

Increasing Reading Scores
Through Guided Reading Instruction
For Beginning Readers

A Special Project
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FACULTY APPROVAL

Increasing Reading Scores through Guided Reading Instruction for Beginning
Readers

Approved for the Faculty

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ABSTRACT

This project was designed to see if guided reading instruction would increase reading scores for beginning readers. Through the use of guided instruction each reading group was taught how to develop accuracy, fluency and comprehension strategies at the students' instructional level. The researcher wanted to find out if students would show growth in the different areas of reading assessed using the *Evaluacion de la Lectura*. Guided instruction permitted students to work within the students' developing skills and become better readers as the students were introduced to new strategies and challenged with new skills. The researcher's hypothesis was that the first grade students who received daily guided reading instruction would make greater than expected growth at the end of six months as measured by the Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura (EDL) pre and post test. The researcher used the t-test for non-independent samples to show the significant difference between September's and February's Evaluación de la Lectura scores. The data showed that there was significant growth in the students' reading level.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

With the implementation of President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act, President Bush wanted to ensure that more children received reading instruction in the early grades. The purpose of the law was to ensure that every child could read at grade level by the end of third grade (No Child Left Behind, Improving Literacy by Putting Reading First). The National Reading Panel issued a report in April 2000 after reviewing 100,000 studies on how students learned to read. The panel concluded:

Effective reading instruction includes teaching children to break apart and manipulate the sounds in words (phonemic awareness), teaching them that these sounds are represented by letters of the alphabet which can then be blended together to form words (phonics), having them practice what they have learned by reading aloud with guidance and feedback (guided oral reading), and applying comprehension strategies to guide and improve reading comprehension (OSPI-Curriculum/Instruction, Reading, para. #3).

Reading was a fundamental skill. Reading was one of the most important skills that a person could master and was crucial to succeed in life and be an informed citizen in society, as Thomas Jefferson believed, "Citizens must be

literate for a democracy to function” (Jefferson quotes on education. Retrieved November 1, 2006, p. 2).

“Guided Reading is a teaching approach designed to help individual students learn how to process a variety of increasingly challenging text with understanding and fluency” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, p.193). The focus of guided reading was the instruction of children in reading at the student’s instructional level based on the Spanish reading assessment, *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura*, which was the translated version of the *Developmental Reading Assessment*. The *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* assessment provided the teacher with the child’s independent reading level as the child began the school year and as progress continued throughout the school year. The teacher was able to select guided reading books at a level or two above the independent level to be used during reading groups at the student’s instructional level. Guided reading placed the child in a more formal instructional reading situation. According to the New Zealand Department of Education, “Guided reading enables children to practice strategies with the teachers’ support, which leads to independent silent reading” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p.1).

Statement of the Problem

Most students that entered the first grade bilingual classroom came with knowledge of beginning letter sounds and letter recognition since the Spanish language was very phonetic. Students began to sound letters out as the learner

read the words but lacked fluency, meaning, comprehension, intonation, and accuracy. Reading was one of the skills students learned at different levels. Therefore, students entered first grade at different levels based on the *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura*. The different levels of reading reflected differences in reading comprehension, fluency, and accuracy. Definitely, the students needed a structured reading program that would teach the learner strategies and skills that provided individualized instruction within a small reading group to make significant reading growth. Guided reading instruction in a small group setting became necessary for the appropriate model and guidance as the skills and strategies were taught (Cuesta & Ruiz, 2000, p. 5).

Purpose of the Project

The students, who participated in the project, *Increasing Reading Scores through Guided Reading Instruction for Beginning Readers*, were instructed using the results of the *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura*. The students were organized into small groups of 3-5 students with similar reading needs. Each group was taught using the guided reading instructional approach to develop fluency, accuracy, and, most important, comprehension in reading in order to rephrase the reading in the students' individual vocabulary. Guided reading instruction in a small group setting allowed students to work within the learners' own developing skills and become better readers as the learners were challenged with new skills. Individually, the students would show growth in the different

areas of reading that would be examined using the *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* (fluency, accuracy and comprehension).

Delimitations

The *Increasing Reading Scores Through Guided Reading Instruction for Beginning Readers* study was conducted in a small rural farming school in the researcher's first grade bilingual classroom with 15 students (8 were girls and 7 were boys). The study was intended to instruct the students using the guided reading approach in the students' native language to increase the students' individualized reading level. All the participants were Hispanic and the home language was Spanish. The study took place from the fall of 2006 to the spring of 2007 in a small rural community located in Eastern Washington State.

