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### **Abstract**

As more accountability is placed on teachers and schools, they must find ways to boost their students' academic reading fluency success. Because of the need to increase academic achievement, strategies that have little cost and require small amounts of time need to be utilized. Goal setting is a strategy that past research has shown effective for student's academic achievement. This action research study was designed to examine the impact of goal setting partnered with goal tracking and feedback on student reading fluency achievement. There were 21-second grade students who participated in this study. Baseline data was first gathered from reading fluency scores without goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback and then compared to reading fluency scores after goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback were provided. The researcher's analysis showed that goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback increased the number of words students were able to read orally when given one minute to read.

**KEYWORDS:** Reading fluency, student goal setting, goal setting, goal tracking, feedback, action research, qualitative research, second grade

### **Introduction**

Literacy achievement has become a central focus in elementary schools. Teachers are required to demonstrate student growth and are accountable for collecting measurable data. Attaining reading fluency is vital because it is the bridge between word recognition and reading comprehension (Pikulski & Chard, 2005). The Common Core State Standards Initiative RF.2.4.B states that students must read grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Students need to accomplish this goal in order to meet the Common Core State Standards Initiative RF.2.4, read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Greater oral reading fluency allows students to focus on the meaning of the text. Focusing interventions on increasing fluency have resulted in gains of both reading fluency and reading comprehension (Stahl & Kuhn, 2002). Using the same text to repeatedly read is not only a great way to teach reading fluency but also an effective way to monitor student's fluency progress.

Students monitoring their fluency growth through goal setting and goal tracking will engage students and help them be more responsible for their own learning. Students setting goals and tracking goals lead to students becoming active participants in their academic growth. Incorporating teacher feedback with goal setting strategies has the potential to positively effect student's oral reading fluency.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem is elementary students are not meeting reading fluency benchmarks. Without the ability to read fluently, reading comprehension becomes challenging. Reading fluency is the bridge between word recognition and reading comprehension, therefore attaining reading fluency is imperative (Pikulski & Chard, 2005). It is difficult for students to construct meaning from text without first attaining reading fluency (Stahl & Kuhn, 2002).

### **Rationale**

Literacy achievement and scores are a major focus in schools. Teachers are using data more and more to monitor individual student growth. Goal setting and goal tracking can positively impact student achievement (Dotson, 2016). Feedback to the student is often left out of the process. Without feedback students are not aware of the progress they are making and may lose motivation toward achieving their goal. When there is a lack of student progress, feedback allows the teacher to intervene and address individual challenges. By incorporating feedback to goal setting and tracking, the learning target will be clear, known and owned by the participant (Newman, 2012).

Goal setting and goal tracking have shown a positive impact on student achievement, but the most important factor to improving student achievement is feedback (Lee, 2010). Research showed that setting goals in partnership with teacher feedback has a positive effect on middle school students (Stevenson & Mussalow, 2019).

### **Literature Review**

Locke and Latham (2002) illustrated the importance of setting goals and the positive impact it has on student achievement. The correlation between setting goals and the result in behavior and achievement was examined (Locke & Latham, 2002). Goal setting was shown to

engage individuals to exert more effort to match the demand of the goal (Schunk, 2001). A study done on setting reading goals and its effect on reading achievement showed that goal setting does help focus student effort and attention. However, research has shown that goal setting alone is not enough to increase students' academic achievement (Cabral-Marquez, 2011). Cabral-Marquez suggested that teachers support goals so that students can sustain their goals and improve their reading achievement. Additional research showed that setting goals in partnership with teacher feedback has a positive effect on middle school students (Stevenson & Mussalow, 2019). The purpose of this literature review is to provide an understanding of goal setting, goal tracking and progress feedback and its effect on academic achievement of reading fluency.

### **Reading Fluency**

Reading fluency is defined as “the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression” (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000, p. 3). The elements of fluency are speed, accuracy, expression and comprehension. A fluent reader can read text orally as it would be spoken. Fluent readers spend less time decoding words and can focus on what the text is saying (Jefferson, Grant, & Sander, 2017). When a reader can read fluently and concentrate on what the text is saying, they have greater reading comprehension (Jefferson et al., 2017). When a student is a fluent reader, they have more cognitive space to put toward comprehending the content and meaning of text (Jefferson et al., 2017)

According to Stevens (2006), students who do not develop reading fluency have weak reading comprehension skills. Fluency provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension (Pikulski & Chard, 2005). When a reader has not developed fluency, they make mistakes, read without expression, read slowly, word by word and their reading aloud is choppy.

