



UNF Digital Commons

UNF Graduate Theses and Dissertations

Student Scholarship

1985

A Research Study of the Effect of Instruction in the Basal Reader Supplemented by the Language Experience Approach on Comprehension Scores of First Grade Readers

Nancy L. Keene
University of North Florida

Suggested Citation

Keene, Nancy L., "A Research Study of the Effect of Instruction in the Basal Reader Supplemented by the Language Experience Approach on Comprehension Scores of First Grade Readers" (1985). *UNF Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 303.
<https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/etd/303>

This Master's Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at UNF Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in UNF Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of UNF Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [Digital Projects](#).

© 1985 All Rights Reserved



A RESEARCH STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF INSTRUCTION IN
THE BASAL READER SUPPLEMENTED BY THE
LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH ON
COMPREHENSION SCORES OF FIRST GRADE READERS

by

Nancy L. Keene

A thesis submitted to the Division of Curriculum
and Instruction in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education in
Elementary Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES

April, 1985

Signature Deleted

Dr. Roy Singleton, Advisor

Signature Deleted

Dr. William Herrold, Committee

Signature Deleted

Dr. Donna Keenan, Committee

Running head: EFFECTS ON COMPREHENSION

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether children enrolled in two first grade classes who did not meet the criterion score for one or more of the seven subtests on a selected readiness test given during the first two weeks of the school year would make higher scores on selected comprehension measures when instruction in a basal reading series is supplemented with instruction in the language experience approach than children who receive instruction only in basal reader materials. Language experience activities were conducted with all reading groups in the experimental class for three days every two weeks. Group experience stories and word bank activities were not done with the control group which used only basal materials.

A factorial analysis of variance model was selected to analyze the data on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test on the main effects of type of instruction, sex, and classification of students. No significant difference at the .05 level was found for the null hypotheses tested; however, a slight non-significant difference was found in the mean scores of the target children in both classes with the language experience group having an 80% higher mean score than the control group.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT	2
CHAPTER I	
INTRODUCTION.....	4
Problem Statement.....	4
Rationale.....	4
Purpose.....	6
Definition of Terms.....	6
CHAPTER II	
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	8
Language Experience as a Total Reading Program.....	9
Language Experience used with Exceptional Children.....	14
Language Experience as a Supplement to the Basal.....	17
Conclusions.....	19
CHAPTER III	
PROCEDURES.....	21
Overall Design.....	21
Sampling.....	22
Instrumentation.....	23
Treatment.....	23
Data Analysis.....	26
CHAPTER IV	
ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS.....	27
CHAPTER V	
CONCLUSIONS.....	30
Recommendations.....	32
BIBLIOGRAPHY	37
APPENDIX A WORD BANK ACTIVITIES.....	39
APPENDIX B CHILDREN'S STORIES.....	41

Chapter I

Introduction

Problem statement: Will children enrolled in two first grade classes who did not meet the criterion score for one or more of the seven subtests of the Macmillan Series r Readiness Test given during the first two weeks of the school year make higher scores on selected comprehension measures when instruction in the Macmillan basal reader materials is supplemented with instruction in the language experience approach as compared with children who receive instruction only in the basal reader materials?

Rationale: The reading process begins with word identification. A child must first learn to recognize the unit of print called a word and then give meaning to that unit. Phonics instruction gives the child the key to decode the unknown words.

As the words are decoded, or recoded, meaning must be given to them. To comprehend the meaning of the grapho-phonetic information, the reader must first be able to relate this to prior experiences. Reading occurs only when meaning is extracted from the printed words and assimilated into the reader's existing store of information (Athey, 1983). Since the purpose of reading is communication, the potential for difficulty is reduced when the written language is built upon the existing language and experiences of the reader. The language experience approach is based on the concept that reading is most meaningful to a

child when his language patterns and experiences form the materials being read. This helps effect a smooth transition from speech to print.

Frequently when a child does not comprehend the printed word, the reason is that he can not relate to the material being read. When children begin reading instruction through the use of meaningful materials created from their own language patterns and from their realm of experiences, comprehension is present.

When the language experience approach is combined with reading instruction using the basal reader as suggested by Mallon and Berglund (1984), some of the criticisms of the program can be mitigated. The sequential development of skills can be realized through the use of the basal and further developed with cards from the children's word banks. These word banks contain words printed on small cards that the child has recognized and underlined in group and individual stories two and three days after dictation. Moreover, the repetition of vocabulary should be increased through work in the basal and its components. Language experience stories can be developed from ideas and vocabulary presented in the basal materials, thereby reinforcing some of the basal vocabulary in a more meaningful situation. Furthermore, the diagnostic materials of the basal can be used as measurements of progress in comprehension and word attack skills. The authors of the readiness test for the Macmillan basal reader series suggest that children who

do not meet the criterion scores for one or more of the subtests should have experiences with some of the Pre-Book Activities in the Teacher Edition prior to placement in the last readiness book (Smith, Arnold and Weinstein, 1983). These include oral language activities and recording of children's original stories.

