Implementing the Reading Counts Program in Seventh Grade Language Arts

Classes to Improve WASL Reading Scores

A Special Project

Presented to

Dr. Jack McPherson

Heritage College

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FACULTY APPROVAL

Implementing the Reading Counts Program in Seventh Grade Language Arts

Classes to Improve WASL Reading Scores

Approved for the Faculty

_____, Dr. Jack McPherson

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this experimental research project was to determine

whether implementing the Reading Counts program into the curriculum improved

reading scores on the WASL. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected

literature was conducted, which focused on: the No Child Left Behind federal

legislation; the Washington State Assessment of Student Learning (WASL);

silent reading; and, the Reading Counts program. The effects of using the Reading

Counts program with seventh grade students at Chief Joseph Middle School,

Richland, Washington, during the 2002-2003 school year, was investigated.

Findings produced by the study supported the hypothesis that using the Reading

Counts Program as a supplement to the regular Language Arts curriculum would

have positive gains on WASL reading scores.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This project is dedicated to my son, Aiden James DeVere. I want him to know that anything is possible if you put your mind to it. Thanks for being with me all the way. To my husband, Jason, for showing me that it can be done. To my parents, for supporting and helping me in so many ways so that I could reach my goal of a Masters Degree. I appreciate all the effort and sacrifice that my family has made during my pursuit, thank you.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

Like air, food and water, reading is a skill that students needed to survive

in today's society. Reading was a skill that students needed to participate in any

subject whether it was science, math, social studies or art. As suggested by Santa

(1999), reading has become the best gift teachers can give to students. Said

Santa:

> Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write
>
> more than any other time in human history. They will need advanced
>
> levels of literacy to perform jobs, run their personal households, act as
>
> citizens and conduct their personal lives. They will need their literacy to
>
> cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn.
>
> They will need literacy to feed their imaginations so they can create the
>
> world of the future. In a complex and sometimes dangerous world, their
>
> ability to read will be crucial. Continual instruction beyond the early
>
> grades is needed. (p. 99)

Education was a huge part of Washington State Governor Gary Locke's

campaign agenda when he was elected to govern Washington in 1997. In 1999,

Gary Locke, stated that forty percent of all children were reading below the basic

level on national reading assessments. While test scores have recently been on the

rise, Washington State still has a long way to go. As stated by Governor Locke:

State leaders are making great strides to improve reading achievement. It is my passionate belief, as it was the belief of Governor Rogers 100 years ago, that a relentless focus on creating avid readers will do a vast and incalculable good and it will help to raise the character of the future men and women of this state to a higher plane (2001).

During the 2000-2001 school year, only 38.8% of the Chief Joseph Middle School (CJMS) seventh grade students, in the Richland, Washington School District, met the standards for reading on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). Those scores prompted the incoming principal to make reading improvement a top priority on the list of items to change. In fact, at that time the entire Richland School District did not meet or exceed the state average for reading. Nor did they qualify as a district that met their improvement goal (OSPI, 2001).

According to Fielding Kerr, and Rosier (1998), reading has become our first and most basic educational process. These authorities stated:

Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through third grade, children learn to read. Thereafter they read to learn. Children who read successfully by third grade do well in schools. Children who do not learn to read well by third grade do poorly. This can lead to children performing poorly for the rest of their lives (p. 25).

Children who do not learn the basic skills of reading in their early years hinder their learning for the rest of their lives. This will be even more evident as society moves into the 21st century.

Fielding, Kerr and Rosier (1998) contended that skilled readers do well in our society from the time they start their first job as students until they retire from jobs in business and industry six decades later. Fielding, Kerr and Rosier stated:

> Unskilled readers struggle in our society. With the increasing use of the Internet for information and communication, good reading skills are more important than ever before (p. 30).

Students need to have acquired the skills to read at an early age. It was not something students could just show up to school and do. Those students who did not come to school with basic skills are the students who struggled the most with reading. Quatroche (2000) expressed:

> Learning to read has been described as a complex process. Most children learn to read and continue to grow in their mastery of this process. However, there continued to be a group of children for whom learning to read was a struggle. This group that continued to struggle presented a challenge to our schools. Thus, the development of effective intervention and instructional strategies were needed (p. 62).

Curriculum needed to be revamped in order to ensure that every child was reading at grade level, to meet the statewide standards. Parents, teachers, administrators, and the community needed to come together to build a brighter today and tomorrow.

In a recent speech, Washington State's Governor Gary Locke (2002) explained how students typically come to school with very different levels of reading preparation and how they master the skills of reading at different rates. Adopting and implementing a literacy program into the curriculum would yield the best results. Teachers needed to be more diagnostic and intentional in their teaching. They must have the skills and knowledge to implement many different literacy programs, reaching and teaching each and every child in the classroom. Said Locke:

> Our first priority as a state must be to provide the best education possible to all of our children. And while education reform is leading to all kinds of improvements and innovations that are making our schools more effective, we also know that teachers cannot do it alone (speech).

