

Implementing a Read Well Program to
Improve Kindergarten Students DIBELS scores

A Special Project

Presented to

Dr. Jack McPherson

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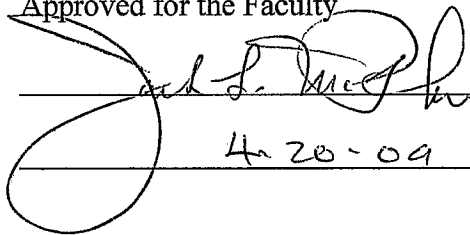
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FACULTY APPROVAL

Implementing a Read Well Program to

Improve Kindergarten Students DIBELS scores

Approved for the Faculty

_____, Faculty Advisor

4-20-09_____, Date

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this experimental research study was to determine the extent to which a re-teaching of the *Read Well Program* to kindergarten ELL students made a difference on the outcome of the scores of the fluency and comprehension pieces as measured by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills (DIBELS). To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was accomplished. Additionally, essential baseline data was obtained and analyzed from which related generalizations, conclusions, and recommendations were formed. The fundamental research question on which the study focused was answered in the negative, indicating that the re-teaching of *Read Well* did not have an impact on the fluency and comprehension scores of the experimental group.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

The discipline of education has typically comprised a multitude of specialties which has included: reading, math, writing, science, social studies, history, geography, social skills, extracurricular activities and language acquisition. Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire (2005) stated that "Only through education can we prepare students to face the realities of the 21st century workforce" (p.1). For students to be successful in life, they need the ability to be successful in reading and writing because reading has been established as the foundation for all learning (Pennsylvania Partnerships for children, 2002).

The previous Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Terry Bergeson (2006), said, "Early acquisition of phonemic awareness, phonics skills, and fluency will lead to greater vocabulary acquisition and stronger comprehension skills and are all critical to a student's future academic success"(p.1). To make learning effective, educational skills learned by students need to be constructed upon their prior knowledge. Further research compiled by Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (2002) said that students who did not have a solid educational background were not successful later in their academic career. According to this authority, "Literacy is the anchor of learning, the skill that grounds all school achievement and, for most people, lifetime success"(p. 38). Teachers needed to make sure that students had a firm educational background that

was relied upon throughout their academic career. The authorities cited above have made a strong case for the important role that the skill of reading plays in success in life, while establishing a context for the present study.

Statement of the Problem

The Wahluke School District (WSD) in an agricultural area in Central Washington had a high Migrant (28.8%), transitional bilingual (54.0%), and Hispanic (92.6%) population. More than 70.6% of the students enrolled qualified for free or reduced lunch rate. The researcher (Cara M. Morrill) derived from the statistics shown that the community was low income and struggled with language issues, migrant work issues and related economic factors. In this community, most of the families came for work and tried to stay. Some of the fathers needed to travel to other states in the country, and sometimes even Mexico, to find work to support their families.

After studying this community and school district, the researcher noted the English Language Learners (ELL) in kindergarten failed to pass the unit tests in the *Read Well Program*. The researcher determined, from the scores, that the students did not pass in the areas of fluency and comprehension. Fluency was defined as the ability to recognize words automatically, ability to focus on comprehension, and read aloud effortlessly and with expression (Rasinski, 2006). Comprehension was defined as the ability to understand or get meaning from any type of written material and understand the language that the text was written in (Wren, 2006).

The consequence of students not passing the *Read Well* fluency or comprehension test has lead to poor scores and frustration later for the students. Students who were not skilled in fluency or comprehension at an early age did not have time to make up their schooling at a later date.

Phrased as a question, the problem which was represented as the focus of the present study may be stated as follows: To what extent did kindergarten students who participated in the re-teaching of the *Read Well* program, improve their literacy scores as measured by DIBELS reading assessment?

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this experimental research study was to determine the extent to which a re-teaching of the *Read Well Program* to kindergarten ELL students made a difference on the outcome of the scores of the fluency and comprehension pieces as measured by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was explored. Additionally, essential baseline data was obtained and analyzed from which related generalizations, conclusions, and recommendations were formed.

