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2023

### The REWARDS of Student Literacy Confidence

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#### Recommended Citation

Fitch, Erica and Xu, William, "The REWARDS of Student Literacy Confidence" (2023). *Research Days Posters 2023*. 144.

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The REWARDS of Student Literacy Confidence



By Erica Fitch and William Xu  
Acknowledgements: We would like thank the local educational agency, the students who took our survey, the teachers who partook in our interviews, and Dr. Amber Simpson for their participation and guidance in our research.

BACKGROUND

The *Reading Excellence: Word Attack and Rate Development Strategies* (REWARDS) intervention program that aids students in developing reading confidence. It is imperative that students’ reading perceptions are measured by the students themselves to gauge the effectiveness of the program through their perspective. **The purpose of this study is to examine the reading confidence of REWARDS program students as well as teachers’ perceptions of the literacy intervention program.**

METHODS

1. Collected survey data from 32 middle school students partaking in the REWARDS literacy program.
2. Used Qualtrics survey utilizing Likert scales (1 being Strongly Disagree with a statement to 5 being Strongly Agree) from The Reader Self Perception Scale (Henk & Melnick, 1995) and open-ended questions regarding the REWARDS program.
3. Analyzed descriptive statistics from survey data and in vivo coding on student responses and teacher interviews.

RESULTS

- Students somewhat agreed to considering themselves as good readers (M = 3.75 out of 5).
- Students had the highest confidence in their reading progress (M = 37.07 out of 45).
- Students had the lowest confidence in their physiological states while reading (M = 24.18 out of 40).
- 14 students had positive comments about the REWARDS program, while 7 students gave specific ways on how it was helpful.

“I am a Good Reader”

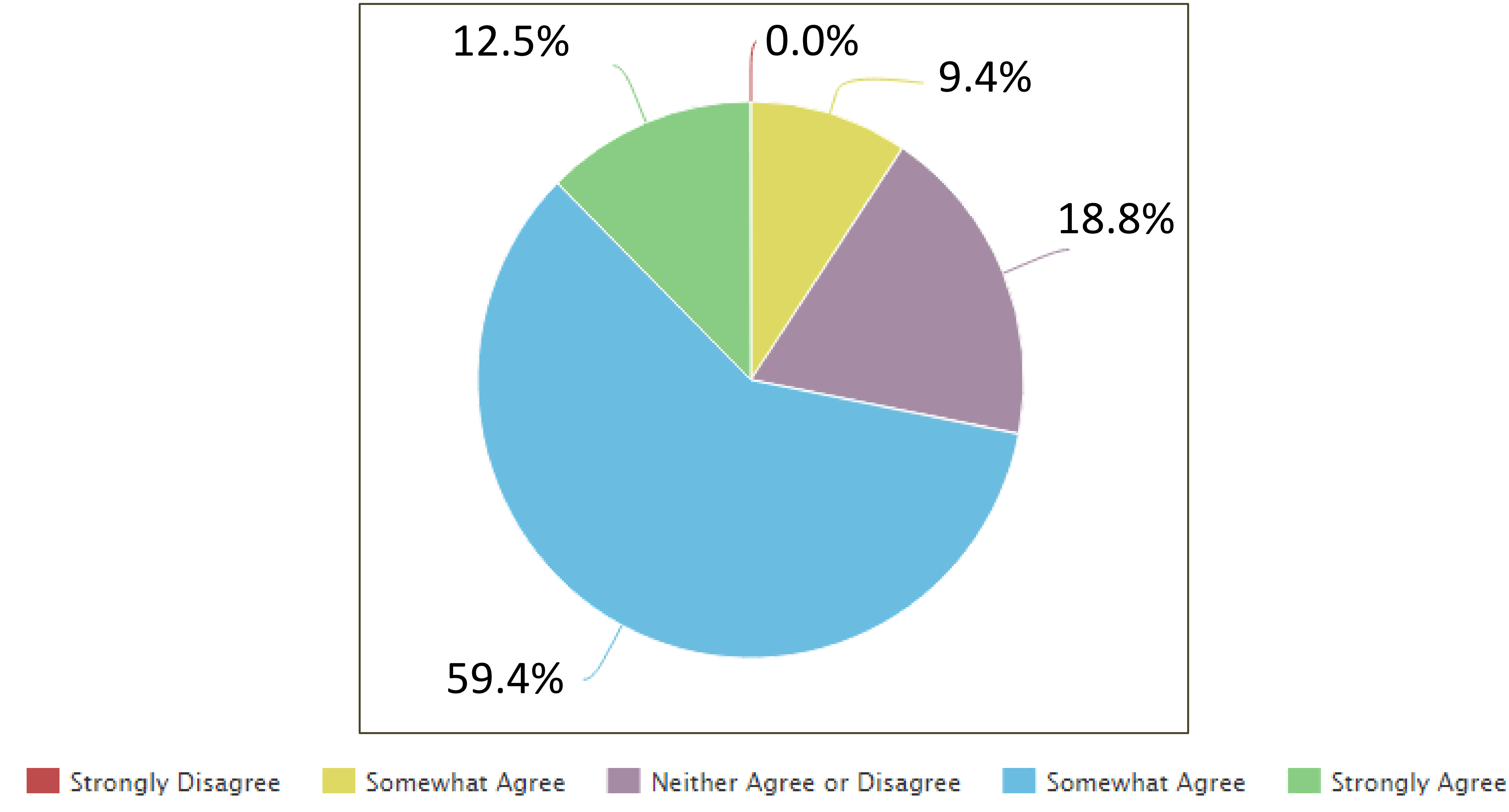


Figure 1: The distribution of student responses when asked to rank how much they agree with the statement, “I am a good reader” (Henk & Melnick, 1995).

While the REWARDS Program succeeds in pushing progress of literacy skills, student literacy confidence remains low.

Category	Very Low	Low	Average	High
Progress	22.6%	19.4%	54.8%	3.2%
Observational Comparison	28.1%	34.4%	21.9%	15.6%
Social Feedback	15.6%	40.6%	25.0%	18.8%
Physiological States	50.0%	21.9%	25.0%	3.1%

Figure 2: The distribution of how students perceived their confidence in literacy skills regarding overall progress, comparison with others, social interactions, and their physiological states when reading.

STUDENT TESTIMONY

Improvement

it helped me improve with reading a lot  
i feel like it has helped me a lot  
i got to learn how to say longer words  
i feel like it helps a lot  
I like doing the strategies they give me  
the overt strategy  
helps me figure out the words better  
better reader

TEACHER TESTIMONY

Like Vegetables

Instead of doing what we call the “stab and go”  
students look at words a lot more carefully  
It’s helped them gain knowledge  
for how those pieces work within words  
I’ve seen increases in reading rate  
It’s kind of like vegetables, like good for you.  
It’s very important that they see their growth  
Oh, someone’s giving me an explicit tool that works  
Definitely has improved their confidence  
And *that* is a positive of REWARDS

DISCUSSION

- Overall, students believed they were “good” readers. However, they also highlighted many areas where they struggle (e.g., Physiological States).
- The students’ perception of their confidence when reading to others and of they feel while reading is significantly lower than expected.
- The REWARDS program has helped numerous students specifically with their vocabulary and technical skills.

IMPLICATIONS

- The REWARDS program does not boost student literacy confidence enough in the way it originally intended to do so.
- Reforming the REWARDS program to help students improve targeted fields would build more literacy confidence in future students.

REFERENCES

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