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Effectiveness of Sight Word and Repeated Reading Interventions in the Primary Classroom

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Effectiveness of Sight Word and Repeated Reading Interventions in the Primary Classroom

A Project Presented to
The Graduate Faculty of
Minnesota State University Moorhead

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of my research is to determine if sight word interventions and repeated reading interventions are effective when it comes to increasing reading achievement in primary age students. These interventions are fast paced and focus on intentional teaching practices of reading skills that are critical for emerging readers. Each intervention lasted 5 minutes. One group received direct, explicit teaching and practice of sight words. The other intervention allowed students more freedom in reading a familiar book, to gain confidence and improve their fluency.

Chapter One

General Problem

Background Information. The purpose of my research is to determine if sight word interventions and repeated reading interventions are effective when it comes to increasing reading achievement in primary age students.

To gain some background for topic, I have read a variety of articles, books, research, and teacher blogs about teaching guided reading to find one that works for me. It seems as if every teacher, researcher, author, and/or administrator has a different opinion about what the best routine, model, or procedures are for teaching guided reading. Some want teachers to spend the entire time reading with no focus on word work, others say writing must be integrated into every guided reading lesson, others say that every day you have to be reading a new leveled reader, and another researcher insists that guided reading should be done by meeting with one student at a time. Trying to determine which routine, or guided reading model to follow is frustrating and challenging. I am choosing to research sight word and repeated reading interventions to learn which one, if applicable is more effective for increasing the reading abilities of students.

Rationale. My rationale for choosing sight words and repeated reading as my topic because a large chunk of my literacy instructional time is spent teaching guided reading, and I have researched many different routines and ways to teach guided reading, but I want to determine if there is an intervention that is most effective. I think this topic is manageable because I already teach guided reading so my students are familiar, I have a decent knowledge base built up regarding these two interventions, and I have the resources available to conduct the research. It is an ethical topic because students will not know the research is being done, and

much of my research will be done using data points/assessments that I am already using to go along with reading other educational research articles.

I believe my topic is very significant because as I stated earlier, a large portion of my literacy block is spend teaching guided reading with my students. If I can learn about an intervention that that is more effective than others, it will affect the students and my teaching in a positive way for years to come.

Subject and Setting

Description of subjects. Participants will be 8 first grade students who are currently reading at the Fountas & Pinnell Reading Level F-H. 5 of these students are white males. The other 3 students are white females. These are students who are reading, but are not meeting the grade level criteria based on the Fountas and Pinnell Data.

Selection criteria. Students who will be participating in the research will be picked randomly. Their name will be written down, put in a tub, picked, and put alternatively into Group 1 and Group 2. Each group will have 4 students.

Description of setting. This study will take place in a small, rural town in Minnesota. The school has approximately 500 students K-6, has excellent technology for students and teacher, and has a great culture and commitment to teachers building relationships with kids. The student body is 95% white, 1% Hispanic, and 1 % Black or African American. 20% of students receive Special Education services, and 56% of students receive free and reduced lunch.

Research Ethics.

Permission was obtained from the IRB at Minnesota State University – Moorhead and the school district I work in. Permission will be received from the Superintendent of the school and the principal at the school where the study will be done at. All participants' information

remained private throughout the study, pseudonyms were used, and consent was obtained by all of the students' parents before conducting the study. The students involved in the study are at no more than a minimal risk as both interventions that are being studied are research based, and have been proven to be effective. All students still received core instruction in conjunction with the interventions.

CHAPTER TWO

Existing Research

Sight word research has many different theories and strategies. It has been found that students who do not have early literacy skills by the end of first grade are at risk of not progressing in reading fluency through third grade (Bertelsen, 2016). Learning to automatically recognize sight words can make reading fluently much easier. Regarding sight words, there are two well-known researchers who created an order of sight words for teachers to use to teach sight words to their children. These two are Dolch and Fry, both have well known sight word lists that teachers across the world use (Bertelsen, 2016).

Strategic incremental rehearsal intervention. Using the Dolch and Fry lists, there are many different ways to teach sight words. Strategic Incremental Rehearsal is an intervention that was found to be highly effective when used within the Multi-Tiered System of Support (January, S., Lovelace, M., Foster, T., & Ardoin, S., 2016). Strategic Incremental rehearsal procedure is simply a systematic introduction of new words, incremental presentation of known words, and replacing the most practiced words with new unfamiliar words (January, 2016).

