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**EFFECTS OF RECIPROCAL TEACHING IN GUIDED READING  
WITH THIRD GRADE STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC POOR  
COMPREHENSION**

by

Sharon R. McLaren

A Thesis

Submitted to the  
Department of Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education  
College of Education  
In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
For the degree of  
Master of Arts in Special Education  
at  
Rowan University  
May 15, 2018

Thesis Chair: S. Jay Kuder, Ed.D.

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## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Abstract**

Sharon R. McLaren

### **EFFECTS OF RECIPROCAL TEACHING IN GUIDED READING WITH THIRD GRADE STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC POOR COMPREHENSION 2017-2018**

S. Jay Kuder, Ed.D.

Master of Arts in Special Education

This study examined the effects that using the reciprocal teaching intervention method on third grade students with specific poor comprehension skills within a guided reading setting. The study included ten third grade students-five boys and five girls. While all the students read fluently, they were identified with poor reading comprehension skills. The researcher conducted the reading groups with both the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group received the reciprocal teaching intervention. The control group received the standard guided reading lessons.

Results from the study show that reciprocal teaching can improve third graders reading comprehension skills. Participants in the experimental group increased their scores from the pre-test to the post-test. The experimental group also increased their reading comprehension scores on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Several of the control group participants decreased their scores in reading comprehension on the DRA. It is clear students in both groups made increases, however, more of the experimental group participants increased comprehension scores as compared to the control group participants.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **Statement of Problem**

As a Remedial level Language Arts teacher and Interventionist in a suburban public-school setting, I have continuously encountered students struggling with reading comprehension skills. When students struggle with reading comprehension in Language Arts class, it adversely impacts their writing skills and their success in the other core content classes such as Social Studies and Science. For the last seventeen years, I have struggled to find ways to inspire and teach students that have reading skill deficits. One day when researching intervention strategies to booster reading comprehension in my students, the Reciprocal Teaching strategy caught my eye. After implementing a version of reciprocal teaching with my class, there was significant appeal to engage in the reading process by my students. Because of this, when using the reciprocal teaching method in class, my students' understanding of the material and the engagement from the students was exponential to my customary direct teaching method. Considering the effect, the teaching method had on my students the few times it was employed in my class and the fact that it was not delivered with true fidelity, I expect that used with fidelity for a continual amount of time that the reciprocal teaching strategy would be a highly effective intervention for struggling readers.

Research on reciprocal teaching began with the professionals who created the strategy, Annmarie Palincsar and Ann Brown. Palincsar and Brown created a metacognitive strategy to teach a reader how to self-regulate their own learning. The teacher first models the activity and then gradually releases the responsibility to the

students. Palincsar created four activities to use to increase comprehension and critical thinking skills. When reading, students summarize, generate questions, clarify and predict. Each activity has a unique purpose and when used together correctly, will create students that is engaged in their own learner. Summarizing gives the student an opportunity to identify and synthesize the most critical aspects of the text. Students can start with summarizing a few sentences to a paragraph, then work their way up to summarizing an entire passage. Generating questions reinforces summarizing because the students look for the most important information to create a question. As the students become more proficient in this strategy, they can be taught and encouraged to create questions at both a literal level and the more advanced inferential and application levels. The clarifying strategy is especially important for students with a history of comprehension difficulties. Asking these students to clarify a point or answer to a question is a task that takes practice, because many of these students see reader as a decoding activity and do not really question when words do not make sense. The clarifying strategy will help restore textual meaning for many of the students. The predicting strategy helps students utilize schema to approve or disprove a theory. Each strategy was strategically selected to assist students in gaining meaning from text; first by following instruction from a teacher and eventually becoming the teacher.

## **Study Questions**

The research question for this study is: can reciprocal teaching positively impact the reading comprehension skills of third grade students with comprehension difficulties that have been identified to receive reading intervention? My hypothesis is that by using the reciprocal teaching strategy, student achievement in reading comprehension will increase and create a more positive attitude about reading and learning.

Sub questions are as follows:

Will using reciprocal teaching increase student grades in reading?

Will students' attitudes about reading improve?

Will students become more engaged in the learning process?

## **Study Implications**

The results of this study could be used to increase our school's reading scores on the PARCC test. It could also be used to improve the attitudes and active engagement of students in their learning. According to R. Garner,

To make an individual metacognitively aware is to ensure that the individual has learned how to learn. (Garner 1988)

This is the effect that reciprocal teaching can have on a student.

My plan for this study is to utilize the reciprocal teaching method during guided reading with groups of third grade students. In September, every student in the school is given the DRA test to identify with students need academic support and Response to

Intervention (RtI) services. The students that are identified as needing services are not

eligible for special education services but have fallen below grade level in reading and/or writing skills. None of the students selected for the study have an IEP or 504 Plan. The study group will consist of 5 students who have been identified in Language Arts, specifically reading comprehension, to receive academic support services. Their services include tiers 1 and 2 reading interventions by an interventionist (academic in-class support teacher). these students are reading below grade level. The control group will consist of 5 students in the same general education class that have not been identified for reading interventions. Although not identified for academic support, these students are not the highest-level readers in the class. These students are reading on grade level. In our guided reading groups, the reciprocal teaching process and each strategy will be taught to the students. Once each strategy is taught and modeled by the teacher, the release of responsibility will slowly be given to the students in each group. At this point, the students will take over as the leader (teacher) of the group, and the teacher will intermittently sway the direction of the discussion as needed. At three times during the study, students will keep a journal log of their feelings on the strategies and their attitudes about reading. At the end of the study, students will write a final journal entry. Short reading assessments will be given after each guided reading group. these assessments will be on third grade reading level with approximately 150 words. This will include 5 multiple questions and 1 short answer question. Grades will be tracked throughout the study to identify if students are progressively achieving higher scores.

