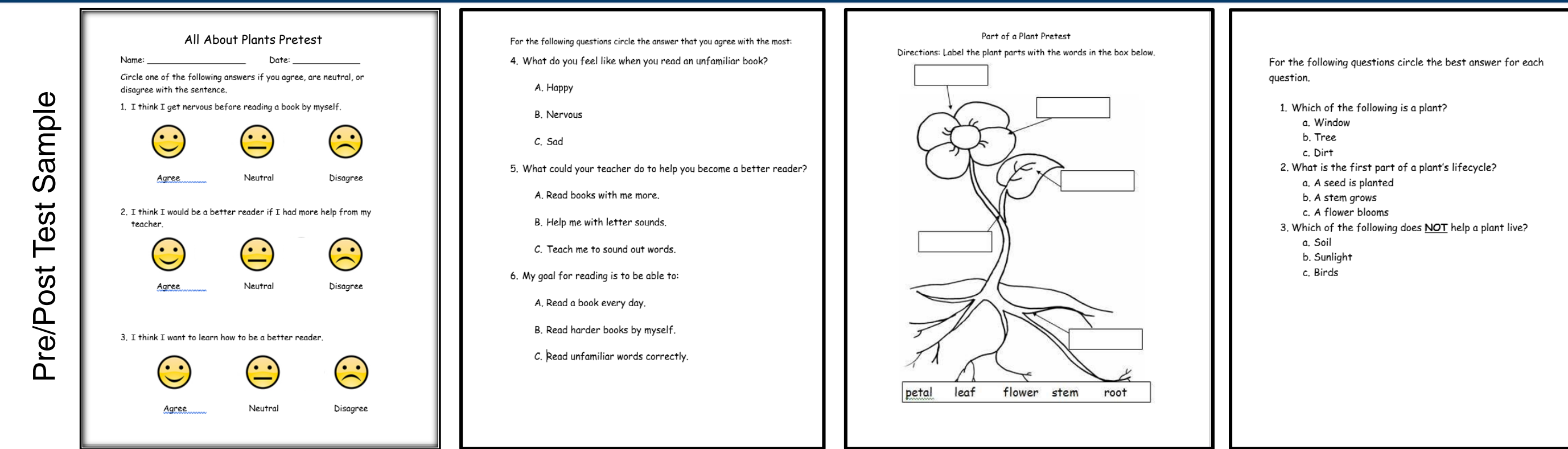


HYPOTHESIS

Can using Vygotsky's theory of Emotional Scaffolding in the elementary urban classroom motivate English language learners (ELLs) to increase their reading ability?

BACKGROUND

- One of the most rapidly growing population of students in the United States are children whose first language is not English. Nearly one in every ten public school students (roughly 4.5 million of 50 million total students) were classified as English language learners (ELLs) during the 2010-2011 school year (Horsford, 2013). This number will only continue to grow, therefore studying how to teach these students is integral.
- Lev Vygotsky's theory of scaffolding to increase ELL students' comprehension states that learning, motivation and emotions are interconnected processes (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky believed that by listening to and cultivating students' emotions will increase their motivation. Motivating students is essential in order to strengthen their inner desire to learn.
- Park (2014) used Emotional scaffolding so that "teachers can help students move forward in their understanding of academic concepts by stepping in at key moments and supporting emotions which will help students persist." (Park, 2014, p.21). They focus on the idea that if teachers create a learning environment that supports the students' positive experiences in order to help them achieve their goals, the student will be motivated to be successful.
- Brown and Broemmel, (2011) believe that teachers should look at ELLs as glasses half full not half empty and recognize their potential as readers based on the fact that they have a proficient knowledge base in their native language. In addition to learning English, ELLs are also responsible for learning math, science, and social studies content, so it goes without saying that their struggles with reading comprehension often impact their ability to learn across content areas.
- Rachael M. Howard (2012) looked at how ELLs felt about reading, and what books they preferred to read. She interviewed ELL students to determine how motivated they were, and how supported they felt by their teachers. ELLs struggle with reading especially because they are expected to master the same concepts as native speakers which is creating a large gap in comprehension. Teachers can remedy this issue by simply getting to know their students on a deeper level and give them the tools to work towards success in reading.



