Two Ways to Teach Reading:

Exploring the Impact of Readers' Workshop and Plugged Into Reading Programs

in a Middle School.

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A Special Project

Presented to

Dr. Gretta Merwin

Heritage University

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree of

Master of Education

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Lawrence P. Elfering

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FACULTY APPROVAL

Two Ways to Teach Reading:

Exploring the Impact of Readers' Workshop and Plugged Into Reading Programs

in a Middle School.

Approved for Faculty

_____, Faculty Advisor

_____, Date

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore how two reading programs, Readers'
Workshop and Plugged into Reading, directly influenced student achievement in a
low-income, high poverty middle school setting. The teacher wanted to determine
if there was a significant difference between these two programs for reading
instruction. The teacher worked on students' vocabulary, comprehension, and
making inferences to promote students' reading in all content areas. The level of
improvement was not significant. Neither reading program proved to be more
effective than the other.

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Introduction

Background for the Project

      In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed by Congress to emphasize equal opportunities and set higher standards and an accountability system for secondary schools (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2011). Congress amended ESEA and named it No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001.

      In the State of Washington, the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) was created to assess student learning and further educational accountability. The state used this test from 1997 to the summer of 2009, testing reading, writing, and mathematics in grades 3-8 and again in the tenth grade (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2011). In 2009, WASL was changed to the Measurement of Student Progress (MSP) for grades 3-8, and the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) for the tenth grade.

      Schools were held accountable based on their test scores on MSP and HSPE standardized tests. Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) was a calculation used by the federal government and the US Department of Education to determine if schools were meeting the standards set forth. Benchmarks were then set each year based on federal rules, identifying how the students were expected to perform on the statewide standards-based exams. Not meeting AYP for

consecutive years had consequences that restricted funding, mandated school restructuring, and replaced staff.

With 36.6% of Washington State seventh graders (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2009-2010) not meeting state standards in reading, districts were looking for ways to improve reading scores. Schools began to look for new curriculum, and many chose programs recommended by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The State of Washington required students to demonstrate proficiency in the Measurement of Student Progress (MSP) in middle schools and later they had to demonstrate proficiency in the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) to graduate from high school. Educators firmly believed that strong reading programs were vital to students' academic success as well as success in later life. But what were those reading programs that were highly effective, and which programs had the most success regarding student achievement?

Statement of the Problem

Since 2001, when No Child Left Behind was implemented into the public school systems, methods of how schools assessed students and held people accountable had changed. With these reforms many school leaders tried to find curriculum that would prove to be the key to student success in reading.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this study was to explore how Readers' Workshop and Plugged into Reading directly influenced student achievement in a low-income, high poverty middle school setting. Many schools were looking for curriculum, where achievement would improve. Both of these programs had shown improvement in the middle school environment. Did one of the programs show more student growth, as measured by the MSP, than the other?

Delimitations

The school in this study was a middle school located in Southeastern Washington State. The school was made up of 521 males or 53.4% and females made up 46.6% or 454, for a total of 975 students. The race or ethnicity of the students mostly consisted of Hispanics with 90.4% or 881 students. There were 68 or 7% with the ethnicity of white and 17 students or 1.7% African American. Seven other students or 0.9% were made up of either Alaskan Native or they were Asian. Nine hundred and thirty-three or 95.8% of the students were considered in the category of free and reduced-price meals. There were 164 students in Special Education and 430 of the 975 were in the Transitional Bilingual category. In the last category of migrant students this middle school was made up of 18.4% or 179 students(Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2009-2010).

The study was comprised of students in a 7th grade regular, mainstream Language Arts and history classroom in a middle school located in Southeastern Washington State. The sample group consisted of 57 students.

The statistics of the Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) and sample reading prompts taken off of the OSPI website had been used in previous MSP tests. These statistics showed students' reading levels, as well as benchmark assessments through Fountas and Pinnell (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006).

Assumptions

The teacher who implemented Readers' Workshop and Plugged into Reading was certified to teach elementary education in Washington State and was also certified to teach reading, writing, and history in a secondary middle school setting. The teacher was a four-year teacher, who had taught the same subjects the entire time.

The teacher assumed each student had received the same instruction, and all the students had the same enthusiasm for improving their literacy skills. The teacher also assumed the students' instruction was under the same or equivalent classroom conditions.

Hypothesis

When middle school students were instructed in two reading programs, Readers' Workshop and Plugged into Reading, one program proved to be

significantly more effective in improving reading scores as measured by the Measurement of Academic Progress test and benchmark assessments.

Null Hypothesis

When middle school students were instructed in two reading programs, Readers' Workshop and Plugged into Reading, one program did not prove to be significantly more effective in improving reading scores as measured by the Measurement of Academic Progress test and benchmark assessments.

Significance of the Project

By the end of this study the teacher wanted to determine if there was a significant difference between two programs for reading instruction. The purpose of this project was to determine which program, if any, showed the most improvement in reading comprehension, vocabulary, making inferences, and in reading achievement on standardized tests. The teacher wished to improve these students' reading ability to better prepare them for the MSP taken at the end of the year.

Procedure

The procedure followed for this study used the Readers' Workshop model for instruction during the first semester of the year, 12 weeks in total. During the beginning of the second semester the teacher then switched to the Plugged into Reading program and instruction model for the remaining 12 weeks of the school year.

