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Elevating Student Comprehension through Repeated Read-Alouds

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Elevating Student Comprehension through Repeated Read-Alouds

Abstract

There has been a vast amount of research dedicated to the positive benefits of reading aloud to students. However, lacking in the current research is the effect of repeated read-alouds on student comprehension. This action research attempts to answer the question “How does the level of reading comprehension change with repeated read-alouds?” This research focused on three 3rd grade students in a suburban school. Methodology included reading picture books multiple times and analyzing student’s oral and written responses. Data analysis indicates that as a student’s familiarity with the story increased, so does their level of understanding. This implies that an effective method for increasing student’s comprehension is to expose students to repeated readings.

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Elevating Student Comprehension through Repeated Read-Alouds

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Supervised by

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Abstract

There has been a vast amount of research dedicated to the positive benefits of reading aloud to students. However, lacking in the current research is the effect of repeated read-alouds on student comprehension. This action research attempts to answer the question “How does the level of reading comprehension change with repeated read-alouds?” This research focused on three 3rd grade students in a suburban school. Methodology included reading picture books multiple times and analyzing student’s oral and written responses. Data analysis indicates that as a student’s familiarity with the story increased, so does their level of understanding. This implies that an effective method for increasing student’s comprehension is to expose students to repeated readings.

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Elevating Student Comprehension through Repeated Read-Alouds

Over two decades ago, the Commission on Reading published *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985) which included this quote, “the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children” (p.23), read-alouds have gained recognition as a significant instructional approach that could affect children’s literacy acquisition and growth. Since then, parents and teachers have heard much more about the importance of reading aloud to children. In 1982, Jim Trelease’s *Read-Aloud Handbook* became quite popular and several programs began to surface that promoted the benefits of reading aloud. For example, the program Reading is Fundamental produced public service announcements stating the benefits of reading aloud and the Reach Out and Read program began using pediatricians as a way to provide parents with books and tips for reading aloud to their children (Lane & Wright, 2007).

As a result of such a widespread promotion, most teachers today believe in the benefits of reading aloud to children and have implemented the read-aloud as a component of their reading program (Lane & Wright, 2007). School districts have also incorporated read-alouds as part of their literacy framework and teachers are encouraged to read aloud to their students every day and recently, the rationale for reading aloud has expanded to include instructional purposes.

To date, there is a wealth of research that supports the use of teacher read-alouds across grade levels. The benefits of reading aloud have proven to be numerous. For example, many researchers have demonstrated that reading aloud to students can increase their listening

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comprehension skills, promote syntactic development, and increase their ability to recognize words. There is also evidence that reading aloud to children can increase vocabulary and reading comprehension (Barrentine, 1996; Fisher, Flodd, Lapp & Frey, 2004; Oyler, 1996). These results strongly recommend read-alouds as components of literacy programs and support trends resulting in more teachers reading aloud every day.

There is also a vast amount of research that has demonstrated that the most effective read-alouds are those in which children are actively involved in making connections and answering and asking questions rather than passively listening (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Ouellette, Dagostino, & Carifio, 1999; Mallock & Beutel, 2009; Sipe, 2000). These read-alouds are called interactive read-alouds. Barrentine (1996) defines interactive read-alouds as instructional conversations in which the teacher poses questions throughout the reading “that enhance meaning construction and also show how one makes sense of the text” (p.36). In these types of discussions, teacher and students discuss both aesthetic responses to literature as well as the processes by which they are reading. Students are encouraged to interact with the text and have discussions with their peers as they construct meaning (Barrentine, 1996; Oyler, 1996). These types of interactive read-alouds show positive gains in vocabulary and comprehension skills.

What is noticeably lacking from all of this research is the value of repeated readings. The limited research available does suggest a positive relationship between early literacy skills and repeated readings. Morrow (1988) found that repeated readings resulted in more interpretive responses and more responses focusing on print and story structure in four-year-olds. In a

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similar pre-school study, Martinez & Roser (1985) noted that when a teacher reads the same story to children several times, the children begin to notice different aspects of the story than they did on the first read. Yaden (1988) also reported an increased understanding and enjoyment of a story that has been read multiple times. In his study, Yaden (1988) concludes that a young child's understanding after a single read is not a true and accurate measure of their comprehension. However, positive as these findings are, these studies involved the emergent literacy skills of children in preschool and kindergarten. What about older children? Would repeated readings have the same positive findings? Are teachers missing the opportunity to deepen their students' literacy understanding by only reading books once?

This project is in response to the need for additional information on the effect of repeated readings on students' responses and comprehension in the older grades. I conducted a study to investigate how children's responses to literature change with increasing familiarity with a story. This study was conducted in a 3rd grade integrated co-teach classroom in a suburban elementary school. Read-aloud sessions were recorded and students work was examined to determine the level of their understanding of the story, both oral and written. This study focused on three students with one student reading above grade level, one student reading at grade level and one student who is reading below grade level.

Theoretical Framework

The reading process is far more complex than originally thought by early researchers. Primarily, reading is not a prescribed set of skills to be mastered. In the traditional, behaviorist

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approach to literacy education, the emphasis was placed on an individual's development along a carefully traced trajectory (Alexander and Fox, 2008). This approach assumed that all children progress along the same continuum and learn specific skills in sequence. Reading was deconstructed into specific elements whose sequence was well known. Once these pre-determined skills have been mastered, readers were viewed as experts who should comprehend all that they read (Alexander and Fox, 2008). In this approach, readers were viewed as passive recipients of the text. Comprehension, making meaning from text, was not the goal of reading.

By the mid-1960's, when problems in reading acquisition persisted, educators became dissatisfied with the "skill and drill" approach and thus gave rise to the cognitivist view. Researchers were no longer focused on the behavior of reading; what became of interest was understanding the thinking behind the behavior. (Alexander and Fox, 2008). Cognitively-based views of reading emphasize the interactive nature of reading in which reading is a process whereby the reader actively searches for meaning in what is read. In this approach, the meaning the reader gathers from a text is greatly influenced by the cognitive work that they put into the reading process. The reader uses their background knowledge and range of cues from the text as well as the context in which the reading occurs to construct meaning from the text (Kucer, 2005). Thus, reading cannot be viewed as a set of subskills which can be easily isolated, practiced, and mastered—thus allowing the reader to move from one text to another with the same degree of proficiency. In practice, a reader's knowledge, and the mental processes that they use to foster and maintain understanding, play an important role in the current cognitive approach to reading (Alexander and Fox, 2008).

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Out of this cognitive approach came constructivism. The constructivist perspective argues that meaning does not reside exclusively in the text but is a set of social practices that are located in the interactions between people that change to meet the demands of society (Larson and Marsh, 2005; Heath, 1982; Goodman, 2001; Gee, 2001). Readers actively construct meaning from the text as they read, and this process is influenced by the reader's background knowledge and experiences. Most children in the United States enter school with numerous exposures to literacy events within the home. Both Heath (1982) and Goodman (2001) argue that all children, regardless of cultural, ethnic or socio-economical status, become literate through the social interactions and experiences within their environment. Therefore, knowledge about literacy is socially constructed, both in and out of school and varies across context, purpose and audience.