Interventions that focused on increasing fluency have resulted in gains of both reading fluency and reading comprehension (Stahl & Kuhn, 2002). It is important to master reading fluency in early grades so that students can fully comprehend the text they read in higher grades. If students fail to become fluent readers, they will find it difficult to construct meaning from text (Stahl & Kuhn, 2002). Teachers have seen and research has shown the importance of reading fluency and its effects on reading comprehension. Research has shown that high amounts of practice in oral reading are the most effective techniques for developing reading fluency (Stevens, 2006). Repeated reading strategy is an effective strategy used to develop oral reading fluency (National Reading Panel, 2000).

### **Repeated Reading**

Research by LaBerge & Samuels (1974) showed that when students read passages repeatedly their reading fluency increases. Students who were able to read passages of text faster, understood the meaning better and were able to read subsequent passages better as a result of repeated reading. Repeated reading directly effects reading comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). The repeated reading strategy help students to understand the meaning of words and they are able to apply the words to future text (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). Using the same text to repeatedly read is not only a great way to teach reading fluency but also an effective way to monitor student's fluency progress.

Often in classrooms, students read fluency passages to test their words per minute (WPM). Teachers then retest as time allows to see how students' progress. In the Reach for Reading curriculum, there is a fluency passage for each of the four-week units. When the class moves onto the next unit, the fluency passage changes (National Geographic Learning, Cengage

Learning, 2019). It is beneficial to student achievement to read fluency passages with goal setting and tracking (Conte & Hintze, 2000).

### **Goal Setting**

Setting goals with students provides them with the link between attaining a goal and deciding and tracking how to achieve that goal. Goal setting is the process of establishing a direction for learning to students (Marzano, Pickering, & Polluck, 2001). Goal setting is a process that will help students achieve success in all areas of life. Students have been known to work harder when they have personal goals to work toward (Conte & Hintze, 2000). When students set goals, it helps create a clear learning target. Providing students an opportunity to personalize their learning target can increase motivation (Dean, Hubbell, & Pitler, 2012). Student motivation increases when they feel as though they have power and control on how it affects their learning (Dean, et al., 2012). When students can identify why the learning target is important to them personally, they feel a greater sense of control over what they learn (Dean et al., 2012). Moeller, Theiler and Wu (2012) showed a positive correlation on the effect of goal setting and student achievement. When students set goals, they are focused on the desired outcome and know what it will look like to be successful. Further research also showed that students who participate in goal setting in the classroom perform better (Moeller et al., 2012).

### **Self-Set Goals**

Goals that are made by the teacher without student involvement will not produce the desired effect. Without having students involved, students will not be motivated by the goal. It has been shown that students respond better to self-set goals compared to teacher-set goals (Swain, 2005). The same research showed that students also put forth more effort toward self-set goals (Swain, 2005). Goal setting allows students to be responsible for their own learning.

Having students involved in setting the goal makes it personal and increases student motivation for meeting the goal (Dean et al., 2012). Goals should be specific to the student and individualized based on their needs. Teachers should aim for student goals to be authentic, individualized, and student created (Lee, 2010).

### **S.M.A.R.T. Goals**

Teachers need to move away from setting goals for students and toward students setting goals for themselves. To begin setting goals, students need to be explicitly taught what a goal is, how to set a goal and to write it down. There are essential parts needed to make student goals effective, including making goals specific, moderately difficult, and attainable within a shorter time frame (Lee, 2010). In order for students to meet goals, the goals must be relevant, and the student must understand the goal and what it looks like when they have met the goal. When students do not understand the goals set for them, they are not able to achieve them and often do not even try (Lee, 2010).

Due to student's motivation increasing when they feel control over their learning, teaching goal setting is imperative. Rader (2005) detailed six steps for teachers to use to successfully incorporate goal setting.

- 1-Choose a specific goal and write it down
- 2- Decide a time when the goal will be achieved
- 3- Develop a plan to achieve your goal
- 4- Visualize yourself accomplishing your goal
- 5- Work hard and never give up
- 6- Self-evaluate (pp. 124 & 125)

The six steps to successfully set goals are a good way to introduce goal setting to students. They are easy to remember and to teach (Rader, 2005). By using the six steps, students remain in control during the process. The teacher's role is to observe, assess, and evaluate student progress.