Delimitations

Participating students received an initial lesson of *Read Well* each day for one and a half hours. The students in the experimental group received a second lesson of *Read Well* two times a week for thirty (30) minutes from September through the present, 2008-2009. The second lesson of *Read Well* was taught through the Sheltered Instruction

Observation Protocol (SIOP) method. The teaching of the *Read Well Program* was done in the researcher's kindergarten classroom in the Wahluke School District and was taught by the researcher and the paraprofessionals that worked in the classroom. The materials used were: *Read Well* curriculum, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) lesson plans, realia, media, books, songs and chants.

The experimental group was comprised of the students enrolled in the researcher's kindergarten class during the 2008-2009 school year. This group of students received an initial lesson of *Read Well* in the morning for an hour and a half. The experimental group also received a second lesson of *Read Well* two times a week for 30 minutes.

The control group was comprised of students that had been enrolled in the researcher's kindergarten class during the 2007-2008 school year. This group of students received the initial lesson of *Read Well* in the morning for an hour and a half, but didn't receive the extra lessons of *Read Well*.

Assumptions

The writer (Cara M. Morrill) a veteran elementary teacher received special training needed to teach the students both the initial *Read Well Program* and the SIOP re-teaching program. The paraprofessionals assigned to the writer's classroom also had the expertise needed to teach the initial *Read Well Program*. Students had plenty of time during the initial teaching of the *Read Well Program* to receive and assimilate the information. During the re-teaching, students re-read the materials, and then completed

several other activities using those materials. Materials used were based on the SIOP method and were student, grade-level appropriate. Students were constantly engaged by the teacher and paraprofessionals during both the initial and re-teaching sessions.

Students showed great interest in learning English and in comprehending the stories they were reading. These interests were communicated through the students asking about their test scores and then comparing those scores with their classmates. Students took great pride in their *Read Well* unit scores and in their DIBELS scores.

Hypothesis or Research Question

Kindergarten students who participated in a *Read Well* re-teaching program supplemented by SIOP instructional intervention strategies will show an increase in literacy scores as measured by the DIBELS Word Use Fluency (WUF) reading assessment.

Null Hypothesis

Kindergarten students will show no significant improvement in their DIBELS scores. Significance was determined for $p \geq$ at .05, .01, and .001 levels.

Significance of the Project

Having experienced a history of a high rate of ELLs in the classrooms, the district faced the problem of how to teach these students English, and still achieve high scores on the DIBELS. To address this problem, the Mattawa Elementary School (MES) kindergarten team created a new curriculum, based on the *Read Well Program*, where the

students received an extra lesson of the reading program two (2) times a week for 30 minutes. These lessons utilized a combination of SIOP teaching strategies and *Read Well*.

The intention of the kindergarten teachers was to help the students achieve higher DIBELS scores through the re-teaching of *Read Well*. Teachers believed that the students had benefited from the extra re-teaching by reviewing their test scores. Teachers then refined the future lessons to make them even more beneficial for the students in the future.

Procedure

The WSD kindergarten team recorded and analyzed DIBELS scores from 2007-2008 and decided that something needed to be done to help students raise their scores. Over the 2008 summer, teachers formed a committee and developed new lesson plans based on the *Read Well* curriculum using the SIOP template. These SIOP lesson plans were based on the main theme and vocabulary of each unit of the small group materials. Each lesson had a language and content objective that was written on the board in kid friendly language. The SIOP instructional strategies included: fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and prior knowledge.

All ten (10) kindergarten teachers were assigned to use the SIOP strategies twice a week dependent upon which unit their highest group was on. Students in the highest group received information about the unit they were studying, where other groups received pre-teaching related to those lessons. Each lesson had designated vocabulary and concepts, which the students were tested on at a later date.

For this study, the researcher took the DIBELS scores of the students that were recorded in January 2008, and compared them to the scores recorded in January 2009. Criteria for comparing the scores included an independent *t*-test which allowed the researcher to determine the extent to which the scores improved through the extensive re-teaching of the *Read Well Program*.

Definition of Terms

Significant terms used in the context of the present study have been defined as follows:

comprehension. Comprehension is the ability to understand or get meaning from any type of written material.

experimental study. 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.

fluency. Fluency is the ability to recognize words automatically, ability to focus on comprehension, and read aloud effortlessly and with expression.

Read Well Program. *Read Well* is the primary reading curriculum that adjusts to the needs of each student and builds the foundation necessary for sustained reading success.

re-taught. To teach the same curriculum again using additional materials like: songs, chants, books, and realia.

