific word overlap and this instruction will increase their comprehension, fluency and prosodic qualities.

Significance of the Study

The current study examined prosody and its overall impact on comprehension, fluency and expressive reading. The study of prosody has many aspects. One of the familiar aspects of prosody is its combination with word learning and fluency. Usually prosody and fluency go hand-in-hand. A recent prosody study has shown its possible ability to exist without a fluency emphasis (Rasinski, 2009).

Another aspect of prosody is its overall positive impact it can have on comprehension. If students can be taught to read prosodically then their comprehension skills will possibly increase

due to the focused intent on meaning. This study could have a possible impact on teachers' teaching methods, reading curriculum and assessment reports.

If prosody is the ability to read with expression, then more attention might need to be paid to those readers of the written word who practice reading with expression all the time. These readers are performers, in particular, actors. If you look at the process an actor takes to learn his lines, you will see that he focuses on prosody early on in many of the initial readings of the script. Actors do not wait to be expressive after learning the lines; in fact the use of prosody helps them to learn their lines faster and with more ease. So studies that see prosody as an end result might need to rethink the order of where the skill of prosody can be best utilized.

This study could possibly lead to changing how new teachers are trained to teaching reading. The reading curriculum could be impacted to involve prosody as a major aspect of reading education for students to attain. Another significance that this study could have is its overall impact on assessments. If recording students as they read leads to teachers and students being able to focus more on prosody, then perhaps assessments need to go more in that direction.

Limitations to the Scope of the Study

A possible limitation to the study could be the amount of time given to each condition. The students only had 30 minutes a day to explore the conditions and there is only a 12-day span for the entire study. The results could have been more conclusive with more time committed to each condition.

Research of this type is fairly original due to the fact that prosody is not a well-established, literature-infused topic, at this time. There is much interest in prosody and the literature that does exist is clear that it does assist students in their overall reading performance (Rasinski, 2009).

Another limitation is that only 2nd grade students were tested. This might not be representative of the general population. Even though random assignments of all of the participants were utilized to help control for the sample limitation, there is still a possibility that all populations were not represented.

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The skill of reading with prosody is one in which a reader reads with a rhythmic pace and tonal aspects of speech (Samuels & Farstrup, 2006). Simply stated, prosody is reading with expression. However the steps to becoming an expressive reader are anything but simple. One must start at the beginning of learning how to read. The steps between learning how to read to reading with expression are varied and can be extremely complicated (Sloat, Beswick, & Willms, 2007). The complications stem from the multi-faceted steps involved in order to become a fluent and prosodic reader. These steps will be explored further in the fluency theory section.

This study examined the strengths and uses of prosody, fluency and repeated reading with an emphasis on RT. First, there will be an explanation of the theoretical conflicts of prosody, such as, where prosody should be emphasized in instruction and how prosody as a learning intervention might adversely affect the speed of fluent readers. Next, the theories of fluency with an emphasis on repeated reading will be examined in order to reveal the positive outcomes of word overlap, which can provide benefits to reading with accuracy and with comprehension. Thirdly, the theories of RT will be explored and recommended as a vehicle to motivate all levels of readers in their efforts to develop their reading skills.

Prosody Theory

A skilled oral reader is one who practices reading a text aloud with clarity and expression. Oral readers use many different tools when they are trying to glean meaning from a

text. One of these tools is reading with prosody. Prosody may aid a reader in obtaining comprehension. Jennings and her colleagues defined prosody as "a sign or an index that the reader is actively constructing the meaning of the passage as the words are being identified and pronounced" (Jennings, Morin, & Bell, 2010; Rasinski, 2009). Recent research on the skill of prosody has found that there is a possible causal relationship among prosody, fluency and comprehension (Jennings et al., 2010).

A possibility of how prosody can help assist ones fluency and comprehension could come through helping the reader focus on units of meaning that can be identified through inflective frameworks. Inflective frameworks are phrases of words that can be read with expression to assist the reader to comprehend. For example, a reader could read "whose at the door" in one complete breath to show excitement; or if it were read one word at a time with deliberate pauses this could show fear or trepidation. Punctuation can give one clues in knowing how to orally interpret a text. Punctuation can let a reader know if there is a series of information that is going to be given or if the information is shocking or unexpected, if what is being said is based on someone remembering something, or something that is being predicted for a future reality.

Prosody has always been defined as an end result or a by-product of fluency. It has long been accepted, as an inherent unconscious phenomenon that takes place once a reader is fluent. This placement of prosody is the problem of teaching prosody. Prosody has been defined as a skill of reading with expression that comes once a reader is fluent. It has been seen as a phenomenon that takes place inadvertently once a reader is already set in his reading skills. According to Schwanenflugel and her colleagues, a reader can read with speed, but can also read with no expression. However those prosodic readers who read with expression are fluent, as well. To date, no studies have shown the existence of prosody without fluency; yet there have

been studies to show the existence of fluency without prosody (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, & Meisinger, 2010).

Kuhn described prosody as an "epiphenomenon" which is an unintended result (Kuhn et al., 2010). The authors make no direct statement about whether prosody is a skill or an ability that has a direct impact on the other components of reading. In this article she is explaining the many questions of prosody that researchers of reading are mulling over. These questions include: Can prosody aid a reader in comprehension? Is the skill of prosody a beneficial tool for struggling readers? Is prosody an end result or a means to an end? Research has shown that prosody can be taught, even to struggling readers, and could assist those deficient readers in becoming better at comprehension and fluency (Miller & Schwanenflugel, 2008).

A view of the impact that prosody can have on comprehension also comes from Kuhn. Kuhn (2005) explored prosody and its overall impact with three instructional intervention strategies: repeated reading, wide reading and listening only. Her intent was to see which strategy would help students make the transition from decoding to fluent reading. This study used six struggling second-grade students from three second-grade classrooms, randomly assigned to the three strategies. There was a control group with two students from each of the three classrooms for a total of 24 participants. The results found that the repeated and wide-reading approaches led to improvements in prosody and word recognition in accuracy and automaticity, but that the wide-reading approaches improved comprehension. They found that prosody did not show improvement.

The long-term impacts of prosody on fluency and comprehension are just now being studied and explored. The fact that prosody can have a causal relationship on fluency and comprehension still needs much consideration. However, the limited number of studies that

have been done on prosody have shown that there is a strong possibility of prosody being a casual factor in improving fluency and comprehension. The span of empirical research is limited on it, but studies are increasing. That is why this study is so relevant to the reading research field.

Fluency Theory and Repeated Reading

The objective of reading instruction is to promote comprehension. However a reader must learn the letters and sounds that make up words before word learning can promote comprehension. With the knowledge of decoding students can then free up processing space in order to comprehend (Ehri, 1998). This section explores the optimal ways to learn and recognize words. The debate on fluency and its misuse in instructional assessments will also be explored.

Learning to Decode

The first steps of any reading program entail aiding students in "breaking the code," which is a term that means learning the letters and sounds and to be able to manipulate the letters and sounds to learn to read (Beck & Juel, 1995). Once the code has been broken, a series of skills must fall into place in order for the ability to read can take place. The skill of manipulation of the letters and sounds is a phonics and decoding skill. Research has taught us that the best way a student learns to read is through learning the alphabetic principal and applying it to learning phonics and phonemic awareness skills (Torgesen & Mathes, 1998).

The reading wars of the 20th century put proponents of phonics against those in support of whole language (Anderson, 2000), even though there are many advantages to learning through a whole language curriculum. These advantages include higher levels of vocabulary and exposure to varied genre exploration. Phonics instruction has shown itself to be more advantageous to students when they are learning to tackle word learning (Chall, 1967). If the goal is to have a

child know how to tackle word learning to the point where they can become independent readers, phonics has proven itself to be that catalyst (Beck & Juel, 1995).

Defining Fluency

The study of prosody has been linked with fluency. One of the familiar theories of prosody is that it exits in combination with word learning and fluency. Even though word learning is a major component to making a reader fluent, it is not the only component. A fluent reader is one who possesses automaticity, speed, prosody and word recognition (Kuhn et al., 2010). This automatic word recognition is defined as quick and effortless identification of words out of context (Ehri & McCormick, 1998). Once a reader learns sounds and their major grapheme correspondences, then a bridging of these concepts takes place in his mind.

There are competing views on the best way to learn to read words. One popular and well- studied theory is on repeated exposure to words. The more a reader sees a word, the more the mental picture of the spelling of that word sticks in the mind and automaticity takes place (Kuhn et al., 2010; Metsala & Walley, 1998).

As opposed to learning to read words by phonics rules and sounding out methods, some researchers in reading believe that students should learn to read by sight words or whole-word instructional methods. However for a student to learn to read a word through a whole-word method, many exposures must come into place for that student to learn a word. Gates (1995) states that on average a student must be exposed to a whole word at least 35 times before a word is learned. Even though Gates was comparing the IQs of students to the number of exposures it would take for them to learn a word, the average number of exposures is within a range of 20–55. Students who learn how to read through a phonetic and phonemic awareness base are more likely to learn a word within 4 trials of sounding out that word (Reistma, 1983).

Brain Activity During Reading

A study done by Shaywitz (2003) shows the brain activity of readers as they attempt to read unknown words and physiologically reveal the pathways students take in order to learn new words. This particular research on the brain has been able to reveal what particular parts of the brain are activated when a person, who has had phonologic and phonemic awareness knowledge, is trying to read an unknown word. Shaywitz' Yale research group has used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) technology to analyze how the brain learns to read. The findings from this study have shown how three main regions of the brain—the occipital, angular gyrus, and the Wermicke region—are activated when a good reader attempts to read.

Shaywitz' study found that children who have strong phonologic bases rely on the occipital region of the brain, which is activated by the visual features of letters, and the angular gyrus where print is transcoded into language as well as the Wermicke region where meaning is accessed. Children who were poor readers had under-activation of all of these regions. Children who have had phonics instruction utilize their left-brain hemisphere, which is the language area, when trying to work out a word that they do not recognize. The study also found that children who have not had any phonics instruction show little or no activity in the brain when they are trying to read an unknown word. Finally, children without a phonetic background have little if anything to rely on as a source of prior knowledge to assist them in the task of reading unknown words (Shaywitz, 2003).

LaBerge and Samuels' (1974) explored the cognitive pathways that a reader takes in order to learn to read. Out of this exploration came a theory known as the theory of automatic information processing. The authors explored the directional processes that a reader encounters when trying to understand what is being read and how he or she remembers prior knowledge of

letters and sounds. The study explained that information travels from visual, phonological, and episodic memory until it reaches semantic memory. A beginning reader is trying to use a great deal of cognitive space to remember letters, and their sounds, syllables, and stresses. Once automatic word recognition takes place the reader has more cognitive space to understand the text. LaBerge and Samuels' theory explains how a reader can acquire automatic word recognition through repeated exposure to words and in print. Hence, the impetus of the now well respected strategy of using repeated reading.

The aforementioned method of repeated reading study with word overlap (Rashotte & Torgesen, 1985) has been found to be one of the optimal ways to increase word recognition. As described by the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000), this increase in word recognition can help a reader's skills evolve from accuracy of word recognition to automaticity of word recognition. Reading educators continue to try to find ways to make the process of learning new words easier and not as laborious. A person can only hold so many pieces of information within his mind at one time. Executive processing space is the amount of cognitive space used to perform a specific task at hand (Pressley & McCormick, 1995). Educators attempt to put fewer tasks on students and to free up more space for them while they are trying to learn to read. An educational goal is to minimize reading processes for students, so that their executive processing space is free to receive more complex aspects of reading like comprehension and prosody.

