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Effects of Group-Assisted Listening-While-Reading  
and Repeated Reading on the Fluency  
of Fifth Grade Students

by  
Deanne M. Alspach

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a  
Master of Science in Teaching Degree in the Graduate  
Division of Rowan College of New Jersey  
1995

Approved by

M.S.T. Advisor

Date Approved

June 21, 1995

## ABSTRACT

Deanne M. Alspach - *Effects of Group-Assisted Listening-While-Reading and Repeated Reading of the Fluency of Fifth Grade Students, 1995*, Dr. Randall Robinson, Advisor, Master of Science in Teaching Program in the Graduate Division of Rowan College.

In an attempt to verify the feasibility of using a "group-assisted listening-while-reading approach" or a "repeated reading approach" in a suburban New Jersey intermediate grade setting, the researcher set out to test both strategies in a fifth grade classroom. Using a pretest-posttest control group design and  $t$  tests for independent and non-independent samples, the researcher found that a group-assisted listening-while-reading approach had a significant impact on increasing the reading fluency in one class ( $n=20$ ). Students in this group demonstrated greater improvement in reading rate ( $p<.10$ ) and miscue analysis ( $p<.01$ ) than counterparts receiving a repeated reading treatment. Both groups also saw significant improvement between the pretest and posttest results with one exception. There was no significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the control group regarding miscue rate improvement. While research on fluency improvement focuses mainly on primary students, similarities in older poor readers necessitated further study. As they lack the necessary fluency development they do not read as often as other students. Yet, the only way to increase fluency is by reading. Researchers have recognized that there must be alternatives to develop fluency in the classroom.

## MINI-ABSTRACT

Deanne M. Alspach - Effects of Group-Assisted Listening-While-Reading and Repeated Reading of the Fluency of Fifth Grade Students, 1995, Dr. Randall Robinson, Advisor, Master of Science in Teaching Program in the Graduate Division of Rowan College.

The researcher tested both a "group-assisted listening-while-reading approach" and a "repeated reading approach" to increase fluency in fifth grade students. Using a pretest-posttest control group design, students in the experimental group demonstrated greater improvement in reading rate ( $p < .10$ ) and miscue analysis ( $p < .01$ ) than counterparts.

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## Chapter 1 Scope of the Study

### Introduction

Regardless of content area, the main goal of educators is to assist their students in reaching a level of success. This is especially true for those instructors responsible for increasing reading achievement. One would be hard pressed to find an elementary teacher who did not feel that reading was crucial in the development of lifelong learners. Yet, fluency, a major factor in reading development, often is not recognized as a skill that must be refined (Allington, 1983).

Fluency is the ability to read passages orally without errors and with expression. Development of this aspect of reading often is not stressed in the elementary classroom. Allington (1983) posits that a lack of fluency development is often seen as just the learning pattern of a poor reader. Unfortunately, this misconception may thrust a less fluent student into a continuing cycle of low reading achievement. Students that have not developed the necessary components that promote fluency may lose any motivation to keep reading (Mathes, Simmons & Davis, 1992). In the same vein those students who are taught the necessary fluency skills, regardless of the method, have shown better attitudes toward reading and are more motivated to continue (Reitsma, 1988).

A substantial number of past studies suggest that repeated reading

enhances the fluency of children. Evidence has also been found to support assisted reading approaches in increasing this reading skill. The majority of the studies, however, focus on the reader in the primary grades. Yet, students in the fifth grade may still lack the necessary fluency development.

### Statement of Problem

Research has shown that primary school success is linked with level of reading development (Fowler, 1993). Yet, the typical classroom procedures do not address the oral fluency question. The traditional "round-robin" technique for oral reading may have to be altered (Reitsma, 1988). Increased attention has been placed on the creation of novel ways to promote fluency since the early 1970s. The most effective and time-efficient strategy has yet to be recognized by all major researchers.