This framework constitutes a shift from the traditional teacher-centered classrooms to learning-centered contexts. As stated by Larson and Marsh (2005) "Social constructivist learning theory defines the child as an active member of a constantly changing community of learners in which knowledge constructs and is constructed by larger cultural systems" (p. 100). Larson and Marsh (2005) further make the distinction that classrooms grounded in this theory hold that children "live culturally" (p.101) and do not separate culture from the practice of everyday life. In this framework, teachers emphasize students' practices as valuable resources for curriculum and build on what their students' bring to school and classrooms are seen as culturally embedded communities of learners.

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Research Question

The purpose of this action research is to examine the effect of repeated readings on student responses. For this action research, students will participate in multiple readings of a particular read-aloud. Student responses, both oral and written, will be documented and analyzed after each read-aloud to determine *how* children's responses to literature changes with increasing familiarity with a story.

Literature Review***Read-alouds in the home***

As stated earlier, literacy learning begins in the home. Children's first experiences with literacy are mediated by the ways in which parents and families use reading and writing in their lives (Purcell-Gates, 1996; Wells, 1986). One way in which parents and caregivers invite young children to participate in literacy activities is by reading aloud to them. Reading aloud to children has been advocated as an important experience in literacy development both at home and at school.

Many researches have identified the direct relationship between being read to and aspects of literacy development (Morrow & Gambrell, 2000). Morrow & Gambrell (2000), citing the work of Clay, 1979 and Smith, 1978, report the positive effects of reading to children and indicate that read-alouds help young children learn about the features of written language. Specifically, from read-aloud experiences, children learn that written language is different from oral language, that print generates meaning, and that printed words on a page have sounds (Morrow & Gambrell,

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2000). Wood & Salvetti (2001) report that young children who have been read to regularly know how to handle books, and can identify the front of a book, the print to be read, and the correct direction for reading the print. This research supports the constructivist theory that early literacy skills can be acquired through the social interactions and experiences within the home.

Many researchers have also shown that one predictor of children's reading achievement in school is the number of hours they were read to as preschoolers (Hargrave & Senechel, 2000; Sipe, 2000; Wells, 1986; Wood & Salvetti, 2001). The more exposure young children have with books and read-aloud experiences prior to school, the more successful they will be. In addition, it has been shown that preschoolers who participate in interactive read-alouds with their parents and caregivers have better story understanding and larger vocabularies as five-year-olds than do children who interact less during storybook readings (Hargrave & Senechel, 2000; Wood & Salvetti, 2001). It is important to note that there is a difference between an interactive read-aloud and a straight read-aloud where the reader simply reads the book aloud start to finish without any interruptions. Interactive read-alouds as defined by McGee & Schickendanz (2007) are a "book sharing experience by a child and a more knowledgeable other person, usually an adult, to which both contribute" (p.726). During interactive read-alouds, parents read, comment, ask questions, and point to illustrations, and children point, ask and answer questions, and make comments. Therefore, interactive read-alouds with very young children has proven to be an important vehicle through which they acquire literacy concepts.

Children grow up in many different contexts, with different effects on their literacy skills. Some children have experiences with home literacies that are very much like the literacies they

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will experience in school. In other communities, home literacies experiences are not school-like and instead they are about getting the daily business of life accomplished (Gee, 2001; Heath, 1982; Meier, 2003). In her landmark study of three subcultures within an Appalachian community, Shirley Brice Heath (1982) found that ways of taking meaning and pleasure from books were “as much a part of learned behavior as are ways of eating, sitting, playing games, and building houses” (p. 49). In her research, Heath (1982) discovered that through the familiar parent and child bedtime story routine of sharing books and interacting with literature by making comments and asking questions, children from a middle-class community learned different ways of getting meaning from books than children from other communities in the area. By the time these middle-class children entered school, they had come to act like readers even before they could read (Heath, 1982). Similarly, in her research, Terry Meier (2003) found that early childhood experiences with books in the home can provide children with the necessary literacy skills they will need in the future. In Meier’s (2003) study, she found that the children of parents who engage them in read-alouds acquire a high book-based vocabulary, come to view reading books as pleasurable and rewarding, and begin to use their knowledge of characters, plots, and story language in their interactions with other people and to make sense of their own experiences. Meier (2003) also found that early book reading experiences also give children practice with reading behaviors such as listening quietly and attentively as the story is being read. This and other studies have shown how young children who are surrounded by books and participate in read-aloud experiences in the home have learned to make meaning and take pleasure from print (Altweger, Diehl-Faxon, & Dockstader-Anderson, 1985; Heath, 1982; Martinez & Roser, 1985; Morrow; Yaden, 1988).

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However, Meier (2003), similar to Heath (1982), also points out that the type of literacy skills young children acquire in the home can dramatically differ depending upon culture. For example, some children of immigrants who come from countries where oral storytelling is a tradition may only experience stories that are told orally and not in book form because book reading is not part of their cultural tradition. These children then enter school inquisitive and eager to learn but, with a different literacy skill set than children who are familiar with read-alouds but have no exposure to oral story telling. Another example that Meier's (2003) makes is that during book reading, many multicultural children are not used to an adult asking them questions for which it is obvious that the adult already knows the answer. Therefore, according to Meier's (2003), reading behaviors such as sitting still, paying attention, and answering known-answer questions during a read-aloud, are not as common knowledge as many teachers assume and children who have not been read to at home may very well find these routines aversive, puzzling, or simply boring.

Read-alouds in school

Since the publication of *Becoming a Nation of Readers* in 1985, the number of teachers who read aloud to their students has dramatically increased. Evidence of this significant change is supported by the study conducted by Braham and Lynch-Brown (2002). Braham and Lynch-Brown (2002) report that 30 to 40 years ago, less than half of the elementary teachers read aloud to their students on a daily or even weekly basis. In contrast, in a more recent survey, it was demonstrated that 76% of teachers read aloud daily and 100% read aloud several times a week to their students (Braham & Lynch-Brown, 2002).

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In a more extensive, in-depth nation wide survey of the read-aloud practices of K-6 teachers, Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard (2000) reported additional findings. These authors concluded that more primary than intermediate teachers read aloud to their students more often, K-2 teachers read more picture books than novels and 3-6 teachers tend to read more novels than picture books. In addition, few teachers (K-6) read any type of informational text (Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard, 2000). Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard (2000) also noted that primary grade teachers use read-alouds to introduce and recommend books to students more often than the intermediate grade teachers do. Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard (2000) concluded their research with a few recommendations stating that read-alouds are for all grade levels and that all teachers should attend to the literacy needs of their students by reading aloud to them on a regular basis. Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard (2000) also argue that intermediate teachers should read more picture books as well as more informational texts and teachers need to share books in different ways to entice and motivate readers.