Like the six steps to setting goals are having students set S.M.A.R.T. goals for their learning. Doran (1981) detailed how to set S.M.A.R.T. goals. The acronym stands for:

Specific: the goal must target a specific area for improvement

Measurable: the goal must have an indicator as to if you are successful

Assignable: know who will be doing the goal

Realistic: set a goal that is realistic to obtain with available resources

Time: the goal is obtainable in the time allowed (Doran, 1981)

Research done in a Physical Fitness class using S.M.A.R.T. goals as their guide, showed increase in student achievement (Feith, 2014). When goals were written, students felt as though they had created a written contract and felt more accountability to the goal (Feith, 2014). Feith (2014) used more student friendly acronym for S.M.A.R.T. goals; specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound. Students setting goals is not enough if the goals are not tracked and progress is not monitored. The objective of setting goals is to motivate students to increase their academic achievement; therefore, progress toward the goal must be tracked.

### **Tracking Goals**

A student setting self-set goals is the first step, but goals also need to be tracked so that students can measure their success. Setting short-term goals for learning can be an effective way to encourage students to track their progress (Zimmerman, 2001). Students who set and track goals are more likely become self-motivated (Dotson, 2016). The process of setting and tracking

goals give students the ability to self-regulate (Schunk & Mullen, 2013). Self-regulated learners can discern when they have mastered a skill, which allows them to be involved in establishing personalized learning goals (Zimmerman, 2001).

Setting and tracking goals in reading fluency can be done by having students read a passage of text and record their accurate words per minute. Students can set a S.M.A.R.T. goal for how many words per minute they want to achieve on the same passage of text. Students will record their first and final score. This will help students see and understand that by applying repeated reading their reading fluency scores improved. Students will also see that repeated reading will help them accomplish their self-set goal (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005).

Self-assessing allows students to plan, monitor and evaluate their progress. Burdon, Flowers, and Manchak (2011) concluded that, “self-assessment practices in the elementary classroom help students in the early development of becoming critical and reflective thinkers” (p. 4). When students create and monitor their goals, they are more interested in school and learning (Burdon et al., 2011). McChesney, Covey, and Huling (2012) showed that it is as important for students to determine their progress toward the goal, as it is to set the goal. When there is an appropriate way to measure students’ progress, their opportunity for success increases (McChesney et al., 2012).

Further research on students tracking their progress toward goals, showed that tracking was the most powerful tool in reaching goals because it enables students to see their growth (Marzano, 2017). Students are motivated by, and respond well to, seeing their personal growth. By measuring reading fluency, students can observe and self-assess their words per minute. Students should have a clear understanding of their learning target and self-assess their progress, resulting in them becoming more active in the learning process. Once students set and track their

goals, they need to work with a teacher to get feedback and determine how the student's fluency is progressing (Swain, 2005). Students cannot set and track goals alone, teacher support and feedback are necessary factors to affect academic achievement.

### **Teacher Support and Feedback**

Student goal setting success is increased by teacher support and feedback. Teachers support is provided through direct instruction on how to set goals, writing student goals down and providing feedback regarding student progression toward the goal (Lee, 2010). A regular meeting with students to measure and evaluate progress is vital to the goal setting process. Research has shown that students benefit the greatest when students set goals, assess progress and received feedback on a regular basis (Lee, 2010). Feedback is an essential piece of goal setting and can positively affect student progress.

Teacher feedback should be consistent in timing, for example meeting with student weekly or bi-weekly, specific and directly tied to the student's goal and learning target. Providing immediate and ongoing feedback can greatly affect student's motivation and encourage them to continue to work hard to move closer to their goal (Koenig, Eckert, & Heir, 2016). Feedback and support should be considerate and meaningful in order to motivate students. Consistent feedback allows the teacher to ensure that students are progressing toward their goals. Teachers can become aware of and help students overcoming any potential challenges. Ongoing feedback can maintain students' motivation and encourage them to keep moving toward their goal (Snyder, 2016). When a teacher provides a student with quality feedback, the student can become intrinsically motivated. According to Serravallo and Goldberg (2007), student conferences should start with the student's strengths, in order to set a positive tone where students see that their strengths are recognized. Starting meetings with student

strengths also creates an environment where students are willing to take risks (Serravallo & Goldberg, 2007).

