

12-2015

The Efficacy of Readers' Theatre with Digital Voice Recording as a Means of Improving Reading Skills

Meghan Ferraro

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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THE EFFICACY OF READERS' THEATRE WITH DIGITAL VOICE RECORDING
AS A MEANS OF IMPROVING READING SKILLS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Meghan Ferraro

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

December 2015

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of Educational and School Psychology

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Meghan Ferraro

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education

Lynanne Black, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Educational and
School Psychology, Advisor

Joseph F. Kovaleski, D.Ed.
Professor of Educational and School
Psychology

Mark Staszkievicz, Ed.D.
Professor of Educational and School
Psychology

Becky Knickelbein, Ed.D.
Associate Professor of Communication
Disorders, Special Education, and
Disability Services

ACCEPTED

Randy Martin, Ph.D.
Dean
School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: The Efficacy of Readers' Theatre with Digital Voice Recording as a Means of Improving Reading Skills

Author: Meghan Ferraro

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Lynanne Black

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Joseph F. Kovaleski
Dr. Mark Staszkievicz
Dr. Becky Knickelbein

The current study examined the effectiveness of readers' theatre with and without a digital voice recording component on 5th-grade students' oral reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension skills as measured by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Next 5th-grade oral reading fluency (DORF) probes and Daze probes. Students were identified for participation in the study if they received reading instruction within the general education curriculum in a small, rural school district in western Pennsylvania. Participants included 69 fifth graders with 23 students in each of the three groups (readers' theatre plus digital voice recording, readers' theater only, and control).

A series of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) and two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical analyses were conducted to determine if differences existed between the three groups. The results of the analyses indicated that statistically significant differences did not exist between groups for post-treatment reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension skills when adjusting for pre-treatment reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension skills. Additionally, results indicated there were not statistically significant interactions between treatment group and pre-reading skill level ("below proficiency" or "at and above proficiency") for gain scores (i.e., pre- to posttest score differences) in reading

accuracy, fluency, or comprehension. Overall, the use of readers' theatre with 5th-grade students (regardless of initial reading skill level) was not an effective means of improving students' reading accuracy, fluency, or comprehension skills compared to the control group.

A focus group interview was conducted following the implementation of the study in which five randomly selected students from the readers' theatre plus digital voice recording group were asked a series of three questions to obtain their perceptions of engagement in the treatment group. Both positive themes (motivational factor of group work and general improvements to oral reading skills) and challenges (technology issues and teacher supervision concerns) emerged from the student responses.