Choose Your Own Adventure! Choice in Differentiated Reading Groups

by

Martha Jeanne Bello

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Dr. Karen Grady, Chair

Dr. Charles Elster

April Leiferman

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Date
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Choose Your Own Adventure! Choice in Differentiated Reading Groups

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: In many classrooms in the United States teachers are instructing students with a wide range of reading abilities and academic strengths and needs. Flexible differentiated reading groups are one way to assist students with their current reading abilities and teach them the strategies required to read increasingly difficult texts. Allowing students to choose what books they read during these groups increases learner engagement and motivation when it comes to interacting with books. The purpose of this study is to determine if a student's sense of self as a reader changes and confidence in reading improves by participating in differentiated reading groups when given a choice of authentic texts to read with grade level peers.

Procedure: To determine if student’s sense of self as a reader and self-confidence in reading increases with participation in differentiated reading groups when given a choice of what books to read, this study used a combination of reading surveys and observational tools to collect data from participants in flexible reading groups.

Findings and Conclusions: The study shows that when given a choice of authentic texts to read in differentiated reading groups and with teacher guidance and focus on reading strategies, students did perceive themselves as better readers.

Chair: __________________________

Signature

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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.       Introduction and Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.       Background/Context</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.      Review of Related Literature</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.      What are Differentiated Reading Groups?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.      Theoretical Perspective of Literacy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.      Historical Transformation in Reading Instruction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.      The Instructional Use of Differentiated Reading Groups</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.      Contemporary View of Differentiated Reading Groups</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.      Differentiated Reading Groups: Why Should we do Them?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.      Choosing What to Read</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.      Miscue Analysis and Kidwatching</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.      Opposing Views</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.      Support for the Study</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.     Methodology</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.     Description of Participants</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.     Data Sources</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.     Procedures</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.      Data</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.      Presentation of Data – All Students</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.      Presentation of Data – More in Depth with Five Readers</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.      Analysis of Data</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.      Student Experience</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.      Teacher Experiences</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.       Implications</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.       Appendix A – IRB Rights of Human Subjects</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.       Appendix B – Informed Consent English</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.       Appendix C – Informed Consent Spanish</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.       Appendix D – Burke Reading Interview</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.       Appendix E – Over the Shoulder Miscue Observation Sheet</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.       Appendix F – Bello Reading Survey</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.       References</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 1: Focus Students General Information

Table 2: Differentiated Reading Groups Offered

Table 3: Whole Class Responses to Burke Reading Interview
Chapter I
Introduction and Statement of Problem

Background/Context

The story of how I chose my thesis topic is essentially the story of how I became a student in the MA Program at Sonoma State University. I have always enjoyed teaching and learning, and I regularly sought out opportunities to improve my teaching skills. I have been involved in numerous professional development opportunities; many of these professional development sessions were designed around helping teachers learn the curriculum to teach, but not on how to help children learn. I enrolled in the MA program with the goal of becoming a better teacher. I wanted to discover the best ways to help children learn and to help guide others in my school and district to focus on the child rather than the curriculum. These goals for entering the MA program shadowed me through each class and eventually led to my topic of inquiry. From the first class I took at Sonoma State and throughout the program we had regular discussions on the importance of helping students where they are in their language development and giving them choices in what they read, write and share. This emphasis on helping students at their current reading level motivated my topic of flexible differentiated reading groups. The importance and potential of engaging children in literacy by allowing choice continued that inspiration to grant students the opportunity to choose what they read within their differentiated reading groups.

For the majority of my elementary schooling my classmates and I were placed in homogenous groups for reading. These were stagnant groups that progressed together and...
did not change over our years together from one grade to the next. Having been included in the low group for the majority of those years I did not like the idea of ability grouping students. I did not see myself as a reader until middle school and I did not want to expose my students to the same negative feelings towards reading that I felt for many years. However, as a teacher I still grappled with how to best serve all of my students in the classroom given the reality that readers develop along different timelines, particularly at the elementary level.

In two of my Sonoma State University classes I had the opportunity to participate in student selected reading groups. Both of these opportunities led to great discussions and learning. I was inspired to start reading groups with my second grade students because I liked the opportunity to choose books and have discussions. I started doing reading groups a few years ago in my second grade classroom. I grouped students based on similar needs and reading ability, then assigned books to read with their peers. In small groups we read the books with repeated readings and discussion. The two major changes that I made when I next implemented book groups in my own classroom was that the groups were flexible and students were able to choose their own books. I noticed a significant improvement in the reading abilities of my students as time progressed and students became more cognizant of the reading strategies they were using while reading. My goal for undertaking differentiated reading groups was to support students at their current reading level, teach them strategies to become better readers, and provide the opportunity for them to see themselves as successful readers.

My first goal was to identify the reading approaches my students were already using and then to help them develop new reading strategies. The notion that students
should be metacognitive about their reading strategies is a concept that I heard many
times throughout my classes at Sonoma State University. I saw this idea in operation
during the 2012 and 2013 SSU School of Education Summer Reading and Writing
Academies. The Summer Academy is hosted at local public elementary schools, and
allows SSU Reading and Language candidates the opportunity to put into action those
theories that are being taught by their SSU professors. I learned during these summer
experiences that the best way for students with diverse backgrounds and varied reading
abilities to improve their reading is to be taught specific reading strategies, for them to
choose their own reading material, for them to be given an opportunity to read for an
extended amount of time, and then be able to reflect on their reading in a meaningful
way. According to Dr. MaryAnn Nickel, professor at SSU and director of the Summer
Reading Academy, instruction should be focused on children’s observed learning needs
and students should be taught to identify their strengths and use those strengths in their
reading.

Based on what I observed and learned during the SSU Summer Reading
Academy, I wanted to investigate how implementing a similar approach in reading
development would impact my students. In particular, I wanted to know: How do
students view of themselves as readers change when given the opportunity to choose
authentic text during flexible differentiated reading groups.
Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

For this thesis project I created differentiated reading groups in my second grade classroom in order to explore how students' views of themselves as readers might change when they were able to choose authentic texts to read. After defining differentiated reading groups, this review of related literature is organized around three distinct areas of research. The first section of the review focuses on the theoretical and historical perspectives of how literacy is defined. Section two provides a synthesis of contemporary literacy experts' views on differentiated reading and section three provides a look at supporting and opposing views on differentiated reading groups.

What are Differentiated Reading Groups?

This study is based on the view that effective reading instruction with early readers includes the components of developing students' reading fluency and expanding their use of comprehension strategies. Reading fluency is reading a text with expression and intonation, as well as, comprehending what is being read (Allington, 2009; Samuels, 1997). In order to comprehend what they are reading, a reader will use different tools to construct meaning. Examples of comprehension strategies that readers use while reading are; repeated readings, reread, read ahead, use pictures as clues, and use previous experience to decode unknown words (Watson, Burke, & Goodman, 1996).