SIOP. An instructional strategy that uses fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and prior knowledge of the student.

t-test. An inferential statistics technique used to determine whether the means of two groups are significantly different at a given probability level.

t-test for independent samples. A parametric test of significance used to determine whether a significance difference exists between the means of two independent samples.

Acronyms

AYP. Annual Yearly Progress

DIBELS. Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

ELL. English Language Learner

LNF. Letter Naming Fluency

ME. Multicultural Education

OSPI. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

SIOP. Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol

WUF. Word Use Fluency

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

The review of selected literature presented on the following pages has focused on certain fundamental components of literacy and related teaching strategies for ELL. For example, fluency was identified as a key reading strategy which allows students to decode words and language. Comprehension and other fundamental reading skills were essential for understanding oral and written language. Further literature review allowed the writer to explore a variety of selected teaching strategies needed to provide ELL with a language-rich environment.

Data current primarily within the last five (5) years were identified through an online computerize literature search of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), the Internet, Proquest, and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Reading Fluency

The National Institute for Literacy (2007) has defined literacy as “the ability to read a text accurately and quickly” (p.1). Fluency was deemed important because of the close connection between word recognition and comprehension. As stated by Dee, et al. (2009), “Fluency is a gateway to comprehension that enables students to move from being word decoders to passage comprehenders” (p.11). Students able to read sight words spent less time decoding words and more time decoding content. Wren (2006) backed up

this theory with the thought that "...students who develop good decoding skills at a young age are typically better at comprehending text in subsequent grades" (p.2). This young age that Wren referred to started as early as kindergarten. Phonemic awareness should be taught by a breakdown of the letters and sounds followed by a buildup of words and reading or creation of whole texts. Having started at the basics, the teacher would have made sure that all the students were knowledgeable about letter names and sounds and that the foundation was set for reading. Having set the foundation, teachers were able to move onto words, sentences and paragraphs with the knowledge that the students were successful.

According to Wren (2006), to be considered fluent, a student needed to read with 90% accuracy rate. To reach this level, students had to pass through three levels of reading. These levels included: emergent stage, alphabetic reading, and the mature orthographic stage. During these stages, the students started by recognizing words as whole units. The second stage was to use letter-sound knowledge to sound out words. The third stage was the ability for the students to be fluent and to have automatic recognition of familiar words. Said Wren:

It is an insidious paradox in education—students who need the most support, instruction and opportunities to practice and develop knowledge and skills are typically given the least. It is a frustrating state of affairs that led Allington (1977) to write, "if they don't read much, how are they ever gonna get good?"(p.4).

Learning to read with fluency required practice, but most students who were struggling have not received enough time to practice. Sadly, these students spent most of their days completing worksheets instead of receiving oral guided reading and repeated reading, reinforcing the notion that it took more time and energy to work with struggling readers than readers who were already fluent (Wren, 2006).

Pressley (2006), identified three specific fluency skills that students were in need of instruction in, whereas other students were at the point of needing some fluency pre-teaching. The first skill termed Systematic Decoding Instruction, centered on teaching phonics to students and then requiring the students to use that skill to sound out words. The second skill focused on alternative forms of word-recognition instruction. This skill worked with: onset and rime, focusing on individual sounds in words, letter and sound combinations, and blending the letters and sounds which resulted in creating words. The third skill involved developing sight words and vocabulary knowledge. Pressley explained how this skill worked with Dolch sight words, created by Edward Dolch in 1939 who identified 220 words that made up 50% to 70% of the text that students read. Dolch believed if students had certain words they recognized by sight, they would spend less time decoding those words and either more time decoding other words or using those sight words to determine the meaning of the text.

Similarly, Rasinski (2006) also identified instructional fluency strategies including: model fluent reading; providing assistance while reading; and providing opportunities for students to practice reading.

The first strategy was to model fluent reading for the students. This was done by reading to the students with appropriate accuracy, rate and meaningful expression. “Students who are read to daily have larger vocabularies, better comprehension skills, a more positive attitude toward reading, and a more precise understanding of what it means to read with fluency” (Raskinski, 2006, p.64). Students need to hear teachers read to them so that they can hear what it means to read with fluency. An exclamation point or a question mark won’t make a difference in a student’s life until they understand how those punctuation marks change a sentence. Students also need to be exposed to different types of genres. Teachers have included: poetry, excerpts from speeches, folk and fairy tales, true historical accounts, fiction, and others. The goal was to show the students that there were numerous pieces to be read, and that they all were exciting. Not every student took a liking to the same material, but by having provided numerous materials, the teacher made an effort to include all the students (Rasinski, 2006).

