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Benefits of sustained silent reading and self-monitoring for reluctant readers

Jamie Quinn
Rowan University

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BENEFITS OF SUSTAINED SILENT READING AND SELF-MONITORING

FOR RELUCTANT READERS

by

Jamie Quinn

A Thesis

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Abstract

Jamie Quinn
BENEFITS OF SUSTAINED SILENT READING AND SELF-MONITORING
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S. Jay Kuder, Ed. D.
Master of Arts in Special Education

This study examined the effect/impact of self-monitoring on reading achievement of reluctant readers during 20 minutes of sustained silent reading. Lexile scores were used as the measurement to evaluate student-learning outcomes. Seven, 9th graders (four male, three female) in an English/Language Arts (ELA) classroom participated in the study. Their initial lexile scores were under 1000 (as determined by the Scholastic Inventory) and identified as reluctant or underperforming readers.

During the intervention, students participated in a sustained silent reading program for the first four weeks, then a self-monitoring strategy (reading logs) was incorporated into instruction. The Scholastic Reading Inventory Assessment (SRI) was administered to evaluate their learning outcomes.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Reading achievement has been shown to be associated with success in school (Greaney, 1980). The National Center for Education Statistics (2011) indicates that 65% of fourth graders are reading at or below the basic reading level. As curriculum advances, these students fall further behind when entering advanced grades. This achievement gap increases as students' progress through the education system. Underperforming readers, when reading grade appropriate text, cannot extract the general meaning, make obvious connections between the text and their own experience, or make simple inferences from text (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2016). In response to poor engagement and achievement in reading, implementation of silent reading practices provides an opportunity for students to read self-selected texts during school to increase reading skills.

Self-monitoring is a skill to track action and performance. Its process includes of self-evaluation, self-instruction, and goal setting. This process keeps students on task and promotes engagement and self-motivation. Reading logs are a self-monitoring strategy to promote reader's' reflection and connection to text. These logs create a purpose for reading and require a daily response/reaction to reading.

Research Question

This study evaluated the effect/impact of the use of a self-monitoring strategy during 20 minutes of daily-sustained silent reading on the lexile score of underperforming, reluctant readers. During the first four weeks, students will participate in SSR with no self-monitoring procedures. The next four weeks, a self-monitoring

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strategy (reading logs) will be implemented. This study will further evaluate the comparative outcome on student lexile scores. Lexile scores will be used as the measurement to evaluate whether participation in a sustained silent reading practice, combined with self-monitoring, improves the reading ability of students.

Students were determined reluctant or underperforming readers by an initial lexile score, a previous year's lexile score, and previous academic year's teacher observation. Lexile scores are a tool to measure reading ability. Lexile attempts to measure readers' true ability by word frequency and sentence length (Lexile Framework). In order to determine "reluctant" and "underperforming" readers for the study, an initial lexile score was recorded. Students, for the sample study, were indicated as "underperforming" readers by an initial lexile score, a previous year's lexile score, and previous academic year's teacher observation.

The hypothesis is that participation in a sustained silent reading program, combined with a self-monitoring strategy, improves reading ability (measured by a reading inventory assessment; lexile score).

Implications

Students can use self-monitoring strategies to become better, more effective readers. The use of reading logs helps monitor reading comprehension while developing fluency at the same time.

Engaging in sustained silent reading (SSR), with the incorporation of reading logs as a self-monitoring strategy, provides students with opportunities to actively participate in text, increasing students' comprehension and lexile score. Reading skills are enhanced

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through daily practice of silent reading; therefore, underperforming readers should see an increase in lexile score.

Increasing opportunities for reading engagement would provide more opportunities for exposure to unfamiliar vocabulary and content knowledge. Students need to read and comprehend increasingly complex text for career and college readiness demands beyond the classroom.

Teachers could incorporate this reading practice into daily instructional periods by allotting a specific amount of time for the reading of self-selected texts. This may be difficult to implement in a traditional schedule due to time constraints; although, a sustained silent reading program could seamlessly fit into an ELA block schedule. Due to the time restrictions of a traditional schedule, SSR could be a weekly practice, instead of a daily, practice.

Key Terms

Sustained Silent reading (SSR) is a form of school-based recreational reading, or free voluntary reading, where students read silently in a designated time period every day in school (Lexile Framework). "Sustained Silent Reading is a technique which has been proposed to provide students with the opportunity to practice their silent reading skills with books of their choice" (Gambrell, 1978). Independent reading skills are enhanced through daily practice in silent reading; SSR provides the opportunity to transfer and apply isolated skills in a pleasurable, independent experience (Gambrell, 1978).