Although differentiated reading groups and small group instruction are valuable in meeting students' needs, not all teachers use these as part of their comprehensive literacy program, yet all students can benefit from small group instruction at their current reading
Differentiation means tailoring instruction to meet individual needs. Whether teachers differentiate content, process, products, or the learning environment, the use of ongoing assessment and flexible grouping makes this a successful approach to instruction” (Tomlinson C. A., 2000). Differentiated reading groups are flexible, ability-based reading groups that are part of a balanced approach to literacy instruction that accommodate the diverse learning needs of all students with a stress on whole language study. Whole language emphasizes using authentic text, reading for meaning, and integrating all language skills within the context of what is being read (Goodman K., 2006). As defined by educators and theorists a balanced approach to literacy is immersion in authentic literacy experiences and explicit instruction of strategies and skills through modeling, mini-lessons, explanations, and demonstrations (Tobin & McInnes, 2008; Tomlinson C. A., 2000; Fountas & Pinnell, 2010). In reading groups, with teacher guidance, students read and discuss the same leveled text in groups of four – six students for approximately fifteen minutes two or three times weekly. Flexibility during these reading groups may mean that teachers vary their instruction based on the group of students they are working with and those students’ specific needs. It also means that the groups are dynamic, fluctuating on a regular basis based on the changing needs of the students (Berne & Degener, 2010). The ultimate goal is that all students, whether English Language Learners, struggling readers, or independent readers, will read progressively challenging texts with improved fluency and comprehension while making meaning of the text they are reading. Students will develop problem solving skills to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and challenging text. One challenge for
teachers is to match students with text that will stimulate their interests and push them to learn more.

**Theoretical Perspective of Literacy**

Developmental psychologist and philosopher Jean Piaget (1955), theorized that children learn to read (and many other things) by active discovery and building meaning on what they already know. However, in post – World War II United States, the prevailing belief was a behaviorists' perspective, that a phonics – based technique, based on a view of learning as stimulus-response, was the most effective means of teaching children that were experiencing difficulty in learning to read (Flesch, 1955; Gray, Arbuthnot, & Artley, 1951). During the late 1960’s, a shift began in the reading research community with the belief that language acquisition was not a learned behavior but a natural process (Chomsky, 1957, 1965). Learning to read is developed through meaningful interactions with text, rather than being a skill that is practiced and reinforced by breaking down the parts in a systematic fashion. Reading theorist Frank Smith (2006) states, “Reading is the most natural activity in the world, something we all do constantly, without conscious effort, whether or not we are literate” (Smith, 2006, p. 1). Halliday (1969) claimed that any occurrence of language use or exposure to language is an opportunity to learn about language and learn through language. Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978), like Piaget, advocated for the power of societal interactions and acknowledging the intrinsic understanding of the learner. Frank Smith and Lev Vygotsky both argue that children should not be taught to read but should be exposed to experiences that allow them the opportunity to learn to read. (Smith, 1986; Vygotsky,
Whole language is the educational belief that learning takes place most effectively when learners are engaged in collaborative, meaningful, and purposeful uses of literacy. Goodman and Goodman (1980) believe that children will learn to read if given abundant exposure to whole text in meaningful situations. Whole language proponents acknowledge that word work, spelling, vocabulary, and phonics are all part of understanding language and are integrated into what is being taught and learned. However, developing such skills as decoding is not ever done in isolation from the meaning that can be made from interacting with authentic text.

**Historical Transformation in Reading Instruction**

How to teach reading, or help students become readers has always been contested territory. In 1955 Rudolf Flesch published a book titled *Why Johnny Can't Read – And What You Can Do About It* (1955). In this book he criticized the current teaching methods at that time, which was a whole word approach. Flesch referenced research stating that phonics-based techniques and a phonics drill approach were more effective than the current methods. Building on this belief, researchers analyzed the processes involved in learning to read and there became, “a growing tendency for problems in the reading act to be looked on as deficiencies in need of remediation” (Alexander & Fox, 2004, p. 35). With this thought, reading researchers identified the subskills that children needed before reading, created diagnostic tests to identify a child’s reading maturity, and created remedial techniques to implement in order to further the child’s skill acquisition (Alexander & Fox, 2004). In the 1960’s and 1970’s a conceptual change came about in the reading research community. This change viewed learning as a natural process and
that language and reading was developed through meaningful use not mindless practice. The work of Chomsky (1965), discussed above, led to particular changes in reading instruction. An example of these changes is that the learner was now considered an active participant, which constructed meaning, and used many forms of information to arrive at comprehension (Halliday, 1969). Some people have tried to resolve the conflict of reading instruction by calling for a balanced approach to literacy. As previously stated, a balanced approach to literacy is engagement in authentic literary experiences along with explicit instruction of strategies and skills (Fountas & Pinnell, 2010; Tomlinson C.A., 2000).

**The Instructional Use of Differentiated Reading Groups**

The idea of guiding students through reading as a way for teachers to structure reading and responses to reading was originally discussed in Emmett Betts’ (1946) book *Foundations of Reading Instruction*. In the late 1950’s Gray and Reese built upon Betts’ teaching approach when they listed a four step teaching procedure, “These steps include preparation for the story, guided reading of the story skills, and drills for word analyses and vocabulary, and follow – up activities for applying new ideas.” (as cited in Ford & Opitz, 2011, p. 227). The idea of reading this way was expanded upon throughout the 1960’s with Bond and Wagner (1966) and in the 1980’s with George and Evelyn Spache (1986). In the 1980s, small focused reading groups became a new type of reading instruction in New Zealand and Australia (Pinnell & Fountas, 2010). In the mid 1990’s the idea that differentiated reading was a way for teachers to read with students to meet their instructional needs became common place. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) furthered the
idea of meeting students' instructional needs by having teachers focus guided reading on small group instruction, as modeled after New Zealand and Australia. Differentiated groups are dynamic, flexible groups that change in response to students' needs, teacher observations, and formative assessments. Some reading researchers advocate for the teacher to select books for reading groups (Pinnell & Fountas, 2010), while other reading researchers believe there is more power in students reading self-selected texts. (Miller, 2009; Serafini, 2001)

Contemporary View of Differentiated Reading Groups

In education, differentiation means modifying instruction to meet specific needs of all students. Differentiation as it pertains to reading groups is using ongoing assessments and flexible grouping to meet individual needs and move all students forward in their development as readers. The International Reading Association believes that, "Children learn to read and write at different rates and in different ways. There are significant numbers of children who struggle with reading and writing. Many of these children need more and different kinds of instruction, and they have a right to instruction that is designed with their specific needs in mind" (International Reading Association, 2000, p. 8).

Differentiated reading groups accommodate the various educational needs of the learners by varying the procedures and books used to teach each concept. McBride (2004) stated that "Differentiated instruction is vital to effecting positive change in student performance, because the one-strategy-fits-all approach doesn't work in a real classroom" (p. 39). Differentiated reading groups are small flexible groups based on
student needs and instruction is delivered with students’ ability and needs in mind in order to increase students’ fluency, comprehension, and overall reading skills. Activities that can be included in flexible differentiated reading are; using leveled text, teaching reading strategies, practice reading skills, reading aloud, partner reading, group reading and silent reading.

**Differentiated Reading Groups: Why Should We Do Them?**

In all academic grade levels, differentiated reading groups and other forms of small group instruction increase student reading fluency, student reading comprehension, student engagement, and overall reading levels (Ferguson & Wilson, 2009; Bonfiglio, Daly III, Persampieri, & Andersen, 2006). Using culturally relevant reading material, having students read text aloud, and focusing on vocabulary during differentiated reading groups can be especially effective for students that are English Language Learners. (Avalos, Plasencia, Chavez, & Rascon, 2007; Suits, 2003) “For English language learners (ELLs), the proportion of students who struggle with learning to read surpasses national averages, particularly for Hispanic students” (Ross & Begeny, 2011, p. 604). Fluent reading is necessary for reading comprehension and focused instruction based on needs and repeated readings of a text are two ways that ELL students can increase fluency and comprehension of grade level text (Ross & Begeny, 2011). Students reading books that help practice fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and grammatical text structure in small groups is a way to help ELL students improve their reading fluency (Avalos, Plasencia, Chavez, & Rascon, 2007).
Educators use specific scaffolds during differentiated reading groups, which help students improve on their reading strategies. (Frey & Fisher, 2010; Skidmore, Perez-Parent, & Arnfield, 2003) In the educational setting, scaffolding is the temporary but essential assistance given by a teacher to students to help them learn a new skill. While learners are focusing on the new skill the teacher assists the learner in moving toward the ability to do the new skill or concept independently (Gibbons, 2002). While working on reading strategies in the classroom a teacher can help guide students through a text by using scaffolds to help students access the knowledge they already have about a particular text. The knowledge a reader brings to a text is essential to their ability to make meaning from the text.

