Reading is Ruff: Therapy Dogs and L2 Reading Engagement

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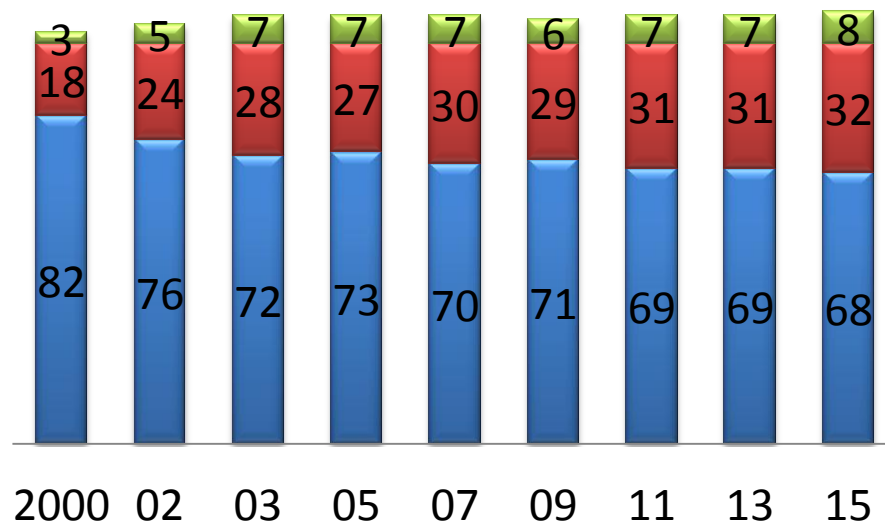TexLER Conference 2017

Why reading matters...

Lower levels of print literacy

- Poor testing performance
- Increased grade retention
- Decreased graduation rates
- Less access to better jobs & wages

(August & Shanahan, 2006; Wrigley, Chen, White, & Soroui, 2009)

Grade 4 Reading Composite National (ELL)

- 🟦 % Below Basic
- 🟥 % At or above Basic
- 🟩 % At or Above proficient

Year	% At or Above proficient	% At or above Basic	% Below Basic
2000	3	18	82
02	5	24	76
03	7	28	72
05	7	27	73
07	7	30	70
09	6	29	71
11	7	31	69
13	7	31	69
15	8	32	68

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2015)

Struggling Readers

- What's happening with struggling readers?
  - High levels of stress (cyclical)
  - Fear of judgment by peers & teacher
  - Decreases in confidence & self-efficacy
  - Decreases in interest & meaningful interactions with texts

* Instruction must go beyond discrete skills to ENGAGE students
* Early reading intervention critical to long-term academic success
* Intervention + guided reading + engagement = students participating in their own developmental processes

(Cummins, 2012; Denton, 2012; Lonigan, Farver, Nakamoto, & Eppe, 2013; Rivera, Moughamian, Lesaux, & Francis, 2008; Taboada, Tonks, Wigfield, & Guthrie, 2009)

Defining Reading Engagement

Multi-dimensional & Dynamic

Agency

- Affective
- Behavioral
- Cognitive

- ## Affective Engagement:
- *Positive reactions* (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Lutz et al., 2006)
- *Enthusiasm, interest, and enjoyment* (Guthrie, 2004; Reeve, 2004)
- *Curiosity and preferences* (Malloy, 2013)
- *Absence of distress during reading events* (Reeve, 2004)

- ## Behavioral Engagement:
- *Time on task* (Guthrie, 2004)
- *Attention, effort, and concentration* (Fredricks et al., 2004; Guthrie, 2004; Lutz et al., 2006; Reeve, 2004)
- *Active participation, persistence, and the frequency of asking and answering questions* (Fredricks et al., 2004; Lutz et al., 2006)

(Ellis & Coddington, 2013; Guthrie, 2004; Martin, 2012; McCarthey, Hoffman, & Galda, 1999; Reeve, 2012)

Engaged Readers

Greater time on task

Greater depth of cognitive processing

Actively pursue reading activities

Read extensively

Greater enthusiasm & enjoyment

Use greater variety of reading strategies

Connect to texts

Reflective of texts

Readily discuss texts

Canine-Assisted Reading Programs

(Intermountain Therapy Animals, 2014)

What are canine-assisted reading programs?