Reading logs build opportunities for sharing ideas and discussion about text and promote the application of met cognitive strategies in the context of reading. Reading

logs are used to maintain a written record of personal reactions to the text on several

levels. Students select novels in order to take full advantage of reading, "students should

enjoy and be motivated by their reading material" (Lyataya, 2001). Reading logs provide

opportunity to articulate attitudes toward a text and make connections to text. Reading

logs provide opportunities for students to grow as strategic readers and independent

learners (Lyataya, 2001). "

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Struggling Readers and Choice

There are several causes of underachievement in reading: reading role models, the acquisition of reading skills (phonics and comprehension), visual processing, and learning disabilities (Adams, 1990). Educators are expected to meet the demands for high levels of literacy in their students, yet they are often met with the low efficiency and motivation from struggling readers. Educators are constantly met with the challenge on how to help students develop and sustain positive reading habits. Educators need ways to provide opportunities for students to experience reading as a rewarding and useful endeavor (Lee, 2011).

Research findings have connected reading motivation with choice. According to Gambrell's (2011) study of sustained silent reading (SSR), students are more motivated to read when they have opportunities of choice (self-selected text) and how they participate in learning tasks. Reading choice increases motivation, keeps students engaged in reading, supports struggling readers, and improves scores on standardized tests (Morgan & Wagner, 2013). Reading engagement increases when students are given opportunities to choose reading material. Implementing Sustained Silent Reading programs can provide students with reading choice opportunities.

Before one can understand how to increase reading achievement, one must understand why readers are struggling. The Rand Reading Study Group (2002) researched different practices of reading comprehension. Research revealed that one of the problems facing middle and secondary students is that students enter classrooms

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without the prerequisite knowledge, skill, or dispositions to read and comprehend text. Burke (1998) identified three categories of readers: powerful, proficient, and reluctant. Powerful readers ask questions about text (including characterization and author's message) and engage in a reading process that requires more in-depth attention. Proficient readers are typical readers. Proficient readers have perquisite reading skills, but lack vocabulary and contextual information knowledge. These readers do not surpass basic reading expectations needed for next level, complex text. Reluctant readers are readers with significant limitations. They struggle to comprehend or engage in text. These readers do not read at home or for enjoyment, and they tend to resist reading. Burke (1998) defines the reluctant reader as struggling readers who have found strategies to avoid reading and understanding whenever possible. The NCAE (2003) identifies reluctant, struggling readers as readers who have anxiety about their reading limitations; these readers are reluctant to read in fear that their limitations will embarrass them in front of their peers.

Bennett (2016) defines reluctant readers as, not one who is unable to read, but one who does not voluntarily read. Bennett described three broad categories of reluctant readers: dormant, uncommitted, and unmotivated. Dormant readers find reading enjoyable but lack time to, or do not make time, to read. Uncommitted readers do not like to read, but these readers may be motivated or inspired in the future to read for enjoyment. Unmotivated readers do not like reading, and it is unlikely that the unmotivated reader will ever enjoy reading. Bennett (2016) discusses the misconception that all reluctant readers have additional learning disabilities. Although this is true for some, it is not true for all. In some cases, reluctant readers are more advanced

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intellectually than reading material assigned; therefore, they are disengaged, or these readers are hesitant to read due to unstimulating material. Choice in reading selection plays an integrate role in the reading desire and excitement about reading for these readers.

SSR and Student Attitude Towards Reading

Earl & Manynard (2006) surveyed and studied fourteen reluctant readers ranging from ages 9-10. Although the participants claimed to enjoy reading, in practice they found reading difficult. Earl & Manynard indicated that reluctant readers are the readers who are not confident in their reading abilities. The survey and study indicated unwillingness and declination for reading, yet not all reluctant readers are incompetent readers. A key issue is confidence and reluctant readers use a number of tactics to avoid reading. They find reading daunting and employ any number of factors to avoid reading. Teacher, Moorefield (2004), divided reluctant readers into three categories: those who 'can't read,' 'don't read,' and 'won't read.' Earl and Manynard concluded that when taking responsibility for reading development, method is crucial. The crucial element to success in overcoming reluctant reading is that reading should be fun. Reluctant readers take responsibility for reading development when reading is enjoyed and appreciated.

Oliver (1970), proposed the use of Sustained Silent Reading (SRR) as a way to reach reluctant and struggling readers. Sustained Silent Reading is a form of school-based recreational reading where students read silently for a designated block of time. Oliver claimed that SSR Sustained Silent Reading increased attention span; improved self-discipline; increased sophistication in the self-selection of reading materials; improved acceptance and enjoyment of reading; and refined and extending reading skills. Oliver

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(1970) studied practices of reading and highlighted practices of reading in his recommendation for reading instruction. Oliver (1970) focused on time spent *practicing* reading. In Best Practice Strategy, Hyde, Daniels, and Zemelman (1998), suggested that effective teachers provide time for silent reading, encourage reading for varying purposes, and creatively develop ways for students to respond to text.