The elementary school where the research was conducted had approximately 298 students and 19 teachers. The school averaged 15.7 students per teacher. The average teacher experience was 13.7 years but 63.2% of the teachers had at least a Master's degree. The student demographics were: student gender of 50.7% males and 49.3% females, ethnicity of 60.4% White, 37.9% Hispanic, 1.0% Asian, and 0.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native. There were 42.6% of students on the free and reduced lunch program that indicated an average population of low socioeconomic status students. Special education students were 7.2%, transitional bilinguals 23.5%, and migrant students at 11.6%

finished the demographics of the population (OSPI-Washington State Report Card, para. #4).

The researcher was a native Spanish teacher. The researcher taught part-time but full days. The researcher worked Mondays, Tuesdays and alternated Wednesdays with a Caucasian teacher who learned the Spanish language in a Spanish speaking country and worked Thursdays and Fridays.

Both teachers followed the same structured teaching format to guide daily instruction. At the beginning of the school year the researcher and partner began the year as kindergarten-first grade teachers with a group of 29 students, 15 students were kindergartners and 14 students were first graders. Three weeks after the school year began a new kindergarten teacher was hired due to the increasing enrollment of kindergarten students. The researcher was left to teach only first grade.

Assumptions

Guided reading was the district's adopted approach to teaching reading. The researcher was properly trained, supplied with a guidebook that detailed the program and capable of teaching guided reading. The researcher was trained in administering the *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* and used the assessment results to guide instruction as the district conducted reading assessments three times a year. *The Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* was used to assess students' kindergarten through second grade, therefore, first graders

were somewhat familiar with the format of the test. The researcher believed all students were capable of learning regardless of mental capabilities as long as the needs of the student were met. The researcher assumed students would show growth in using reading strategies to improve reading skills due to the implementation of the guided reading instruction in the researcher's first grade classroom.

Hypothesis

The first grade bilingual students who receive daily guided reading instruction at the individual's instructional reading level will make greater than expected gains in the learner's Spanish reading proficiency scores by the end of six months as measured by the *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* pre and post test.

Null Hypothesis

The first grade students who receive guided reading instruction at the individual's instructional level will not show any significant difference in growth in the student's independent reading level as measured by the pre and post test using the *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* assessment.

Significance of the Project

Reading was an essential skill in the life of every person. Students who were easily frustrated with learning to read never learned to read above an elementary level. A good reader was a good writer and understood and was able

to explain the learner's understanding through reasoning and demonstrated critical thinking abilities. Students were instructed and encouraged to learn strategies to help the reading become stronger in order to prepare the student to face the challenges of life and meet WASL standards at the fourth grade level.

In kindergarten students began learning the strategies and skills needed to achieve success in the WASL. In first grade the students continued, through guided reading, learning various strategies that helped the students increase phrasing and fluency, accuracy, and comprehension skills.

The child learned to read and write in the student's native language in order to become proficient in the English language. The skills and strategies taught in the student's native language transferred to the second language. The goal of the district was that all students being taught in a bilingual classroom become true bilingual students as the students moved from bilingual to transitional to complete immersion in the English instruction.

Procedure

The researcher reviewed the first grade students' end of the year kindergarten *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* scores. The researcher assessed the students in October using the *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* to place the students in appropriate reading groups. Each student was instructed in a small group setting using the results of *the Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura*. The groups consisted of three to five students with

similar needs, therefore the groups were homogenous. The researcher used the guided reading approach to prepare lessons as the researcher taught each group how to develop fluency, accuracy and comprehension in reading. Within the lesson the researcher taught many reading skills and strategies, such as one-to-one correspondence, letter identification and sound, using picture cues, and rereading for meaning which helped the learner become a better reader. Students received leveled books appropriate for the learner instructional reading level and worked on activities that guided the students in the development of obtaining reading skills and strategies.

Definition of Terms

bilingual education. Bilingual education was an instructional program that used two languages.

bilingual classroom. Bilingual education was referred to as the language instruction in which the students were taught. Spanish was the dominant language of instruction in the researcher's classroom. Students received 80% of the instruction in the learner's native language and 20% in English.

guided reading. According to Fountas and Pinnell, guided reading was a teaching approach designed to help individual students learn how to process a variety of increasingly challenging text with understanding and fluency (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, p.193).