Language experience reading makes the reading process more natural for the beginner because the language patterns used in the materials are not artificial but match those of the reader and he/she is not required to read unfamiliar language. Success, motivation, and interest are achieved because the reader's interests and life experiences are of value since these help constitute the materials of the reading program.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to determine whether children enrolled in two first grade classes who did not meet the criterion score for one or more of the seven subtests of the Macmillan Series r Readiness Test given during the first two weeks of the school year will make higher scores on selected comprehension measures when instruction in the Macmillan basal reader materials is supplemented with instruction in the language experience than children who receive instruction only in basal reader materials.

Definition of Terms

Initial Teaching Alphabet: The Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA) was developed in England and is a true sound symbol approach to reading

which uses 44 symbols each representing a sound in a word. These symbols are taught only as sounds and only lower case letters are used to represent the sounds.

Phonovisual Method: This is a method of teaching phonics designed to serve as readiness materials and supplement the basal reader. The program features a simplified method of phonetic instruction with the necessary materials consisting of two wall charts (consonant and vowel) and a teachers manual.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

The language experience approach to reading is built on two foundations-- experience and language. The language patterns of the reading material are determined by the child's speech and his experiences from the content (Hall, 1981). Sampson (1982) states that although most children enter school eager to read, for many this is an arduous task, possibly because the children's oral language is more sophisticated than the language of the basal and consequently opportunity for vocabulary growth is limited and the joy of reading diminished. Reading is most meaningful and natural to a child when his language patterns and experiences form the material being read.

Some of the research on this approach suggested a major criticism of the language experience approach, the lack of vocabulary controls and vocabulary repetition. The studies cited measured comprehension, sight word growth, oral language growth and attitudes toward reading. Some research involved the use as a total reading program while others measured benefits of this approach when used as a supplement to other programs. Language experience was also used with special groups of children such as the deaf, disadvantaged and bilingual. Activities for all the programs included dictation of experience stories and the more extensive studies involved activities using word bank cards for instruction and creative writing.

Language experience as a total reading program

Hahn (1967) did a study in which three approaches to beginning reading instruction (first grade) were investigated and compared. When the Initial Teaching Alphabet results were compared with the language experience approach results, no significant differences were found on standardized tests. The language experience children, however, wrote longer stories and read more books. When the experience approach was compared with the basal approach, the experience group had higher test scores on word meaning, paragraph meaning, science, social studies concepts, spelling, word study and language subtests. The experience group also recognized more words, read more books and wrote longer stories. The basal group was stronger on the writing mechanics ratio scale.

Kendrick and Bennett (1967) studied two first grade language arts programs which were extended into the second grade. In this study, the language experience approach was compared with the basal. The first group consisted of children who participated in the first grade study and remained in the treatment group until the conclusion of the second year. The secondary group consisted of those who were instructed in some "unprescribed methodology" during the first year, but received instruction in either the basal or the language arts program during the second year. The same teachers taught during both years of the study.

In the study, 120 minutes daily was allocated for language arts instruction. In the experience group, 35% of the time was for writing, illustrating and dictating, 35% was for reading student stories, library books and state adopted texts and 30% of the time was for direct skill instruction. In the traditional group, 90 minutes was direct instruction in reading and listening divided--50 minutes allocated to all three groups meeting with the teacher and 40 minutes for the low group meeting together with the high or average group with teacher instruction. Library time was 40 minutes a week. Children were instructed in handwriting and spelling skills for 20 minutes daily and 10 minutes was for direct teaching or oral and written expression.

The data were analyzed according to the sex of the children, length of time in the study and for socioeconomic class. Pre- and post-tests were given for each of the two populations (first and second year children and second year only children).

The language experience group achieved superior results for the two year treatment group in the following areas.

1. Speaking measures for both lower and higher socioeconomic (LSE and HSE) boys
2. Boys and girls of the LSE group on science and social studies concepts
3. Understanding arithmetic concepts for LSE girls

4. LSE girls for writing--running words, number of different words written and total number of words spelled correctly

The two year basal group achieved superior results in the following areas:

1. HSE girls in word meaning
2. HSE boys and girls in paragraph meaning
3. HSE girls in math computation
4. LSE boys in number of different words written and total number of words
5. HSE girls in mean sentence length
6. HSE boys in writing mechanics

These results indicate that the language experience method was more effective with LSE children and produced better oral expression regardless of socioeconomic group.