All students were given a reading prompt, focusing on vocabulary, making inferences, and reading comprehension, in September of 2010, recording the scores. Next, scores from their MAP tests the previous year in sixth grade were also recorded. The teacher then began to instruct the students using the Readers' Workshop model of teaching for the months of September, October, and December.

In October of 2010, students were administered the MAP. The teacher then administered another reading prompt focused on vocabulary, making inferences, and reading comprehension in the month of January, 2011. The students' performance was recorded by the teacher.

Plugged into Reading was started as the main instruction model in January and continued in March and April. A third reading prompt was administered by the teacher in May, focusing on vocabulary, making inferences, and reading comprehension. The students' performance was once again recorded by the teacher. In May, all students were administered the Measurement of Academic Progress. The teacher collected and analyzed the student data on the MAP test, as well as all three reading prompts, and compared them to the earlier data that was collected.

In the months of November, 2010, and February, 2011, the teacher did not teach to the reading models of Readers' Workshop and Plugged into Reading. The students were in literacy circles and power strategy groups.

Definition of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress. Adequate Yearly Progress was a term used to illustrate a requirement of the No Child Left Behind Act and was adopted and signed in 2002. The Act's main purpose was to measure student achievement in reading and mathematics measured by the Washington Assessment of Student Learning, now Measurement of Student Progress. In the Act there was to be a baseline in achievement that students must meet each year in these two subject areas, increasing this baseline each year. The teacher was expected to have higher levels of achievement from year-to-year.

educators. Educators was a term used to emphasize that collaboration involved the entire school community, not just teachers.

literacy circles. Literacy circles was a term used to define small reading groups, where the students were working on fictional texts with reading group roles.

low-income\high poverty schools. Low-income/high poverty schools was a term used to demonstrate schools eligible for Title 1 funding. For this study it also meant having over 90% of the school population qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Measurement of Academic Progress. Measurement of Academic Progress was a term used to reveal a state-aligned computer-based testing system, and was built on 30 years of research and refinement. The assessment adapted to the child in

real-time as the test progressed for an accurate picture of a student's learning achievement and readiness.

Measurement of Student Progress released items. The term Washington Assessment of Student Learning was created by the State of Washington and the State Department of Education began to release items that were used on previous tests. The State of Washington made these materials available online for educators, students, and parents. When the state then created the Measurement of Student Progress, the State Department of Education kept the old released items and also released items that might have been used on the MSP as well.

Plugged into Reading. Plugged into Reading gradually moved readers from teacher-directed instruction to peer-supported instruction and finally to self-directed learning. Plugged into Reading was a literacy program for middle and high schools authored by internationally respected literacy expert and teacher, Dr. Janet Allen.

power strategy groups. Power strategy groups was a term used to define small reading groups where students were working on nonfiction text, using a specific reading strategy for nonfiction.

reading prompts. Reading prompts was a term used to show how students' reading skills were assessed using indicator performance assessments, which were the district's common assessments used to monitor student progress and predict a student's performance on the MSP. These items were taken from the OSPI

website or written by the literacy coach and a group of teachers at the Southeastern Washington middle school.

Readers' Workshop. Readers' Workshop was the term used for the organizational structure for the instructional components for reading instruction. The class of students was a block class of about 60-75 minutes for daily instruction. Readers' Workshop was an extended time for students to read, think, and converse about books on a daily basis. The main focus was to differentiate, or personalize, instruction in order to accommodate the learning needs of all students while fostering a love for reading.

Acronyms

DI.   Direct Instruction

HSPE.   High School Proficiency Exam

IR.   Independent Reading

MAP.   Measurement of Academic Progress

MSP.   Measurement of Student Progress

NCLB.   No Child Left Behind

OSPI.   Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

WASL.   Washington State Assessment of Student Learning

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

<u>Introduction</u>

What was the best plan for reading instruction? There were a number of plans that fit one area, but there was not one that fit every one. Pupils needed to accept and benefit from the chosen procedure or program(Ediger, 2010). To have students buy into a program and get the most out of it, they needed to be interested in what they were doing.

In a literacy classroom there were four major components that needed to be evident to provide students greater choice and ownership of their reading (Meyer, 2010). Specific modeling and sharing of comprehension strategies, real investigations into questions generated by themselves, clear conversations about their thinking, and the building of a classroom environment, where sharing and collaboration were evident, were the goals to reading programs that had success.

Each plan of instruction had its own key beliefs as to how instruction should be carried out. There were advantages and disadvantages to every reading program (Ediger, 2010). Although educators tried to pick the one they were most influenced by, the program needed to meet the whole or partial needs of each student to encourage self-interest in reading. When instructing a reading program most needed to have three components. The first component was modeling or direct instruction of a specific reading strategy. Next were shared readings, where

the teacher was still reading the text, but the students were following along

working on a specific reading strategy, and the third was independent reading.

Specific Modeling of Reading Strategies

Specific modeling of reading strategies was also categorized as Direct

Instruction (DI). Direct Instruction on reading programs showed results in

improved reading comprehension when used with students at risk for school

failure (Flores & Ganz, 2007).

Modeling skills was showing students what a specific reading strategy was

and how good fluent readers used the strategy to enhance their reading. Modeling

skills could also be categorized as "a rigorously developed, highly scripted

method for teaching that was fast-paced and provides constant interaction

between students and the teacher" (Association for Direct Instruction, 2011).

