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The Effects of Teacher-Made Books on Preschoolers Choosing the Book Area

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Abstract

The purpose of this action research study was to determine the effect of teacher-made books on preschoolers choosing the book area during free choice time. The research setting was an ECEAP classroom in a rural public school in Eastern Washington. The participants included 11 three and four-year-old students in an inclusive preschool program. Quantitative data compared student behaviors in the book area collected through video observation during pre- and post-intervention times. The study found adding teacher-made books, which included photographs of the students, to the book area had a positive impact on children choosing the book area during free choice time. The researcher recommends further studies be conducted, including increased sample size, length of study, and number of classrooms involved in order to further validate the results of the action research.

The Effect of Teacher-Made Books on Preschoolers Choosing the Book Area

High quality preschool classrooms provide a free choice time for their students. Free choice time is a set amount of time, often between 45 and 60 minutes. During free choice time students experiment, explore, and inquire as they initiate their own play-based learning activities. "Free choice time is a uniquely important space in the preschool day for authentic play experiences for children" (Paulick, 2019, p. 2). Teachers create a variety of defined learning areas for the students to engage in during free choice time, such as an art area, dramatic play area, block area, and book area. Different learning activities and materials are selected and prepared on a daily or weekly basis for the students to use during free choice time. Because teachers focus on working with students to reach expected learning outcomes during free choice time, the defined learning areas are intentionally structured to provide opportunities for children to meet learning standards (Phajane, 2019).

All states in the United States have an English Language Arts preschool teaching and learning standard to address literacy. One-way teachers assess children on meeting learning outcomes is through the Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) assessment system. The TSG objectives are aligned with state preschool teaching and learning standards (Heroman, 2010). There are five TSG literacy objectives, with twelve different literacy dimensions, with which to rate children on throughout the year. One of the TSG literacy dimensions is the ability to use and appreciate books. For children to have met the literacy outcome, they must be able to demonstrate an ability to use and appreciate books. This is a learning standard serves as a foundation for lifelong reading.

The ability to use and appreciate books is an outcome a preschool aged child should reach by the time they exit preschool according to the TSG literacy objectives (Heroman, 2010).

Teachers can determine whether the children have met the outcome when they observe children choosing the book area, and books to look at. Giving them the choice to look at books promotes ownership and intrinsic motivation (Sanacore, 2012). Children will see the value of dedicating their time and effort in reading once they are encouraged to think of reading as a benefit (McRae & Guthrie, 2009).

Teachers may have limited data on whether their students are using and appreciating books, if children do not choose the book area during free choice time. "Poor attitudes toward reading, even for good readers, frequently result in student's decision to engage in activities other than reading when given a choice among a menu of activities" (Martinez et al., 2008, p. 1011). It is important for children to want to look at books during free choice time because it helps foster a lifelong love for reading. Educators who promote the lifetime reading habit increase the likelihood children will not only become skilled readers but will also engage in reading for the rest of their lives (Sanacore, 2002). Due to the limited occasions students are choosing the book area during free choice time, this literature review will concentrate on the book area design, pleasure reading, visual texts, and culturally relevant book selections as these elements may influence whether students demonstrate an ability to use and appreciate books. This action research project investigates the effect of adding teacher-made books, featuring photographs of the students, into the book area as a way to influence student's choices during free choice time.

Literature Review

There are many research-based educational practices which support emerging literacy. Literacy instruction in preschool often has a heavy focus on teaching skills emphasizing phonological and phonemic awareness. Teaching reading skills alone is not a guarantee a

student will develop into an accomplished and motivated reader (Gambrell, 2015). Preschool

teachers must also teach their children to use and appreciate books by creating an environment

that supports literacy exploration. The purpose of this literature review is to investigate how the

literacy environment in a preschool classroom supports children in developing the reading habit.

Preschool teachers play a critical role to ensure a literacy-enriched environment succeeds in

promoting the desire to use and appreciate books.

Book Area Design

Researchers have identified specific environmental features of the classroom literacy

area, such as access to literacy materials and a range of sufficient literacy resources (Roskos &

Neuman, 2011) to influence young children's literacy development. The literacy materials

should be placed at the eye and hand level of the students, and the bookshelf should be well

stocked for many opportunities for interactions with books. Some specific features included in a

high-quality classroom library are to offer books relating to the current classroom theme, as well

as a variety of genres including interactive flap books, rhyming stories, and alphabet, shape, and

number concept books (Justice, 2006). The various books must be organized in a way to inform

and involve the readers in discovery and exploration. Organization requires the literacy

materials are arranged purposefully, so to catch the students' awareness and not only maintain it

but guide it in new directions (Roskos & Neuman, 2011).

The preschool classroom literacy environment influences children's interactions with

literacy-related materials (Wolfersberger et al., 2004). Cunningham (2010) investigated both the

physical environment and instructional practices to determine optimal support for literacy

development in preschools. One of Cunningham's findings "would indicate improvement in

literacy environment quality could have a positive impact on literacy development" (2010).