Dean, Hubbell and Pitler (2012) provided four recommendations for how to provide feedback to create a classroom that supports learning.

- 1- Provide feedback that addresses what is correct and elaborate on what students need to do next.
- 2- Provide feedback appropriately in time to meet students' needs.
- 3- Provide feedback that is criterion referenced.
- 4- Engage students in the feedback process.

(Dean et al., 2012)

Weekly meeting with teachers ensures that students' progress can be monitored, and students can receive feedback on their growth toward their goal or lack thereof (Snyder, 2016). Students should make short-term attainable goals to be measured while progressing toward a long-term goal. By allowing students to take ownership of their progress with support and guidance, teachers are supporting student's academic growth and achievement (Koenig et al., 2016). There is a positive impact of including students in their individual growth and goal setting. By involving students in the goal setting, assessment process, progress monitoring, and communication students are encouraged and confident. Setting and monitoring personal goals with teacher support benefits all students (Radar, 2005).

### **Increased Academic Achievement**

With the increasing pressure of meeting state standards, teachers are forced to come up with ways to not only motivate students but also produce higher academic achievement. Research shows that students who participate in goal setting in the classroom perform better

(Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012), but goal setting alone does not increase student academic achievement. However, goal setting in conjunction with goal tracking, teacher support and feedback, academic achievement can be greatly improved. Through the process of goal setting and tracking and teacher support and guidance, students are more likely to improve academic achievement (Radar, 2005). Students learning outcomes and whether they will push through challenging tasks is determined by their motivation, engagement and ability to self-assess their progress.

### **Conclusion**

Research has shown great success in involving students in goal setting (Locke & Latham, 2006). Students become engaged in their learning and care about their progress (Schunk & Mullen, 2013). Even greater results are shown when goal setting it in combination with progress tracking and assessing (Snyder, 2016). By adding teacher support and feedback, not only will students' academic achievement be higher, students will also be taught a skill that will help them be an active participate in their education. Students who are taught goal setting learn skills such as, decision making, assessment and problem solving, as well as how to develop a sense of control and ownership over their education (Radar, 2005).

### **Question**

How does conferring with students to set goals, track goals and provide feedback improve student achievement in oral reading fluency?

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback on oral reading fluency. The objective was to determine if setting a self-made goal and

meeting weekly with the researcher to goal track and to receive feedback would influence students' oral reading fluency achievement.

## **Methodology**

### **Design**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback on oral reading fluency. This study used a classroom action research approach in which the researcher collected data about second grade students reading fluency (Hendricks, 2017). Data was collected to determine the results of the study. Data consisted of words per minute scores on a unit with no goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback compared to a words per minute scores on a unit with student set goals, weekly goal tracking, and feedback. The following research question guided the study: How does conferring with students to set goals, track goals and provide feedback improve student achievement in oral reading fluency?

### **Context**

The study was conducted at a suburban elementary school in the Pacific Northwest. The school has 600 students enrolled and 43 classroom teachers. The average classroom has 21 students. The elementary school is made up 56% White students, 17.2% Hispanic, 2.7% African American, 6.2% Asian, 15.8% two or more races, .3% American Indian and 1.8% Pacific Islander. The population at the school is made up of 44.7% female students and 55.3% male students. Students who come from low-income homes make up 39.3% of the school population. There are 6% of students who are English Language Learners. The student population has 7% of students on a 504 plan and 17.8% who have a disability. The school has 16.3% students who have military parents.

The school was built in 1964 and sits on 15.7 acres of land. The school building is 47,005 square feet and includes 31 instructional classrooms, a gym and 12 portable classrooms. The school is designed into wings that are connected by outdoor covered pathways. The play area outside has a covered play shed, two big toy areas, a larger field and a track.

### **Participants**

Participants were from a second grade classroom that the researcher completed student teaching in. The classroom consisted of 21 seven and eight year old students. There were 10 students were boys and 11 students were girls. Five students were on an Individual Education Plan and one student was an English Language Learner. Fourteen of the students were White, five were African American, one was Hispanic, and one was Asian.