### Statement of Hypothesis

The researcher hypothesized that fifth grade students exposed to a "group-assisted listening-while-reading approach" will show greater improvement in fluency rates than those students using a "repeated reading approach."

### Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study the following terms have been operationally defined by the researcher:

Automaticity - The automatic nature in which fluent readers recognize words.

Fluency - The ability to read with expression and without errors. "Group-assisted listening-while-reading approach" - A reading technique where an instructor leads a group of students in oral recitation of a selected passage.

Improvement - Improvement is defined as an increase in reading rate from the pretest to posttest. Improvement will also be defined as a decrease in the number of miscues from the first to final reading.

Miscue error - Any error that occurs while reading including mispronunciations, substitutions, omissions, and insertions.

Reading rate - The time lapse (when measured in seconds) between the start and completion of one oral reading passage.

"Repeated reading approach" - A reading strategy where students repeatedly read a passage without instruction from a teacher or other outside sources.

"Round-robin reading approach" - A strategy where each student reads a predetermined number of lines of text.

### Limitations of Study

Results of this study are delimited to one fifth grade class at a suburban southern New Jersey school. The fact that the study was restricted to a single class of 20 students severely limits the findings. Classroom selection was not random although random sampling within the class was performed.

Applying the strategies utilized in the study to classes outside this grade level or school may not result in similar findings. Reading levels prior to the study were not reviewed. Thus, the generalized results may not be applicable to all achievement levels.

## Chapter 2 Review of Related Literature

### Introduction

Fluency has been a topic of research for decades. Most studies have focused on determining the best technique to help students develop this essential reading skill. Allington (1983) found that numerous studies drew a “relationship of fluent oral reading and good overall reading ability” (p. 560). Yet, fluency is not stressed in the majority of elementary classrooms. With the advent of whole language reading programs and the like, emphasis has been placed on exposing students to numerous materials. The philosophy guiding such programs stresses that students need to be exposed to language in its entirety. Focus is placed not on explicitly developing individual skills but on experiencing language as a whole (Sears, Carpenter & Burstein, 1994). While this may be a beneficial way to introduce students to literature and the natural flow of language, it does not necessarily promote fluency. Consistently moving on to new material may expose students to new vocabulary and ideas but only if they understand what they are reading. Studies show that students that lack fluency skills do not gain meaning from passages. They place their attention on decoding rather than content (Allington, 1983; Eldredge, 1990; Eldredge & Quinn, 1988).

By focusing solely on decoding, students often cannot reach the necessary speed that promotes understanding. Fowler (1993) states that a

minimum of 200 words per minute reading rate is necessary in order to heighten comprehension. Several studies have focused on techniques that teachers may employ to enhance strategies and promote fluency. Samuels (1979) found that the major component necessary to increase fluency was automaticity. This refers to the automatic nature in which fluent readers recognize words. When a reader reaches the level of automaticity he/she no longer needs to concentrate on decoding. This does not occur quickly but Samuels (1979) states that like musicians and athletes, readers need to practice. There are a variety of techniques that have been developed to expand the approach to fluency development. This researcher hypothesizes that fifth grade students exposed to a "group-assisted listening-while-reading approach" will show greater improvement in fluency rates than those students using a "repeated reading approach."

### Repeated Reading

Repeated reading has been found to be beneficial to students in a number of studies (Eldredge, 1990; Herman, 1985; Rasinski, 1990; Samuels, 1979). Students using this approach read a passage until certain fluency requirements are met (Samuels, 1979). Repeated reading allows students to increase their automaticity for numerous words. As automaticity increases so does speed. Comprehension of material follows this increase in reading rate. Some studies show that there may also be some transfer of knowledge from one passage to another. Samuels (1979) found that with each new passage students reached the predetermined speed much more quickly.