Some preschool classrooms received an "exemplary" rating for providing a learning environment to support literacy development in Cunningham's study. Those "exemplary" classrooms displayed qualitative data recommending preschool teachers create an exclusive book area in the classroom as well as consider the book selections, ensuring a variety of books and an abundance of books be available for the children. This data suggests by providing children a book area, with many picture books and ample time to look through them (Strickland & Shanahan, 2004), they will develop the abilities to use and appreciate books during free choice time.

Reading for Pleasure

Preschool teachers provide a literacy environment when they create a book area in the classroom specifically for pleasure reading during free choice time. "Encouraging the love of reading and the development of the reading habit is a challenging process for the classroom teacher and requires thoughtful attention to creating and implementing reading instruction built upon principles of motivation" (Gambrell, 2015, p. 262). A love of books can be encouraged by offering a free choice time. Children can browse the classroom book area without being rushed and to choose materials well-matched with their reading and interest levels (Sanacore, 2002). As children choose to engage with the books in the book area, they demonstrate the act of reading for pleasure, which is associated with book appreciation. Pleasure reading is a deliberate activity, and the importance of the reader's sense of interest, motivation, and engagement in the process must be recognized (Kucirkova et al., 2017). Intrinsically motivated readers are more likely to read for their own enjoyment and have a positive self-concept as a reader (Cox & Guthrie, 2001; McGeown et al., 2012; Wang & Guthrie, 2004).

A survey looking at reading motivation (Scholastic, 2015) and children's reading habits revealed several predictors about reading development in frequent readers. First, frequent

readers participated during independent reading to a greater extent during the school day than did less frequent readers. Only 33% of students stated their class had a designated time during the school day to read a book of their choice, and 17% stated their class engaged in independent reading almost daily (Gambrell, 2015).

The 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results show average reading scores for fourth and eighth grade students are higher at both grades compared to the first reading assessment in 1992. Although these findings show growth in reading achievement, children's motivation for reading is alarmingly low. A 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress survey of fourth graders showed 65% of students did not have reading as a favorite activity, 73% of students did not read frequently for enjoyment, and 59% of students stated they did not believe they learned very much when reading books (Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005). In 2001, a sample of fourth graders from 35 countries were rated on student motivation for reading (Mullis, Martin, Gonzales, & Kennedy, 2003). Students from the United States were ranked in 33rd place. These ratings suggest the desire to read may be supported by providing time to pleasure read during the school day.

Another study encouraging the need for classroom free reading time found when teachers provided extensive opportunities to read, students' amount of engaged reading increased for fourth graders (Guthrie, Schafer, & Chun-Wei, 2001). However, their findings showed students who did not respond to the opportunity to read by becoming more engaged did not show increases in reading achievement, indicating the opportunity to read does not directly increase achievement for fourth graders. Therefore, it appears teachers would be well advised to provide both a high level of reading instruction and a high level of opportunity to read, according to Guthrie, Schafer, and Chun-Wei (2001).

Visual Text

To further influence student engagement with books during free choice time, preschool teachers should consider the imagery in the picture books when selecting books for the book area. The role of illustrations in picture books is to allure children to read and interact with the story (Fang, 1996). Sometimes illustrations in books can be more powerful than the sentences, especially to children who are just beginning to develop their worldviews and cannot read yet (Bronson, 2016). A study by Evans, Saint-Aubin, & Landry (2009) investigated the manner to which kindergarten aged children looked at print and picture components of pages in an alphabet book. Researchers gave each child pages with four various zones featuring a capital letter always in the upper top left corner, a word printed in capital letters, beginning with the featured letter, an illustration of the word, and a panda bear. Eye movement data determined the children fixated on the illustration zone first on 84% of the pages shown. Their analysis shows the illustrations in the heavily print-salient book were more compelling, holding proportionately more of the child's focus (Evans, Saint-Aubin, & Landry, 2009).

Another pilot study showed preliminary findings preschool aged children rarely look at print when being read picture books. Justice and Lankford (2002) looked at the eye gaze of a few preschool aged participants while showing them scanned pages from children's books displaying vivid illustrations. Justice and Lankford found preschool children rarely attend to the print when looking at storybooks. They found children's fixations in the zones of print accounted for, on average, only 4% of the total fixations per storybook reading, with time spent in print areas accounting for only 2.5% of total visual attention (Justice & Lankford, 2002). This research addresses the gravity of the visual text over the written text when selecting books for the book area. It is important teachers have an awareness to the message conveyed between the

interaction of print, images, and the reader, given the influential role illustrations hold in children's literature (Fang, 1996). The visual text may be a key feature in getting children to choose the book area and engage with books during free choice time.

Specific visual text, representing human story characters, may have an even more profound influence on children choosing books during free choice time, than other visual text subject matter. Characters in visual text need specific traits to make them appealing to the young reader, as well as characters portraying situations and emotions immediately familiar and credible to the children (Fang, 1996). The way in which story characters are depicted may not only increase book interest, but it may also influence the ability of how a child learns the meaning of a story and capability to transfer the meaning to their own lives. One study found 4 and 5-year-olds identified with a story's theme more, if the visual texts featured human characters over rabbit characters (Kotaman & Balci, 2017). The findings also showed the participants from the study scored higher on story comprehension questions after viewing the human character story over the participants who viewed the rabbit character story.