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, the researcher received written organizational consent from the school administrator. The researcher then had the classroom teacher read a script to the students detailing the study. Students who granted their written consent to participate in the study were sent home with a letter from the researcher detailing the study and a consent form. The study was comprised of students who had a written consent to participate in the study from their caregiver and who had granted written consent to participate. The study was conducted to ensure that there was minimal risk to participants. Participants were permitted to leave the study at any point with no penalty. If a participant was impacted negatively by the study, they could talk with the school counselor, their classroom teacher, the school administrator or any other faculty needed. Student names were not used in the study.

All participants' confidentiality was protected. No identifying information about the participants was shared. Randomly assigned numbers were used instead of names. Data was not

released in any form that would release the identity of the participants. All data and documents were stored in securely locked file cabinet only accessible by the researcher. Electronic data were stored on a password-protected laptop. Throughout the study, only the researcher had access to participants' information, the data being collected, and any other related documentation.

### **Intervention**

The researcher collected baseline data of oral fluency reading over the course of four weeks. Student growth of words read per minute was measured from the first to last oral reading. This was done exactly as it was currently being done in the classroom. No goal setting, goal tracking or feedback was introduced.

The researcher did a whole group teaching on what goal setting is and how to set S.M.A.R.T. goals (Doran, 1981). Students were taught that goal setting is a strategy to set a self-made goal. The researcher informed students that research has shown that students who participate in goal setting in the classroom perform better (Moeller et al., 2012). Students were taught that S.M.A.R.T. goals are specific; the goal must target a specific area for improvement, measurable: the goal must have an indicator as to if you are successful, assignable; know who will be doing the goal, realistic; set a goal that is realistic to obtain with available resources, time; the goal is obtainable in the time allowed (Doran, 1981). Students did a first read for the unit and get a words per minute score. The researcher talked to individual student about setting a goal for him or herself. Research has shown that students work harder and have more motivation when the goal is personal to them (Dean et al., 2012). The researcher supported the student on setting a goal that meets S.M.A.R.T. goal criteria. Student goals were written down and kept in a secured folder for that student. According to Feith (2004), a study showed that students have

more success and are more committed to the goal, when they wrote their goal down. Thus, the students filled in a graph to document how many words per minute they read. The graph was kept securely in the student folder.

The researcher met individually with the students on a weekly basis to goal track their fluency progress. Students recorded, graphed and tracked their new words per minute score. Goal tracking has been shown to be the most powerful tool in reaching student goals because it enables them to see their growth (Marzano, 2017). Researcher provided feedback on student's progress or lack thereof. According to Lee (2010), students should receive continuous feedback and have discussions with the teacher/researcher to ensure that students are progressing toward their goal and to address any potential challenges. Quality feedback has the potential to maintain students' self-motivation and encourage them to make progress toward their goal.

Fluency reading passages, getting a word per minute score and goal tracking continued for the next two weeks. On week four, students did a final oral fluency read. Students got a final word per minute score and reflected on their progress and if they met their goal. Students tracked their goals and the researcher provided feedback. Student growth in the two fluency units was analyzed and compared to determine if goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback increased student achievement. All student data was kept in individualized folders and the folders were kept in a locked file cabinet.

The study was conducted for approximately ten weeks between January and March. The first two weeks the researcher obtained administrator consent to conduct the study, caregivers were sent a letter detailing the study and asked to sign the informed consent and researcher had teacher read script to explain study and obtain written consent from students. The following four weeks fluency unit words per minute read orally were obtained and recorded

(Appendix A). Student growth over the four-week unit was measured. The final four weeks, researcher taught the whole group about setting a S.M.A.R.T. goal for their oral fluency reading scores. Students set a goal (Appendix B), tracked progress toward goal (Appendix C) and researcher provided feedback (Appendix D). Words read per minute were obtained weekly. Student growth over the four-week unit was measured. Finally, student growth from the two fluency units was compared (Appendix E).

### **Data Gathering Instruments/Assessments**

The researcher measured student growth of two oral reading fluency scores. The first oral fluency reading was from a unit out of the National Geographic Reach for Reading curriculum (National Geographic Learning, Cengage Learning, 2019). The fluency unit lasted four weeks. During the four weeks students had a first reading where the researcher counted their words per minute (see Appendix A) and then asked students to read the fluency-reading passage again once a week. On week four the researcher got a final words per minute score on their final reading. Student growth was measured from the students first read to their final read in the fluency unit. At this time, no goal setting, goal tracking or feedback, were provided.