Acronyms

DRA. Developmental Reading Assessment

EDL. Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura

GLEs. Grade Level Expectations

IRA. International Reading Association

NCLB. No Child Left Behind

WASL. Washington Assessment of Student Learning

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

There was much to research on the topic but the researcher was touched by a few quotes on education in general that guided the researcher to choose the subsets. Washington State Governor Chris Gregoire stated as the governor visited an elementary school in Seattle, “We must create a world-class education system to make sure our prosperity touches all of us, not just a few”(Education, Governor Chris Gregoire. Retrieved November 1, 2006). Governor Gregoire knew that education was the key to success for the children and the economy.

Like Gregoire, Jefferson also knew that education was the key to assure a successful America as he stated in the following quote: “If the children are untaught, the children’s ignorance and vices will in future life cost society much dearer consequences, than would have done in the children’s correction, by a good education” (Thomas Jefferson to Joseph C. Cabell, 1818). Finally, Dr. Terry Bergeson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, stated, “If a child does not learn to decode early, the child will likely lag behind their peers throughout their school years and may struggle with mathematics, social studies, science, and other content area coursework” (OSPI-Curriculum/Instruction, Reading, para. #4).

The researcher chose to focus on six important subsets that were research based concerning improving reading instruction, therefore supporting the hypothesis. The six subsets that the researcher chose to focus on were: differentiated instruction, reading in the early years, guided reading, balanced literacy, leveled books, and second-language literacy instruction.

Differentiated Instruction

The design and development of differentiated instruction as a model began in the general education classroom. The initial application came into practice for students considered gifted and who perhaps were not sufficiently challenged by the content provided in the general classroom setting. As classrooms became more diverse with the introduction of inclusion of students with disabilities and the reality of diversity in public schools, differentiated instruction was applied at all levels for students of all abilities (Hall, 2002).

Differentiated instruction adopted the concept of "readiness". The difficulties of skills taught were slightly in advance of the child's current level of mastery. Differentiated instruction was an adaptation of the Zone of Proximal Development, which was the range where learning took place created by Lev Vygotsky in 1978. Fountas and Pinnell (2001, p. 192) stated, "Lev Vygotsky used the term Zone of Proximal development to describe the experience of a learner who works successfully with the support of another and extends knowledge in the process."

According to Hall, “Not all students were alike. Based on knowledge, differentiated instruction applied an approach to teaching and learning so students were given multiple options for taking in information and making sense of ideas” (Hall, 2002, p. 2). The model of differentiated instruction required teachers to adapt the curriculum to the students’ level of learning. The instructor, before the implementation of differentiated instruction, had to recognize students’ varying background knowledge, readiness, language, preferences in learning, interests, and ability to react responsively (Hall, 2002).

Differentiated instruction was a process to teach each student at the child’s instructional level. Differentiated instruction had three important elements of curriculum that were differentiated: content, process, and products. Content had three components: Several elements and materials were used to support instructional content, tasks and objectives were aligned to learning goals, and instruction was concept-focused and principle-driven. Process consisted of flexible grouping. Products had three components: Initial and on-going assessment, responsible and active learners, and expectations and requirements varied for student responses (Hall, 2002).

There were guidelines that made differentiation possible for teachers to attain student results. One of the guidelines mentioned was to clarify key concepts and generalizations to ensure that all learners gained powerful understandings that served as the foundation for future learning. Teachers used

assessment as a teaching tool to extend versus merely measure instruction, and emphasized critical and creative thinking as a goal in lesson design. The instructor focused on engaging all learners in order to provide a balance between teacher-assigned and student-selected tasks because a balanced working structure was optimal in a differentiated classroom.

Reading in the Early Years

The information provided by the National Reading Panel in the seminal report on teaching reading provided Washington State an excellent foundation that helped build the GLEs. The GLEs applied to both Spanish and English reading curriculum. The same GLEs were used for lesson planning in either language. The reading strategies and skills transferred from Spanish to English and vice-versa (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Early acquisition of phonemic awareness, phonics skills, and fluency led to greater vocabulary acquisition and stronger comprehension skills and were all critical to a student's future academic success. Dr. Terry Bergeson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, said, "If a child does not learn to decode early, he or she will likely lag behind their peers throughout their school years and may struggle with mathematics, social studies, science, and other content area coursework" (OSPI. Retrieved November 2, 2006, para. #3). But, "If students are fluent readers by the end of first grade, research validates that they will have

the necessary prerequisite skills to focus on reading to learn in subsequent grade levels and throughout life” (OSPI. Retrieved November 2, 2006, para. #3).

Guided reading

Guided reading was an instructional setting that enabled the teacher to work with a small group of students to help the children learn effective strategies for processing text with understanding (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). The purpose of guided reading was to enable the students to use and develop strategies as the students practiced the reading. The ultimate goal in guided reading was to help children learn how to use independent-reading strategies successfully (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). New Zealand Department of Education stated, “Guided reading enables children to practice strategies with the teacher’s support, and leads to independent reading” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 1).

