

Community Volunteers and the Impact on Student Reading Achievement

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Abstract: The study takes place in an urban school with a diverse population. Sixty-eight percent of the first graders in the school were reading below grade level. Four first grade students comprised of one African American girl, one African American boy, one Hispanic boy, and one Hispanic girl who were reading below grade level participated in the study. The students were selected based on their reading level and they represented the demographic population of the school. The study involved a Community Volunteer Listeners program. The Volunteer Listeners program included twenty-two community members who volunteered each week for seven months. The volunteers were solicited from school meetings and school flyers. During each volunteer reading session, community members listened to the first graders read grade level text. The volunteers practiced spelling, phonics, phonemic awareness, sight words, and comprehension strategies with students. There were a total of twenty-two volunteer reading sessions provided to the all four students. Students were assessed in October, December, March and May to determine reading growth. The assessment measures letter sounds, blending, decoding, sight word recognition, fluency, and reading comprehension. During each assessment window, the four students' reading growth was recorded.

Keywords: Community Volunteers, Reading Achievement, Urban, First grade, Race, and Gender

Introduction

Sixty-eight percent of the first graders at a local elementary school in Southwest Georgia are reading below grade. Harn, Linan-Thompson, and Roberts (2008) found there is a need and benefit of prevention and early intervention with early literacy. The study also indicated that most reading difficulties can be prevented with early intervention. Unfortunately, due to budget cuts, poor parental involvement, and staff shortages, these will not receive the needed intervention or additional support. There is an epidemic in many communities and schools with the lack of partnerships with all stakeholders.

The community and schools are working in isolation and not partnering to strengthen today's future leaders. In 2011, Zyngier stated many adults are not actively involved in the lives of young people outside their own families. Jadal (2012) defines Community as parents or an elected representative. Community members take a shared responsibility and promote a sense of togetherness (Bamblett 2013). This study in the local urban southwest school in Georgia will answer the following question: Does weekly community volunteer reading listeners impact first grade students reading below grade level on the school's benchmark assessment (Reading Roots 4th Edition) from August to March?

The purpose of this study is to correlate the impact community volunteerism has on reading achievement in an urban school. During this study, community volunteers will participate in a reading intervention program. Volunteers will listen to students read appropriate grade level text and reinforce reading strategies. This study will provide data to the school and district that there is a need for more community-parent driven volunteer programs. This study will facilitate discussions on the importance of developing and maintaining and enriching volunteer program in all schools. This study will guide the Parent-Community Engagement Committee in this school and how to better implement the interventions or initiatives for the upcoming school year.

Community participation in schools enhance the learning of children. The community support can be shown both academically and non-academically (Jadal, 2012). The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between Community Volunteers and the reading growth of first grade students' reading progress. This study will answer the following question: Does weekly Community Volunteers impact first grade students who are reading below grade level and their reading growth from the August to March? Hart and Karabenick (2009) found that when students are given intervention significantly progress is made based on early reading measures. These interventions can be conducted one on one and in small groups using community volunteers. As I explore the literature, I will address the following questions from each article:

1. How are the Community Volunteers selected and trained to serve as academic volunteers?
2. How is the success of the Community Volunteer Program measured?
3. What are some weaknesses or areas of concerns for the community volunteer programs?

Definitions

1. Volunteer Listeners Program- an intervention involving parents and community members volunteering an hour a week for eight months in a local school in southwest Georgia. During this hour, the Volunteer Listeners are paired with selected first graders who are reading below grade level. The Volunteers will spend the hour listening to the first graders read and practice letter recognition, letter sound correspondence, sight words and reading strategies.
2. Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment: the progress monitor screener used at the elementary site. The test is a first grade measure conducted in August, October, January, March, and May. The assessment measures mastery of phonemic awareness, phonics, blending, decoding, word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and sight words.
3. Read and Respond Form- the first grade homework reading log indicating students have read for 20-25 minutes with an adult and practiced their sight words. Students read and complete this form each night and return it to their reading teacher. Students are given credit for completion from the Volunteer Listeners. (See attachment 2)