Reading aloud to children both in the home and in the classroom is a practice that has been recommended for decades. However, while some children enter kindergarten with endless hours of read-aloud experience and familiarity with a variety of children's books and authors, other children are completely without these experiences (Heath, 1982; Meier, 2003; Wood & Salvetti, 2001). Teachers then must become crucial mediators in bringing literary experiences to their students that will help them progress through emergent literacy to beginning readers. In her article, Meier (2003), argues even children who are "verbally sophisticated" are in danger of school failure if "their teachers are unable to help them extend their love of the spoken word to

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an equally passionate engagement with the written word” and that if teachers do not read-aloud to children and give all children the opportunity and time to connect in meaningful ways with literature, then no other literacy experience such as phonemic awareness activities or rhyming games, will result in their “becoming proficient and empowered readers” (p. 246). These literacy experiences can be done through interactive read-alouds (Meier, 2003; Wasik & Bond, 2001; Wood & Salvetti, 2001). In one 15 week study, Wasik & Bond (2001) found that incorporating read-alouds into the literacy program positively impacted the vocabulary and language skills of “at-risk” preschoolers. These authors noted that during these read-aloud events, teachers defined vocabulary words and provided opportunities for students to use the vocabulary from books as well as asked open-ended questions that promoted discussion allowing student voices to be heard.

Similarly, Wood & Salvetti (2001) argue that “exposure to books is essential to acquiring literacy in the primary grades” (p.76). These authors followed a group of children across the first three years of their education and found that the children who participated in an extensive read-aloud program in kindergarten significantly outperformed non-participating students in the areas of comprehension and language development. In addition, these same students showed a higher level of motivation, engagement, comprehension, and fluency in second and third grade as compared to nonparticipating students (Wood & Salvetti, 2001). Therefore, Wood & Salvetti (2001) conclude that the effects of extensive read-alouds in kindergarten may last into primary grades and may be linked to student achievement.

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Extensive research has shown that children are more motivated to read on their own and have better comprehension, oral language skills, and vocabulary when they are in classrooms where teachers frequently read-aloud to their students (Braham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Fisher, Flood, Lapp & Frey, 2004; Ouellette, Dagostino, & Carifio, 1999; Wasik & Bond, 2001; Wood & Salvetti, 2001). Daisey (1993) states that reading aloud is one of the three ways that teachers can promote literacy for students of any age and Richardson (2000) said “Read-alouds model expressive, enthusiastic reading, transmit the pleasure of reading, and invite listeners to be readers” (p.3). In addition, read-alouds have been proven to contribute to children’s understanding of literacy elements (Sipe, 2000) and texts read independently (Morrow & Smith, 1990).

Furthermore, many researchers have shown that read-alouds are an effective way to introduce children to the joy of reading (Morrow & Gambrell, 2000). As early as 1977, Flood reported the positive motivating effects of read-alouds shared between children and parents. This was also supported by the work of Sulzby & Teale (2003) who demonstrated the impact of read-alouds on the motivation to read created among young children. Further validation for read-alouds as a factor in reading motivation was found by Gambrell, Palmer, and Codling (1993) in their research of third and fourth graders. They found that choice was a motivating factor for reading and that the choices students made were often related to the teacher’s read-aloud (Morrow & Gambrell, 2000).

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Components of an effective read-aloud

As shown, there have been numerous studies conducted on the benefits of reading aloud to students that support teachers' use of read-alouds in the classroom but, how does being read to promote literacy development? A study conducted by Meyers, Wardrop, Stahl, and Linn (1994) sparked a wave of new research surrounding read-alouds. These authors reported negative effects on literacy development as a result of read-alouds (Meyers, Wardrop, Stahl, and Linn, 1994). Meyers, Wardrop, Stahl, & Linn (1994) proposed that reading stories does not necessary promote literacy development. These authors suggested that it is the quality of the interaction that occurs between adult and child during reading that results in positive effects, rather than just a simple storybook read. Furthermore, they found that read-aloud sessions in classrooms are often not of sufficient quality to engage students fully to maximize literacy growth. In their study, Meyers, Wardrop, Stahl & Lin (1994) conclude that certain interactive behaviors, methods, attitude, and environmental influences enhance the potential of the read-aloud event for promoting literacy development and suggest that teachers need to strategically plan for their read-aloud events.

Since then, additional studies have surfaced focused on identifying the components of an effective read-aloud (Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Fisher, Flood, Lapp & Frey, 2004; Maloch & Beutel, 2009; Santoro, Chard, Howard & Baker, 2008; McKeown & Beck, 2001; Sipe, 2000) From his research, Sipe (2000) argues that when planning for a read-aloud, teachers should look at how they structure read-alouds in order to illicit deeper responses from students. He continues by stating that teachers also need to support the different types and ranges of

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student responses that can occur during the discussion and that it is the *during* reading discussion that is more powerful than the *after* reading discussion. Many teachers like to have their students listen to the story as a whole before beginning a discussion but, according to his research, Sipe (2000) suggests that the quality of the discussion is far less when teachers wait until the end of the story. He contends that at this point, the student responses are no longer *in* the moment or *of* the moment and therefore are lost (Sipe, 2000).

Fisher, Flood, Lapp & Frey (2004) agree that the quality of a read-aloud does impact student achievement and in their research these authors sought to identify the essential components of an effective read-aloud. After observing and researching a total of 120 teachers who had been identified by their administrators to be “experts” at delivering effective read-alouds, Fisher, Flood, Lap & Frey (2004) named seven components to an effective read-aloud that can improve student’s comprehension and vocabulary skills. All of the expert teachers included each of the following components during their read-alouds: (1) Books were clearly chosen based on the needs of the students. Books selected were appropriate to students’ interests and matched to their developmental, emotional, and social levels. (2) Text selection had been previewed and practiced by the teacher allowing the teacher to pause effectively during the read-aloud to model fluency and ask questions. (3) A clear purpose for the read-aloud and lesson was established. (4) Teachers modeled fluent oral reading when they read the text and pronunciation errors were rare. (5) Teachers were animated and used expression. Their voices would change to denote differences in characters and they also used movement, hand gestures, and facial expressions to fully engage students. (6) Teachers stopped periodically and thoughtfully questioned the

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students to focus them on specifics of the text. The expert teachers in this study used a balance of efferent and aesthetic questions during their read-alouds. Not only did they want their students to understand the facts and details presented in the text (efferent), they also wanted their students to engage with the text and make connections between the text and their own lives (aesthetic). (7) Connections from the read-aloud were made to independent reading and writing during the day (Fisher, Flood, Lapp & Frey, 2004). These authors concluded that the students of the teachers who included these seven components into their read-alouds demonstrated greater gains in comprehension and vocabulary.

This work is also supported by Santoro, Chard, Howard & Baker (2008) who found that if teachers strategically enhance their read-alouds through carefully planning, previewing of text, and active discussion, then greater gains in student achievement will occur. This study was conducted with first graders and was in response to teachers wanting to find ways to use read-alouds to make the most of instructional time. Santoro, Chard, Howard & Baker's (2008) research showed that read-alouds, with explicit comprehension instruction and engaging discussions about text, can promote comprehension and vocabulary even as students are learning to read.

