The Power of Reading Aloud vs. Reading Along

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Background
Reading aloud (RA) is often referred to as the foundation for literacy development, and is even noted as one of the single most important means to achieving reading success (Bredemeyer, Copple, & Neuman, 2005). Although RA is beneficial for all learners, from pre-school to college (Jim Trelease, 1998), this strategy is far more utilized within primary classrooms than secondary. In fact, within many secondary classrooms, RA is a strategy used only by the teacher, leaving students to read the majority of material independently and silently. Although many studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between RA and student success within primary classrooms, few have studied the like impacts within secondary classrooms.

Purpose
Investigate how reading aloud vs. reading along impacts a secondary student's comprehension and retention of material read.

Research Questions:
1. Do secondary students who read aloud display a higher test performance rate than students who read along?
2. Does reading aloud increase a secondary student's comprehension and retention of material read?

Procedure
- The researcher randomly assigned reading roles to 10 out of 47 secondary students
- Over the span of 3 class periods, students with an assigned role (group B) read Act I of the play, The Crucible aloud, while students without a role (group A) read along silently
- On day four, the examiner administered a reading test to all students
- After grading each quiz, the examiner analyzed the grades of the students within group A vs. the students within group B.
- The examiner determined the average test scores of both groups to determine which group displayed a higher level of comprehension and retention.
- The examiner interviewed students to determine if they felt reading aloud impacts their comprehension and retention rate.

Test Score Averages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>71.57</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test Scores

Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>92.8%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Group A</td>
<td>71.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Findings
- Students who read aloud (Group B) scored an average of 92.8% on the test.
- Students who read along (Group A) scored an average of 71.57%.
- Group B scored 21.8198% higher than Group A

Conclusions
- Reading aloud increases the secondary learner's comprehension and retention of read material
- Reading aloud improves one's test performance
- Listening to a text being read while following along allows deeper comprehension than silent independent reading

Other observations
- Reading aloud, by both the teacher and students, seemed to improve the overall mood of the classroom, and increase student motivation and engagement. Duchin & Mesley (1999) also note the positive emotional impact of RA.
- Students displayed a higher test performance rate on this particular exam, measuring material that the students either read aloud, or read along to while actively listening to the text, compared to their performance on an examine measuring material that was strictly read silently and independently.

Participants
47 English III: Pre-AP students split between two randomly selected groups:
- Group A (Aloud Readers): 10 Students
- Group B (Along Readers): 37 Students
- All students are between the ages of 16-17

References