The second strategy was to provide assistance to the students while they were reading. The theory behind this strategy was that if students were reading the passage on their own while someone else was reading the passage out loud, the students received more expressive recognition of the words in the text. The possibilities for this type of reading in a classroom were endless. Some forms were: while the teacher read, the students followed along on their own paper; or the story was written out on the chalkboard or a chart; choral readings; peer/paired readings; tape assisted; buddy reading; and echo reading (Rasinski, 2006).

The third strategy was to provide the students with opportunities to practice their reading skills. The theory behind this strategy was that the more reading the students have done, the more automatic they were with recognizing words. One way this was accomplished was to have the students read certain stories that were fully decodable by the students. The students read the stories to their teacher, and then read them at home with their parents. By having the students re-read certain passages, the students were able to recognize the words and then read faster with more understanding (Rasinski, 2006).

Blau (2009) described another way students practiced fluency and this was through Reader's Theater. Readers Theater was a great exercise for students because the meaning of the text was conveyed through expression and intonation. In this exercise, students read through the same passage several times and then "performed" their piece in front of the class. This exercise provided students time to practice in a small group setting and then perform in front of their peers.

Reading Comprehension

Comprehension has been defined as a skill where the student was able to understand or get meaning from text but, in order to comprehend what has been read, students need to have good fluency skills. "In order to read with comprehension a reader must simultaneously be able to automatically and fluently decode the text and competently understand the language in which the text is written. Students that accomplished fluency have started to work on their comprehension skills" (Wren, 2006,p.4).

One of the most important skills students needed for comprehension was to have instruction before they started reading. Those activities included: discussions, play activities, retellings, emergent reading, and literacy-rich environments. This skill also implements the concept of building off of the student's previous knowledge (Choice Literacy, 2009). Some of the strategies that have helped the students were: having teachers bring items into the classroom, pictures, drawing pictures on the board, and saying the words in English and Spanish. By having the students highly involved in their learning, they were engaged and more learning occurred.

Strategies used to build this prior knowledge included: phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, concepts of print and listening comprehension (Colorado, 2007). Phonemic awareness was important because it showed the students that words were made of smaller units of sound. Students began to recognize the smaller units and then put them together to form words. Alphabet knowledge taught the students the names of the letters. Concepts of print taught the students how to use the books and different parts of the books. Listening comprehension used the concept of having the teacher read aloud to the students. While teacher read aloud, they were pointing out the characters/elements of the story, explained any uncommon vocabulary, and provided times for the students to retell the story (Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, 2006).

Students with high vocabulary content were able to comprehend text more easily because of their ability to make connections with what was known, and what was being read. "Vocabulary knowledge is vital to reading success and may be learned indirectly or

directly by students” (Collins, p.7). The students learned the words through: word walls, word posters, words maps, words sorts, word tea parties, and dramatization of words. After going through numerous word exercises, the students were able to make mental pictures in their heads while they were reading, which helped them to understand what the text said (Choice Literacy, 2009). Students who understood the text enjoyed the text, and learned more reading strategies.

When alphabetic awareness, high vocabulary content and understanding of the concepts of print had been acquired, the students were able to start using the same strategies as expert readers. The students were then able to look through books and select the important part of the material. Using the acquired strategies, students were able to determine the genre of the book, the author’s main point, who the characters were, and what the problem was in the story.

According to Parker (2007), there were four main strategies for comprehension and through teaching students these strategies; their understanding of text was improved. Those strategies were generating questions, predicting, clarifying, and summarizing. For students to have a full understanding of those strategies, the teacher needed to model the strategies and spend time in direct instruction with the students. Once again, the student’s prior knowledge was accessed and their visual imagery skills were tested.

An article by Liang & Dole (2006) identified a series of frameworks for reading comprehension. The first framework was Scaffolded Reading Experience (SRE) which was designed to foster student’s understanding and engagement with individual texts.