Larsen, Lee, and Ganea (2018) investigated whether human characters were superior for teaching 4 to 6-year-old children the concept of sharing over animal characters with human traits. The study found the participants who looked at the story about sharing, using human characters, shared stickers with others significantly more than the children who viewed the sharing story with a raccoon character. It may be suggested children who did not learn from the moral theme of sharing had a lack of identification with the characters (Larsen, Lee, & Ganea, 2018). The children learned the moral message of sharing when they saw themselves in the book. "Books are windows, but also mirrors. We often can relate to most any story in some way, however, if we cannot connect to the illustrations that do not mirror us, we will become

apathetic to stories" (Bronson, 2016, p. 28). Books intentionally selected to teach moral issues, as well as cultural awareness, can be used to develop culturally responsive classrooms (Wanless & Crawford, 2016).

Culturally Responsive Literature

Reading motivation is also positively impacted when teachers move beyond the scope of selecting books with visual texts representing human characters, to selecting books with culturally relevant characters in the visual texts. Children may choose to look at books more when they relate and connect to the story characters who look like them. Research suggests reading selections which are relevant to the real world will motivate children to develop reading habits (Gambrell, 2015). Ladson-Billings (1995) defines culturally relevant teaching (CRT) as a style of instruction which melds students' cultural backgrounds and environments in the classroom as the teaching helps students make meaningful connections to academic content while affirming their identities. In addition, culturally relative books may be a vehicle for fostering academic success by providing relevant content to students (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Two areas embody the foundation of CRT in an early childhood setting: providing multicultural literature and culturally responsive print rich environments (Bennett et al., 2018). It is unlikely children will develop a love of reading when they rarely encounter characters similar to themselves (Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001). Books are relevant and motivating when they reflect the beliefs and values prevalent to the childhood experiences of the students make up the classroom (Wanless & Crawford, 2016).

When children have opportunities to read material relevant to their lives, they are more apt to become engaged and proficient readers (Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006). Children need to see themselves and others in the books they read, and if children never see

themselves in books, they receive the message books are not for them (Boyd et al., 2015). To

decrease these frustrations, it is important for teachers to offer books which allow the children to

imagine themselves in the story. Cartledge et al. (2016) conducted a study to investigate student

preferences and story passages written to reflect the students' cultural and racial backgrounds. A

total of 24 second grade and 26 first grade Black students from low socioeconomic status

participated in the study. Each student was given research generated, culturally relevant,

passages to read over an eight-day period. Characters, plots, settings, and themes were selected

after consulting with a children's literacy authority on constituting culturally relevant literature.

One of the variables measured by student response was how well the story was liked.

Once the student rated the story, they were asked to explain what they liked or did not like about

the story. A total of 1,500 passages were rated, and only 7% of the culturally relevant stories

were rated "not good" (Cartledge et al., 2016). The number one category for liking a passage

was self-identity or the tendency to identify with the passage. The number one reason for the

few times a passage was given a low rating was because of the lack of identity. Self-identity was

a major influence and, in some ways, may be understood as the principle of cultural relevance

(Cartledge et al., 2016). The study concluded teachers of young readers with varying cultural

backgrounds and limited life experiences need to intentionally provide exposure to books with

relevant interests to their students. Getting all children to read, regardless of the setting and

cultural heritage, is the eventual goal (Cartledge et al., 2016).

Marciano et al.'s project (2017 used an American wordless picture book, *Where's

Walrus?* (Savage, 2011), to inspire a global connection with Italian students by combining the

power of the visual text with exploration of another culture. The children used only the visual

text to comprehend the story. The pictures in the book were effective in connecting the Italian

students with the American teachers through understandings of people and places. "Even though

we lived in two different cultures, this book became the way for us to learn about one another's

cultures, providing us with commonalities" (Marciano et al., 2017, p. 267). Based on this project

and the Cartledge et al. (2016) study, it is evident culturally responsive literature has the ability

to successfully motivate children to use and appreciate books when they feel engaged and

connected to the books.

Need for Research

This literature review identified elements to be considered when intrinsically

motivating preschool students to engage in the classroom library. This topic area is important as

it influences the choices children make during free choice time, so children choose to pleasure

read. From this review, it appears children need a designated area with ample time to look at

books which feature visual texts displaying culturally relevant characters as effective in creating

engaged and self-motivated readers who develop the lifetime reading habit.

Two main purposes of literacy instruction are to increase reading skill and promote

reading enjoyment, however schools do not spend enough time promoting reading as an

important recreational activity (Martinez et al., 2008). Few studies have explored implicit

models of reading which focus on the underlying affective beliefs influencing reading behaviors

(Martinez et al., 2008). The primary purpose of this action research project is to investigate the

effect of teacher-made books on preschoolers choosing the book area. Specifically, this action

research project utilizes the idea of culturally relevant human characters in the visual text, by

using the photographs of the actual students in the classroom. The student photographs will be

the visual texts for the teacher-made books which students can access in the book area during

free choice time. Due to the potential benefit of using culturally relevant human characters in

books as indicated by research, as well as providing a book area and ample time to pleasure read, the research using teacher-made books needs to be conducted to determine if it is an effective tool for increasing student use and appreciation of books during free choice time.

