Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
Improving the Reading Comprehension and Motivation Level of Struggling Adolescent Readers

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education
At Massey University
Palmerston North, New Zealand

Desma Jeriffe
2013
Abstract

Adolescents from many parts of the world are struggling to read and comprehend text at their appropriate grade level. As a result of their repeated failure in reading comprehension tasks, many of these struggling adolescent readers lose their motivation to read and consequently become disengaged with reading. The aim of this research project was to determine the effectiveness of a reading intervention programme at improving the reading comprehension and motivation level of struggling adolescent readers. The intervention was designed based on the Concept Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) Programme developed by John Guthrie and colleagues. The four week intervention which included a total of 15 forty minute lessons was carried out with seven struggling adolescent readers from the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia. The research project utilized a mixed-method approach in which both quantitative and qualitative data was collected. The Neale Analysis of reading ability was used to assess the reading comprehension level of the students while a motivation questionnaire was used to assess the motivation level of the students. A pre-test and post-test method was used in administering these instruments. Field notes were also taken based on general observations of the participants exposed to the intervention. The results from the data indicated that there was a general improvement in students’ reading comprehension and motivation level at the end of the intervention.
Acknowledgements

I am eternally grateful for the support and guidance given to me by my supervisors Dr. Alison Arrow and Dr. Brian Finch in helping me to complete this research project. I thank them for helping me to conceptualize my ideas and for the opportunity to see my work evolve into something meaningful.

To my family back home, including my husband, Jean Jeriffe, my daughter Jeannesma Jhadi Jeriffe and other members of my extended family I say a “BIG” thank you for your love, encouragement and support. I would not have completed this research project without thinking of you all and continuously hearing your voices in my head saying that I can do this!

I would like to thank the principal, vice principal, secretary and the reading specialist teacher who gave me a chance to work with the students.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the students who participated in this research project and their parents who allowed me to work with them. I thank them for allowing me to participate and take a glimpse into their reading experiences and also for the many times that they made me laugh. I learnt a lot!!!

Most importantly, I would not have completed this research project without the health and strength from God who assured me through his word that I can do all things through him who gives me the strength!
Dedication

I dedicate this research project to my
unborn son Jemuel Jezneel Jeriffe who always kept me motivated
to get the job done!!!!
List of Figures

Figure 1: Reading outcome measures before and after intervention for individual students……………………………………………………………………………………… 53

Figure 2: Self-efficacy outcome measures before and after intervention for individual students………………………………………………………………………… 55

Figure 3: Intrinsic motivation outcome measures before and after intervention for individual students……………………………………………………………………….. 57
List of Tables

Table 1: Reading level of passages from the Neale Analysis reading ability assessment attained by students A-G before Intervention (BI) and after the intervention (AI). 47

Table 2: Reading level of passages from the Neale Analysis reading ability assessment attained by students A-G before Intervention (BI) and after the intervention (AI). 48

Table 3: Raw scores, mean and standard deviation for the measure of comprehension before intervention (BI) and after intervention (AI) for students A-G. 49

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation for the measure of rate/fluency before and after intervention for students A–G. 52

Table 5: Mean and standard Deviation (Stdev) of the sum of students A-G's responses for self-efficacy before intervention (BI) and after intervention (AI). 56

Table 6: Mean and standard deviation (Stdev) of the sum of students A-G's responses for intrinsic motivation before intervention (BI) and after intervention (AI). 58