

Introduction

Each school year, thousands of new elementary school teachers take their place among the ranks of reading professionals. With this new job comes many responsibilities—most importantly the responsibility to teach young children to read. Charged with the responsibility to train prospective teachers, most teacher preparation programs provide coursework intended to teach students about effective literacy instruction. Yet most of these activities take place in a university classroom setting far removed from elementary school classrooms making it difficult for pre-service teachers to connect theory and practice in the midst of their learning (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Researchers have recommended that in addition to coursework, prospective teachers need prolonged engagement working with children so they can form personal relationships, in order to get to know the reading and writing capabilities of children (Nierstheimer, Hopkins, Dillon, & Schmitt 2000; Worthy & Prater, 1998).

As researchers we wondered, would working in a one-on-one relationship with an elementary student and participating in reading-related activities *during* a reading methods course help bridge the gap between theory and practice? **Although** some training programs already have school partnerships in place during coursework, this design may not be feasible for all programs especially those that are not in close proximity to local schools. **We recognized a need for more research** in order to assist teacher preparation programs in making decisions about the design and structure of teacher training programs.

The purpose of this exploratory study was to **compare the self-efficacy** of pre-service teachers provided with the opportunity to work with an elementary student during coursework **with the self-efficacy** of pre-service teachers who participated only in coursework requirements and the traditional practicum experience. It should be noted that this examination was not to

determine the value of field-based experiences in general, but rather field-based experiences that occur in the midst of reading methods courses. In the following review of literature, we first examine self-efficacy theory and research on pre-service teacher self-perceptions and how field-based experiences such as these can influence the self-perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of pre-service teachers about their ability to perform the tasks required of reading teachers. The second section reviews the research on pre-service teachers being paired with elementary students to provide reading tutoring during coursework. This research served as an impetus for pairing our own pre-service teachers with an elementary student to provide them with an authentic learning experience during their reading methods course.

Literature Review

The Influence of Training Experiences on Teacher Self-perceptions

Bandura's social cognitive theory (1997) provides a theoretical framework for understanding how pre-service teacher self-perceptions ultimately influence teacher actions and student achievement. Bandura defined the term 'self-efficacy' as the beliefs one holds regarding his or her ability to "execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 2) Bandura further explained that self-efficacy is not a person's actual ability to do something, but it is the perception one has about his or her ability to perform the task effectively. Kagan (1992) explained that teacher beliefs are pivotal and are the "...highly personal ways in which a teacher understands classrooms, students, the nature of learning, the teacher's role in the classroom, and the goals of education" (p. 423).

Researchers analyzing changes in teacher beliefs, self-perceptions, and attitudes to determine the influence of pre-service tutoring and partnership experiences have found that these experiences have a positive effect. As a result of these experiences, pre-service teachers are more

likely to draw upon knowledge learned during their reading courses (Hedrick, McGee, & Mittag, 2000), especially if they discuss and reflect upon those experiences with peers and classmates. They also feel more confident and prepared to teach struggling readers (Zhihui & Ashley, 2004) and gain a stronger sense of responsibility for meeting the needs of struggling readers (Nierstheimer et al, 2000; Maloch et al., 2003).

The first attempts to measure teacher beliefs regarding their ability to influence reading success in children can be traced back to a RAND Corporation study analyzing reading teachers (Armor et al., 1976). Armor et al. reported that the higher a teacher perceived his or her teaching ability, the more their students advanced in reading. Not surprisingly, high self-efficacy beliefs have been found to be a great boon to teachers and, as a result, highly beneficial to students. For example, teachers reporting high self-efficacy beliefs are more willing to try new methods, demonstrate greater competence, appear more organized, possess greater enthusiasm for teaching, and are less critical of students making mistakes (Allinder, 1994; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Guskey, 1988; Stein & Wang, 1988).

