Increasing Fifth Grade Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Scores Using

Walk-to-Read and Double-Dose Intervention

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A Special Project

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FACULTY APPROVAL

Increasing Fifth Grade Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Scores Using

Walk-to-Read and Double-Dose Intervention

Approved for the Faculty

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ABSTRACT

The researcher conducted a study of a group of fifth grade students in an Eastern Washington town. The rationale for the study was to find if fifth grade students' reading scores would increase using the Harcourt Reading Program and the Walk-to-Read model. The students participated in the reading program five days per week, 90 minutes per day. The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Assessment was used to gauge student achievement in the fall and spring during the study. The results of the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Assessments were used to decide if the fifth grade students' oral reading fluency skills improved during the school year.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 was in part created to improve oral

reading fluency of students throughout the country. As a result of the legislation

the school district implemented a program called Reading First. The purpose of

Reading First was to ensure that all students learned how to read by the end of

third grade. Reading First's job was to provide grant money to schools to improve

reading achievement using scientifically proven methods of instruction.

Northwest Evaluation Association and the Harcourt Reading curriculum were

approved programs by the Reading First Grant (Fact Sheet on No Child Left

Behind, 2002).

The National Reading Panel proposed five components necessary in a reading

curriculum which included (a) phonemic awareness, (b) phonics, (c) fluency,

(d) vocabulary, and (e) text comprehension. All of the five items were necessary

for a student's reading literacy throughout the country (U.S. Department of

Education, 2009).

In two of the three fifth grade classrooms in the school being studied, the

Walk-to-Read Model was used, while in only one of the fifth grade classrooms a

Double-Dose of reading intervention was used. The comparison was in finding if

the Walk-to-Read model and Double-Dose reading intervention helped to improve Northwest Evaluation Association Assessment Scores for the students that were studied.

Statement of the Problem

Reading comprehension and fluency of fifth grade students were below grade level as per Northwest Evaluation Association test scores taken in the fall of 2009 in the school in which the study took place. A reading program was necessary to improve both reading comprehension and fluency.

Purpose of the Project

The researcher wanted to know if using Walk-to-Read and Double-Dose intervention had a positive impact and helped students improve Northwest Evaluation Association test scores in reading comprehension and fluency.

Delimitations

The population of the school was culturally diverse, as was the population of the fifth grade classes in the study. The population of the k-5 school was 503 students and the total number of students in the study was 67. The school was one of many elementary schools in a Central Washington town. The Caucasian population of the school was 46.9 percent (Washington State Report Card, 2008). The percentage of Hispanic students was higher yet at 48.1 percent. The population of the remaining students was 2.4 percent black, 2.0 percent

Asian/Pacific Islander, 2.0 percent Asian, and 0.6 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native. The free and reduced lunch rate at this school was 68.9 percent. The combined average years of teaching experience for the 28 teachers employed at this school were 14 years, and 57.1 percent of the teachers had a master's degree (Washington State Report Card, Office of the Superintendant of Public Instruction).

The students that participated in the study came from three separate fifth grade classrooms and were a representative sample of the demographic make-up of the school. Students were grouped by Northwest Evaluation Association scores from the previous year's assessments and were placed into two separate groups based on reading comprehension levels. Students that were below grade level were given a Double-Dose of reading intervention in one of the three classrooms. Data for the study was taken from the three groups as well as a Double-Dose group.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that all teaching staff had proper training using the Harcourt Reading Curriculum and Northwest Evaluation Association. The researcher assumed all teachers were highly qualified. The writer assumed that all students were provided with the appropriate materials and all instruction was provided without bias. The researcher assumed the teachers provided appropriate instruction for the varied learning levels of the students in the classroom. The

author assumed the Harcourt Reading Program was aligned to the Grade Level Expectations and the reading block was consistently 90 minutes each day. A final assumption regarding the administration of the Northwest Evaluation Association assessment was that all fifth grade students took the test in the spring and fall of the school year under study.

Hypothesis

Students involved in the Walk-to-Read model will make significant gains in Northwest Education Association reading scores from the fall to spring assessments. Students involved in the Double-Dose intervention will make greater than expected gains in reading scores as measured by Northwest Evaluation Association.

Null Hypothesis

Students involved in the Walk-to-Read model will not make significant gains in Northwest Education Association reading scores from the fall to spring assessments. Students involved in the Double-Dose intervention will not make greater than expected gains in reading scores as measured by Northwest Evaluation Association.

Significance of the Project

The researcher's goal was to confirm that by using the Walk-to-Read model and the Harcourt Reading Curriculum the Northwest Evaluation Association

scores of the fifth grade level students in the school being studied, from beginning of the year scores to the end of the year scores would improve. Positive results would prove using the Walk-to-Read model and the Harcourt Reading Curriculum were a valid form of instruction for the students. Negative results or results that remain unchanged would prove adjustments were needed throughout the school's reading program.