To give the students interest in the DI approach they were not taught

something they had already mastered. The reading strategies that were brought

forth were new and challenging (Ediger, 2010). Students would not stay actively

involved or show engagement when they did not think the lesson pertained to

them. Dr. Janet Allen said, "Students' understandings of when and how to apply

the strategy is perhaps the most important aspect of strategy instruction"(Allen,

2002, p. 56).

Each lesson was about 10-15 minutes long and to the whole class. While

the teacher was demonstrating the strategy, the students were following along and

taking notes or doing the same thing as the teacher. Students wrote down any

questions they had and interacted with the teacher to come to a conclusion

themselves(Flores & Ganz, 2007). This type of instruction guided students to the

clearly stated objectives or learning outcomes.

Shared Reading/ Guide Practice

Shared reading had evolved in its definition and focus over the years.

Shared reading was first used with Big Books where all students could see the text

while the teacher was reading to a variety of interactions where each student had

the text the teacher was reading(Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2008).

Shared reading was used in a small group of students or with the whole

class. The teacher was still modeling the reading strategy in some form, but there

were more interactions between students with conversations going on.

While the teacher was reading, students were actively following along in the text

helping them pick up and decode new vocabulary words. The students used these

new vocabulary words to help with their own comprehension.

Independent Reading

Engagement in Independent Reading (IR) had helped students overcome

many obstacles and demonstrated higher levels of reading achievement(Kelly &

Clausen-Grace, 2009). With IR the students were not just sent out to read on their

own, IR also included journals for after reading, reading logs, many mini-

conferences with students, and reading with the student.

Building of a Classroom Environment

The physical arrangement and organization of an effective literacy classroom was a powerful tool in support of or an unintended obstacle to effective literacy instruction(Reutzel & Clarke, 2011). The classroom environment was crucial when it came to an atmosphere where the students stayed engaged in what they were doing.

The primary focus was the classroom library. This was a place for students to get a chance to use resources to work on reading strategies and a place for individual reading. Students had a purpose for using the classroom library and knew what they were supposed to be doing when utilizing the resources it provided.

Having an effective classroom environment cut down on classroom management problems as well. When an atmosphere was set up for the students and they knew where to go and when, it limited the problems students faced, allowing them to stay focused on what they were supposed to be doing. This provided positive consequences to instruction time and quality(Reutzel & Clarke, 2011).

Vocabulary

"Vocabulary knowledge was related to and affects comprehension. The relationship between word knowledge and comprehension is unequivocal"(Allen, 1999, p. 5). Comprehension of what students read had much to do with

understanding the words the students were reading. Experts agreed that in order

for students to comprehend everything they learned, they must have knowledge of

90%-95% of the words read(Pullen, Tuckwiller, & Konold, 2010).

When students read often they also saw more words. The more words

they read, the more words they picked up, used, and understood (Anderson &

Nagy, 1991). Using context clues and other vocabulary building strategies helped

the students acquire more words.

Many struggling readers came into the classroom everyday and were not

prepared for grade level reading. These students, many of whom were second

language learners or children of poverty, were hard to reach and even harder to

teach, but at no fault of their own (Kelley, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Faller, 2010).

Students in this category were often word callers, where they were good at

sounding out the word but did not create meaning. With vocabulary, the

instruction that had the most lasting impact was creating concepts. Students who

created concepts for certain words were then able to put other words in the same

concept and retrieved them more often (Allen, 1999). Smaller numbers of words,

the word elements, and words students found in a rich text helped these students

in their vocabulary growth. Instruction with word lists with a large number of

words or from workbooks and worksheets no longer satisfied student achievement

(Kelley et al., 2010).

Comprehension

Comprehension was many things, but it was defined as the ability of a student to understand what that student learned in the text. Reading and comprehension did not always go together. Some students were able to read and pronounce words correctly, but did not understand what they had read. Many studies had shown that decoding accounted for about 45%-80% of comprehension(Høien-Tengesdal, 2010). Most readers that had good comprehension tended to have good vocabularies but this was not always true. This was not saying that if vocabulary was taught that students would end up with good comprehension(Pressley, 2000). Even though many reading strategies might have worked on one student, each student was unique and approaches worked differently depending on the individual child.

Inference

Making an inference represented making an elaborate forecast about what was going to happen next in a text (Casteel, 2007). Although making inferences did not always go with comprehension or understanding a story, it did have students drawing a conclusion or understanding characters' motives.

Making an inference, while reading, was important because it drew the readers' background information into their current reading. Although readers might not remember all of the inferences they made, it did help them with their vocabulary, as well as understanding the meaning of the text.

Summary

Teachers needed to find a reading program that created an engaging curriculum, and one in which students showed interest. When the teacher used a systematic approach to creating reading strategy lessons, students became active readers using the models of Direct Instruction, shared reading/guided practice, and Independent Reading. When the teacher worked on students' vocabulary, comprehension, and then teaching students how to make inferences, the students benefited in their reading in all content areas and, in turn, became better students.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

Many studies had been done on the benefits of Readers' Workshop on students' reading skills. The teacher, however, had seen this instruction done for the past five years, with minimal gains. The teacher in this research had been trained on three separate dates. Given all the training in Readers' Workshop and in Plugged into Reading, the teacher lacked the clarification needed to give input into which program best fit middle school students.