Review of Literature

Selection Process and training of Community Volunteers

Hart & Karabenick (2009) refers to the volunteers as tutors. In the study volunteers were selected through an interview process. The volunteers were strategically selected to provide diversity in race and gender and socioeconomic background (Hart& Karabenick, 2009). The researcher used students who attended the local university. The study did not include the type of interview questions. Volunteers attended 30 ninety minute training sessions where the director of literacy demonstrated literacy-based strategies and techniques, the tutors also practiced in small groups and simulations. The study also explained volunteers were given a culture sensitivity tutorial. During this time, volunteers learned how to be culturally responsive to poverty, parent involvement, child abuse, and service learning (Hart& Karabenick, 2009). In another study, Senior Citizens (age 55 and up) were used as reader volunteers for a school based program. The school recruited the senior citizens based on good physical and mental health, having never been convicted of a felony, and never accused or convicted of child-related crime. The Senior Citizens were required to undergo a criminal background (Yoda et al. 2013). The Senior Citizens were given a parent-child interaction assessment pre and post the study. Lastly, interviews were conducted. The senior interviews showed students' communication skills improved because they were more confident. The interviews also found the volunteers' attitudes became more positive from the service with the students. Lastly, the senior interviews discovered the students became better listeners based on observations from the volunteers. The students modeled their listening behavior after their senior volunteers with other classmates, teachers and school staff. Doiron & Lees (2009) found that their participating schools solicited volunteers by setting up volunteers with each classroom. The volunteers were elder seniors who underwent police checks which was required for all volunteers working with young children. The study did not provide any orientation or training sessions to the volunteers. Volunteers were utilized in various ways both academic and non-academic. Teachers determined how to use the volunteers based on the classroom needs. For example, the seniors volunteered as class readers and student interventionists. Students showed growth in fluency based on the additional intervention from the volunteers. The authors also reported the students were willing to ask more questions in the

classroom because the volunteers encouraged this behavior. Zyngier (2011) study involved enhancing how volunteers are treated during volunteering. The study was documented with photography, video and audio recordings from the participants. The study also conducted four focus groups. The volunteer program was held after-school at a local community center. The volunteers were white middle class men and women. The students were from various ethnic backgrounds. The author found the volunteers benefited from the experience because it gave them an opportunity to work with diverse populations. The study showed student participants became more engaged in school due to the one on one volunteer services. The students' homework return rate increased at school due to the volunteer program. The students also expressed an interest in science because of the hands on experiment conducted by the volunteers. Sukhram & Hsu (2012) showed the usage of parents or caregivers as volunteers. The program was titled "The Reading Together Program". This program took place for six weeks with parents or caregivers who read with children at the public library. Six sessions were held each day for forty-minutes. The authors reported the volunteers learned various learning styles and how to reach their own children. The students enjoyed the attention provided by the volunteers. During the observations, the authors, noticed students were excited about reading and that they were learning different literacy skills. In the 2013, Knapp study adult volunteers were used and training was provided by the librarian, however, the study did not disclose the nature of the training.

Evaluative Measures of Volunteer Program

Knapp (2013) used Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) to assess the students' progress. Students' fluency increase by an average of 24 words per minute. Students were also given the STAR test (Advantage Learning System) which is computer-adapted test of reading comprehension. The STAR assessment revealed students gained an average 9.1 months of reading comprehension skills during the twelve weeks of reading intervention provided by the volunteers. Lastly, teacher observations were administered to report changes in students' reading skills or attitudes. The teacher observed changes in 15 of the 18 students. The students expressed enjoyment in reading they did not have prior to the volunteer intervention. The teacher observation also showed students were working with partners more while reading and were eager to read aloud. In the 2012, Sukhram & Hsu study, an Initial Reading Perception Survey was conducted to rate the program. Volunteers were asked what they learned from the reading program, what they like most and least about the program, and what suggestions could make the program better. Volunteers like the interaction with the students the most and resources. The volunteer disliked the time frames for the sessions because they were held once a week. Zyngier (2011) found various tools to measure program progress. The study used photography, video and audio recordings at two schools. The research also conducted four focus groups with school pupils and surveyed and interviewed the volunteers (Zyngier, 2011). In the interviews the volunteers stated they enjoyed seeing the students grow and gain their trust over the program. The volunteers stated the students began to open up more as the sessions progressed. In the 2009, Doiron & Lees study surveys from the volunteers about their experiences were instrumental in measuring the progress of the volunteer program. There were also six focus groups conducted by the volunteers. The volunteers reported they felt welcomed by the school, teachers, and students. They enjoyed that the students looked forward to their visits each week. The volunteers reported they felt a sense of inclusion at the school. Yoder et al. (2013) study interviewed volunteers and students were assessed using a teacher report form.