Ferguson and Wilson (2009) conducted a survey with forty kindergarten – fifth grade teachers, in four elementary schools, in an urban school district. Their survey was based on the premise that differentiated reading has been considered an effective teaching practice for many years, with multiple studies to back it up. It is considered a best practice in teaching for a balanced approach to literacy to use differentiated reading or guided reading groups and the researchers wanted to give a survey based on the usage of these reading groups in the classroom. Nineteen of the participating teachers taught primary grades (kindergarten through second grade) and the other twenty – one taught intermediate grades (third through fifth grade). Teachers were given an eight question survey about their knowledge of differentiated reading, their use of differentiated reading, and the limitations and benefits to the current reading instruction used. All forty participating teachers acknowledged some type of training on differentiated reading. Of the forty participating teachers, nineteen of the teachers used differentiated reading.
groups daily, one did not use groups at all and the rest of the teachers varied their use from two – three days per week. Of the nineteen teachers that did groups reading daily, fourteen of them were primary teachers. Based on the data in this survey it was more likely that primary teachers used differentiated reading groups than intermediate teachers. The benefits of differentiated reading that were identified by teachers were: improved comprehension, improved fluency, improved test scores, and continued retention of reading strategies.

Three studies focused on the benefits and use of differentiated reading groups and small group instruction with students that are English Language Learners (ELL). In the article Modified Guided Reading (Avalos et al., 2007) the researchers worked with twenty-three ELL middle school students that had lived in the United States less than three years and had reading levels assessed at fourth grade level or below. Their goal was to explicitly teach students the skills and strategies that they need at their current instructional level. Another goal was to provide a more focused instruction on students’ needs and ability to provide more individualized attention. Finally, they wanted to provide more opportunities for active participation of students with the text. The purpose of this study was to show how differentiated reading sessions can be modified to better meet the needs of English Language Learners. The modifications were a focus on culturally relevant text, an emphasis on vocabulary development, and a concentration on grammatical text structures. First teachers analyzed the text in order to introduce the text to students. They looked for figurative language (similes and metaphors), homophones or homographs, and complex grammar to explain to students. Next the teachers introduced the book and, depending on the difficulty of the text, the teacher would read the book
aloud to students. In other words, the teachers conducted a shared to guided reading strategy by first reading aloud (modeling fluent reading, thinking aloud strategies, decoding etc.), then had students continue to read whisper quietly by themselves. After reading, teachers and students worked on word study, comprehension strategies, and writing tasks. Results showed that the students that received 24, thirty minute sessions increased their reading fluency by 1.3 grade levels, and other students that received 36, thirty minute sessions increased their reading fluency by 1.8 grade levels. Similarly; Ross and Begeny (2011) and Suits (2003) focused on differentiated reading and small group interventions with English Language Learners but focused on first through third graders. They concentrated on what reading strategies work best with second language learners and if differentiated reading groups were beneficial to second language learners. Ross and Begeny (2011) also compared small group intervention with one-on-one intervention. They found that the strategies that work best with ELL students are having access to meaningful text, working in small groups, and building upon background knowledge. Additionally, teachers strategically teaching vocabulary in content, and teacher modeling also led to increases in students' reading levels. Suits' (2003) results showed that after one year of differentiated reading groups, that first graders improved 4.4 reading levels, second graders improved by 3.6 reading levels, and third graders improved 2.6 reading levels. Of the five students in their article, Ross and Begeny's (2011) results showed that students made improvement in differentiate-reading groups, but only two students made significant growth as compared to the one-on-one intervention where all students made significant growth.
Another study (Kulaga, 2011) explored using more extensive texts during differentiated reading sessions with proficient students. The rationale was that students would get more out of the differentiated reading session by using more complex text and that small group instruction does not only benefit struggling readers but can also benefit capable readers. The teacher's goal was to tie differentiated reading books in with the social studies unit they were already studying. She broke the small group reading sessions into three phases. Phase 1: orientation is where students make predictions based on surface features and the teacher introduces the book. Phase 2: independent engagement, students took text home to read and complete a written review of the story. Phase 3: critical reading and discussion phase in which the students and teacher reread the text together and the teacher asked critical thinking questions to facilitate discussion and thought. The results were that the teacher felt her analysis of the text prior to phase three gave her an advantage in designing critical thinking questions. She felt students had higher engagement during the sessions as compared to prior differentiated reading sessions. Kulaga concluded that having students read text prior to meeting for a small group reading session caused better discussion, more engaged learners, and higher level questioning and thinking. Students were able to think about and respond to text prior to meeting with group which led to text connections with self and community.

Some other compelling studies (Fawson & Reutzel, 2000; Wiggins, 1994) investigated ways teachers can use state adopted curriculum, such as basal readers, and use differentiated reading groups to support student learning. Fawson and Reutzel (2000) looked into teachers' desire to use the flexible grouping, scaffolding, and reading strategies from homogenous group reading with basal anthologies. An often expressed
criticism of differentiated reading groups is the cost and difficulty for teachers to have easy access to multiple texts at varying levels. The authors leveled basal reading anthologies for five major English Language Arts state adopted curriculums using Fountas and Pinnell’s (2012) text gradient criteria. Then they investigated successful ways for teachers to use the basal texts in their classrooms. The authors found that differentiated reading allows teachers to address students’ specific needs with a variety of reading strategies and that using the basal readers allowed access to multiple levels of texts without extra cost to the teacher or district. Similarly, Wiggins (1994) identified difficulties with past practice of small grouping and compared those issues with differentiated reading groups. Past difficulties with small group instruction is that students were ability grouped based on one assessment and then groups became fixed over an extended period of time and the instructional approach varied based on level of group. For example, low leveled students were asked low level questions and higher students were asked more complex questions and were engaged in more dialogue than their struggling peers. He furthered his study by investigating how third graders would benefit from whole group instruction of on grade level material from the basal followed by small group instruction based on students’ reading needs. This investigation led to teachers grouping students based on need and doing follow up instruction as reinforcement of the whole group lesson. Differentiation occurred with follow – up activities but initial instruction of introducing vocabulary, scaffolding background knowledge, and developing a purpose for reading was done with the large group. By the end of the school year the twelve identified below grade level students from the pilot group placed two months above grade level. By contrast, ten of the eleven below grade
level students in the comparison group were now considered six months below grade level. Only one student in the traditional class, the comparison group, advanced to grade level reading accomplishment. The research of Wiggins (1994) and Fawson and Reutzel (2000) demonstrates that flexible differentiated reading groups and the state adopted reading curriculum can be used simultaneously to increase reading success. This flexibility is effective for students, especially those that have been identified as struggling readers.