The more a student reads a word and has an opportunity to decode the word, the more he is likely to be able to recognize that word (Reitsma, 1983). A student can use flashcards, play word games, explore the varied morphed states of the word, but the best way to learn the word is through reading it over and over again. Repeated reading with word overlap may be the key component in learning new words (Rashotte & Torgesen, 1985).

In the effort to find the best way to teach reading to struggling readers, a study by Taylor, Wade and Yerkovich (1985) explored the advantages of manipulating a text to see if that would assist those strugglers in comprehending more effectively. This study explored the singular and combined effectiveness of phrasing and repeated readings (practice) on the recall of idea units and narrative categories. Simply, it explored the effectiveness of manipulating a text to see if it would assist struggling readers in reading more fluently compared to those same readers reading a non-manipulated text but rereading it many times. A manipulated text would have simple sentences written on each line where a complete thought begins and finishes on the same line.

This study was successful in showing that practice may provide the same advantages and may be superior to phrasing as a technique for improving students' recall of text. Although phrasing has been shown to improve struggling students' comprehension, due to the fact that the students have simplified sentences, this study stated that practice (repeated reading) is more beneficial for teachers to use because it does not require special material preparation. This may be an example of why repeated readings work with RT; they are seeing the text over and over again and working on expression for meaning because they know that an audience will need to understand the story they are trying to convey.

The focus of the current study is to bridge the gap for those readers who know the alphabetic principle and have a grapho-phonemic base and now find themselves stuck between word learning and not comprehending. There are a large group of readers who find themselves in this predicament. These students have adequate word learning and their pace is also acceptable, however they are struggling in comprehension (Applegate, Applegate & Modla, 2009). These students are reading at an acceptable rate but do not comprehend.

A possible cause for this phenomenon has come about due to a focus in the classroom more on the students' reading rates than on their quality of reading comprehension. State tests have been mandated like the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) (Good & Kaminski, 2002) and other timed reading tests that require students to pronounce words rapidly instead of comprehend what they are reading (Samuels, 2007). These students are directed to read passages quickly, in a one-minute timed requirement. They are not told to focus on what they are reading but to focus on how fast they can get those words out. Many times the students are not asked any comprehension questions after the students complete the passages.

This type of practice goes against sound research that reveals that strong readers pause many times throughout a text depending on the genre and purpose of reading. Strong readers also go back into a passage and repeat reading to self-check for comprehension (Samuels, 2007). This is likely an effective strategy for our struggling readers. The focus seems to be going in the wrong direction if we want to produce, sound readers who know how to use a text and to read for a purpose.

Running records and calculating students' correct words per minute (cwpm) measurements have evolved from curriculum-based measurements. These early measurements were designed to allow teachers to quickly assess students through a curriculum-matched assessment (Good & Kamiski, 2002). These assessments were not meant to be the single, formal test that is now so heavily relied upon to determine "at-risk" status for many students. Teachers are using cwpm passages for reading grades and to levelize their reading groups. This presents a major concern due to the fact that schools are relying on this test to determine students' reading ability and this test only assesses speed and accuracy.

This presents a problem for students who read words rapidly without a comprehension focus, but are poor at getting meaning from a text. This type of reader who can read words well and at a quick pace scores high on these tests that measure cwpm and this leads to false-negative results. False negative results are when students receive test scores that appear to pass them from needing special services but their scores are deceiving and "false". This results in many students being passed over from receiving special services due to scores that falsely negate their academic needs (Valencia, et al., 2010).

When determining a student's reading ability, speed and accuracy are just two measures of a much more complex array of skills that truly will help teachers determine a student's reading level. A student can word call in a quick manner and still not comprehend what they are reading. When determining a student's reading ability, comprehension, accuracy, speed and prosody are the skills that need to be assessed for a thorough, comprehensive reading recommendation to take place (Valencia, et al., 2010).

Another key to optimally teaching reading is to know how to teach reading. There is an obvious need to improve the teaching of reading. America is placing 23rd in comparison to 30 other developed countries with respect to reading education (Rhee, 2010). Even though more funds are being spent on technology than ever before, America's ability to effectively teach students reading has not come up to its technological counterpart. The key is not how much technology a school has or how many books or literary resources teachers have in their classroom; the key is how the teachers utilize what is available to them.

One main factor to teaching reading is the teacher effect (Kemp & Hall, 1992). The teacher effect is how effective a teacher is in the classroom. A talented teacher can teach with limited resources, if need be, because he has the training to utilize all strategies to ensure that all

levels of students are successful. Unfortunately some teachers are utilizing strategies that have been found to be ineffective. A popular, outdated strategy of teaching oral reading in small groups is called round robin. This strategy was used for many years because it seems beneficial for the teacher to be able to quickly hear each student read that day. However, more precise attention has been paid to the round robin strategy and many disadvantages have been found to exist (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998).

In round robin reading, students are grouped by their reading levels into a group totaling five or six students at a time. The teacher usually picks one student to read a page while the other students wait their turn to read. The next reader chosen is the one usually sitting by the reader that is reading, at that time. Students in the group know when they are reading and what page they will be reading. Of course, every child in that group focuses on the page he knows he has to read and no one in the group is listening to the story as it is being read. Research has shown that this type of teaching has been found to be ineffective and a waste of instructional time (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998).

This is because only one student reads, at a time, while the other students are not focused on reading and are usually preoccupied with knowing when their turn is coming. The amount of actual reading time for each student is limited and teachers vary greatly in their abilities to provide effective feedback during this minimized instructional time. Another issue based on lack of time is giving students feedback on incorrect words. Due to the lack of time teachers face to teach reading many are choosing to feed the students words that they have misread instead of helping them to use word attack strategies (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998).

Readers' Theatre Theory

Vygotsky's Theory of Role Play

Students of reading should be able to be active in their learning and reading of text. The more they are involved in their learning, the more ownership can take place. Vygotsky, a pioneering psychologist from Russia, spent a great deal of time studying the best ways that children learn. He whole-heartedly believed in the power of play. He stressed that when children were allowed to play in imaginative worlds, they can construct unimaginable possibilities for themselves.

For example, a one-year old might not be able to ride a bike yet; however, they can pick up a toy of a bicycle and imagine themselves on it. Then, when they are more physically and mentally capable of riding a bicycle, the reality will be more acceptable to them because they have already explored it in their minds. As Vygotsky explains it:

> Henceforth play is such that the explanation for it must always be that it is the imaginary, illusory realization of unrealizable desires. Imagination is a new formation that is not present in the consciousness of the very raw young child, is totally absent in animals, and represents a specifically human form of conscious activity. Like all functions of consciousness, it originally arises from action. (Pressley & McCormick, 1995, p. 180)

He also believed in the process of linguistic exploration where children used their voices to construct meaning from the information at hand by speaking their own thoughts and opinions. When students can connect what they are learning to what their bodies are doing, as they learn, they are actively participating in their own learning. Those who support a constructivist theory believe that students learn when they are continuously building on previously known information and then constructing new paradigms.

Vygotsky was influential because in present day schools, teachers are realizing that the more they allow their students independent exploration, with varied support depending on what the individual learner requires, the more the students will take ownership in what they are learning. Recent studies are supporting Vygotsky's views on learning. The more students can make a connection with their bodies and their own ideas, the more retention of ideas seems to take place (Crawford, 1996).

One reading strategy that evolved from Vygotsky's theory of linguistic exploration and is helping students to take ownership of their own views on what they are reading is literature circles. Literature circles is a literary strategy that teaches students to talk about their reactions to literature in small group settings. These students are assigned to their leveled reading groups and orally read books (Pressley & McCormick, 1995).

Most of the time the chapters have already been read and this is the time for the students to form their own opinions about what they have read. The teacher will come in and out of the discussion and serve more as a facilitator than an equal participant. This time is really for the students to interact with one another. This strategy has been proven to be highly effective for aiding students in their comprehension skills (Pressley & McCormick, 1995).

Readers' Theatre (RT)

A recent study that explored the advantages of repeated reading through a RT component found that students who had a readers' theatre center within their classroom improved indirectly in fluency when prosody was the focus (Rasinski & Young, 2009). This research showed that prosody can possibly stand on its own without the focus of fluency. RT was practiced and performed every day for the whole year. Fridays were "fluency Fridays" where students performed their scenes as a RT. Their accuracy rates went from 63 words per minute (wpm), an

average at the beginning of the study, to 128 wpm at the end of the study. Even though the teacher never focused on the students' reading rate or told them that they needed to read faster, the students' rate did improve inadvertently once their prosody and automaticity was improved. There was never a direct focus on fluency, because students were not timed or told about pace unless it pertained to a character's overall attitude. As the teacher put it, "they were taught to read with expression for meaning and not speed" (Rasinski & Young, 2009, p. 41).

There are several variables that can help when one is learning to read. Research has shown more and more that the connection to one's own body and what the body is doing while learning is beneficial. Students need to be more connected to what their brain is thinking as they learn to read and what their mouths are doing as they learn to articulate. Meta-cognition in the field of reading is making great strides especially in comprehension. Students need to know what their own learning looks like even to the point of knowing what they look like as they are learning to say and read sounds (Castiglioni-Spalten & Ehri, 2003).

One of the best examples of meta-cognition is watching a performer rehearse. This can be a musician, actor, dancer, etc. They are constantly restarting, going back to make something better and continuously rating their own performances. When one thinks of the best professional oral readers that exist, actors come to mind. Actors are simply reading words with expression. The more an actor appropriately interprets a writer's intentions through utilizing the text, the more that actor's performance is looked upon as commendable. The only tools an actor has are the words on the paper.

An actor's journey through interpreting a text is not a solo one. The director, fellow actors, set designer, etc. all come together to have a meeting of the minds on each person's interpretation of the text. Here at the first reading of the play, these artists try to agree on

meaning of many aspects of the story, its setting and timeline, desired looks of clothing, and outer appearances of the characters. However, the overarching purpose is to hear the writer's words and to come together in agreement in interpretation. Students of reading education can learn a great deal from this process that actors go through to read words with accurate expression. Research has shown that the more students discuss a text and voice their interpretations, the more accurate their comprehension levels become (Manning & Manning, 1984). From the early stages of instruction, students benefit from an integration of drama and literature (Honeyghan, 2000).

Nelson Goodman (2003), a philosopher from Harvard University, has always felt there was a connection between the arts and cognitive stimulation. His belief was that once students were exposed to the arts, their overall abilities to learn would be enriched. At that time there were no research reports that supported the arts as a factor for academic enrichment so he referred to his newly founded research project as the Zero project. Since 1967 Project Zero has maintained a strong commitment to researching education in the arts and how to mainstream the arts into the classroom.

Through Project Zero, REAP (Reviewing Education and the Arts Project) (2003) was developed to study the effects of mainstreaming the arts on students' academic progress. The REAP program conducted a meta-analysis of 188 studies and found a correlation between success in academics along with studying the arts. A major part of the study was to infuse prosody within the teaching elements. In this particular study, the term "enacting text" was used to define the technique of teaching prosody. There were 80 cases found to show a causal effect on students' verbal skills once dramatic elements were introduced. The effectiveness of students' reading ability of comprehension with the addition of enacting texts, where students

read a text while acting out the words or prosody, was compared with their abilities with those students who did not enact a text and a causal link was found between classroom drama and a variety of verbal areas of those who did enact a text (REAP).

The medium effect sizes were shown in oral understanding/recall of stories, reading readiness, reading achievement, oral language and writing. However, the most encouraging information is the lasting academic impression that reading with expression can have on students' academic performance. The students who were taught to enact texts were tested again, without enacting the texts. These students, again, surpassed their peers who never had the enacted intervention with comprehension of text. The dramatic skill of prosody transfers over to students' reading abilities, even after the intervention has concluded (Goodman, 2003).