Many different reading programs and methods have been developed for use by classroom teachers. One program the researcher found to be both exciting and beneficial in teaching students the fundamentals of reading was the Reading Counts program. Children enjoyed reading interesting stories and earning points through a computer based program. They also participated in a daily Eagle Power

reading program that provided a daily, 20-minute reading time Monday through Friday.

Statement of the Problem

Statewide assessment tests, such as the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), have indicated that all seventh grade students at CJMS were not reading and/or performing at grade level. To address this problem, administration at CJMS approved the use of Reading Counts and Eagle Power as a way to improve state WASL scores. If reading scores did not improve, the school could potentially become a low performing school on probation.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this experimental research project was to determine whether implementing the Reading Counts program into the curriculum improved reading scores on the WASL. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted, which focused on: the No Child Left Behind federal legislation; the Washington State Assessment of Student Learning (WASL); silent reading; and, the Reading Counts program. The effects of using the Reading Counts program with seventh grade students at Chief Joseph Middle School, Richland, Washington, during the 2002-2003 school year, was investigated.

Delimitations

The researcher (Kristin J. DeVere) included seventh grade students from CJMS during the academic school years 2001 to 2002, and 2002 to 2003. The students included in the project were a combination of high, average and low

economic status. Also included were English as a second language learners and students with special needs. Instructional materials use in this study was selected from the Reading Counts program, Scholastic Reading Inventory, Eagle Power, and the WASL.

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the following assumptions were believed to be true:

1. Students were similar and no sorting was done.

2. The curriculum was appropriate for the students.

3. The teachers were qualified and capable of implementing the programs.

4. Students put forth their best efforts on the WASL.

5. Any improvement on WASL reading scores would be the primary result of implementing the Reading Counts program.

Hypothesis

CJMS seventh grade students who participated in the Reading Counts program and Eagle Power showed increased performance on the reading portion of the WASL than those seventh grade students who did not participate in the Reading Counts program and Eagle Power at CJMS.

Null Hypothesis

There was no significant difference between those seventh grade students who participated in the Reading Counts program and those seventh grade students

who did not participate in the Reading Counts program. Significance was determined for *p* (probability) to be greater than or equal to .05, .01, .001.

Significance of the Project

The results of this experimental research project were used to examine the success of Reading Counts program and the effect of this program on WASL scores. At the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year, the Reading Counts program was implemented. A significant number of seventh grade students had not met the reading standards on the WASL, a factor that could impact them for the rest of their lives. Resulting concerns over low reading scores on the WASL prompted the CJMS principal to make reading improvement a building-wide goal.

Procedure

After the 2000-2001 WASL scores were released, CJMS teachers and administrators recognized that only 38.8% of seventh grade students met the reading requirements on the WASL. Reading achievement on the WASL was such a concern that the principal made reading improvement a building-wide goal. This goal included improvement of reading scores on the WASL.

During June of 2002 a leadership team, representing CJMS, attended the OSPI summer conference and returned with a design to improve reading. After much discussion on the part of administration, the leadership team, and the Language Arts department, they decided that the best way to increase scores and impact all grades was to implement a silent reading time, also known in the school as Eagle Power. This was implemented in the fall of 2002.

The seventh grade teachers moved this process one step further and included the Reading Counts program into the seventh grade curriculum in October of 2002. Prior to implementing Reading Counts, the seventh grade teachers studied several programs in the spring of 2002. The seventh grade teachers selected the Reading Counts program because it was similar to other reading programs used by some students in the past, yet was age appropriate for middle school students. The seventh grade teachers were trained to use the Reading Counts program in September of 2002 and, in turn, trained the entire staff in October of 2002.

At the same time, teachers in the building were provided with research and statistics that supported what was thought to be true: kids needed time to read for pleasure. This sent a clear message to students that reading was important.

Over the course of the 2002-2003 school year, students were given a daily 20-minute reading time at the start of each day. In the Language Arts classrooms, they were given opportunities to take tests, choose books from the library and read. In May, they took the WASL. The test scores were reviewed and compared to those seventh grade students from the 2001-2002 school year to see if the Reading Counts program and Eagle Power made a difference in reading scores.

While test scores alone could not have been the only basis on which student achievement was judged, the scores were a big part of the implementation of the Reading Counts program and therefore a satisfactory form of assessment. However beneficial the new program may have seemed, the researcher examined

the scores to see if the implementation of such a program had indeed helped to improve reading scores on the WASL.

Definition of Terms

Eagle Power. A silent reading time that allowed students 20 minutes of per day.

Experimental Research. Research in which at least one independent variable is manipulated, other relevant variables are controlled, and the effect on one or more dependent variables is observed.

Probability. The process of selecting a sample using sampling techniques which permits the researcher to specify the probability, or chance, that each member of a defined population has of being selected for the sample.

Random Sampling. The process of selecting a sample in such a way that all individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample.

Reading Counts. A computer based program that allowed students to choose books ant take tests.

