

Increasing Reading Fluency and Student Confidence
With Read Naturally

A Special Project
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Dr. Robert P. Kraig
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FACULTY APPROVAL

Increasing Reading Fluency and Student Confidence

With Read Naturally

A Master's Special Project

by

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Approved for the Faculty

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ABSTRACT

Increasing Reading Fluency and Student Confidence With Read Naturally

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Reading fluency is a skill that is essential to a student's academic success. Reading fluency not only enriches student's learning, but it also enables them to tap into the higher level thinking necessary for the reading of more complex text. This study demonstrated that students could be successful in reading when a one-to-one model of reading intervention was incorporated into their school program. A group of twenty second grade students received Read Naturally, a guided reading intervention targeted specifically for increasing fluency rates. Specific strategies that focus on fluency and accuracy have been shown to increase reading comprehension.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

Reading proficiency has been found to be integral to learning, especially as students advanced into the middle school and high school years. Students who had not yet attained proficiency in reading struggle in content area classes, exhibited both emotional and behavioral issues, and were less likely to graduate from high school (Bryant, 2003; Fisher and Ivey, 2006; Nes, 2003).

One of the most important skills that students must have achieved before they could successfully understand what they read was fluency (Nes, 1997). Fluency is an ability that evolves with practice and teacher instruction. It enables students to develop immediate word recognition and analyze text content (Nes, 1997). Students who were unable to master the skill of fluency continued to struggle with reading and became less successful at comprehending what they read. These individuals later became labeled reading disabled or at risk for reading failure (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1997). The goal of the research design was to determine if the intervention was successful in creating reading gains for this particular group of students.

Statement of the Problem

“Struggling and at-risk readers may have fewer schemas to help them comprehend while reading. Teachers needed to increase schema in the classroom as much as possible. Learning dispositions could be the greatest obstacle to learning, possibly sabotaging the learning possibilities of reading experiences.” (Kidd Villaume, 2002). Struggling readers

may have come from underprivileged literacy environments, leading to fewer oral language and emergent literacy skills, and limited prior knowledge (Brownell, 2000). Some parents of the targeted group in the study rarely took time to read to their children, or may not have had the ability to do so according to students. This challenged the ability of teachers to successfully educate students.

Struggling readers differed from skilled readers in their use of world knowledge while comprehending texts, as well as monitoring comprehension and fix-up strategies (Parker, 2002). For some, they lacked the knowledge needed in order to rectify their breakdown in comprehension (Massey, 2003). They may have failed to understand keywords, and the way that sentences relate to one another.

Comprehension problems may also have been due to difficulties in reading fluently. Fluency was vital for students to develop effective reading comprehension skills. Readers lacking fluency spend excessive time decoding, leading to less short-term memory available for comprehension (Brownell, 2000). Students needed to be able to decode well, in order to comprehend the text. Regular independent reading time must have been provided for the students to practice the strategies. Dr. Michael Pressley stated the following, “Reading becomes better with practice, and comprehending becomes better with more reading practice” (Pardo, 2004).

Other issues that struggling readers needed to overcome included: low-quality literature, boring reading materials, and inferior classroom instruction (Brownell, 2000). Struggling readers require support for many years, however different types of support are needed at different times in a child’s reading development (Brownell, 2000). It is imperative that teachers taught decoding skills, built fluency, built prior knowledge,

taught new vocabulary, motivated, and engaged students with the text in order to improve reading comprehension (Pardo, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to incorporate a guided oral reading intervention in order to raise fluency rates on a group of second grade students attending Onalaska Elementary School. Baseline data were collected for each participant prior to introducing the fluency intervention. Reading rates and reading comprehension accuracy were calculated and graphed daily. Measures also included pre and post-testing of students using Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills. (DIBELS)

Delimitations

This project was delimited to 20 second grade students attending Onalaska Elementary School during the 2008-2009 school year who scored below grade level on a pre-assessment of reading fluency.

Assumptions

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

1. All survey questions were answered honestly.
2. All students did their best during DIBELS testing.
3. The DIBELS proctor followed correct protocol.
4. All second grade students participating in the study were at equal levels of reading proficiency.

Hypothesis

Second grade students will show measurable improvement of reading fluency scores when given the guided reading intervention program Read Naturally as a supplement to

the Harcourt Reading Series. Students will exhibit a greater level of confidence in reading according to survey results.

Null Hypothesis

Second grade students will not show marked improvement of reading fluency scores when given the guided reading intervention program Read Naturally as a supplement to the Harcourt Reading Series. Students will not exhibit a greater level of confidence in reading according to survey results.

Significance of the Project

The purpose of this project was to provide a factual base of information regarding student achievement in reading fluency after using the intervention reading program Read Naturally as a supplement to the Harcourt Reading Series. Students would exhibit a greater degree of confidence in reading after completing the study.

Procedure

For the purpose of this project, the following procedures were implemented:

1. A review of selected literature was conducted at Onalaska Elementary School, Heritage University, and articles collected through the use of internet search engines.
2. Permission to conduct research on students was received from the Onalaska Elementary School Principal, Taj Jensen (see Appendix A).
3. Permission was granted to use the second grade para-professional as the official DIBELS proctor.
4. The para-professional administered DIBELS tests on all second grade students at Onalaska Elementary School.