Margaret Mooney, in an article entitled *Guided Reading—The Reader in Control*, shared that guided reading was when the teacher and a small group of children, or when the teacher and a child, talked, thought, and read through a text which offered manageable challenges for each reader. The role of the teacher was one of support and to ensure that the children read with comprehension because comprehension or made meaning was the act of reading. Therefore, the guided reading approach to teaching reading emphasized trying, exploring, initiating, and controlling. Materials for guided reading matched a child’s development stage (Mooney, 1995).

Groups for guided reading were not formed right away at the beginning of the school year but by the end of September. The students who had similar reading behaviors were brought together. Jeannes Olshedske made the best comment, in regards to grouping, as found in the Fountas and Pinnell book *Guided Readers and Writers* (p. 216).

A teacher cannot establish her reading groups at the beginning of the year and keep the group intact throughout the year. If she does, she is not addressing the individual differences, and not responding to differential rates of progress or allowing for different paths to the same goal.

Somehow the teacher's practices are locking the children into fixed rates of progress.

The goal of the teacher was to form small groups of children with similarities in the students' development of strategies and in the level of text the students could read and regroup the children through ongoing assessment. The teacher selected text that was appropriate for the strategies children were demonstrating and at the appropriate level for the group. But most importantly, the teacher's goal was to select powerful teaching points that illustrated the reading process and helped children learn to solve words while maintaining a focus on meaning (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Balanced literacy

Balanced literacy was a framework designed to help all students learn to read and write effectively. The program believed all students could learn to read and write. The balance between reading and writing allowed students to receive the teaching needed in order to reach grade level status, while allowing students to work at a level that was not frustrating for the learners (Balanced literacy.

Retrieved from

http://comsewogue.k12.ny.us/~rstewart/k2002/Teachers/Balanced_literacy/).

Guided reading was only one component of a balanced literacy program. A child spent between ten to thirty minutes a day in a focused reading group that was organized, structured, planned, and supported by the teacher. The rest of the day that same student participated in whole-group, small-group, and individual activities related to a wide range of reading and writing, which involved children of varying experiences and abilities (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Leveled books

The students entered first grade at different levels and stages of reading. Since the students were at different stages of reading the teacher needed to match the stage to the reader and the leveled books. The purpose was to match the reader's ability to the leveled text to provide the student with the opportunity to develop, become familiar with, and gain, various reading strategies. Don Holdaway declared, "If children could work on literacy tasks most of the time at a

level of success, teachers would have solved the biggest problem in learning to read and write” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p.117).

Leveled books were the key components in a guided reading program as well as stages of development because typically, children went through specific stages of development as the children progressed from nonreaders to fluent readers. There were four stages of reading; early emergent readers, emergent readers, early fluent readers, and fluent readers. Through leveled books the teacher taught phonics, high-frequency words, word structure, grammar, and meaning (Reading a-z.com. Retrieved September 17, 2006, <http://www.readingaz.com/newfiles/leveledreaders.html>).

Second-Language Literacy Instruction

The International Reading Association stated that all students came to school with strengths in the individual’s home language and literacy instruction built on the strengths of the native language. The International Reading Association supported that indigenous linguistic minorities had the right to an education in the child’s home language and supported the right of families to determine whether initial literacy instruction was delivered in the dominant language or the home language. The right of the child to choose to be bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate, or monolingual, monocultural, and monoliterate, had to be honored and respected (Second-Language Instruction, 2001).

The accumulated wisdom of research in the field of bilingualism suggested that initial literacy learning in a second language was successful. But learning in a second language also carried a greater risk than if the children were instructed in the children's home language, especially when the children were affected by poverty, low levels of parental education, or poor schooling (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Excellent initial literacy instruction was difficult to accommodate due to the fact that families of second language backgrounds had different preferences in relation to initial literacy instruction. Some families wanted initial literacy instruction delivered in the home language, while others preferred initial literacy instruction delivered in the school's dominant language. Another factor that interfered with providing initial literacy instruction in the child's home language was local, state or provincial, and national policies that determined the language of schooling. The district where the research was conducted had a bilingual program, which used the late exit model.