The Craft Project (Comparing Reading Approaches in First Grade Teaching) was conducted by Serwer (1969) in Black, hard-core, poverty schools in New York City. The 48 classes were divided into two groups, language experience and basal. Of the 24 language experience classes, 12 were given intensive instruction in phonics via the Phonovisual Method. In the first two grades, the children were kept together in the experimental groups. In the third year, they were randomly dispersed.

Test results at the end of the first and second year showed slight non-significant gain for the basal approach. At the end of the third year, the results showed a significant gain for the experience approach.

The test scores of the third year also produced results close to the New York City norms. Four Harlem teachers combined Phonovisual with the language experience approach and got "outstanding results" which were attributed partly to teacher competence. This study was discontinued after two years.

In 1969, Stauffer and Hammond did a report on a study of the effectiveness of the language experience approach and the basal reader extended into the third grade. The population of 22 classes was drawn from rural towns. The experimental group contained a mixed white and non-white population, but the control group was a total white population. Of the 15 hypotheses tested, the experimental group scored significantly better on eight of these. The experience group did better on writing and spelling tests including measures of creativity as well as the mechanics of writing. On the Stanford Achievement Test, a significant differences occurred for the experience group on subtests of science and social studies concepts and spelling. The basal group achieved significant results on arithmetic computation. The experimental boys scored significantly higher on the Eagerness to Read scale and made more mature choices of reading materials.

Stauffer and Pilulski (1974) designed a study to measure the oral language growth of first grade children when the language experience approach to reading was used. The materials were comprised of pupil dictated stories, both group and individual, and word banks containing

words recognized from dictation retained and recalled two and three days later. The word bank cards were used in both individual and group activities.

At the end of the year study, the dictated stories were analyzed for improvement in areas of oral language growth. Significant improvement was found for all areas and growth in the average number of words, sentences, and prepositions was particularly impressive.

A study done by Cagney in 1977 investigated the ability of kindergarten and first grade children who were speakers of Black dialect to listen with understanding to experience stories translated into Standard English. The stories were dictated by kindergarten and first grade children in the same community who were identified as speakers of the Black dialect by their teachers. Eight questions on the three levels of comprehension, literal, inferential and critical, were developed for each story.

The Standard English stories had significantly more correct responses and first graders had more correct responses than did kindergarteners. The literal and critical questions had more correct responses in the Standard English, but the inferential had more in Black dialect.

Two studies, (Sampson, 1982 and Thomas, 1980) used the Goodman-Burke miscue analysis procedure to assess comprehension of a dictated story and of a basal story. Results in both instances indicated that

children processed the dictated story more proficiently and the miscues in the dictated story did not produce a change in meaning even though the stories were at a higher readability level. Although a major claim of basal reading proponents is that beginning readers must contain primarily high frequency, phonetically regular words introduced gradually and with frequent repetition, these two studies indicate that semantic measures rather than readability levels may make texts more accessible.

Language experience used with exceptional children

Sylvia Ashton-Warner used the key vocabulary method to teach a group of Maori children in New Zealand (1963). She believes that "First words must have an intense meaning. First words must already be part of the dynamic life. First books must be made of the stuff of the child himself, whatever and wherever the child" (Ashton-Warner, 1963 p. 35). Each morning as the children entered she called them to her and asked each what word he/she wanted. The word the child selected was then written on a large sturdy card about a foot long and five inches wide. After the word was written, the child traced the letters with his/her finger and then put it away for later use. Each morning all the self-chosen words were emptied on the mat and the children find their words as they come in. They then sit with a partner and hear each other's words.

Writing follows the key vocabulary with key words being written. From there, they go on to autobiographical writing where the subjects

and language are their own and could never be captured in any book. Content is never criticized. Children then read their own stories and then someone else's story. From these stories, the Maori Transitional Readers were made. These books, made from the "stuff of the child itself", were used as a lead up to the American readers and not as a substitute.

When this method was used for two years by first grade teachers in four United States cities, the lists requested by the children had little or no relationship to the basal words. The teachers who used this method with disadvantaged children with limited backgrounds of experience and language skills reported that children were writing their own stories earlier than in previous years (Packer, 1970).

Stauffer authored an article in 1979 on using the language experience approach with deaf and hearing impaired children. This was a result of a two year study done at a school for the deaf and hearing impaired in Delaware. The experiment started with the children signing and vocalizing their responses to pictures. As the experiment continued, the stimuli were first-hand experiences and a change in language structure became apparent. The older children (grades four and five) were introduced to creative writing. The inability to use phonics and the modality of sound does not prevent children from communicating through written language, especially when instruction is based on meaningful communication.