Aldawish (2017) claims that incremental rehearsal intervention raised all of his students' sight word reading abilities, and they made less errors when reading.

Traditional drill intervention. Another common intervention is traditional drilling of students using flash cards. In traditional drill intervention, all words are unknown and the students continue reading the words off of flash cards until they can be read quickly, and automatically. There has been evidence that this traditional drill intervention is more effective than the Strategic Incremental Rehearsal method because all of the words are unknown to start

with, and are known at the end of the intervention, so students have learned more words over the same amount of time (January, 2016).

Multisensory approach. The multisensory approach to sight words involves the teacher using the sight words to have the students follow a procedure for each unknown word. The procedure is to have the teacher say the word, then have the students “sky” write the word three times. After skywriting, students began to chop the sight word on their arm three times while saying the word. After that, the students wrote the sight word three times on a piece of paper that was on top of a bumpy surface, then three more times on a smooth surface. On the next day, students followed a similar routine, but had to use the word verbally in a sentence, then the teacher or students dictated or wrote the sentence for them to read.

Philips and Feng (2012) found that students who read flash cards with sight words and pictures on them increased their accuracy and speed. Their conclusion was that flashcards alone increased speed more effectively, but adding pictures to the flash cards increased the students’ accuracy and their ability to retrieve and say the word after a period of time (Philips, 2012). They also found that the increase in sight word learning was directly related to the fact that the students were actively engaged and their attention was focused at a higher level than just flashing cards.

Repeated reading intervention. Repeated Reading is a commonly used intervention in which readers read a text “cold,” then continue to practice reading the story, or text until they can read it smoothly and accurately. It is commonly used for students who are struggling with their reading fluency in grades 1-3. I found that repeated reading had a positive impact on students’ reading abilities.

Ates S. conducted a study in which he had a student who was severely struggling with reading, and he worked with this student for 38 hours doing an intervention as his research (2013). During the intervention the student was given feedback; number of words read correctly, number of mistakes, reading miscues. The student read a passage “cold” and then tracked the number of words the student read in one minute and miscues. They then took a break, read the story a second time, tracking WPM and miscues. When the student made a mistake, the teacher always told the student the word, then had them read the word again. The reader also was given a video recording of their reading.

The findings of his study show that his students WCPM (Words Correct Per Minute) drastically increased, while the number of errors during the reading went way down as well. Ates felt that the feedback given to the student after each error was an influencing factor in the students’ reading skills, as well as the repeated reading.

Fixed fluency criteria intervention technique. In Kostewicz, D., Kubina R., Gallagher, D.’s research, they found that repeated reading was a highly effective intervention for students (2016). They found that often times, teachers had students do a repeated reading of a text a certain number of times (3 or 4). They conclude that when students have a “Fixed Fluency Criteria” or a reading goal to meet, and practice re-reading a story until they meet that goal, that the intervention is more successful and beneficial for increasing students’ reading fluency.

Eye tracking. In Zawoyski, A., Ardoin, S., Binder, K.’s study they were investigating how students eye movement patterns changed after reading a passage (2015). In their study, they had second grade students participate in Repeated Readings of a text. While reading, the researchers recorded and tracked the eye movements of the readers. They analyzed data from these videos such as gaze duration on words, total time reading, average number of fixations per

word, and the number of interword regressions. The authors found that when students participated in repeated reading they are more efficient in sounding out low-frequency words, and reduces the total amount of time students spent processing the text. This study was designed to help understand how Repeated Reading can lead to increased reading abilities (Zawoyski, 2015).

Conclusion. After reviewing the research base available, studies have found that Repeated Reading and Word Interventions are both effective ways to increase struggling first grade students' reading levels. The data shows that when students participate in these interventions, their ability to read increases. Comparing the two interventions is something that I hoped to find more data on, however there was no research base that compared sight word interventions to repeated reading interventions to see if one is more effective than others. Reviewing this research has made it clear that these interventions are effective when teachers use research-based procedures and do them consistently over a long period of time.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Question

How do re-reading familiar text and sight word interventions impact first grade students that are reading on or below grade level?

Instrument. The effectiveness of the re-reading familiar text and sight word interventions will be evaluated using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment. It will be determined whether a specific intervention, “Sight Words Intervention or Repeated Reading” raised their reading level more, less, or the same over the same course of time.

Design. Students took an initial assessment at the beginning of the study. The initial assessment was done using the Fountas and Pinnell Leveling system. After the initial assessment, students that were reading below grade level were randomly selected into two groups. All names were written on a piece of paper, pulled out of a bin, and separated into two groups.