Methodology

The research method used was Quantitative. The Quantitative research method used here was where the teacher predetermined what variables were surveyed before observing the students in the study. "Quantitative research approaches are applied to describe current conditions, and to investigate relationships, and study cause-effect phenomena"(Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006, p. 10). The teacher used the Quantitative data from MAP scores from the spring of the students' sixth grade year. Statistics of the students' reading prompts at the beginning, middle, and end of the year in seventh grade, along with the MAP test in October and again in May, were used to determine the effectiveness of both programs.

<u>Participants</u>

This research consisted of MAP and reading prompt data with 58 seventh grade students at a Southeastern Washington middle school. The research was set in a mainstream seventh grade Language Arts classroom. Reading scores differed from student to student, but in general were deemed below seventh grade level.

Only three of the 58 students had parents that graduated from high school here in the United States, and none of those students had parents that completed college. Fifty-six out of the possible 58 students were Hispanic, and 48 out of the 58 students spoke Spanish as their first language. There were 53 of the 58 students who qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch according to state guidelines. Next, 25 of the 58 students tested came from a single parent home, while all 58 students had parents working outside of the home. Seven of those students had parents that worked at night. Of those parents 13 had alternating night and day shifts. There were 17 parents on seasonal work. In the prior year, 47 out of the 58 had received a full year of instruction in Readers' Workshop.

<u>Instruments</u>

There were four different instruments used in this research. The first instrument used was the Measurement of Academic Progress. The second instruments were three different reading prompts, each with seven questions, testing the students on responses to vocabulary, making inferences, and reading comprehension.

The first instrument was used to identify where the students were at the end of sixth grade in vocabulary, making inferences, and reading comprehension. The MAP test was again used to show any progress while the students received instruction in the Readers' Workshop model. They again were assessed after receiving instruction through the Plugged into Reading program.

The second instruments used were the reading prompt assessments. These assessment questions allowed the teacher to give a pre, middle, and end test.

Design

This research used Quantitative data from the district's reading performance indicators every three months, as well as the data from MAP testing in May of 2010, October of 2010 and May of 2011. This study used a Pretest-Posttest group design. This design required at least two groups, both being administered a pretest and posttest at the end of the study. Pretests were used to determine if the groups were the same on the dependent variable. Posttest scores were then compared to determine the effectiveness of the treatment (Gay et al., 2006).

Procedure

The procedure used in this research consisted of the online data from Northwest Evaluation Association (MAP) scores for the Southeastern Washington middle school and reading prompt assessments.

Instruction was given to students in whole class and in small group lessons in a mainstream, regular classroom. Both models believed in progressive release, where skills were modeled to the students by the teacher (Direct Instruction). The teacher then guided the students through the same skill, followed by giving the students time to practice the skill independently. The students received about 60-75 minutes of instruction a day in reading.

The procedure followed for this study used the Readers' Workshop model for instruction during the first semester of the year, 12 weeks in total. During the beginning of the second semester the teacher then switched to the Plugged into Reading program and instruction model for the remaining 12 weeks of the school year.

All students were given a reading prompt, focusing on vocabulary, making inferences, and reading comprehension, in September of 2010, recording the scores. Next, scores from their MAP tests the previous year in sixth grade were also recorded. The teacher then began to instruct the students using the Readers' Workshop model of teaching for the months of September, October, and December.

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Plugged into Reading was started as the main instruction model in January and continued in March and April. A third reading prompt was administered by the teacher in May, focusing on vocabulary, making inferences, and reading comprehension. The students' performance was once again recorded by the teacher. In May, all students were administered the MAP. The teacher collected and analyzed the student data on the MAP test, as well as all three reading prompts, and compared them to the earlier data that was collected.

In the months of November, 2010, and February, 2011, the teacher did not teach to the reading models of Readers' Workshop and Plugged into Reading. The students were in literacy circles and power strategy groups.

Students were given the reading prompt assessments and MAP test to monitor their progress according to seventh grade Essential Academic Learning Standards. The reading prompt assessments were administered to the students in their regular classroom setting, and no tools were provided to the students. The MAP test was administered to the students in a computer lab, where the test was taken on a computer.

The teacher examined each individual student's reading prompt assessment in October, January, and May. The teacher looked to find areas of growth in the students' reading skills as indicated in the student's responses to the indicators. The teacher compared the overall score in October to the overall score in January, and then again in May to determine any growth. The teacher then reviewed each

individual question on the assessments to see if the students made growth on one of the three independent reading skills.

The teacher reviewed the overall MAP scores given to the students in May of 2010, October of 2010, and in May of 2011, to determine if students demonstrated growth. The teacher then looked at the breakdown in vocabulary, making inferences, and reading comprehension to discover any areas of increased knowledge on individual skills.

Treatment of Data

The data for this research was shown in two different sets of tables. The first sets of tables showed the data collected from MAP testing in spring of 2010, October of 2010, and again in May of 2011. The second set of tables showed the students' scores on the reading prompts or how students moved up or down from one set of scores to another.

Summary

Seventh grade students were given instruction using two teaching models, Readers' Workshop and Plugged into Reading. The instruction was given to them in 60-75 minutes each day. The students were then given reading prompt assessments in October, January, and May, as well as MAP testing in October and May to determine areas of growth. For each program Direct Instruction (Modeling), guided practice, and independent practice were used.