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) is not a method of reading instruction, but a planned program of reading practice. Yoon (2002) discussed a meta-analytic review that investigated the overall effects of SSR on attitude toward reading. Yoon (2002), examined whether SSR enhances students' attitude toward reading and what contextual features of SSR are associated with students' reading attitude. The findings either suggested that providing a fixed period of time for students to read material of their choice, for pleasure or for information, facilitated their attitude toward reading (Yoon 2002). The study examined the important characteristics of SSR that facilitate a relationship between comprehension, attitude, and the activity: self-selection, role modeling, and non-accountability.

Yoon (2002) proposed that readers pay closer attention to text, persist in reading for longer periods of time, and enjoy reading when material interests them. Yoon stated that, according to Deci & Ryan's (1985) theory of self-motivation and intrinsic motivation, children are motivated to learn when they have choice and ownership in material. Thus, the self-selected component of SSR promotes ownership of what students' read. If choice is removed, individual intrinsic motivation for reading may decrease.

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An attitude survey, conducted by Heathington (1979), reported that students with poor attitudes indicated a number of reasons why they did not like reading: lack of time; interruptions; not enough materials on topics of interest; not being allowed to select reading materials; readings being too hard. SSR provides time for silent, uninterrupted reading time with student (self-selected) text. Giving students reading choice is imperative to the practice. Hyde, Daniels, and Zemelman, (1998) indicated, "Choice is an integral part of literate behavior. Children should be permitted to choose reading materials, activities, and ways of demonstrating their understanding of the texts they have read." Gallagher (2003) indicates that choice "maximizes chances for reading."

Kirby (2003) evaluated the effects of the use of weekly SSR reading time on recreational reading habits and attitudes in a 9th grade English Class. A questionnaire was developed to address how this practice affected the students' recreational reading habits over a two-month period. The questionnaire was administered at the beginning and end of the study period (Kirby, 2003). In response to the questionnaire, students indicated that SSR introduced them to genres that they may not have otherwise read. Students indicated they felt they did increase the number of books read throughout the time of the study and, overwhelmingly stated that they were glad they participated in SSR each week. Students also indicated that they read for the majority of the time allotted for SSR (Kirby, 2003).

Additionally, a study conducted at Estancia High School in Californian, investigated the impact/effect SSR had on reading attitude and literacy. Researchers evaluated the role SSR had on language development, comprehension, vocabulary, student attitudes, and its corollary consequence on the development of reading habits

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(Meyers, 1998). In a post survey completed by a classroom of 22 students, 19 students indicated they read most or all of the time during the silent reading period. In a post school wide survey, 54 out of 90 respondents indicated they read most or all of the time during the silent reading period. In regards to reading habits, most students indicated they felt they read more after the program was introduced; only 53% of the students surveyed wanted the school to continue the program (Meyers, 1998).

Benefits of SSR

Regardless of how SSR programs are administered, distinguishing characteristics of SSR are that students, once a day for at least 15-30 minutes, are provided with a block of time to read self-selected text. Studies show that students who enjoy reading develop better skills in reading comprehension, spelling, and vocabulary. In a typical Sustained Silent Reading program, middle school students read about 1 million words and learn about 1,000 new words each year without any vocabulary direct instruction (Gardiner, 2001).

The National Reading Panel (2000) report failed to recommend SSR strategy due to lack of evidence of its effectiveness in increasing student achievement. However, various research suggests the benefits of the components of a sustained silent reading program. The NRP suggested that additional research to be conducted to further determine the benefits of such programs.

Sustained Silent Reading programs provide opportunities for students to practice reading skills, leading to proficiency. The foundation for SSR is engagement. Guthrie (2001) links reading motivation, reading practice, and reading achievement. Guthrie

concludes that more highly engaged readers show higher achievement than less engaged readers, and that the availability of materials and student choice are motivational factors for student engagement.

Gardiner (2001) reviewed a study of SSR using the Nelson & Denny reading test to assess rates of improvement in vocabulary and reading comprehension of high school students in Colorado. Students completed an 18-week Sustained Silent Reading program. At the end of the program, reading achievement (vocabulary and comprehension) showed improvement of 1.9 grade levels (more than 4 times that of the control group who did not participate in a SSR program). The students in the study, who read at least one or more books per month, doubled from 12-24%.