### Assisted Reading

Many other strategies are slightly modified versions of Samuels' repeated reading technique. Assisted reading generally refers to an individual at a more advanced reading level assisting the less skilled person to read. The lead reader models a fluent rendition of the passage. Often the reading is repeated until a certain fluency rate is obtained (Mathes, Simmons & Davis, 1992). Hoskisson (1975) stated that this method of reading remediation followed traditional oral language acquisition. Students are taught the correct spoken language by mimicking the sounds they hear. In the same vein, assisted reading exposes students to information via sight, sound, and movement (Hollingsworth, 1978). Assisted reading is a generalized term for a variety of reading strategies. These techniques include the Neurological Impress Method (N.I.M.), a speech-select pad strategy, listening-while-reading/tape-assisted reading, dyad reading, and group-assisted reading.

#### Neurological Impress Method

The Neurological Impress Method (N.I.M.) was formulated by Heckelman in 1961 (Heckelman, 1966). This strategy was developed in an effort to help students develop reading fluency in the shortest amount of time. The N.I.M. consists of a teacher sitting in close proximity to a poor reader. The instructor then reads text aloud into the student's ear. The student attempts to orally follow along (Heckelman, 1966; Hollingsworth, 1978). There is no emphasis placed on correcting student errors or developing

decoding skills. Fluency of the text is the goal (Hollingsworth, 1978). This strategy was considered beneficial by Heckelman (1966) due to its inexpensive nature, quick results, and its ability to be used in different classroom environments. There is evidence of the influence of the N.I.M. in a majority of assisted reading methods.

#### Speech-Select Pad Technique

Reitsma (1988) utilized a speech-select pad technique. The passage that the students were practicing was linked to a touch pad. Participants could then practice on their own, touching words they did not know. The touch pad would then replay the correct pronunciation. The students involved with this treatment showed significant improvement in fluency.

#### Listening-While-Reading

Listening-while-reading also can be classified as an assisted reading technique. In this approach, a fluent reader reads the passage while the student listens and attempts to read along (Rasinski, 1990). An adaptation of this method is a tape-assisted program. In the late 1960s, a taped reading method called Prime-O-Tec was utilized in the San Rafael, California, School District. There the students used a modified taped version of the N.I.M. Hollingsworth (1978) also found that the N.I.M. could be adapted to incorporate tape recorders. Chomsky (1976) also worked with taped versions of trade books. The students participating in that study listened to a recorded version of the text and attempted to read along. The taped version of the



passage provides a fluent model (Mathes, Simmons & Davis, 1992). The object in the study was to virtually “memorize” the text. Chomsky found that when a student had “memorized” a text by hearing and reading it again and again, fluency was achieved.

There are several benefits of taped listening-while-reading methods. As certain students are involved with listening and reading, a teacher can deal with other individuals (Hollingsworth, 1978). Also, when students are listening to taped text via earphones outside sounds are eliminated. They hear only a correct fluent rendition. This is unlike other oral reading situations where fellow students may model incorrect versions during round-robin reading (Jordan, 1967). Students also do not need to measure their reading levels against their classmates. They can develop at their own pace (Kagan, as cited in Chomsky, 1976). Chomsky (1976) found students that met with success were motivated to read other materials. A major drawback of this technique, however, is the lack of human supervision. There is no guarantee that the students are actually reading along with the tape (Reitsma, 1988).

### Dyad Reading

Dyad reading studies also have had a positive effect on fluency. Developed by Eldredge and Butterfield (1986), dyad reading stresses the visual and auditory experience of a text. This strategy involves a buddy team with one reader being of higher ability. The lead student orally reads a passage as the assisted reader attempts to follow along. Studying five different strategies,

Eldredge and Butterfield (1986) found that students were most successful when in heterogeneous groups, used trade books, and had some decoding instruction. Eldredge and Quinn (1988) had great success when using the technique with second graders of "poor" reading ability. Overall, the experimental group involved in the dyad reading demonstrated more growth in mean vocabulary and comprehension than the control.