Scholastic Reading Inventory. A computerized test that helped students choose books for Reading counts that fall within their reading level.

T-Test for Independent Samples. A parametric test of significance used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the means of two independent samples at a selected probability level.

Washington Assessment of Student Learning. A high stakes test measurement.

Acronyms

CJMS. Chief Joseph Middle School

EALRS. Essential Academic Learning Requirements

NCLB. No Child Left Behind Act

RC. Reading Counts

SRI. Scholastic Reading Inventory

SSR. Sustained Silent Reading

OSPI. Office of Superintendent and Public Instruction

WASL. Washington Assessment of Student Learning

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

<u>Introduction</u>

The review of selected literature summarized on the following pages has

been organized to address: No Child Left Behind (NCLB); Washington State

Assessment of Learning; silent reading; the Reading Counts Program; and,

summary.

<u>No Child Left Behind</u>

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the No Child Left

Behind Act (NCLB). "In America, no child should be left behind. Every child

should be educated to his or her full potential" (Bush, 2002). This federal

legislation explained that the president's policy was aimed at closing the

achievement gap by having accountability and high standards, creating

consequences for schools that failed to educate disadvantaged students and annual

academic assessments. As stated in the No Child Left Behind Act:

> Annual reading and math assessments will provide parents with the
>
> information they need to know how well their child is doing in school, and
>
> how well the school is educating their child. Further, annual data is a vital
>
> diagnostic tool for schools to achieve continuous improvement. With
>
> adequate time for planning and implementation, each state may select and
>
> design assessments of their choosing. In addition, a sample of students in
>
> each state will be assessed annually with the national Assessment of

education Progress 4th and 8th grade assessment in reading and math (2002).

Washington State complied with this policy when the state created the WASL in 1996. Reading Counts was a way for the seventh grade teachers at CJMS in Richland, Washington to improve scores on the reading portion of the WASL.

Washington Assessment of Student Learning

The main goal of Washington State is to make sure that students who came out of the education system were prepared for society. The office of Superintendent of Public Instruction stated this:

> Reading for today and tomorrow. To facilitate the optimal development of reading ability, the cooperation of the community, family, school, student, and teacher proves necessary. These cooperative efforts should contribute to an individual becoming a constructive member of society and enhance the likelihood of becoming an active lifelong reader. The written word is important to the understanding of cultural heritage and to the acquisition of knowledge about the world. Hence, we must ensure equal access to excellent reading instruction and opportunities to learn for all students. (OSPI, Education Reform)

President George W. Bush had put education at the top of his agenda. Bush's proposals included requiring all students in grades three through eight to be tested every year. Bush stated that tests are not a tool to punish, but a tool to

reward. Testing, Bush believed, was the first step to improving education (Bush, 2001).

According to results on the National Assessment of Educational Process, students continued to make improvements in their acquisition of reading skills, however this process was only being made at the basic level of reading (Quatroche, 2000). Statewide, the WASL assessed seventh graders by essential academic learning requirements (EALRS). The EALRs were broken up into four categories, with supplemental benchmarks under each goal. Through OSPI it has been stated that seventh grade students were required to meet the following goals:

1) The student understands and used different skills and strategies to read.

2) The student understands the meaning of what was read.

3) The student read different materials for a variety of purposes.

4) The student set goals and evaluated progress to improve reading.

The state level WASL assessments required students to both select and create answers to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and understanding in each of the EALRs from multiple choice and short answer questions to more extended responses, essays, and problem solving tasks (OSPI, Assessment Research and Curriculum).

Both teachers and specialists contributed to the development of the questions for the statewide assessments. Two committees were created at each grade level, one for reading, writing, and communication and another for

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mathematics. Such committees defined and tested the items specific to the EALRS. The committees reviewed all questions prior to pilot testing and provided final review and approval of all questions after pilot testing.

In addition, a fairness committee composed of individuals reflective of Washington's diversity reviewed all questions for words or content that might be offensive to students or parents, or might create a disadvantage for some students for reasons unrelated to the skill or concept being assessed (OSPI Assessment Research and Curriculum).

The WASL included hundreds of questions to create a pool of questions each year. This allowed the creation of new forms of the assessment each year by sampling from the pool. Statistical equating procedures were used to maintain the same performance standard from year to year and to provide longitudinal comparisons across years even though different questions were used (OSPI, Assessment Research and Curriculum).

Following the first operational assessment at each grade level, a standard setting committee determined the level of performance on the assessments that was required for students to meet the standard on the EALRs. In addition, progress categories above and below the standard were established to show growth over time, as well as to give students and parents an indication of how far from the standard a student's performance was.

Each student, in each school, of each district was responsible for completing a test for district and statewide scores. All statewide assessments are untimed; students have as much time as they need to complete their test.

The Reading Counts program supported goal numbers two and four that stated the student understand the meaning of what was read and the student had set goals and evaluated progress to improve reading. Students needed to demonstrate basic comprehension of the content of literary, informational, and task orientated tasks. Students demonstrated comprehension of the main idea and supporting details; summarized ideas in own words, connected previous experiences and knowledge when reading to understand characters, events, and information.