Summary

The focus of chapter two was on the literature that would best support the researcher and the hypothesis. Since the reading topic was so broad the researcher chose to focus on seven subsets that narrowed the topic but were vital to the research; differentiated instruction, reading in the early years, guided reading, balanced literacy, leveled books, and second-language literacy instruction.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

The researcher decided to conduct a study on the benefits of the instructional approach of guided reading to a group of bilingual first graders. The researcher's main goal was to discover if guided reading instruction helped to develop fluency, accuracy, and, most important, comprehension in reading in order to rephrase in the students' individual vocabularies. The students received guided reading instruction twice a week in Spanish with the researcher and twice a week with the researcher's teaching partner, since the researcher only instructed in the classroom three times a week.

Methodology

The researcher used a pre-experimental design. The data that the researcher compared consisted of the beginning of the year *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* (EDL) scores taken in October 2006, and the end of the third trimester EDL scores taken in February of 2007. The study was pre-experimental because there were two scores being compared. The students' scores from the end of kindergarten and the beginning of the year became the base line as most of the students had never received formal guided reading instruction in small group settings according to their reading ability.

Participants

The researcher used students from the researcher's first grade bilingual class. The classroom contained 15 students, 8 were girls and 7 were boys. A high achieving student moved to a school within the district in the month of October. Two other migrant students moved back to Mexico in November. By the month of December the classroom contained only 12 students, 6 were girls and 6 were boys. The students were all Spanish speaking and limited in the English language. The students had participated in the bilingual program since kindergarten. The students' study habits were below average due to the lack of parental support with homework and daily reading practice at home. The researcher attended, throughout the 2006-2007 school year, a guided reading monthly course provided by the researcher's school district to receive proper training. The literacy coach in the researcher's school supervised and provided the researcher with ideas and strategies to increase the student's skills and strategies to improve the student's reading ability.

Instruments

The researcher used the EDL to test the students based on their reading comprehension, fluency, and accuracy. The researcher used the EDL because the EDL was the reading assessment approved, provided and used as the accepted form of reading evaluation by the researcher's school district. The assessments were administered three times a year, in October, February and May. The

researcher's principal and district required that the test be given three times per year for all students below grade level in reading.

The researcher had attended several trainings on how to administer and analyze the EDL. The researcher had administered the EDL for the past five years in the classroom at different grade levels. The researcher was re-trained, while the research was conducted, on how to administer the EDL by one of the researcher's school district literacy coaches.

The EDL test was administered to all 12 students by the researcher to ensure test validity and reliability. The EDL test was a research-based test. The researcher administered the EDL test in October and again in February. The researcher administered the EDL also in May as the end of the year assessment but the data was not included in the research due to the fact that the Special Project was presented before May. Although the researcher had been trained and had administered all of the tests, the EDL was still subject to personal biases based on consenses of both the researcher and teaching partner. The EDL was subjective because of the researcher's personal knowledge of the students' personalities, capabilities and achievement as well as past academic performance of the students due to the fact that the researcher's partner had been the participants' kindergarten teacher.

Design

The researcher used the experimental design because the students in the researcher's classroom were given the EDL three times during the 2006-2007 school year. The teacher was provided with the end of the year EDL scores for the entering first graders. The pre-test was administered in October 2006. The pre-test provided the researcher with reading scores to create homogeneous guided reading groups. The students were grouped homogeneously based on EDL scores and knowledge of strategic reading skills and ability. The teacher provided guided reading instruction twice a week for an approximated time of 15-20 minutes a day and the teacher's partner also provided guided reading instruction twice a week.

Throughout the six months the teachers monitored the students' progress through informal assessment and regrouped the students as the learners mastered new strategies and skills to improve their ability to read and advanced them to the next proficiency level. The teachers continued small guided reading group instruction based on the individual needs of each student or group.

The post-test was administered, by the researcher, on the second week of February to all 12 students. The researcher compared the February EDL score to the October's EDL score for the purpose of this study. Student maturity became a factor in the study because the children studied were the same students during the same school year and the fact that some students entered school with an early or

late birthday, which impacted the student's academic development. The students familiarized themselves with the test and testing procedure, thus helping the students increase their ability to preview and predict as well as retell.

Procedure

The school's literacy coach provided the researcher with an end of the year kindergarten EDL score. The researcher became aware of the students' reading abilities at the end of kindergarten. The researcher taught basic reading skills such as letter recognition, letter sounds and phonemic awareness to the students in the month of September in a whole group setting. The researcher had permission to test all of the students because the EDL assessment was a requirement by the school and throughout the school district. In October the first EDL assessment was administered. The researcher received approval from the principal to collect and use the students' scores as data. The students were organized into small groups of 3-5 students with similar reading needs. Each group was taught using the guided reading instructional approach to develop fluency, accuracy, and, most important, comprehension in reading in order to rephrase in the students' individual vocabularies. Guided reading instruction in a small group setting allowed students to work within the learners' own developing skills and become better readers as the learners were challenged with new skills and taught new strategies. Individually, the students showed growth in the

different areas of reading that examined the use of *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* (fluency, accuracy and comprehension).

