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Making Reading Fun: Using Reader's Theater to Increase Interest, Fluency, and Comprehension in Reluctant Readers

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Making Reading Fun: Using Reader's Theater to Increase Interest, Fluency, and Comprehension in Reluctant Readers

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Students with reading difficulties don't enjoy reading, especially aloud in front of others. What can improve their interest in reading? Based on current trends demonstrating best practice, the use of Readers Theater may spark this interest for reluctant readers. This is the focus of our study. We are using a pre-test/post-test format with a class of 16 second graders to determine whether students enjoy reading content area material more when it is presented as a play. Each student is individually informally assessed by reading a passage and interviewed with questions exploring how they feel about reading before and after this experience. Every student in the class is tested, but the focus is on the results of the reluctant readers. The students are given parts in a story in which they practice and perform for each other; repeatedly reading stories as they are practiced for performance has been shown to increase fluency. This is especially important for students with reading difficulties and we predict that these students will want to read this material more because they are having fun. We also feel that increased fluency correlates with increased comprehension of the material. This will support their learning in all subject areas.

Information about the Authors:

Raimie Conrad is a junior elementary education major, special education minor. She is from Arcadia, CA and would like to pursue a career in the special education field when she graduates. Tiffanie McIver is a junior elementary education major, special education minor from Corona, CA. She hopes to be a second or third grade teacher in the general education field. She became interested in this topic when she saw the interest from the students who participated in Reader's Theater. Ashley Miller is a junior elementary education major, special education minor from Valparaiso. She hopes to become a kindergarten or first grade teacher in the general education classroom. She became interested when she saw the positive responses of Reader's Theater when done. Gabriela Tino is a junior elementary education major, special education minor from Miami, FL. She will be student teaching in Venezuela. In the future, she hopes to teach English to Spanish speaking students.

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