Chapter 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how Readers' Workshop and

Plugged into Reading directly influenced student achievement in a low-income,

high poverty middle school setting. Many schools were looking for curriculum,

where achievement would improve. Both of these programs had shown

improvement in the middle school environment.

The project consisted of 57 seventh grade students in a Language Arts block,

working for 60-75 minutes a day for eight months. The students were taught using

Direct Instruction, guided instruction, and independently in whole group and

small group environments. The students were given the MAP test in May of

2010, October of 2010, and May of 2011. They were also given reading

assessments in October of 2010, January of 2011, and May of 2011. These

assessments were given to measure the students' reading skills as compared to

Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements for seventh

graders.

Description of the Environment

The students in this group were from a middle school in a rural intermediate

school in Southeastern Washington State. The group consisted of 57 regular

education students in a seventh grade classroom; 30 boys and 27 girls. The

reading scores from the previous years had varied on the MAP test by student, but the scores were consistently below grade level (OSPI Report Card, 2009-2010).

These students were taught in September, October, and December using Readers' Workshop.   In January, March, and April the students were then instructed using the Plugged into Reading program.

Hypothesis

When middle school students were instructed in two reading programs, Readers' Workshop and Plugged into Reading, one program proved to be significantly more effective in improving reading scores as measured by the Measurement of Academic Progress test and benchmark assessments.

Null Hypothesis

When middle school students were instructed in two reading programs, Readers' Workshop and Plugged into Reading, one program did not prove to be significantly more effective in improving reading scores as measured by the Measurement of Academic Progress test and benchmark assessments.

Results of Study

     Each student was given a student identification number for the purpose of displaying the students' scores in a pretest, mid-test, and posttest table. In Table 1.1, the teacher listed the students' sixth grade MAP assessment scores first, followed by the fall of 2010 score, and next was the students' scores in the spring of 2011. This table was the results from the first block of students. Table 1.2 was the results from the second block students. The MAP assessment was taken on a computer in a computer lab testing the students' reading skills. The line on the top indicated a score of 217, which showed the students were reading at grade level.
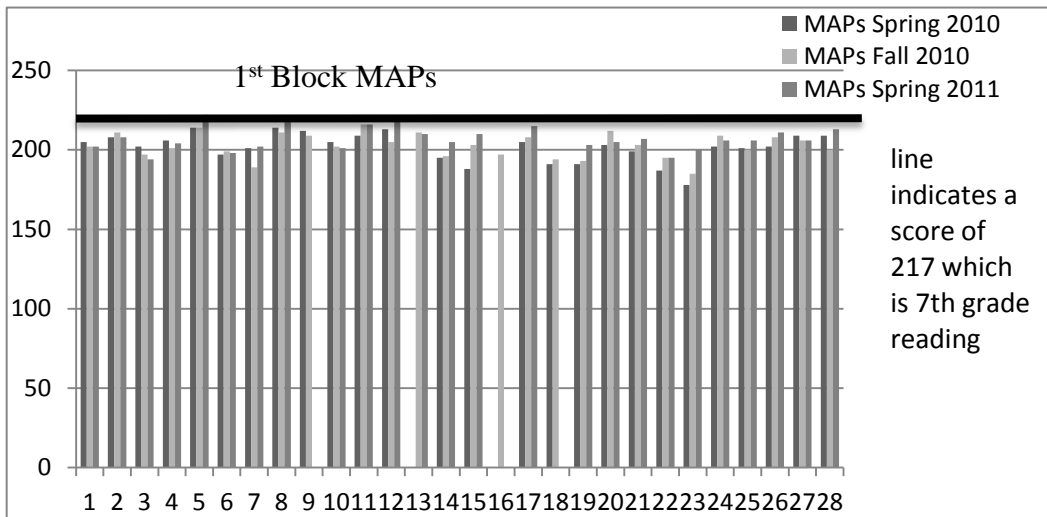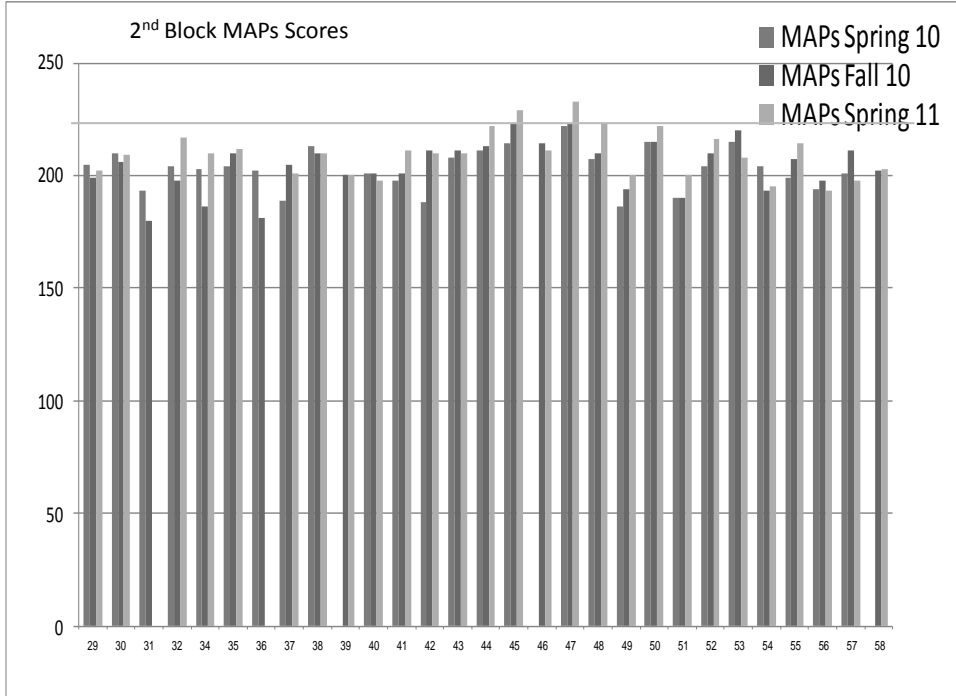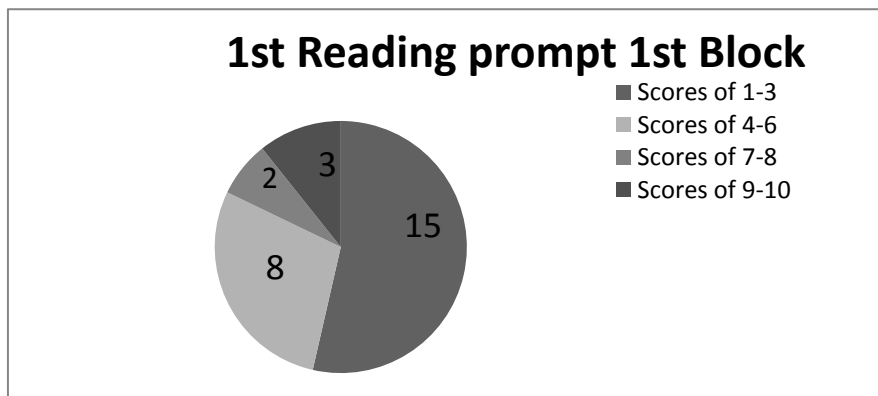
Table 1.1