5. DIBELS results were tabulated and participants were selected based on the results.
6. A student survey was created by the researcher and then approved by the Principal, Taj Jensen.
7. A survey of student confidence in reading and comprehension was given to the participants of the study (see Appendix B).
8. Results from the survey were tabulated.
9. Read Naturally was administered four times per week by the para-professional and the researcher from January, 2009 through June, 2009.
10. Data was recorded after every Read Naturally examination.
11. A final DIBELS test was given by the para-professional in June, 2009.
12. Results of the DIBELS tests were tabulated.
13. The survey of student confidence in reading and comprehension was given once again to the participants of the study.
14. Results from the survey were tabulated.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following words are defined:

Comprehension: The level of understanding.

Fluency: The ability to read accurately, quickly, effortlessly, and with appropriate expression and meaning.

Read Naturally: A reading intervention program designed to improve fluency. The program combines three strategies: teacher modeling, repeated readings, and progress monitoring.

Acronym

DIBELS: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

NCLB: No Child Left Behind

WCPM: Words-correct per-minute

DORF: DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency

OES: Onalaska Elementary School

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

This chapter has been organized around the following topics: (a) No Child Left Behind, (b) Harcourt Reading Series (c) Reading Fluency and Comprehension, (d) Read Naturally, (e) Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, and (f) summary.

No Child Left Behind

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) focused reading instruction on the following five components: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The implementation of these components required extremely knowledgeable, thoughtful, well-prepared teachers who adjust instruction for learner's needs. (Stewart 2004). The law specified that reading programs must be established in Kindergarten through third grade in Reading First schools to ensure that every student can read at grade level or above no later than the end of grade three. Many schools that do not qualify as a Reading First school were complying with the NCLB requirements.

With the high demands of NCLB in primary education all aspects of the curriculum had been changing to match the education reform. The learning gaps of children can start developing before they every enter Kindergarten. For children who enter Kindergarten ready to learn, the task of the K-12 school system was to prevent any achievement gaps from emerging. For children who enter less prepared or who fall behind in the early

grades, the task was to close a gap the already exists (Davison, Seo, Davenport, Butterbaugh, and Davison 2004).

Harcourt Reading Series

The Harcourt Reading Series is a balanced, comprehensive reading and language arts program for prekindergarten through sixth grade that provides the full range of resources and support that teachers need to deliver research-based, motivational instruction for all learners. The instructional focus of the program progresses from “learning to read” to “reading to learn” and ultimately, to “learning for life.” Onalaska Elementary School has adopted the Harcourt Reading Series. It is used in Kindergarten through fifth grade.

Key areas of reading instruction within the program develops student proficiency in all aspects of reading and language arts, including the key areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, as well as writing, spelling, grammar, listening, and speaking.

The program provided teachers with a clear path for intervening to meet a variety of needs. Resources included complete intervention programs for students who struggled to read and write and a scaffolded support program for English language learners. In addition, the Harcourt Reading Series offered a Spanish-language program, Trofeos, which paralleled the complete Harcourt program.

Integrated assessment components allowed teachers to determine each student's strengths and weaknesses and adjust instruction as needed, using a wide variety of resources. (Harcourt, 2009)

Reading Fluency and Comprehension

Teaching reading fluency has been an essential element of reading instruction. A student's problem with fluency was a reliable indicator of problems with reading comprehension (Rasinski, 2004). Accurate comprehension depended on understanding the vocabulary words and how they connected to the text. Gardner and Lambert (1972) felt teachers needed to assist hesitant readers in choosing appropriate reading materials that would help motivate them. (Ambe, 2007). Because accuracy was a fundamental component of fluency, teachers who worked with beginning readers must have focused significant amounts of instructional time on basic word recognition and word analysis skills (Pikulski and Chard, 2005). To have done this effectively, teachers would have provided instruction that systematically presented daily opportunities for students to learn words accurately (Snow, Burns, and Griffith, 1998) – the important first step in becoming a skillful, proficient, and motivated reader. The best reading teachers served as facilitators in well-balanced literacy programs that encompassed a wide variety of literacy activities that accommodated students' individual learning styles (Archer, 2003). It was beneficial for students to understand how a text was structured as this understanding would aid their comprehension. Research indicated that students needed to predict, self-question, infer, summarize, visualize, and monitor their own comprehension (Dewitz and Dewitz, 2003). Teachers were encouraged to model fluent reading illustrating proper rate and accuracy. In order to gain oral reading fluency, teachers must have promoted reading and rereading instruction, which would have aided in gaining effective fluency for the reader (Glazer, 2007). Assessing the three elements of fluency (accuracy, rate, and prosody) provided information about students' individual learning needs and enabled the teacher to choose

appropriate interventions (Hudson, Lane, and Pullen, 2005). Fluent readers used expression and prosody, and identified words instinctively and correctly. Using prosody correctly was an indication that the reader comprehended what they read. When one considered the role automaticity and prosody played in comprehension, it would seem logical that developing a reader's fluency would encourage increased comprehension. Accuracy, automaticity, and prosodic instruction should have occurred simultaneously. Some texts such as poetry, song lyrics, rhymes, and plays were suitable for oral reading practice. By practicing the various text (poetry, etc.), students increased their skills in accuracy, automaticity (rate), prosody, and comprehension (Rasinski, 2006). Effective reading teachers used a variety of frequent assessments to keep track of student progress for the purpose of delivering appropriate instruction. Progress monitoring of student performance was a vital component of education so that if an instruction method was not working with a particular student, the program could have been altered to fit the needs of that student (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2001).