## **Key Terms**

*Metacognition* - an awareness of one's own thought process

*Zone of Proximal Development* - the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she cannot do.

*Reciprocal Teaching* - instructional activity in which students become the teacher in small group reading sessions. Teachers model, then help students learn to guide group discussions using four strategies: summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting.

*RtI* - Response to Intervention is a process used by educators to help students who struggle with a skill.

*Intervention* - educational strategy that helps students with support to improve skills

Tier 1 Intervention - Core instructional interventions

Tier 2 Intervention - Intense interventions for students who are struggling with whole-class interventions

*General Education Teacher* - Teachers of students without disabilities

*Interventionist* - Teachers that develop and implement individualized interventions

*Exceptional Learners* - Students with learning and behavioral problems, as well as gifted students

One possible implication for this study might be that more teachers will utilize the strategy of reciprocal teaching. This can create students that actively engage in their own learning. It can create an atmosphere of learning where students are engaged in the process socially with each other. Through this, stronger peer relationships can develop as

well as students' communication skills. I plan on surveying students in this study to evaluate their thoughts on the reciprocal teaching process.

A second implication for the study might be the increase of student achievement in both reading class grades, as well as an increase in the reading scores on the state assessment, PARCC. This research project will be a mixed-methods approach, with both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

A possible negative implication of this study is that teachers or administration do not buy into the idea of teachers backing out of the process and giving the learning responsibility over to the students. There are still teachers and administrators that do not know or believe the research that student-led learning is more valuable than old fashioned direct teaching instruction of lecture and worksheets.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

Reading is a skill that is mastered over time through learning and developing the skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Reading is not a skill that everyone grasps at the same time. Most times, children begin to form literacy skills at a very young age. By kindergarten, most students, age-appropriately, are identifying and sounding out sight words by using their acquired phonemic awareness and phonics skills. As students are taught phonemic awareness and phonics, fluency skills begin to emerge. Fluency is a critical aspect of reading skills, as the reader develops a sense or meaning of a text. As readers become fluent, they perceive that there is a purpose for reading text. To enhance understanding of text, vocabulary study is extremely important to increased comprehension skills. Comprehension goes beyond decoding words; it encompasses the ability to understand meaning and the relationship between ideas in the text.

### **Reading Comprehension**

Reports continue to show that comprehension is a problem for students in the United States. While most kids learn to decode words, comprehending what they read is another problem. Only 34% of students in 4th and 8th grade scored at or above proficient in reading scores (Nation's Report Card, 2013). Reading comprehension requires the ability to interact with a text in a way that turns a passive reader into an active reader. Comprehension requires higher order thinking skills that can be difficult for many emerging readers. Good readers utilize comprehension strategies to help master the

understanding of a text. Reading comprehension strategies were developed to help focus on comprehension and increase the ability to understand text. Eight main reading strategies are used to improve comprehension skills of students. *Activating schema* is an important first step in comprehension ability. When a reader utilizes past experiences and knowledge learned, understanding increases. The more personal experience a reader has, the more understanding will take place when reading text. *Self-questioning* is a technique where the students generate their own questions about the text. these questions guide their reading and understanding. *Making connections* helps students relate to the text by comparing it to their own lives, another text or the world. *Visualizing* is used to create mental pictures of what the students are reading. *Vocabulary* is important so that readers know how words work and how they are used in the text. Good readers also *monitor* their reading for better understanding. *Summarizing* is used for integrating important ideas. Lastly, *evaluating* is used to make judgements about the text which will help in understanding and promote discussion. Using active reading strategies, such as questioning and determining the importance of what is read helps build comprehension skills (Ozkus, 2010).

## **Reciprocal Teaching**

Reciprocal teaching is an instructional method developed by Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar and Ann L. Brown in the early 1980's. This instructional technique takes place as a conversation between the teacher and student as a means of constructing meaning from text. This strategy was designed to improve the comprehension of students by using four comprehension strategies specifically chosen by Palincsar and Brown (1984): *summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting*. Reciprocal teaching is not meant to take the place of other reading programs. Reciprocal Teaching is a secondary method of teaching reading comprehension that complements other core reading programs.

Research has shown that accompanied with a core reading program, reciprocal teaching can account for significant increases in reading comprehension ability (Oczkus, 2010 p. 4). In Palincsar and Brown's pilot research study in 1982, the findings showed that reciprocal teaching could be highly effective when used with 7th grade middle school students. In their first study, thirty-seven 7th graders were placed into four groups; two groups were control groups that were taught no reading intervention. The other two groups were taught a reading intervention; one being *Reciprocal Teaching* and the other *Locating Information*. Locating Information is a common teaching method where students learn to comprehend text better by using techniques; such as locating text features to preview the text, and skimming material to find important information. Students in this study were paired with a teacher/tutor and were taught the specific reading program for each group. The results of this study showed that students in the