Silent Reading

Along with the Reading Counts program, CJMS included into each day a 20-minute silent reading time call Eagle Power. This was a free reading time where students could read whatever they chose as long as they were reading. "Parents and educators readily agree that reading is the key to success in school" (Marson, 1997 p. 1).

With that in mind, the researcher tackled the task of finding research to back the concept of free silent reading and how that time impacted the reading scores of all students. The researcher found that many of the studies stated, "schools who imbedded sustained silent reading (SSR) into daily routine has a large increase in reading scores" (Pilgreen, 2000).

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Not only did the researcher find current support for the benefits of silent reading time but, also, information dating back to the 1950's which supported silent free reading time.

Students who had the most success in reading came from classrooms in which teachers routinely read aloud to the class, a wide assortment of books was available, incentives were used to motivate students, and Sustained Silent Reading was scheduled during the school day. In fact, the students who read 21 to 33 minutes per day in text were ranked in the 90 percentile of readers (Anderson, Fielding and Wilson, 1988 p. 288).

Over and over, the research continued to state how students benefited from silent reading. Most importantly, "Reading comprehension improved, students' writing style improved, vocabulary improved, and spelling and control of grammar improved" (Krashen, 1993).

CJMS seventh grade Language Arts teachers believed that the addition of 20-minutes of silent reading time school-wide and the implementation of the Reading Counts program in the seventh grade improved reading scores on the WASL. "Children who scored in the 90th percentile on a reading test spent five times as many minutes per day reading books as children at the 50th percentile" (Anderson, et al.1988).

Reading Counts Program

The Reading Counts program was designed to develop confident, successful readers through the use of proven, research base-material. Research has

shown that reading achievement was positively related to the amount of time students spent reading. The students developed vocabulary and concept knowledge through extensive reading.

Scholastic stated that the best way to strengthen reading skills and foster the reading habit was to see students get reading practice with books that were carefully selected and matched to their reading level and interest (Scholastic, 2003).

> Simply reading is not enough. Text must be carefully selected to find the "just right" match: one that is not too hard but not too easy. Challenging but comprehensible reading materials need to be a part of students' reading diets. High interest, easy-vocabulary reading, while sometimes appropriate for building fluency, is not likely to result in academic language growth. (Chall, Jacobs, Baldwin, 1990)

The Reading Counts program included three simple steps. First, students chose and read a book, a selection from more than 30,000 popular titles. Second, students took a quiz; each quiz contained 10 or 20 multiple-choice questions. The quizzes were designed to instantly reveal verification that the book has been read.

The computer instantly revealed how many questions the student answered correctly, and points were awarded regarding the book's length, reading level, and number of correct answers. In the beginning students would read the books very quickly, and usually failed. Instructions explained to students that it

was important to take time. If the student ended up failing the quiz, the option was available to go back through the book and find the answer.

Third, both teacher and student received immediate feedback for evaluating a student's progress. Educators collected valuable information about each student from a printout that detailed the book that had been read, its reading level, percentage of correct answers, and points assigned.

A seventh grade teacher, at CJMS in Richland, Washington found the Reading Counts reporting system to be beneficial for students, parents, and teachers. Quarterly reports were sent home with each child that indicated the student's present reading level, as well as all Reading Counts scores for the specific quarter. The teacher indicated that the class put fourth more effort because each student took pride and ownership of individual and running record of scores.

Students in a seventh grade class at CJMS, in Richland, seized every opportunity to use the reading Counts program. The teacher provided the students with time to work on the Reading Counts requirements for the quarter. However, students most often used personal free time. The teacher's students loved to use the program because of the self-selection of books and instant feedback.

The Reading Counts program has been described as an emerging trend that recognized reading as a thinking process. Many critics of reading tests claimed that most approaches to the assessment of reading remained, as they have always been, measures of reading comprehension as a direct product of a reader's

interaction with the text. Unable to assess the process involved in comprehension, the tests measured comprehension as required responses that are products of reading (Powell, 1998).

Reading Counts indirectly tests students' comprehension. The points are a direct product of how well the student comprehended the material.

The seventh grade teacher found Reading Counts to be a great tool for measuring how thoroughly the student read the material. The teacher stated that in the past, some students would be dishonest about completing the reading assignments, but with the Reading Counts program the teacher could definitely acknowledge the fact that the reading was done. Students found it was difficult to pass the test with 80% accuracy in order to satisfy the reading requirement for the quarter if the book was not completed.