The next unit of oral fluency reading began with an initial read and words per minute were documented (see Appendix B). Students filled in a graph to show how many words per minute they read (see Appendix C). The researcher talked with the student to discuss setting a word per minute goal for the unit's fluency read. Students set a goal of words per minute with teacher support. Students wrote down their goal of words per minute accurately read on the fluency unit (see Appendix B).

Students met weekly with the researcher to reread the fluency passage. Students tracked their goal and graphed their progress. Researcher provided support and feedback on student

progress (see Appendix D). Student and researcher discussed their progress or lack thereof and what changes could be made. This process continued for four weeks. On week four, the final read, students recorded their final words per minute, reflected on their progress and whether they met their goal. Researcher provided feedback to student.

Students' fluency scores from the first unit, where goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback were not provided were compared to the fluency scores from the second unit that used goals setting, goal tracking and researcher feedback (see Appendix E). The researcher collected data by collecting words per minute graph. The data that were collected during the study include,

- Baseline data from first fluency unit without goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback (Appendix A).
- Goal worksheet: student set goal (Appendix B).
- Graph: goal tracking words per minute on fluency read (Appendix C).
- Student progress toward the goal worksheet with researcher's written feedback (Appendix D).
- Study Results (Appendix E).

Validity: In accordance with Hendricks (2017) to maintain internal validity, the following measures were taken.

- Fluency passages were used from the same curriculum the class has been using all year. The fluency passages were the same for each student and were from two consecutive units in the curriculum.
- Using two fluency units and two sets of data strengthened the validity. One unit was used to provide baseline data and one was used with goal-setting interventions.

- The study was completed over the course of ten weeks so that two fluency units could be covered at the same rate of time and so that there was enough time to ensure that all data was collected.
- Goal setting studies have been found to have high reliability and high validity (Locke & Latham, 2002).

In accordance with Hendricks (2017) to maintain external validity, the following measures were taken.

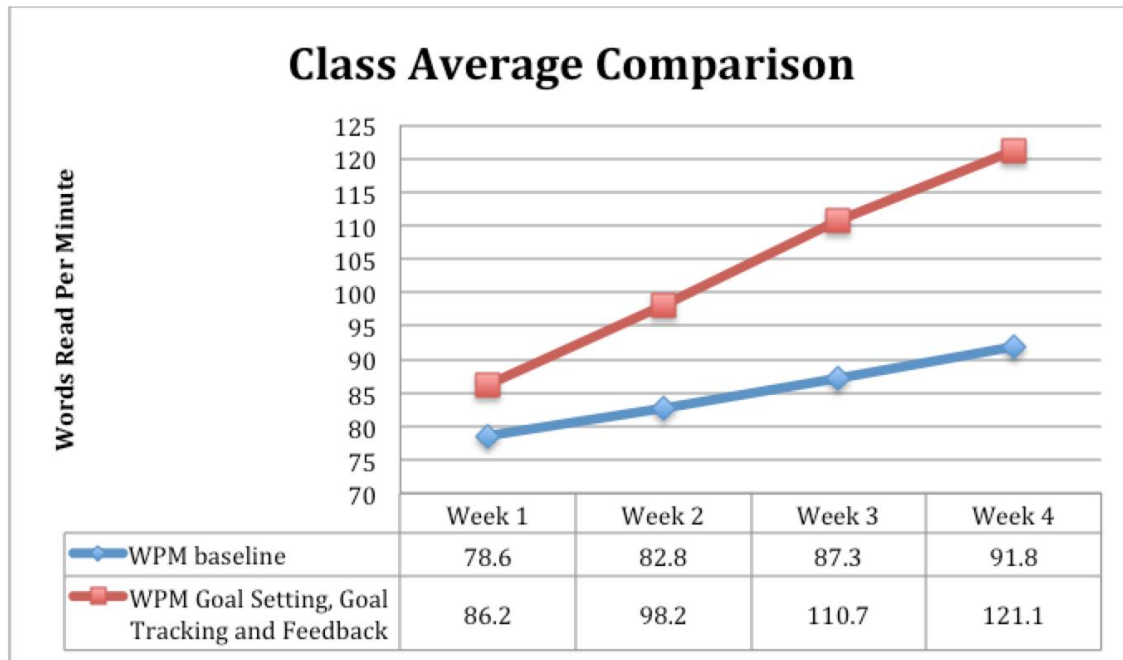
- The population of the study consisted of 11 females and 10 males.
- The population of the group consisted of a wide range of ethnicity; White, Hispanic, Asian and African American.
- The population of the study consisted of highly capable identified, average and below average students.
- Weekly progress tracking and meeting to provide feedback were done with the same researcher to maintain the studies validity.
- Data collection was kept in individual student folders and locked in a file cabinet.