Read Naturally

The Read Naturally (RN) strategy was developed by Candyce Ihnot, a Title I reading teacher from Minneapolis. Candyce developed and tested it in 1989 as part of her master's thesis in special education. After finding that her approach was effective with struggling students in her school, Candyce and her husband, Tom Ihnot, developed a set of instructional materials that were commercially available from their company, Read Naturally, Inc. To implement the Read Naturally strategy, students' fluency levels words-correct per-minute (WCPM) were assessed to place students at an appropriate instructional level. The teacher then helped each student set a reasonable, achievable

fluency goal. Goals ranged from approximately 80-90 WCPM for primary students or older students reading at a primary level and from 90-120 WCPM for upper elementary students.

Instruction began with an unpracticed, “cold reading” of a student-selected passage from the targeted level. Passages may have ranged in length from approximately 100 words at the mid-first-grade level to 350 words at the sixth-grade level. As they read, the teacher used a timer and kept track of the words they skipped or stumbled over by lightly underlining the problem word. They then calculated the WCPM and graphed this first, unpracticed WCPM score on a bar graph. In step two, students practiced reading the same passage three to four times along with a model to learn how to accurately pronounce all the words in the text. This step was not timed, and the students read the entire passage. The modeled reading could come from a recording or a person trained to read the entire passage at a rate that is comfortable for the student. The key here is that a student did not just listen to the model, but actually read aloud, softly, with the narrator’s voice, giving full attention to the text. Encouraging students to point to the text being read and informing them that they would be responsible for answering a set of comprehension questions after completing all the steps in the strategy helped students stay focused. Once students felt comfortable with the text, they began step three in which they read the text independently, again aloud, but softly. Students set a timer for one minute and read the text several times until they were comfortably reaching their predetermined goal level—and were ready to be checked by the teacher. Students kept practicing the passage until the teacher could meet with them because this maximized their engaged practice time—a key to improved skills in low performing students (Brophy, 1988).

In the final step, the student read for the teacher, who then calculated the WCPM score. The student “passes” if four criteria are met: 1) the WCPM score met or exceeded the predetermined goal; 2) three or fewer errors were made; 3) the student read the passage with correct phrasing and attention to punctuation; and, 4) the student could correctly answer a few comprehension questions. When students do not pass, they continue practicing this same text. When they do pass, they graph their new score onto the same bar with their initial, unpracticed score, using a different colored pencil or marker. This graph gives tangible evidence to the students that they were improving—and keeps motivation high by showing them that their own effort makes the difference. Students repeated these steps until they completed 10-12 passages of equivalent difficulty. At that point the student and teacher collaboratively examine the data on the student’s graph to decide what step to take next. If the student made steady progress in the current level, but has not yet approached his goal level on the first, unpracticed reading, he should stay in that same level for another 10-12 passages. If the student’s first unpracticed readings are occasionally meeting or approaching the goal, the teacher and student may decide to move the student up to the next level of difficulty with the same goal, or stay in the current level of difficulty and raise the “pass” goal a bit higher. If at any time the student had difficulty reading at the goal level after the practice readings, the decision could have been made to move the student down to an easier level or make a downward adjustment in the WCPM goal.

In addition to requiring the students to answer a set of comprehension questions at the end of each passage, some teachers have added other comprehension activities to this

process, such as having the students write a five-minute re-tell response after each passage.

Using the Read Naturally strategy for 20-30 minutes per day, for three or more days per week, could have a significant impact on improving students' reading fluency. In two studies reported on by Hasbrouck, Ihnot, and Rogers (1999), second- and third-grade Title I students, as well as sixth-grade special education students, showed significant improvement in their fluency. The second- and third-graders received, on average, 32 weeks of RN instruction. From fall to spring, the second-graders' average WCPM increased from 17.9 to 71.6, meaning that they moved from well below the 25th percentile to well above it; they showed an average gain of 1.68 WCPM per week, much greater than the 1.2 WCPM per week gain that second-graders typically make. Third-grade students had similar results. From fall to spring, their average WCPM increased from 42 to 93, meaning that they moved from just below the 25th percentile to well above it; they gained 1.60 WCPM per week, as compared to the typical growth of 1.1 WCPM per week. The study of sixth-grade special education students also found significant improvements. These students were reading at levels ranging from grade 1.5 to 4.0. They received Read Naturally instruction in a special education class for 20 to 32 weeks and improved their fluency by an average of 1.4 WCPM per week, which is double the 0.7 words per week that sixth-graders typically gain.

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is a curriculum-based screening device that included measurements of oral reading fluency. DIBELS was research based and assisted with the diagnosis and treatment of reading problems.

DIBELS was a thorough assessment of reading skills. The five subtests of DIBELS included Letter Naming Fluency, Initial Sound Fluency, Phonemic Segmentation Fluency, Nonsense Word Fluency and Oral Reading Fluency. The inclusion of five subtests that measured reading ability was advantageous since these allowed educators to design instructional plans targeted at specific reading deficiencies.

DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) was intended for children from mid first grade through third grade. The benchmark goals were 40 in the spring of first grade, 90 in the spring of second grade and 110 in the spring of third grade. Students may have needed intensive instructional support if they scored below 10 in the spring of first grade, below 50 in the spring of second grade and below 70 in the spring of third grade (DIBELS, 2003).

DORF was a standardized instrument. It was administered individually and measured accuracy and fluency with connected text. The passages and procedures were based on research involving Curriculum-Based Measurement conducted by Stan Deno and colleagues at the University of Minnesota. The DORF was designed to identify children who may have needed instructional support and monitor progress toward instructional goals. Student performance was measured by having students read a passage aloud for one minute. Words omitted, substituted, and hesitations of more than three seconds were scored as errors. Words self-corrected within three seconds were scored as accurate. The

number of correct words was the oral reading fluency rate. Students could be given an optional retell fluency assessment to tell if their oral reading fluency was consistent with their comprehension (DIBELS, 2003).

Summary

The focus of this chapter was to address the available evidence to the topics of (a) No Child Left Behind, (b) Harcourt Reading Series (c) Reading Fluency and Comprehension, (d) Read Naturally, and (e) Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills. NCLB placed a focus on student learning Kindergarten through high school graduation. With the high demands of NCLB in primary education all aspects of the curriculum changed to match the education reform. The research summarized in this chapter has shown that reading fluency was a key contributor to student achievement. When adopted curriculum alone didn't meet the needs of reading fluency-challenged students intervention pieces that focused directly on the problem were needed. Read Naturally is just one such piece that could help close the gap. DIBELS assisted with the diagnosis and treatment of reading problems. The methodology and treatment of the data are reported in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of the Data

Introduction

This chapter has been organized around the following topics: (a) Methodology, (b) Participants, (c) Instruments, (d) Design, (e) Procedure, (f) Treatment of Data, and (g) Summary.

Methodology

The researcher conducted two studies. The first study was experimental, comparing pretest and posttest reading fluency scores of the 20 participants. In January, 2009 a DIBELS pretest was administered by a para-professional with five years of test giving experience. The test was given to all 58 second grade students at Onalaska Elementary School. The 20 students who scored the lowest became the participants in this study. These students were then given the guided reading intervention Read Naturally four times per week for 11 weeks. Both the para-professional and the researcher oversaw and managed the Read Naturally curriculum. In each lesson, the first five minutes were spent on oral reading of a selected passage with either the para-professional or the researcher. The reading was timed for one minute and the total number of words read correctly was recorded on a graph. The last 20 minutes involved repeated oral reading of the selected passage either individually or with a cassette tape. Once students practiced the passage three times, they did a timed reading with the para-professional or the researcher. If the student achieved mastery (70 words read correctly with three or fewer errors), the student moved onto another passage. Otherwise the cycle was repeated. In June, 2009 a posttest was administered by the para-professional to the 20 participants in order to indicate if

there was improvement in fluency or no improvement in fluency. Results between the pre and post tests were tabulated and can be found in Chapter 4.

The second study was descriptive, assessing pre and post survey results regarding the participant's attitudes toward reading. The survey was given in January, 2009. The researcher explained to the participants that they should answer all questions as honest as possible. The researcher then read each survey question one at a time aloud to the participants to ensure accurate understanding. The surveys were collected, tallied, and stored in the researcher's desk. The post survey was given in June, 2009. The researcher explained to the participants that they should answer all questions as honest as possible. The researcher then read each survey question one at a time aloud to the participants to ensure accurate responses. The surveys were collected, tallied, and stored in the researcher's desk. The results have been tabulated and can be found in Chapter 4.

Participants

The researcher conducted two studies. The first study was experimental, comparing pretest and posttest reading fluency scores of the 20 participants. In January, 2009 a DIBELS pretest was administered by a para-professional with five years of test giving experience. The test was given to all 58 second grade students at Onalaska Elementary School. The 20 students who scored the lowest became the participants in this study. These students were then given the guided reading intervention Read Naturally four times per week for 11 weeks. Both the para-professional and the researcher oversaw and managed the Read Naturally curriculum. In each lesson, the first five minutes were spent on oral reading of a selected passage with either the para-professional or the researcher. The reading was timed for one minute and the total number of words read correctly was

recorded on a graph. The last 20 minutes involved repeated oral reading of the selected passage either individually or with a cassette tape. Once students practiced the passage three times, they did a timed reading with the para-professional or the researcher. If the student achieved mastery (70 words read correctly with three or fewer errors), the student moved onto another passage. Otherwise the cycle was repeated. In June, 2009 a posttest was administered by the para-professional to the 20 participants in order to indicate if there was improvement in fluency or no improvement in fluency. Results between the pre and post tests were tabulated and can be found in Chapter 4.

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Instruments

Two instruments were used in the completion of this study. The first was the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) test. DIBELS assisted with the diagnosis and treatment of reading fluency problems. The second instrument was a survey developed by the researcher to help assess the attitudes of the students toward

reading. The researcher felt that the two instruments used tested what they were designed to test.

Design

The researcher conducted two studies. The first study was experimental, comparing pretest and posttest reading fluency scores of the 20 participants. The second study was descriptive, assessing pre and post survey results regarding the participant's attitudes toward reading.