Methods

Participants

Participants were 11 preschool children who were enrolled in an inclusive half day preschool program. The preschool was affiliated with the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) in the state of Washington. The ECEAP classroom was a state funded preschool housed in a rural school district. A total of 11 children from the classroom participated in the teacher-made book intervention. Among all participants, caregiver consent was provided to video record the children while in the book area and take photographs of the children. The preschool program in which the children were enrolled all had targeted enrollment policies, in which enrollment was intended for children exhibiting some sort of risk, typically based on household income, and/or identified disability. Ninety-one percent of the children resided in a household at or below the federal poverty level. The other 9% of the children qualified for the program because they required special education. Seventy-three percent of the children were 4-year-olds, and the rest of the children were 3-year-olds. Just more than half, or 55% of the children were male. In terms of race, 64% of children were White, 27% were Hispanic, and 9% were African American.

Data Collection

The action research conducted was to determine if adding teacher-made books, featuring actual photographs of the students, into the book area could increase students' choosing the book area during free choice time. This procedure was implemented over the course of 6

weeks, 3 weeks before winter break, and 3 weeks following winter break. The first 3 weeks included collecting pre-intervention data on 4 days during the week. The following 3 weeks involved implementation of the teacher-made books on 4 days during the week. Quantitative data was collected prior to the intervention of adding teacher-made books to the book area during free choice time. Specific behaviors exhibited by the preschool children in the book area was video recorded. Behaviors were analyzed included which children chose to go to the book area during free choice time, how many books the child looked at while in the book area, and the amount of time the child spent in the book area. These behaviors were observed during a 45-minute free choice time. During this time, children are allowed to come and go into the book area as they choose.

The first 4 days of pre-intervention data collection took place during the first week in December. Before the children were excused for free choice time, the teacher researcher told the children there was a new alphabet book in the book area. The teacher researcher showed the children the cover of the book, stated it was an alphabet book, and placed it in the book area, among other books, before excusing the children for free choice time.

During the second week of December, pre-intervention data was collected for another 4 days. The teacher researcher told the children a new number book would be added in the book area. The children were shown the cover of the book, informed it was a number book, and the book was added to the book area, before the children were excused for free choice time.

The final 4 days of pre-intervention data was collected during the week before winter break. The children were shown a shape book. The teacher researcher showed the children the cover of the book, told them it was a book about shapes, and placed it in the book area with the other books, before excusing the children for free choice time.

The teacher researcher video recorded the children while in the book area during those 3 weeks, specifically collecting data on which students chose the book area, how many books were looked at, and the length of time the children stayed in the book area. During this time, the teacher researcher took photographs of the children during free choice time for the teacher-made books.

Data was then collected post-intervention by the teacher researcher. The 3-week intervention of placing teacher-made books, the independent variable, into the book area was implemented. The children were video recorded in the book area during the 45-minute block of free choice time. The same specific book area behaviors were observed as those observed during the pre-intervention phase.

 The first 4 days of intervention data collection took place during the first week in January, after returning from winter break. Before the children were excused for free choice time, the teacher researcher told the children there was a new alphabet book in the book area made using the children's photographs. The children were shown the cover of the book, told it was a teacher-made alphabet book, and placed in the book area, among other books, before the children were excused for free choice time.

During the second week of January, intervention data was collected for another 4 days. The teacher researcher told the children a new number book, which was teacher-made using their photographs, would be added to the book area. The teacher researcher showed the children the cover of the book, stated it was a number book, and added it to the book area, before excusing the children for free choice time.

The last 4 days of intervention data was collected during the third week in January.

The children were shown a shape book which the teacher researcher made using photographs of

the children. The teacher researcher showed the children the cover of the book, told them it was

a book about shapes, and placed it in the book area with the other books, before excusing the

children for free choice time.

The teacher researcher video recorded the children while in the book area during those

3 weeks, specifically collecting data on which students chose the book area, how many books

were looked at, and the length of time the children spent looking at the books.

The dependent variable of change in the children's behavior was measured by

observing and tabulating the number of occurrences during their time in the book area. This

research is quantitative. The number of occurrences of behaviors supports the quantitative

research and will show a specific amount of increase or decrease. Quantitative data was

garnered while watching the video recording of student behavior in the book area during the pre