Choosing What to Read

In order to conduct flexible, differentiated reading groups with students having the ability to choose authentic texts, a wide range of texts need to be available for student choice. Various reading researchers are proponents for students choosing their own reading materials as often as possible. Although this might not always be an option, allowing students the opportunity to self-select text when possible has been shown to increase student motivation and enthusiasm for reading (Routman, 1996; Allington, 2009). In his book The Reading Workshop Creating Space for Readers, Frank Serafini (2001) states, “As classroom teachers, we need to provide children with access to a wide variety of reading materials, an extensive uninterrupted amount of time to read every day, and choices about what is read to them and what they are reading themselves” (Serafini, 2001, p. 61). Classroom teacher and author Donalyn Miller (2009) reiterates the idea of allowing student choice in what they read by asserting that her students were more engaged in their books and students were excited about completing projects assigned as part of the reading. Howard (2009) states that flexible groups, readable books and student
selected texts are key factors in having a successful literacy program in a school. In the book *Essentials of Children’s Literature*, (Tomlinson & Lynch-Brown, 1996, p. 20) the authors state; “Common sense tells us that children will apply themselves more vigorously to read or learn something that they are interested in than they will to read or learn something that they find uninteresting or boring.” In order to allow reading choice and self-selected text students must have a wide variety of books available to choose from and ample opportunities to make choices with books. Allington states, “assuring that you have an adequate supply of texts that students find interesting and they can read accurately, fluently, and with good understanding” (Allington, 2009, p. 69), Serafini (2001) continues this idea by highlighting the need for text diversity including multicultural considerations, varying sociocultural perspectives, and literature from diverse backgrounds.

**Miscue Analysis and Kidwatching**

Flexible reading groups are created in order to increase students’ reading fluency and comprehension. In order for educators to successfully identify what students are doing well and what groups might be the most effective for the student the teacher needs to observe the student and read with them. In her book, *Kidwatching: An Alternative to Testing*, Yetta Goodman (1978) refers to the observation of students during literacy activities as Kidwatching. These observations are done continuously and they are ongoing, they are not done in isolation or only during formal assessments. Observing students during their interactions with text and literacy activities in individual, small group and whole group situations can effectively inform teachers on a student’s
understanding of a text. “Critical moment teaching is predicated on teachers listening attentively to their students and tuning into their questions and concerns, their wonderings and fears, their tentative beliefs, and the issues they raise” (Goodman Y., 2003, p. 51). Along with careful, ongoing observations of students, educators should also conduct a reading miscue with students. Ken Goodman defines a miscue as “an actual observed response in oral reading which does not match the expected response” (Goodman K., 1973, p. 5). The purpose of a reading miscue is to give the teacher an insight into the reading process and to examine the oral reading of an individual student (Burke, Goodman, & Watson, 1987). A miscue analysis is a one on one reading experience with educator and student, where the student reads and the teacher notes miscues the student makes while reading. The miscue analysis procedure allows for the teacher to not only notice a child’s miscues but also their reading strengths. Following the reading, the child is asked to do an unaided retelling of the text they read in order to determine if they comprehended the text (Burke, Goodman, & Watson, 1987). With the information that a teacher gathers from Kidwatching and a miscue analysis, they can accurately group students based on similar strengths and strategies needed to further their reading abilities.

**Opposing Views**

Ross and Begeny (2011) did a comparative study of small differentiated reading group intervention as compared to one on one intervention. The purpose of this study was to compare small group instruction to one on one instruction as it applies to students’ reading fluency and comprehension. The specific skills the researchers focused on were
repeated readings, listening passage preview and phrase – drill error correction. The researchers focused on students that are English Language Learners, whose first language is Spanish. An overall goal was looking at ways of improving the students’ fluency. The idea is that when students’ reading fluency improved their comprehension will also improve. Participants were five second graders from a rural school. On evidence based assessments four of the students were deemed reading below level (67 wcpm) on DIBELS test. One read above the 67 word count per minute (wcpm) but the teacher had expressed concerns. Students received seven sessions of one – on – one intervention, and seven sessions of small group intervention, and NTC (no treatment control) sessions, which were assessment sessions without any intervention. Students were taken out of their classrooms three days a week for thirteen minute sessions for eight weeks. Data showed that the one on one interventions produced significant fluency gains for all five students, but the small guided reading group intervention showed significant gains for only two of the students. Although their research only focused on five students that were all English Language Learners their results did show that using one – on – one intervention was a more effective intervention strategy than small differentiated reading groups for improving fluency and comprehension. However, a one on one intervention is not always possible and differentiated reading groups may be a more effective use of time.

Some critics of Fountas and Pinnell’s version of guided reading claim they are not challenging students as the Common Core Standards require. Timothy Shanahan (2012) of the University of Illinois at Chicago claims, “For common core, making it challenging means placing students, second grade up, in books that would be frustration range according to F&P; books that students would read with markedly lower fluency and
comprehension on a first read." California Common Core does express that students should be reading rigorous text, however a counter argument could be made that rigorous text can be part of whole group lessons and small group intervention, such as differentiated reading groups.

**Support for the Study**

As stated previously, differentiated reading groups are part of a balanced approach to literacy, with an emphasis on whole language study. Literacy experts (Routman, 1996; Goodman Y., 2003; Goodman K., 2006) describe whole language as a way of thinking and learning where learners are supported to use literacy as a meaning making process. Fountas and Pinnell, (1996; 2012) leading researchers in guided reading, describe small group reading as an atmosphere where readers are engaged in the reading while attending to the meaning of the text. Students learn strategies and build a system for handling multiple types of texts that increase in difficulty.

Reading with students individually is a component of differentiated reading groups. A suggestion by literacy experts, (Routman, 1996) (Howard, 2009) (Goodman Y., 1978) is to do a Running Record or a Miscue Analysis with the student in order to differentiate what strategies they are already using while reading. This type of one-on-one assessment allows the teacher to listen to the child read, understand what strategies they are using, and decide what the next steps will be.

Teachers should be observing students not just while they are reading in differentiated reading groups but any time they are participating in literacy activities. Yetta Goodman (1978) refers to these observations as Kidwatching. By establishing a
Kidwatching belief in the classroom teachers will pay careful attention to students’ interactions during literacy activities, observe and analyze students as they engage in daily literacy experiences, and use evaluations and observations to drive instruction and learning. If a student does not seem to be progressing the teacher should analyze ways to help the student in order to offer timely support.

Based on the research support for differentiated reading groups and my theoretical beliefs that include viewing reading as a meaning making process, I decided to investigate how to best integrate theory, research, and practice in reading instruction with my second grade students. I wanted to explore the use of differentiated reading groups that would not be fixed, but flexible in terms of students’ interests and needs. I wanted to see how students might shift in their views of themselves as readers when their strengths and needs were addressed through small group instruction and with students having choice in what texts they read. In the next section I will describe how I set up the groups and the data that I collected in order to explore the phenomenon of flexible, differentiated reading groups that honored student choice and interests.
Chapter III

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to determine how students’ views of themselves as readers change when given the opportunity to choose authentic text during differentiated reading groups. Chapter three includes a description of the participants, data sources used and the procedures that will be used in this study.

Description of participants

The participants for this qualitative research case study on differentiated reading groups are second grade students in a self-contained classroom. The school is a kindergarten – eighth grade public school in a rural, Northern California community with approximately 575 students. Ninety-one percent of the student population is designated socioeconomically disadvantaged according to federal guidelines, forty percent of the students at the participating school are English Language Learners (ELL), and thirteen percent of the student population are students with an identified disability.