Procedure

For the purpose of this project, the following procedures were implemented:

1. A review of selected literature was conducted at Onalaska Elementary School, Heritage University, and articles collected through the use of internet search engines.
2. Permission to conduct research on students was received from the Onalaska Elementary School Principal, Taj Jensen (see Appendix A).
3. Permission to use the second grade para-professional as the official DIBELS proctor.
4. The para-professional administered DIBELS tests on all second grade students at Onalaska Elementary School.
5. DIBELS results were tabulated and participants were selected based on the results.
6. A student survey was created by the researcher and then approved by the Principal, Taj Jensen.
7. A survey of student confidence in reading and comprehension was given to the participants of the study (see Appendix B).

8. Results from the survey were tabulated.
9. Read Naturally was administered four times per week by the para-professional and the researcher from January, 2009 through June, 2009.
10. Data was recorded after every Read Naturally examination.
11. A final DIBELS test was given by the para-professional in June, 2009.
12. Results of the DIBELS tests were tabulated.
13. The survey of student confidence in reading and comprehension was given once again to the participants of the study.
14. Results from the survey were tabulated.

Treatment of Data

The results of the two DIBELS tests were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and then calculated with the STATPAK program in order to analyze the mean, mode, and t-score.

Summary

This chapter was designed to review the methodology and treatment of data related to the achievements the participants made in reading fluency. Participants were given a DIBELS test to determine a starting point. A survey was given to determine the confidence level the participants had in reading. The guided reading intervention program Read Naturally was given four times a week for 11 weeks. Regular monitoring of the participant's exam results was recorded. In June, 2009 a final DIBELS test was given. The results were tabulated to show either an increase or a reduction in fluency rates. The survey of student confidence in reading was given once again to the

participants of the study. The analysis of data and findings from this study are reported in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

Chapter 4 has been organized around the following topics: (a) description of environment, (b) hypothesis, (c) results of the study, (d) findings, and (e) summary.

Description of the Environment

This project was delimited to 20 second grade students attending Onalaska Elementary School during the 2008-2009 school year who scored below grade level on a pre-assessment of reading fluency. Onalaska Elementary School (OES) is located in Onalaska, WA. OES houses approximately 355 students ranging from grades K through 5. OES contains 14 general education classrooms, one special education classroom, a gymnasium, a music room, a computer lab and a library. The ethnic make-up of the student body for the 2007-2008 school year consisted of Caucasian (81.7%), Hispanic (10.4%), American Indian/Alaska Native (4.5%), and Black (1.4%). Of those students 60.5% received free or reduced meals. (OSPI, 2008)

Hypothesis

Second grade students will show measurable improvement of reading fluency scores when given the guided reading intervention program Read Naturally as a supplement to the Harcourt Reading Series. Students will exhibit a greater level of confidence in reading according to survey results.

Null Hypothesis

Second grade students will not show marked improvement of reading fluency scores when given the guided reading intervention program Read Naturally as a supplement to

the Harcourt Reading Series. Students will not exhibit a greater level of confidence in reading according to survey results. An analysis is provided which tests this hypothesis.

Results of the Study

There was a significant increase in the reading fluency rates of the participants. All participants made gains between the months of January and June in the 2008/2009 school year. The first part of the hypothesis stated that second grade students would show measurable improvement of reading fluency scores when given the guided reading intervention program Read Naturally as a supplement to the Harcourt Reading Series, was supported. (Figure 1)

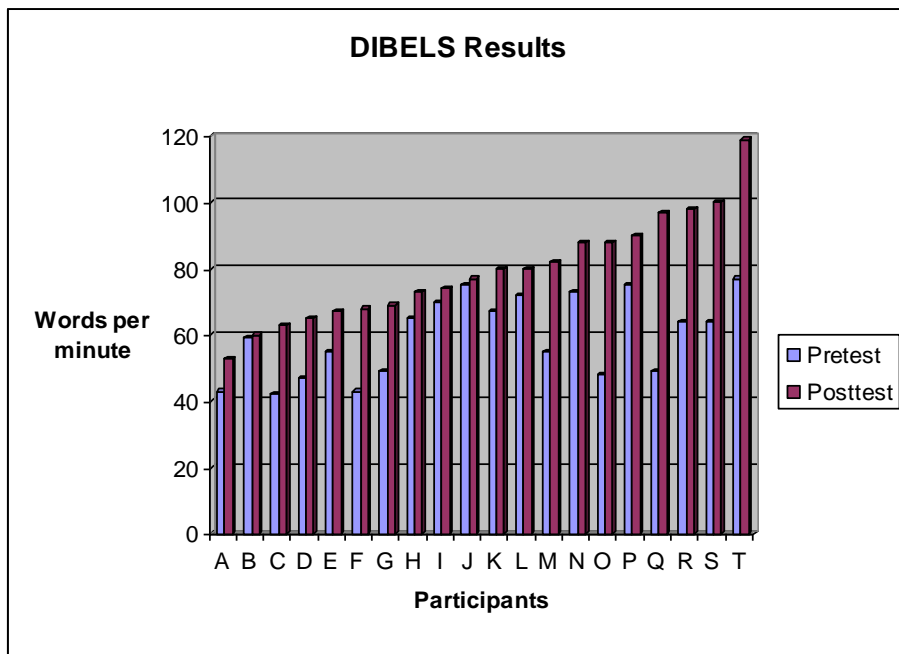


Figure 1

The data was entered into a STAT PAK and a *t* test was conducted to test for significance. With a degree of freedom of 19 and a probability of .05, a value of 2.093 needed to be exceeded to show significance. When calculated with a degree of freedom of 19 the *t* value was 6.25, showing significant change; accepting the hypothesis and rejecting the null hypothesis. The mean of the difference of the pre test and post test scores was 18.45, showing an increase in fluency. (Table 1)

t-Test for Non-Independent Samples	
Statistic	Values
Number of Pairs	20
Sum of Difference	389
Mean of Difference	18.45
Sum of Difference Squared	11251.00
t-Value	6.25
Degrees of Freedom	19