Gardiner (2001) conducted a study in a high school in Georgia on a Power Sustained Silent Reading program. 64% of the teachers reported students' interest in reading had increased in response to the program. 53% of teachers reported students' reading skills improved in response to the program. Student achievement in reading increased from 34th percentile to 57th percentile during four years of implementation.

Krashen (2006) reported on studies tracking students who were involved in a long-term SSR program. 8 out of 10 students who participated in the long term SSR program (12 months or more) outperformed their counterparts in classes that did not participate in a recreational reading program. Krashen (2006) reports that in 51 out of 54 comparisons (94%) of readers involved in recreational reading programs do as well or better than students in traditional reading programs. Krashen also discussed the benefits of vocabulary acquisition through a silent reading program, and increased vocabulary knowledge through reading words in context.

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Original studies by Erazum (1987) indicated a link between sustained silent reading and higher student reading achievement. Erazum's study concluded that lower achieving students who participated in a SSR program showed greater gains in reading achievement on the Metropolitan Achievement Test than those in a control group who did not participate in a SSR program.

Researcher Janise Arthur (1995) investigated the connection between sustained silent reading programs and achievement. Arthur investigated reading interests of children in kindergarten, primary, and middle grades. Arthur's studies revealed that students who demonstrated a voluntary interest in books were not only rated to have better work habits, social and emotional development, language structure, and overall school performance, but also scored higher on standardized tests (2). Arthur's studies showed that SSR programs improved students' attitude towards reading and further developed students' skills in reading comprehension, spelling, and vocabulary.

Self-Monitoring Reading/Reading Logs

Reading logs are a self-monitoring reading strategy that can be applied to SSR practices. Pilgreen's (2002) SSR Handbook outlined the components of a successful Silent Reading program: 1. Access; 2. Appeal; 3. Conductive environment; 4. encouragement; 5. Staff training; 6. Non-account-ability; 7. Follow-up activities; 8. Distributed time to read. Reading logs, according to Pilgreen's handbook, could be utilized as a non-accountability, follow-up activity to silent reading.

In regards to non-account-ability, Pilgreen's SSR Handbook advised to avoid using traditional reading assessment, but for educators to try book reports, page

requirements, and reading points per day to encourage engagement and self-monitoring (Lee, 2011). Garan & DeVoogd (2008) suggested innovations to SSR to enhance benefits such as student monitoring to extend student thinking. Garan and DeVoogd suggest conferencing with students to discourage "fake" reading (to look at text superficially without actually reading), peer sharing, conference logs, completing response journals, and reading logs.

Lyutaya (2001) suggests pairing SSR with reading logs (i.e. reading journals, response journals, reading diaries) to encourage pre-, during-, and post- reading engagement. Reading logs are a record of personal reactions to text. Students are able to express attitudes towards text and make connections with text. Reading logs are a place to take risks, speculate, ask questions, express opinions, and build knowledge in response to text. Thus, students' ability to grow as strategic, independent readers' increases. Writing in a log enables students to organize thoughts and awareness to text, lending to deeper comprehension (Lyutaya, 2001).

Pre reading responses in a reading log sets a purpose for reading, activates background knowledge, and allows students to make predictions and review text features. During reading responses include extended writing comments, commenting on passages or sentences from text, creating questions and making logical suppositions by analyzing details from text. During reading responses can also include writing and recording new vocabulary and definitions (Lyutaya, 2001).

Reading logs format should be personalized. Students should fill in logs regularly, but logs should be very personalized and diary-like (Lyutaya, 2001). The teacher can stipulate the number of components and length of logs, but students should

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make their own choices about what components to include in their logs. Teachers can assess reading logs by developing a scale for a basic rubric: (1) Excellent, (2) Very Good, (3) Good, (4) Needs Work, evaluating components such as observations, questions, comparisons, reflections, summaries, analyses, synthesis, and vocabulary (Lyutaya, 2001).

Lyutaya (2001) concludes that completing pre-, during-, and post- reading interval logs helps students learn strategies to enhance reading comprehension: activating new vocabulary and developing writing skills. Lyutaya also suggests peer review of responses as a form of non-formal, non-accountability, assessment.

In regards to reading logs, Corbine (1995) stated that by writing while reading, students could learn to organize their thoughts, and after habitually writing in response to reading, could learn to clarify and refine their thoughts. Activities centered around a reading log, could "elucidate several aspects of student thought processes: using the reading log as a response journal, they could discover ideas; and using it a s a text-to-meaning journal, they could rethink ideas; and using it as a process journal, they could regulate their reading habits" (Corbine, 1995). Corbine concludes that writing in response to text sets a purpose for reading, and that before, during, and after reading assignments elicits students' perceptions of text.