reciprocal teaching group increased the answers to main idea questions from 34% (pre-intervention) to 70% (post-intervention). Their main idea summaries increased from 52%-85% (Palincsar and Brown, 1982). With such a successful first study, Palincsar and Brown (1984) conducted a second study that focused on how the strategies are taught, rather than what is included in the four strategies. This study used similar groupings of seventh graders, except real teachers instead of adult tutors were used. In this study, each group was taught a different way of using reciprocal teaching. Group 1 used reciprocal teaching/corrective feedback. This was performed the same way as Palincsar and Brown's first study. The students were taught each strategy and gradual release of responsibility went to the students as they became more secure in the procedure. Group 2 used reciprocal teaching/practice, which had the students write summaries, questions and predictions but teacher feedback was minimal. Group 3 used a technique called Demonstration, which was having the teacher demonstrate the four strategies and the students would answer teacher generated questions. Group 4 used what they called, treated condition, where the students were taught one strategy at a time and were given worksheets. The 5th group was the untreated group, which only received the assessment and no reciprocal teaching lessons. This study showed that reciprocal teaching with teacher feedback was most effective. Demonstration with no teacher feedback was the least effective of the groups (Palincsar and Brown, 1984). Extending the research to older students, Nicole Correa (2016) completed a study using reciprocal teaching on nineteen students in a high school mild disabled English class. The participants ranged from 15-18 years of age. The improvement shown in the study by using the reciprocal teaching

method was consistent with other studies completed with the same age group (Correa, 2016).

Results with older students, prompted research on elementary-aged students. Many of the previous studies had been done with struggling readers. Kathy Magnuson (2009) chose six high-level readers from a 1st grade class of sixteen students. The main purpose of her study was to see if reciprocal teaching method could be effective with 1st grade students. Students were given a pre-assessment and post assessment to assess their comprehension of text over the course of the study. All but one student in this study increased their reading comprehension scores from pre-test to post-test. Two-thirds of the students increased their comprehension scores using the reciprocal teaching method (Magnuson, 2009). In 2014, a study was completed on 3rd grade students in Sweden. The 3rd grade students were chosen because of the standardized testing that begins in year three in Sweden's schools. No studies had ever been done in Sweden using reciprocal teaching as a reading comprehension intervention method. Monica Reichenberg (2014) conducted a 12-week intervention using reciprocal teaching method to 30 3rd grade students. Two groups of fifteen students met twice a week for 15-20 minutes over the 12-week period. Using the reciprocal teaching method, the students' scores increased significantly over the course of 12 weeks.

With all the success shown by studies conducted in reading classes with both elementary and secondary students, studies began to appear examining the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching method in the content areas. Kim DiLorenzo (2010) conducted a study using reciprocal teaching method in science literacy. Following a 20-day study and

follow up period, DiLorenzo's study showed that the 4th and 5th graders combined scores increased by 33%. DiLorenzo also noted that students began to take on leadership roles in their small groups. In 2004, Richard Hogewood conducted a study using reciprocal teaching on a group of 50 9th graders in Social Studies. During the 12-week study there was a control group that did not receive training in reciprocal teaching but instead received normal direct instruction. The study group received training and used reciprocal teaching over the course of the 12-week study. Results showed that the control group increased their scores from 35%-50%, while the reciprocal teaching group increased their scores from 15%-80%. (Hogewood, 2004).

There have been a variety of research studies about reciprocal teaching, beginning with Palincsar and Brown's primary study of 7th grade students in 1982. The success of Palincsar and Brown's studies inspired others to study reciprocal teaching within other areas. Younger students were studied by Kathy Magnuson with 1st grade students and Monica Reichenberg with 3rd grade students. Research studies using reciprocal teaching in the content areas, such as Science and Social Studies began to appear. All of these studies showed results that prove that reciprocal teaching is an effective comprehension teaching method. My research will be focused on 3rd grade students in guided reading groups, where reciprocal teaching method will be implemented with students identified with reading comprehension difficulties. Students with specific poor comprehension (SPC) read fluently by sounding out words correctly but have obstacles in absorbing and understanding what they have read. Observing students with SPC, fluency is visible; however, when questioning the student about the reading deficits in comprehension are

obvious. SPC begins to become more noticeable in the upper elementary grades; when students' inferential comprehension begins to be tested much more. As texts get longer, students will demonstrate poor monitoring skills to access their own understanding of the text. Most studies that have been done using reciprocal teaching method have not distinguished between students with SPC and other types of reading disabilities, such as dyslexia. My study will focus on grade 3 students with SPC. Third grade is the year where many signs of SPC are observable in students. Because reciprocal teaching method is a technique that encapsulates comprehension-fostering and comprehension monitoring strategies, students with SPC should show marked improvement in their comprehension skills.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **Setting and Participants**

This study included twelve third grade students from a suburban elementary school in Southern New Jersey. According to the New Jersey School Performance Report (New Jersey Department of Education, 2014), 87.4% of students in the upper elementary school are white, 7% are Hispanic, 2.4% are Asian, 1.6% are black, 1.1% are multi-raced, .3% are American Indian, and .3% are Pacific Islander. The majority of the students in the district speak English with a small percentage that speak Spanish.

All the students chosen for this study have been identified for academic support in Language Arts. These students have been identified through their baseline screenings and teacher recommendations. Each September, every student in the school is administered the Developmental Reading assessment. The Developmental Reading Assessment, also known as the DRA, is a standardized reading assessment used to determine a student's instructional and independent reading levels. The assessment is administered multiple times in a school year to obtain data on each student to use for qualification into remedial programs and Response to Intervention programs; as well as, to show progress and which areas in which the student needs support. Scores on this test, along with teacher recommendations, help identify students for academic support services. The students in this study are reading on or below a beginning third grade reading level. Comprehension being a specific area of deficit for all the participants.