There is a new surge in education to implement more theatrical elements in reading education. The reasoning for this has come out of many experimental studies, like the one previously mentioned, which have shown undeniable benefits for students who embrace theatrical elements to assist them in their reading. Due to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, many studies have been developed to investigate the most effective ways to teach children how to read and RT has shown itself to be a highly effective motivational vehicle for students of all levels of reading (Rasinski & Young, 2009).

The reasons behind the effectiveness of RT are specific in nature. RT allows students the opportunity to practice repeated readings in a highly motivational setting. Also, the cooperative learning setting that RT promotes has long been associated with producing high levels of learning outcomes (Pressley & McCormick, 2007). In this exploration of RT, Pressley and McCormick found that most of the students wanted to do well and were intrinsically motivated to perform in front of their peers.

Historically RT has been offered to the higher leveled learners in the classroom. RT has been used as a "filler" for those students who finish their work early and need something to do until the other students have completed their work. Robertson (2009) recently explored the advantages that RT can have for struggling readers, as well as English Second Language students (ESL) or English Language Learners (ELL). RT scripts are short and are written in a simple format that allows a student to know exactly when a certain character is reading. Students do not have to try and figure out who is reading by identifying literary clues within the text, such as quotation marks or inference, which can only confuse struggling readers more. RT scripts identify who is speaking before the dialogue is read and sometimes even defines the intentions of the speaker before they speak, which can only help those students who have difficulties in deciphering inferred meanings.

The positive effects that repeated reading strategies and readers' theatre can have on students' overall reading skills have been well explored. On the other hand, the overall effectiveness of teaching prosody has not been greatly studied. There seems to be a learning connection between readings in a readers' theatre format when the emphasis is on prosodic elements. This study explored this connection in comparison to the well-studied strategy of repeated reading.

CHAPTER III. METHODS

This study is an exploration of the teaching of prosody, its overall effect on students' reading skills, specifically, their comprehension, fluency and prosody skills. Until recently, prosody has been known to be an end result of fluency. For example, the popular belief is that fluent readers will become expressive readers the more they read. However, prosody has started to take on a new definition. Research has shown that prosody can be taught and used as a means to assisting students to become better at comprehending text and more fluent (Rasinski, 2009). This study explores whether the practice of repeated reading with the existence of word overlap is more beneficial to comprehension, fluency and prosody acquisition than the practice of RT with text manipulation and repeated reading.

Research Objectives

This study was designed to examine the effects of teaching prosody on second graders' fluency, comprehension and prosodic readings. The objective of this study was to explore prosody as either a means to an end or an end result. The hypothesis was that the students who were taught to read with expression through a RT script and atmosphere would be more motivated and thereby read more fluent, have better comprehension skills and would sound more expressive in their reading than students who read the same text without the prosody coaching and RT format.

The latter group was timed in reading a text with six chapters in one minute. They would repeat their readings of one chapter each day, three times in one day of the condition, and would

chart their growth on incentive charts. The final group, the control group, would read a text from the same authors as the first two groups, but the control group would not read consecutive chapters they were limited to only the first chapter of different books.

The control group did the repeated readings like the repeated reading group, charted their growth on incentive charts and was timed in one minute, as well. The only difference was that the repeated reading group read one consecutive chapter every day (chapters 1–6) and the control group would read the first chapter of a different book everyday (chapter 1 of different books each day). The control group had little or no word overlap. Through the exploration of two different treatments and a control group, it was determined if prosody or repeated reading would have more of a positive influence on students' comprehension, fluency and prosody skills. Unlike the present study where the teachers conducted each treatment, I conducted a six-day pilot study in October of 2010.

Pilot Study

The participants of the pilot study were from an afterschool program in the southeastern part of the United States. Permission was given to conduct the research by the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Curriculum. The afterschool director allowed the pilot study to be conducted at this particular campus. There were a total of 12 participants. These students were first and second graders. There were six males and six females. The students were predominantly African-American with one Hispanic student. A permission form was sent home and those students who returned the form with a signed consent from their parents were able to participate in the study. I took the students to a room away from the other afterschool students. I focused on the students' fluency scores. The other scores were taken on prosody and comprehension but once I discovered the inequity of the group make up, I knew the

scores would not be able to be used. I then used this opportunity to practice procedures for the dissertation study.

One of the teachers from the afterschool program randomly assigned students to each group. There were six students for the RT group and six students for the repeated reading (RR) group. The teacher unbeknownst to me, at the time, chose students by grade level, so the groups were not equal in their class representations. The RT group had four second-grade students and two first-grade students and the RR group had five first-grade students and one second-grade student.

There were four pre-assessments administered before the study began. The first pre-assessment was a modified names test that assesses decoding of all major correspondences (Cunningham, 1990). The students were instructed to read the list of names like they were the teacher and they were reading off an attendance list.

The second pre-assessment was a reading passage from the Basic Reading Inventory (BRI; Johns, 2008). This passage had 101 words, and as the students read I recorded them and later scored their readings on a prosody rubric (Rasinski, 2004). The students readings were a second grade reading passage that they had not read before and then asked five comprehension questions.

Initially I assessed their prosodic abilities through Rasinski's (2004) rubric. The four qualifiers were smoothness, expression, pace and phrasing. The scores ranged from 1–16. The highest score that could be received in each qualifier was 4 points. So, for example, if a student had an excellent reading (4 X 4) in each section on the rubric, that student would have received 16 points. The rubric was altered twice before I used it in the dissertation study; the revisions are discussed in the instrumentation section.

The only formal pre-assessment that was used as data for the pilot study was the sub-test of the Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Learning Skills (DIBELS), which was the oral reading fluency test. For the pilot study, the students' DIBELS scores were a pre-assessment; however, due to the fact that there were first grade students in the study, their scores could not be used. The first grade students used in the pilot study did not take the oral reading passage assessment of the DIBELS until December of 2010 and the pilot study was in October 2010. However, I was able to take the second grade students' scores as a screening score.

The students took a Likert-type Garfield Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) before the treatments began. This survey was given, individually, before the study. There were 20 questions, 10 recreational questions and 10 academic questions about students' likes and dislikes pertaining to reading. It is called the Garfield Survey because there is a picture of the cartoon character, Garfield, that the students circle that pertains to their answers. For example, one of the recreational questions asks, "How do you feel about reading instead of playing outside?" and there are four pictures of Garfield standing with a very happy expression, which is a 4, an expressionless Garfield that is a 3, a Garfield with a doubtful expression which is a 2, and a definite negative response is a 1.

Conditions for Reader's Theater (RT)

The students from the RT group met for a total of six days. The decodable chapter book, *Night at the Shore* (Sims, 2004c) was typed in a RT format with the names of the characters flushed to the left side of the page and the text tabbed over twice from the characters.

The RT group had groups of threes and was told to read with expression whenever they felt the characters needed to. Each student read one character part a day. By the end of the study, all of the students had read the parts for all of the characters. The students had 15 minutes

to read and reread with their group; the last 15 minutes were dedicated to performing for each other.

Finally, each group had an opportunity to perform for the next group. The students were coached to read with expression and to keep in mind that reading loudly does not always mean one is expressing anything. If they needed help with a word, they would be helped to try and work the word out. They knew that they had to go back and read the word, or sound it out or skip it and read to the end of the sentence for context clues. They were not told a word until they tried it on their own. The researcher taught both groups but was only able to pull one treatment at a time. The researcher met with the RT group for 30 minutes and then the RR group for an additional 30 minutes.

Pilot Study Group for Repeated Reading (RR)

The students from the repeated reading group met for a total of six days. The decodable chapter book, *Night at the Shore* (Sims, 2004c) was their text. The RR group had groups of threes and was told to read like they would in their reading groups in their classrooms. These students had a guided reading session where all six of the students met with the researcher first to read over the text and discuss any difficult vocabulary. For example, the word 'inlet' was a word that was discussed and defined before the students began reading. Then they broke off into smaller groups of threes to reread the text again.

Students were not told to read with expression. Their overall objective was to read accurately. If they needed help with a word, they would be helped to try and work the word out. They knew that they had to go back and read the word, sound it out, or skip it and read to the end of the sentence for context clues. These students would not be told a word without trying to work it out first.

The posttest was *The Stranger at Willowbrook* (Johns, 2008). It was a 103-word passage. The students were timed and recorded as they read through it. They answered five comprehension questions that were modified from the BRI's 10 questions.

Results from the Pilot Study

The RT group read faster than the RR group. The time for the RR group was 16 minutes and 50 seconds. In comparison, the RT group read their passages at 15 minutes and 46 seconds. Comparatively the RT group improved beyond the RR group in fluency. However, due to the way the RT groups and the RR groups were assigned, there was an equity issue. There were more second-grade students who were in the RT group and more first-grade students who were in the RR group. To alleviate any questions of randomization in the dissertation study, the students would be randomized through a computer program, random.org.

The Garfield Survey was used in the dissertation study; however, the students were interviewed at the end of the study instead of the beginning of the study. The researcher wanted to see if the conditions had an effect on the students' reading attitudes. It was determined that a cut-off score needed to be put in for the names assessment. Students who did not score higher than 27 in the pilot study struggled through the conditions. The guided reading session for each group was not used in the dissertation study due to time constraints.

The fluency rubric was modified to include more quantifiable identifiers within the rubric. In testing the reliability of scores it was found that the researcher and her advisor were not able to achieve high inter-rater reliability score.

Participants

The participants of this study were second graders from five classrooms. The public school was in a rural county school in the Southeastern United States. This school housed first

and second grade classrooms only. An average of 30% of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Participants were 60-second grade students who were reading between 30 and 83 correct words per minute (CWPM) on measures of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills (DIBELS) or reading fluency (Good & Kaminski, 2002). However, by the time the study began in February of 2011, the students involved with this particular study were reading above the 85 (CWPM), so I decided to eliminate the top score range. Any student who was reading at a 30 (CWPM) minimum was accepted into the study. Another prerequisite was that the students had to read 27 out of 40 names on the names pretest. It was discovered during the pilot test that those students who could not read at least 27 names out of the 40 names in total, struggled through the decodable text and improvement was impaired by their inability to phonetically read.

Table 1

Demographics of the Student Population

White	72.0%
Black	24.4%
Asian, Pacific Islander	0.5%
Native American	0.6%
Hispanic	2.5%
Eligible for free lunch	211
Total Number of Students	639

The age level of participants ranged between 7 and 9 years. Heterogeneous grouping may include students of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities. Socioeconomic status (SES) is likely to fall largely in the lower SES range with a moderate percentage in the middle SES range. Large numbers of Caucasian students are the predominant population in this rural region of the country. None of the participants were learning disabled (LD) or English language learners (ELL). One possibility for the lack of LD or ELL students in this study could be because the minimum score for DIBELS was 30 and the minimum score for the names test was 27 and this requirement might have disqualified those students. There were three treatment groups. The green group was the RT group and it had 10 females and 10 males. The blue group was the RR group and it had nine females and eight boys. The read group was the control group and there were 11 females and nine males.

The total number of students participating was 60 second-grade students. Due to attrition, 5 students were lost. Two (2) students were not able to complete the study due to behavior issues. One (1) student did not complete the study due to excessive absences. Another student was suspended during the study. Finally, there were 2 students who completed the study but were absent on crucial assessment days, so their scores were not used in the final analysis.