The rationale for SSR is that it will promote reading growth. SSR allows students to develop reading skills through application and practice by providing sustained, uninterrupted encounters with self-selected text. By adding self-monitoring to a sustained silent reading program reluctant readers may experience more of the benefits from sustained silent reading.

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Methodology

Setting and Participants

This study included seven high school students (four males and three females), all ninth graders in an English/Language Arts (ELA) classroom. The students attend a high school in a suburban southern New Jersey school district. The ELA classroom is a double instructional period, 84 minutes in length.

There are approximately 381 students in the high school. According to the New Jersey School Performance Report (New Jersey Department of Education, 2015) 54.1% of the students in the high school are white, 25.5% of the students are black, 11.3% of the students are Hispanic, 2.4% of students are Asian and 5.2% of students are two or more races. English is the primary language spoken in the community. When examining the high school population, 18% of the students are students with disabilities, 56.4% of the population are considered economically disadvantaged, and 1.3% of the population is limited English proficiency students.

Four of the seven students have 504 educational accommodation plans. Two male students have been diagnosed as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. One female student has an undetermined learning disability (classified as learning disabled); and one female has been identified as having a central auditory processing disorder. The third female in the sample study, without a 504 plan, is an English as a Second Language (ESL) student.

Participant 1. CC is a 9th grade Caucasian, male student who is not currently receiving any special education services. His initial reading inventory indicated he was reading four grades below grade level (671 lexile).

Participant 2. JC is a 9th grade Caucasian, female student who is currently receiving accommodations from a 504 plan. JC has a 504 plan to address her symptoms of a central auditory processing disorder, including slower processing skills. Her accommodations include receiving extra time for class assignments, supplemental instruction with step-by-step directions for task completions, and the reinforcement and repetition of directions establishing one-on-one eye contact. Her initial reading inventory indicated she was reading one grade below grade level (886 lexile).

Participant 3. IH is a 9th grade African American, male student who is not currently receiving any special education services. His initial reading inventory indicated he was reading on grade level (904 lexile).

Participant 4. TH is a 9th grade African American, female student who is currently receiving accommodations from a 504 plan. TH has a 504 plan to address her symptoms of an undetermined learning disability, including seizure episodes. Her accommodations include receiving extra time for class assignments, checking verbally for understanding with student by discreetly asking the student to recite task expectations, and braking lessons and assessments into shorter segments. Her initial reading inventory indicated she was reading one grade below grade level (882 lexile).

Participant 5. LP is a 9th grade Hispanic, female student who is not currently receiving any special education services. LP is an ESL student. Her initial reading inventory indicated she was reading four grades below grade level (633 lexile).

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Participant 6. CS is a 9th grade Caucasian, male student who is currently receiving accommodations from a 504 plan. CS has a 504 plan to address his symptoms of ADHD, including focus and attention. His accommodations include providing directions/instructions in steps with clarification and extended time for class work and assessments. His initial reading inventory indicated he was reading three grades below grade level (782 lexile).

Participant 7. OT is a 9th grade African American, male student who is currently receiving accommodations from a 504 plan. OT has a 504 plan to address his symptoms of ADHD, including focus and attention. His accommodations include providing directions/instructions in steps with clarification and extended time for class work and assessments. His initial reading inventory indicated he was reading one grade below grade level (849 lexile).

This study was conducted as a single subject study. All participants were students with an initial lexile score under 1000 (as determined by the Scholastic Inventory). For this study, students were determined reluctant or underperforming readers by an initial lexile score, a previous year's lexile score, and the previous academic year's teacher observation.

Table 1

Lexile Score and Grade Level for Each Participant

_____

Student	Initial Lexile Score	Reading Grade Level
Participant 1	671	Grade 5 Reading Level
Participant 2	886	Grade 8 Reading Level
Participant 3	904	Grade 9 Reading Level
Participant 4	882	Grade 8 Reading Level
Participant 5	633	Grade 5 Reading Level
Participant 6	728	Grade 6 Reading Level
Participant 7	849	Grade 8 Reading Level

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Two interventions were applied. During the first four weeks, students participated in a sustained silent reading program. During weeks five through eight, a self-monitoring strategy (reading logs) was incorporated into instruction. The researcher administered the Scholastic Reading Inventory assessment (SRI) after implementation of each intervention to further evaluate the outcome.

Procedure

The study was conducted over an eight-week period. Baseline data was collected on the students' reading levels using a pre skills assessment to indicate reluctant and underperforming readers (initial lexile score assessed by Scholastic Reading Inventory).