The experimental group consisted of five students, including four females and one male. All the students were third graders ranging in age from 8-9. The mean age for this group was 8.2 years. Experimental group participants' reading scores on the September 2017 DRA range from 24- 28. According to the DRA, a third-grade student is reading on level at a 30.

The control group consisted of five students, including one female and four males. All the control group participants are third graders ranging in age from 8-9 years old. The mean age of this group is 8.5 years. Study group participants' reading scores on the September 2017 DRA range from 24- 30.

### **Procedure**

The intervention was implemented over an eight-week period from February 2018- April 2018. As the academic support/reading teacher, I met with two guided reading groups three days a week for forty minutes per session. The students met in their guided reading groups from their general third grade classroom. Group 1, the experimental group, consisted of six third grade students. This group met on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12:30-1:10PM, unless there was a schedule change or school closing. Group 2, the control group, consisted of six third grade students who also met on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1:40-2:20, unless there was a schedule change or school closing.

In session, 1, baseline data was collected from the students. This data included reading scores from the Fall DRA assessment, and the scores from the pre-assessment. The reading pre-assessment consisted of a one-page reading passage with five multiple choice comprehension questions. Students were introduced to the study, including what their role would eventually be in the study.

In sessions 2-5, each intervention strategy was taught to students. Students were taught the reciprocal teaching strategies; predicting, summarizing, questioning and clarifying. Each session, one strategy was taught so the students could utilize each strategy during the intervention.

Each session, one strategy was taught so the students could utilize each strategy during the intervention. The reciprocal teaching intervention consisted of twenty-four total sessions. During the first five sessions, the study was introduced, and the four reciprocal teaching strategies were taught. During session five, I maintained the role of leader and initiated questions and discussion. During the next five sessions, students gained more responsibility as the leader and finally took over as the leader. At the end of every second session, the students took a reading comprehension assessment with a short, one-page passage and five multiple choice questions. In the beginning of May, the Spring MAP assessment was administered giving the final MAP scores of the year.

In sessions 6-24, the reciprocal teaching method was used to enhance the comprehension skills of the experimental group. In the experimental group, participant 1, with my assistance took the role of leader. With each new text, the next participant took the leader role. Each of the five participants in the experimental group had a chance to

take the role of leader for an entire text. Each "participant leader" began the lesson by prompting the other participants to predict what the text was about by asking what the text features represent to the text. The leader asks questions that help activate the participants' schema as to help them predict what happened in the text. Next, the leader mediated the reading of the text by calling on participants to read portions of the text. Once the reading was completed, the leader asked multiple level questions to participants. The leader asked basic recall questions, such as "Who is the main character?". Higher-level thinking questions, such as inference and analysis questions. Each leader created questions with my help. After the questioning was completed, the leader prompted the participants to summarize the text in their own words. After the summary discussion, the student participants had a chance to ask any remaining questions they had to the student leader. This portion of the session helped to clarify any misunderstandings of the text. The control group continued using the guided reading method in their group. The guided reading method consisted of using direct instruction. The teacher leads the reading lesson by controlling the path the reading lesson takes, including asking the questions to students based on the reading assigned by the teacher. Guided reading consisted of using any reading strategy and reading technique at any time.

The independent variable in this study was the reciprocal teaching method. This intervention aimed to increase students' comprehension skills. The dependent variables in the study were students' grades and DRA scores.

The design used in this experiment is the quasi-experimental, two-group, intervention and group design. In this experiment, the study group was taught and learned an intervention reading technique called reciprocal teaching. The control group does not learn the reciprocal teaching method. This group was taught the direct instruction guided reading method. the hypothesis of this study is that by utilizing the reciprocal teaching method, students' reading scores will increase higher than those students who are taught the typical guided reading lessons. Each group was given a pre-assessment, as well as, short reading assessments after every second class. At the end of the study, each group was given the pre-assessment as a final post-assessment.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

In this study, the impact of reciprocal teaching instruction on third-grade guided reading groups were analyzed. Ten students from two third grade guided reading groups participated in the study. Five students received the intervention and five students acted as the control group. The intervention implemented during guided reading was the reciprocal teaching method. The research questions answered were:

1. Can reciprocal teaching positively impact the reading comprehension skills of third grade students with comprehension difficulties that have been identified to receive reading intervention?
2. Will using reciprocal teaching increase student grades in reading?
3. Will students attitudes about reading improve?

Figure 1 below shows the results of the pre- and post-tests for the study group. The pre/post-test consisted of a two-page narrative with ten multiple-choice comprehension questions. The comprehension questions were composed of main idea, inference, retelling details, and vocabulary. All five of the experimental group participants increased their scores from the pre-test at the beginning of the study to the post-test at the end of the study. Experimental group participants increased from 25% to 42.6% from pre-test to post-test. In opposition, the control group, as seen below in figure 2, earned a smaller increase from 0% to 28.6%.