There were five teachers who participated in the study. These teachers were second-grade teachers at this particular school. These teachers were not used to teaching students who were not their own students. This particular campus had no experience with leveling by grade levels, where students travel to different classrooms to receive reading instruction with other students on their same reading level. Some campuses call this type of instruction “Walk to Read”. These teachers were not used to leveling within their own classrooms. The sixth group leader of the study was a community volunteer. All of the teachers stayed in their classroom to

teach the treatment. The community volunteer was placed in the next building in a vacant classroom. These teachers and volunteer were randomly assigned to a condition. The teachers' names were written on a piece of paper and they chose the pieces of paper out of a pile. The first two names chosen were the RT teachers, the third and fourth names chosen were the repeated reading teachers and the fifth and sixth names chosen were the control group teachers.

Permission was sought from the principal of the school. An official letter of introduction to the principal explaining the study and what it entailed. The principal in turn sent a letter of approval. I then began the process of sending permission letters home through each teacher's classroom. The students who returned a letter with their parents' signature were allowed to participate in the study. Those students who did not turn in a permission form or if their parents did not give approval were allowed to stay in their classrooms and took Accelerated Reader quizzes as the treatments were being taught.

Research Design

This is a true experimental study. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of the students and teachers involved. The students within this study have been randomly selected for each group. The students were randomly assigned by a computerized program, random.org. The teachers were also randomly assigned to each treatment group, as well. However, their process was not as formal as the students. Their names were placed on a piece of paper and the first teacher who pulled her name was assigned to the RT group, the second name pulled was assigned to the repeated reading group and the third name was put with the control group and so on until all six names were pulled and assigned. The students did not know what groups they were in until the day of treatment began and even then were not made aware of the meaning of

the conditions. They were aware that they were trying a new reading activity but they were not told that it was for a study.

All of the students within this study used the same materials. These materials were altered only in their text format or text order. Each treatment group used the Sims decodable reading books. The differences are as follows: the RT group read the text that was rewritten in a RT format, where the names of the characters were typed to the left of the text; the control group read only ch.one of each book where the text was rewritten so that copies could be made for each participant and the repeated reading group read all six chapters consecutively from a text that was rewritten so that copies could be made for all participants. No words were added or deleted from any of the rewrites of the books.

Instrumentation

The first pretest was the names test (Cunningham, 1990). Second grade students were instructed to read each name and if they did not know it, they were told to sound it out and then skip it. They were told to read each name like they were the teacher reading the attendance list. There were 40 correspondences; 27 was the minimum cut-off score. For example, one of the names was "Neal Wade."

The second pretest was taken from the Basic Reading Passage (BRI) leveled passage, Black Out that had 101 words and a Flesch Reading Ease score of 60. The Flesch Reading Ease scores range from 0 to 100, the higher the score the easier the readability. The students' readings were recorded for the prosodic reading rubric. The students were asked five comprehension questions. Fluency was estimated by measuring correct words per minute (CWPM). This is computed by counting the total words in the passage, subtracting the total number of deviations from the text (substitutions, reversals, and deletions, if self-corrected this was not counted as an

error), multiplying the result by 60, and dividing this number by the number of seconds it took to read the passage.

The only standardized measures were the STAR and DIBELS assessments for a leveled comprehension level. The STAR assessment is a computer adaptive assessment that levels a student's silent reading comprehension and accuracy as they read a passage and answer comprehension questions about that passage. It does not time the student's reading.

I took their STAR and DIBELS scores as pre and post assessments. There will be a timed component to these assessments when the students are administered the DIBELS assessment. The DIBELS assessment will time the students for one minute. The students are instructed to read three passages in one minute. These are passages that the students have not seen before. From their readings, the scorer will write down the middle score of the three scores that the student had received. For example, if a student reads 50 words per minute (wpm), 75 wpm and 35 wpm that student's score is 50 wpm. DIBELS does not want to take a student's highest nor their lowest score. The DIBELS scores were assessments of students' general fluency. General fluency means the fluency skills of students taken from a formal assessment that is not specific to any one story.

A mid-test was administered to all students after the first five days of the study. The mid-test was taken from *Night at the Shore* (Sims, 2004c). The passage, *Night at the Shore,* was used as a mid-test fluency measure for all groups (the RT, repeated reading and the control group). This passage had 121 words and a Flesch Reading Ease score of 96.5. The Flesch Reading Ease scores range from zero to 100, the higher the score the easier the readability. For example, a legal document would have a score of a 12 where a Dr. Seuss text might have a score of 98.

There were five comprehension questions asked to each student taken from the BRI's 10 comprehension questions. The students were timed, but were not told to read fast. The researcher timed the readings to log the amount of minutes it took to complete the passage. After the mid-assessment was administered, the researcher scored their readings on the fluency rubric.

The first posttest was the sixth chapter from the second Sims book *Silly Dreamers* (Sims, 2004e) that was read in its entirety by the RT and RR groups. The control group only read chapter 1 of this book. This chapter had 127 words and a Flesh Reading Ease score of 83. The students were asked 5 comprehension questions and their readings were recorded, timed and scored on the prosody rubric at a later date. This was the first specific fluency test given. Specific fluency is taking students' fluency scores from a specific passage.

The second posttest was the BRI passage, *Stranger at Willowbrook* that had 103 words and a Flesch Reading Ease score of 73. There were five comprehension questions asked to each student. The students were timed, but were not told to read fast. The researcher timed the readings to log the amount of minutes it took to complete the passage and calculated their CWPM. This was the second specific fluency test that was given.

The third posttest was the students' attitudes on reading. This was done through an attitude survey. The internal consistency of the attitude scales was calculated at each grade level for both subscales and for the composite score. These coefficients ranged from 0.74 to 0.89. This is significantly high and defines this survey as highly reliable (McKenna & Kear, 1990). Students attitudes were measured using a questionnaire which consisted of twenty items measured on a four-point Likert-type, Garfield scale with illustrations of Garfield showing him happy as 4 = Very Strongly Agree to Garfield looking unhappy which represents a 1 = Very Strongly Disagree. The instrument's items were questions about reading ranging from

recreational reading to academic reading. For example, the following item was designed to represent the attitude of students toward recreational reading.

I would rather read than go out and play.

4	3	2	1
Very strongly agree			Very strongly disagree

Item values were summed to obtain an overall score. The summed score was used in analyses of student attitudes in comparison after students received different treatments. Prosody Measure Students' oral readings were recorded on an Olympus portable tape recorder DP10. Two raters listened to the readings and assigned a rate of one through16, using the prosody rubric, which was constructed from the researcher and her advisor. The inter-rater reliability, which is when two people are observing a participant's behavior or rating a student's work and need to agree on a level of consistency when combining the two scores do a statistical method to be more consistent. This method is called finding a correlation coefficient, where the scores of the first rater are correlated with those assigned by the second rater (Ross & Shannon, 2008). The correlation coefficient was .90 when the scores were compared, which shows a strong correlation. These recordings were scored by a team of reading specialists, and score reporting was practiced and deliberated to find common qualities for each score.

Procedures

Permission was sought from the school district to give the RT intervention, the repeated reading condition as well as the control group. Once permission was granted, the second grade teachers met with the researcher twice for training.

The training was 30 minutes long, during the teachers' planning time. Initially the researcher met with the teachers to discuss the study and what would be expected during the treatment period. Any questions or concerns that the teachers had were answered at this time.

The second meeting was more specifically set for the researcher to meet with each teacher from each condition. For example, the RT group met with the researcher for 10 minutes, and then the control group, etc. This final training session dealt with passing out materials, discussing procedures and setting time requirements.

Brief coaching occurred for approximately 30 minutes, during the teachers' planning time, which included five of the teachers; the community volunteer came on the day of the study but was coached by one of the teachers before the study began. This training took place the week before the treatments began to answer any questions or comments the teachers might have before the formal study began the next week. The researcher practiced procedures with the teachers to ensure that the treatments were understood.

The hypothesis that the teaching of prosody will have more of a positive effect on students' fluency, comprehension and expression in reading than the repeated reading group, will not be compromised due to researcher's subjectivity, teacher effect or Hawthorne effect since these factors have been controlled for. The researcher did not conduct any part of the condition.

The teachers were randomly assigned so many students experienced a new teacher for the first time. All of the participants were in a group doing the same activity; no one was sent out or singled out during the study. Any observations that were made by the researcher or her advisor were unobtrusive and brief.

Students were randomly assigned through a computerized program, random.org. Each participant was given a pseudonym, as agreed in the parental consent form for reporting purposes. Students were randomly assigned to groups within classrooms to control for teacher effects, including teaching style, education level, number of years of experience and other factors that might adversely affect the outcome of the study.

Originally, the first day of the study was set to start the conditions; however, the students and teachers needed a day to practice who was going where and which teacher was teaching which group. This school was not familiar with having students travel to different classrooms, so this was a new experience for everyone involved.

RT Condition

On the first day of the treatment to the fifth day, in the RT group, students were given their scripts and were split into groups of threes because each chapter in the Sims books had three characters. There were chairs set up in a circle format so that students could look at each other during their readings. On each chair was a name of one of the characters. For the duration of that day, the students would continue to be that character. For the next four days after that, the students would change characters, so by the fifth day, each student had a chance to read each character at least once. On the sixth day the students did not meet in their groups. I assessed each student individually. Then from the seventh day until the 11th day the students continued on with their treatments with a new text, *Silly Dreamers* (Sims, 2004e). The same procedures were used; the only difference was the new text.

Once the teacher felt that the students were ready to perform in front of the whole class and it was approximately halfway through the treatment, she would sit the students down as the audience members and choose one group to perform their readings. At the beginning of the study, the teachers were encouraged to have the students bring their character name sheets with them as they read. However, through one of the teacher's comments in their notebooks and also during an end of the treatment debriefing she noted that the students were not using the papers with the character's names on them and they were getting stepped on. So for the rest of the treatment, the papers with the characters names were no longer used.

After each group performed their readings, students from the audience were encouraged to comment on the performers' readings. The teachers said they were mostly positive comments; however some students got carried away with critiquing every little action. So the teachers used that as a teaching moment and discussed the best way to give constructive criticism.

RR Condition

The repeated reading group read a consecutive chapter a day from the Sims decodable reading chapter book. The students were given a copy of all of the chapters in the *Night at the Shore* book and their incentive charts that were placed in plastic sleeves to protect the charts. The charts had colored pictures of clouds and a hot air balloon. The clouds represented the words that the students were reading in one-minute intervals. The students were instructed to read the 1st chapter only and keep rereading it until they were called to read with the teacher.

The teacher would call each student, individually, and time them reading chapter one for the first day, chapter two for the second day, etc. The students would bring their charts and their copy of the book with them as they would read. The teachers had a timer, the students' copy to mark any errors, substitutions and deletions. The teachers circled a word the first time a student misread it. The second time the teachers put a check on top of the word and the third time a word was misread, the teachers highlighted it. This way they could quickly identify which word was not being read correctly even after sustaining feedback was given.

After the timed readings, the teachers asked the students to reread the word, try to sound it out or read the sentence again for contextual clues. Then after the third time the students misread a word, the teachers would make it wrong. For the timed reads, the students read from the book. There were not enough books for each student, so they had to practice from a copied

version of the book. The teacher asked the students one comprehension question from the list of questions given to the teachers before the treatment began.

On the sixth day the students did not meet in their groups. I assessed each student individually. Then from the seventh day until the 11th day the students continued on with their treatments with a new text, *Silly Dreamers*. The same procedures were used; the only difference was the new text.

The Control Group Condition

The control group read a new chapter a day from the Sims decodable reading chapter books. The control group read chapter one of the same books mentioned above as well as 10 additional books by the same author: *Wooden Box, Into the Wild, One Winter Day, Missing Chime, Bass Lake, The Red Gem Mine, The Best, Champs, North Meets South,* and *The Car Trip*.