and post intervention.
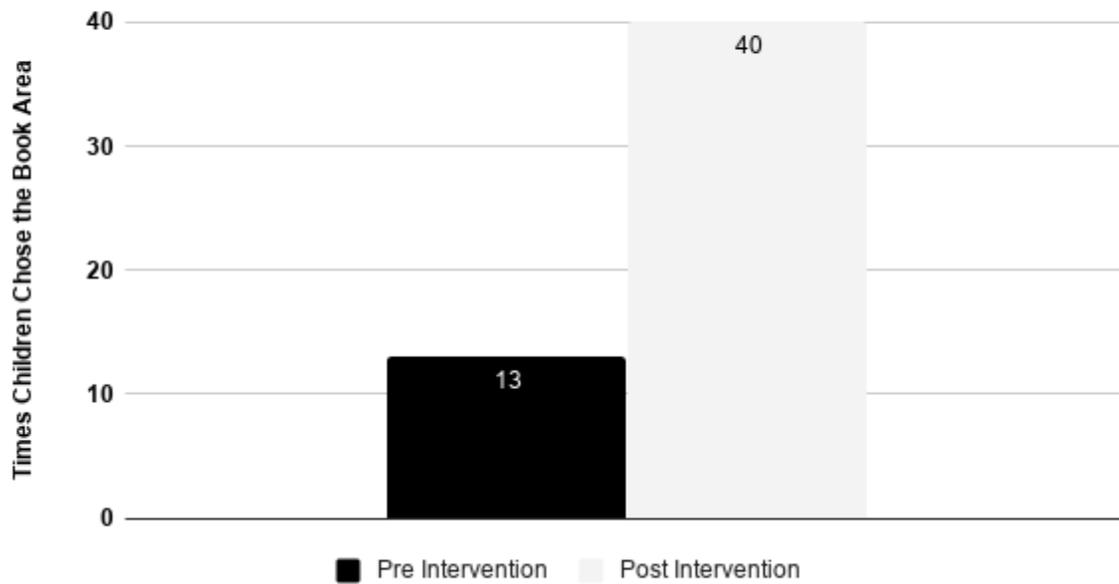
Findings

Data Analysis

For this action research project, comparison analysis was applied by collecting

quantitative data prior to the implementation of adding teacher-made books to the book area in

order to compare the findings after the children had access to the teacher-made books. The pre-

intervention data showed book area behaviors before the implementation of teacher-made books

were added to the book area. In general, the goal was to compare whether adding teacher-made

books to the book area would influence the children's behaviors in the book area. There was

minimal researcher bias in this action research study. Data was collected 4 days of the week for

6 weeks. The researcher tallied the amounts of time a child went into the book area during free

choice time, the quantity of books the child looked at while in the book area, and the amount of

time the child remained in the book area. The data was added to a Microsoft Word document

while watching video recordings of the children's book area behaviors.

       The quantitative data collected showed the three book area behaviors increased for the

class as a whole. The data collected from the pre and post interventions showed the class, as a

whole, increased the three book area behaviors being analyzed after teacher-made books were

added to the book area. The results demonstrated teacher-made books had a significant and

positive main effect on the use and appreciation of books for the class as a whole.

       Figure 1 compares the number of times all 11 children chose the book area before and

after the teacher-made books were added to the book area. The 3 weeks of the pre-intervention

period showed 11 children chose the book area on 13 separate occasions during free choice time.

After the teacher-made books were added to the book area for 3 weeks, the children chose the

book area on 27 more occasions than during the first 3 weeks, without the teacher-made books

present.

Figure 1

Whole Class Results of Choosing the Book Area During Free Choice Time


The findings in Figure 2 compare the relation among the pre-intervention and post-intervention results of the amount of books the children chose while in the book area. In analyzing the data in Figure 2, the results show the class as a whole viewed 48 more books in the same amount of time after the class made books were added to the book area.