The EDL was required to be administered three times during the school year but for the purpose of the study the researcher chose to administer the EDL test twice during a period of six months. The tests were given in October and in February. The EDL was adopted as the school district's reading test for bilingual kindergarten through second grade. The students passed a reading level if the student scored a 16 or above in comprehension, 95 percent or above in accuracy and a fluency score of three to six. The students' EDL test scores that were compared were the October and February test scores.

Treatment of the Data

The researcher collected the reading data during the 2006-2007 school year. The data used was the students' reading level scores on the EDL test, which were administered in October and February. During each testing period the researcher administered the EDL test to all 12 students in the first grade bilingual class. The researcher used a pre-experimental design. The researcher compared the October student score to the February student score to measure reading growth. Student exposure to guided reading where reading strategies were taught, individual reading assistance with the paraprofessional and student maturity were some of the contributing factors of student growth. The researcher looked at the EDL scores using the standard statistical procedures and used the non-

independent t-test from the Windows Statpak by L.R. Gay and Peter Airasian.

The non-independent t-test was used because the researcher was performing a pre-experimental design.

Summary

Chapter three mainly focused on the research, how the data was collected, who the participants in the study were, the EDL and the experimental design used by the researcher. The researcher used a pre-experimental design to compare the EDL reading scores from October and February. The researcher discussed the procedure of conducting the research, data collection and how the data was treated.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The researcher conducted a study to investigate if guided reading would increase reading scores for beginning readers. The researcher conducted the study in a first grade bilingual classroom. The students received guided reading instruction from the researcher on Monday and Tuesday. The researcher's teaching partner delivered guided reading instruction on Thursday and Friday. Guided reading instruction followed a daily schedule, which began with the lower reading level students and concluded with the above level readers. This chapter focused on how the data was analyzed.

Description of the Environment

As mentioned in chapter one, the *Increasing Reading Scores through Guided Reading Instruction for Beginning Readers* study took place in a small farming school in the researcher's own first grade bilingual classroom. The intention of the study was to instruct the students using the guided reading approach in the students' native language to increase the students' individualized reading level. All the participants were Hispanic and the home language was Spanish. The researcher and the researcher's teaching partner were both properly trained, supplied with a guidebook that detailed the program and a literacy coach provided assistance, when needed, to improve delivery of guided reading

instruction. The researcher attended several trainings on how to conduct guided reading lessons and how to administer and analyze the EDL. The students were ability grouped based on the students' reading level according to the EDL and teacher observation of reading behaviors.

There were 12 students in the researcher's classroom (6 girls and 6 boys). All students were Hispanic. Parental involvement in a child's education overall was average. One student in our classroom was qualified in kindergarten for Special Education; therefore, the student received assistance in reading for 15 minutes four times a week. Another student came to the school district from a district that did not provide bilingual instruction, the student's kindergarten academic year was completed all in English, the student's learning was limited, and maturity affected the child's academic progress.

Hypothesis/Research Question

The first grade bilingual students who receive daily guided reading instruction at the individual's instructional reading level will make greater than expected gains in the learner's Spanish reading proficiency scores by the end of six months as measured by the *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* pre and post test.

The data indicated that there was a significant difference between the October EDL scores and the February EDL scores. Based on the non-

independent *t*-test the data showed that the null hypothesis was rejected and that the hypothesis was supported at $p \geq 0.05$.

Null Hypothesis

The first grade students who receive guided reading instruction at the individual's instructional level will not show any significant difference in growth in the student's independent reading level as measured by the pre and post test using the *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* assessment.

Through guided reading instruction every student made growth at the student's individual instructional level as measured by the pre and post test using the EDL assessment. The parametric test of significance used to determine whether there was a significant difference was the non-independent *t*-test. Significance was determined at $p \geq 0.05$. The data indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected at $p \geq 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was supported at $p \geq 0.05$.

Results of the Study

The result of the study demonstrated that the first grade bilingual students made better than expected growth in the learner's Spanish reading proficiency scores at the end of six months. However, exposure to the EDL, continuous practice on phrasing and fluency, retelling to build comprehension and maturity were contributing factors to the growth the students demonstrated.