Table 1

The second part of the hypothesis was supported. There was a significant increase in the number of student who exhibited a greater level of confidence in reading. A survey was handed out in January, 2009 to the participants. Six questions were asked and either yes or no answers were given. The survey questions were read aloud to the participants by the researcher to ensure accurate understanding. The same survey was handed out in

June, 2009 to the participants. The survey questions were again read aloud by the researcher to ensure accurate understanding.

Of the 20 second grade participants who took part in the survey, they all responded to the statement: “I was able to read all of the words.” The January, 2009 survey found that only seven participants felt that they were able to read all of the words while the June, 2009 survey found that twice that amount felt they could read all of the words. (Figure 2)

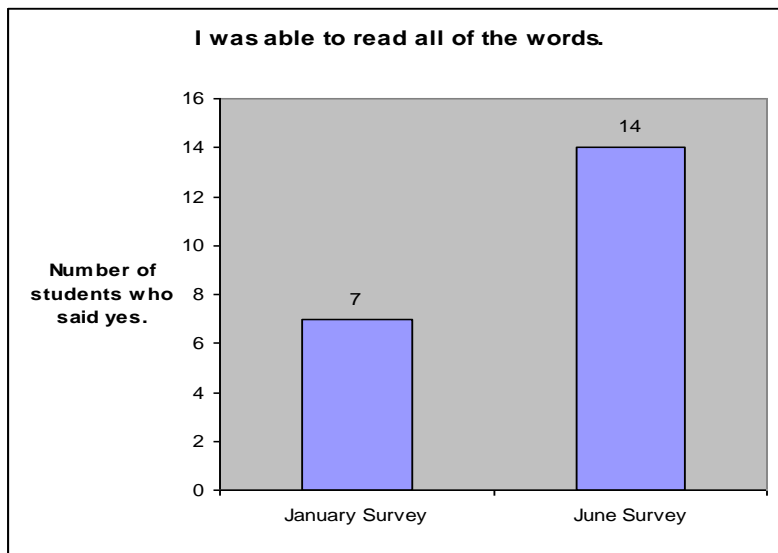


Figure 2

Of the 20 second grade participants who took part in the survey, they all responded to the statement: “I read with expression and feeling.” The January, 2009 survey found that eight participants felt that they were able to read with expression and feeling while the June, 2009 survey found that 17 felt they could read with expression and feeling. (Figure 3)

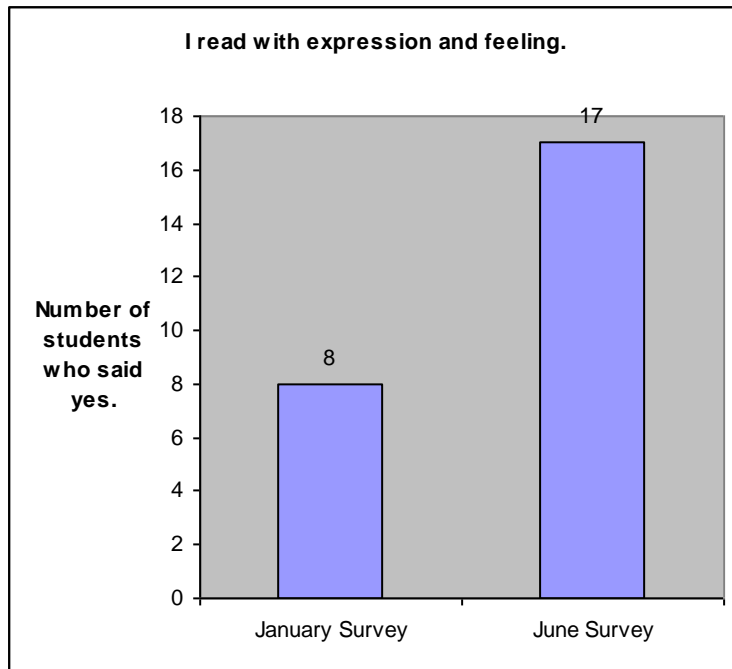


Figure 3

Of the 20 second grade participants who took part in the survey, they all responded to the statement: “I am a good reader.” The January, 2009 survey found that nine participants felt that they were good readers while the June, 2009 survey found that 16 felt they were good readers. (Figure 4)