Field-based experiences have been shown to be one way to increase pre-service teacher efficacy beliefs. For example, Parameswaran (1998) compared teacher self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service teachers who, during their coursework, participated in field trips that involved working with children, compared to pre-service teachers who did not and found that the pre-service teachers who engaged with students during coursework reported higher self-efficacy beliefs. Teacher self-efficacy beliefs also increase in student teachers from the beginning of their student teaching assignment to the end, further suggesting that field experiences increase self-efficacy (Fives, Hamman, & Olivárez, 2007; Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008). A longitudinal study conducted by Woolfolk Hoy and Burke Spero (2005) found that pre-service teacher

efficacy continued to rise from the beginning to the end of a teacher preparation program. These findings suggest that field experiences have a positive influence on the self-perceptions pre-teachers hold about their ability to perform instructional tasks, but questions remain as to how much field experience is necessary.

Pre-service Teaching Experiences of Working with Elementary School Children During a Reading Methods Course

Research has demonstrated that working with young children during a reading methods course has a positive influence on pre-service reading teachers (Al Otaiba, 2005; Duffy & Atkinson, 2001; Wolf, Carey, & Mieras, 1996; Worthy & Patterson, 2001). For example, Duffy and Atkinson (2001) reported pre-service teachers improved in their professional and practical knowledge and instructional misunderstanding decreased. They also noted pre-service teachers in their study felt more prepared to teach reading, and they valued these experiences highly. Worthy and Patterson (2001) found pre-service partnerships positively influenced pre-service teachers' content and procedural knowledge about reading instruction, while Al Otaiba (2005) found that tutoring experiences helped pre-service teachers feel more comfortable about their role as a reading teacher and their knowledge about literacy and language structure increased. Pre-service teachers also reported changing their teaching approach after these hands-on experiences, become more student-centered and coming to a more complex view of reading instruction (Linek et al., 1999; Smith & Hill, 1999).

The findings of these studies support the practice of having pre-service teachers spend time during reading coursework working with children because it seems to increase teacher knowledge and produces pre-service teachers who have a better understanding of the appropriate pedagogy for reading instruction and who are attuned to the needs of individual students. Yet we

noticed that in each of these studies, there were no comparison groups included. We wondered if pre-service teachers not provided these pre-service partnerships during coursework would make similar gains in confidence and understanding about the nuances of providing quality reading instruction to young readers. In other words, given the fact that many teacher preparation programs already provide practicum and field based experiences above and beyond the student teaching experience, are additional pre-service partnerships during coursework necessary for pre-service teachers to make steady growth in their development as reading teachers? We noticed a lack of studies in this review of the literature where the self-perceptions of pre-service teachers provided a pre-service partnership were compared with the self-perceptions of pre-service teachers not afforded these same opportunities.

Therefore, in this quasi-experimental study, we examine the influence that pairing pre-service teachers with an elementary student to participate in reading-related activities has on the self-perceptions of pre-service teachers about their ability to perform reading instructional tasks. We asked, do pre-service teachers who engage in weekly teaching activities with an elementary student during a reading methods course report higher self-perceptions of their ability to perform reading instructional tasks than pre-service teachers who do not have these experiences?

Methods

Given the opportunity for a one-on-one relationship with an elementary student to participate in similar experiences to that of working in an elementary classroom, we hypothesized that these experiences would increase the self-perceptions pre-service teachers have about their ability to perform reading instructional tasks. The present study builds on and extends previous research by comparing the self-perceptions of two groups of pre-service

teachers – one group provided a pre-service partnership during a reading methods course, and one group not provided these pre-service partnerships.

Setting and Participants

We carried out this research at a university located in the Rocky Mountain region of the United States. **The Institutional Review Board at the university where this study was conducted granted permission.** All college students who were enrolled in the same reading methods course (but enrolled in different sections) were invited to participate in this study, and all students agreed to participate for a total of 71 participants. One group was randomly assigned to be in the control group ($N=41$), with the other group randomly assigned to be in the treatment group ($N=30$). All participants were elementary teacher education students completing their last semester of coursework just prior to student teaching. **All participants were given the opportunity to participate in a practicum experience in an elementary classroom after coursework was completed. In addition to the practicum experience, participants in the treatment group were given six additional weeks to work with one elementary student in the midst of their reading methods course.**

Participants in this study were predominantly white (99% White, 1% Latino), and mostly female (only one participant was male). Ninety-four percent of the participants ranged in age from 20-29 years, with the remaining six percent being 30 years of age or older. All participants had previously completed a one-semester introductory reading course with general instruction in the areas of concepts of print, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Elementary students with whom participants in the experimental group were paired **with** were all second graders (ages 7-9 years old) and were predominantly white, with seventeen females and thirteen males. Seven of the second graders were identified as **currently**

struggling readers, ten second graders were identified as **currently excelling** readers, and thirteen of the second graders were identified as being on grade level by their teacher.