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Students were determined reluctant or underperforming readers by an initial lexile score, a previous year's lexile score, and previous academic year's teacher observation. Seven participants were selected with an initial lexile score under 1000. A 9th grade student, reading on grade level, should have at least a 999 lexile score. End of year target reading levels for a 9th grade student, reading on grade level, is 1050-1260. The students selected ranged from a 5th grade reading level, to a low 9th grade reading level.

The Lexile program used for this study was from the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). SRI is a criterion-referenced test intended to measure reading comprehension. SRI uses Lexile Frameworks, measuring reading ability and readability. Results are reported as scale scores (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1998). The SRI is a valid assessment instrument. SRI has been the subject of six validation studies (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1998). SRI is an interactive computer adaptive assessment.

In the first session, after an initial-baseline reading inventory, the intervention was applied. Students participated in 20 min of daily-sustained silent reading for four weeks. Students chose silent reading novels within their lexile range (100L below – 50 above). Students were allowed to self-select novels from the class-reading library or the district media center. The novels were teacher approved to meet a combination of lexile range, development level, and interest level. Struggling readers (students' two grades below reading level or more) were matched with novels of high interest/low readability. The teacher conferenced with students upon completion of one novel before students moved on to the next. Students, during this four-week period, completed one to two novels. No assessments were provided during the initial four weeks. After the first four weeks, students completed a second Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) assessment. This

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second assessment was administered to evaluate the impact of a sustained silent reading program on student lexile scores.

During weeks five through eight, a second intervention was applied. Self-monitoring strategies (reading logs) were implemented to further evaluate the comparative outcome on student lexile scores. For this study, reading logs were used to assess students' responses for active engagement with reading and comprehension of text.

Reading logs were used daily to understand students' thought process, connection and reflection to text. Each day, students recorded the amount of time-spent reading and the number of pages read. Students were required to write in complete sentences and include textual evidence as necessary to respond to one of the following prompt choices: summarize action; comments (thoughts on the significant of what is currently happening in the text); ask questions; quote line(s) from text and comment/reflect; describe a reaction to a character, action, or idea confronted in the text; illustrate an image or passage with description.

After four weeks of daily reading log entries, students completed a third reading inventory. This third assessment was used to further evaluate the comparative outcome on student lexile scores when self-monitoring strategies (reading logs) are incorporated into a silent reading program.

Chapter 4

Results

Analysis was conducted on three lexile measurements to determine if there were differences between students' reading achievement when participating in a Sustained Silent Reading Program (SSR) compared to a baseline lexile measurement. Additionally, outcomes were analyzed to determine if there was a significant difference in reading achievement when a self-monitoring strategy (reading log) is incorporated into a SSR program.

A baseline lexile measurement was attained before interventions were applied.

Table 2

Lexile Score and Grade Level for Each Participant

Student	Initial Lexile Score	Reading Grade Level
Participant 1	671	Grade 5 Reading Level
Participant 2	886	Grade 8 Reading Level
Participant 3	904	Grade 9 Reading Level
Participant 4	882	Grade 8 Reading Level
Participant 5	633	Grade 5 Reading Level
Participant 6	728	Grade 6 Reading Level
Participant 7	849	Grade 8 Reading Level

After an initial baseline was determined. The first intervention was applied. Students participated in four weeks of 20 minutes uninterrupted SSR. After the first four weeks, students completed a second Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). The results are shown below in table 3:

Table 3

Lexile Score Growth Report

Student	Initial Lexile Score	Intervention (SSR)
Participant 1	671	757
Participant 2	886	850
Participant 3	904	865
Participant 4	882	964
Participant 5	633	671
Participant 6	728	991
Participant 7	849	881

Participant 1. Participant 1 increased lexile measurement from 671-757 (+86). Reading Inventory indicates one reading grade level increase. Reading Inventory indicates reading achievement is below basic (significantly below grade level).

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Participant 2. Participant 2 decreased lexile measurement from 886-850 (-36). Reading inventory indicates she is still reading one grade below grade level. Reading Inventory indicates reading achievement is basic (below grade level).

Participant 3. Participant 3 decreased lexile measurement from 904-865 (-39). Reading inventory indicates he decreased reading on grade level. Reading Inventory indicates reading achievement is basic (below grade level).

Participant 4. Participant 4 increased lexile measurement from 882-964 (+82). Reading Inventory indicates one reading grade level increase. Reading Inventory indicates reading achievement is proficient (grade level).

Participant 5. Participant 5 increased lexile measurement from 633-671 (+38). Reading Inventory indicates she is still reading four grades below grade level. Reading Inventory indicates reading achievement is below basic (significantly below grade level).

Participant 6. Participant 6 increased lexile measurement from 782-991 (+209). Reading Inventory indicates a two grade reading level increase. Reading Inventory indicates reading achievement is proficient (grade level).