There are twenty-three students in the participating class; however only five students were chosen for the case study. At the beginning of the case study all participating students were seven years old. The classroom population consisted of eleven male students and twelve female students; five students are identified by the district as English Language Learners, and two students received special education services. The five participating students were chosen based on their responses to the Burke Reading Interview (Burke, Goodman, & Watson, 1987) (Appendix D) and their willingness to participate in the study as determined by the informed consent (Appendix B) (Appendix
C). The response to the Burke Reading Interview question number ten states, "Using a scale of 5 to 1, with 5 being a terrific reader what overall rating would you give yourself as a reader?" I chose students that initially rated themselves at a three or lower in order to show potential growth.

The first student that participated in this case study is a male, identified in this study as Ray. He is the youngest child in his family with an older brother that is one grade level older than him and attends the same school. Ray lives at home with both parents and his sibling. He enjoys wrestling, bike riding, and video games. When given a choice of books to read he prefers Fly Guy, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, and a Bad Case of Stripes. Ray was recommended for speech therapy during the school year and received speech services twice weekly for approximately thirty minutes per session. He attended afterschool tutoring program for reading and writing assistance.

The second student that participated in this qualitative case study is another male student, identified in this case study as Zack. He is the oldest child in his family with a younger sibling that was approximately four months old at the beginning of the study. Zack lives at home with both parents and his younger sister. Zack is an English Language Learner. He was born in California and the primary language spoken at home is Spanish with both parents learning English. His first regular exposure to English was attending kindergarten two years prior to the beginning of this study. He enjoys fishing, riding his bike, helping others, and playing Xbox. When given a choice of books to read Zack prefers Dr. Seuss, No David, and monster books. He attended afterschool tutoring program for reading and writing assistance.
The third student to participate in this case study is a female identified in this case study as Judy. She is the oldest child in her family with a younger sister that is one grade level below her and attends the same school. Judy lives at home with both parents and her sibling. She enjoys reading, horseback riding, swimming, and jumping on the trampoline. When given a choice of books to read she prefers PJ Funny Bunny, Bad Kitty, and non-fiction animal books.

The fourth student to participate in this case study was a female that will be identified as Ana. She is the middle child with an older brother that is two grade levels older than her and attends the same school and a younger sister that was born during the current school year. Ana lives at home with her mother and step-father. Ana is an English Language Learner. She was born in California and the primary language spoken at home is English, but both parents and children speak English and Spanish. Ana enjoys soccer, playing with her brother, watching the Disney Channel and reading. When given a choice of books she prefers Bad Kitty, Dr. Seuss books, and books about animals.

The final student included in this case study is a female identified in this case study is Maggie. She is an only child that lives at home with her mother and step–father. She enjoys playing make-believe games, reading, and helping others. When given a choice of books to read she prefers Dr. Seuss books, Amelia Bedilia, and books about animals.
Table 1

Focus Students General Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Age at Beginning of study</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>English Language Learner</th>
<th>Identified Special Ed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ray</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zack</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maggie</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data sources

The data sources used for this research project were those items that provided information in managing the flexible differentiated reading groups. One data source for this research project was the Burke Reading Interview (Burke, Goodman, & Watson, 1987) (Appendix D), which is an informal reading inventory that allows the person administering the inventory the opportunity to see what reading strategies children are cognizant of using while reading and how they view themselves as readers. An informal Miscue Analysis (Burke, Goodman, & Watson, 1987) was also administered and notes taken on the Miscue Observation Sheet (Appendix E). The miscue analysis provided an opportunity to listen to each student read a self-selected text, discuss the text, examine the miscues, and converse with the students about their own reading capabilities and identify next steps to encourage reading growth. The Reading Survey (Appendix F) was a teacher created survey in order to analyze how students view themselves as readers and
how they view the activity of reading. Other data collected included observational notes taken throughout the project from September 2013 to February 2014.

**Procedures**

As the classroom teacher, I carried out the research and interacted with the students as part of the daily routine of the classroom.

After the initial data was collected, I grouped students based on similar reading abilities and next steps needed for reading. Students were grouped with three – six students per group. Reading groups met approximately two or three times per week in fifteen minute sessions. Students chose texts with their peers based on teacher recommendation and limited by the texts in the classroom for which there were multiple copies. As a classroom teacher I have focused on collecting a range of literature; including culturally relevant texts, texts for varying reading levels, assortment of topics and a wide variety of interest levels. At the time of this study there were over 125 literature sets ranging from a Lexile Reading level 25 – Lexile Reading level of 925 available for student choice. The classroom is set up in heterogeneous table groups with four students per table and an extensive classroom library is available for student usage.

Observational data and field notes were taken throughout the study during differentiated groups including specific interactions between student and teacher and student with peers, during small group reading sessions, and any other literacy activities. Approximately every two weeks I carried out a miscue analysis with students to determine if any adjustments needed to be made in the groups. At any time the teacher observed that a student would benefit from moving groups students could be relocated to
a more appropriate differentiated reading group. Groups were established based on multiple criteria that changed based on the needs of the students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Differentiated Reading Groups Offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonics group – letter sound recognition and correspondence.</td>
<td>Summarizing and retelling after reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunking group – chunking parts of larger words and sentence phrases for decoding.</td>
<td>Ask questions before, during and after reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skip/read on/reread -</td>
<td>Make connections while reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at pictures</td>
<td>Making inferences while reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use voice intonation and expression</td>
<td>Determining the author's purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and comprehending nonfiction text</td>
<td>Comparing and contrasting text read.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During this time students routinely read with their peers and teacher, and students had group discussions on books they were reading and chose new texts to read. All students in the classroom including ELL students and identified special education students participated in the groups.

At the conclusion of the research study, I administered the Burke Reading Interview, a final Miscue Analysis and the same Reading Survey. The data collected at the end of the study along with preliminary assessment, observational notes and field notes will be discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter IV

Data

In this chapter the results of the data analysis are presented. I collected data over a five month period and then processed the data in response to the question of how students view themselves as readers and if that view changes when given the opportunity to choose authentic text during differentiated reading groups. Two fundamental goals drove the collection of the data and the subsequent data analysis. The first goal was to determine how students viewed themselves as readers and how that view changed throughout the study. The second goal was to determine if given a choice of reading material affected students’ opinion of reading. These goals were accomplished. The findings presented in this chapter establish the potential for merging philosophy and practice.

Presentation of the Data – All Students

There were twenty-three second graders in the participating class of this research study. All students participated in the differentiated reading groups and were given multiple opportunities to select texts with peers and change groups based on strategies needed. Table 3 is a comparison of all students’ initial and final response to the Burke Reading Interview question of rating yourself as a reader. The Burke Reading Interview was initially given in September 2013 and final responses were given in February 2014. As stated earlier, all students were interviewed one on one. Table 3 shows that sixteen students rated themselves higher after the five month study, three students rated
themselves the same, and four students were either not attending school at the beginning of the research study or at the conclusion of the research study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student *initials or pseudonym used</th>
<th>Initial Response to Burke Reading Interview 9/2013</th>
<th>Final Response to Burke Reading Interview 2/2014</th>
<th>Student *initials or pseudonym used</th>
<th>Initial Response to Burke Reading Interview 9/2013</th>
<th>Final Response to Burke Reading Interview 2/2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C.G.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>J.M.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.S.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A.G.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.C.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>M.M.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.M.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I.W.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.S.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>no longer enrolled</td>
<td>F.M.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.J.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A.B.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>no longer enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Z.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Maggie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.S.</td>
<td>not enrolled</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Zack</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.W.</td>
<td>not enrolled</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ray</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.H.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Judy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.L.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Presentation of the Data – More in Depth with Five Readers**

Of the twenty-three students in the class five students were chosen for this qualitative research study. The five participating students were chosen based on their
responses to the Burke Reading Interview (Burke, Goodman, & Watson, 1987) (Appendix D) question about rating themselves as a reader. Students chosen initially rated themselves at a three or lower. I also chose three females and two males because the classroom included slightly more females than males and I chose two ELL students.