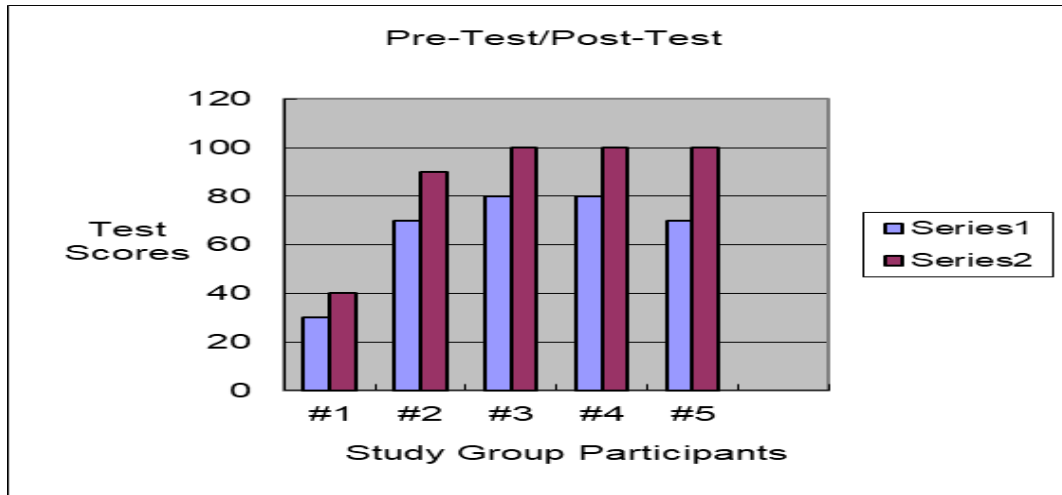


Figure 1. Pre and Post-Test Scores for Experimental Group

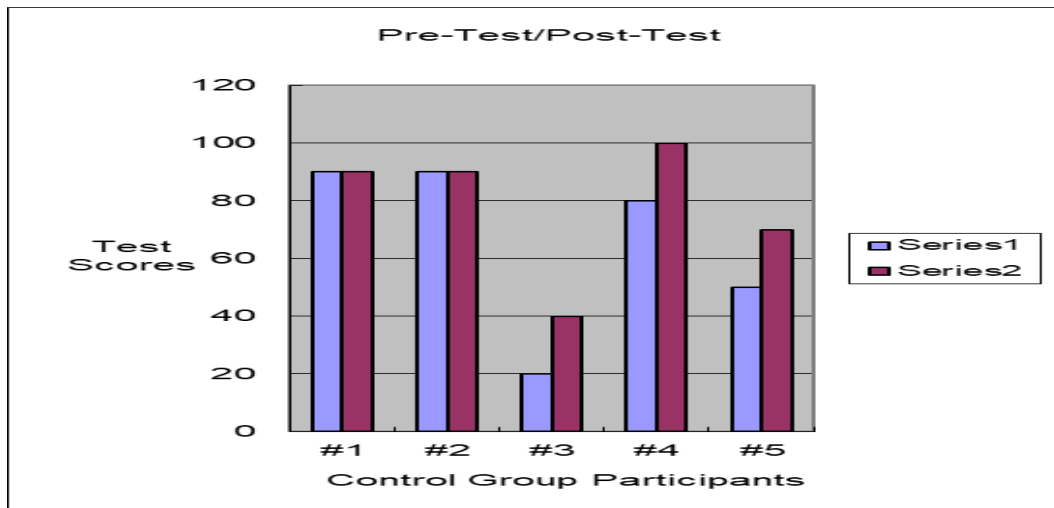
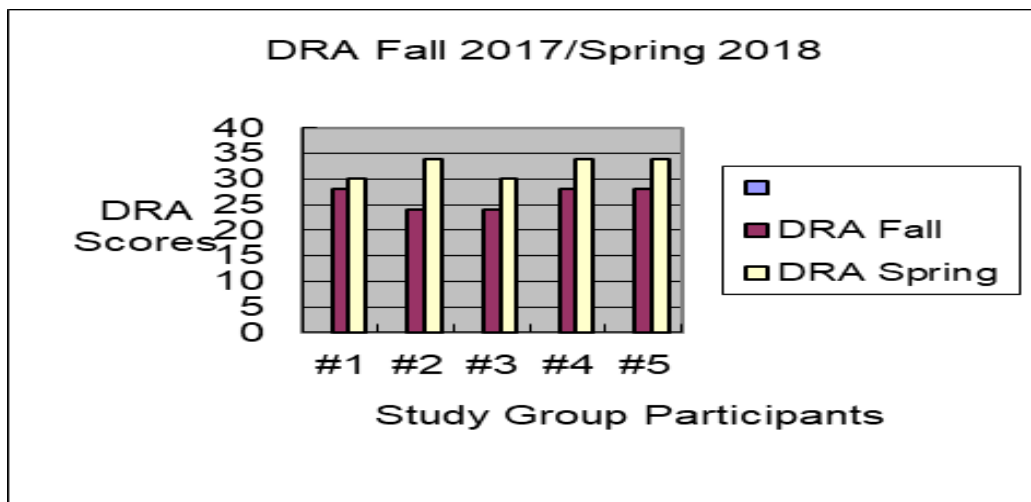
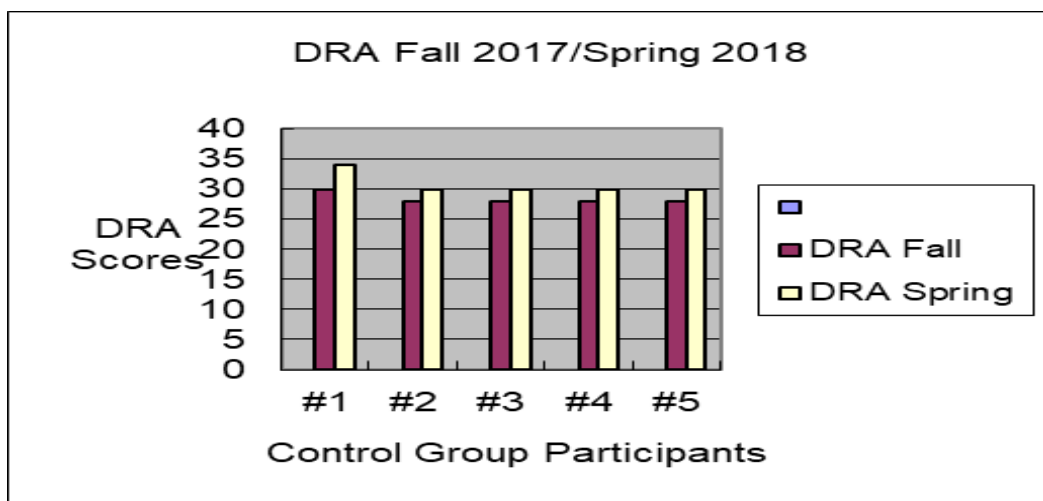