Procedures

The Reading Methods Course. The reading course took place in one semester that included nine weeks of coursework **followed by** six weeks of a practicum experience. All participants **had** the opportunity to participate in a field-based **practicum** at the conclusion of the nine weeks of coursework. The treatment group, however, received additional time to work with a second grade student in the midst of coursework. The same instructor (first author) taught all sections of this course. The key objective of the reading methods course was to teach pre-service teachers how to assess and provide explicit reading instruction for elementary school students in the areas of concepts about print, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and/or vocabulary (see National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The students were trained to administer a variety of reading assessments including the Concepts About Print Assessment (Clay, 2000a; Clay, 2000b), The Same-Different Word Pair Task (Treiman & Zykowski, 1991), The Core Phonics Survey (Consortium on Reading Excellence, 1999), The 3-Minute Reading Assessment: Word Recognition, Fluency, & Comprehension (Rasinski & Padak, 2005) and cloze passage assessments (Johnson, 2001).

As part of the course requirements, pre-service teachers designed explicit reading lessons. A description of these explicit lessons can be found in Author (in press). Explicit lesson topics were selected based on data gathered from reading assessments. Once participants taught their reading lessons to their elementary student partner (**or classmates**), they reflected with peers in their methods course about their experiences teaching reading skills to an elementary student. Questions used to guide students' reflections on their tutoring experiences were: How did the

lesson go? What went well? What would you change? Did the student master the reading objective? Why or why not? How did you feel about the pacing of the lesson? Was the reading objective you selected for the student too easy, just right, or too difficult? What is the next step for this student?

Treatment group. Participants in the treatment group were paired with a second grade student during the nine weeks of coursework. As part of the course requirements, pre-service teachers administered reading assessments and designed explicit reading lessons geared specifically to their elementary student partner's needs. The intent of this experience was to provide pre-service teachers with a hands-on experience of teaching a child during their coursework so they could practice instructional skills and techniques in a meaningful way. Participants spent 45 minutes to an hour each week, over the course of nine weeks, assessing the reading skills of their elementary student partner and teaching explicit lessons on specific reading skills.

Control group. Participants in the control group experienced the same reading methods course as those in the treatment group. Participants in the control group were also taught how to administer reading assessments, and they designed explicit lessons in the same manner as the participants in the treatment group. The **only intended difference** between the experiences of comparison groups was that participants in the control group administered reading assessments with and taught reading lessons to a classmate in their university reading methods course instead of teaching an elementary student. **Control group participants were pretending they were teaching and assessing an elementary student. Members of the control group selected lesson objectives using the second grade state core curriculum to create the lessons. These lessons were**

designed to meet the needs of a second grade student in general, but not necessarily a specific second grade student.

Instrumentation

The data for this study was collected using the *Self-Assessment of Proficiency to Perform Reading Tasks* (SPPRT) scale (see Table 1 for scale items.) Examples of questions from this scale include the following: “How well can you evaluate reading materials for their usefulness and appropriateness for your students?”, “How well can you adapt reading instruction to accommodate students with special needs?” and “How well can you use comprehension activities (e.g., discussion questions, graphic organizers, and other assignments)?” The SPPRT consisted of 13 questions related to reading instructional tasks required of elementary school teachers. Response to each item was on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 corresponding to “not at all” and 5 corresponding to “very well.” Thus, the higher the score participants received on the self-assessment scale, the greater their perceived ability to perform instructional tasks. This scale was selected because the items were written specifically for pre-service teachers and the reading instructional skills mentioned on this scale aligned with the objectives being taught in the reading methods course. **All participants (from both control and treatment groups) completed this scale on the first and last day of coursework, prior to the six-week practicum.**