Figure 2

Whole Class Results of Quantity of Books Viewed while in the Book Area
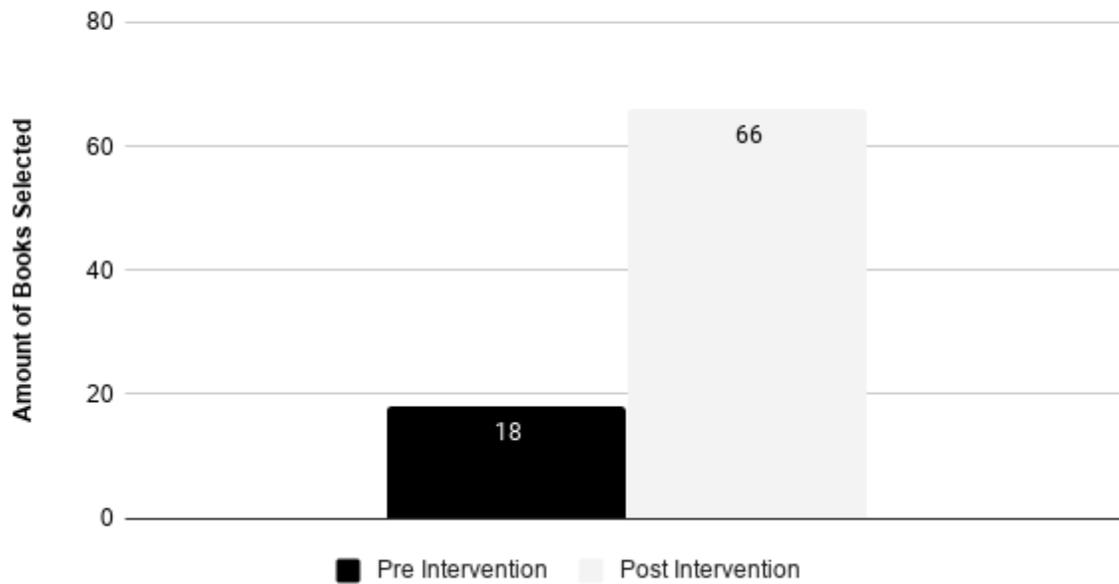
The third behavior considered the amount of time the children spent in the book area while viewing books. Figure 3 displays the pre-intervention and post-intervention rates of the 11 children. The results show, before the teacher-made books were present, children spent a total of 29 minutes in the book area over the initial 3 weeks. Once the teacher-made books were available to the children, the class as a whole spent 129.5 more minutes in the book area.
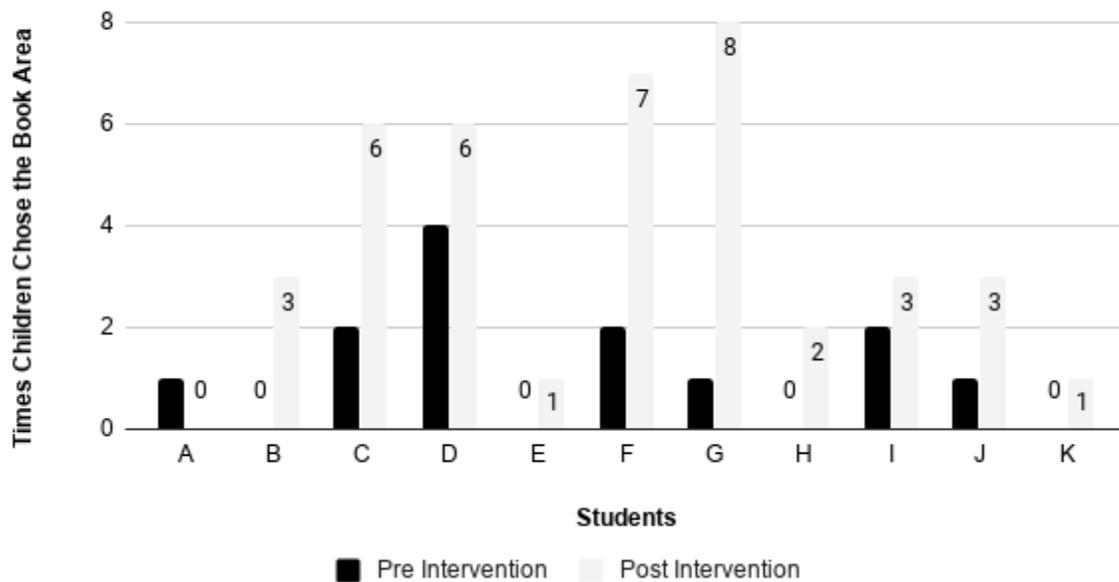
Figure 3

Whole Class Results of Time Spent in the Book Area During Free Choice Time
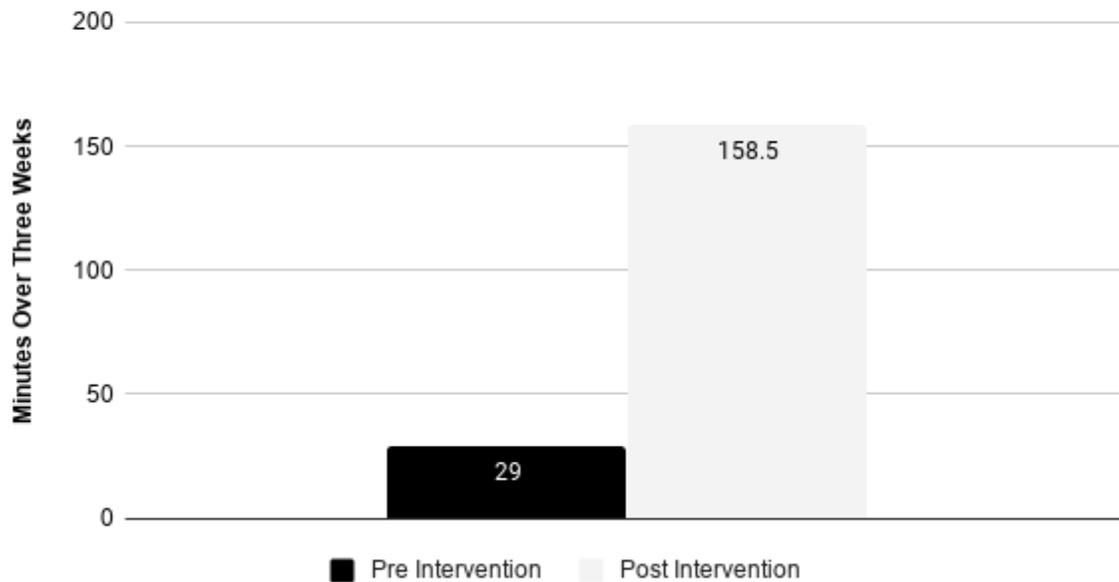
The number of occurrences of each of the three behaviors was individually recorded and totaled for all 11 children. This information can be found in Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 6. The black bar represents the total amounts during the pre-intervention. The open bar displays the post-intervention totals.