The students were given a copy of all of the first chapters from each book and their incentive charts that were placed in plastic sleeves to protect the charts. The charts had colored pictures of clouds and a hot air balloon. The clouds represented the words that the students were reading in one-minute intervals. The students were instructed to read the first chapter only and keep rereading it until they were called to read with the teacher.

The teacher would call each student, individually, and time them reading chapter one for the first day, chapter two for the second day, etc. The students would bring their charts and their copy of the book with them as they would read. The teachers had a timer, the students' copy to mark any errors, substitutions and deletions. The teachers circled a word the first time a student misread it. The second time the teachers put a check on top of the word and the third time a word was misread, the teachers highlighted it. This way they could quickly identify which word was not being read correctly even after sustaining feedback was given.

The teachers followed Reistma's suggestions for effective feedback, which is a sustaining type of criticism that is not terminal (1988). Sustaining types of feedback promote healthy critiquing of students' reading errors without demeaning their efforts. Reistma found that the more teachers correct students without letting them attempt a word first, the more the students began to resent being corrected. This type of crippling correction or terminal correction will be highly discouraged during the treatment.

After the timed readings, any words that were initially missed were marked incorrect. The teachers asked the students to reread the missed word, try to sound it out or read the sentence again for contextual clues. For the timed reads, the students read from the book. There were not enough books for each student, so they had to practice from a copied version of the book. The teacher asked the students one comprehension question from the list of questions given to the teachers before the treatment began.

On the sixth day the students did not meet in their groups. I assessed each student individually. Then from the seventh day until the 11th day the students continued on with their treatments with a new chapter each day. The same procedures were used from the seventh-11th day as before the mid-assessments.

The study took place simultaneously in six classrooms in one rural southeastern school for a total of six participating classrooms. This type of schedule was easily implemented due to the fact that these classes were already set-up for a simultaneous, reading exploration time. To ensure that the Hawthorne effect is not an issue with this study, instructors were asked to not discuss their condition with their students until after post testing data has been collected and students were also be asked to keep all information "a secret" until the study was over.

The participants were any student in those classrooms who returned their permission slip allowing them to participate in this study. Any student who did not turn in a permission slip or their parents have said no to their participation in this study, stayed in their classrooms during this time of the study for the next twelve days and they were able to take Accelerated Reader tests (AR) during this same time each day. Those students who were not participating in the study did not miss out on any instruction material.

This design is a mixed methods study where quantitative and qualitative methods were used. It entailed two treatment groups and one control group. It was a true experiment due to the fact that the students in these classrooms have not been leveled, so a true experiment can exist and it will be coded as follows.

Table 2

Treatment Design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963)

Treatment 1	R	O	X1 O
Treatment 2	R	O	X2 O
Control 3	R	O	X3 O

The ratio of instructor to student will be one to nine. The green group was the treatment 1 group that received the RT intervention for 12 days, at 30-minute sessions. The blue group was the treatment two group that received the repeated readings with word overlap intervention for 12 days, at 30-minute sessions. The red group was the treatment three, the control group, received no word overlap. Students will not be allowed to read ahead nor will they be able to go

back and reread a chapter that they have previously read. They must focus on a chapter a day and remain on that chapter for the entire thirty minutes.

For fidelity purposes, the researcher planned to visit each treatment group four times within the twelve-day treatment span. Unfortunately, due to a family emergency, the researcher was not able to visit the teachers the second week of the study. For the first week, after each treatment day, teachers were able to meet with the researcher one on one to debrief and discuss any questions or discoveries. Each teacher was encouraged to keep a journal of things that they see or discovered during the lesson; however, there was only one teacher who left brief notes to the researcher in her journal. However, there were verbal questions and comments made to the researcher and those will be discussed in the qualitative section of the results chapter.

Qualitative Methods Data

I would meet with the teachers each day during the first week of the study to debrief with them and ask if they had any questions or comments. This was very beneficial and a great deal of clarity came out of these debriefings. Several changes were made to accommodate the teachers and students after I met with the teachers. Specific adjustments, questions, and comments have been noted in the results section.

I also administered an exit interview, individually after each student completed the final assessment. One question was asked, “Did you like doing the reading class where you went to different classrooms?” There were times that I had to get more explicit with the question to jar their memory about what they did. I mentioned the incentive charts if they had the repeated reading treatment, or the teacher they had or an example of what they did in the treatment like “did you like reading three times with the teacher?” I did not have to remind them a great deal, though. These students had not had the opportunity to travel to different classrooms and be

taught by different teachers, so usually when I asked them about the treatment they knew exactly what I meant. The students' responses have been documented and analyzed in a matrix format (Miles & Huberman, 1994) in the Results chapter.

Material

The main text involved in this study was the decodable chapter books by Matt Sims published by High Noon (2004c). *Night at the Shore* that had 152 words and *Silly Dreamers,* which had 127 words (2004e) was the books used in the repeated reading group, the RT group and the control group. The repeated reading group read both books in their entirety, in consecutive order for 12 days. The RT group read the same two books as the repeated reading group. The only difference was that the books were rewritten in a RT format where the person speaking is written to the left of the text. The control group read chapter one of the same books mentioned above, as well as, 10 additional books by the same author: *Wooden Box had 134 words* (Sims, 2004f), *Into the Wild had 186 words* (Sims 2004a), *One Winter Day* had 178 words (Sims, 2004d), *Missing Chime had 206 words* (Sims, 2004b), *Bass Lake* had 142 words (Sims, 1999a), *The Red Gem Mine* had 124 words (Sims, 1999b), *The Best had 141 words* (Sims, 2001b), *Champs* had 203 words (Sims, 2001a), *North Meets South* had 147 words (Sims, 2001c), and *The Car Trip* had 141 words (Sims, 2001d).

All of the students received a cover-up critter. This was a wooden popsicle stick with eyes that were glued on. The students were told to use the stick whenever they did not know a word and needed to sound it out. They were told that the stick was a friend to help them find smaller words in bigger words.

The students in the repeated reading group and the control group each had laminated motivational charts that allowed them to track their progress everyday (Johnson, 2008). There is

a colored picture of a hot air balloon and clouds as the visual for each student. Each cloud has a number written on it to represent the number of correct words per minute that each student is reading after each timed reading. The clouds represent 20 word intervals. The numbers started at 30–130. These students did three readings within the thirty minutes. When these students were not with the researcher being timed, they were practicing on their own. The goal for these students was to reach 90 correct words per minute (cwpm); however, once the results from the formal DIBELS test came back in December 2010, the researcher realized that 90 was a goal most of the participants had already reached, so the new goal for the repeated reading and control groups was to read 20 words above their initial, individual score. The students' code names were written on the front of the chart to ensure anonymity.

The RT teachers questioned and coached the students along the way to get the most expressions out of students' readings. This was an informal technique of questioning. If the teachers recognized that a student needed more clarification on how to read a word with expression they would then coach that student to help them find the appropriate expression. The teachers were encouraged to remind the students to read with PEPS, that is an acronym of the four components in Tim Rasinski's (2009) fluency rubric. The students were encouraged to read with these quality components in mind: **P**ace, **E**xpression, **P**hrasing and **S**moothness. The students were told that pacing is what a good reader does when they pick-up on when to read quickly or when to read slowly. Expression is when a reader reads with an emotion or an objective. Phrasing is when a reader reads with a phrase or a group of words in one breath. Smoothness is when a reader reads with a complete thought all of the way through a sentence.

The RT teachers were given a poster with the letters PEPS and a brief explanation of each letter. Each day when the condition began they pulled out the poster and reviewed its meaning.

On the first day of the study, the researcher gave each teacher their needed materials and answered any questions they had at that time. After the first day, the teachers kept their materials with them so they could start the treatment each day without interruptions.

Analysis

A descriptive statistics will be run to determine the group means for each variable. The group means will be analyzed to determine if any growth took place after the two treatments were experienced, as well as with the control group. Means, standard deviations and ranges based on average pretest scores for each student will be calculated on each measure (mean speed, word accuracy, frequency of prosodic elements, within subjects effects) will also be analyzed, through a two-way analysis of variance ANOVA with repeated measures. A Pairwise Comparison determined changes in word accuracy with sessions under differing reading conditions. Effect sizes between groups were examined. It was hypothesized that the effect size for the green group-RT increased beyond the effect sizes of the red group-repeated readings and the blue group-control group. The results were analyzed using a mixed model analysis of variance ANOVA comparing the performance of the three groups at three time points.

CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of teaching prosody through the strategy of RT. I hypothesized that repeated readings of passages with word overlap would help participants to become more fluent where the students would have more automaticity and thereby have freer processing space to comprehend more efficiently compared to the students who had little word overlap exposure. I also hypothesized that the added aspect of teaching prosody would be utilized by the students as another aid to increase comprehension. Repeated readings with word overlap should lead to greater fluency, comprehension and prosody than the group with little word overlap. This chapter describes the statistical analyses of the quantitative results as well as a descriptive analysis of the qualitative results.

The measures within this study are fluency, comprehension and prosody. The tests that were administered for fluency were, the Basic Reading Inventory (BRI), which was given as a pretest and a posttest, chapters six of *Night at the Shore* and *Silly Dreamers* and the DIBELS tests that were given as a pretest and a posttest. The correct words per minute (CWPM) were computed after each assessment.

The tests for comprehension were the STAR assessment that was administered as a pretest and a posttest and the five comprehension questions that were asked after each informal assessment was given.

The tests for prosody were taken from the informal assessments. The students received scores from a prosody rubric. These scores were taken from their recorded readings that were later tabulated.

Within Groups Findings

Fluency

First, differences in fluency rates while reading a second grade passage taken from the Basic Reading Inventory (BRI) assessment were investigated. The students' CWPM scores were obtained from their readings of one passage. The scores were obtained four times within the study. There was a pretest, a mid-assessment and a posttest one and a posttest two. Their scores were investigated using a proportional score derived by dividing the total number of words read correctly by the total number of words in the passage times 60. However, the formal DIBELS test was taken only as a pretest and posttest. Third, if a difference in fluency was determined, a within-subjects effects analysis was run to determine, F, p value and effect size.

Prosody

Again, the means and standard deviations were computed. Second, the prosody data were analyzed at four different stages of the treatment, to document prosody differences, if any, using a repeated-measure ANOVA. Third, if a difference in prosody was determined, a within-subjects effects analysis was run to determine, F, p value and effect size.

Comprehension

Here again, the means and standard deviations were computed. Second, the comprehension data were analyzed at four different states of the treatment, to document comprehension differences, if any, using a repeated-measure ANOVA. Third, if a difference in

comprehension was determined, a within-subjects effects analysis was run to determine, F, p value and effect size.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences in second graders' fluency, prosody and comprehension that were the direct result of prosody practice with word overlap in RT, repeated reading with word overlap or repeated reading without word overlap. Research questions one through three were answered through the first series of tests run. These questions were: (1) Will prosody practice with word overlap in RT improve second-grade students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension? (2) Will the method of repeated reading with word overlap improve second-grade students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension? (3) Will the method of repeated reading without word overlap improve second-grade students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension?