This scale was adapted from the *Total Quality Partnerships Pre-service Teacher Survey* administered to teacher candidates as part of a longitudinal study of pre-service teachers in the state of Ohio (see Lasley, Siedentop, & Yinger, 2006). The adaptations made to this scale involved the prompt, which preceded the items on this self-perception scale. The original scale contained the prompt, “How well has your teacher preparation program prepared you to do the following...” The new prompt reads, “How well can *you* do the following...” The change was

necessary because we wanted participants to evaluate and self-report their perceived ability to perform these instructional tasks and not to evaluate how well their teacher preparation program trained them to perform these instructional tasks. Two references to writing instruction were also removed from the scale because the methods course in which this study occurred was a reading methods course. Additionally, a question about teaching reading vocabulary was added to reflect the objectives of the reading course objectives. The revised scale was reviewed by a panel of literacy teacher educators (see full scale in Appendix).

Results

Prior to conducting this study, we administered the SPPRT to pre-service teachers ($N=543$) attending teacher preparation programs from the same state as the participants in the current study. This initial field test allowed us to determine the reliability and validity of this slightly adapted scale.

We used the Cronbach-alpha analysis (Cronbach, 1951) to determine the internal consistency of items on the revised SPPRT. Nunnally (1978) indicated that a measure of 0.7 or greater is an acceptable reliability coefficient. The reliability coefficient for this scale was .87, indicating that the different items on this scale measured the same general construct and produced similar scores demonstrating an internal consistency among the items on the overall scale.

The SPPRT was then examined for its construct validity through the use of confirmatory factor analysis ($N= 543$) to confirm factor structure and theory. The data for this analysis was entered into AMOS 16.0 (Arbuckle, 1999). We hypothesized that all items on the SPPRT would load onto one factor (reading instructional tasks), and the fit indices and weights allowed us to accept one factor, as having a good data fit (Dickey, 1996; Roberts, 1999). This **decision** was

also supported by other fit indices: CFI = .899, NFI = .875, TLI = .892, AIC = 7441.763, and RMSEA = .053 (see Table 1 for the factor loadings of each item).

An analysis of the descriptive statistics revealed that participants in both the control and experimental groups reported similar overall scores on the SPPRT (see Table 2). Overall, participants without an elementary student partnership rated their ability to perform teaching tasks higher than those provided this additional field experience. None of the differences in mean scores between groups were statistically significant. The only two items where participants in the experimental group reported higher means were the perceived ability to use the textbook as a resource instead of as the primary instructional tool, and the ability to use comprehension activities. The two items with the biggest mean differences between the two groups were related to teaching reading groups that are of mixed ability, evaluating reading materials for usefulness and appropriateness, teaching oral reading, and teaching vocabulary.

Next, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the control and treatment groups at the beginning of the study. Results of the independent samples *t*-test demonstrated that there was not a significant difference in the scores on the SPPRT for the control group ($M = 28.91$, $SD = 8.41$) and the treatment group ($M = 24.10$, $SD = 4.23$) at the beginning of the study, $t(69) = 1.49$, $p = .23$.

Another independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the control and treatment groups at the end of the study. There was not a significant difference in scores on the SPPRT between the control group ($M = 40.12$, $SD = 6.45$) and treatment group ($M = 39.21$, $SD = 4.36$) at the conclusion of the course, $t(69) = .38$, $p = .54$, indicating that the treatment did not influence the self-perceptions of pre-service teachers in the

treatment group about their ability to perform reading instructional tasks above and beyond the self-perceptions of participants in the control group.

Discussion

We predicted that participants in the treatment group would report statistically significant higher scores on the SPPRT when compared with the control group because of their nine-week partnership with an elementary student. However, this prediction was not confirmed in the analysis of the data. The pre-service teachers who participated in pre-service partnerships experienced a positive increase in their self-perceptions similar to pre-service teachers in other studies (Linek, et al., 1999; Smith & Hill, 1999; Duffy & Atkinson, 2001; Worthy & Prater, 1998; Zhihui & Ashley, 2004), but the pre-service teachers without these partnerships increased their self-perceptions in a similar fashion. There are several possible explanations for these findings. First, there may not have been enough time spent in these pre-service partnerships. Forty-five to sixty minutes per week over the course of nine weeks provided ample time for participants to establish a relationship, but it may not have been sufficiently long enough to produce stronger self-perceptions of their ability to teach reading.