At the beginning of the study in September 2013 Ray initially rated himself as a one on the Burke Reading Interview. When asked to describe himself as a reader he stated that he was “okay” and “kind of” a good reader. When asked to elaborate he mentioned that he does not practice reading a lot. Ray participated in reading groups focused on chunking words, rereading, summarizing, retelling, and asking questions. As the study progressed Ray’s rating of himself gradually increased from a 1 to 3’s and a final rating of a 5 at the conclusion of the study in February 2014. When asked to describe himself Ray stated that he is good and that he practices reading. He concluded with identifying specific skills he does when reading: sounding out words, look at pictures, reread, and practicing.

Zack, another male included in the study and one of the ELL students involved, initially rated himself as a three on the Burke Reading Interview. He stated that he is “kinda good” and that “words are sometimes hard for me.” Zack originally struggled to name any strategy he used when reading and could name classmates that he thought were good readers but could not identify what made them good readers. As the study progressed Zack participated in differentiated reading groups focused on rereading, using intonation and expression while reading, summarizing what has been read, making connection when reading, and comprehending nonfiction text and using text features. In the middle of the study Zack dropped his own rating to a two in October 2013 and gave a
final rating of a five on the Burke Reading Interview in February 2014. When asked if he is a good reader he said, “Yahh! I’m a little bit good reader. I have been practicing.” Strategies that Zack identified himself as using were looking at the pictures, rereading, and sounding it out.

Although Maggie, a female student that participated in the survey, originally rated herself as a one on the Burke Reading Interview her classmates regularly named her as a good reader in class. Maggie stated that she looks at pictures and sounds out words to help her read but did not identify any other strategies that she used. Maggie stated that she reads every night. The differentiated reading groups that Maggie participated in were using intonation and expression, making connections, making inferences, asking questions, and determining author’s purpose. Maggie’s peers may have seen her as a good reader but Maggie did not. This changed throughout the study and at the conclusion of the study Maggie rated herself as a five on the Burke Reading Interview. Maggie claimed, “I learned how to read at home and at school. I can read!”

Ana is an ELL female student that was included in the study. Ana initially rated herself as a one on the Burke Reading Interview and the strategy she named that she does was asking for help. Ana stated that when reading she “forgets a lot of stuff.” Ana participated in differentiated reading groups that included; phonics, chunking words, summarizing, retelling, and looking at pictures. As the study progressed, Ana continued to show improved self-confidence in her reading abilities. Ana’s original rating of a one increased to a 3 and finally a 5 at the conclusion of the study. Ana identified strategies of looking at pictures and sounding it out. Ana stated, “I am a good reader. I can read any kind of book.”
The final student included in the study was Judy. Judy originally rated herself as a 3 on the Burke Reading Interview and claimed, “I’m maybe sort of a good reader.” Like Maggie, Judy did not see herself as a good reader although her classmates regularly named her as someone that was a good reader. Judy identified strategies she used as looking at pictures and asking for help. As the study progressed Judy added the strategies of sounding it out, and rereading to understand. Judy participated in differentiated reading groups that focused on reading with intonation and expression, rereading, making connections, making inferences, and reading and understanding nonfiction text and text features. At the conclusion of the study Judy rated herself as a four on the Burke Reading Interview and stated, “I think I am good.”

**Analysis of the Data**

A number of factors can play a part in how students view reading and view themselves as readers including; parental and peer influence, past and present experiences, and the child’s personality. This study on differentiated reading groups highlights a small part of the literature experiences in one second grade classroom.

A common pattern that arose during the study among the five focal students was how often students struggled to list more than one reading strategy at the beginning of the study but they were able to identify multiple reading strategies that they used at the end of the study. This suggests that students were made metacognitive of those reading strategies that they use while reading.

Another similarity that emerged was that at the beginning of the study the five students when asked to describe themselves as readers focused on aspects that they
deemed as negative, “sometimes I forget a lot of stuff.” “Words are sometimes hard for me.” “I don’t practice a lot.” As the study progressed and the same question was asked the students’ words reflected a more positive connotation, “I can read.” “I’m a little bit good reader because I have been practicing.” “I read chapter books.” “I practice.”

All of the five focal students that participated in the study, and in fact the majority of their grade level peers that were surveyed, said that they liked choosing their own books to read. When asked why, student responses ranged from, “I know which books I like,” to “I like picking exciting books, and I can pick real cool books.” This common response of second grade students claiming they like a voice in choosing their own books was the same throughout the study but was voiced even more adamantly at the end of the study.

After analyzing the data I believe that including flexible differentiated reading groups as part of a balanced literacy approach can have a positive influence on students’ view of themselves as readers when given the opportunity to self-select text with peers during flexible differentiated reading groups. Using this program along with other classroom literacy components did make a positive impact on students’ view of themselves as readers. Students became metacognitive of the reading strategies they used while reading and were able to name those strategies. Students regularly voiced that they preferred to choose the text they would read rather than have someone choose a text for them.

These outcomes are relevant because flexible differentiated reading groups are something that teachers can do in their classroom to meet their students’ needs and as an early intervention or challenge for readers. It also shows that, at least at a young age,
students’ view of themselves as readers is flexible; given positive encouragement, multiple chances to read self-selected text, and help with reading strategies.

Student Experiences

Overwhelmingly students seemed to view flexible differentiated reading groups as a positive experience. Because groups were flexible and changed regularly there was not an identifiable low group or high group. One example is students that were in the phonics group were later mixed with students in the nonfiction text group or summarizing and retelling group. One difficulty that occasionally arose during reading groups came when it was time to choose books. On occasion a student would cry when the book they wanted was not chosen, usually this was solved with a compromise for future book choices or splitting the group and forming two groups that were working on the same reading strategy.

Teacher Experiences

While conducting this research in my classroom I found that flexible differentiated reading groups became a favorite part of my day. During this time I had the opportunity to read in small groups with all of my students. During these small groups I was able to assist them on meeting small and large goals, help them with strategies they were working on and witness their transformation in reading. In a whole class setting it is difficult to identify students’ individual reading needs and then help them with those needs. In the small group setting students had many opportunities to read, get feedback and improve.
Chapter V

Implications

In my own classroom I saw the benefits of using flexible differentiated reading groups as part of my literacy activities with my students. I feel that I had a better understanding of my students' reading strengths and strategies that they were using. I do not believe my experiences were unique and I do believe that other students in other classrooms may also benefit from flexible differentiated reading groups. I have confidence in this because learners will receive more individualized attention from the teacher and targeted instruction that matches each child's needs. Based on what happened in my classroom, it appears other students may show growth as readers and their use of reading strategies may increase. This is significant to the educational field because in many districts, including my own, there is a big push to provide intervention to students before they fall significantly behind their grade level peers. Reading groups is one way that teachers can meet the needs of all students at their current ability level in the classroom. Differentiated and flexible reading groups, if done effectively, can not only help a student improve their reading skills, fluency, and comprehension, but enable them to see themselves as capable readers. Reading groups are one part of a balanced approach to literacy that allows teachers to focus on students' literacy needs by observing their individual strengths while working towards specific learning goals.