Figure 2. Pre and Post-Test Scores for Control Group

Figures 3 and 4, show the beginning Developmental Reading Assessment results and the end DRA results from both the study group and the control group. Participants in both the experimental group and the control group increased their overall DRA scores from the Fall administration to the Spring administration of the DRA test. The experimental participants had a slightly more significant increase than the control group participants. In the experimental group, one participant increased one level from a 28 to a 30. Three participants increased two levels; one from a 24 to a 30 and two from a 28 to 34. One participant increased three levels from a 24 to a 34. In the control group, four participants increased by one level from a 28 to a 30. One participant increased two levels from a 30 to a 34.



*Figure 3.* DRA Fall and Spring Scores for the Experimental Group



*Figure 4.* DRA Fall and Spring Scores for the Control Group

Figures 5 and 6, below, show the results of the reading comprehension section of the DRA. These results focus specifically on the reading comprehension growth of each participant. In the experimental group, shown below in figure 5, four of the participants increased their reading comprehension scores and one participant decreased in their reading comprehension scores. Participant 1 earned a 20% increase. Participant 2 increased by 16.7%. Participant 3 increased by 27.8%. Participant 4 increased by 6.25%. Participant 5 decreased their reading comprehension score by 15.8%. Figure 6 shows that all five of the control group participants decreased scores on reading comprehension. Participant 1 decreased by 6.25%. Participant 2 decreased by 10.53%. Participant 3 decreased by 11.11%. Participant 4 decreased by 20%. Participant 5 decreased by 8.7%.