The results in Figure 4 demonstrate most of the children increased the amount of times they chose to visit the book area after the post-intervention of adding teacher-made books was implemented. Student A was the only student who did not show an increase in choosing the book area, as choosing the book area decreased by one occasion. The behavior of choosing the book area increased the most with Student G, as this student chose the book area on 7 more occasions after the teacher-made books were present. On average the children visited the book area 2.5 times more during the post-intervention observations.

Figure 4

*Choosing the Book Area During Free Choice Time Per Child*

The data in Figure 5 present the comparison results among the amounts of books the children viewed before and after the intervention. Most of the children increased the number of books they looked at while in the book area. Student A and Student I were the two students who did not increase the number of books used in the book area. Both students decreased the number of books they looked at by one book selection. Student G increased the number of books viewed by any other child, as Student G looked at 16 more books in the book area once teacher-made books were provided, compared to the first 3 weeks. On average the students increased the quantity of books viewed by four books after the teacher-made books were presented.

Figure 5

Quantity of Books Viewed Per Child
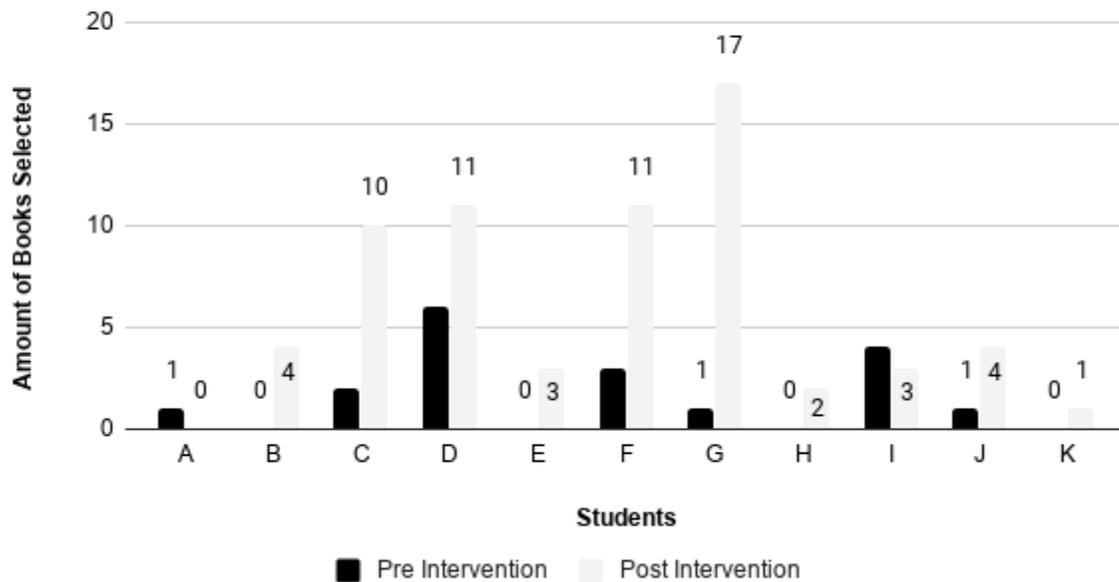
The data from the third behavior observed, minutes spent in the book area, is represented in Figure 6. The pre-intervention and post-intervention times are displayed for each child during the 3 week trial of data collection. The findings show most of the children increased the amount of time they spent in the book area. Student A was the only student who showed a decrease in the amount of time spent in the book area, by 1.5 minutes, after the teacher-made books were added to the book area. There was no change in time spent in the book area for Student I. Student G showed the largest increase, 38 minutes, in the amount of minutes spent in the book over 3 weeks time, once teacher-made books were provided. Data shows, on average, the children increased the time they spent in the book area by 12 minutes when they could look at teacher-made books.

Figure 6

Time Spent in the Book Area During Free Choice Time Per Child

Pre Intervention   Post Intervention
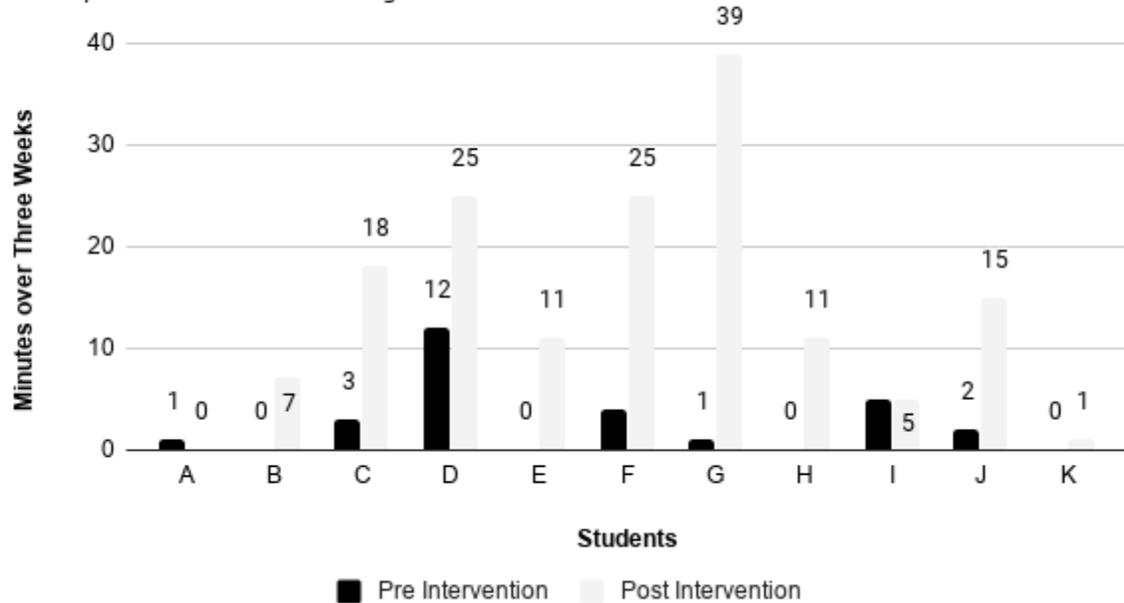
Discussion