Table 1.2

The teacher put all students together, and looked at the movement of scores from one reading prompt to the next. In the first reading prompt, given in October of 2010, 23 of the 28 students in the first block did not pass. Passing was considered scores of 7-10 as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

In the second reading prompt given in January, after instructing the students in a reading workshop model, there were 11 students who did not pass, but 17 out of 28 did pass as shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

2nd Reading prompt 1st Block

- Score of 1-3
- Score of 4-6
- Score of 7-8
- Score of 9-11

1
10
10
7
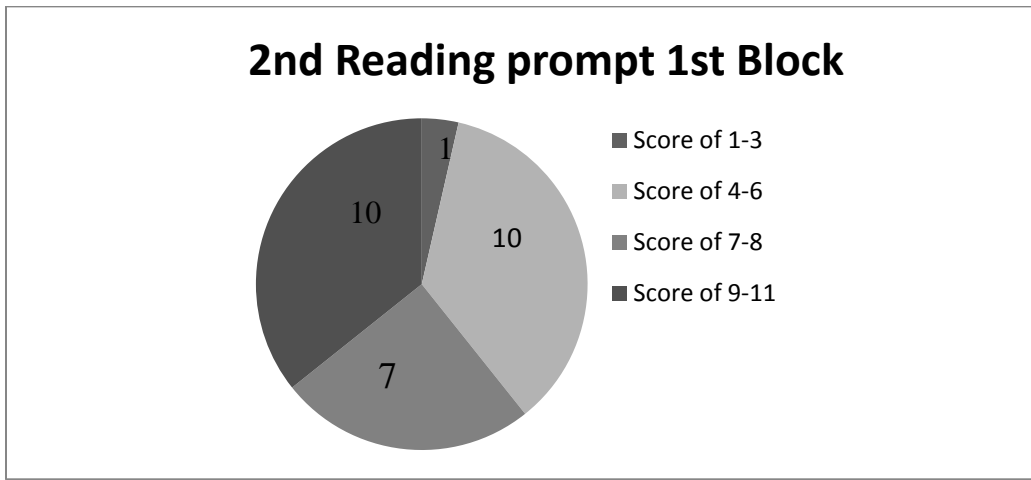
The third reading prompt given in May of 2011, after instruction in Plugged into Reading, showed there was even more movement from scores between 1-6 and 7-11 as shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3

3rd Reading Prompt 1st Block

- Score 1-3
- Score 4-6
- Score 7-8
- Score 9-11

2
12
4
8
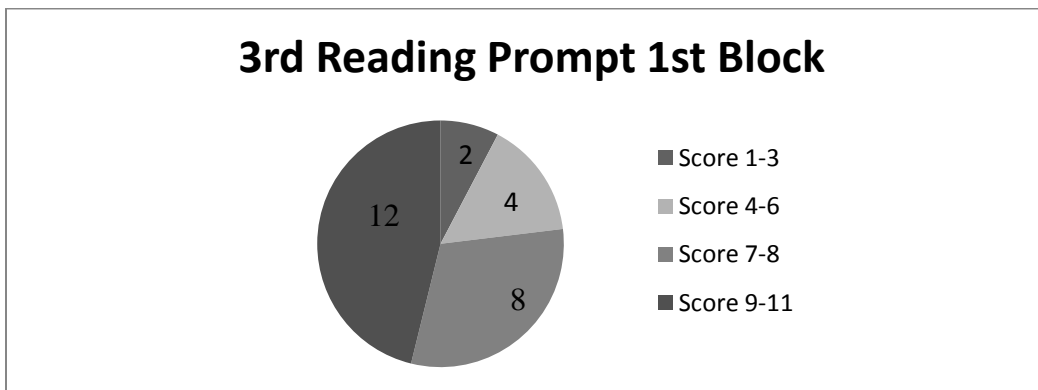
In Table 3.1, for the second group of students, during their first reading prompt the teacher found there were 20 students out of 28 that did not pass the first prompt in October of 2010.