- Interaction between a child, a therapy dog, and a handler
- Guided reading approach + reading aloud + projection
- Child "teaches" dog to read & connects word to world

Theoretical Foundations

Sociocultural Theory & Zone of Proximal Development	**Affective Filter & Language Anxiety**
Motivation & Engagement	**Agency & Investment**

CARPs

(Guthrie, 2004; Krashen, 1985; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Verhoeven, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978; Vygotsky, 1986)

What the research says...

Physiological & Psychological Benefits

- Anxiety & stress (cortisol) decreases
- Blood pressure decreases
- Cardiovascular health improves
- Increased happiness & contentment
- Promotion of coping mechanisms


Education-related Behavioral Benefits

- Greater homework completion
- Reduced absences & tardiness
- Increased responsibility with classroom rules & activities
- Better behavior
- Improved problem-solving skills
- Improved attention, responsiveness, & cooperation
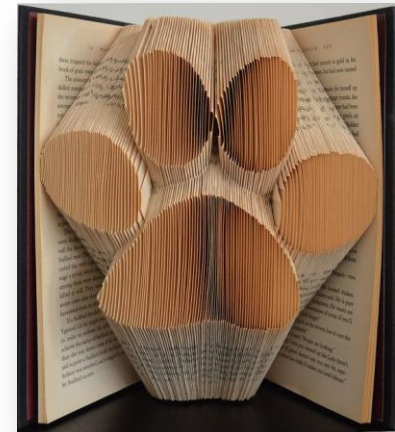
What the research says...

Social & Affective Benefits

- Greater stability
- More positive attitudes toward school
- Greater willingness to become socially involved
- Stronger empathy & better interaction with peers
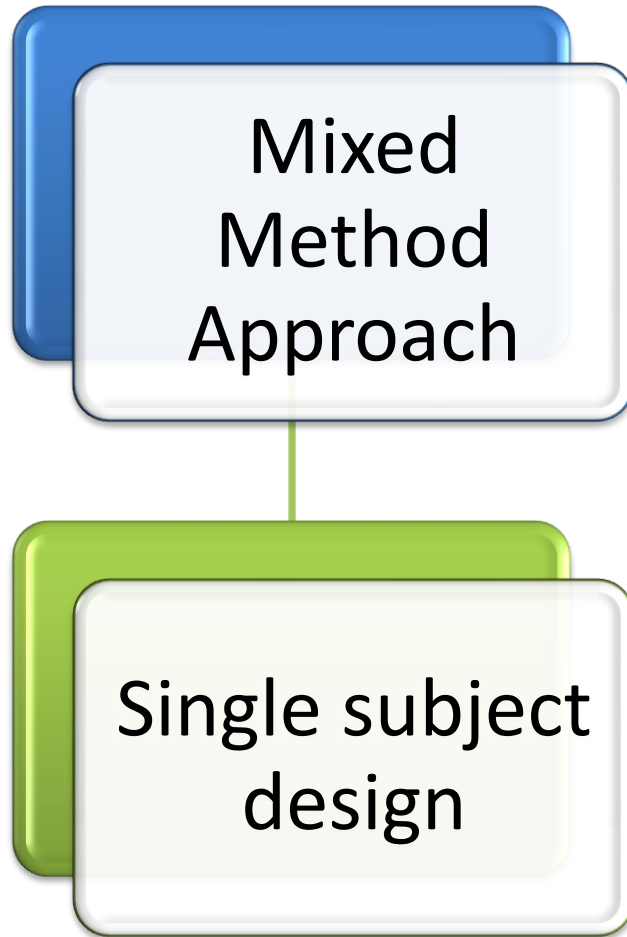- Less fear of or stigma toward asking for help
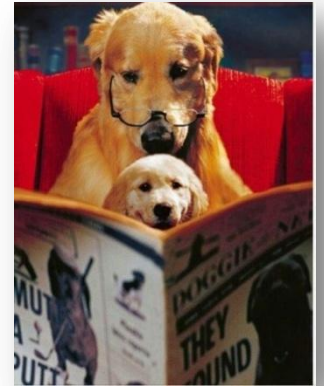
Reading Benefits