Further confirmation on the effect of read-aloud styles on vocabulary acquisition and comprehension was found by Brabham & Lynch-Brown (2002) in their work with first and third graders. Specifically, they found that the classrooms where teachers engaged in interactive read-aloud styles as compared to a simple story read, scored higher on vocabulary and comprehension assessments. Both studies conducted by Ouellette, Dagostino, & Carifio (1999) and Maloch &

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Beutel (2009) had similar findings. Ouellette, Dagostino & Carifio claim that when children take an active part in the read-aloud experience, they demonstrate an increase in oral language development, story comprehension and story structure. These authors also contend that interactive read-alouds encourages critical thinking. Similarly, Maloch & Beutel (2009) found that teacher initiated dialogue around literature gave students the opportunity to engage in dialogic conversation around and with text. These authors contend that it was the teachers scaffolding of the read-aloud event that led students to become actively engaged with text and take a critical stance.

As shown, numerous studies have been done on the various styles that teachers use when reading aloud to their students and the effect of these various styles on student achievement.

All of these researchers have concluded that when teachers strategically plan and engage their students during read-alouds by conversing and discussing the important ideas in a text with their class, their students' comprehension and vocabulary development improves. Therefore, research has demonstrated that the most effective read-alouds are those in which children are actively involved asking and answering questions and making predictions rather than passively listening. The primary goal of the read-aloud, then, is the construction of meaning from the interactive discussion between teacher and student.

Repeated readings

As many parents know, children often request their favorite stories be read aloud over and over again. This common practice of rereading stories to children has led some researchers to

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question the cognitive benefits of repeated readings (Morrow, 1988; Martinez & Roser, 1985; Yaden, 1988). These researches have sought answers to this question by studying the responses of children who have had the opportunity to hear repeated readings of the same story. In a study of preschoolers, Martinez & Roser (1985) found that as children had more opportunity to listen to a story, their range of responses increased. They appeared to have more opportunity to fill gaps, clarify and make connections. Martinez & Roser (1985) concluded that with each repeated reading, children “gained increased control” over the story (p.786). Yaden (1988) confirmed the research conducted by Martinez & Roser with his own study. In his study, based on student responses seen in kindergarteners, Yaden (1988) concluded that with each reading of the same story, students’ understanding of that story deepened. Both studies suggest that children’s comments and questions increased and became more interpretive and evaluative after several readings of the same story (Marinez & Roser, 1985; Yaden, 1988).

Although these studies document a positive relationship between repeated readings and literacy skills, these studies only focus on the emergent literacy skills of preschoolers and kindergarteners. The effect of repeated readings on older children’s literacy skills still remains a question. It is this question that leads me to wonder and research how the responses and comprehension of third graders will differ when exposed to multiple readings of the same text. In this project I will conduct multiple read-alouds of the same story with a small group of third graders and record their level of comprehension of the text after each reading. For this project, I will read each story the same way and use the seven components as outlined above by Fisher, Flood, Lapp & Frey (2004)so that each read-aloud will remain consistent.

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Methods*Context*

Research for this study was conducted at Krane Elementary School (a pseudonym). Krane Elementary School is 1 of 13 elementary schools in a suburban school district located in Monroe County in Western New York. This district is the largest suburban school in Monroe County and the ninth largest district in New York State. According to the New York State Report Card, this district's population is 77% Caucasian, 12% African American, 8% Hispanic or Latino, and 2% Asian or Native Hawaiian. Additionally, 38 % of the student population in the 2009-10 school year received free or reduced lunch.

Krane Elementary School has a student population of 328 students in grades three through five with 85% of the students being Caucasian, 5% are African American, 5 % are Hispanic or Latino, 3% are Asian or Native Hawaiian and 1% are American Indian or Alaska Native. Ethnic diversity has remained constant with no great variations noted over the last three to five years. Krane Elementary is almost equal in regards to gender where 48% of the students are male and 52% are female. Ethnic diversity has remained constant with no great variations noted over the last three to five years. The socioeconomic status, however, has been steadily declining in recent years. In the 2007-08 school year, 23% of the student population received free and reduced lunch, in the 2009-10 this percentage increased to 26% and in the 2009-10 it reached 25%. Additionally, there is a very high attendance rate at Krane Elementary. Over the last three years the attendance rate has remained between 96% and 98%.

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Krane Elementary is an open-floor school with no internal walls to define classrooms. Instead, classroom spaces are created by using dividers, cabinets, and bookcases. Currently, there are four 3rd grade classrooms, four 4th grade classrooms, and five 5th grade classrooms. There is an integrated co-teach classroom at each grade level and two 12:1:1 classrooms in the building.

As a Signature School of Health, Wellness, and Developing Minds, the staff at Krane Elementary works together to enhance each child's physical, social/emotional, and cognitive development. In addition, Krane Elementary offers a wide variety of extracurricular activities such as Student Council, Art History Club, Band, Orchestra, Chorus, Chess Club, and Cup Stacking.

Furthermore, Krane Elementary has high parental involvement. The community surrounding the school is vested in the children's success. There is a strong network of families in the neighborhood and a high level of support from the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The PTA is involved with planning and executing numerous special events throughout the year that directly align with the school's goals.

Research for this study was conducted in a third grade integrated co-teach classroom. This classroom has 24 students of which 14 are male and 10 are female. Out of 24 students 9 are identified as special education and are receiving services such as speech, resource room, occupational therapy, and counseling. There is one general education teacher, one special education teacher who pushes in for an hour for ELA and Math, and a teaching assistant who

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pushes in for 2 hours during ELA and 1 hour for content. There is also one Child Care Associate who monitors 2 special education students throughout the day. Out of 24 students, 3 students are African American, 1 student is Hispanic, 1 student is Asian and 19 students are Caucasian.

Participants

Brianna (a pseudonym) is an eight-year-old Caucasian female in the third grade. She is an only child and wants to be a teacher when she grows up. She is sweet, kind, and has a gentle soul. She loves to read fiction and is currently reading and writing above grade level.

Samantha is an eight-year-old Asian female in the third grade. She is one of four girls in her family and loves to draw. She is quiet and loves to help her peers. She enjoys reading graphic novels and is currently reading and writing at grade level.

John is an eight-year-old Caucasian male in the third grade. He is an only child and likes to please adults. He is polite, respectful, and friendly. He is a reluctant reader and is currently reading and writing below grade level. He struggles to attend during instruction and independent work time.

Researcher Stance

As the researcher and classroom teacher in this study, I served as what Mill (2007) calls an active participant observer. I am in my fourth year of teaching and obtained my Bachelor's Degree in Elementary and Special Education from St. John Fisher College. Currently I am pursuing my Master's Degree in Literacy at St. John Fisher College.

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Method

For this study, I implemented interactive read-alouds during my literacy block. Each morning I gathered children on the carpet and began the day with an interactive read-aloud session which was approximately 20 minutes in length. Each interactive read-aloud began with a book introduction and included planned teacher questions and prompts throughout the story in order to engage the students in a discussion and check for understanding. After each interactive read-aloud session, students were presented with an activity in order to assess their understanding. Activities included an oral retell, short answer written responses to teacher generated questions and a story map. The order of activities changed daily, for example on day one students completed an oral retell, on day two students answered teacher generated questions and on day three students composed a story map. For the second book, on day one students composed a story map, on day two students completed an oral retell and on day three students answered teacher generated questions. For the third book, on day one students answered teacher generated questions, on day two students composed a story map and on day three students completed an oral retell. A fourth book was used to replicate the order of activities that the students were most successful with.