SUPPORTING DATA

Participants

21 elementary students ages 6-8

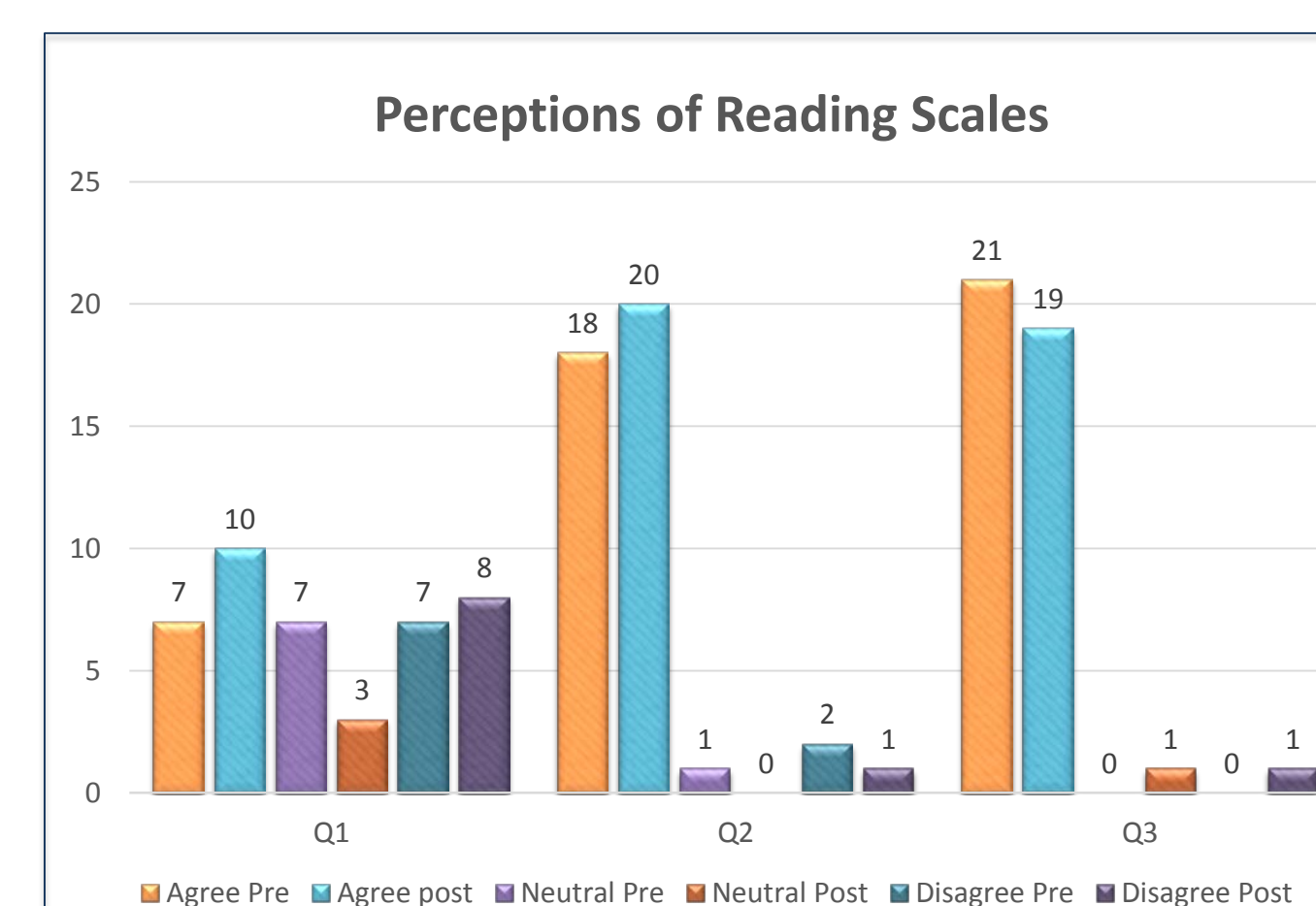
Girls	9
Boys	12
English Language Learners	18

Procedure

- Students were informed that they would be learning about plants through reading and would be asked to take a test before and after the unit. Participants then were guided through a 14 question pretest made up of 6 perceptions of reading questions and 8 academic questions about the topic. Each participant was required to answer the questions to the best of their ability.
- After the pretest data was analyzed, students were engaged in a five day unit integrating reading and the science of plants. Throughout the week their work was collected to be made into a book that they could take home to share their knowledge of plants.
- Finally participants completed a post-test that consisted of the same 14 questions as the pretest assessment. Each participant was reminded to answer all questions to the best of their ability.

Results

- The pre/post tests were compared based on the students' feelings towards reading using a scale and multiple choice questions.
 - On the post-test 38% of the students do not feel nervous before reading a book by themselves. (33% felt this way on the pretest.)
 - 95% of students felt that they could be better readers with continued help from their teacher on the post-test. (86% on the pretest believed this.)
 - 90% of students on the post-test felt like they wanted to become a better reader. (100% on the pretest.)
 - On the post-test 90% of students felt happy when reading an unfamiliar book. (81% on the pretest.)
 - 43% of students want their teacher to help them with letter sounds on the posttest. (10% on the pretest.)
 - Students goal for reading on the posttest was to be able to read unfamiliar words correctly (43%). (33% on the pretest.)