### **Results**

This study used qualitative data to determine how conferring with students to set goals, track goals and provide feedback effects student achievement in oral reading fluency. The sample was comprised of twenty-one second grade students: 11 females and 10 males. At the conclusion of the eight-week study, the growth of words the class read per minute orally was calculated. The class averages of words read per minute each week were compared (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Comparison of Class WPM Reading Growth in Baseline Data v. with Goal Setting, Goal Tracking, and Feedback Data*



Baseline data (see Appendix A) and data collected from fluency reads with goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback (see Appendix B) were compared. The baseline data showed that the class average increased the number of words read orally per minute from 78.6 in week one to 91.8 in week four. This was an increase of 13.2 words per minute read orally. When using goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback the class average increased the number of words read orally per minute from 86.2 in week one to 121.1 in week four. This was an increase of 34.9 words per minute read orally. The class read an average of 21.7 more words per minute orally when goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback were provided.

Data collected from the study (see Table 2) showed 15 out of 18 students increased the percentage of words read per minute when goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback were used compared to baseline data.

Table 2

*Comparison of WPM Student Reading Growth  
Baseline Data v. Goal Setting, Goal Tracking, and Feedback Data*

<b>Student</b>	<b>Baseline (wpm gain)</b>	<b>With goals (wpm gain)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
1	8	9	(-) 1%
2	8	30	(+) 30%
3	18	63	(+) 32%
4	3	9	(+) 17%
5			No data
6	14	38	(+) 21%
7	17	56	(+) 24%
8	7	10	(+) 4%
9	1	43	(+) 37 %
10	16	42	(+) 24%
11	7	20	(+) 30%
12			No data
13	11	42	(+) 39%
14	6	18	(+) 31%
15	20	19	(-) 8%
16	40	74	(+) 30%
17	10	45	(+) 63%
18	7	19	(+) 11%
19	27	29	(-) 6%
20	18	36	(+) 12%
21			No data

The fluency unit using goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback revealed that 15 students increased words read per minute, ranging from 4% to 63% higher than the baseline data. Three students had greater growth in words per minute read orally in baseline data versus the unit that applied goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback.

### **Discussion**

#### **Conclusions**

Based on the study's results, the researcher was able to confirm that conferring with students to set goals, track goals and provide feedback, students improved their oral reading

fluency scores. Baseline data showed how many words per minute read orally the class gained during the four-week unit without any interventions. The class gained 13.2 words per minute read orally over the four-week period. When goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback were introduced to the following four-week period, students showed an increase of 34.9 words per minute read orally. The outcome showed that by conferring with students to set goals, track goals and provide feedback, students orally read more words per minute during four weeks. Introducing goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback had a positive effect on student's oral fluency words read per minute.

### **Implications**

Reading fluency provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension (Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Students who do not develop reading fluency have weak reading comprehension skills (Stevens, 2006). By increasing students' ability to read more words per minute orally, students will have greater ability to comprehend what they are reading. Fluent readers spend less time decoding words and can focus on the content of the text (Jefferson et al., 2017). The connection between reading fluency and reading comprehension, places a high value on students' achievement in reading fluency.

Implementing goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback has a positive effect on students reading fluency, and consequently will positively effect students' ability to comprehend what they are reading. It is important to master reading fluency in early grades so that students can fully comprehend the text they read in higher grades. Due to the effect that reading fluency has on reading comprehension, it is vital that we provide strategies for students to increase students' oral reading fluency.

Students were more engaged during oral reading when self-made goals were defined. Research showed that goal setting engaged students in their learning and that they cared about their progress (Schunk & Mullen, 2013). The study confirmed that when students set goals, they were more engaged in the process and therefore scored higher. When meeting with students, they would often start with telling the researcher their goal, showing where their goal was on the fluency passage and how many more words they would have to read to meet their goal.