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Read-Aloud Book	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Grandfather's Journey by Allen Say	Oral Retelling	Story Map	Answer Teacher Generated Questions
Crow Boy by Taro Yashima	Story Map	Answer Teacher Generated Questions	Oral Retelling
The Girl Who Lived with the Wild Horses by Paul Goble	Answer Teacher Generated Questions	Oral Retelling	Story Map
Cheyenne Again by Eve Bunting	Oral Retelling	Story Map	Answer Teacher Generated Questions

Quality and credibility of research

When conducting research, it is essential to ensure the quality and credibility of the study. Mills (2007) defines credibility as “the researcher’s ability to take into account the complexities that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained” (p. 104). To ensure credibility during this study, I applied several methods. By being the classroom teacher and teaching in the school for over three years, I ensured credibility to this research as I have participated in the study for a prolonged amount of time. I also participated in peer debriefing with a colleague who helped me to reflect on the progress of the study and provided me with additional insight. Practicing triangulation during this study also ensured credibility. According to Mills (2007), triangulation is where the researcher compares a variety of data sources and different methods with one another in order to cross-check the data. Throughout this study, I collected and analyzed information using multiple approaches; including audio

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recordings of the interactive read-aloud and oral retells, anecdotal notes, reflective notes after each interactive read-aloud session, student questionnaires and student work produced.

I also ensured transferability during my research. According to Mills (2007), transferability refers to the researcher's belief that everything they study is "context bound" and that the goal of their work is not to develop statements that can be generalized to larger groups of people (p. 104). Since this research was conducted in my classroom, I was very familiar with the students and their individual strengths and needs as a learner. In addition, I have taught in this school for over three years and have an understanding and experience with the school's population, goals, rules, and expectations.

Dependability, which refers to the "stability of the data", is apparent in that the data that was collected and analyzed was derived from different forms and methods to ensure that in the data "the weakness of one is compensated by the strength of another" (Mills, 2007, p. 104). Another strategy to ensure dependability was to establish an audit trail (Mills, 2007). For this, a critical colleague examined the process of my data collection, analysis, and interpretation and had access to all of my data.

Lastly, I ensured confirmability during my research. Mills (2007) defines confirmability as the "neutrality or objectivity of the data that has been collected" (p. 105). By practicing triangulation I was able to compare one method with another which allowed me to cross-check the data. I also practiced reflexivity throughout my research. As I progressed through my study

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and received data, I kept a journal and continually referred back to and reflected on my original research question and also developed new questions for further research.

Informed consent and protecting the right of the participants

Prior to beginning the research, I obtained informed consent from each participant. Letters were sent home to each family that explained the procedures and purpose of the research and asked for their permission to allow their child to participate in this study. In protecting the rights of the participants, I used anonymous names and removed all identifying marks on student artifacts. I also obtained verbal assent from each participant and informed my principal about my action research study.

Data collection

As noted earlier, I used multiple forms of data collection. I audio recorded each interactive read-aloud session which allowed me to record students' verbal responses to teacher questions and prompts. I also recorded student's oral retells. In addition, after each session, I reflected on the lesson and recorded my observations and thoughts. I also collected each student's responses to the teacher generated comprehension questions as well as their story map in order to analyze their work. Lastly, a student questionnaire was completed at the end of the research in order to assess student's thoughts and feelings about interactive read-alouds and specifically repeated readings. The student questionnaire, story map, teacher generated comprehension questions, rubrics, and list of read-aloud books used for this study are located in the appendices.

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Data analysis

Multiple sources of data were collected during this action research project. To make use of the data that was collected, I examined the information multiple times. The first step was to score the oral retellings and story maps using rubrics. Each activity had its own rubric (Appendix G and H). After scoring the data, I organized the results into two tables (*Table 1 and Table 2*). I then looked for trends across the data based on if the results were after a 1st read, 2nd read or 3rd read. I also looked for trends across the data based on student achievement (below-grade level, on grade-level or above grade-level).

I then looked at the student answers to the teacher generated comprehension questions. There were two types of comprehension questions used to assess students understanding of the story. One type of comprehension question that was used was a literal question. Answering a literal comprehension question requires the student to extract information that was directly stated in the text. The other type of comprehension question used for this action research project was an inferential question. This type of question is a higher level question because it requires the student to think beyond the text since the answer is not explicitly given in the text. Since two types of comprehension questions were asked, I first looked at the number of correct answers each student provided with each book. I then focused on the number of correct answers given to the literal questions across the various texts and then I looked at the number of correct answers given to the inferential questions. On the third read through of the answers I compared how well the students performed based on when the questions were asked, after a 1st read, 2nd read or 3rd

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read. Answers were looked at a fourth time based on student achievement. All results were recorded using a table in order to determine if any commonalties or differences surfaced.

Student's comments made during the read-aloud sessions were studied and tallied. I recorded the number of responses made during each reading of the four books. These results are given in table 5. The last piece of data I collected was the student questionnaires about read-alouds. Student responses were read and compared with each student's results.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1: Oral Retellings

Student	Grandfather's Journey <i>(After 1st read)</i>	Cheyenne Again <i>(After 1st read)</i>	The Girl Who Lived with the Wild Horses <i>(After 2nd read)</i>	Crow Boy <i>(After 3rd read)</i>
John <i>(Below grade level)</i>	4	6	8	14
Samantha <i>(At grade level)</i>	14	15	15	19
Brianna <i>(Above grade level)</i>	17	19	15	21

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Table 2: Story Map

Student	Crow Boy <i>(After 1st read)</i>	Grandfather' s Journey <i>(After 2nd read)</i>	Cheyenne Again <i>(After 2nd read)</i>	The Girl Who Lived with the Wild Horses <i>(After 3rd read)</i>
John <i>(Below grade level)</i>	B- 2 M-2 E-2	B-2 M-1 E-2	B-2 M-2 E-2	B-2 M-2 E-2
Samantha <i>(At grade level)</i>	B-2 M-2 E-2	B-3 M-3 E-3	B-3 M-3 E-3	B-2 M-3 E-2
Brianna <i>(Above grade level)</i>	B-3 M-3 E-3	B-3 M-3 E-3	B-3 M-3 E-3	B-3 M-3 E-2

Key:

B (Beginning) M (middle) E (End)

Level: Total Points

Novice: 1

Apprentice: 2

Proficient: 3

Innovating: 4

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Table 3: Comprehension Questions

<p>Key:</p> <p>Literal Questions (# correct / # given)</p> <p>Inferential Questions (# correct / # given)</p>
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Student	The Girl Who Lived with the Wild Horses <i>(After 1st read)</i>	Crow Boy <i>(After 2nd read)</i>	Grandfather's Journey <i>(After 3rd read)</i>	Cheyenne Again <i>(After 3rd read)</i>
John <i>(Below grade level)</i>	1/2 0/4	2/2 2/4	2/2 1/4	2/2 2/4
Samantha <i>(At grade level)</i>	2/2 2/4	2/2 3/4	2/2 4/4	2/2 4/4
Brianna <i>(Above grade level)</i>	2/2 2/4	2/2 4/4	2/2 4/4	2/2 4/4