This particular framework provided the students with numerous amounts of practice which lead the students to reading without assistance. "Research associated with the automaticity theory maintains that automaticity is developed through repeated practice over time and exposure to wide varieties of print" (Dee et al., 2009, p.4). The students needed to have time to read the same text over and over again which made them become confident with their reading skills.

The second framework was Questioning the Author (QtA) which taught the students to question what they read, think, probe, associate and critique. The point of this framework was to teach the students to construct meaning out of the text. The students were taught to view the text, deal with the text through questioning, question as they were reading, and student collaboration.

The third framework was Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) which emphasized reading one passage at a time and once that passage was mastered, the students moved onto the next passage. In this technique, the students were first taught to look for key features in the text, brainstorm prior knowledge and predict what will happen. The second step was to read and look for ideas and words they didn't understand. The students then used strategies to figure out what they didn't know. Thirdly, the students determined the main or important ideas in the passage. The last step was to generate questions and answers to show they understood the concept of the passage.

The fourth framework was Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) which was a multiple strategy program to improve reading comprehension. First, the students read

aloud to each other. Then, the students did paragraph shrinking where they read and told the main idea of the passage. The third part was called a prediction relay where the students: predicated what was going to happen, read one half of the page, checked their prediction, and then summarized what they read.

The last framework was Concept-Orientated Reading Instruction (CORI) which assisted teachers in motivating students to learn conceptual knowledge about content area subjects through use of comprehension strategies. There were four steps listed for this framework. The first one was to observe and personalize through direct experiences. The second one was to search and retrieve by gathering information. The third one was to comprehend and integrate by learning and gaining. The last one was to communicate with others though presentation of the materials.

A Review of Selected Instructional Teaching Strategies for Reading

According to research conducted by the Washington State OSPI (2008), for ELLs to be successful, instructional strategies that matched their linguistic, cultural and educational background experiences were considered essential. English Language Learners also needed to be able to use the four modalities of language every day. The four modalities were: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In order for ELL students to learn how to use English appropriately, the students needed to be exposed to good models of reading, writing, listening and speaking on a daily basis. Eight general concepts that increased the chance of success for ELL students were identified. These eight concepts were also incorporated in the SIOP teaching method.

The eight concepts were:

1. Display the Objective
2. Build Background
3. Develop Vocabulary
4. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Materials
5. Scaffolding
6. Interaction
7. Make it Visual
8. Hands-on Practice

According to Vogt (2006), for the concept of “Displaying the Objective,” teachers identified and posted both a language and a content objective for each lesson. These objectives were appropriate for the grade level and educational background of the students. The objectives were reviewed at the beginning and the end of the lesson and the students stated if the objectives had been met.

The second and third concepts went together in the actual presentation of the lesson. For the “Concept of Building Background,” the teachers needed to make sure the concepts in the lesson were linked to the student’s background experience. This experience could be personal, cultural, or academic in nature. Once the concept was linked to the student’s background, then the teacher needed to make the link between the prior knowledge and the new concept. One major way for teachers to link prior knowledge was through the “Use of Vocabulary”. Vogt (2006) suggested that teachers

needed to contextualize the key vocabulary of the lesson. Teachers needed to have the vocabulary defined, and then use the vocabulary in context. English Language Learners needed the vocabulary words to be placed correctly in a literacy context so that they could understand the meaning of the words. Vocabulary was also introduced through: personal dictionaries, content word wall, concept definition map, and other word activities. By having a language rich environment, the teacher showed the students that print was meaningful and provided many resources for the students to have to read and write from. On a daily basis, the teacher read different material and modeled how to extract meaning from text. In addition, the teacher provided a safe, supportive, and positive learning environment where students practiced spoken language.

According to OSPI, “Culturally Responsive Teaching and Materials” was a technique used by teachers to include culturally appropriate and relevant teaching practices. Some materials included were: using charts, graphs, pictures, illustrations, realia, math manipulatives, multimedia, and demonstrations by the teacher or students in the classroom. Through the use of these materials, the teacher provided the students with a visual interpretation of the verbal instructions or explanation. Other strategies included; effective wait time for students, clarifying key concepts in their first language, application of the content and language knowledge, and review of key vocabulary.