Table 1 illustrated the bilingual first grade EDL scores in the researcher's class during the 2006-2007 school year. At the end of first grade an EDL score of 18 was considered on level reading and the teacher was not permitted to test beyond a level 18. An entering first grader on level was a level 3 and mid year was a level 10. The October EDL level was compared to the February EDL level to demonstrate reading growth.

Table 1

First Grade Bilingual EDL scores for 2006-2007

Student Name	Pre-test October EDL 2006	Post-test February EDL 2007
Student 1F	0	1
Student 2J	0	1
Student 3I	1	3
Student 4J	0	6
Student 5L	3	6
Student 6R	0	3
Student 7A	4	8
Student 8M	4	16
Student 9J	4	8
Student 10R	4	12
Student 11Y	10	18
Student 12O	14	18

Table 2

t-test for Non-independent Samples

Statistic	Values
Number of Pairs	17
Sum of D's	56.00
Mean of D's	4.67
Sum of D's Squared	380.00
t-Value	4.92
Degrees of Freedom	11

Findings

The data showed a significant difference between October's EDL scores and the February's EDL scores. The hypothesis was supported at $p \geq 0.05$. The null hypothesis was rejected at $p \geq 0.05$. Therefore, first grade bilingual students achieved better than expected growth in the learner's Spanish reading proficiency level due to the guided reading instruction.

Discussion

The researcher compared the October EDL scores and the February EDL scores and the data indicated a significant difference between scores. Each

student's score for October was compared to the student's February score to show growth. The majority of the students increased reading levels based on the EDL. Some showed very little progress but indeed made gains in the student's ability in gaining strategic approaches to reading to increase reading skills.

As the data was analyzed, several factors seemed to have contributed to increasing students' reading levels. One factor was guided reading instruction being consistently delivered four times a week in the students' native language. In addition, the students became familiar with the EDL test and testing practices, such as, what the test administrator expected from each student: an accuracy rate of 95 percent or better, phrasing and fluency and an adequate comprehension through oral retelling. Another factor, which contributed to increasing students' reading level, was maturity.

Summary

Chapter four focused on the standard statistical procedure. The researcher used a pre-experimental design to compare student reading progress using the EDL scores from October and February. Both test scores were compared and evaluated. The data showed a significant difference between the October EDL scores and the February EDL scores. The null hypothesis was rejected at $p \geq 0.05$. The hypothesis was supported at $p \geq 0.05$. The first grade bilingual students who received daily guided reading instruction at the individual's instructional reading level achieved better than expected growth in

the learner's Spanish reading proficiency scores by the end of six months as measured by the *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* pre and post test.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The study was designed to discover if guided reading instruction helped to develop fluency, accuracy, and, most important, comprehension in reading in order to rephrase the reading in the students' individual vocabulary. The students received guided reading instruction twice a week in Spanish with the researcher and twice a week with the researcher's teaching partner, since the researcher only instructed in the classroom three times a week. Guided reading was incorporated into the reading curriculum to provide the students with valuable reading strategies and not just decoding skills.

The evidence of the problem was that the incoming first graders needed to learn the basic skills of reading. The students needed to learn vowels/consonants relationship, alphabet letter recognition sounds, become familiarized with the first grade high frequency words, picture reading and most important to have one-to-one correspondence with the text before being organized into ability grouping for guided reading instruction.

Once the students were ready for guided reading instruction, the groups were formed. As the students mastered the strategies taught at the students' ability reading level, the groups were changed to expose and teach new strategies to improve reading skills.

Summary

The researcher conducted this study to determine if guided reading would increase EDL scores of beginning readers, by developing fluency, accuracy, and, most important, comprehension in reading in order to rephrase the reading in the students' individual vocabulary. The data was the October EDL scores and the February EDL scores of the researcher's class in the 2006-2007 school year.

The data showed a significant difference between the October EDL scores and the February EDL scores. The null hypothesis was rejected at $p \geq 0.05$. The first grade bilingual students who received daily guided reading instruction at the individual's instructional reading level achieved better than expected growth in the learner's Spanish reading proficiency scores by the end of six months as measured by the *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* pre and post test.

Conclusions

The t-test for non-independent samples determined that the null hypothesis was rejected at $p \geq 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was supported at $p \geq 0.05$. First grade bilingual students who received daily guided reading instruction at the individual's instructional reading level achieved better than expected growth in the learner's Spanish reading proficiency scores by the end of six months as measured by the *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura* pre and post test.