Second, the results may not be surprising considering the idea that the more we learn about a subject (such as meeting the needs of young readers), the more we realize how much we do not know, and this therefore could have had a negative effect on scores of pre-service teachers who had more hands-on experiences with students. Perhaps a lower score on the SPPRT reflects a pre-service teacher with a more realistic self-perception of his or her teaching abilities after having had the experience of working with a student. It has been determined in previous studies that self-efficacy scores decrease as teachers move from the pre-service to the inservice stage (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005). Research that continues to track the pre-service and

inservice experiences of reading teachers over the long term as they gain more experience would be helpful to **teacher educators making** decisions about pre-service field experiences.

Third, the results of this study may have occurred because the pre-service teachers only performed assessments and taught lessons to one elementary student and not a variety of beginning readers. This exclusive partnership may have limited the pre-service teachers' sense that they were acquiring the reading instructional skills necessary to meet the needs of a full class of students with a wide range of reading levels.

Finally, we turned to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory for more insight. Vygotsky describes how knowledge is not transmitted but rather co-constructed and co-created, but it is important to remember who is involved in this construction of knowledge. We included the involvement of elementary children to enhance pre-service teacher learning. However, Vygotsky (1978) explained that learners increase their developmental level through collaboration with a "more capable peer." In the current research study, the instructor of the course (the more capable peer) was available to answer questions and provide feedback to pre-service teachers, but the instructor did not work individually with each pre-service teacher as they designed and taught lessons to elementary students. This lack of direct influence and assistance from a more capable peer may have limited the effects that working with an elementary student had on the pre-service teachers' **self**-perceptions of competence and ability.

Richards (2007) found that undergraduate students paired with graduate students (practicing teachers) to form a tutoring triad while working with an elementary student was helpful. Pre-service teachers in Richards' study exchanged video clips of their tutoring sessions with practicing teachers and received additional feedback thus further building self-efficacy in these budding teachers. The help of this "more capable peer" may be essential to provide

adequate scaffolding for pre-service teachers to reach a higher developmental level in teacher training. Teacher educators should ensure that pre-service teachers have adequate support while they are receiving instruction.

Limitations

Every research study has limitations, and this study was no exception. First, the small sample size limits the generalizability of its findings, but provides a good foundation for further studies on this topic. Second, participants attended the same university and were enrolled in the same reading methods course with the same instructor. It is difficult to determine the influence that the university and the instructor had on student learning. Third, each pre-service teacher was partnered with a different elementary student, which may have influenced the experiences pre-service teachers had. Some elementary students may have been more challenging or less responsive to work with than others or conversely, may have had less need for the lessons being taught. **Fourth, the data collected in this study was self-report data and not a measure of the pre-service teachers' actual competence. Participants may have perceived their abilities above or below what others may think of their abilities. For example, members of the control group may have felt very effective working with their classmates while the experimental group members who worked with problem readers may have felt less effective.** Finally, there was no knowledge test administered to the control and treatment groups to determine how much knowledge each group had in the area of teaching reading skills at the beginning of the study. This information **about the pre-service teachers' knowledge** could help explain what knowledge pre-service teachers brought to their reading lessons, which ultimately may have influenced their **self-**perceptions.

Implications for the Field

The challenge for teacher preparation programs is to help pre-service teachers acquire skills they need to be effective teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The present study extended the research specific to pre-service partnerships during a reading methods course, but additional research is needed to determine specifically *how* these experiences influence pre-service teachers' self-efficacy to perform reading instructional tasks. Future studies should include data which tests the actual ability of pre-service teachers, data which assesses teacher knowledge, as well as other forms of data collection such as lesson plan analysis, teaching observations, and interviews with pre-service teachers in order to provide a much richer understanding of pre-service teacher experiences and abilities at the pre-service stage.