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics

		Reading Theatre (RT) (n = 20)		Repeated Reading (RR) (n = 16)		Control (n = 17)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
STAR	Pre	3.12	0.85	3.08	.89	2.78	.90
	Post	3.42	0.94	3.66	1.17	3.33	1.00
DIBELS	Pre	110.40	31.95	111.31	31.11	105.35	28.83
	Post	121.45	30.08	122.63	25.59	118.63	25.31

(table continues)

Table 3 (continued)

		Reading Theatre (RT) (n = 20)		Repeated Reading (RR) (n = 16)		Control (n = 17)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
General Fluency	Pre BRI	71.65	31.08	78.85	30.73	67.33	29.51
	Post BRI	73.57	21.58	82.04	27.22	65.57	19.81
Fluency in Text	NS Ch6	61.57	17.79	65.86	18.95	55.13	21.66
	SD Ch 6	83.67	26.51	88.47	28.81	75.59	29.41
Comprehension	Pre BRI	86.50	19.29	85.33	19.22	80.00	21.91
	NS Ch6	82.00	11.05	83.75	10.88	68.57	20.33
	SD Ch6	70.53	20.41	67.50	21.76	65.00	18.62
	Post BRI	81.05	19.41	64.71	28.75	66.15	15.02
Prosody	Pre BRI	11.94	2.61	11.94	3.34	10.56	3.35
	NS Ch6	12.75	2.83	12.81	2.76	12.13	2.87
	SD Ch6	13.25	2.79	13.18	2.22	12.18	2.83
	Post BRI	13.15	2.08	13.31	2.55	11.71	3.70
Attitude	Post	56.05	11.59	57.76	9.60	59.24	13.99

Results within Groups

DIBELS

First, differences in fluency rates while reading a second grade passage taken from the DIBELS assessment were investigated. The students' DIBELS scores were obtained from their readings of three passages. Their middle score was the score that was reported. The means and

standard deviations for the DIBELS measure were the pretest for RT, which had a mean of 110.40 (31.95), RR mean was 111.31 (31.11), and the control group mean was 105.35 (28.83). The posttest RT mean was 121.45 (30.08), RR mean was 122.63 (25.59), and for the control group the mean was 118.63 (25.31).

A repeated measure ANOVA of the DIBELS of the RT group revealed a significant difference resulting from the posttest scores compared with the pretest scores, $F(1, 19) = 17.490$, $p < 0.001$. There was an effect size that was large, $\eta^2 = .479$. A large effect size is .01 or greater, a moderate effect is 0.06 and a small effect size is 0.14 (Shannon & Ross, 2009). Their posttest scores were greater than their pretest scores.

A repeated measured ANOVA analysis of the DIBELS of the RR group with word overlap, revealed a significant difference resulting from the posttest scores compared with the pretest scores, $F(1, 15) = 10.909$, $p = 0.005$. Effect size was large $\eta^2 = .421$. Their posttest scores were greater than their pretest scores.

A repeated measured ANOVA analysis of the DIBELS of the RR group without word overlap, revealed a significant difference resulting from the posttest scores compared with the pretest scores, $F(20, 378) = 4.872$, $p < 0.001$. Effect size was large $\eta^2 = 0.576$. Their posttest scores were greater than their pretest scores.

Fluency

First, differences in fluency rates while reading a second grade passage taken from the Basic Reading Inventory (BRI) assessment were investigated. The students' CWPM scores were obtained from their readings of one passage. The scores were obtained four times within the study. There was a pretest, a mid-assessment and a posttest one and a posttest two. Their scores

were investigated using a proportional score derived by dividing the total number of words read correctly by the total number of words in the passage times 60.

The means and standard deviations for the fluency measure were the pretest for RT was 71.65, (31.08), RR was 78.85 (30.73), and the control group 67.33 (29.51). The mid-test mean for RT was 61.57 (31.08), RR mean was 65.86 (30.73) and the control group mean was 55.13 (21.66). The posttests one mean for RT was 83.67 (26.51), RR mean was 88.47 (28.81), and for the control group the mean was 75.59 (29.41). The posttests two for RT mean was 73.57 (21.58), RR mean was 82.04 (27.22), and for the control group the mean was 65.57 (19.81).

For the RT group, the assumption of sphericity was checked using Mauchly's test. The sphericity assumption was violated and resulted in $p = 0.002$.

A within-subjects effects was found to be significant $p < 0.001$ with an effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.465$), $F(2.168, 36.862)$. There was a significant difference among the pretest, mid-test, posttest one and posttest two scores. The mid-assessment is statistically significantly higher than the pre, posttest one ($p = .010$) and posttest two ($p = 0.001$). The posttest one scores are statistically significantly higher than the pretest, mid-assessment and posttest two.

The LSD method was used to perform pairwise comparisons, where each test of fluency was paired with another to show if there was any significance within groups and significant results were found (Ross & Shannon, 2008). The posttest one is significantly higher than the pretest ($p = 0.01$), the mid-assessment ($p = 0.001$) and the posttest two ($p = 0.001$). The mid-assessment is smaller than the pretest and the posttest one and posttest two. The posttest one is larger than the pretest, mid-assessment and the posttest two. The pretest and posttest two do not have statistically significance in the scores ($p = 0.581$). There is no difference between the pretest and posttest two.

The RR group was the second group investigated. The reliability of the tests was scrutinized through several statistical tests, as well. The assumption of sphericity was checked using Mauchly's test. The sphericity assumption was violated and resulted in a $p = 0.005$. A within-subjects effects was found to be significant ($p < 0.001$) with a large effect size, $\eta^2 = 0.326$, $F(2.040, 28.563) = 6.780$.

The LSD method was used to perform pairwise comparisons, where each test of fluency was paired with another to show if there was any significance within groups and significant results were found. There was a significant difference among the, mid-test and posttest one and posttest two scores. The mid-test is lower than the posttest one ($p = 0.003$) and posttest two ($p = 0.010$). The posttest one is higher than the posttest two ($p = 0.029$).

The control group was the third group investigated. The reliability of the tests was scrutinized through several statistical tests, as well. The assumption of sphericity was checked using Mauchly's test. The sphericity assumption was not violated and resulted in a $p = 0.050$. The within-subjects effects test showed a $F(3, 33) = 2.115$, $p = 0.117$, which means among these four scores there was no significant differences. There is no difference among these groups.

Comprehension

STAR. First, differences in comprehension rates while reading a second grade passage taken from the STAR assessment were investigated. The students' grade equivalent scores were obtained from a computerized passage that leveled their responses once the passages had been read.

The means and standard deviations for the STAR measure were the pretest for RT mean was 3.12, (0.85), RR mean was 3.08 (0.89), and the control group mean was 2.78 (0.90). The

posttests for RT mean was 3.42 (0.94), RR mean was 3.66 (1.17), and for the control group the mean was 3.33 (1.00).

A repeated measured ANOVA analysis of the STAR of the RT group, revealed a significant difference resulting from the posttest scores compared with the pretest scores, $F(1, 19) = 4.872$, $p = 0.040$. Effect size was large, $\eta^2 = .204$. Their posttest scores were greater than their pretest scores.

The RR group with word overlap had an ANOVA analysis of their STAR grade equivalent scores. Their scores revealed a significant difference resulting from the posttest scores compared with the pretest scores, $F(1,16) = 14.23$, $p = 0.002$. Effect size was large, $\eta^2 = .471$. Their posttest scores were greater than their pretest scores.

The RR group without word overlap also had an ANOVA analysis of their STAR grade equivalent scores. Their scores revealed a significant difference resulting from the posttest scores compared with the pretest scores, $F(1,16) = 5.14$, $p = 0.038$. Effect size was large, $\eta^2 = .243$. Their posttest scores were greater than their pretest scores.

Comprehension

First, differences in comprehension rates while reading two informal second grade passages taken from the BRI assessment and two second grade leveled passages taken from chapter six of the Sims decodable reader books, were investigated. The students' comprehension scores were obtained from their readings of four passages. The scores were obtained four times within the study. There was a pretest, a mid-assessment and a posttest one and a posttest two. Their scores were investigated using a proportional score derived by dividing the total number of questions answered correctly by the total number of questions (five).

The means and standard deviations for the comprehension measure were the pretest for RT was 86.50 (19.29), RR was 85.33 (19.22), and the control group 80.00 (21.91). The mid-test mean for RT was 82.00 (11.05), RR mean was 83.75 (10.88), and the control group mean was 68.57 (20.33). The posttests one mean for RT was 70.53 (20.41), RR mean was 67.50 (21.76), and for the control group the mean was 65.00 (18.62). The posttests two for RT mean was 81.05 (19.41), RR mean was 64.71 (28.75), and for the control group the mean was 66.15 (15.02).

For the RT group, the assumption of sphericity was checked using Mauchly's test. The sphericity assumption was not violated and resulted in a $p = 0.478$ which is not significant. A within-subjects effects was found to be significant, $F(3, 51) = 2.846$, $p = 0.047$, with a large effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.143$).

The LSD method was used to perform pairwise comparisons, where each test of fluency was paired with another to show if there was any significance within groups and significant results were found. There was a significant difference between the pretest in comparison to posttest one ($p = 0.014$) and the mid-test in comparison to posttest one ($p = 0.008$). Posttest one was smaller than both of them.

The RR group was the second group investigated. The reliability of the tests was scrutinized through several statistical tests, as well. The assumption of sphericity was checked using Mauchly's test. The sphericity assumption was not violated and resulted in a $p = 0.987$ which was not significant. A within-subjects effects was found to be significant, $F(4.961) = 3.39$, $p < 0.005$, with a large effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.276$).

The LSD method was used to perform pairwise comparisons, where each test of fluency was paired with another to show if there was any significance within groups and significant results were found. There was a significant difference among the pretest and the posttest one

($p = 0.013$), and the pretest and posttest two ($p = 0.022$). The pretest scores were larger than posttest one and posttest two. The mid-test was larger than posttest one ($p = 0.017$) and the mid-test was larger than posttest two ($p = 0.035$).

The control group was the third group investigated. The reliability of the tests was scrutinized through several statistical tests, as well. The assumption of sphericity was checked using Mauchly's test. The sphericity assumption was not violated. The ANOVA results were in $F(1, 774) = 3.33$, $p = 0.171$. This was not significant, as well. Among these four scores there was no significant differences.

Prosody. First, differences in prosody rates while reading two informal second grade passages taken from the BRI assessment and two second grade leveled passages taken from chapter six of the Sims decodable reader books, were investigated. The students' prosody scores were obtained from their recorded readings of four passages. There was a pretest, a mid-assessment and a posttest one and a posttest two. The scores were obtained four times within the study from a rubric with scores ranging from 1–16. The means and standard deviations for the comprehension measure are presented in Table 1.

In order to test the first through third hypotheses, a RR Comparison of Groups analysis was performed. The measure of prosody was assessed through a series of informal assessments; a pre, middle and two posttests and two formal tests. The RT group was the first group investigated. The reliability of the tests was scrutinized through several statistical tests. For the RT group, the assumption of sphericity was checked using Mauchly's test. The sphericity assumption was not violated and resulted in a $p = 0.177$ which was not significant.

A within-subjects effects was found to be significant $F(3, 48) = 4.665$, $p = 0.006$ with an effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.226$). Posttest one ($p = 0.010$) and posttest two ($p = 0.004$) were significantly higher than the pretest.

The LSD method was used to perform pairwise comparisons, where each test of fluency was paired with another to show if there was any significance within groups and significant results were found. There was a significant difference between the pretest in comparison to posttest one ($p = 0.010$) and posttest two ($p = 0.004$). The pretest was smaller than both of them.

The RR group was the second group investigated. The reliability of the tests was scrutinized through several statistical tests, as well. The assumption of sphericity was checked using Mauchly's test. The sphericity assumption was not violated and resulted in $p = 0.268$ which was not significant. A within-subjects effects was found to be significant, $F= 7, 343$, $p = 0.001$, with a large effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.361$).

The LSD method was used to perform pairwise comparisons, where each test of fluency was paired with another to show if there was any significance within groups and significant results were found. There was a significant difference among the pretest ($p = .005$) in comparison to the mid-test, and the pretest in comparison to posttest one ($p = 0.010$), and the pretest in comparison to posttest two ($p < 0.001$). The pretest is significantly smaller than the mid-test, posttest one and posttest two.