The use of this approach was further developed by Gormley and Geoffrion (1981) where they also advocate using this method of instruction with hearing impaired students. This is an excellent strategy for teaching reading as the relationship between the reader's experiences and the written language are stressed. The word bank, written and dictated stories developed around the child's interests, prediction and retell, and letter writing are all activities suggested for use with the hearing impaired to teach meaningful reading instruction.

Spache and Spache (1977) used language experience to teach science, social studies, English and mathematics to a group of junior high school students who were economically and academically disadvantaged. At the end of the first year of the project, the tests showed significantly greater gains for these students than had been achieved in previous years.

George Spache also used language experience with severely brain-damaged patients to recover their academic and vocational skills enabling them to resume their vocation or schooling. In three cases, language experience combined with speech and physical therapy helped to recover their language abilities to almost their original educational level.

Language experience was also found effective in a workshop with kindergarten and first grade children where the approach was demonstrated to teachers (Feeley, 1977). The six children were

beginning readers and bilingual. A poem was read and repeated for the children to join in on the "easy to remember" parts followed by first hand experience making "frosted funnies". The steps for making this were recorded with the children and the chart was read together. This activity was followed by making "I like _____." where pictures of foods were drawn and words used to complete the sentence which the children then read to each other. The poem recited at the beginning was then distributed, followed by copies of the "Frosted Funnies" experience story which the children then read.

Another use of language experience was with a group of educationally disadvantaged Black Title I children in a summer camp project. (Sinatra, 1975). At least ten hours per week were devoted to reading instruction per child. Language experience was used in seven activity areas with an hour lesson for each activity. The vocabulary for each lesson was taught, demonstrated and used. Following the activity, the children had to write what they had learned from that lesson. Children at almost all grade levels were able to significantly improve word recognition through use of the language experience approach to teaching the vocabulary for the lessons.

Language experience as a supplement to the basal

Only two studies were found in which the language experience approach was used as a supplement to the basal program, although

experience story writing is included in the readiness level of most basal programs and sometimes even extended into the preprimers.

In the first study, Asplund and Sunal (1976) used the language experience approach in the afternoons with ten second grade students in a slow reading group. All received instruction for 90 minutes during the morning for four weeks. In the afternoons for 60 minutes, five children used the basal program which was designed for children with reading difficulties, while five dictated and read experience stories. The children selected the topics, some of which were related to themes of the basal stories. The language experience group read their dictated stories to a third grade partner who also checked word recognition. Pre- and post-tests for both groups consisted of reading 180 words in isolation.

The experience group achieved 10% greater sight vocabulary than the basal group and exceeded the mean gain in word recognition for both groups by 80%. Only 20% of the basal group exceeded the mean gain. They concluded that the experience activities reinforced the basal vocabulary by allowing children to use difficult words in the meaningful context of their own language.

Allen and Laminack (1982) cited an experiment in which three first grade teachers used the language experience approach during the time when some children went to remedial reading classes. Others in the school used "programmed phonics materials supplemented by relatively old basal readers" (Allen & Laminack, 1982 p. 709).

Activities for the first eight days consisted of pictures with sentence captions. Subjects for the pictures were incomplete sentences such as, "On my way to school I saw ____.", color words, "The ____ is brown." and Ashton-Warner's key vocabulary approach. Words remembered were given to the children to be placed in a word bank. Most popular responses were recorded on a chart along with words the class as a whole remembered.

Group stories started on the eighth day and the first story was about a marshmallow the children were given to feel, smell and eat. Words remembered several days after dictation of these stories were also put into the word banks.

When the California Achievement Test was given in April, the children taught by the language experience method achieved an average grade equivalent of 2.1 as compared with the school average of 1.9 and the county average of 1.8.

Conclusions

These studies in general support the use of the language experience approach as a total program, with exceptional children, and as a supplement to the basal program. Only one study (Cagney, 1977) refuted the theory that children comprehend better when the materials being read are written in their own language. When compared to the basal, success of varying degrees was achieved in different areas. While all children received some benefit from this method used in

various forms, boys and economically and academically disadvantaged children seemed to make more progress than others when instructed in the language experience approach.

The reasons for the success the program has met perhaps lie in the nature of the program. Although the language patterns of the materials are much advanced over those of the basal, children find these materials easier to read because, as Ashton-Warner states, "They are made of the stuff of the child itself". In this program, the interrelationship of all the communication skills is stressed (Hall, 1981). Reading is integrated naturally with the other language arts skills. Speaking, listening, writing, and reading are all aspects of the approach with each dependent on the other as a major part of the program.