The concept of “Scaffolding” was explained by Haynes (2004) as introducing a new concept with a lot of instruction in the beginning and then when the students became more familiar with the concept, gives less instruction. One model for increasing

independence started with explicit teaching, moved to modeling, followed by practicing and ended with applying. When the students went through this process with different lessons, the students demonstrated confidence in themselves as successful learners. Daily writing by the students and modeling by the teacher was a great example of using scaffolding. In addition, the teacher modeled the correct writing format, grammar, and its rules to the students. Daily writing practice by the students helped them apply and demonstrate their new learning.

Vogt identified several different ways that a teacher could use the strategy of “Interaction” in the classroom. Said Vogt, “Learning is more effective when students have an opportunity to participate fully—discussing ideas and information” (p.6). For ELL students to participate fully, the teacher’s needed to make sure the students were comfortable in the classroom. This was done through grouping techniques, cooperative learning activities, using appropriate wait time, and clarifying those key concepts. The idea behind the grouping techniques was that some ELL students felt more comfortable talking in a small group rather than in front of the whole class. Not only did the students get time to practice in a small group, they had time to ask clarifying questions without speaking out in front of the whole class. The cooperative learning activities included jigsaw reading, four corners, information gap activities, and roundtable. Each of these activities allowed the students to work together to either solve a problem or present information.

The strategy of “Making it Visual” was defined by OSPI as showing a picture or modeling the process. Many of the vocabulary words were foreign to the ELL students and showing pictures or modeling the words helped the students understand the vocabulary. These pictures could have been drawn, downloaded and printed off the computer, or put on a large screen in the front of the classroom. One example given was that the students were told to describe sand but they were just shown the word. The list produced by the students was very small. When they were shown a picture of sand, the list grew. When the students actually got to feel, smell and look at sand, their list grew again. This activity showed that the students had a better understanding of the new item when they got to see and hold it rather than simply seeing or hearing the word.

The strategy of “Hands-on Materials and/or Using Manipulatives for Practice,” has increased the probability of students mastering the content concepts and skills. English Language Learners also needed to be able to connect abstract concepts with concrete experiences so that the concepts would be understood. Some suggestions given were: divide the content into meaningful short chunks: make time for practice into short 10-15 minute chunks: and, new learning should have several short practices close together while older learning should have practices that are farther apart (OSPI).

Summary

The review of selected literature presented in Chapter 2 produced the following major research themes:

1. Reading Fluency was identified as a key reading skill which allowed students to decode words and language.
2. Reading Comprehension was defined as a skill where the student was able to understand or get meaning from text but, in order to comprehend what was read, students needed to have good fluency skills.
3. To assist ELLs in using the four modalities of language every day, a variety of instructional strategies that matched their linguistic, cultural, and educational background experiences were recommended.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

The purpose of this experimental research study was to determine the extent to which a re-teaching of the *Read Well Program* to kindergarten ELL students made a difference on the outcome of the scores of the fluency and comprehension pieces as measured by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills (DIBELS). To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was explored. Additionally, essential baseline data was obtained and analyzed from which related generalizations, conclusions, and recommendations were formed.

Chapter 3 provided a description of the methodology employed, the participants included in the study, details regarding instruments used, design, procedure, treatment of the data, and the summary.

Methodology

The method employed in the present study used the posttest-only control group design. Accordingly, participants were randomly divided into two groups, exposed to different treatments and then posttested. Posttest scores were compared to determine the extent to which a re-teaching of the *Read Well Program* to kindergarten ELL students

made a difference on the outcome of the scores of fluency and comprehension pieces as measured by DIBELS.

Participants

The participants for this study were randomly divided into control (X) and experimental (Y) groups. Group X was made of 18 ESL kindergarten students in the researcher's classroom for the year of 2007-2008. This group of students did not receive the extra lesson of *Read Well* through the SIOP method. Group Y was made of 18 ESL kindergarten students in the researcher's classroom for the year of 2008-2009. This group received the extra lessons of *Read Well* through the SIOP method. Both groups received an initial lesson of *Read Well* in the morning; one half (1/2) hour for whole group instruction, and one (1) hour of small group instruction.

Instruments

The researcher used the DIBELS Word Use Fluency (WUF) test to verify the effectiveness of re-teaching the *Read Well Program* through the SIOP method. For purposes of comparison, the DIBELS scores of January 2008 and January 2009 were obtained and analyzed. According the DIBELS data system (2009),

The DIBELS Word Use Fluency (WUF) measure is an individually administered test of vocabulary and oral language. WUF is intended for most children from fall of kindergarten through third grade. A benchmark goal is not provided for WUF because additional research is needed to establish its linkage to other big ideas of

literacy (phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, and accuracy and fluency with connected text (p.1).