Table 3.1

1st Reading Prompt 2nd Block

Score of 1-3
Score of 4-6
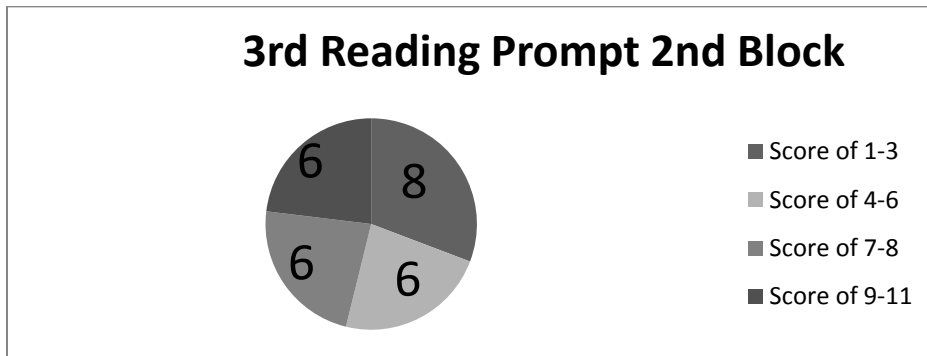Score of 7-8
Score of 9-10

3
9
5
11
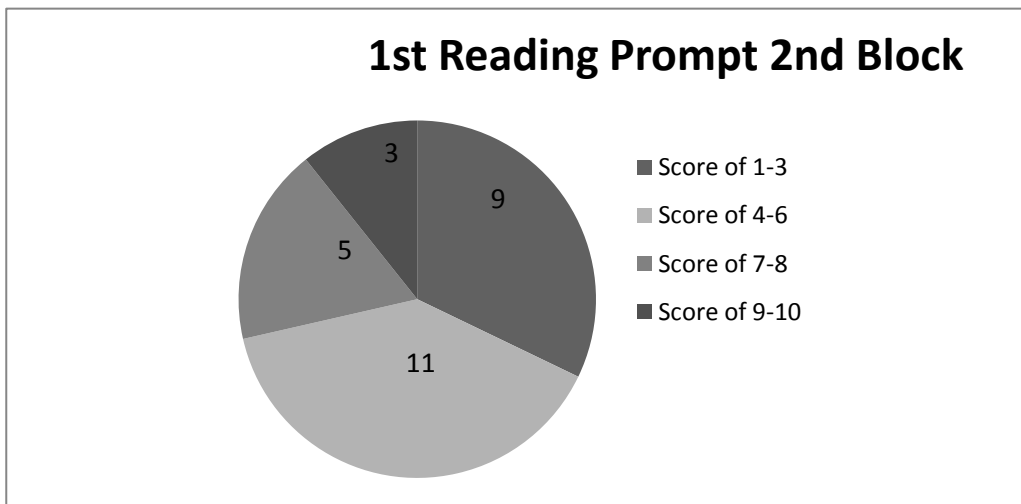
After taking the second reading prompt in January of 2011, the students moved from 20 failing to 5 failing the prompt. This was a vast improvement after being instructed in Readers' Workshop.

Table 3.2

2nd Reading Prompt 2nd Block

Score of 1-3
Score of 4-6
Score of 7-8
Score of 9-10

1
4
18
6
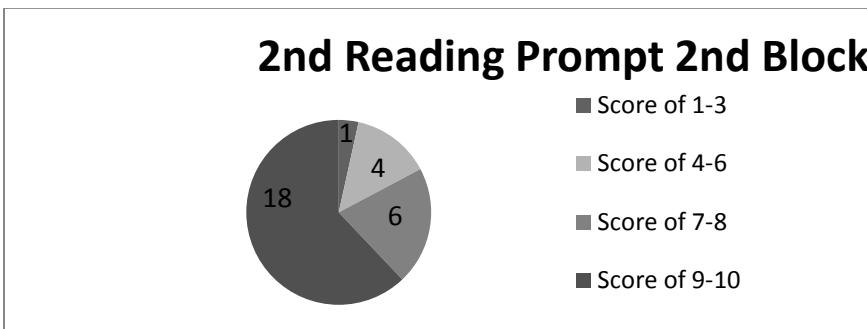
The third reading prompt was given in May of 2011, after reading instruction was given in the Plugged into Reading program. In this prompt 14 student did not pass, increasing from 5 not passing after instruction in Readers' Workshop.

Table 3.3

3rd Reading Prompt 2nd Block

	Legend
■	Score of 1-3
■	Score of 4-6
■	Score of 7-8
■	Score of 9-11

Pie chart values: 6, 8, 6, 6

Findings

Over half of the students made some improvement or stayed the same on the MAP test; 31 of the 58 students made improvements on the MAP test from October of 2010 to May of 2011. Another six students stayed the same or had the same score on their MAP test in the same time frame (See Tables 1.1 and 1.2).