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Table 4: Student Comments Made During Read-aloud Events

Key:
First Read
Second Read
Third Read

Student	Grandfather's Journey	Cheyenne Again	The Girl Who Lived with the Wild Horses	Crow Boy
John <i>(Below grade level)</i>	First Read 0 Second Read 0 Third Read 1	First Read 1 Second Read 2 Third Read 4	First Read 0 Second Read 0 Third Read 1	First Read 1 Second Read 2 Third Read 6
Samantha <i>(At grade level)</i>	First Read 1 Second Read 3 Third Read 2	First Read 4 Second Read 6 Third Read 3	First Read 1 Second Read 4 Third Read 2	First Read 4 Second Read 5 Third Read 3
Brianna <i>(Above grade level)</i>	First Read 3 Second Read 4 Third Read 2	First Read 5 Second Read 7 Third Read 4	First Read 2 Second Read 3 Third Read 3	First Read 7 Second Read 6 Third Read 5

After looking across all the tables and analyzing all the data, several themes emerged. These themes include literal comprehension, inferential comprehension and student engagement.

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Literal comprehension

Comprehension is the ability to make sense of the text. It is the goal of reading. Within comprehension there are several levels of understanding. As stated above, literal comprehension is the ability to understand what is explicitly stated in the text. For example, being able to identify story elements such as characters, setting, problem and solution is an example of literal comprehension. In this action research, I used several methods in order to determine a student's literal comprehension of the text after each reading. The oral retellings, written story map, teacher generated questions and types of comments made during the read-aloud were all used to assess literal comprehension.

In this action research, I found that my lowest student (John) needed to hear the story several times before being able to demonstrate some literal understanding of the story. For example, after the first read of the book, John answered one out of two literal comprehension questions correctly, scored in the "apprentice" level for the story mapping activity and the "needs work" level for the oral retelling. He also did not make any comments during the interactive read-aloud for a first read. It wasn't until the book was read more than one time before John could demonstrate a better literal understanding of the story. After a second read or a third read of the story, John was able to answer both literal comprehension questions correctly. In addition, John's oral retelling went from the "needs work" level with a total score of four and six points, to the "developing" level after a second read with a score of eight points and a score of fourteen points after a third read which placed John at the cusp of "developing" and "skilled" level of retelling. It is important to note as well that with each subsequent reading, the number of John's

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comments during the read-aloud increased slightly. Therefore, based on these findings, it is suggested that students who are reading below grade level benefit from multiple reads of a story before they are able to proficiently demonstrate a literal understanding of the text.

This is not the case, however, with students at or above grade level for reading. Based on the data, I found that both students, Samantha (at grade level) and Brianna (above grade level), were able to successfully demonstrate a literal understanding of the book regardless if it was a first, second or third read. For example, both students were able to answer the teacher generated literal comprehension questions accurately after a first, second and third read. In addition, Brianna (above grade level) was able to complete the story map activity and oral retelling proficiently after a first, second and third read. Samantha (at grade level) demonstrated proficiency with story mapping and oral retelling after the second and third readings. For the first read of the book, Samantha was on the cusp of proficiency with both the story mapping activity and the oral retelling.

Inferential comprehension

The other type of comprehension that was assessed during this action research was inferential comprehension. As stated earlier, inferential comprehension is a higher level thinking skill which requires the reader to think beyond the text. For example, as opposed to literal comprehension where the reader is answering the who, what, where, when, why of the text, to demonstrate inferential understanding the reader may infer about ideas before or earlier than the context of the text, the cause and effect of events within the text, possible changes to

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circumstances, the targeted audience of a text, and information about characters and main ideas presented within the text.

Based on the data collected, Brianna, the above grade level student, struggled with answering the inferential comprehension questions when presented with them after the first read of the story *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses* by Paul Goble. Although she answered two out of the four questions correctly, the two questions that she answered incorrectly demonstrated some of her confusion with the story. For example, Brianna answered the question “Do you think the girl becomes a wild horse?” with a misconception. She answered by stating “Yes, because when she is ill she never comes back.” In truth, when the girl becomes ill in the story she does come back.

Examining the number of correct inferential questions Brianna received with each story, one can see that it was only after the first read of a story where she incorrectly answered the inferential comprehension questions. With the second and third readings, Brianna was able to successfully answer all inferential questions accurately and use text evidence to support her answers. For example, after the third reading of *Cheyenne Again* by Eve Bunting, when answering the question “How does Young Bull become Cheyenne again?” Brianna answered by stating “He thinks of him and his tribe in his mind and draws his memories. He remembers who he is by holding on to his memories and never forgetting them. Nobody can take away your memories.” It is important to note that Brianna found this story to be very engaging but difficult at the same time. After the first reading of the story, Brianna asked me “I don’t understand what the title means?” At this point, I didn’t give her the answer because I wanted to see if she was going to be able to figure it out on her own. After the second reading, Brianna still did not

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understand the title of the story and became quite frustrated with me when I finished the story and said “But wait! I still don’t get the title and what it means!” I told her that I wasn’t going to give her the answer to her question yet because I wanted her to listen to the story one more time first and if she still didn’t understand where the title came from then I would have a conversation with her about it. After the third read of the story when I read the last page, Brianna’s face lit right up and she said “Oh, I get it now! He is Cheyenne again because even though they cut his hair and took away his clothes, he can still hold on to his memories and never forget who he is. He is Cheyenne again!” It wasn’t until the third read of the book that Brianna made this connection between the title and the text. If she had only heard the book one or even two times, she never would have independently understood the importance of the title.

Samantha (at grade level student) showed similar results. Similar to Brianna, Samantha was only able to answer two out of the four inferential questions correctly after the first reading of the story. After the second read of the book, Samantha was able to answer three out of the four inferential questions accurately and after the third reading of the book, Samantha was able to successfully answer all inferential comprehension questions.

John (below grade level) struggled with answering the inferential comprehension questions across all readings. After the first reading of *The Girl Who Lived with the Wild Horses* by Paul Goble, John was unable to correctly answer any of the inferential questions. However, after the second reading of *Crow Boy* by Taro Yashima, John was able to answer two out of the four inferential questions correctly. Therefore, John did demonstrate an improvement in his inferential understanding of the story after a second read. When examining John’s ability to

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answer inferential questions after a third read, one can find conflicting results. After the third read of *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say, John only answered one out of four questions correctly. But, after the third read of *Cheyenne Again* by Eve Bunting, John was able to answer two out of four inferential questions accurately. This difference can be attributed to the fact that John demonstrated difficulty in being able to understand *Grandfather's Journey* at the literal level. As Tables 1 and 2 indicate, John scored the lowest for literal understanding for *Grandfather's Journey* in the oral retelling and story mapping activities than any other book. Students need to be able to understand a story at the literal level before they can begin to understand it at a deeper level. John's results also show that as a student who is reading below grade level, he benefits from multiple readings of the same text in order to reach a higher level of both literal and inferential understanding.