Design

The researcher used DIBELS as the assessment tool for this study. Formal tests were administered in January 2008 and January 2009, while progress monitoring was conducted biweekly throughout the school year. Test scores from January 2008 and January 2009 were compared in a posttest fashion using data from the biweekly testing as a monitoring technique. The researcher used the Word Use Fluency (WUF) test to measure student accuracy and fluency.

Procedure

Procedures employed in the present study evolved in several stages as follows:

1. During January 2009, the investigator (Cara M. Morrill) sought and obtained permission to do the following study and collected baseline data from the Mattawa Elementary Principal (Lucinda Wiser).
2. During the summer of 2008, the kindergarten teachers of Mattawa Elementary reviewed and analyzed the DIBELS scores from the school year 2007-2008. It was determined that the students were low in fluency and comprehension.
3. Kindergarten teachers then created a *Read Well* re-teaching curriculum that used the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) method. The objectives of the lessons were to increase student fluency and comprehension skills.

4. Teachers next examined each of the units and determined the pertinent vocabulary from the lessons. The teachers based their language and content objectives on the vocabulary of each lesson.
5. To implement each re-teaching lesson, the teachers gathered and employed various items, realia, songs, pictures, and stories for the students.
6. Students in the researcher's class were tested in January 2009 and the scores were compared to the scores of the researcher's class from the previous year.
7. During Spring Semester 2009, the writer analyzed essential baseline data and formulated related conclusions and recommendations.

Treatment of the Data

A *t*-test for independent variables was chosen as the appropriate measurement tool for determining the significance between the control and experimental groups. The researcher used the Windows STATPACK statistical software and the text Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006) to interpret the data from the *t*-tests. These data were analyzed for significance at the levels of $p \geq 0.05$, 0.01, and 0.001 levels.

To test significance of scores obtained, a *t*-test for independent samples was used. The following formula was used to test for significance.

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

Summary

Chapter 3 provided a description of the research methodology employed in the study, participants, details regarding instruments used, design, procedure, treatment of the data, and a summary.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

After studying the Mattawa community and school district, the researcher noted the English Language Learners (ELLs) in kindergarten were not passing the fluency and comprehension tests in the *Read Well Program*. The consequence of students not passing these *Read Well* tests led to poor scores, frustration, and inability for students to make up their schooling.

To address these concerns, the present study sought to determine the extent to which a re-teaching of the *Read Well Program* to ELL students might improve *Read Well* fluency and comprehension skills as measured by DIBELS.

Description of the Environment

The Wahluke School District (WSD), an agricultural community in Central Washington, had a high Migrant (28.8%), transitional bilingual (54.0%), and Hispanic (92.6%) population. More than 70.6% of the students enrolled qualified for free or reduced lunch rate. The researcher (Cara M. Morrill) derived from the statistics shown that the community was low income and struggled with language issues, migrant work issues, and related economic factors.

Participating students received an initial lesson of *Read Well* each day for one and a half hours. The students in the experimental group received a second lesson of *Read*

Well two times a week for 30 minutes from September through present, 2008-2009. The second lesson of *Read Well* was taught through the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) method. The teaching of the *Read Well Program* was done in the researcher's kindergarten classroom in the Wahluke school district and was taught by the researcher and the paraprofessionals that work in the classroom. The materials used were: *Read Well* curriculum, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) lesson plans, realia, media, books, songs and chants.

Experimental group(X) included students enrolled in the researcher's kindergarten class during the 2008-2009 school year. This group of students received an initial lesson of *Read Well* in the morning for an hour and a half. The experimental group also received a second lesson of *Read Well* two times a week for 30 minutes.

Control group (Y) included students enrolled in the researcher's kindergarten class during the 2007-2008 school year. This group of students received the initial lesson of *Read Well* in the morning for an hour and a half, but didn't receive the extra lessons of *Read Well*.

Hypothesis/Research Question

Kindergarten students who participated in a *Read Well* re-teaching program supplemented by SIOP instructional intervention strategies will show an increase in literacy scores as measured by the DIBELS reading assessment.