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Appendix. *Self-Assessment of Proficiency to Perform Reading Tasks*

As we strive to prepare you for success in your future role as a teacher of reading, we would like to gather some information about your impressions of your teaching abilities. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Please rate your answers on a scale from “1” (not at all) to “5” (very well).

| | NOT AT ALL | POORLY | ADEQUATELY | WELL | VERY WELL |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| How well can you do the following? | | | | | |
| 1. Help foster students’ oral or written responses to literature. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Teach silent reading (including time for independent reading). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Use comprehension activities (e.g. discussion questions, graphic organizers, and assignments). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Teach oral reading. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Use instructional strategies that children can use to help with comprehension. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Use a variety of reading assessments (e.g. observation, portfolio, tests, performance tasks, and anecdotal records) to determine students’ strengths, needs and progress. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Teach reading to student groups that are of mixed ability. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Evaluate reading materials for their usefulness and appropriateness for your students. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Understand how children come to acquire reading skills. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Use the textbook as a resource in reading rather than as the primary instructional tool. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Teach reading (oral or silent) during social studies, science, or mathematics classes. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Adapt reading instruction to accommodate students with special needs. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Teach reading vocabulary (emphasizing word meaning). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Demographic Information: Please mark all that apply to you.

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| African-American or Black | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hispanic/Latino(a) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| White– Caucasian | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Are you male or female? _____

What is your age? _____

Table 1

Factor Item Loadings for the Self-Assessment of Proficiency to Perform Reading Tasks (N= 543)

| Item | Factor Loading |
|---|----------------|
| 1 - Help foster students' oral or written responses to literature. | .79 |
| 2 - Teach silent reading (including time for independent reading). | .81 |
| 3 - Use comprehension activities (e.g., graphic organizers, prediction, etc.). | .81 |
| 4 – Teach oral reading skills. | .84 |
| 5 - Use instructional strategies to help children with reading comprehension. | .73 |
| 6 - Use a variety of reading assessments to determine students' strengths, needs, and progress. | .77 |
| 7 - Teach reading to student groups that are of mixed ability | .77 |
| 8 - Evaluate reading materials for their usefulness and appropriateness. | .80 |
| 9 - Understand how children come to acquire reading and writing skills. | .78 |
| 10 - Use the textbook as a resource in reading rather than as the primary instructional tool. | .75 |
| 11 - Teach reading (oral or silent) during social studies, science, or mathematics lessons. | .70 |
| 12 - Adapt reading instruction to accommodate students with special needs. | .78 |
| 13 - Teach reading vocabulary (emphasizing word meaning.) | .82 |

Table 2

Mean Scores of Pre-service Teachers With and Without Partnerships During a Reading Methods Course

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Group</u> | <u>Mean</u> | <u>SD</u> |
|---|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| Teach reading vocabulary. | Control | 3.17 | .59 |
| | Experimental | 2.97 | .61 |
| Teach oral reading. | Control | 3.05 | .67 |
| | Experimental | 2.83 | .65 |
| Help foster students' oral or written responses to literature. | Control | 3.12 | .56 |
| | Experimental | 3.10 | .61 |
| Teach silent reading. | Control | 3.05 | .50 |
| | Experimental | 2.90 | .56 |
| Use comprehension activities. | Control | 3.33 | .62 |
| | Experimental | 3.43 | .63 |
| Use instructional strategies to help children with reading comprehension. | Control | 3.34 | .62 |
| | Experimental | 3.20 | .71 |
| Use a variety of reading assessments. | Control | 3.24 | .73 |
| | Experimental | 3.00 | .74 |
| Teach reading groups that are of mixed ability. | Control | 3.10 | .66 |
| | Experimental | 2.70 | .65 |
| Evaluate reading materials for their usefulness and appropriateness for students. | Control | 3.20 | .68 |
| | Experimental | 2.73 | .78 |
| Understand how children come to acquire reading skills. | Control | 3.20 | .64 |
| | Experimental | 3.03 | .67 |
| Use the textbook as a resource rather than as a primary instructional tool. | Control | 3.26 | .81 |
| | Experimental | 3.33 | .71 |
| Teach reading during social studies, science or math classes. | Control | 3.27 | .67 |
| | Experimental | 3.20 | .66 |
| Adapt reading instruction to accommodate students with special needs | Control | 2.88 | .64 |
| | Experiment | 2.87 | .63 |