### Group-Assisted Reading

Eldredge (1990) also found improvements when using a group-assisted technique to increase fluency in third grade students. Based on success with dyad reading groups in prior studies (Eldredge & Butterfield, 1986; Eldredge & Quinn, 1988), Eldredge attempted to increase the "buddy" team to a group setting. In the study, Eldredge (1990) formulated an experimental group of six readers (three dyads) and one instructor. This instructor lead the oral reading in a similar vein as the dyad lead reader. The students read along with their instructor. Students in the control group used the time to read on their own. Overall, the findings show greater reading achievement in vocabulary and comprehension for those students involved with the group assisted strategy. As stated previously, numerous other studies have utilized groups, but they have focused on taped versions.

### Summary

Students that lack fluency skills may find themselves in a self-fulfilling prophecy. As they lack the necessary fluency development they do not read as

often as other students. Yet, the only way to increase fluency is by reading. Researchers have recognized that there must be alternatives to help develop fluency specifically in the classroom. Both repeated reading and assisted reading strategies help poor readers increase their fluency. The techniques can be easily incorporated into any type of reading program. Repeated reading programs only need time to be allotted. In the assisted strategies all that is necessary is a fluent reader willing to model proper technique or a taped version of the material. Teachers, parents, and even other students can be key instruments in facilitating the growth of fluency in a poor reader (Mathes, Simons & Davis 1992; Samuels, 1979).

## Chapter 3 Experimental Design and Procedure

### Introduction

In an attempt to verify the feasibility of using a “group-assisted listening-while-reading approach” or a “repeated reading approach” in an intermediate grade setting, the researcher set out to test both strategies in a fifth grade classroom. While research on fluency improvement focuses mainly on primary students, the researcher found that similarities in older poor readers necessitated further study. This researcher hypothesized that fifth grade students exposed to the “group-assisted listening-while-reading approach” will show greater improvement in fluency rates than those students using a “repeated reading approach.”

### Population and Sample

One classroom of 21 fifth grade students in a southern New Jersey suburban town was selected to be the sample of this study. Twenty of the students actively participated. The male to female ratio of the subjects was 1:1. Students in this heterogeneously grouped class were randomly selected (using a random number table) to be a member of the experimental or control group.

### Procedure

Classroom selection was not random. The classroom pool consisted only of those classes which were participants in a Masters level cooperating teacher program. This factor was not controlled for within the context of this study. A pretest-posttest control group design was utilized in this study. Student division into either the experimental or control groups was done on a random basis. Using a chart of random numbers, twenty students were divided and placed in either the experimental group receiving the group-assisted listening-while-reading approach or in the control group that repeatedly read without instruction. The complete study consisting of a pretest, treatment, and posttest was administered over the course of two weeks. Each student, however, was involved for one week only. This division was due to limited time available to the researcher to conduct the study during the school day. Participation took place during the twenty minutes immediately following the student lunch break. Each student participated in oral reading for approximately five minutes per day. Those students not in the participating group used the time for Sustained Silent Reading.

On the initial day of the study 10 students were given a passage on sixth grade reading level from the Basic Reading Inventory (Johns, 1994) (see table 1). The higher level reading provided some initial difficulty for the participants. Students A- J were individually tape recorded while reading the selection. While students were reading the passage for the pretest, the researcher recorded all miscues (insertions, omissions, substitutions, and

mispronunciations). After students in the first week's group completed the pretest, the researcher verified the total miscue rate and determined reading rate by using the recorded reading.

table 1  
Week 1 Subject Division

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Group-Assisted Listening-While-Reading ( <i>experimental group</i> )	Repeated Reading ( <i>control group</i> )
Subject A	Subject F
Subject B	Subject G
Subject C	Subject H
Subject D	Subject I
Subject E	Subject J