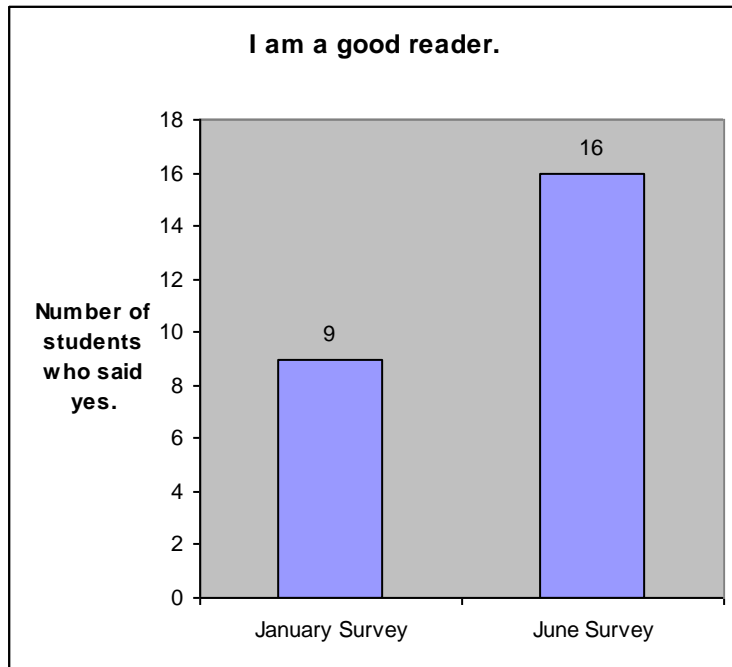


Figure 4

Of the 20 second grade participants who took part in the survey, they all responded to the statement: “I think others like my reading.” The January, 2009 survey found that nine participants felt that others liked their reading while the June, 2009 survey found that 17 felt that others liked their reading. (Figure 5)

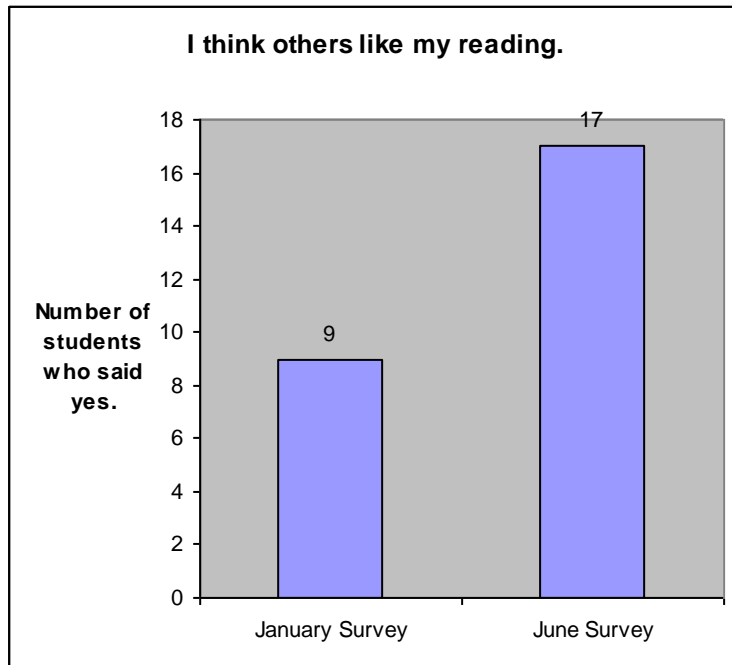


Figure 5

Of the 20 second grade participants who took part in the survey, they all responded to the statement: “I like to read to others.” The January, 2009 survey found that 11 participants liked to read to others while the June, 2009 survey found that 18 liked to read to others. (Figure 6)

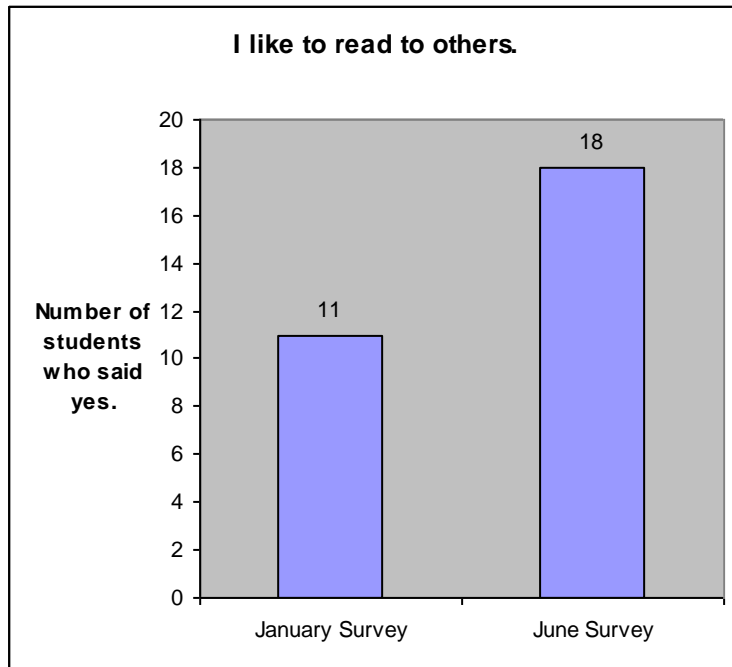


Figure 6

Of the 20 second grade participants who took part in the survey, they all responded to the statement: “I like to read for fun.” The January, 2009 survey found that 15 participants liked to read for fun while the June, 2009 survey found that 16 liked to read for fun. (Figure 7)