Students transferred what they learned about goal setting in oral reading fluency to other subject areas such as, math fluency and sight words. The class was working on math fluency and sight words the same time the study was being conducted and countless times, students would talk about their goals in those subject areas to the researcher, teacher and other students. Based on the results of the study, the researcher confirmed that goal setting is a skill that when taught and applied, can be transferred to other areas of participants education. Students who are taught goal setting learn skills such as, decision making, assessment and problem solving, as well as how to develop a sense of control and ownership over their education (Radar, 2005).

The students often asked if they could read the fluency passage again after the first fluency read. Students desire to repeat the reading showed that they had become more interested in reading for fluency and were more engaged and interested in the outcome. While gathering baseline data, zero students asked to reread the fluency passage.

After reviewing the students' fluency goal and the one-minute fluency read, students recorded their words read per minute on their goal tracking form. Students were able to see how many more words per minute they read compared to the previous week. This also allowed students to track their progress toward their self-made fluency goal. When there is an

appropriate way to measure students' progress, their opportunity for success increases (McChesney et al., 2012).

Providing time for feedback allowed the students to reflect on their progress and directed them on what to work on to increase their fluency. Ongoing feedback can maintain students' motivation and encourage them to keep moving toward their goal (Snyder, 2016). During feedback, the researcher pointed out words that either were missed or read incorrectly, so that they could be corrected and continue to move close to their goal. The feedback time additionally allowed the researcher to compliment and encourage each student's fluency progress.

### **Limitations**

There were several limitations. First, the data collected did not show students' accuracy in their reading fluency. The data only showed words that were correctly read in one minute. Secondly, the study was limited to one school and one second grade class. The results were limited in how the interventions would affect students in various grades, schools and demographics. Finally, while 21 students participated, data was only tracked for 18 students. Three students spent much of the day in the special education room and due to absences, behavioral issues and scheduling conflicts, consistent data could not be obtained. A researcher would need a much larger population of students to implement goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback to determine if the study could be generalized.

### **Recommendations**

There are four recommendations to improve the design of this study. First, I recommend meeting bi-weekly to test students' fluency and assess their progress toward their goal instead of meeting weekly. Each fluency meeting includes talking about students' self-made goal, a one-minute fluency read, tracking their goal, recording their goal and providing feedback. This puts

a time constraint on teachers who are trying to implement the goal setting, goal tracking, and feedback strategies.

Secondly, I recommend allowing students to do their fluency read three times during each meeting with the teacher rather than once. This would make the meeting two-minutes longer, but they would meet less often, which would result in less time being spent on the fluency testing. By reading the fluency passage more than once, students could result in a greater increase of words read per minute.

Thirdly, I recommend future research include measuring the rate of accuracy. I recommend teaching the words that were missed on the first reading and then allowing the student to read again a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> time. This change would allow students to see how their scores and accuracy increased immediately, rather than having to wait a week.

Finally, further research is needed to see if using goal setting, goal tracking and teacher feedback during oral reading fluency would improve reading fluency results in other elementary grades, beyond second grade.

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**Appendix A****Baseline Fluency Scores**

Student Fluency WPM (no goal setting, goal tracking or feedback)	
	Words Per Minute
Week 1	
Week 2	
Week 3	
Week 4	
WPM Growth (week 4 - week 1)	

**Appendix B**

**Student Set Goal**

Fluency Unit_____	WPM Goal:
My Beginning of the unit fluency score:	
Week 2 Fluency score:	
Week 3 Fluency score:	
My end of the unit fluency score:	
How do you feel about your fluency progress in this unit?	

**Appendix C**

**Goal Tracking**

# My Fluency Graph

150				
145				
140				
135				
130				
125				
120				
115				
110				
105				
100				
95				
90				
85				
80				
75				
70				
65				
60				
55				
50				
45				
40				
35				
30				
25				
20				
15				
10				
5				
0				
WPM				
	<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Week 4</b>

**Appendix D**

**Feedback**

<b><u>Weekly Fluency Feedback</u></b>	WPM Goal:
WPM	Teacher feedback:
Week 1:	
Week 2:	
Week 3:	
Week 4:	

**Appendix E**

**Results**

<b>Study Results</b>		
	<b>WPM Growth</b>	<b>Percent of Growth</b>
Baseline Growth (unit A WPM growth)		
Growth with Goal Setting, Goal Tracking and Feedback (unit B WPM growth)		
Increase in WPM with goal setting, goal tracking and feedback compared to baseline data (Unit B minus Unit A)		