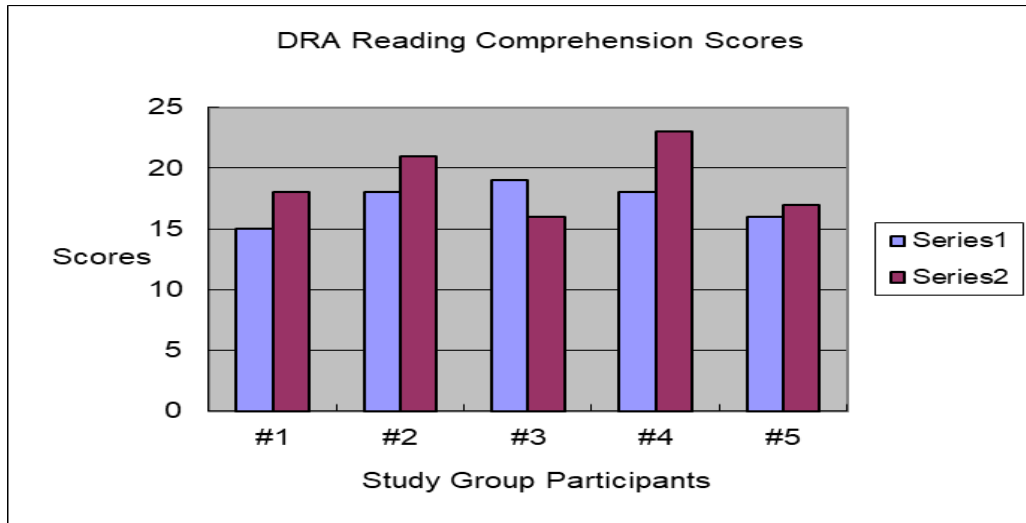


Figure 5. DRA Reading Comprehension Scores for Experimental Group

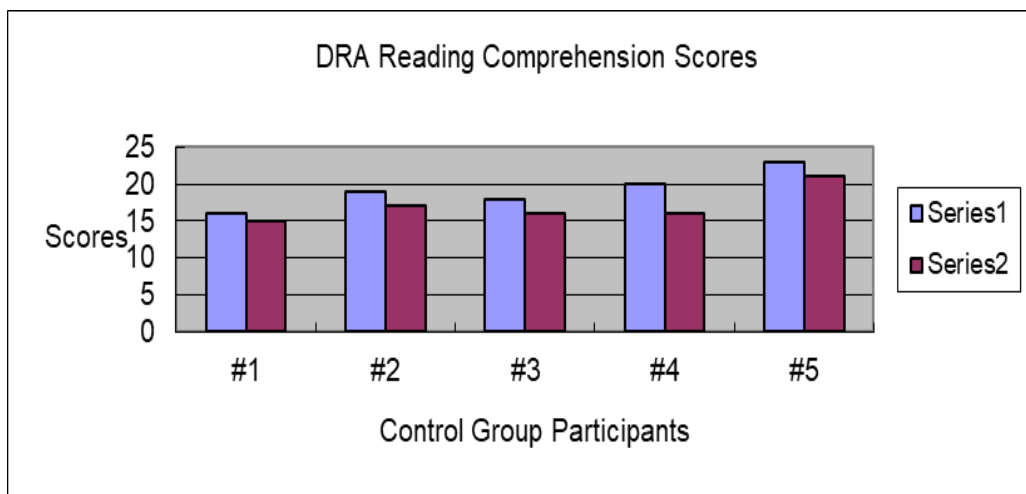
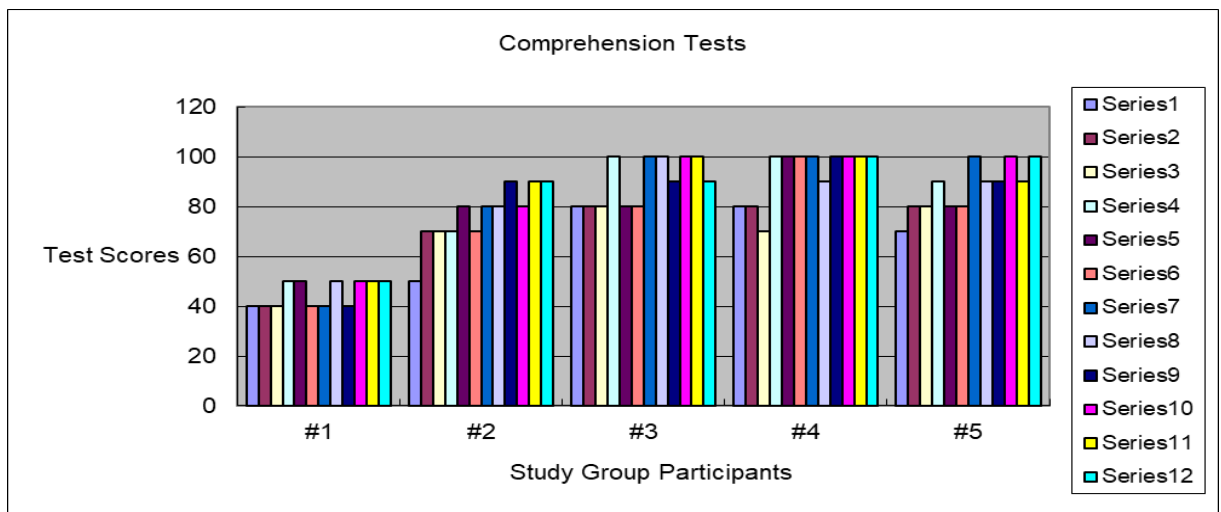


Figure 6. DRA Reading Comprehension Scores for Control Group

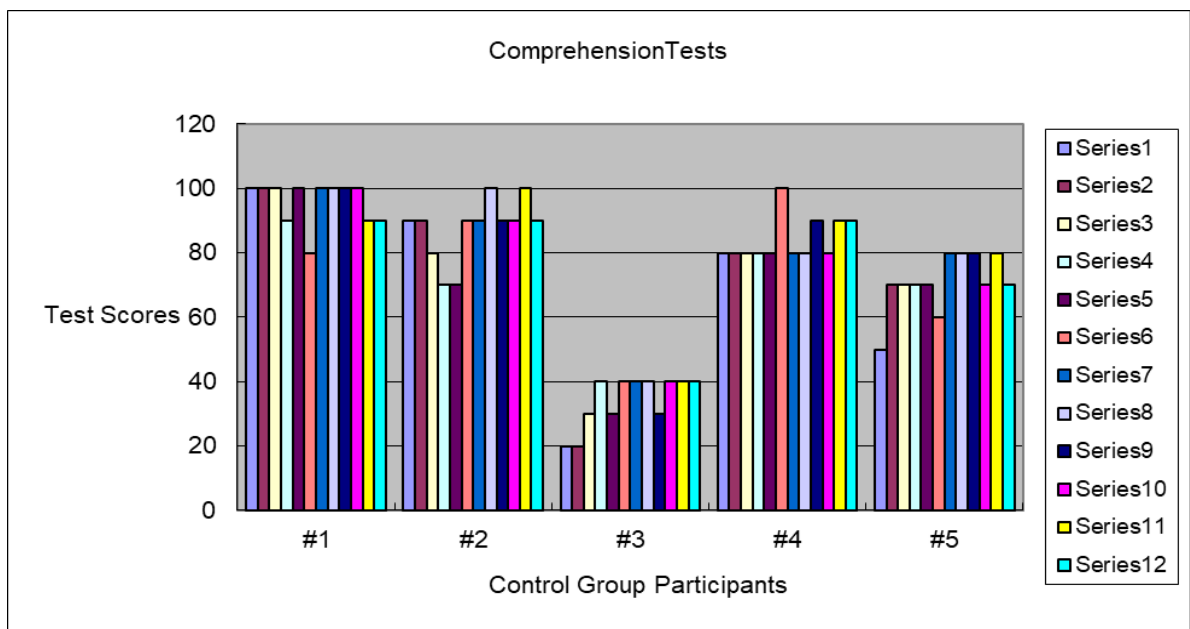
Figure 7 shows the results of the study group's comprehension tests that were administered after every second lesson. There was a total of twelve comprehension tests administered over the course of the study. Each participant increased and decreased throughout the study, however, every participant increased their scores overall from the beginning of the study to the end. Participant 1 ranged from a 30% to a 5% and had an average of 45%. Participant 2 ranged from a 50% to a 90% and averaged 77%. Participant 3 ranged from a 80% to a 100% and averaged 90%. Participant 4 ranged from 70% to 100% and averaged 93%. Participant 5 ranged 70% to 100% and averaged 87.5%.