- Increased enjoyment & interest in reading
- Greater focus, more extensive & frequent reading
- Shift in agency toward child & improved self-efficacy
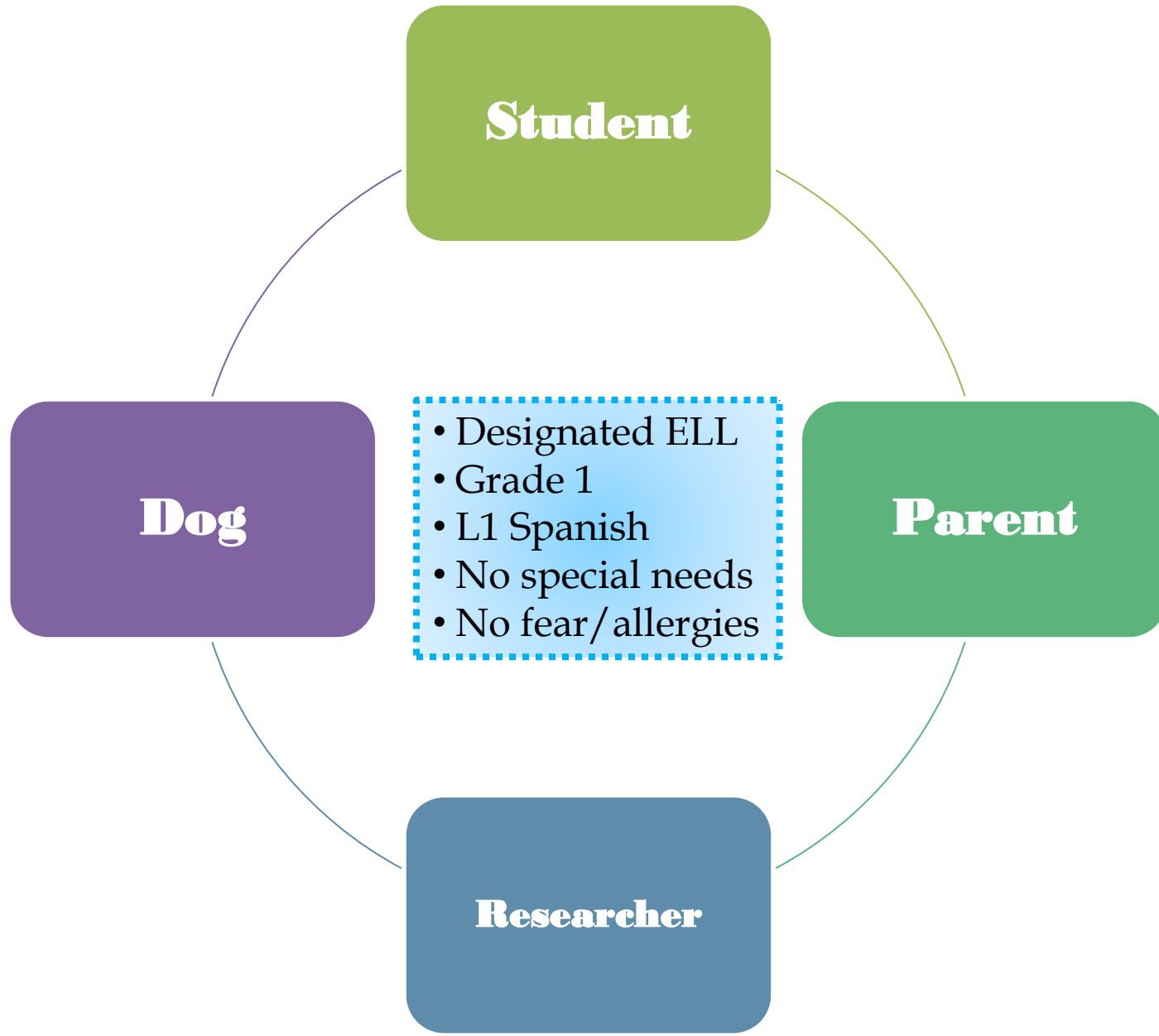- Significant positive gains in reading comprehension, rate, accuracy, & fluency

Study Design & RQs

Mixed Method Approach

Single subject design

1) How does the use of a canine-assisted reading program impact the affective reading engagement for an elementary school-aged English language learner?

2) How does a CARP impact the behavioral reading engagement?