The interviewed included questions comparing students' receptiveness pre and post intervention. Volunteers were also interviewed about their feelings toward volunteering. In 2009, the Hart & Karbenick study used data from multiple sources such as observations, interviews, surveys, and questionnaires. The authors found teachers revealing students were checking books out of the library more after the volunteer sessions. The students talked about reading more at home for leisure. The Informal Reading Inventor showed students' pre and post scores on the Informal Reading Inventory increase from -2 to grade 6. The average reading level in the program was 1.6 compared to the previous score of 1.5.

Disadvantages to utilizing Community Volunteers

Volunteerism is a selfless act, however, several studies provided specific disadvantages or struggles with enlisting community volunteers. The lack of uncertified educators causes continuous coaching and feedback to the tutors. Yoder et al. (2013) noted lack of time and scheduling as a concern. The Senior Citizens were busy with traveling and with their own live to commit each week. In the 2013, Knapp study college students were used as volunteers. One disadvantage in using these volunteers was consistency and time. Students completed their semester volunteer hours and did not continue for the second semester. The scheduled times also conflicted with the university's students' schedule.

Advantages to utilizing Community Volunteers

Knapp (2013) showed significant gains in students' reading progress. Student gained 4.8 Words Per minute in fluency on the DBELS assessment. In the Sukhram & Hsu 2012, study the volunteers assessed their reading Together Program and was able to give feedback on how to improve the strategies. Doiron and Lees (2009) discovered students increased their self-perception due to the volunteer assistance. Meaningful relationships were formed between young people and the elderly community was formed. There was an increase in community volunteers throughout the school (Hart & Karabenick, 2009).

Methods

This study will use a quantitative research design. I will use the stages of growth from the nine passages on the Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment to show how each student increased or decreased due to the volunteer intervention. I will also use numeric data to indicate the amount of time given to each student by the community volunteers. The data will be measurable depicting the students' reading growth and the impact of the community volunteer support. My study will use nonprobability sampling. I am using this type of sampling because the students are available and convenient. These students are in my school and need the intervention.

The dependent variables are the students' achievement scores on the benchmark assessments. The assessments are given in August, October, January, and March. Students are assessed on phonemic awareness, sight words, word recognition, fluency, decoding, and comprehension.

The independent variable is the intervention provided by the community volunteers. The community members volunteer once a week for an hour for eight months. Each student participates in a thirty minute sessions each week from October through April. The study will involve a single-subject research design. The single-subject research design studies a small group of individuals. I am studying four first graders. These four first graders were selected because

they were in the same reading class. These four first graders scored below grade level or failed the initial screener on the Reading Roots 4th Edition Formal Assessment. These single subjects also represent the demographics of the school. For example, the study will include an African American boy, an African American girl, a Hispanic boy, and a Hispanic girl. I will use baseline data to determine the need for the intervention, observe the intervention, record, and plot the data results. By plotting and recording the data I will be able to record any patterns or changes.