Summary

The review of selected literature and research presented in Chapter 2 supported the following themes:

1. The No Child Left Behind federal legislation seeks to educate all children to their full potential.

2. The main goal of the WASL is to make sure that students are academically prepared for society.

3. Schools that incorporated silent reading benefited by increased reading scores.

4. The Reading Counts program was designed to develop confident, successful readers through the use of proven research based material.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

The purpose of this experimental research project was to determine

whether implementing the Reading Counts program into the curriculum improved

reading scores on the WASL. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected

literature was conducted, which focused on: the No Child Left Behind federal

legislation; the Washington State Assessment of Student Learning (WASL);

silent reading; and, the Reading Counts program. The effects of using the Reading

Counts program with seventh grade students at Chief Joseph Middle School,

Richland, Washington, during the 2002-2003 school year, was investigated.

Chapter 3 contains a description of the methodology used in the presents

study, along with details concerning participants, procedures, instruments, design

and treatment of data obtained.

Methodology

An experimental research study was conducted using two independent

groups. The control group was the seventh grade students randomly selected from

the 2001-2002 school year. The students attended school and took the WASL

before implementation of the Reading Counts program. The treatment group

included randomly selected seventh grade students from the 2002-2003 school

year. These students took the WASL after implementation of the Reading Counts program.

Participants

The researcher included seventh grade students from CJMS in Richland, Washington, during the academic school years 2001 to 2002 and 2002 to 2003. The students included in the project were a combination of high, average and low economic status. Also included were English as a second language learners and students with special needs. The test groups in this study were composed of a random sampling of all students in the seventh grade during both years. No student was excluded from the study.

Instruments

Reading Counts

The Reading Counts program (Appendix A) was designed to develop confident, successful readers through the use of proven, research base-material. Research has shown that reading achievement was positively related to the amount of time students spent reading. The students developed vocabulary and concept knowledge through extensive reading.

Eagle Power

The Eagle Power program was designed to give students a 20-minute reading time each day. The students were able to choose the material they wanted to read with the idea that if they chose the material then they would be engaged in it.

Design

This experimental study utilized a two-group posttest to measure the extent to which students' scores on the reading component of the WASL showed improvement. The design involved two post-test groups. One group was administered a post-test (O), and one group received the treatment (i.e., intervention of the Reading Counts program) and a post-test (X).

With the two-group posttest only design, the main source of invalidity fell under the internal category in the column of mortality. History, maturation, and selection all supported the validity of this particular design.

Procedure

After the 2000-2001 WASL scores were released, CJMS teachers and administrators recognized that only 38.8% of seventh grade students met the reading requirements on the WASL. Reading achievement on the WASL was such a concern that the principal made reading improvement a building-wide goal. This goal included improvement of reading scores on the WASL.

During June of 2002 a leadership team, representing CJMS, attended the OSPI summer conference and returned with a design to improve reading. After much discussion on the part of administration, the leadership team, and the Language Arts department, they decided that the best way to increase scores and impact all grades was to implement a silent reading time, also known in the school as Eagle Power. This was implemented in the fall of 2002.

The seventh grade teachers moved this process one step further and included the Reading Counts program into the seventh grade curriculum in October of 2002. Prior to implementing Reading Counts, the seventh grade teachers studied several programs in the spring of 2002. The seventh grade teachers selected the Reading Counts program because it was similar to other reading programs used by some students in the past, yet was age appropriate for middle school students. The seventh grade teachers were trained to use the Reading Counts program in September of 2002 and, in turn, trained the entire staff in October of 2002.

At the same time, teachers in the building were provided with research and statistics that supported what was thought to be true: kids needed time to read for pleasure. This sent a clear message to students that reading was important.

Over the course of the 2002-2003 school year, students were given a daily 20-minute reading time at the start of each day. In the Language Arts classrooms, they were given opportunities to take tests, choose books from the library and read. In May, they took the WASL. The test scores were reviewed and compared to those seventh grade students from the 2001-2002 school year to see if the Reading Counts program and Eagle Power made a difference in reading scores.

While test scores alone could not have been the only basis on which student achievement was judged, the scores were a big part of the implementation of the Reading Counts program and therefore a satisfactory form of assessment.

However beneficial the new program may have seemed, the researcher examined the scores to see if the implementation of such a program had indeed helped to improve reading scores on the WASL.

Treatment of Data

The statistical and analysis procedures were completed using a STATPACK, a data analysis program that accompanied the text Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application text by Gay and Airasain (2000). In order to test for null hypothesis, that there would be no significance short-term or long-term effects and to determine if there were significant differences between the means of the treatment and control groups, a t-test for independent samples was performed.

t - TEST FOR INDEPENDENT SAMPLES

Statistic	Values	Group X
No. of Scores in Group X	-	
Sum of Scores in Group X	-	
Mean of Group X	-	
Sum of Squared Scores in Group X	-	
SS of Group X	-	
No. of Scores in Group Y	-	
Sum of Scores in Group Y	-	
Mean of Group Y	-	
Sum of Squared Scores in Group Y	-	
SS of Group Y	-	
t - Value	-	
Degrees of freedom	-	

Enter Score
Calculate
Clear Scores
Print

Group Y
Group X
Group Y

Main Menu

The *t*-test compared the level of improvement on the reading portion of the WASL among those who were not treated (i.e., *before* intervention of RC) compared to these who were treated (i.e. *after* intervention of RC). The following formula was used to test the significance of the t-test (Gay and Airasian, p. 485).