This study attempted to discover the effect the language experience approach has on reading comprehension when used as a supplement to the basal program. Activities included writing experience stories, word bank activities, and creative writing. All aspects of the language arts were integrated in the program.

Chapter III

Procedures

Overall design

The purpose of this study was to determine whether children enrolled in two first grade classes who did not meet the criterion score for one or more of the seven subtests of the Macmillan Series r Readiness Test (1983) given during the second week of the school year would make higher scores on selected comprehension measures when instruction in the Macmillan basal reader materials (1983) is supplemented with instruction in the language experience approach as compared with children who received instruction only in basal reader materials.

The experimental group received instruction in the Macmillan Series r basal reader materials supplemented by instruction in language experience activities. These included key vocabulary activities (Ashton-Warner, 1963), pictures with sentence captions, experience stories (both group and individual), and word bank activities. The control group received instruction only in Macmillan basal materials.

Testing to identify the children was done during the second week of school and the study continued until the post-test was given in March. The children were further subdivided into flexible reading groups in each class.

Sampling

The children were members of two heterogeneously grouped first grade classes in an elementary school, grades one through five, where the population is predominately middle class. All the children in the county attend kindergarten at the Kindergarten Center. The children in the two classes are identified in Table 1.

Instrumentation

Identification of the children for this study was done through scores on the Macmillan Series r Readiness Test (1983). This test is designed to measure readiness in seven areas: visual discrimination-- letters and words, letter discrimination--upper and lower case, auditory discrimination--oral, auditory discrimination--rhyming, concepts-- spatial relationships, vocabulary--oral, and listening comprehension. Percentiles on the subtests to meet criterion scores range from 75% on listening to 83% on concepts. Any child in the two classes who did not meet the criterion score for one or more subtests qualified for this study.

Post-testing was done with the comprehension section of the Macmillan assessment tests for each of the first grade levels, four through ten and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, second edition (1978) Level A, Form 2, comprehension section.

Treatment

Instruction in basal materials for both groups began the third week of school. The first two weeks for both classes included readiness

Table 1

Sampling

Control Group

<u>Name</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Test Scores Below Criterion Level</u>
Will	M	Auditory Discrimination--Initial Consonants
Bob	M	Listening Skills--Sequencing
Arthur	M	Auditory Discrimination--Initial Consonants
Jackie	F	Visual Discrimination--Letters and Words Auditory Discrimination--Rhyming
Stanley	M	Auditory Discrimination--Rhyming Listening Skills--Sequencing
Harry	M	Auditory Discrimination--Initial Consonants Auditory Discrimination--Rhyming Listening--Sequencing

Experimental group

Ann	F	Auditory Discrimination--Initial Consonants
Kate	F	Auditory Discrimination--Initial Consonants
Gerry	F	Auditory Discrimination--Initial Consonants
Jason	M	Auditory Discrimination--Initial Consonants
Tommy	M	Auditory Discrimination--Initial Consonants
Frederick	M	Auditory Discrimination--Rhyming
James	M	Auditory Discrimination--Rhyming
Ashley	M	Auditory Discrimination--Rhyming Auditory Discrimination--Initial Consonants
Riley	M	Visual Discrimination--Letters and Words Auditory Discrimination--Rhyming Auditory Discrimination--Initial Consonants

Table 1 (continued)

Experimental Group (continued)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Test Scores Below Criterion Level</u>
Jennifer	F	Auditory Discrimination--Initial Consonants Auditory Discrimination--Rhyming Listening Skills--Sequencing
Marie	F	Auditory Discrimination--Initial Consonants Auditory Discrimination--Rhyming Listening Skills--Sequencing

Table 2

Schedule of Groups

	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
Week 1	Group 1-Basal	1-Basal	1-LEA	1-LEA	1-LEA
	Group 2-LEA	2-LEA	2-LEA	2-Basal	2-Basal
	Group 3-Basal	3-Basal	3-LEA	3-LEA	3-LEA
	Group 4-LEA	4-LEA	4-LEA	4-Basal	4-Basal

Week 2 All groups work in the basal reader and materials with word bank activities included.

This schedule was continued for the school year (until testing in March) with one week of instruction in the basal combined with instruction in language experience (dictating, reading and composing group and individual stories). The next week's schedule consisted of instruction only in the basal and language experience instruction was limited to seatwork activities with word banks.

Four centers were set up in the classroom for children to use when seatwork was completed. These included a library center, a listening center with tapes to accompany books, an art center where stories and sentences could be illustrated, and a writing center with frequently used words on a wall chart, picture dictionaries, and pencils and marker pens for writing.