The control group was the third group investigated. The reliability of the tests was scrutinized through several statistical tests, as well. The assumption of sphericity was checked using Mauchly's test. The sphericity assumption was not violated and resulted in a $p= 0.050$. This was found to be not significant as well, $F(1, 992) = 3.42$, $p = 0.50$. Among these four scores there were no significant differences.

Results of Comparison of Groups

Research questions four through six were answered through the second series of tests run. These questions were:

4. Will prosody practice with word overlap in RT improve second-grade students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension more than the method of RR without word overlap?
5. Will the method of RR with word overlap improve second-grade students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension more than the method of RR with word overlap?
6. Will prosody practice with word overlap in RT improve second-grade students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension more than the method of RR with word overlap?

Prosody

In order to test the four through six hypotheses, a mixed design ANOVA analysis was performed. The RT group, RR with overlap and the RR with no overlap prosody scores were investigated and compared. The interaction, within-subjects and between effect tests were administered.

The interaction effect was not significant ($p = 0.854$), indicating that the scores difference among these four assessments were not different among these three groups. The assumption of sphericity was checked using Mauchly's test. The sphericity assumption was not violated and resulted in a $p = 0.75$ which was not significant. The within subjects effect was found to be significant with a large effect size regardless of condition, $F(10, 807) = 3.6$, $\eta^2 = 0.201$, $p < 0.001$.

The LSD method was used to perform pairwise comparisons, where each test of prosody was paired with another to show if there was any significance within groups and significant results were found. There was a significant difference among the pretest ($p < 0.001$) which was lower than the mid-assessment ($p < 0.001$), posttest one ($p < 0.001$) and posttest two ($p < 0.001$). The mid-assessment ($p < 0.001$) is higher than the pretest. Posttest one ($p < 0.001$) and posttest two are greater than the pretest.

Fluency

In order to test the four through six hypotheses, a mixed design ANOVA analysis was performed. The RT group, RR with overlap and the RR with no overlap CWPM scores were investigated and compared. The interaction, within-subjects and between effect tests were administered.

The interaction effect was not significant ($p = 0.895$), indicating that the scores difference among these four assessments were not different among these three groups. The assumption of sphericity was checked using Mauchly's test. The sphericity assumption was not violated and resulted in a $p = 0.268$, which was not significant. The within subjects effect was found to be significant with a large effect size regardless of condition, $F(17.605) = 2.155, 4.310$, $\eta^2 = 0.295$.

The LSD method was used to perform pairwise comparisons, where each test of fluency was paired with another to show if there was any significance within groups and significant results were found. There was a significant difference among the pretest is higher in comparison to the mid-test ($p = .001$), and the pretest is lower in comparison to posttest one ($p = 0.005$).

The mid-test is significantly lower than the pretest ($p = 0.000$), lower than posttest one ($p < 0.001$) and posttest two ($p < 0.001$). The posttest one is higher than the pretest ($p = 0.005$).

Posttest one is higher than the mid-test (p = 0.000). Posttest one is higher than posttest two (p = 0.000). Posttest two is higher than the mid-test (p = 0.000) and posttest one (p = 0.000).

The Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was not significant (pretest: p = 0.949, mid-test: p = 0.597, posttest one: p = 0.827, and posttest two: p = 0.370) which means that the variance is equal across the groups.

Comprehension

In order to test the four through six hypotheses, a mixed design ANOVA analysis was performed. The RT group, RR with overlap and the RR with no overlap comprehension scores were investigated and compared. The reliability of the tests was scrutinized through several statistical tests. The interaction, within-subjects and between effect tests were administered. First, differences in comprehension rates while reading a, second grade passage were taken. The students' comprehension scores were obtained from two sources, their answers to five questions after reading one BRI passage before the study began and from their answers to five questions after reading another BRI passage after the study had ended; the other source is taken from their answers to five questions after reading a mid-assessment from the sixth chapter of *Night at the Shore* and the five answers to questions after reading the posttest one of the sixth chapter of *Silly Dreamers.*

The answer to Research question, 4) Will prosody practice with word overlap in RT improve second-grade students' fluency, prosody, and comprehension more than the method of RR without word overlap, is 'yes'. The second grade students with prosody practice and word overlap in RT improved in comprehension more than the method of RR without word overlap.

The assumption of sphericity was checked using Mauchly's test. The sphericity assumption was not violated and resulted in a p = 0.564, which was not significant. The

interaction effect with the condition was not significant ($p = 0.181$). The within subjects effect was found to be significant at $F(6.735)$, $df = 3.6$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.141$, regardless of condition. A multiple comparison was made among the three conditions and a significant difference was found between the RT group ($p = 0.008$) and the control group (C). The RT group scores were significantly higher than the (C) groups' scores.

STAR

In order to test the four through six hypotheses, a mixed design ANOVA analysis was performed. The RT group, RR with overlap and the RR with no overlap STAR scores were investigated and compared. The reliability of the tests was scrutinized through several statistical tests. The interaction, within-subjects and between effect tests were administered. First, differences in comprehension rates while reading a computerized, second grade passage were taken and rated by grade equivalency score. The students' comprehension scores were obtained from their readings of one passage before the study began and one passage after the study had ended.

The interaction effect with the condition was not significant ($p = 0.473$). The within subjects effect was found to be significant at a $F(21.102) = 1.2$, $p < .001$, $df = 1.2$ regardless of condition, which could have been due to the maturation element. These tests were taken amongst a five-month span ($F(21.102)$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.293$, $df = 1$). The between-subjects effects was not significant ($p = 0.574$). There was no difference among the groups.

DIBELS

In order to test the four through six hypotheses, a mixed design ANOVA analysis was performed. The RT group, RR with overlap and the RR with no overlap DIBELS scores were investigated and compared. The students' DIBELS scores were obtained from their readings of

three passages. Their middle score was the score that was utilized. The reliability of the tests was scrutinized through several statistical tests. The interaction, within-subjects and between effect tests were administered. First, differences in DIBELS rates were analyzed.

The interaction effect with the condition was not significant ($p = 0.973$). The within subjects effect was found to be significant at $p < 0.001$, $df = 1.00$, regardless of condition, $F(21.102)$, $p < 0.001$, ($\eta^2 = 0.476$, $df = 1$), which could have been due to the maturation element. These tests were taken amongst a five-month span. The between-subjects effects was not significant ($p = 0.574$).

Qualitative Results

Teacher Comments and Questions

"Oh, I'm sorry. I thought they were playing in here because they were so loud." The afterschool director commented on how loud the students were as they practiced their readings. She said she saw that they were excited about what they were reading, but she thought they were playing around due to the level of noise that they were making.

One of the teachers from the control group thought that the purpose of having them read three times was to get them to their goal which was 20 words from their last score. So if the students met that goal she stopped asking them to reread.

Student Comments

I also administered an exit interview individually after each student completed the final assessments. I tried to make sure that the students did not know which treatment I felt more positive about. There was no time limit on their responses. If they made a negative comment, I reassured them that it was ok and I appreciated their honesty. The interviews were transcribed. The only question that was asked was, "Did you like doing the reading class where you went to

different classrooms?" There were times that I had to get more explicit with the question to jog their memory about what they did. I mentioned the incentive charts if they had the RR treatment, or the teacher they had, or an example of what they did in the treatment, e.g., "Did you like reading 3 times with the teacher?" I did not have to remind them a great deal, though. These students had not had the opportunity to travel to different classrooms and be taught by different teachers, so usually when I asked them about the treatment they knew exactly what I meant.

Pseudonyms were used throughout the study to protect the participants' identification. The students in the RT condition commented most on what they were doing during the study. Cindy commented on how funny the stories were. Michael commented on the fact that he liked reading in front of an audience. Other comments on RT dealt with characters, roles, funny places, reading with expression, friends and comments from teachers. Overall 19 positive comments were made about the RT condition. There were no negative comments about the RT condition at that time.

The RR condition had comments that dealt with how the study helped them. Cheryl said, "I liked doing the reading because it helps me read faster." Richard said, "Yes, I liked reading because I got to try it over and over again."

There were two responses from this condition that did not go into any of the thematic groupings. One student commented on how he liked doing the readings because he did not have to do more work in the classroom. Another student gave a positive response to liking the condition, but commented on his confusion with the incentive chart.

The number of times the students had to read the text, which was three times each day, was identified as a negative for four students and a positive for one student. The comments that

the students made that dealt with the mechanics of the condition were the scores, goals, timer, pictures, funny stories, and the teachers. In total there were 16 positive comments and six negative comments about the RR condition.

The control group had the most comments on how bored they were. I came in the second day of the study and one student had this to say, "Why do I have to keep reading this over and over again? "I'm bored." The positive comments came mostly from the mechanics within the condition. The students liked switching classes, the chart, the scores, and the instant gratification of knowing if they improved after each reading. There were 15 positive comments and five negative comments regarding the control condition.

Table 4

Matrix of Students' Comments at the Exit Interview

Student Codes	Student Comments	Treatment
L10	I liked it because it wasn't that long and it helps you read better and learn the words.	C
K7	Yes, I liked it, my favorite subject is reading, it is interesting.	C
N15	Kinda, I had to go there every day, she would grade it after I read. It was fun.	C
K1	No I didn't. I thought it was boring.	C
L13	Yes, I go to tutoring and we always have to do that.	C
N12	I got to read a lot.	C
K13	I liked it, I just didn't understand going up.	C
C14	I did like it, I just like reading even when I'm bored.	C
L3	It helps me learn to read, I like it a lot.	C
N4	Yes, but I only had 2 parts. I don't like talking much.	RT
C13	I like reading, it's a lot of fun.	RT
K12	There were fun places they talked about. You didn't have to work.	RT

(table continues)

Table 4 (continued)

Student Codes	Student Comments	Treatment
L4	I liked standing in front of them and reading.	RT
L6	Yes, we got to perform. I wanted to go to the next ch.	RT
C8	I love reading books.	RT
N2	I liked reading the parts. You can do different parts. Not sure if I want to do again.	RT
N8	I just liked reading the stories. They were funny.	RT
B9	It was fun and we got to read with expression.	RT
C4	We got to stand up and read in a group. I got to be with friends.	RT
C5	I liked it because I could take a 2nd reading time.	RT
C15	I liked it. I could read fast and it could help you.	RR
C3	Yes, we had time and increased our time.	RR
B5	It was annoying doing it 50 times.	RR
K3	I liked to read but I don't remember the clouds.	RR
N6	I didn't like it. I didn't like to read it over and over again.	RR
B1	I wanted to read it over and over again.	RR
L1	Funny Stories	RR
C6	I did like reading but it only gave us less work in the class.	RR
N7	Not really. We had to go up and read 3 times.	RR
N3	Yes, I got to read to the people. She was nice to people.	RR
N5	They told us how we did; we got to read with inspiration.	
	I liked it a lot. I got to read in front of the class; it helps us better.	
B4	I love reading; it's fun.	RT
C10	Yes, I liked it a lot. I love to read and being around Mrs. Brothers.	RT

Table 4 (continued)

Student Codes	Student Comments	Treatment
L9	I liked performing and the comments	RT
B3	I've always liked to read. It feels good to read.	RT
B6	I liked that we had parts of animals.	RT
C12	We had to read to the class and she switched us.	RT
K5	I liked to read and it was fun.	RT
N13	Yes, I liked it. You can get a higher score. I got a 177.	C
L2	Not much it was a little boring. I had to wait.	C
K9	I liked the balloons and I kept going up. But I kept skipping words.	C
N11	I really liked it because I like reading.	C
L8	It was fun. I got better.	C
K2	I don't have a feeling about reading. I liked reading it, but not over and over again.	C
N10	We could go up and up.	C
K11	No it was kinda boring.	C
K8	I liked it; it could help me read faster and faster.	C
C9	Yes, I saw a lot of my friends. It was fun.	C
L12	Yes, I liked it because you get a chance to get higher and higher on the words.	RR
C2	No, it was boring. The only thing I did like was trying to get a goal, I almost got it.	RR
N14	I liked the scores and beating the timer.	RR
K6	My reading got better.	RR
L12	I liked that you get a chance to read more.	RR
K4	We got to read, it was a funny picture.	RR
L5	Yes, I liked it, it was fun and helped us read more. All the girls were talking.	RR
C2	No, I didn't like it. It was boring. I did like trying to get to goal 150.	RR
K10	We didn't like it 3 times each.	RR

CHAPTER V. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Results from Prosody Study

A discussion of the results of this prosody study, its theoretical implications, its classroom implications, and the limitations of this study are contained in this chapter. In addition, at the end of the chapter I provided recommendations for further research.