This research project is significant to teachers and students because differentiated reading groups are a way to meet students' needs without having to send them out to a resource classroom or intervention teacher. The classroom teacher can meet the needs of most or all of their students by identifying and focusing on specific reading strategies.
their students need. The inclusion of student choice and the flexibility of the
differentiated reading groups in this research study differ from what has previously been
done in regards to reading groups. Students can become more engaged in the reading
because they chose their book. Students may feel more confident when reading with a
small group rather than with a large group which will give them more opportunity to
practice reading, discussing their reading, and responding to what they read. Students are
also empowered when instructional groupings are not fixed. There is a chance for
students to see that the strengths and abilities of all readers vary, depending on the text
they are reading.

Parents should find this research project significant because differentiated,
flexible reading groups allow more individualized attention to their child. Students that
are still learning to read can receive small group help from their teacher and students that
need a challenge can receive that from their classroom teacher as well.

In the future I would like to continue the practice of flexible differentiated reading
groups in my classroom and see if the findings are similar with different groups of
students. I would also like to collaborate with other educators in my school and district
that are interested in implementing choice in flexible differentiated reading groups.
Appendix A – IRB Rights of Human Subjects

SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY—INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE RIGHTS OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

Application for Approval of Research Involving Human Subjects

This application is designed to fulfill the responsibilities of Sonoma State University to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46, regarding research involving human subjects. Failure to comply with the policies and procedures referenced in this application (1) may cause individuals to incur personal liability for negligence and harm; (2) may cause the University to lose federal funding, prevent individuals from applying for or receiving federal research funds, and prevent the University from engaging in research; and (3) will be viewed by SSU as a violation of university policies and procedures and will result in appropriate administrative action.

All research involving the use of human subjects conducted by SSU faculty, staff, or students—or sponsored in part or whole by SSU—must be reviewed and approved by the University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Rights of Human Subjects prior to the start of the project and then must be conducted in full compliance with University policies and procedures. It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to refer to the IRB any project involving human subjects, even if the subjects are not considered to be “at risk.” This includes research conducted in conjunction with classroom assignments that will be published or shared, as well as student dissertation or thesis. It also includes all interviews, questionnaires, surveys, observations, educational tests, and secondary analyses of previously collected data that will be incorporated into published research or other public presentation. Such projects may be undertaken only after appropriate approval and may be continued only so long as that approval remains in effect. Changes to a project, or continuation of the project following adverse or untoward occurrences during the project, are also subject to review and approval.

Research intended solely for classroom use (with no possibility of further disclosure or publication) and conference/workshop evaluation surveys do not require IRB review.

Submit applications to: Sonoma State University, Institutional Review Board –Stevenson 1024, 1801 East Cotati Ave., Rohnert Park, CA 94928

If you have any questions, contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 664-2448 or email irb@sonoma.edu

NOTE: Your complete application is due one month prior to the start of your research. It should include:

- Pages 1-3 of this application plus additional pages for the Protocol Requirements (page 3) as needed.
- A copy of your written informed consent form OR a request for waiver of written informed consent with a copy of the oral text you intend to use to inform your subjects of the points listed on the Checklist of Informed Consent (see http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/orsp/human_subjects.shtml for a sample consent form and checklist).

This form is designed to be completed on a computer using Microsoft Word. Complete all applicable gray form fields and check boxes. See http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/orsp/human_subjects.shtml for a version suitable for completion by hand or typewriter

Your signature below certifies that:

- You have read this 6-page packet and understand your responsibilities and liabilities as a principal investigator.
- You have reviewed the University’s policies and procedures on research involving human subjects and will ensure your research is conducted in full compliance. Copies of the policies and procedures are available from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) in Stevenson Hall, Room 1024. The information is also posted on the ORSP website at http://www.sonoma.edu/orsp.
- You have completed Module 2 (Informed Consent) of the Human Subject Assurance Training provided online by the Office of Human Research Protections at: http://137.187.172.153/CBTS/Assurance/login.asp
- You, your spouse, or your dependent children have no financial interest in your project that will or may be reasonably expected to bias the design, conduct, or reporting of your research.

Signature of Principal Investigator: ____________________________ Date: 9-19-2013

Title of Project: Guided Reading as an Intervention

Name of principal investigator: Martha J. Bello Telephone: (707) 888 - 2213

Home Address: 3107 13th Street Clearlake, CA. 95422 Email: bellom@seawolf.sonoma.edu

Department: _______ Title or Academic Status: _______

Co-Investigator(s): _______

For student investigators only:

Please print or type name of professor or faculty advisor: Dr. Karen Grady

Signature of professor or faculty advisor: ____________________________ Title or Academic Status: _______

Department clearance: ____________________________ Date: _______

Student investigators must obtain clearance from their department’s human subjects committee, if one exists. Psychology students
**Protocol Summary Sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name: Bello</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Title of Project:</strong> Guided Reading as an Intervention</td>
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**Brief description of purpose of project:**

During the 2013-2014 school year I will conduct guided reading groups in my second grade classroom using a reading workshop model. Groups will meet approximately 3 times per week for 20 minute sessions. All students in the classroom will participate in the groups and 3-5 will be evaluated for this qualitative case study thesis. The purpose of this project is to determine: If guided reading groups are an effective tier one intervention for students identified as at risk in a Response to Intervention Model? And does a student's view of themself as a reader improve by participating in guided reading groups when given a choice of what books to read?

Data that will be collected and analyzed are beginning of the year and progress monitoring assessments such as: Miscue Analysis, Burke Reading Interview, a modified Burke Reading Interview, student surveys and observational notes.

**Subjects**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number: 3-5</th>
<th>Population: 25</th>
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Source/How contacted: Population consists of students in my self contained second grade classroom. Contact is in person in the general education setting.

**Instruments**

Check all that apply: ☒ Tests ☐ Questionnaires ☐ Interview guides ☐ Other: 

Attach one copy of each instrument used. If not yet developed, provide drafts, samples, and/or outlines

How administered:

☐ Telephone ☐ Mail or email ☒ In person 

Length and frequency of procedure: 2-3 times weekly in 15-20 minute sessions.

Setting: general education classroom setting.

**Data**

Check all that apply. Data will be recorded by:

☒ written notes ☒ audio tape ☒ video tape ☐ photography ☐ film ☐ other:

Data will include:

☐ information which can identify the subject (e.g., name, social security number, other unique identifier) specify:

☒ codes linked to subjects name by separate code key

☐ codes not linked to subjects names

For items checked above, circle box of those related to data that will be reported

Data will be used for:

☐ publication ☐ evaluation ☐ needs assessment ☒ thesis ☐ other:

**Informed Consent**

☒ written (attach copy of consent form; see http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/orsp/human_subjects.shtml for Appendix A: Informed Consent Guidance)

☐ oral (attach text of statement and request for waiver of written informed consent; see http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/orsp/human_subjects.shtml for Appendix A: Informed Consent Guidance)
Protocol Requirements

Answer each of the following questions. Use as many pages as necessary to fully respond; most protocols can be covered in five pages or less.

1. What are your research objectives?
My research objectives are to determine:
If guided reading groups are an effective tier one intervention for students identified as 'at risk' in a Response to Intervention Model? And does a student's view of themself as a reader improve by participating in guided reading groups when given a choice of what books to read?