Students improved over the course of the year on their reading prompt assessments. Out of both groups, 15 of the 58 students scored in the one to three ranges on the first assessment. The biggest significant gains came from moving 18 students to the nine to eleven ranges on the third prompt compared to six on the first prompt (See Tables 2.1-3.3).

The data was analyzed and interpreted. The teacher found, although one class had slight gains from the second prompt to the third, there was not a significant

gain. The second class did not improve and went down from the second prompt

to the third. Although there were gains in MAP testing scores, the teacher could

not say it was Plugged into Reading that produced those results. Therefore, the

teacher found Plugged into Reading did not have a significant impact on student

reading achievement for the whole group.

In the first group, students 1-30 showed overall improvements after receiving

instruction in the Plugged into Reading program. Students 31-58 showed more

overall improvements after receiving instruction in Readers' Workshop.

Discussion

The project was conducted to see if students would progress at a higher

rate if instructed using the program Plugged into Reading as opposed to Readers'

Workshop. As was stated in Chapter 2, reading programs should be done on an

individual bases. Although the first group of students did improve overall, the

second group did better after the first method of instruction. This could have been

because they were used to this method of teaching and felt more engaged during

Readers' Workshop rather than Plugged into Reading.

Summary

Students were instructed using two different reading programs and given

three reading prompts. One reading prompt was at the beginning of the year

before Readers' Workshop was followed. A second reading prompt was then

given in January of 2011 after receiving instruction in Readers' Workshop.   After

30

the students received instruction using the Plugged into Reading program, the students were given a third reading prompt.

The information was gathered to determine whether there was a significant difference between the instruction of Readers' Workshop and the Plugged into Reading program as evidenced by improved reading achievement. Students in the seventh grade did make small gains in regards to the instruction given in the Plugged into Reading program. This was based on MAP achievement scores, along with the three reading prompt scores. However, the level of improvement was not significant and the null hypothesis was accepted.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

NCLB was implemented into the public school systems in 2001. With this new legislation how schools assessed students had changed. Curriculum for reading became a key component to how schools were going to meet these new standards.

The purpose of this research was to explore how two different reading programs encouraged student achievement in reading. Low-income, high poverty middle schools were looking for curriculum, where achievement would improve. Readers' Workshop and the Plugged into Reading program both had revealed improvement in the middle school environment.

Summary

This research was to determine whether there was a significant difference between two different reading instruction programs, Readers' Workshop and the Plugged into Reading program, as evidenced by improved reading achievement. The hypothesis of this study was when middle school students were instructed in two reading programs, Readers' Workshop and Plugged into Reading, one program would prove to be significantly more effective in improving reading scores as measured by the MAP test and benchmark assessments.

The procedure followed used these two reading programs for a total of 24 weeks. During the first semester Readers' Workshop was used for 12 weeks. In the second semester Plugged into Reading was used for another 12 weeks. MAP scores were gathered in October of 2011 and again in May of 2012. Reading prompts were scored in the skills of vocabulary, making inferences, and reading comprehension. Students 1-30, as whole, made improvements using the Plugged into Reading program, but students 31-58 showed more improvement after receiving instruction in Readers' Workshop.

Each plan of instruction had its own key beliefs as to how instruction should be taught. To engage the students in reading, the programs needed to meet all of the students' needs. The first element of the reading programs was modeling or DI. The next element included shared readings where the teacher was reading the text, but the students had the text in front of them and were following along with the auditory support while also working on a reading strategy. Modeling or DI and shared reading were followed by Independent Reading.

Quantitative methodology was used for this research. The teacher determined what variables needed to be surveyed before reviewing the students in the study. Quantitative data from the spring of the students' sixth grade MAP scores and statistics from the students' reading prompts at the beginning, middle and end of the year were used to determine the effectiveness of both programs.

The study used a Pretest-Posttest group design. This design required at least two groups to be administered the pretest and the posttest during the study. For 60-75 minutes a day for 24 weeks 57 seventh grade students were given these assessments. Over half of the students made improvements or stayed the same on the MAP test; 31 of the 58 students made improvements on the MAP test from October 2011 to May 2012. Another six students stayed the same during the same time frame. There was not a significant gain in the reading prompt assessments. Although there were gains in the MAP test, the teacher found there was not a significant impact with either program.

Conclusions

After 2001 and NCLB teachers needed to find reading programs that captured student interest. The teacher devised an approach to creating reading strategy lessons that generated active readers. In this study, the teacher worked on students' vocabulary, comprehension, and making inferences to promote students' reading in all content areas.

The level of improvement was not significant and the null hypothesis was accepted as shown from data in the tables. In Table 1.1 the teacher listed the first block students' MAP test scores from the spring of their sixth grade year in May of 2011. In Table 1.2 the teacher listed the second blocks students' MAP test scores from the spring of their sixth grade year in May of 2011. MAP scores in Tables 2.1 through 2.3, along with 3.1 through 3.3, were analyzed by the teacher

which showed evidence that there was no significant improvement by either Readers' Workshop or the Plugged into Reading program.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the teacher understood there was not one reading program that benefited all students. Each student was different and needed different instructional styles to be successful. There was not a one-size fits-all strategy.

If a similar study were to be done in the future, the teacher suggests having one group stay the whole year in one program and the other group be instructed in the second program. The problem the teacher sees with this approach is that one group would be receiving a different instruction method, and several students did benefit from Plugged into Reading instruction.

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