Procedure

After the students in the school were studied and tested in the fall of 2009, the teachers placed students in appropriate instructional groups according to each individual's fluency and comprehension levels. The data considered for the placement of the students was based on the fall Northwest Education Association Assessments. Students were placed into ability groups and used the Harcourt Reading Curriculum. One of the classrooms in the study also employed a Double-Dose, intervention curriculum.

All Northwest Education Association assessments were administered in the school's computer lab at the beginning of the school year. Each grade level, including the three fifth grade classes, took the test under the same circumstances.

Two of the fifth grade teachers divided the students in the classrooms into appropriate reading groups, and then one of the fifth grade teachers added a Double-Dose intervention in one of the classrooms to help the lowest students to

5

achieve more comprehension than without the Double-Dose. The teacher in the

Double-Dose classroom worked with the whole group during the Walk-to-Read

block. Then during Sustained-Silent-Reading time the teacher gave the lowest

students a Double-Dose of reading intervention to help with comprehension and

fluency.

Definition of Terms

Double-Dose is an extra block of reading time to help students by providing
intensified instruction.

Fluency is the smoothness or flow with which sounds, syllables, words and
phrases are joined together when speaking.

No Child Left Behind Act was signed by President George Bush on January 8,
2002. No Child Left Behind was born from the Elementary and Secondary
Education Act of 1965. The purpose of NCLB was to "provide all children
with a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality
education" (No Child Left Behind, n.d., p. 1)

Northwest Evaluation Association Assessment is a tool used to test student's
literacy skills, mathematics knowledge, science skills and produce a
measureable outcome.

Northwest Evaluation Association is a non-profit association in which
information is gathered via tests to better the education of students.

Phonemic awareness is a process in which listeners are able to hear, identify
and manipulate the smallest units of sound that can differentiate meaning.

Phonics is an instructional method for teaching children to read English the connection of sounds with letters or groups of letters and blending sounds together to produce approximate pronunciations of unknown words.

Sustained-Silent-Reading is a period of time set aside for students to read silently.

Text comprehension is an ability to understand the meaning or importance of something read.

Vocabulary is a set of all words that are understood by a person or the set of all words likely to be used by a person when constructing new sentences.

Walk-to-Read is a reading model in which students walk to separate areas being divided into ability groups.

Acronyms

DIBELS, Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills

NCLB, No Child Left Behind

NWEA, Northwest Education Association

SSR, Sustained Silent Reading

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

<u>Introduction</u>

The researcher studied the Harcourt Reading Program, Walk-to-Read model, NWEA assessments, and other intervention programs used by teachers to enhance support of student achievement. A Walk-to-Read model was considered with input from teachers and outcomes of a successful curriculum. The Washington State K-12 Reading Model Implementation Guide was studied and used as a reference in observing the reading program in the school under observation.

<u>NCLB/Reading First</u>

According to the National Reading Panel (2003), the inability to read had negative consequences on a child's confidence, motivation, and later school performance. A report was issued in 2000 by the National Reading Panel identifying the skills and methods necessary for reading achievement. In the report, more than 10,000 studies were reviewed. The research had met criteria such as: "(a) the research had to address achievement of one or more skills in reading, (b) the research had to be generalizable [sic] to the larger population of students, (c) the research needed to examine the effectiveness of an approach, and (d) the research needed to be regarded as high quality" (National Institute for Literacy, 2003). These criteria were used by researchers to determine the

effectiveness of a program. The National Reading Panel had adopted these criteria in a field where decisions had been based more on principles than on evidence.

NCLB had led to many improvements in schools, providing a means to implement a valid and reliable assessment system in schools. This assessment system held schools accountable for the education of all students. The components of responsibility provided greater scrutiny to all of the states' accountability systems already in place (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Four pillars were written into the NCLB act of 2002: (a) stronger accountability for results, (b) more freedom for states and communities, (c) proven education methods, and (d) more choices for parents. States were made to assure all students were meeting standards and close the achievement gap. Schools that did not meet the standard received corrective measures (Four Pillars of NCLB, 2004). Parents of children that attended schools performing low for two years had the choice to have the students bused to a higher performing school within the same district. Low income students that attended low performing schools for three years had the opportunity to receive supplemental educational opportunities.

DIBELS

According to a study conducted by Oregon State University (2009), reading assessments had been aligned with goals set at the beginning of the year.

11

If used properly, DIBELS was a fair and consistent assessment tool. Schools used reliable and valid indicators of student's skills, provided signs of growth and development, were able to sense small changes over a long period of time, and were easily repeated and easily continued (University of Oregon, 2009).

Research had shown benchmark goals predicted future reading success (University of Oregon, 2009). The study went on to affirm that if students met the benchmark goals in the designated time frame it was sensible to expect the student to reach the next benchmark.