This study will include four adult volunteers, four first grade students, first grade basal or text, a chart documented time spent with each student, and the nightly read and respond form. The volunteers will be solicited through Parent Teacher Association meetings and monthly newsletters. The Volunteers will attend an orientation explaining the material, process, and procedures for the program. Volunteers will begin the program the following week. All volunteers will participate in the Volunteer Orientation. The first grade students were selected based on a beginning of the year assessment. The assessment determined students were reading below grade level. Students' progress is measured using the Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment. The assessment measures letter-sound correspondence, phonics, word recognition, comprehension, and blending. The assessment measures students based on nine passages. Students are charted from the beginning of the year based on these nine passages. All first grade students participating in the volunteer program did not master any passages on the initial assessment. The students did not master the initial screening of letters and sounds. Students are tested in August, October, January, March, and May. Students' growth will be charted at each testing period.

Volunteers were solicited during Parent Teacher Association Meeting, newsletters, and local school council meetings. Twelve volunteers signed up for the volunteer listeners program. The Reading Roots Assessment is administered five times a year. Volunteers are given an orientation to discuss the reading sessions. During the orientation, volunteers were trained on the Reading Program, decoding strategies, culture sensitivity, and how complete Read and Respond Form. The Community Listeners volunteered for eight months each week for an hour and listened to each student read for thirty minutes. Students read a grade level text based on the Reading Roots Assessment. The Volunteer Listeners sign the student's Read and Respond forms. The Read and Respond form is the homework slip completed by the volunteer that signifies they listened to the students read for 20-30 minutes.

Two types of instruments will be used in this study. I will utilize a demographic form to define the demographics such as gender and race. Next, I will use a performance measure instrument. This performance instrument will gauge the students' growth based on the Reading Roots 4th Edition benchmark given at in August to determine baseline data. I will use single-item scores for the gender and race. For example, the gender will be identified as 1-Female and 2-Male. The race will be characterized as African American-A and Hispanic-B. The age will be indicated by the actual number. All student participants are six years old therefore the numeric score for their age will be six. I will plot the data on a graph to determine if the students' instructional reading level increased, decreased, or was stagnant. The Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment contains nine passages which contain the sounds, words, and skills reviewed during the intervention. Each student participating in the study all tested below passage 1. My goal is to plot each student on a graph at each benchmark based on the passage Use of P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, and P9 (indicates passages). The graph will reflect the baseline data for all students assessed in August- March. The Reading Roots 4th Edition Formal Assessment is given each

quarter. The students last passage mastered will be charted and the growth will be measured for the Beginning of the Year (BOY) or August to the Middle of the Year (MOY) or March. The time spent with each student will also be recorded. For example, Student 1A (who is an African American female) showed 3 stages of growth from October to May and received fourteen hours of intervention from the Community Volunteers

Figure 1: Example of Chart-Data from the Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment

Participants	August	October	January	March	# of sessions	Stage of growth
1A	P1	P3	P4	P4	14 hrs.	3
1B	P1	P2	P2	P2	5hrs	1
2A	P2	P4	P5	P6	20 hrs.	4
2B	P4	P4	P4	P4	8 hrs.	0

Results

Sixty-eight percent of the first graders at a local elementary school in Southwest Georgia are reading below grade. The purpose of this study in the local urban southwest school in Georgia is to answer the following question: Does weekly community volunteer reading listeners impact first grade students reading below grade level on the school’s benchmark assessment (Reading Roots 4th Edition) from August to March? This study follows four six year old first graders. The student participants include one African American female, one African American male, one Hispanic female, and one Hispanic male. The students were assessed using the schools’ reading screener. The Reading Roots 4th Edition assessment determines the students’ reading level based on the passage number mastered. The four participants are reading below grade level because they did not master Passage 1 (P1) of the assessment.

This chapter will present the data from the study. The data will include the reading results from August to March. The chapter shows the reading growth based on the passage number and correlate the growth with the number of volunteer sessions each participant received. Single-item scores will be utilized to represent the gender and race. For example, the gender is identified as 1-Female and 2-Male. The race is characterized as African American-A and Hispanic-B. The age is indicated by the actual number. All student participants are six years old therefore the numeric score for their age is six.