Summary of Major Findings

The findings of this action research suggest adding teacher-made books, which include photographs of the students, can help increase the number of times children choose the book area, the amount of time children spend in the book area, and the amount of books children look at while in the book area during free choice time. The findings suggest most children showed an increase in the three book behaviors: choosing the book area, selecting books, and time in the book area after the teacher-made books were added. The data also supports the three book behaviors for the whole class increased in all three observed behaviors. Results show 82% of the children exhibited an increase in book usage and time spent in the book area once teacher-made books were added to the book area. There was also a significant increase in children choosing the book area after the addition of teacher-made books, as data shows 91% of the

children chose the book area more often. These findings also suggest, by adding teacher-made

books including the student's photographs, children will increase their time on task with books.

As children increase their time in the book area, teachers have more time to observe and assess

the children engaged with books. Teachers using the Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG)

assessment system are expected to rate children on objective 17a: use and appreciate books and

other texts (Heroman, 2010). In summary, these findings suggest a book area which includes

teacher-made books, with student photographs, can be a beneficial tool to increase children

choosing the book area during free choice time.

Limitations of the Study

        The teacher researcher found various limitations to the research. The research

considered just one preschool classroom for 6 weeks. The trend may be different when looking

at data collected from a more significant number of preschool classrooms and over a more

extended period of time. It is unclear as to whether the teacher-made books can sustain a long-

term increase in book area usage. The results of the study could be impacted once the novelty of

the teacher-made books wore off.

        Another limitation was the experimental group size. There were only 11 children in

the experimental group. The data may show different results when comparing a more significant

number of children. In addition to the small sample size, the children involved in the study had

various literacy development.

        The research focused solely on children in preschool. Preschool students are just

beginning to develop phonemic and phonological awareness, so written text is not yet

meaningful. The researcher did not have any data on older children who may be influenced by

more than just visual text. Data from children who can actually read literal text may have

yielded confirming or varied results.

Further Study

Suggestions for further study and research include implementing the teacher-made

books earlier in the school year and collecting data over a longer period of time. It would be

beneficial to collect data in more than one preschool classroom and more than just at the

preschool level to determine the effectiveness of teacher-made books.

The researcher suggests a similar study be conducted with future groups of preschool

aged children beginning at the start of the school year. The original study investigated the effect

of the teacher-made books for 3 weeks. The results could possibly vary with children as the

newness of the teacher-made books ended. The researcher would like to compare the results of

the current study, to a longer study or a study with more participants.

<div align="center">**Conclusion**</div>

The findings of this action research suggest adding teacher-made books, which

include photographs of the students, to the book area does have a positive impact on students

choosing the book area during free choice time. Comparative analysis of the results indicates

preschool children who participated in this action research study showed significant increase in

book area behaviors during free choice time. There were three book behaviors investigated in

the 6-week teacher-made book intervention. These behaviors included the following: choosing

the book area, number of books viewed, and time spent in the book area. At the start of each

week, just before free choice time, the researcher showed the participants the cover of the book,

and told them the concept of the book, whether it was a book about the alphabet, numbers, or shapes.

The ECEAP classroom, where the action research took place, uses the TSG assessment system. Children are given ratings 3 times a year on various developmental objectives, including literacy. One of the literacy objectives rates children on their ability to use and appreciate books. This action research has shown the teacher-made book interventions, which increase children choosing the book area, provide teachers with more opportunities to observe and rate a child's ability to use books. The results of the study validate the importance of children choosing to look at books as a pleasurable experience. The findings of the action research legitimize reason for further research. Increasing the length of the study, number of classrooms, and sample size would help increase the validity of the study.

Pleasure reading is not learned in a few weeks. It must be introduced and encouraged in classrooms. Students of all ages need opportunities to connect to a story. Maya Angelou frequently quoted McKenna (1972, p. 26) stating "any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs is good for him." This action research found teacher-made books had a positive effect on children choosing the book area during free choice time, and the hope of the action researcher is this effect will support the habit of reading.

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