---

On the second and third days, subjects A-E received a group-assisted listening-while-reading treatment. They read the selected passage along with the researcher. No data regarding miscue analysis or reading rate was recorded at that time. In another room, subjects F-J of the control group read the passage on their own. Students in both the experimental and control groups (A-J) again read into the tape recorder on the fourth day. Posttest analysis of total miscues and reading rate was conducted in an identical fashion as to that of the pretest. The fifth day of the week was used to

reexamine reading errors and rate for accuracy. Subjects K-T took part in the study during week two. Procedures were identical to that of the first week (see table 2).

table 2

## Week 2 Subject Division

---



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<b>Group-Assisted Listening-While-Reading</b> <i>(experimental group)</i>	<b>Repeated Reading</b> <i>(control group)</i>
Subject K	Subject P
Subject L	Subject Q
Subject M	Subject R
Subject N	Subject S
Subject O	Subject T

---

## Instrument

A reading of a passage on a sixth grade level from a commercially produced informal reading inventory was used to assess fluency (see appendix, Johns, 1994). The passage was limited to 102 words. Only total miscue errors in reading accuracy were recorded in this study. Miscues were defined as mispronunciations, substitutions, omissions, and insertions. Recitation of the passages was tape recorded to ensure accuracy in miscue analysis and calculation of reading rate.

Validity and reliability of the reading passage were not discussed

extensively. Johns (1994) does state, however, that the graded passages have been revised from previous editions. Grade level accuracy for this edition was evaluated not only by prior readability scales but also with the Readability Estimator, a computer program created by Hardy and Jerman. Several field tests were reviewed prior to publishing this version of the informal inventory. For the purpose of this study, the passages found in Johns' (1994) Basic Reading Inventory were sufficiently valid and reliable regarding grade level readability.



## Chapter 4 Analysis of Findings

### Introduction

The researcher attempted to verify the feasibility of using a “group-assisted listening-while-reading approach” or a “repeated reading approach” in order to improve the fluency rates of fifth grade readers. The results of the study demonstrated that there was a significant difference between the two approaches. The researcher hypothesized that fifth grade students exposed to a “group-assisted listening-while-reading approach” would show greater improvement in fluency rates than those students using a “repeated reading approach.”

### Tabulation of Raw Scores

The twenty students that participated in the study were analyzed based on reading rate improvement and miscue rate improvement. Reading rate was calculated as the time lapse between the start and completion of one oral reading passage. This time lapse was measured in seconds. Miscue rate improvement was formulated as the difference between the number of miscues in the pretest reading and the posttest. Only total miscue errors (mispronunciations, substitutions, omissions, and insertions) were recorded. There was no breakdown of individual miscue categories.

The mean improvement for reading rate of the experimental group

was 19.58 seconds. The control group yielded a 12.55 second mean improvement (see tables 3 and 4). The mean improvement in the miscue rates for the experimental and control groups was 5 miscues and 0.9 miscues respectively (see tables 3 and 4).

table 3

Chart of Reading Rate and Miscue Rate for the Group-Assisted  
Listening-While-Reading Approach  
(Experimental Group)

Subjects	Pretest Reading Rate (in seconds)	Posttest Reading Rate (in seconds)	Reading Rate Improvement (in seconds)	Pretest Miscue Rate	Posttest Miscue Rate	Miscue Rate Improvement
A	59.4	33.4	26	3	0	3
B	48.5	31.9	16.6	4	1	3
C	74.6	36.2	38.4	10	1	9
D	61	38.8	22.2	4	1	3
E	64.4	37	27.4	7	2	5
K	52.9	30.5	22.4	16	1	14
L	45.8	30.7	15.1	5	0	5
M	49.8	33.1	16.7	5	0	5
N	35.9	31.5	4.4	1	1	0
O	39.1	32.5	6.62	5	2	3
Total	531.4	336.6	195.82	59	9	50
Average	53.142	33.56	19.582	5.9	0.9	5

table 4  
 Chart of Reading Rate and Miscue Rate  
 for the Repeated Reading Approach  
 (Control Group)