Engagement

By examining the data multiple times and triangulating it with the student questionnaires and student comments made during each interactive read-aloud session, several statements can be made. Both Brianna and Samantha were very active participants during each read-aloud session. For example, both students not only made comments about the story throughout each reading, they also asked questions. Sometimes their questions were clarifying questions and sometimes their questions were reflective of the character's actions. Their posture also indicated a high level of engagement. For each reading, they were sitting very close to the teacher on the carpet and maintained consistent eye-content. Their attention did not waver during each read-aloud session. Their faces were very animated and their voices were very enthusiastic. In addition,

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based on my observations, each student demonstrated a high level of confidence when listening to each story.

Furthermore, each student was familiar with the interactive read-aloud routine in the classroom and genuinely loved listening to books being read-aloud to them. Samantha and Brianna both indicated on the student questionnaire that they enjoyed the read-aloud time in the classroom and even loved listening to the story multiple times. Both girls also reported that the reason why they liked to listen to a story more than once is because they always hear something new the second time that they didn't hear the first time the book was read. Samantha reported on her questionnaire that "Listening to the book a second time lets me learn more about the story. I always miss something the first time I listen to a book." Based on the student questionnaires, it is also apparent that literacy is valued in both the girls' homes. Both girls report that their parents routinely read aloud to them at night and they each look forward to this special time of the day. On her questionnaire Brianna did lament that she wished her mom would read to her every night "like she used to" instead of "just three to four times a week."

In contrast, John did not show a high level of engagement during each read-aloud session. His demeanor showed that he was disinterested and disengaged. His comments during the read-aloud sessions were sparse if he made any comments at all. He sat away from me with his head bowed down and spent most of the read-aloud time playing with his shoelaces or an imaginary speck on the carpet. He was very difficult to pull into any conversation that I was having with the two other students during each interactive read-aloud event. Even when asked a direct question, John would often shrug his shoulders and mumble something. Based on his student

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questionnaire, John only likes read-aloud time in the classroom if it is a book that he likes and he reported that he never likes to listen to a book a second time. He says it is “boring” to listen to a book more than once. He also indicated that his parents do not read aloud to him at home “anymore” and he doesn’t like to read independently either.

Implications and Conclusion

There are many reasons as to why teachers should be reading aloud to their students’ everyday. Reasons such as to entertain, to inform or explain, to arouse curiosity, and to inspire children are just a few. Furthermore, in 1985, the Commission on Reading in their report *Becoming a Nation of Readers* found conclusive evidence to support teachers reading aloud to their class and stated that reading aloud is a practice that should continue throughout the grades. Unfortunately, Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard’s (2000) research found that the number of teachers that read aloud to their children has decreased significantly since standardized testing has become more prominent in education today. However, as seen in the results of my action research, reading aloud to older children is not a frivolous activity. I found that reading aloud to children and exposing them to the same literature multiple times increases both their literal comprehension and inferential comprehension skills. These findings support the work of Morrow (1988), Martinez & Roser (1985), and Yaden (1988). Yaden (1988) found that with each reading of a story, the students’ level of understanding deepened. He concluded that teachers should not assess a student’s level of story understanding after a single read because it is inaccurate. A child needs several exposures to the story in order to totally grasp meaning. Yaden’s (1988) conclusion mirrors what I found during my action research project with John.

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Based on my data and John's responses, John could not demonstrate a complete literal understanding of the story unless it was read to him multiple times.

Martinez & Roser (1985) had similar findings with their study and found that repeated readings resulted in children noticing and identifying different aspects of the story than they did on the first read. I found this to be true in my research as well. All three students' literal and inferential comprehension scores increased with each rereading of the story. The number of comments the students' made also increased with each rereading. Therefore, based on my findings, I conclude that as the students understanding and familiarity of the story grows with each subsequent reading, so does their ability to comment about different aspects of the story. For example, Samantha, who is academically performing at grade level for reading and writing, was able to notice and comment on the author's craft after the third reading of *Grandfather's Journey* by Allan Say. She said "Look how the author is using sequencing words to tell the story. First, second, third. I didn't notice that the first or second time you read this to us." As suggested by my findings and the research conducted by Martinez & Roser (1985), Samantha was able to notice author's craft because she already had a firm understanding of the story at that point. On the first, and often times the second read of a story, students are trying to make meaning and aren't cognitively able to think beyond the text yet. If I had not read *Grandfather's Journey* a third time to Samantha, I would not have known about her ability to recognize author's craft. Personally, this was a defining moment in my research. From that moment on I knew that there was value in rereading stories to children.

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Limitations

There are several limitations to this action research study. The first limitation is the number of participants. This study included only three participants, one participant reading below grade level, one participant reading at grade level, and one participant reading above grade level. If I were to replicate this study I would include a larger number of participants which would increase the amount of data to analyze. Another limitation of this action study was the short duration. This study occurred over a 2 1/5 week span which only allowed me to use four books. I would have liked to continue this study over a longer period of time in order to collect and analyze more data. It would be interesting to see if additional themes would surface if more participants and more books were used. A third limitation to this action research is the genre of books used. All four picture books used are fiction. It would be interesting to explore how children's responses and comprehension would change if nonfiction or poetry were used instead.

Questions for consideration

Data that was not collected during this action research study was the different types of oral comments that students were making during each read-aloud event. For example, I know that students were making observations, asking questions, making predictions and clarifying the story with each read-aloud. However, would the frequency of the types of questions change with each subsequent read-aloud? Do students ask more clarifying type questions during the first reading as opposed to the second or third reading? I also question how changing the genre would impact results. Do children comprehend fiction easier than nonfiction or poetry? Would changing the

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genre make a difference at all? Do some children react and respond better to fiction than nonfiction? All of these questions would require further research in order to answer.

Conclusion

This action research has been conducted with the intent to determine what effect repeated readings have on 3rd grader's reading comprehension. Morrow (1988), Martinze & Roser(1985), and Yaden (1988) have all conducted similar research with younger children and each researcher has found a positive relationship between repeated readings and emergent literacy skills but, there has been little research done in regards to the value of repeated readings with older children. This action research was situated within the context of a constructivist perspective in order to determine the impact of multiple read-aloud events on student comprehension. From this context, readers interact with the text and actively construct meaning as they read, and this process is influenced by the reader's background knowledge and experiences. In this framework children become literate through their social interactions and experiences within their environment. In this action research, children were listening, responding, and interacting with text in a social setting.