Participant 7. Participant 7 increased lexile measurement from 849-881 (+82). Reading Inventory indicates he is still reading on grade level. Reading Inventory indicates reading achievement is proficient (grade level).

After the first four weeks of participation in a SSR program, five participants' Reading Inventory indicated an increase in lexile. Three of the five students increased one reading grade level (Participant 1, Participant 4, Participant 7); two of the five participants moved from below reading grade level to grade level (Participant 4, Participant 6); and one of five students increased four reading grade levels (Participant 6).

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Two participants showed no growth in lexile measurement. One of the two participants (Participant 2) remained on current reading level (one grade below grade level). The other decreased in lexile measurement from on grade level to one grade below grade level (Participant 3).

According to research, when implemented with fidelity, a SSR program should increase students' lexile measurements 50-150 L. Participant 4 increased lexile measurement +209 in four weeks. Considering the students' disability (ADHD), the initial lexile score variable is inattentive behavior.

During weeks five through eight, self-monitoring strategies (reading logs) were implemented to further evaluate the comparative outcome on student lexile scores. Reading logs track accountability in an independent reading program. Reading logs hold students accountable for reading and writing evidence. For this study, reading logs were used to assess students' responses for active engagement with reading and comprehension of text.

Reading logs were used daily to exhibit thought process, connection and reflection to text. Each day, students recorded the amount of time-spent reading and the number of pages read. Students needed to write in complete sentences and include textual evidence as necessary to respond to a designated, choice prompt.

After four weeks of daily reading log entries, students completed a third reading inventory. Lexile measurements are provided below:

Table 4

Lexile Score Growth Report (Reading Logs)

Student Initial Lexile Score		Intervention (SSR)	Intervention (Reading Logs)
Participant 1	671	757	948
Participant 2	886	850	884
Participant 3	904	865	936
Participant 4	882	964	742
Participant 5	633	671	878
Participant 6	728	991	899
Participant 7	849	881	902

Participant 1. Participant 1 increased lexile measurement from 671-757 (+86) after first intervention; after second intervention, Participant 1 increased lexile measurement from 757-888 (+127). Reading Inventory indicates a two reading grade level increase. Participant 1 increased from below basic-to-basic reading achievement (below grade level).

Participant 2. Participant 2 decreased lexile measurement from 886-850 (-36) after first intervention; after second intervention, Participant 2 increased lexile

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measurement from 850-902 (+52). Reading inventory indicates reading level is proficient (grade level).

Participant 3. Participant 3 decreased lexile measurement from 904-865 (-39) after first intervention; after second intervention, Participant 3 increased lexile measurement from 865-899(+34). Reading Inventory indicates Participant is reading one grade below level. Reading inventory indicates reading achievement is a basic (below grade level).

Participant 4. Participant 4 increased lexile measurement from 882-964 (+82) after first intervention; after second intervention, Participant 4 decreased lexile measurement from 964-936. Reading Inventory indicates Participant is reading on grade level. Reading Inventory indicated reading level is proficient (grade level).

Participant 5. Participant 5 increased lexile measurement from 633-671 (+38) after first intervention; after second intervention, Participant 5 increased lexile measurement from 671-742 (+71). Reading Inventory indicates participant is three reading levels below grade level. Reading Inventory indicates reading achievement is below basic (significantly below grade level).

Participant 6. Participant 6 increased lexile measurement from 782-991 (+209) after first intervention; after second intervention, Participant 6 decreased lexile measurement from 991-948 (-43). Reading Inventory indicates Participant 6 is reading on grade level. Reading Inventory indicated reading achievement is proficient (grade level).

Participant 7. Participant 7 increased lexile measurement from 849-881 (+82) after first intervention; after second intervention, Participant 7 decreased lexile

measurement from 881-878. Reading Inventory indicates Participant 7 is reading one grade below grade level. Reading Inventory indicated reading achievement is basic (below grade level).

After the second intervention, five participants' Reading Inventory indicated an increased in lexile. Two of the seven students increased one reading level (Participant 2, Participant 7); two of the seven students increased two reading levels (Participant 1, Participant 5).

According to data, six out of the seven participants (after first intervention) increased reading achievement. All seven participants (after both interventions) increased reading achievement. Participant 1 increased +213 L; Participant 2 increased +16 L; Participant 4 increased +54 L; Participant 5 increased +109 L; Participant 6 increased +166 L; Participant 7 increased +29 L. Participant 3 decreased lexile measurement (-35) after first intervention (SSR) and increased lexile measurement (+24) after second intervention (reading logs).