Participants

- Student
- Parent
- Researcher
- Dog

- Designated ELL
- Grade 1
- L1 Spanish
- No special needs
- No fear/allergies

Instruments, Procedures, & Data Analysis

| Sessions 1 & 2 Reading Baselines | Sessions 3-8 CARP Intervention | Sessions 9-10 Reversal |

Quantitative data:

1. Audiovisual 2 minute Segment Evaluation w/ Protocols
2. Affect Likert Scale

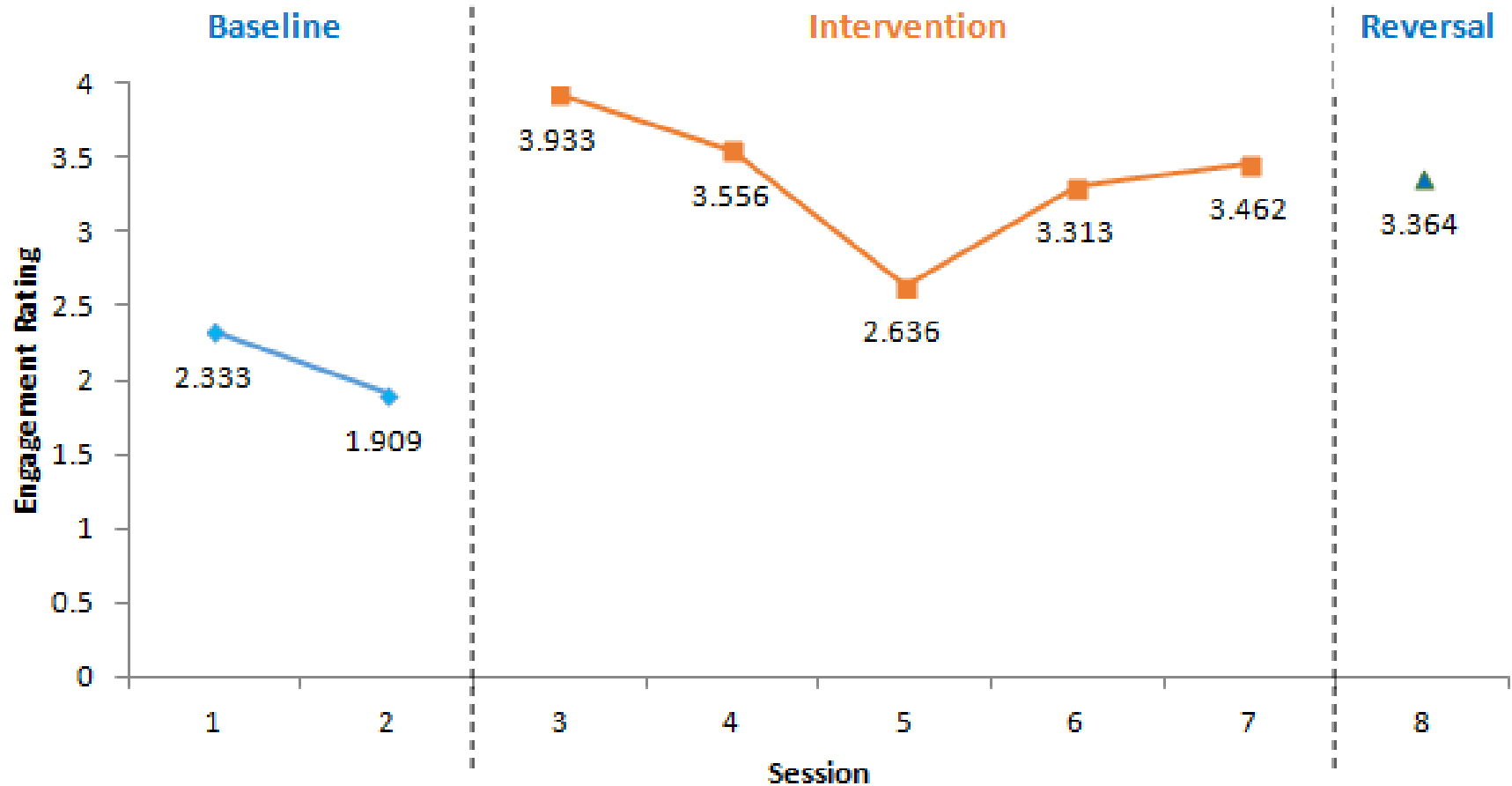## Qualitative data:

1. Participant Interviews
2. Artifact: *Letters to Leeloo*
3. Field Notes & Analytical Memos

Analyses:

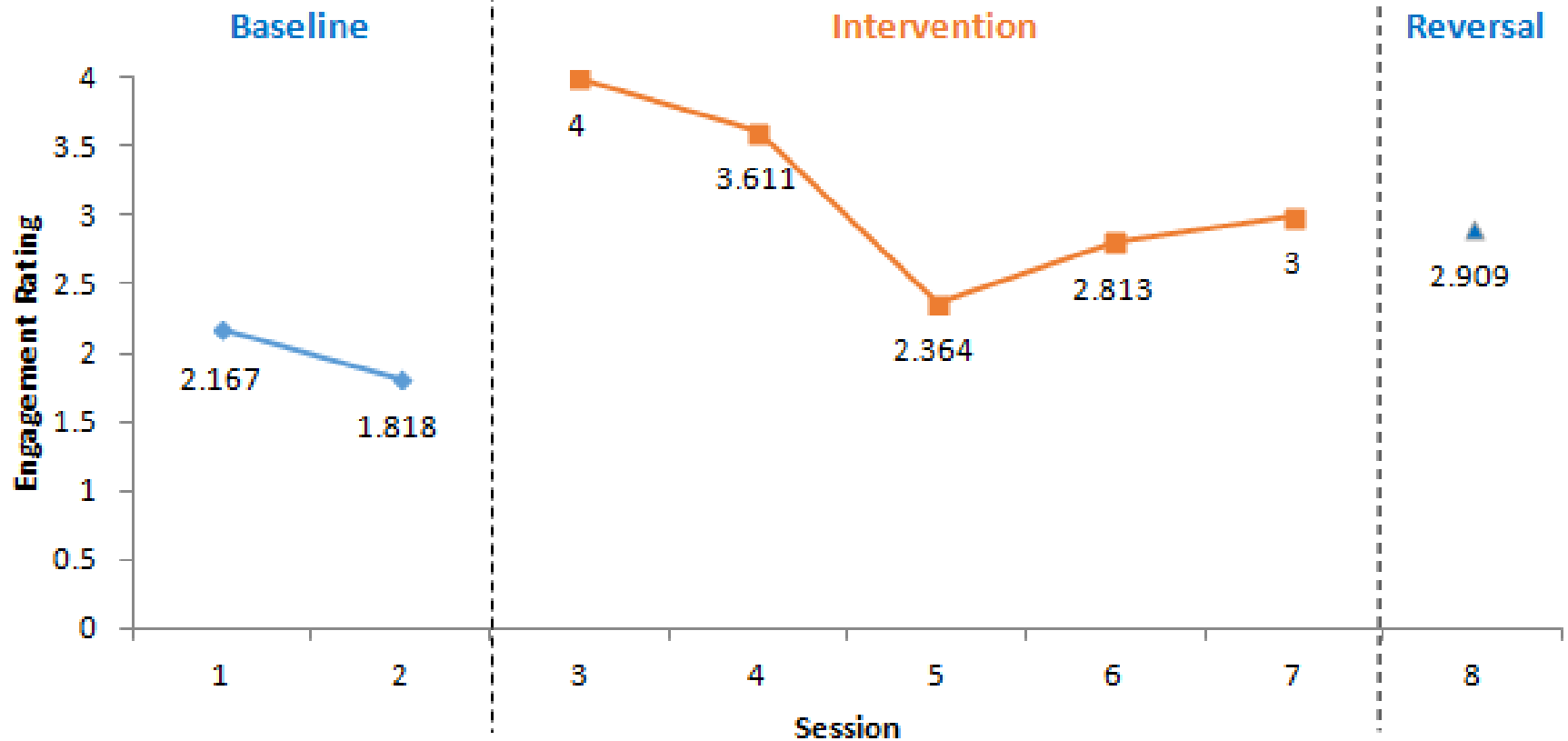1. Descriptive Statistics
2. Constant comparative coding and thematic analysis

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Overall Affective Engagement