Based on the findings of this action research, it can be said that repeated readings have a positive effect on a 3rd grader's comprehension of literature. I found that a student's level of understanding increased with each reading of the same text. Both literal and inferential thinking improved with each reading. In addition to deepening their story understanding and moving children from a literal understanding to an evaluative and critical stance, I found that rereading

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books also sparked an interest in reading in my classroom. I was not expecting this. In fact, I was surprised to discover that even after reading the same book to my class three times in three days, as soon as I put the book down on a chair, students were fighting over who would get to read it first during independent reading time. As a teacher who values books and loves to read, one of my personal goals each school year is to foster that love of reading in each and every student in my class. So, to see children, especially my “John’s” of the classroom, clamoring to get to the book first was wonderful. Although I have completed this action research project, the four books that I used are still on the shelves in my classroom and just yesterday, weeks and weeks later, children are still reading those same four books over and over again. They are reading them independently, they are reading them with a friend, and they are asking me if they can borrow them overnight to share them with their family. It is incredible. They are even approaching me and showing me the new things that they have noticed this time reading the book that they didn’t notice the first, second, or even third time. Gambrell, Palmer, and Coding (2003) found similar results in their read-aloud study of third and fourth graders and stated that interactive read-alouds are an effective way to introduce children to the joy of reading. They found that the book choices students made for independent readings were often related to the teacher’s read-aloud. In conclusion, not only should teachers read aloud to their children every day but, based on the findings of this action research study, teachers should incorporate multiple rereads of the same book into their daily schedule.

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Appendix A**List of Read-Aloud Books*****Cheyenne Again*** by Eve Bunting

Summary: Near the turn of the century, a Cheyenne boy, Young Bull, is forced to attend the off-reservation Indian school so that he can learn to become a part of the white world. He is housed in soulless barracks and shown repeatedly and quite blatantly that the Indian ways are no good. When he rebels and tries to run home in a snowstorm, he is caught, returned, and shackled for a day. The story, told from Young Bull's point of view, is not so much judgmental as empathetic—none of the authority figures is an ogre. The agents for change here are not white bureaucrats, but Indians who have adopted white ways, and Young Bull clearly feels betrayed by them.

The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses by Paul Goble

Summary: Goble's Caldecott Medal-winning book tells the story of a young Native American girl who is devoted to the care of her tribe's horses. The story begins with a young Native American girl who dedicated to the care of her tribe's horses. She feels such a kinship with the wild horses grazing near her village that she eventually becomes one of them and runs forever free.

Grandfather's Journey by Allen Say

Summary: This is the story of a Japanese immigrant's journey to America. Allen Say's (author) grandfather came to this country as a young man. The grandfather traveled all over America and saw the mountains, prairies, deserts, and cities. But, he settled in California because he liked it the best. California had mountains, sun, and a seacoast which reminded him of his home in Japan. He returned to Japan to marry and then brought his bride to California. They had a daughter, but then Grandfather became homesick for Japan and his family moved back to Japan. He loves being with his friends in Japan. He loved both countries all the rest of his life. His daughter married and had a son (Allen Say). After Allen grows up he decides to come see all the beautiful things in America his grandfather had loved and talked about. Allen stays in California but never forgets his homeland. The story is told as Say remembers his grandfather's life and his own coming to America.

Crow Boy by Taro Yashima

Summary: In a small Japanese village, Chibi is an outcast at school because he is different from the other children. However, at the beginning of his sixth grade year, he has Mr. Isobe for a teacher. Mr. Isobe saw something special in Chibi, and he helped him show that gift to others.

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Appendix B**The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses**

By Paul Goble

1. How does the girl help the wild horses?

2. What happens during the thunderstorm?

3. How does the girl feel when she is living with the horses?

4. Why does the girl become ill when she returns home? What would you have told her if she had asked you what to do?

5. Why do you think the girl's parents let her go with the horses?

6. Do you think the girl becomes a wild horse? Why or why not?

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Appendix C**Crow Boy**

By Taro Yashima

1. What are some of the things that the other children notice about Chibi—things that make him different and set him apart?

2. Who is Mr. Isobe?

3. Why do you think Chibi keeps coming to school every day? If you were in Chibi's shoes, would you come to school every day? Explain your answer.

4. Why do you think none of children stand up for Chibi when his is being teased? Do you think this is right or wrong? What could they have done instead?

5. What lessons do you think Crow Boy's classmates learned?

6. What is the theme of this book?

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Appendix D**Grandfather's Journey**

By Allen Say

1. In the beginning of the story, where is the grandfather going?

2. What were three things that the grandfather saw when he came to North America?

3. At first, how does the grandfather feel about his travels?

4. What do you think he missed most when he was living in the United States?

5. The book ended with "I think I know my grandfather now?" Why? What does this mean?

6. What is the main idea of this story?

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Appendix E**Cheyenne Again**

By Eve Bunting

1. Why does the Man Who Counts and the Taking Man come for Young Bull?

2. Why does Young Bull's father tell him to go?

3. What do the teachers at the boarding school take from Young Bull? Do you think this is right or wrong? Why?

4. How does Young Bull feel at the school? How do you know?

5. What else could they have done to teach him about American culture?

What advice does the teacher give Young Bull?

6. How does Young Bull become Cheyenne Again?

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Appendix F

Story Retelling				
	Novice 1 pts	Apprentice 2 pts	Proficient 3 pts	Innovating 4 pts
beginning of story	Novice Student attempts to identify how the story began, but with some inaccuracies.	Apprentice Student attempts to identify beginning of story, but leave out key points.	Proficient Student identifies all key elements of the beginning of the story. Characters and setting are identified.	Innovating Student correctly expresses the beginning of the story and describes how it introduces the story.
middle of story	Novice Student attempts to identify events from the middle of story, but with some inaccuracies.	Apprentice Student attempts to identify events from the middle of story, but leave out key points.	Proficient Student identifies all key elements from the middle of the story.	Innovating Student correctly identifies the key elements of the story and can express why it is important to the story.
end of story	Novice Student attempts to identify events from the end of story, but with some inaccuracies.	Apprentice Student attempts to identify events from the end of story, but leave out key points.	Proficient Student identifies all key elements from the end of the story.	Innovating Student correctly expresses the ending of the story and describes how it concludes the action.

Appendix G

Basic Story Map		Instructions: Fill in the boxes to show how your story developed.	Name: _____
Title: Author:	Characters:	Setting:	
Beginning:	Middle:	End:	
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Appendix H

Fiction Retelling Scoring Form

Student's Name _____ Date _____

Book Title _____ Score _____

Rubric for Scoring Individual Story Elements	
Complete, detailed	3 points
Partial	2 points
Fragmentary (sketchy)	1 point
Inaccurate or not included	0 points

Key Elements	Prompts	0	1	2	3
Beginning	How does the story begin?				
Setting	Where does the story occur?				
Characters	Who are the main characters? Which was most important? Why?				
Problem	What is one important problem in the story?				
Sequence	What important things happened in the story? What was the order of events?				
Resolution	How is the problem solved? How does the story end?				
Level of prompting: high (1), medium (2), none (3)					

Total points

Observer Comments:

Interpreting the Point Totals	
Skilled	15-21
Developing	8-14
Needs work	0-7

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Appendix I**Student Questionnaire**

1. Do you read at home? How often? What types of books do you like to read?

2. Do your parents read aloud to you? How often?

3. Do you enjoy read-alouds in the classroom? Why or why not?

4. Do you like to listen to the same story more than once? Why or why not?

5. Do you prefer to listen to chapter books or picture books? Why?