Data analysis

The Gates-MacGinitie scores for the comprehension section were analyzed to determine the mean score of each group. A two way analysis of variance was computed with sex and type of instruction as variates. The data was entered in the IBM computer at the University of North Florida and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, 1975) utilized for the statistical analysis. The .05 level of significance was utilized to make the statistical decisions.

Chapter IV

Analysis of the Results

The research questions asked in the study of the effect of the language experience approach on comprehension of first grade students were as follows:

1. Does the language experience method make a difference in the reading achievement of first graders?
2. Are there sex differences in reading?
3. Is there a significant interaction between method of instruction and type of student? Sex and type of student?
4. Is there a significant interaction among sex, type of student, and type of interaction?

Results

The results of the factorial analysis are presented in Table 3.

The null hypothesis that there were no differences between the means of the language experience and control group was accepted. An F of 0.45 was computed and found to be not significant at the .05 level. There were no statistical significant differences between the means of the two groups. The language experience group had a mean of 20.78 as compared to 21.70 for the control group.

The null hypothesis that there were no differences between the means of boys and girls was accepted. An F of 0.5333 resulted and was not significant at the .05 level. There were, therefore, no

significant differences between the means of boys and girls. Boys had a mean of 21.31; girls, a mean of 21.12.

The null hypothesis that there were no differences between the means of targeted and non-targeted students was rejected. An F of 25.50 was calculated and found to be significant at the .001 level. Target children had a mean of 14.56 as compared to 24.80 for non-targeted students.

There was no significant interaction between type of instruction and type of student. Target students had a mean score of 15.80 in the language experience class and 12.50 in the control class. Non-targeted students in the language experience class had a mean of 24.62 as compared to 24.94 for the control class. An F of 0.41 was computed and was not significant at the .05 level. Target students tend to have similar achievement in both types of instructional settings according to scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests. Likewise, it is true for the non-targeted students.

There was no significant interaction between sex and type of student. An F of .003 was computed and was found not to be significant at the .05 level. There was also no significant interaction between type of instruction, sex, and type of student. An F of 1.073 was computed and found not to be significant at the .05 level.

Table 3

Factorial Analysis of Variance on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test
by Type of Instruction, Sex, and Type of Student.

<u>Source of Variation</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>d.f.</u>	<u>Mean Squares</u>	<u>F</u>
Type of Instruction	19.76	1	19.67	0.45
Sex	22.97	1	22.97	0.53
Type of Student	1115.83	1	1115.83	25.50***
Instruction x Sex	51.76	1	51.76	1.18
Instruction x Student	17.72	1	17.72	0.41
Sex x Student	0.15	1	0.15	0.00
Instruction x Sex x Student	46.94	1	46.94	1.07
Error	16662.80	38	43.76	
TOTAL	2920.37	45	64.90	

***p .001

Chapter V

Conclusions

Conclusions

Although all null hypothesis were accepted, these findings are somewhat in agreement with previously cited studies. Three studies in which language experience was used as a total program and compared with the basal were extended into the second and third year and significant results were not found until the end of the second and third years. The study by Serwer (1969) showed a slight non-significant gain for the language experience group at the end of the first year which is comparable to this study. (The mean score of the target children in the language experience group was 15.80 and in the control group, 12.50 with 50% of the children in the experimental group exceeding the mean gain for both groups and only 16% of the control group exceeded the mean gain.) The mean score of the language experience group was 80% higher than that of the control group. The experimental group had a larger number of target children and all children had completed the preprimers whereas half of the target children in the control group had only finished the second preprimer (Level 5). The reading levels and Macmillan comprehension test scores for both groups are given in Table 4.

Another important factor which may have influenced the results of this study was the diagnostic tool used--the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests. Although the test was normed for first graders when

Table 4

Macmillan Reading Levels and Comprehension Test Scores

Control Group

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Reading Level</u>	<u>Comprehension Test Score</u>
Stanley	M	7	13/13
Bob	M	7	11/13
Will	M	7	11/13
Harry	M	5	9/11
Jackie	F	5	8/11
Arthur	M	5	9/11

Language Experience Group

James	M	7	12/13
Marie	F	6	31/35
Frederick	M	7	12/13
Ashley	M	7	13/13
Ann	F	7	11/13
Riley	M	6	29/35
Gerry	F	7	13/13
Tommy	M	6	31/35
Jason	M	7	11/13
Kate	F	7	13/13

given in February, the range of the reading levels of the target children in both groups was from the third preprimer to the second half of the primer. (The average first grade child at this time (March) should be beginning the first reader.) Therefore the test scores were most valid for the better readers as the teachers of both groups observed during testing that the target children randomly marked answers for over half of the questions on the test. Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test scores for both classes are given in Table 5.