2. Discuss the significance and scientific merit of the study.
California's RtI framework, supported by national research and in accordance with federal law, emphasizes effective instruction and earlier intervention for students experiencing difficulty learning. RtI is a systematic, data-driven approach to instruction that benefits every student. RtI is a comprehensive system of core instruction and tiered levels of interventions to benefit every student.
The first tier of the RtI tiered levels is high quality classroom instruction with regular screening of students to determine learning needs. I plan to research if guided reading as one part of a balanced approach to literacy that allows teachers to focus on students' literacy needs by observing their individual strengths while working towards specific learning goals. Guided reading is one way that teachers can meet the needs of all students at their current ability level. Guided reading, if done effectively, can help a student improve their reading skills, fluency, and comprehension.

3. In what manner and to what extent will human subjects be involved?
Human subjects are students that will be participating in assessments and guided reading groups while interacting with peers and myself. I will be talking anecdotal notes during this time. Students will not be asked to take any assessment, survey or participate in any activity that deviates from traditional classroom procedures.

4. What procedures, instruments, etc. will be employed?
Procedures will be to collect preliminary data and place students in guided reading groups based on their reading needs. Preliminary data that will be collected is a Burke Reading Interview, a miscue analysis, and a reading survey.
In their guided reading groups students will choose books with their peers and read with teacher guidance. Groups will meet approximately 3 times a week for 20 minute sessions. During this time teacher will monitor students reading, read with the students, take notes on students' progress take notes on students' reading needs, and take notes on students' interaction with the text and peers.
Throughout the research time students will be given the progress monitoring assessments listed above and groups will be adjusted based on the updated information. At the end of the research study the assessments will be given again including the reading survey.

5. What existing data, if any, will be used?
Existing data that will be used are the beginning of the year assessments and progress monitoring assessments that are used throughout all second grade classrooms in the participating school.

6. What will the subjects be told about their involvement in the study?
Subjects will be informed that their class will be participating in guided reading groups. It will be explained that groups will be chosen based on their reading needs. It will be explained to students that the groups will be flexible and change throughout the year as their reading needs change. Students will be told that guided reading groups is one of the big things I am studying in school and that I think it will help them be better readers.
7. Describe the procedures for obtaining and recording the informed consent of subjects. Attach a copy of the consent form if written consent is planned. If oral consent is planned, attach a copy of the text of the statement and a request for waiver of written consent. Consent forms will be sent home with students in English and Spanish. I will be available to answer any questions from parents and/or guardians regarding the research.

8. Describe any potential risks to the subjects, including psychological stress and physical hazards. How are these risks outweighed by the sum of the benefits to the subjects and the importance of the knowledge to be gained? No potential risks are anticipated. Students will be participating in reading groups with their classroom teacher and classmates. Researcher is the participants classroom teacher.

9. Describe any interventions or manipulations of subjects or their environments. Not applicable. Students environment is their homeroom classroom.

10. What measures will be taken to safeguard the welfare of subjects, their right to privacy and confidentiality of information? Data collected; including assessments, surveys, and observations, will be reported in a manner in which the participants can not be identified directly or through identifiers.

11. Are school-age children or other minors to be involved? If so, please describe the subject population. Yes, school age children will be involved. The subject population is a self contained second grade classroom with children in the age range of 6 years old to 9 years old.

12. Are psychological tests to be used? If so, please name them. Not applicable

13. Describe the debriefing of subjects. What steps will be taken to deal with the after-effects of emotional stress resulting from the research procedure? No after effects are anticipated. Students will be participating in reading groups with their classroom teacher and classmates. Researcher is the participants classroom teacher.

14. What procedures will be taken to insure prompt reporting of (a) proposed changes in the activity, (b) any unanticipated problems involving risks to the subjects or others, (c) any injury to subjects, and (d) any non-compliance with policies and procedures? I will notify the IRB Board and my Thesis Chair if any of the above situations occur.

15. What type of remuneration, if any, will be offered to subjects for their participation in the research? Not applicable
Sonoma State University – Informed Consent for Minors

My name is Martha Bello I am your child’s second grade teacher and a graduate student with the School of Education at Sonoma State University. I am doing a study on the benefits of guided reading groups as part of my Master’s Degree with Sonoma State University. I will be doing guided reading groups with all students in my class and I will choose 3 – 5 students to do case study research with. The purpose of this research is to determine: If guided reading groups are effective. And if students’ views of themselves as readers improve by participating in guided reading groups when given a choice of what books to read?

Procedure:
If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, the following will happen:
1. I will complete preliminary assessments with your child.
2. I will place your child in a group based on their reading needs.
3. Your child will read with their group approximately 3 times a week for 20 minute sessions.
4. Your child will participate in the guided reading group during the 2013-2014 school year.

Confidentiality:
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Participation:
All students in the class will participate in guided reading groups; however participation in the case study research is voluntary. You may withdraw your child at any time from participation without penalty. Your decision to allow your child to participate in this study will have no influence on your child’s present or future status as a student in his/her classroom. Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with Sonoma State University. There will be no costs to you or your child as a result of taking part in this study.

If you have further questions about the study, you may contact Martha Bello at (707) 994 – 2272 ext. 2515 or martha.bello@sonoma.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor at Sonoma State University, Dr. Karen Grady, at (707) 664 – 3238 or karen.grady@sonoma.edu. You may also contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at Sonoma State University (707) 664 – 2448 or rob@sonoma.edu.

Consent:
YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.

My signature below indicates that I agree to allow my child to participate in this study.

Signature of Subject’s Parent/Guardian Date

Child’s Name Relationship to Child
Información para Menores

Universidad de Eldorado Sonora - Comunicación

Appendix C - Información Comunicación
Burke Reading Interview
by Carolyn Burke (1987)

Name ___________________________  Date __________

1. When you are reading and you come to something you don’t know, what do you do?

2. Do you ever do anything else?

3. Who do you know who is a good reader?

4. What makes him/her a good reader?

5. Do you think he/she ever comes to something he/she doesn’t know when reading?

   If your answer is yes, what do you think he/she does about it?

6. What do you think is the best way to help someone who doesn’t read well?

7. How did you learn to read? What do you remember? What helped you to learn?

8. What would you like to do better as a reader?

9. Describe yourself as a reader.

10. Using a scale of 5 to 1, with 5 being a terrific reader, what overall rating would you give yourself as a reader?
Appendix E – Over the Shoulder Miscue Observation Sheet

Observer

**Over the Shoulder Miscue Observation Sheet**

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<th>Student said</th>
<th>Text said</th>
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Student appears:

Retell:

Other insights:

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<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Next steps:</th>
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Appendix F – Bello Reading Survey

**Reading Survey**

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Languages you speak</th>
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<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>No</th>
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- I like to read
- Reading is boring
- I like to choose my own books to read.
- I like when others choose books for me to read.
- I feel good about myself as a reader.
- I like to guess what may happen in the story.
- I sometimes look at the pictures for clues in the story.
- I sometimes get so interested in a book I don't want to stop reading.
- Reading helps me learn new things.
- I read everyday.
- I like when others read to me.
- I like to talk to my friends about books I read.
- I like to read out loud.
- I choose to read for fun.

**When I read I am good at**

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**When I read I have trouble with**

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**What do you like about reading?**

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**What do you dislike about reading?**

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**Would you rather choose your own books to read or have someone choose for you? Why?**

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**What things do you like to read?**

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**Are you a good reader?**

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References