Subjects	Pretest Reading Rate (in seconds)	Posttest Reading Rate (in seconds)	Reading Rate Improvement (in seconds)	Pretest Miscue Rate	Posttest Miscue Rate	Miscue Rate Improvement
F	53.9	35.4	18.5	10	4	6
G	44.5	32.8	11.7	3	3	0
H	49.6	37.9	11.7	6	6	0
I	49	39.4	9.6	2	2	0
J	52.6	41.7	10.9	8	8	0
P	76.5	44.6	31.9	14	15	- 1
Q	51.4	38.7	12.7	16	13	2
R	35.6	31.2	4.4	1	2	- 1
S	41.5	31.6	9.9	3	2	1
T	46.5	42.3	4.2	5	3	2
Total	501.1	375.6	125.5	67	58	9
Average	50.11	37.56	12.55	6.7	5.8	0.9

#### Tabulation of T Scores

Both a  $t$  test of independent samples and a  $t$  test of non-independent samples were tabulated. The  $t$  test of independent samples compared the results for both reading rate improvement and miscue rate improvement between the experimental and control groups. When calculating the  $t$  test for independent samples for reading rate, there was a significant difference

between the experimental and control groups. The significance level ( $p < .10$ ) was not, however, consistent with the predetermined acceptable level ( $p < .05$ ). The difference between the miscue rate of the groups was found to be highly significant ( $p < .01$ ) (see table 5).

table 5  
Measurements, Reading Rate, and Miscue Rate  
for Experimental and Control Groups  
(Independent Samples)

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Measurements	Reading Rate	Miscue Rate
t score	1.738	2.926
degrees of freedom	18	18
p<	0.1	0.01

---

T tests of non-independent samples were tabulated to determine if there was a statistically significant change from pretest to posttest scores in both groups. In regards to the experimental group, the difference between pretest and posttest scores for reading rate were found to be significant to the .001 level. Miscue rate improvement was significant to the .01 level. Results for the control group demonstrate a statistical significance level of .001 for the difference in reading rate. There was not, however, a significant difference between pretest and posttest miscue rates (see table 6).

table 6  
 Measurements, Reading Rate, and Miscue Rate  
 for Experimental and Control Groups  
 (Non-independent Samples)

	Measurements	Experimental Group	Control Group
Reading Rate			
	t score	8.53	5
	degrees of freedom	9	9
	p<	0.001	0.001
Miscue Rate			
	t score	4.038	1.369
	degrees of freedom	9	9
	p<	0.01	not significant

#### Analysis Related to Particular Purpose of Hypothesis

The  $t$  scores tabulated between the experimental and control groups were found to be significant. While not meeting the  $p < .05$  in all areas, the experimental group did show very significant changes regarding miscue rate. The researcher's original hypothesis that fifth grade students exposed to a group-assisted listening-while-reading approach will show greater improvement in fluency rates than those students using a repeated reading approach was supported although not strongly in all areas.

Improvement within both groups for reading rate and miscue rate were found to be very significant (see table 6) in all but one area. There was

only a 0.9 rate of improvement for the control group regarding miscue rate. As the significance level for this measurement did not even meet the  $p < .10$  level, this score can be attributed to chance.

## Chapter 5 Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### Introduction

As reading fluency is a major component of success in school, the researcher set out to test the validity of using a “group-assisted listening-while-reading approach” or a “repeated reading approach” in a fifth grade setting. While most fluency research focused on primary students, the researcher found that older readers also lacked the necessary development. The researcher hypothesized that fifth grade students exposed to a “group-assisted listening-while-reading approach” will show greater improvement in fluency rates than those students using a “repeated reading approach.”

### Summary of the Problem

While fluency has been linked with level of reading, the average classroom does not focus on or address the skill. Researchers have promoted a variety of techniques to increase student fluency development. Yet, there is not absolute consensus on the most effective and time-efficient strategy.

