

## ABSTRACT

### READING IN THE FAST LANE: AN EVALUATIVE STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ACCELERATED READER® IN A FOURTH-GRADE LITERACY PROGRAM

Accelerated Reader® (AR) is a supplemental reading management program used in over 50% of schools nationwide. Despite its popularity, little independent research exists. According to federal mandates requiring scientifically-based instructional reading materials, it's necessary to evaluate programs on this basis. This study's purpose is to examine AR's effectiveness on motivation, literacy perceptions, prospective lifelong literacy behaviors, and comprehension. Through observations, questionnaires, interviews, and a focus group, data collected will yield authentic insight. Further, analyses contrasting theoretical constructs will offer implications regarding program quality and its effect on students.

Co-rated findings indicate literacy perceptions are adversely affected by emphasizing extrinsic motivation. Thus, misguided perceptions and motivation influence literacy behaviors and comprehension. Further, unintended outcomes reveal inadequate scientific knowledge and professional development contribute to varied implementation. Although AR allows time to read at appropriate levels, commercial programs aren't necessary. Compared to theoretical reading constructs, AR neglects vital components in developing a literacy-rich environment.

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