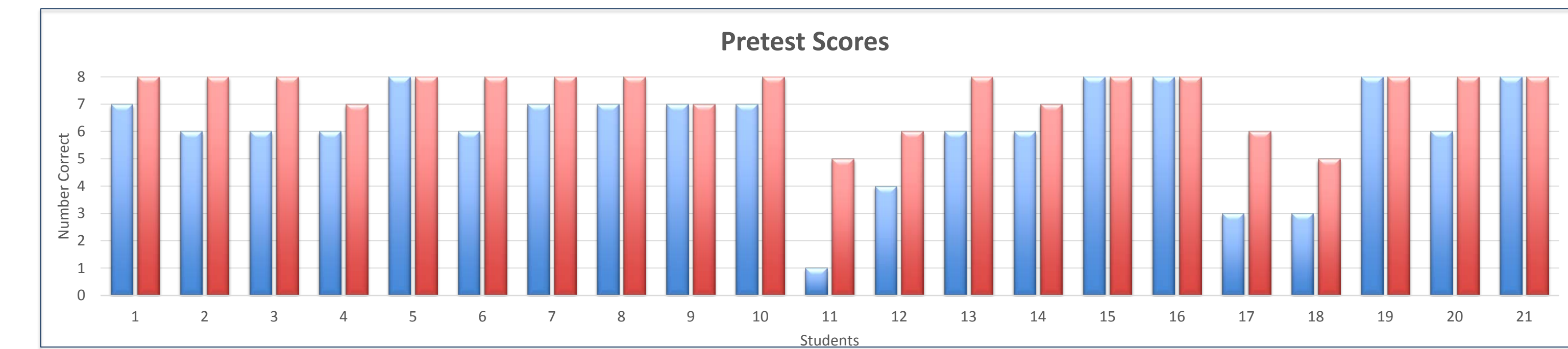


Student #	Q4 Pre	Q4 Post	Q5 Pre	Q5 Post	Q6 Pre	Q6 Post
1	B	A	C	C	A	A
2	A	A	C	C	B	B
3	A	B	B	A	A	B
4	A	A	A	B	A	C
5	A	C	B	B	B	B
6	A	C	B	B	B	C
7	A	A	B	A	A	B
8	A	A	A	A	A	B
9	A	A	A	A	A	C
10	A	A	B	A	C	C
11	A	C	A	B	A	A
12	A	C	A	B	A	A
13	A	A	B	B	A	A
14	B	A	B	B	B	B
15	A	A	A	B	C	C
16	C	A	C	B	B	B
17	A	B	A	B	B	B
18	A	A	B	B	B	B
19	A	C	A	B	A	A
20	A	B	A	A	A	A
21	A	A	C	B	B	B

Majority of students felt: A. Happy A. Happy A. Read books with me more B. Help me with letter sounds B. Read harder books by myself B. Read harder books by myself

2. The pre/post tests were compared based on the students' knowledge about the topic of plants using fill in the blank with a word bank, and multiple choice questions.

- 81% of students scored above 80% (B) on the post-test when asked to label a plant based on its parts and correctly answer multiple choice questions. (48% scored above an 80% on the pretest.)
- 71% of students made an increase in number of correct answers by at least 1 question from the pretest to the post-test.



CONCLUSION

Discussion

- The increase or consistency of all students' test scores from pre to post test proves that the majority of students benefitted from their participation in the assessment cycle. Though the emotional scaffolding process requires more than a week to really assess, in this short timeframe I was able to incorporate it through the relationships I have been building all semester. The results show an increase in correct answers and positive responses towards reading.
- Throughout the unit students were constantly able to think deeper about the topic and truly enjoyed the learning process. Integrating the concept of emotional scaffolding with reading allowed the students to expand their knowledge while participating in thoughtful discussion of the topic. They also completed a range of associated tasks with enthusiasm and higher level thinking. I made it my goal to create an atmosphere that was positive and promoted hard work and celebrating success.
- It is hypothesized that using emotional scaffolding in the urban elementary classroom will benefit ELL students by increasing their internal motivation to be a successful reader through deepening the teacher student relationship.

REFERENCES

- Brown, C. L., & Broemmel, A. D. (2011). Deep scaffolding: Enhancing the reading experiences of English language learners. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 46(2), 34-39,101.
- Horsford, S. D., & Sampson, C. (2013). High-ELL-Growth States: Expanding Funding Equity and Opportunity for English Language Learners. *Voices in Urban Education*.
- Howard, R. M. (2012, Fall). ELLs' perceptions of reading. *Reading Improvement*, 49(3), 113+.
- Park, M. (2014). Increasing English language learners' engagement in instruction through emotional scaffolding. *Multicultural Education*, 22(1), 20-29.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological process*. Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press.