The data on the graph shows students’ instructional reading level and if those levels increased, decreased, or remained stagnant. The Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment contains nine passages which contain the sounds, words, and skills reviewed during the intervention. Each student participating in the study all tested below Passage 1. P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, and P9 was utilized to indicate the passages mastered by the students. This chapter includes implementation data through observations and note taking from each reading volunteer session, strategies used by each reading volunteers, tutoring frequency, the direct impact of the volunteer listener program had on reading achievement, and the compared reading results by gender and race.

Implementation of Data Collection

Data was gathered by recording the number of sessions each student received and by the results from each assessment window. Baseline data was collected in August to determine the starting point. Students were assessed in October, January and March. All participants began at the same passage according to the Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment. Students were all selected from the same reading class because they were all at the same reading level. Volunteers came each Tuesday for an hour to assist students. The Volunteers were paired with the same student for the 22 reading sessions. This was to show consistency with the data and to develop a relationship or bond with the students and volunteers.

Strategies used during the Reading sessions

Each volunteer participated in an hour orientation. During the orientation, volunteers were introduced to various reading skills and strategies. The volunteers reinforced the following strategies during each reading session:

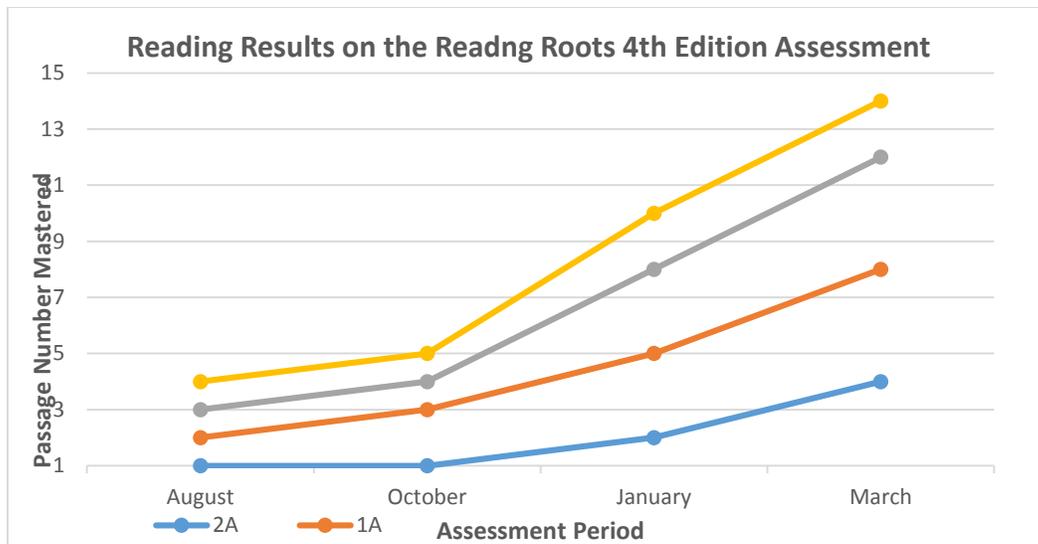
- Sight word recognition
- Phonics and phonemic awareness
- Blending and decoding words
- Using picture cues to help with comprehension and vocabulary review
- Fluency practice with rate and accuracy

Data Analysis

Table 1 (below) shows the number of reading sessions attended by each student. The table displays the four students' pre and post scores from the Reading Roots Assessment. There were a total of 22 reading sessions from October-April. Fifty percent of the students attended every session and fifty percent of the students attended fewer than half of their session. Reading sessions were missed due to absences from students. Students were absent due to illness, early dismissal due to scheduled doctor's appointments, or unexcused absences.

Table 1
Reading Results Based on the Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment

Student	August	October	January	March	# of sessions attended	Stages of Growth
2A	P1	P1	P2	P4	20	3
1A	P1	P2	P3	P4	20	3
1B	P1	P1	P3	P4	10	3
2B	P1	P1	P2	P2	9	1



Impact of Volunteer Listeners Program on Overall Reading Improvement

The table shows student 1A made the required growth each assessment period. The student increased by a passage each time. The end results was three stages of growth. Compared to student 2A who grew two stages from January to March. Student 1B had three stages of growth from August to March with less reading session hours with a volunteer. Student 2B had the least amount of reading sessions and the least amount of growth. Although there was growth this student did not make the one stage growth each assessment window and remained at passage 2 for two consecutive assessment periods.