In the language experience class, the two children who were reading on a preprimer level when they entered first grade in August moved prior to the March testing and one child who had not met the criterion score for three of the subtests on the Macmillan Series r Readiness Test moved in January. Jennifer had progressed from the lowest to the highest reading group, having completed the preprimers in early January. The other children completed the preprimers in late February and some just finished the last preprimer in mid-March. The scores of these children on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests would have raised the mean score of both the entire class and the target group.

Recommendations

Although the null hypotheses were accepted and the results were not significant at the .05 level, the research in previous studies supports the use of the language experience approach with beginning

readers. This method is an excellent approach for beginning reading instruction with all first graders and should be continued throughout the year with the children who are below grade level as a supplement to the basal reader. Children on all levels benefit from the group experience stories, but those who are proceeding at a very slow rate in the basal and having difficulty remembering the vocabulary would benefit more from stories individually dictated to the teacher. As these dictated stories are reviewed and sight words common to several of these stories are found, the words will become more meaningful to the child when they are encountered in the basal. Moreover, the children will probably enjoy reading and sharing their stories more than struggling with those in the basal, and reading will become a more enjoyable experience.

Table 5

Comprehension Test Scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests

Control Group

Child Number/Name	Sex	Raw Score	Target Child (Yes/No)
1	M	39/40	No
2	M	36/40	No
3	M	34/40	No
4	F	33/40	No
5	M	32/40	No
6	F	31/40	No
7	F	29/40	No
8	M	26/40	No
9	M	24/40	No
10	M	24/40	No
11	M	23/40	No
12 Stanley	M	23/40	Yes
13	M	18/40	No
14	M	17/40	No
15	M	17/40	No
16	F	16/40	No
17	M	13/40	No

Table 5 (continued)

Control Group (continued)

Child Number/Name	Sex	Raw Score	Target Child (Yes/No)
18 Bob	M	13/40	Yes
19 Will	M	13/40	Yes
20 Harry	M	11/40	Yes
21	M	11/40	No
22 Jackie	F	9/40	Yes
23 Arthur	M	6/40	Yes

Language Experience Group

1	M	34/40	No
2	M	31/40	No
3	F	31/40	No
4	M	30/40	No
5	F	28/40	No
6	F	23/40	No
7	M	22/40	No
8	F	22/40	No
9 James	M	22/40	Yes
10	F	21/40	No
11	M	21/40	No
12	F	20/40	No
13	F	20/40	No

Table 5 (continued)

Language Experience Group (continued)

<u>Child Number/Name</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Raw Score</u>	<u>Target Child (Yes/No)</u>
14 Marie	F	19/40	Yes
15 Frederick	M	18/40	Yes
16 Ashley	M	18/40	Yes
17	F	17/40	No
18 Ann	F	16/40	Yes
19 Riley	M	14/40	Yes
20 Gerry	F	14/40	Yes
21 Tommy	M	14/40	Yes
22 Jason	M	13/40	Yes
23 Kate	F	10/40	Yes

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, E. G. & Laminack, L. L. (1982). Language experience reading--it's a natural. The Reading Teacher, 35, 708-714.
- Allen, R. V. & Allen, Claryce. (1982). Language experience activities. (2nd ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Ashton-Warner, S. (1963). Teacher. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Asplund, B. B. & Sunal, C. S. (1976). The effectiveness of the language experience approach as a supplement to a basal reader program. (Research Report). West Virginia.
- Athey, I. (1983). Language development factors related to reading development. Journal of Educational Research, 76, 197-203.
- Cagney, M. A. (1977). Children's ability to understand standard English and Black dialect. The Reading Teacher, 30, 607-610.
- Feeley, J. T. (1979). A workshop tried and true: Language experience for bilinguals. The Reading Teacher, 33, 25-27.
- Gormley, K. A. & Gerffrion, L. D. (1981). Another view of using language experience to teach reading to deaf and hearing-impaired children. The Reading Teacher, 34, 519-525.
- Hahn, H. T. (1967). Three approaches to beginning reading instruction ITA, language experience, and basic readers--extended into third grade. The Reading Teacher, 20, 711-715.
- Hall, M. A. (1981). Teaching reading as a language experience. (3rd. ed.) Columbus: Merrill.
- Kendrick, W. M. & Bennett, C. L. (1967). A comparative study of two first grade language arts programs--extended into second grade. The Reading Teacher, 20, 747-755.
- Mallon, B. & Berglund, R. (1984). The language experience approach to reading: Reoccurring questions and their answers. The Reading Teacher, 37, 867-871.
- Nie, N. H., Hull, C. H., Jenkins, J. G., Steingrenner, K. & Bent, D. H. (1975). Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. (2nd. ed.). New York.