Discussion

Summary

This study examined the effect of a daily Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) program on reading achievement. The seven participants in the study were 9th grade students determined underperforming readers with an initial lexile score under 1000. During the first four weeks, students participated in SSR with no self-monitoring procedures. Weeks 5-8, a self-monitoring strategy (reading logs) were implemented. The study further evaluated the comparative outcome on student lexile scores.

The Sustained Silent Reading program (SSR) used in this study positively affected participants' reading achievement. Six out of seven participants increased lexile measurement. All seven participants increased lexile measurement after the implementation of self-monitoring, reading logs. Participant 2, 4, and 6 increased reading achievement to proficient (on grade level).

According to previous research, when implemented with fidelity, a SSR program should increase students' lexile measurement 50-150 L. Six of the seven participants reached this benchmark after the first intervention (incorporation of the SSR program). All seven participants reached this benchmark after the second intervention (SSR plus self-monitoring).

Similar to previous studies, this study indicated the effect/impact of SSR on reading achievement. Comparable to Gardiner's (2001) study, this study indicated increased reading achievement showing improvement from 1-4 grade levels. Gardiner (2001) reviewed a study of SSR using the Nelson & Denny reading test to assess rates of

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improvement in vocabulary and reading comprehension of high school students in Colorado. Students completed an 18-week Sustained Silent Reading program. At the end of the program, reading achievement (vocabulary and comprehension) showed improvement of 1.9 grade levels (more than 4 times that of the control group who did not participate in a SSR program).

Additionally, original studies by Erazum (1987) indicated a link between sustained silent reading and higher student reading achievement. Erazum's study concluded that lower achieving students who participated in a SSR program showed greater gains in reading achievement on the Metropolitan Achievement Test than those in a control group who did not participate in a SSR program. Similar to Erazum's study, the participants in this study were lower achieving students, determined underperforming readers with an initial lexile score under 1000. Six out of seven participants increased lexile measurement ranging from (+16) to (+213).

Lyutaya (2001) suggested pairing SSR with reading logs (i.e. reading journals, response journals, reading diaries) to encourage pre-, during-, and post- reading engagement. Reading logs are a record of personal reactions to text. Students are able to express attitudes towards text and make connections with text. Reading logs are a place to take risks, speculate, ask questions, express opinions, and build knowledge in response to text. Thus, students' ability to grow as strategic, independent readers' increases.

Writing in a log enables students to organize thoughts and awareness to text, lending to deeper comprehension (Lyutaya, 2001). During the first four weeks of this study, students participated in SSR with no self-monitoring procedures. Weeks 5-8, a self-monitoring strategy (reading logs) were implemented. All seven participants increased

lexile measurement after the implementation of reading logs. The rationale for SSR is that it will promote reading growth. SSR allows students to develop reading skills through application and practice by providing sustained, uninterrupted encounters with self-selected text. By adding self-monitoring to a Sustained Silent Reading program, reluctant readers may experience more of the benefits from sustained silent reading. This study validated Lyutaya's concept of incorporating self-monitoring for reluctant readers to experience more of the benefits from SSR. All seven participants reached benchmark with SSR plus self-monitoring, including participants with ADHD.

Limitations

Fidelity, a conductive environment, and committal to the program are integrate to a successful program. In Pilgreen's studies, readers were generally given 15-20 min. This study provided students with the suggested 20 min of sustained silent reading, and all seven participants reached benchmark. A program's success is contingent on the time and frequency students are given to read.

Research findings have connected reading motivation with choice. Choice in reading selection plays an integrate role in the reading desire and excitement about reading for reluctant reading. According to Gambrell's (2011) study of sustained silent reading (SSR), students are more motivated to read when they have opportunities of choice (self-selected text) and how they participate in learning tasks. Due to limited funding and media center availability, students had to self-select text from a limited variety classroom library.

Implications for Practice

Implementing a successful SSR program requires fidelity. Since there is limited research on the effectiveness of SSR on reading achievement, an increased number and larger participant sample sizes would need to be evaluated. This particular study indicated an increase in reading achievement for learning disabled students and regular education students with initial below basic lexile measurements. Further research would need to be collected on regular education students who are basic or proficient readers.

Conclusion

This study examined the effect/impact of the use of a self-monitoring strategy during 20 minutes of sustained silent reading on the lexile score of underperforming, reluctant readers. Lexile scores were used as the measurement to evaluate reading achievement.

The results of the study indicate that participation in a sustained silent reading program, combined with a self-monitoring strategy, improves reading ability (measured by a reading inventory assessment; lexile score). Six of the seven participants reached benchmark lexile scores after the participation in the sustained silent reading program. All seven participants reached benchmark lexile scores with the incorporation of a self-monitoring strategy.

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