Students in Group 1 were administered a 5-minute Sight Word Intervention at the beginning of each Guided Reading lesson during the week. This sight word intervention was as follows. Students first learn 3 new sight words. The intervention routine for teaching new sight words was to show and say the word. Next, students repeated the word, and said the sounds. After that they spelled the word orally. After teaching the three new words, I showed them 3 review words from the previous lesson. I then had students take turns practicing how to read the new and review sight words, one by one. After the sight word intervention, students continued with guided reading.

Students in Group 2 were administered a 5-minute Repeated Reading intervention at the beginning of each Guided Reading Lesson during the week. For this intervention, students spent 5 minutes reading books that they have previously read. When these students sat down, they had

a bin of books to choose from that they have previously read during Guided Reading. The students read their story of choice for the entire 5 minutes. I started the timer, and for five minutes they read their books, working on reading smoothly. After five minutes, the students continued on with guided reading.

All students that participated in the study were reassessed using the Fountas and Pinnell Leveling System. I analyzed the data to see if the students made reading progress. I also analyzed the data to determine if students in either group made more or less progress according to the Fountas and Pinnell Leveling System Data.

Hypothesis Statement:

Re-reading familiar text and practicing sight words are two common interventions for first grade literacy instruction. My hypothesis is that re-reading familiar texts daily is more effective for raising reading achievement in students than sight word interventions.

CHAPTER FOUR

Description of Data

At the end of the study, 7 students were given the Fountas and Pinnel Benchmark test. Their scores from the pre-assessment were compared to the results on the post-assessment. Each full letter that they increased counts for one point. Students who tested between letters (ex. E/F) counts for a ½ point increase. Students in the Sight Words Group's increases were added up and divided by 4, (# of students in this group) to find the average increase. Students in the Repeated Reading Group's scores were added up and divided by 3, (# of students in this group that were given the post-test) to find the average increase.

Results

Table 1.1 indicates the participants scores on the Fountas and Pinnel benchmark. The pretest was administered before the intervention took place. The post test was administered at the conclusion of the intervention.

Table 1.1

Sight Word Intervention

| <u>Participant</u> | <u>Pretest</u> | <u>Post-test</u> |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|
| A | H | H |
| B | H | H/I |
| C | H | H |
| D | G/H | H |

Students who received the Sight Word Intervention raised their reading level, on average, ¼ of a point higher from their original level.

Table 1.2

Repeated Reading Intervention

| <u>Participant</u> | <u>Pretest</u> | <u>Post-test</u> |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|
| E | H/I | I |
| F | F | F/G |
| G | F | F |
| H | H | NA |

Students who participated in the repeated reading intervention raised their reading level, on average, $\frac{2}{3}$ of a point from their original level. The two interventions tested concluded with very similar results, with the Repeated Reading Intervention raising the students' scores slightly more than the sight word intervention. Four out of the seven students who received an intervention raised their reading level at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of a level.

Conclusions

Both reading interventions are equally as effective for raising students' reading levels. Both raised the students' reading levels very slightly, at a very similar rate. These results were what I had expected because both interventions provide students with focused practice on a reading skill that can be applied to their everyday reading instantly. Students in both groups made improvements, which tells me that each students' individual needs should be assessed before administering them one of these interventions to make them even more effective.

The Fountas and Pinnell assessment tool worked as a great indicator of student's success. It gave me a clear indicator as to where the child's reading level was, and how much improvement they made after the intervention was administered.

CHAPTER FIVE

Action Plan

As a result of this study, I will continue to utilize these interventions in my teaching practice. To further benefit the students, rather than randomly assign them an intervention, I will assess them using Fountas and Pinnell, but also incorporate a sight word assessment and anecdotal data to determine what their individual needs are and place them into intervention groups based on their instructional needs. Each group will then be given the appropriate intervention to help them improve their reading abilities. I also found that the sight word intervention would be a great way to begin Guided Reading groups early in the year, as it is an engaging, fun way for students to gain confidence in reading sight words. The repeated reading intervention will be a great mid-year intervention once students gain more confidence as the year progresses.

Sharing Plan

My sharing plan is to share this data and research paper with my first-grade teaching colleagues. I will explain the results and encourage them to try one of the interventions with a group of struggling or below level readers. The results of this study may also be shared with other staff members, if they were to request the information.

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