Null Hypothesis

Kindergarten students will show no significant improvement in their DIBELS scores. Significance was determined for $p >$ at .05, .01, and .001 levels.

Results of the Study

A t -test was calculated to determine the levels of significance between the control and experimental groups. *Figure 1* represented the results of the t -tests between the two groups of students. Table 1 represented the distribution of t with 33 degrees of freedom. Significance was not determined for $p \geq 0.05$, 0.01, and 0.001.

t - TEST FOR INDEPENDENT SAMPLES		
Statistic	Values	Group X
No. of Scores in Group X	18	0.0
Sum of Scores in Group X	27.0000	0.0
Mean of Group X	1.50	0.0
Sum of Squared Scores in Group X	477.00	0.0
SS of Group X	436.50	0.0
No. of Scores in Group Y	17	0.0
Sum of Scores in Group Y	71.0000	11
Mean of Group Y	4.18	22
Sum of Squared Scores in Group Y	1159.00	0.0
SS of Group Y	862.47	0.0
t - Value	-1.26	0.0
Degrees of freedom	33	0.0

Figure 1 t -Test report comparing control group (X) and experimental group (Y) DIBELS scores.

Figure 1 displayed 17 scores for Group Y (experimental) and 18 scores for Group X (control). The sum of the scores for Group X was 27 and Group Y was 71. The mean of Group X was 1.50 and Group Y was 4.18. The sum of squared scores in Group X was 477.00 and Group Y was 1159.00. The degrees of freedom were 33 and the *t*-value was -1.26. The values used to determine significance were published in the textbook Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006, p. 571).

Table 1

Distribution of *t* with 33 degrees of freedom

df	p		
	0.05	0.01	0.001
33	2.042	2.750	3.646

As indicated in *figure 1*, the *t*-value was at -1.26 and the degrees of freedom were 33. Accordingly, levels of significance at 0.05(2.042), 0.01(2.750), and 0.001(3.646), indicated the null hypothesis was accepted and the hypothesis was not supported.

Findings

Data obtained and analyzed for this study were used to compare the DIBELS scores of students who did not receive extra lessons of *Read Well* to the DIBELS scores of students who did receive extra lessons of *Read Well*. Through statistical analysis, the

determination was made that there was no significant difference in the scores between the two groups of students.

As no significant data were found to support the hypothesis, the writer concluded that the students needed even more time with reading fluency and comprehension. A future study might include a follow-up of the same students to determine whether student skills improved over a longer period of time (longitudinal study) to include grades K-3.

Summary

Chapter 4 included the description of the environment, the hypothesis, null hypothesis, results of the study, findings, and a summary. The fundamental research question on which the study focused was answered in the negative. The research indicated that the treatment did not have an impact on the fluency and comprehension scores of the experimental group. During evaluation of the findings, it was deemed by the researcher that the hypothesis was not supported and the null hypothesis was accepted. This was shown through *figure 1*.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this experimental research study was to determine the extent to which a re-teaching of the *Read Well Program* to kindergarten ELL students made a difference on the outcome of the scores of the fluency and comprehension pieces as measured by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills (DIBELS). To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was accomplished. Additionally, essential baseline data was obtained and analyzed from which related generalizations, conclusions, and recommendations were formed.

Conclusions

From the review of related literature in Chapter 2 and from the analysis of the data in Chapter 4, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Reading Fluency was identified as a key reading skill which allowed students to decode words and language.
2. Reading Comprehension was defined as a skill where the student was able to understand or get meaning from text but, in order to comprehend what had been read, students needed to have good fluency skills.
3. To assist ELLs in using the four modalities of language every day, a variety of instructional strategies that matched their linguistic, cultural, and educational background experiences were recommended.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions cited above, the following recommendations have been suggested:

1. To help young readers improve their skills in word and language usage, educators should emphasize the use of fluency skill practice.
2. To enhance the development of comprehension skills, students should be taught fluency skills and strategies.
3. To reach the needs of the ELL population, numerous teaching strategies should be implemented by the teachers and the school district.
4. To further explore potential benefits of the re-teaching program, a longitudinal study including a larger student population encompassing K-3 is recommended.
5. Schools or school districts seeking research pertaining to the effectiveness of re-teaching *Read Well* to an ELL population may wish to utilize information contained in this present study, or they may wish to undertake further research more suited to their unique needs.

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