Recommendations

The researcher concluded that guided reading was an essential piece of the reading curriculum to be implemented at the primary grades. This curriculum enabled the teacher to work with a small group of children to help them learn to use and develop effective strategies for processing text with understanding. Guided reading instruction helped to teach the students to become independent readers using learned reading strategies successfully. The book, *Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for all* by Fountas and Pinnell (1996), was an excellent source that helped the researcher with providing appropriate guided reading instruction. As the New Zealand Department of Education stated, “Guided reading enables children to practice strategies with the teacher’s support, and leads to independent reading” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 1). Even though the students in this study made significant growth in the student reading scores as measured by the EDL, some students were still reading below grade level. At second trimester, in the first grade, student reading level should be between 10 and 12 to be considered at level. Therefore, the below level readers must continue receiving extra reading support by a paraprofessional and encourage parents to read with the child for 20 minutes every day at home to reinforce the strategies and skills learned.

The researcher concluded that guided reading in the primary grades was of great benefit to the beginning reader. The researcher will continue providing

guided reading instruction for the rest of the school year and stress the importance of guided reading instruction with the first grade team.

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1st grade pre and post EDL scores

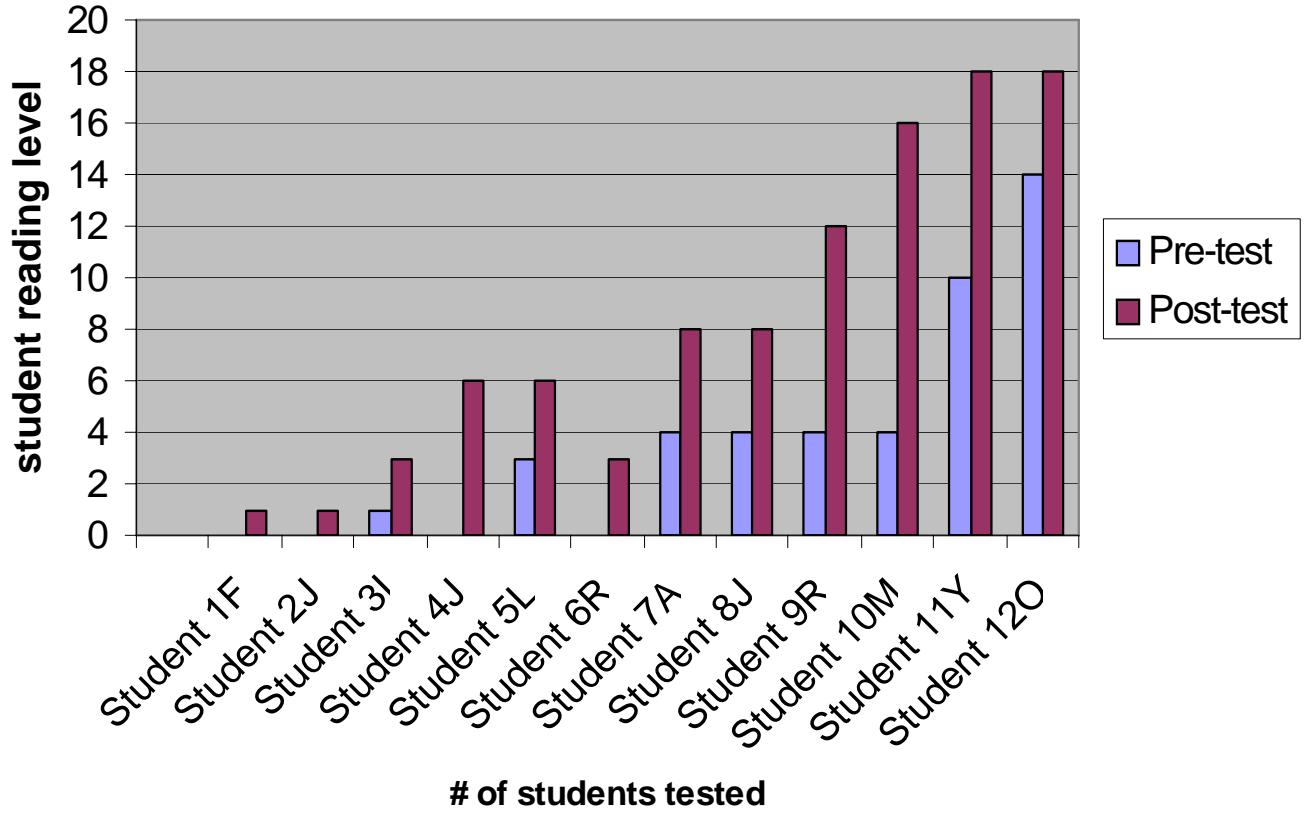


Figure 1, Student Reading Graph