- Packer, A. B. (1970). Ashton-Warner's key vocabulary for the disadvantaged. The Reading Teacher, 23, 559-564.
- Quandt, I. (1973). Investing in word banks--a practice for any approach. The Reading Teacher, 27, 171-173.
- Sampson, M. R., Briggs, L. D., & White, J. H. (1982, December). Student authorship and reading: The joy of literacy. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Reading Conference, Clearwater Beach, FL.
- Serwer, B. L. (1969). Linguistic support for a method of teaching reading to Black children. Reading Research Quarterly, 42, 468-499.
- Sinatra, R. C. (1975). Language experience in Title I summer camping problems. Reading Improvement, 12, 148-156.
- Smith, C. B., Arnold, V. A., & Weinstein, M. A. (1983). Off we go. New York: Macmillan
- Spache, G. D. & Spache, E. B. (1977). Reading in the elementary school. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Stauffer, R. G. (1980). The language experience approach to the teaching of reading. New York: Harper & Row.
- Stauffer, R. G. (1979). The language experience approach to reading instruction for deaf and hearing impaired children. The Reading Teacher, 33, 21-24.
- Stauffer, R. G. & Hammond, W. D. (1969). The effectiveness of language arts and basic reader approaches to first grade reading instruction--extended into third grade. Reading Research Quarterly, 4, 468-499.
- Stauffer, R. G., & Pikulski, J. J. (1974). A comparison and measure of oral language growth. Elementary English, 51, 1151-1155.
- Thomas, S. K. (1980). The effect of reader-authored materials on the performance of beginning readers. (Research Report). East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University.
- Veatch, J. (1973). Key words to reading: The language experience approach begins. Columbus: Merrill

Appendix A

Word Bank Activities

Ideas for word bank activities were taken from Veatch (1973), Quandt (1973), Stauffer (1980), Hall (1981), and Allen & Allen (1982).

Classifying Words

Beginning sounds

Ending sounds

Long and short vowel sounds

Family words (-at, -and, -it, -ide, etc.)

Structural endings (-s, -ing, -ed)

Words with two letters

Words with three letters

Names of people

Things you can do

Names of things you can see, touch, hear, smell, or taste

Alphabetizing Words

Select ten words and put them in alphabetical order

Given the first word, find nine more that will follow

Given the second word, find one that will go before and eight to follow

Alphabetize words to the second and third letter

Cut and Paste Activities

Find known words in newspapers and magazines

Appendix A (continued)

Cut and Paste Activities (continued)

Find the same word in different sizes and types

Find words that can be put together to make compounds

Find words that can go together to make sentences

Other Activities

Make sentences on felt boards with word cards

Match words with another child finding those you have alike

Make questions on the felt boards for another child to answer

Find words that can be used to describe yourself or a friend

Take a word and change the beginning sound to make rhyming words

Find as many different words as possible to complete or finish the same sentence

Appendix B

Children's Stories

Individually Written Stories

"I dreamed of a octopus tearing up the town. Brenda dreamed she had a blue one dollar and tow red dollars. Keisha dreamed she was out in the rain by she self. She get killed by the cofe pot. The cofe pot get a knife out of he tool bank in he stomach and sticked she in she eye."

Written by Kate

"I have a monster. He is mean to other pepul. He came out of space. He likes me and I like him. He does what I say. He is stroug and tears down buildings and he tore down a space ship."

Written by James

"Popcorn taste good.
Popcorn feels sate.
Popcorn smells dlishis.
Popcorn sounds like a war.
Popcorn looks white."

Written by Ann

"I flyed to a world. I saw a road. It is brown and bumpy. I sol a meen black monster with long arms and ears like a roccoon. There was meen trees. I ran to my spaceship. It flyed away."

Written by Gerry

A Student Dictated Story

The Ugly Girls and the Pretty Boys

"The girls run after the boys. The boys ran after the girls. The boys tripped the girls and caught them and put them in handcuffs and took them to jail."

Written by Riley

Appendix B (continued)

A Group Dictated Story

The Shark Story

"Marie, Tommy, Riley, Shanna, and Jason fished for a shark. They fished from a big, big boat in the ocean. Jason got bit by a shark. He was sitting by the edge of the boat and moving his hand in the water. The shark bit his hand and pulled him in the water. Marie dived in to get Jason. Riley and Shanna pulled Jason in the boat. They all took him to the hospital".

Written by Marie, Tommy, Riley, Shanna, and Jason