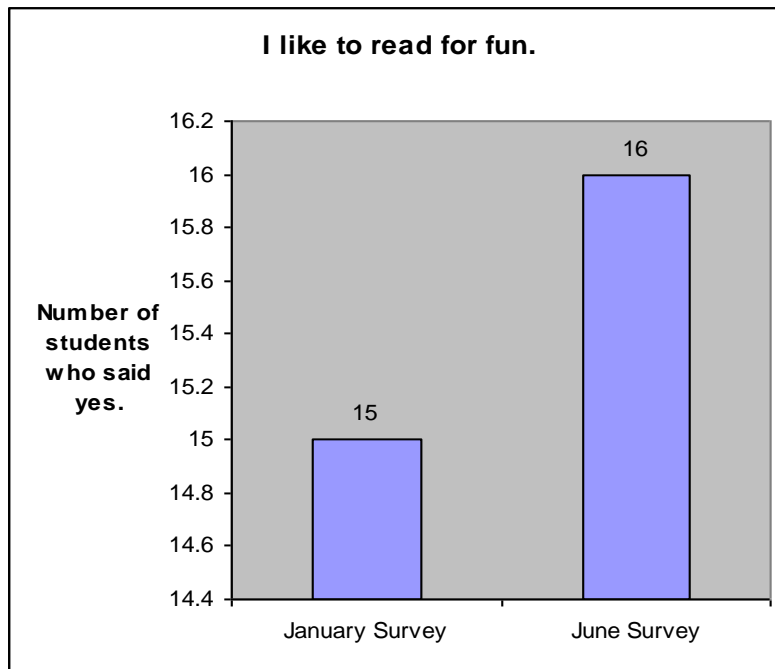


Figure 7

Findings

The researcher rejected the null hypothesis and supported the hypothesis based on the data results. There was an increase in student reading fluency according to the DIBELS test scores and the survey results indicated that students exhibited a higher level of confidence in reading.

Discussion

Even the best reading curriculums have not always met the needs of all students. Intervention programs had been created to fill in the gaps for students who needed additional support. It was hypothesized that the guided reading intervention Read Naturally would help raise fluency scores in struggling readers. Read Naturally focused on modeling and providing sufficient practice time. Glazer has said that teachers are encouraged to model fluent reading illustrating proper rate and accuracy. In order to gain oral reading fluency, teachers must have promoted reading and rereading instruction, which would aid in gaining effective fluency for the reader (Glazer, 2007). Evidence linked reading fluency to gains in reading comprehension, and teachers should regularly assess students' reading fluency and use the information to target a range of skills. Teachers could use informal or formal assessment for measuring and improving rate and accuracy. If one evaluated a student's errors, it may have been possible to determine the cause of the problem and the student's way of thinking. This could have provided guidance in the type of intervention (Dewitz and Dewitz, 2003).

Summary

This chapter was designed to analyze the data and identify the findings. From the data, the hypothesis was supported and the null hypothesis was rejected. There was significant

change in the fluency scores of the participants according to the DIBELS tests and the participants exhibited greater levels of confidence in reading according to the survey results. Chapter 5 will summarize the study, draw conclusions, and make recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter has been organized around the following topic: (a) introduction, (b) summary, (c) conclusions, (d) recommendations.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if adding the guided reading intervention program Read Naturally in addition to the adopted Harcourt Reading Series would have increased reading fluency in second grade students at Onalaska Elementary School. A number of students were scoring below average on the DIBELS fluency test which was a cause for concern. Read Naturally was introduced and implemented from January, 2009 until June, 2009. A review of literature showed that reading fluency was an important link to comprehending and grasping what was read. All participants in this study were given a survey in January, 2009 and June, 2009.

Conclusions

The results of the study indicated there was significant change in reading fluency scores based on DIBELS tests. As well, the participant's confidence levels in reading were higher at the conclusion of the study. The data supported the use of the guided reading intervention Read Naturally on second grade students struggling with fluency. Figure 1 supported this finding.

Recommendations

Literature discussed in this study shows that teaching reading fluency is an essential element of reading instruction. A student struggling with fluency is a reliable indicator of

problems with reading comprehension. Adding an intervention program, such as Read Naturally, can help students close this gap. With the influence of higher standards based on No Child Left Behind, teachers will be asked to increase students' skills and knowledge. Finding ways to keep students at average or above average levels is essential.

It is the recommendation of the researcher to continue using Read Naturally as an intervention piece to the Harcourt Reading Series. The researcher also recommends using surveys to gain insight on student confidence levels.

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APPENDIX A

Beth Disney has permission to conduct the study, *Increasing Reading Fluency and Student Confidence with Read Naturally*, at Onalaska Elementary School.

Administration Approval

_____, Administrator,

Taj Jensen

APPENDIX B

This survey is being given to gather information about how you feel about reading. You have just taken the DIBELS test. Read the sentences below and mark Yes or No next to them.

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. I was able to read all of the words. | Yes | No |
| 2. I read with expression and feeling. | Yes | No |
| 3. I am a good reader. | Yes | No |
| 4. I think others like my reading. | Yes | No |
| 5. I like to read to others. | Yes | No |
| 6. I like to read for fun. | Yes | No |

Thank You