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\left(\dfrac{SS_1 + SS_2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}\right)\left(\dfrac{1}{n_1} + \dfrac{1}{n_2}\right)}}$$

An analysis and presentation of data produced as a result of the study has been detailed on the following pages in Chapter 4. Conclusions and recommendations derived from data analysis have been presented in Chapter 5.

Summary

In Chapter 3 the researcher provided an overview of the processes and procedures utilized in the conduct of this study. A description of the methodology employed included the research design and formulas and tables used to analyze the data. A description of how the data were treated was also included.

Chapter 4

Analysis of Data

<u>Introduction</u>

An analysis and presentation of data obtained from the present study has

been detailed on the following pages. Chapter 4 has been organized to address:

description of environment; hypothesis; null hypothesis; results of the study;

findings; and, summary.

<u>Description of Environment</u>

The researcher included seventh grade students from CJMS in Richland,

Washington, during the academic school years 2001 to 2002, and 2002 to 2003.

The students included in the project were a combination of high, average and low

economic status. Also included were English as a second language learners and

students with special needs. The materials included in this study were the Reading

Counts program and the WASL.

<u>Hypothesis</u>

Overall, CJMS Seventh grade students who participated in the RC

program showed increased performance on the reading portion of the WASL than

those Seventh grade students who did not participate in RC at CJMS.

Significance was determined for p to be greater than or equal to .05, .01, .001.

Null Hypothesis

There was no significant difference between those seventh grade students who participated in RC and those seventh grade students who did not participate in RC.

Results of the Study

Table 1 demonstrates the basic statistical analysis for the independent samples.

Table 1

t-Test for Independent Samples

Statistic	Value
Number of Scores	44
Sum of Scores X	17739.00
Mean of Scores X	403.16
Sum of Scores Squared X	7162675.00
Sum of Scores Y	17681.00
Mean of Scores Y	401.84
Sum of Scores Squared Y	7116205.00
t-Value	0.38
Degrees of Freedom	86

Table 1 showed the number of scores, 44, sum of X 17739.00 and Y 17681.00, mean of X 403.16 and Y 401.84, sum of scores squared for X 7162675.00 and Y 7116205.00, the Degrees of Freedom at 86, and the t value at 0.38.The values used to determine significance were published in the test Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application (Gay and Airasian, 2000, p. 610).

Table 2

Distribution of _t_ With 86 Degrees of Freedom			
		p	
_df_	.05	.01	.001
86	.2050	.2673	.3375

Table 2 represented the _t_ value with 86 degrees of freedom used in this study.

A _t-_ test comparison of the treatment group and controlled group demonstrated a significant increase as noted in Table 2. The increase was significant at the p>.05 level of .2050 for 86 degrees of freedom and all following levels. As a consequence the null hypothesis was rejected at all levels of .05, .01,

.001. Support was given, through the degrees of freedom p value, for the hypothesis.

Findings

The data compared the WASL reading scores of the seventh grade students from the 2001-2002 school year with those of the 2002-2003 school year. The results showed a higher mean when the treatment of the Reading Counts program was given and then the students were tested. Through statistical analysis it was found that there was a significant difference between the treatment group and the control group at all levels of $p>.05$, .01 and .001. Therefore there was also support for the hypothesis at all levels $p>.05$, .01,.001. In addition, the null hypothesis was rejected at all levels $p\geq .05$, .01, .001.

Summary

The WASL test reading scores for the 2001-2002 school year and 2002-2003 school year were compared and the two scores reflected significant differences. These differences were due to the treatment given to the sample. The treatment given was using The Reading Counts program as a supplement to the regular seventh grade Language Arts curriculum.

A review of the statistical data from the two different test groups seemed to indicate; using the Reading Counts program produced higher scores on the reading portion of the WASL. To conclude, the implementation of the Reading Counts program appeared to raise WASL reading scores.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this experimental research project was to determine

whether implementing the Reading Counts program into the curriculum improved

reading scores on the WASL. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected

literature was conducted, which focused on: the No Child Left Behind federal

legislation; the Washington State Assessment of Student Learning (WASL); silent

reading; and, the Reading Counts program. The effects of using the Reading

Counts program with seventh grade students at Chief Joseph Middle School,

Richland, Washington, during the 2002-2003 school year, was investigated.

A summary of the present experimental research study along with

conclusions and recommendations have been provided in Chapter 5.

Summary

The present study compared WASL scores from the 2001-2002 and 2002-

2003 school years, to determine whether a group of seventh grade students

receiving treatment of the Reading Counts program achieved higher reading

scores than a group of seventh grade students who did not receive this treatment.

A t-test of independent samples determined whether there was a significant

difference in WASL scores between the control group and the treatment group.