This study focused on the benefits of the teaching of prosody with an emphasis on RT and word overlap. The goal was to determine if students' prosody, comprehension and fluency skills increased when students were given three treatments: (a) prosody as a treatment within a RT (RT) text with word overlap (b) repeated reading (RR) text with word overlap and (c) the control group, which was defined as repeated reading without word overlap. Another goal of this study was to investigate the differences of students' attitudes toward reading after having experienced their assigned treatment. The qualitative data gave the information needed to investigate the final goal of this study, which was to determine if there was a difference in students' attitudes toward the treatments.

This study was an opportunity to extend the work of Rashotte and Torgesen's (1985) study of repeated reading and word overlap. It also examined: (a) the results of teaching prosody on readers' comprehension, fluency and prosodic skills in a RT format; (b) if students' reading attitudes were different based on the treatment they received; and (c) if students' attitudes toward the treatment were different.

Findings

The tool of repeated reading with word overlap was investigated in this study. The three groups were RT with a prosody emphasis, repeated reading with word overlap and repeated reading with no word overlap. The two groups that had an opportunity to practice text with word overlap made significant growth in comprehension, fluency and prosody however the group without word overlap, at times, read more words but they still did not make significant growth. More studies need to investigate the best ways to utilize repeated reading with word overlap strategies within the classroom.

RT requires the reader to reread text over and over again to practice reading with expression. Therefore, I also investigated whether students' reading skills would improve more if they read whole repetitive text with word overlap (words that repeat in the text three or more times) or incomplete text with little or no word overlap. Moyer (1982) described the advantages poor readers have when rereading entire passages as opposed to rereading broken text, because whole passages allow the reader to practice "higher linguistic structure (contextual and syntactic cues)" (p.181).

In this study, I used an experimental research design with random assignment of student groups from five second-grade classrooms. The students were assigned to three groups: a RT group with word overlap and a prosody emphasis, a repeated reading group with word overlap, and a repeated reading group without word overlap. There were a total of six teachers, so the groups were split up into smaller groups. There were two groups for each condition. Second grade teachers were randomly assigned to the groups. These teachers worked with these groups for 30 minutes each day for a total of 12 days. They used the procedures described in the Procedures section of this document.

Within Group Findings

Each group except the control group significantly improved in fluency, comprehension and prosody. The control group did not improve significantly, possibly because there was no word overlap.

There were significant improvements in the reading skills of the groups that had prosody emphasis and word overlap. However, the control group did not show significant growth in prosody or comprehension. This group did show significant gains in DIBELS and STAR assessments, which could possibly be attributed to maturation because these tests were spread out over a five-month duration.

The control group read the first chapter of 10 different books. These students did not have the advantage that Moyer (1982) spoke of in reference to the benefits of reading a passage in its entirety. The control group never experienced the higher levels of the written language structure. Even though the control group experienced rereadings of text, their inability to reread the whole text may be why they did not show significant growth overall. Perhaps the lack of word overlap may have limited the students' reading achievements.

Comparison of Group Findings

The comprehension levels of the RT group with word overlap and prosody emphasis did make significant improvements over the control group. The fluency scores were not significantly different among the conditions nor were the prosody scores.

What was a surprising result was that the RT group did not make significant gains in prosody above the other groups. However, the prosody emphasis did eventually aid this group in comprehension, which reveals the retention power of prosody.

Students' reading attitudes did not differ significantly based on the treatment they received. The control group's raw score had a difference above three points from the other groups. A possible explanation for the increase in the control groups' scores might have been because there one of the teachers from the control group had more of her homeroom students than any other group. But the scores were not significantly different.

Students' attitudes toward the treatments did differ. Based on qualitative data taken from student exit interviews, there appears to be a greater positive response to the RT group. There were 19 positive comments about the RT treatment and no negative comments. There were 16 positive comments about the repeated reading with word overlap group and six negative comments. There were 15 positive comments about the repeated reading without word overlap group and five negative comments. Overall, it appears that the students enjoyed all of the treatments, but the RT group enjoyed this treatment the most.

The RT groups' answers from the exit interviews tended to be more focused on the mechanisms of the treatment. These students commented the most on what they did within the treatment. They remembered the scripts, the parts, the rehearsals, and the teacher and student comments that were made at the end of each day. These students seemed to be very present throughout the whole process. The other two groups made comments about the mechanisms of the treatments, as well. Their comments were not as focused on what was going on within the treatment as the RT group.

Theoretical Implications

Prosody Can Aid Comprehension

The most promising results from this prosody study are that the students who had prosody emphasis made significantly higher scores in comprehension than the control group.

This shows that prosody emphasis can be learned and utilized to improve comprehension skills.. More studies need to explore this parallel correlation. This study clearly shows that the more students learn prosodic elements the more their comprehension skills improved.

Word Overlap

This study extends the findings of Rashotte and Torgesen (1985) by showing that students' gains in prosody, comprehension, and fluency increased through repeated reading. Their hypothesis was students' fluency gains would increase by the repetitive reading of a reading passage, but not just any passage. The passage had to have word overlap. They hypothesized that the more the words overlap in the passage, the more the students would establish those words as sight words. The students would not have to commit as much processing space to those words and more space would be available to comprehend a text.

The present study had results that supported Rashotte and Torgesen's findings. The two groups that had word overlap increased significantly in their prosody, comprehension and fluency. The control group had little or no word overlap, but read passages with more words in them. As explained in the Rashotte and Torgesen study, the amount of words read is not as indicative for fluency increase as the amount of words that overlap.

Educational Implications

Teaching Prosody

An interesting finding is that the RT group read slower after having the prosody training, but their comprehension levels continued to increase. Once students start reading a text for prosodic elements, their reading pace will naturally decrease for a time. Like any new skill, one must focus on the task at hand and other skills might fall off for a time until that new skill is more automatic. When a reader is learning to read with expression, time is the least of their

concerns. They are searching for contextual clues so that their readings will be more accurately connected to the author's purpose. Teachers need to realize that reading for speed is promoting fast word identifiers but not readers. Speed should be seen as a consequence of word recognition not a goal in itself. Speed is one valuable tool that can be used by skilled readers.

Each time the students were assessed they were recorded reading their passages. The students seemed very excited about the prospect of them being able to hear themselves once they finished their readings. The students continued to say, "Is that what I really sound like?" This was truly a new phenomenon for them. Students need to know how they sound when they read. This is not a secret that only the teachers can know. When they can hear themselves miss words (that they did not know they missed) or misinterpret punctuation, then they can be more specific in correcting their mistakes. They can also go back on their own to make sure that the mistakes were corrected. This is an invaluable tool for teachers and students.

Limitations

Possible limitations of this study are sample size, length of the study, teacher participants, and the utilization of the reading-attitude survey.

Sample Size

The old adage, "there is power in numbers", might have sufficed here in terms of assessing this study. The issue of power could have played a factor in the overall findings. The students who did participate were on a volunteer basis that was based on signed, parental permission letters. The low number of participants could have skewed the statistical findings.

Time of the Study

This study was conducted in January of 2011. By this time, students have already done a great deal of growing in their fluency and comprehension skills. I might have seen a more

sizeable amount of growth if the study had been conducted toward the beginning of the school year as opposed to the middle of the year.

Length of Study

The length of the study was 12 days. The amount of time to practice the readings each day was only 30 minutes. Based on the feedback given from the students and teachers I would not recommend extending the amount of time for the study. A possible recommendation for the length of this study would be to extend it to a nine weeks span.

Teacher Participants

The teacher participants volunteered for this study and it was conducted within their regular classrooms. The rigor of the study may have been compromised because the study was not in a lab setting. Also, the teachers had to continue teaching their regular curriculum before and after the study each day. Their schedules were altered to fit the requirements of the study. The issue of following the requirements to fidelity may have been compromised due to the teachers' daily classroom obligations.

Garfield Reading-Attitude Survey

The results from the Garfield reading-attitude survey could have been utilized more comparatively had I given it at a pre and post interval. Measuring reading attitude is a difficult task because it is so esoteric. Moreover, students are not given many opportunities to share their attitudes in school. More opportunities have to be given to students to connect more to their own likes and dislikes about reading and texts. Perhaps this particular survey was not sensitive enough to measure attitude change.

The Chapter Six Assessment

The posttest for *Silly Dreamers* was the story's final chapter, which was chapter six. Although it was noted on the back of the text as having the same set and letter number as the other text used, its readability was much higher than the other chapter six text, which was used as a mid-assessment. The mid-assessment's readability rate was at a 0.8 and the posttest assessment was at a 2.8. Also the word overlap for this chapter was smaller than first anticipated. Certain character names were repeated up to 17 times in the sixth chapter. However, repetition of content words did not overlap more than five times.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research opportunities can stem from the varied uses of recorded readings, the length of study and the benefits of repeated reading. A primary emphasis of reading is to read with expression. Teachers admonish students for not reading with expression, but have they taught what reading with expression means? This study focused on the teaching of prosody. The four components of reading with prosodic elements are pacing, expression, phrasing and smoothness. These components are best mastered when practiced and self-analyzed.

A future study would focus on these four elements to see which of the four would be easiest to master and which would be the most difficult and why? Are different grade levels more capable to master these prosodic elements than others? And in mastering these components what if any carry over does it have in general fluency and comprehension?

The length of this study was 30 minutes a day for 12 days. A future study could extend both the amount of time and the length of days. The students were not used to switching classes and had been randomly assigned to teachers that they had not been taught by before, therefore

the aspect of adjustment should be considered. If the students had more time adjusting to the change of classes, teachers and the treatment the results could have been more conclusive.

Another future study that might render some interesting results would be to compare the effectiveness of sustaining feedback to terminal feedback. Sustaining feedback is when a teacher corrects a student's errors by making him go back and reread the whole sentence again or having him sound out or cover the word to find smaller words. Terminal feedback is when a teacher says the word that the student missed. Research has shown that students become more accurate in word identification when they are able to work out the word than when they are given the word. All three conditions used sustaining feedback. This would have been interesting to see if one group out-performed the others based on the different feedback they received.

A future qualitative study on repeated reading and performers would render interesting results. Teachers need the opportunity to view actors in practice of text in particular how actors bring prosody to their words. It is not the final product of the actors' performance that would be the focus. The focus would be the process to which an actor follows to becoming a prosodic reader.

ELL and LD students were not participants of this particular study. Future research opportunities need to focus on prosody's impact on these readers. Readers' theatre scripts have been found to be beneficial for ELL students due to their format. The scripts are easier to follow and the readers know up front who is speaking.

This prosody study has shown the effectiveness of teaching prosodic elements. Students benefit from reading with expression and their comprehension seems to get better with prosodic practice. This is only a small study of prosody and its overall impact on students' reading. More studies need to be done to explore the many beneficial aspects of learning prosody.

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