*Figure 7. Comprehension Test Scores for the Experimental Group*

Figure 8 shows the results of the control group's comprehension tests that were administered after every second lesson. There was a total of twelve comprehension tests administered over the course of the study. Four of the five participants increased

their overall scores from the beginning of the study to the end of the study. Participant 1 ranged from 80% to 100% and averaged 95.8%. Participant 2 ranged from 70% to 100% and averaged 87.5%. Participant 3 ranged from 20% to 40% and averaged 34%. Participant 4 ranged from 80% to 100% and averaged 84%. Participant 5 ranged from 50% to 80% and averaged 70.8%.



*Figure 8.* Comprehension Test Scores for the Control Group

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

This study examined the effects that using a reading comprehension intervention technique called reciprocal teaching would have on the comprehension success of third grade students identified with specific poor comprehension. This study included ten participants; five boys and five girls ranging in age from eight to nine years old. Five students were chosen randomly for the study group that received the reciprocal teaching intervention. The other five students were chosen for the control group that received the standard guided reading lesson.

### **Major Findings**

The findings suggest that reciprocal teaching can make a positive impact on the reading comprehension skills of 3rd grade students with poor specific comprehension. Reading comprehension scores as shown in the pre-test and post-test increased on average by 30% in the study group and 20% in the control group. Although every student on the study increased their Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) scores from September 2017 to April 2018, the study group surpassed the control group in the specific area on reading comprehension on the DRA. In the study group, four of the five participants raised their comprehension scores on the DRA from the September administration to the April administration. In opposition to that, all five of the control group participants decreased their reading comprehension scores on the DRA. Participants in the study group scored a slightly higher average from the control group

on the twelve comprehension tests given over the course of the study. Participants in the study group had a difficult time learning the reciprocal teaching method, which showed some frustration and confusion in their group. However, over the course of the study, participants became more secure in the method. It was then that they showed great enthusiasm for reading and reading group. Similarly, the control group got frustrated when a task was difficult and showed more enthusiasm when it was fun.

### **Comparison to Similar Studies**

Comparing this study to other studies done under similar circumstances, it is apparent that reciprocal teaching can have a positive impact on comprehension skills of third grade students. Monica Reichenberg's 2014 study of 3rd grade Swedish students using reciprocal teaching showed similar results. Similar to New Jersey students, Swedish students begin standardized testing in third grade. Reichenberg's study was similar in that it was twelve weeks long with sessions similar in time to this study. The results are in line with each other where the reciprocal teaching method group made increases in comprehension skills. Another similarity was that in Reichenberg's study, the teachers complained that it was difficult to teach third grade students the process of reciprocal teaching. In this study, I also found that teaching the reciprocal teaching method to third grade students was difficult and would take more time for the students to master the method.

### **Limitations and Future Studies**

In this study, few participants were used for the data. Only five participants per group were used to obtain data on third grade students. Besides using a small data group, the study lasted only twenty-four sessions. In addition, teaching third graders to correctly use reciprocal teaching takes longer than twenty-four sessions. The time limitations could have affected the best data that could have been collected.

In future studies of third grade students utilizing the reciprocal teaching method, either study participants should be taught the method prior to beginning the study or the length of the study should be much longer than twelve weeks (twenty-four sessions). In addition to added time and training, more participants, overall, should be used to collect the best data of third grade students.

### **Study Implications**

In this study, the teacher leading the intervention discovered that it was difficult to teach third grade students to implement the reciprocal teaching method. Proper professional development training for the teacher would benefit the students' genuine use of the intervention. Educators using the intervention would need training, not only in the use of the intervention, but in the training of others to utilize the intervention. Educators would also need adequate time to train students and implement the intervention with fidelity.

## **Conclusion**

This study sought to answer the following question: Can reciprocal teaching positively impact the reading comprehension skills of third grade students with comprehension difficulties that have been identified to receive reading intervention? The data indicates that third grade students can be positively impacted by learning and using the reciprocal teaching method to increase their reading comprehension skills. If the proper training and time is taken to teach third graders this method, students with comprehension deficiencies would benefit from this intervention. Another question that was answered was: will using reciprocal teaching increase student grades in reading? The data in this study showed that scores on multiple areas increased when using the reciprocal teaching intervention. Scores on the DRA and specifically the reading comprehension section of the DRA, increased for the study group. The final question sought to answer was: Will students attitudes about reading improve? Through the study group's three journal entries, when using the reciprocal teaching intervention, students enjoy reading and discussing the reading more than in a typical guided reading group. Although, overall, they found it difficult to master, they enjoyed being a leader and taking control of the learning.

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