These data demonstrated that a t-score value of .38 was significant at all levels of

$p \geq .05, .01, .001$ with 86 degrees of freedom, thereby supporting the hypothesis that using the Reading Counts program as a supplement to the regular Language Arts program would have positive gains in reading scores on the WASL.

Conclusions

Findings produced by the study indicated that reading with the implementation of the Reading Counts program produced a positive difference at the seventh grade on the WASL. . Through statistical analysis it was found there was a significant difference between the treatment group and the control group at levels of $p > .05, .01$ and $.001$. Therefore, there was support for the hypothesis at the levels of $p > .05$ and $.01$ and $.001$.

Recommendations

In view of the significant improvement of student reading scores resulting from use of the Reading Counts program, the researcher (Kristin J. DeVere), has recommended that this reading program be implemented in all Language Arts classrooms, at all grade levels, at Chief Joseph Middle School(CJMS), Richland, Washington.

As the Reading Counts program and the design of this experimental study were in the fledgling stage it is further recommend the program be continued at CJMS, but with more support from other grades and a broader analysis of scores.

Educators in other schools and school districts seeking to improve student reading scores on the WASL may find the present study of value or, they may wish to undertake further research more suited to their unique needs.

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APPENDIX A

READING COUNTS SAMPLES

Q: Once upon a time a famous art museum searched the world over for the best paintings it could find. After a long search, the museum found a beautiful Old Master painting depicting youths and maidens frolicking in a wood. The directors were only too glad to pay millions for this painting because they were captivated by its beauty and elegance. How delightfully the maidens' hair and mouths were drawn, how perfectly the hands and arms of the youths, how life-like the bare feet on the forest floor. But the curator of the museum was the happiest one of all, for he had now become guardian and protector of a famous work by a famous painter. "Every time I look at that painting," he would say, "I see new beauties and excellences. Just look at these leaves here, the sweep of the branches from this tree, capturing just the hint of a breeze and seeming to vibrate with the music from the dance of the youths and maidens in the clearing. My very soul resonates with the greatness of it all."

The curator <<>> the painting.

✓ admired

admonished

neglected

criticized

Harris, Robert. STORIES FROM THE OLD ATTIC. Project Gutenberg:
http://www.promo.net/pg/_authors/harris_robert_a_.html#storiesfromtheoldattic.

Q: The king became actually friendly and laughed some and often engaged in animated conversation with the young prince. The king was often heard to say that he would never let the prince part from him even for a day but that the prince should be his always. They often rode on horseback through the forest all day or sat together by the fire until the servants fell asleep, discussing the kingdom and enjoying each other's company.

The king <<>> the prince.

✓ cherished

advised

sheltered

mocked

Harris, Robert. STORIES FROM THE OLD ATTIC. Project Gutenberg:
http://www.promo.net/pg/_authors/harris_robert_a_.html#storiesfromtheoldattic.

Q: On entering the parlour we found that honoured lady seated in her arm-chair at the fireside, working away at her knitting, according to her usual custom, when she had nothing else to do. She had swept the hearth, and made a bright blazing fire for our reception; the servant had just brought in the tea-tray; and Rose was producing the sugar-basin and tea-caddy from the cupboard in the black oak side-board, that shone like polished ebony, in the cheerful parlour twilight.

✓ correct answer

student answer

His stepfather had <<>> the ball from Bix.

✓ <u>stolen</u>

  bought

  thrown

  rescued

Brooks, Bruce. THE MOVES MAKE THE MAN. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1984.

Q: In fact, Rankin doesn't like to limit documentary work at all. He thinks documentary studies should encompass a multitude of media and mixed media that go beyond boundaries of words, pictures and sound. DoubleTake magazine is one example. Published quarterly with a circulation of 60,000, it mixes well-known writers such as Bill McKibben and Susan Faludi with unknowns such as an elderly woman in Topeka, Kan., who recently learned to read. The magazine has attempted to straddle the different worlds of literary journals and consumer magazines, to combine artistic photography with elegant and simple prose.

Rankin is <<>>.

✓ innovative

  <u>introverted</u>

  structured

  irritating

Kicklighter, Kirk. "On Campus: Liking for Stories Forged Academic Destiny," THE NEWS AND OBSERVER (September 1, 1998).

Q: For the Annie Fisher students, the program included gifts far greater than a promise of money. The program gave them a desire to pursue education. From the moment they signed their college contracts, program coordinators worked with the students on a variety of academic and social issues during the school term, to keep their minds focused on meeting their goals.

The program was <<>>.

✓ <u>beneficial</u>

  cancelled

  confusing

  inexpensive

Williams, Alicia B. "On Campus: Promises Made, Promises Kept," THE NEWS AND OBSERVER (September 8, 1998).

✓   correct answer

    student answer

The atmosphere was <<>>.

✓ <u>enchanting</u>

energizing

chilling

solemn

Bronte, Anne. THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL. Project Gutenberg:
http://www.promo.net/pg/_authors/bronte_anne_.html#thetenantofwildfellhall.