Frequency of Tutoring

The Volunteer Listeners Reading Program began in October. Each volunteer came weekly for an hour. There were a total of twenty-two sessions for the year. Student 2A participated in twenty sessions. Students 1A participated in twenty sessions. Student 1B participated in ten sessions and Student 2B participated in nine sessions. Reading sessions were missed due to absences by students. A back up student was utilized when absences occurred. Students who received more tutoring made consistent gains each testing period. These students participated in at least fifty percent or more of the reading sessions.

Gender and Race/Ethnicity

The female participants made greater gains compared to the male participants. Both female students made three stages of growth from August to March. There was growth among both race groups. The African American participants made more growth compared to the Hispanic students. The Hispanic male student made the least amount of growth during the study. However, he received the least amount of reading volunteer sessions due to chronic absences.

Literature Interpretation

The literature supports the changes in student behavior, observations, academic achievement, and attitudes. The literature and studies followed a group of students and volunteers over a period of time. Data was collected in the form of pre and posttest, surveys, and inventories.

Knapp (2013) study found students made gains in fluency and words correct per minute. The study used the DIBELS assessment to determine student reading achievement. In this study, students' comprehension increase by an average of nine months based on the STAR test. The study also found that students' behavior changed due to the tutoring program. Students had an enjoyment for the intervention which transferred to their love and enjoyment for reading.

In the Yoder et al. (2013) study interviews were conducted by the senior volunteers. The results showed changes in the students' behavior. Students were more communicative at the end of the sessions. Volunteers believe their role played a huge part in the students' ability to communicate better in class and with peers.

Hart and Karsbenick (2009) results indicated student reading attitudes and self-perception improved because of the tutoring sessions. The pilot did not increase the reading ability by change students' ideals on their reading. Teachers, students, and parents were interviewed in the study. The teachers noticed students were utilizing reading strategies in class. Parents observed children began to change their nightly routines by choosing to read over watching television. Lastly, students were positive in their interviews because they felt confident and equipped to read challenging text.

Summary

The goal of the study was to determine if weekly community volunteer reading listeners would impact first grade students reading below grade level on the school's benchmark assessment (Reading Roots 4th Edition) from August to March. The chapter reviewed the study of four first grade students and their reading achievement each quarter using the Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment. The results found a direct correlation between the reading achievement and the volunteer program. The participants were reading below grade level and in need of intervention. Community volunteers provided additional reading sessions providing students one on one strategies and reading skills to enhance comprehension and fluency. Each participants showed growth over the twenty-two volunteer sessions. Each students made growth from August to March. The volunteer reading program assisted students in their reading achievement and closer to reading on grade level.

Discussion

The study followed four six year old first graders who were reading below grade level. The study was conducted over a period of nine months. The participants included an African American girl, an African American male, a Hispanic female, and a Hispanic male. The students were paired with a community volunteer listener who held weekly one on one reading session with the students. All community volunteers participated in an orientation where reading strategies were introduce and discussed. The purpose of the quantitative study was to determine

if the community volunteer program would have an impact on the four students who were reading below first grade.

Students were assessed in August to determine their reading level. Students were assessed using the school's reading screener (Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment). All four students scored on the same reading level and were placed in the same reading class. Volunteers were paired with students and volunteered each Tuesday to review phonics, fluency, sight words, and comprehension skills. Students were assessed throughout the year to determine growth.

The Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment involves sounds pronunciation, blending and decoding, sight working recognition, fluency, and comprehension questions. There are nine passages on the Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment. Students are placed in reading groups based on the last mastered passage. All student participants began the year on passage one. Passage one is identified as below grade level for August. Students were assessed at each quarter in October, January, and March to determine their growth. The students' achievement was charted by the passage growth. The study also recorded the number of reading session provided to each student.