### Summary of Hypothesis

The researcher hypothesized that fifth grade students exposed to a “group-assisted listening-while-reading approach” will show greater improvement in fluency rates than those students using a “repeated reading

approach.”

#### Summary of Procedure

Twenty, fifth grade students from a southern New Jersey suburban classroom participated in the study. The heterogeneous classroom was divided into two distinct groups using a random number table. Students were classified as a member of the experimental group receiving the “group-assisted listening-while-reading approach” or the control group which experienced the “repeated reading” treatment. Each of the twenty students took part in the study for four days. The students in both groups were pretested on their reading ability on a sixth grade passage. Reading rate and total miscues accrued were recorded. On the second and third days of the study students reviewed the passage utilizing strategies outlined by one or the other approach. A posttest was conducted on the fourth day of the study. Reading rate and total number of miscues were again tabulated for each student.

#### Summary of the Findings

The researcher calculated  $t$  scores for both independent and non-independent samples. The  $t$  scores tabulated between the experimental and control groups were found to be significant. While not meeting the  $p < .05$  in the area of reading rate ( $p < .10$ ), the experimental group did show very significant changes regarding miscue rate to the  $p < .01$  level. Improvement within groups for reading rate and miscue rate were found to be very significant in all but one area.



Students taking part in the experimental group demonstrated significant improvement in their reading rate to the  $p < .001$  level, as well as  $p < .01$  for the miscue rate improvement. The control group also exhibited highly significant changes from the pretest to posttest for reading rate ( $p < .001$ ). There was however no statistical significance for the results of the control group regarding miscue rate improvement. As the significance level for this measurement did not even meet the  $p < .10$  level, this score can be attributed to chance. The researcher's original hypothesis that fifth grade students exposed to a "group-assisted listening-while-reading approach" will show greater improvement in fluency rates than those students using a "repeated reading approach" was supported although not strongly in all areas.

### Conclusions

While not statistically significant to the level expected in all areas, the researcher's original hypothesis was supported. The results were also practically significant for those fifth grade students which participated in the study. The experimental group improved their reading rate by 19.58 seconds. Their miscue rate also decreased from 5.9 to 0.9 errors. The control group also demonstrated some improvement decreasing reading rate by 12.55 seconds. Their miscue rate, however, improved by only 0.9. These findings support those established by other researchers. Repeated reading does increase fluency rates (Samuels, 1979). Numerous other studies (Eldredge, 1990; Hoskisson, 1975; Rasinski, 1990 & Reitsma, 1988) focusing on assisted reading approaches also are supported by this study.

Students that lack fluency skills do not approach reading with the proper motivation. Yet, the only way that a student can really improve their reading ability is through practice. As both groups demonstrated some improvement, each has merit. They can be incorporated into any type of reading program at school or at home. In their simplicity lies the key to fluency acquisition. Practice and reading experience are the only ways to develop truly fluent readers regardless of age.

#### Implications and Recommendations

The results of this study necessitate further research. As the sample size was small (n=20), results cannot be generalized to all other student populations. Differences between gender and fluency improvement were not discussed but could offer new insight. As this was a heterogeneous sample, a variety of initial reading levels were present. A comparison of these levels could yield important information regarding the most influential strategy to employ with different levels of achievement.

APPENDIX  
Graded Passage

### Keep Your Distance

Elwood was considered a tough guy at Anderson School. Everybody called him Woody. They didn't dare call him by his full name because that riled him. He was colossal in size. From far away Elwood looked like Mr. Wilson, a teacher, but the moment you saw Elwood's shoes and faded, torn jeans, you knew it could only be Elwood. He felt inferior because of his clothing, so he tried to make up for it by shocking people with his rude behavior and toughness. Elwood didn't have many friends, except for Bob who lived in the same old apartment building.

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