Q: The remaining $2.5 billion of the bond measure would benefit community colleges, the Cal State system and the University of California. The funds would build class space, buy new computers and improve technology, complete earthquake retrofitting, fix leaky roofs, antiquated plumbing and heating systems and poor air conditioning. All of these basic repairs have been long postponed.

The funds will <<>> the schools.

✓ amend

<u>furnish</u>

influence

weaken

"A Key Decision on Schools," LOS ANGELES TIMES (August 28, 1998).

Q: Louis had learned to read--to "cut the book," as musicians say--but it was his ability to improvise marvelous melodic phrases which made him stand out, and made everyone else in the band play better. On fast numbers, no band could help but swing with Armstrong's horn driving it forward. Where other horn players slurred or half-tongued, Armstrong hit every note with a clean, sharp front edge. On long-held notes, he would deliberately start slightly flat and pull up to true pitch the way folk singers did, creating great tension and emotion. He played high notes with more smoothness and clarity than any horn player had ever achieved. As one critic observed, "Armstrong brought high register playing into jazz."

Louis was a(n) <<>> horn player.

✓ <u>accomplished</u>

inexperienced

arrogant

lousy

Brown, Sandford. LOUIS ARMSTRONG: SWINGING SINGING SATCHMO. New York: Franklin Watts, 1993.

Q: Bix held the ball, flat-footed, looking at his stepfather's waving arms, then looked over at me with this dull expression like he suddenly did not understand anything, and where was he please? While he did that, the man slapped the ball out of his hands perfectly clean, and dribbled for a second outside, giving Bix a chance to pick him up if he wanted, which was actually nice of him, he could have just bolted for the snowbird. But Bix was not picking anybody or anything up. He was looking at his hands like remembering something about a ball being there a couple of seconds ago and where was it now? His stepfather went on and took it in for a lay-up and brought the ball back.

✓   correct answer

         student answer

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STUDENT TEST PRINTOUT

Student:

Grade:

Test Date:

Student Lexile: 1319

Q: Because no teacher or counselor took an individual interest in her or recognized her special needs and talents, Rosita remained very self-conscious throughout her school years. The trauma of trying to learn English and her lessons at the same time was very painful, and she began to doubt her own abilities. She rarely put up her hand to answer a question because she was afraid of answering incorrectly.

Rosita was <<>>.

✓ insecure

inconsiderate

indifferent

impulsive

Suntree, Susan. HISPANICS OF ACHIEVEMENT: RITA MORENO. New York: Main Line Books Co., 1993.

Q: He was obviously an ecclesiastic of high rank; his dress was that of a Cistercian Monk, but composed of materials much finer than those which the rule of that order admitted. His mantle and hood were of the best Flanders cloth, and fell in ample, and not ungraceful folds, around a handsome, though somewhat corpulent person. His countenance bore as little the marks of self-denial, as his habit indicated contempt of worldly splendour. His features might have been called good, had there not lurked under the pent-house of his eye, that sly epicurean twinkle which indicates the cautious voluptuary.

He was <<>>.

✓ complicated

emaciated

isolated

conceited

Scott, Sir Walter. IVANHOE. Project Gutenberg: http://www.promo.net/pg/_titles/i-_i3.html#ivanhoe.html.

✓   correct answer

      student answer

PERFORMANCE REPORT

Teacher:

Class: Period 6

Normative Data

Name	Grade	Test Date	Lexile	Performance Standard	Percentile Rank	NCE	Stanine
	7	09/02/2003	948	Proficient	49	51.6	5
	7	09/02/2003	1112	Advanced	78	67.4	7
	7	09/02/2003	1107	Advanced	77	66.9	7
	7	09/02/2003	976	Proficient	54	54.5	5
	7	09/02/2003	1189	Advanced	88	74.5	8
	7	09/02/2003	1209	Advanced	90	76.4	8
	7	09/02/2003	957	Proficient	51	52.6	5
	7	09/02/2003	1076	Proficient	72	64.0	6
	7	10/07/2003	804	Basic	28	37.8	4
	7	09/02/2003	993	Proficient	56	55.9	5
	7	09/02/2003	1000	Proficient	58	56.9	6
	7	09/02/2003	978	Proficient	54	54.5	5
	7	09/02/2003	973	Proficient	53	54.0	5
	7	09/02/2003	1119	Advanced	78	67.9	7
	7	09/02/2003	825	Basic	31	40.2	4
	7	10/07/2003	760	Basic	22	33.9	4
	7	09/02/2003	1301	Advanced	97	85.5	9
	7	10/07/2003	1025	Proficient	63	59.3	6
	7	09/02/2003	1267	Advanced	95	82.2	9
	7	09/02/2003	1191	Advanced	89	75.0	8
	7	09/02/2003	1062	Proficient	69	62.6	6
	7	09/02/2003	1482	Advanced	99	99.0	9

On Grade Level Lexile Range

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11
100-400	300-600	500-800	600-900	700-1000	800-1050	850-1100	900-1150	1000-1200	1025-1250	1050-1300