The findings from the study showed growth of passages for all students from August to March. The desired outcome or growth for each quarter is to master one passage. The African American female met the goal of growth for each assessment. This students participate in twenty reading sessions with her volunteer. The African American male did not make the one passage growth each assessment period. However, he made a two stage growth from January to March. The Hispanic girl made the same growth as the African American female and male while participating in less reading sessions. Although the Hispanic male made growth from the beginning of the year, he remained on passage one and two for two grading periods. This student received the least amount of reading sessions due to the student absences. The study found the volunteer sessions each week made an impact on student achievement on the Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment.

The data reveals the direct correlation between student growth and the volunteer sessions. Each student moved from passage one to a higher passage by March. The volunteer listeners practiced weekly with students on letter recognition and sound pronunciation. Each student participant mastered this portion of the Reading Roots 4th Edition Assessment. The students read the stories from their reading class each week to the volunteers. Each student mastered passage one and passage two. The strategies and skills reviewed by the volunteer were mastered at each assessment period. Another finding from the study was the number of sessions did not correlate with the movement. For example, the Hispanic female student made the same amount of growth as the African American female and male with less reading sessions.

In the Yoder et al (2013) study the students did not showed growth based on the school's pre and posttest. The study discussed limitations or problems with the senior citizens and their schedules. The volunteer sessions were limited and oftentimes canceled due to schedule conflicts with the senior citizens volunteers. The study included retired volunteers ages fifty-five or older. The researchers explained they competed with doctor's appointment, vacations, and illness from their senior volunteers. This did not mirror my study. Our volunteers were diligent and made an effort to be present at all sessions. Our senior volunteers were scheduled to visit our school every Tuesday for nine months. They scheduled their personal appointments on days other than Tuesday. Their commitment and dedication was consistent. The Yoder et al (2013) study also contained a small sample size. This allowed data for every child at every assessment.

My study also followed a small sample size to target a specific groups. This small size provided an opportunity to manage the study and data.

Knapp (2013) found students' fluency grew an average of twenty-two words per minute during the volunteer program. The volunteer program in this study was done afterschool. The researcher reading sessions were held 2-3 times a week for twenty minutes. This is equal to the hour reading session I observed in my study. In comparison, both of the authors' studies supported the need for volunteerism in school with struggling students. Both studies provided an orientation for the volunteers with training on specific reading strategies. Lastly, both studies support my research results and the correlation of growth in reading for these students who are reading below grade level.

This study contributes to research because it follows a small sample of students. The study followed students with different genders and races. The other research studies follows large groups. This study contributes because it uses a common and assessable assessment to determine student growth. This will help future research studies determine what tool to utilize and gauge reading growth.

There were limitation to the study. For example, students were not able to receive the twenty-two session in its entirety. Missed sessions were due to absences from the students. The study was unable to determine the growth for each student based on the scheduled twenty-two session. The study does not factor in the language barrier of the Hispanic students. Two participants were native Spanish speaking students and were learning to read while learning the English language. These students were selected because they make up the demographics of the school. These students were also selected because they were in the same reading class and level of the other participants.

Future research is needed to address the purpose of community connection in schools. The future research should include student reading interest surveys, student interview, volunteer interviews, teacher and parent survey. This will allow an opportunity to determine students' perception of their success and feelings toward reading. The future research will help schools to reach parents and fill in gaps for parent involvement. The future research will also provide the district with insight on how important intervention and volunteerism is to schools.

The purpose of this study is to determine if community volunteers will impact students' reading growth based on the school's reading assessment. Students were selected based on the reading level and the need for intervention. Students were followed and assessed each quarter to determine reading growth. Volunteers participated in twenty-two reading sessions. The results showed the four students made gains from August to March. Despite the absences and language barriers each students displayed reading gains. The study shows the importance of community involvement and partnership in schools. Community partners are important stakeholders and fostering a good relationship will improve student achievement.

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