Overall Affective Engagement

Overall Behavioral Engagement
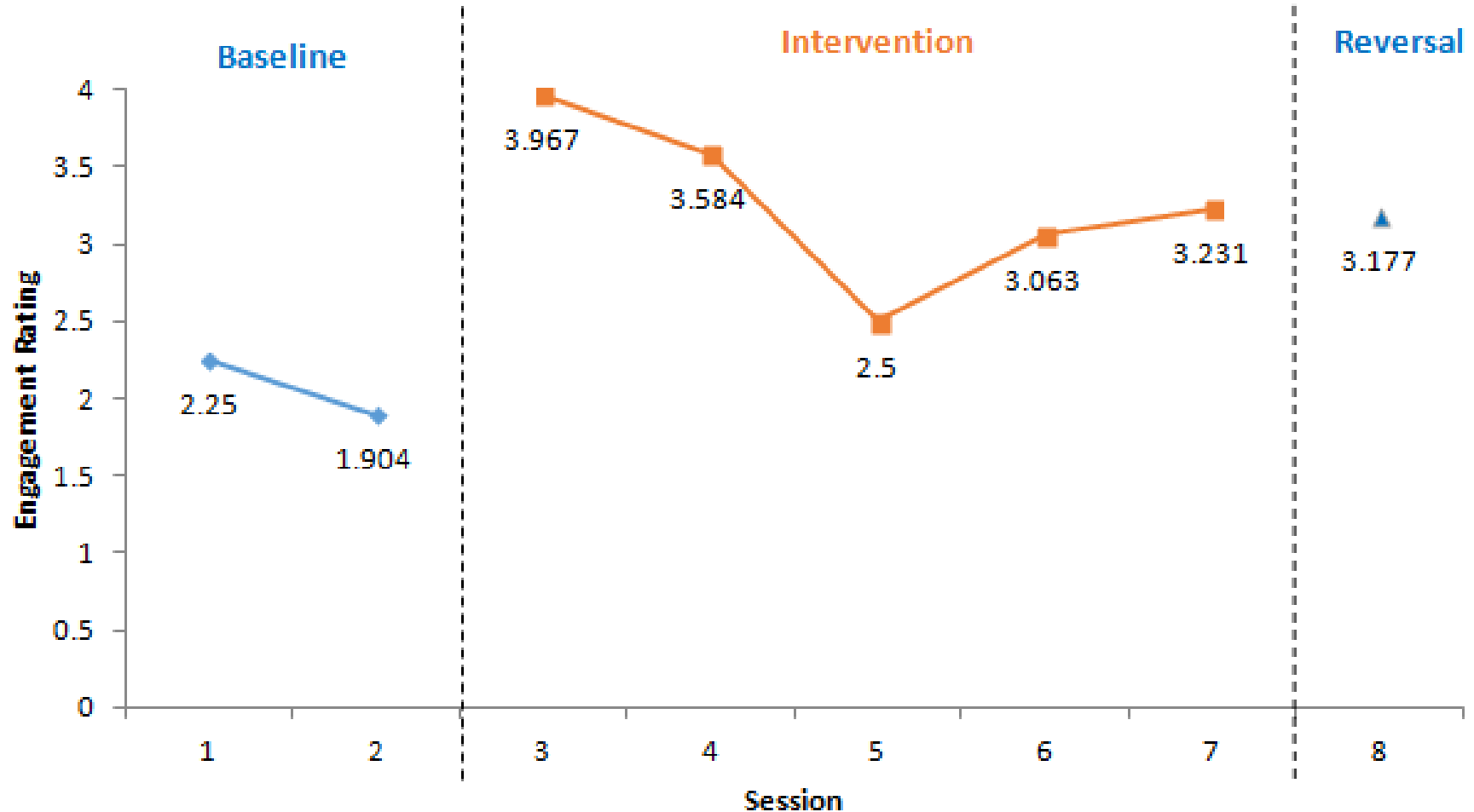
Preliminary Findings

Pre-Intervention	Intervention & Post-Intervention
Fear of reading in English; uncertainty about ability; wanted to read in Spanish	"I can read!"; Self-awareness & acknowledgement of improvement
At 20:00, no desire to continue	At 20:00, wish to continue & finish text; increased time on task
Monotonous; quiet; no character voices	Greater voicing variability in intonation, volume, expression, & fluency
Took time & effort to redirect to text when distracted	Quick acceptance of redirection & return to text
Little world-connection to text	Shares experiences related to textual content; connects word to world
Very little self-correction when stumbling w/ words	Quickly self-corrected with little prompting by handler
Leaned back against wall, yawning, hands over head/face, fidgeting, increasing space between himself & handler	Leaned forward or laying down with book; exaggerated gestures when discussing text; acted out characters' behaviors; sat/lay close to dog & handler
Affect: 3.015; Behavior: 3.365; Overall: 3.195	Affect: 3.565; Behavior: 3.715; Overall: 3.645

Classroom Implications

Transference & Projection

- Classroom Pet
- Petlandia & other apps
- Reading superhero or alter ego
- Activities promoting non-judgment
- Puppets & stuffed animals
- Reading to dogs at home
- Animal corner in classroom

THANK YOU

R.E.A.D

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ASSISTANCE DOGS
A PROGRAM OF
INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS

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