The effects of setting reading goals on reading motivation, reading achievement, and reading activity
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Abstract

This study examined the effects that setting personal reading goals had on reading motivation, reading achievement, and reading activity of fourth- and fifth-grade students. Forty eight students from a culturally and linguistically diverse elementary school located in a large school district near Chicago participated in the study.

Participants were randomly assigned to experimental and control conditions. Students in the experimental group were assigned to small groups (four to six students) to participate in a researcher-led session on how to set personal reading goals that were specific, proximal, and challenging. Following the goal-setting training session, students were asked to set four personal reading goals to be attained in a six-week period. After setting personal reading goals, the small groups met with the researcher every two weeks for 30 minute sessions to share their progress toward attainment of reading goals. The goal-setting cycle was repeated four times for a total of 16 reading goals in 24 weeks. The total time of student/researcher contact was six hours.

Data were collected using three instruments: The Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), The Reading Activity Inventory (RAI), and the Measures of Academic Progress. These instruments were administered in the fall and spring. Mixed design analysis of variance (ANOVA), simple and multiple regressions were carried out to determine differences between experimental and control conditions prior and post intervention.

Findings suggested that setting goals alone did not have a significant effect on reading motivation, reading achievement, or reading activity. However, the number of reading goals participants met significantly predicted reading challenge and curiosity growth, as well as reading achievement and reading activity growth. Findings also indicated that students in fifth-grade were more successful in attaining their reading goals than students in fourth-grade. Findings underscore the need to study the strategies used by highly motivated readers as a means to design domain-specific reading motivation interventions.