According to the University of Oregon (2009), progress monitoring was essential to help determine the need to provide differentiated and individualized instruction. Lower level learners needed to be progress monitored more often than students that were higher level learners and progressed acceptably (University of Oregon, 2009). Also at risk students for reading difficulty were participating in progress monitoring more often and the data was used to make instructional decisions.

According to University of Oregon (2009), instructional decisions were made from data collected; therefore, the data was objective. Questions were addressed to know if students met the goals, and showed improvement when compared to the previous year's performance. For the core curriculum to be deemed effective, students had to show growth while using the curriculum.

Matching instructional needs with resources were also essential to the effectiveness of the program (University of Oregon, 2009).

Ability Grouping/Walk-to-Read

According to Hollifield, the debate about ability grouping is a longstanding argument for or against the separation of students by ability. One side of the debate felt ability grouping helped educators deal with a wide variety of learning styles and addressed ways in which students learn best. The other side of the debate felt that ability grouping was a form of discrimination (1987).

Welner (2004) stated that the courts played an active role in America's schools. Research by Fullwood (1991) revealed the majority of white Americans believe African Americans were less intelligent than Whites, and the same was true of Latinos. Brown vs. Board of Education (1954) helped to begin the desegregation process, although ability grouping had canceled the numerous benefits of the decision.

"The legal boundaries are, on the whole, notably broad with regard to ability grouping. Principals should recognize that the answer to the issue of heterogeneous versus homogeneous groups is in many cases a matter for educators, not judges, to determine" (Zirkel and Gluckman, 2009). Further, ability grouping was a controversial issue in schools for many years, and more recently there had been numerous studies (Hollifield, 1987), regarding both in-class ability

13

grouping and between-class ability grouping. In-class ability grouping grouped students within a classroom into small groups. Based upon each student's needs, the teacher moved from group to group to work with individuals needing assistance. Between-class ability grouping grouped students at specific grade levels. Students moved to individual classroom based on ability level.

According to Hollifield, the theory behind ability grouping was that students achieved better in groups of peers who performed at or close to the same ability level. Teachers provided instruction at the student's level, neither too difficult nor too easy. Ability grouping allowed teachers to raise the bar for high achieving students and increased the pace of instruction, while providing more one-on-one attention and repetition for lower achieving students (1987).

Hollifield stated that in studies the Joplin Plan was shown to increase reading achievement. The Joplin Plan allowed for heterogeneous grouping throughout the school day, and regrouping across grade levels for reading. The non-graded plan grouped students by abilities rather than age. No longer did grade levels exist. Each subject within a curriculum was divided into levels and students were able to work at the students own pace (Hollifield, 1987). Within class ability grouping was used by teachers within the classroom. Students were placed into small groups based on individual abilities resulting in outcomes for low achieving

14

students that were higher than outcomes of the higher achieving students (Hollifield, 1987).

According to Hollifield, successful ability grouping included the student's ability to identify primarily with a heterogeneous class. Teachers varied instruction and pace based on a student's achievement levels. A small number of groups were formed in within-class grouping that allowed the teacher the opportunity to work with each group (1987).

<u>Case Studies</u>

According to LaJueness (2009), the purpose of the study was to determine if third grade students' oral reading fluency scores would increase using the Open Court Reading Program and the Walk-to-Read model. The measurement tool used in this study was the Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Assessment. Measurements were taken in the fall, winter, and spring, and were used as a pre- and post test.

According to LaJueness (2009), No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was the beginning of the oral reading fluency movement. The country's oral reading scores became lower and lower each year resulting in the passage of the NCLB act of 2002. The NCLB legislation was passed by Congress and signed into law by President George Bush on January 8, 2002, with the intent to improve the country's reading scores. In addition, other important aspects of the NCLB Act

were stronger accountability for results, more freedom for states and communities to implement, proven educational methods, and more choices for parents of students. States tried to assure that all students were meeting standards and were trying to close the achievement gap, while schools that did not meet the annual yearly progress goals received corrective measures (Four Pillars of NCLB, 2004).

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development found there were five main components needed in a successful reading curriculum: (a) phonemic awareness, (b) phonics, (c) fluency, (d) vocabulary, and (e) comprehension. The panel found that of the five components reading fluency was the most neglected component (LaJueness, 2009).

LaJueness wanted to know if using the Open Court Reading Curriculum and the Walk-to-Read model would improve the fluency scores of the third grade students in the study. If positive results were attained, the school was in the process of improving the oral reading fluency of the students. If negative results were obtained, then adaptations to the curriculum would be required in order to improve the scores of the students (2009).

The DIBELS assessment was designed to measure change over time in progression of early literacy skills (Hall, 2006). Skills were assessed at each grade level, and the assessment was intended to be a good indicator of a child's reading ability. According to Hall (2006), the DIBELS Assessment scores allowed

schools to offer a comprehensive reading program to provide students' reading competency with specialized instruction. In the assessment early reading skills tested were initial sound fluency, letter naming fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency, nonsense word fluency, and oral reading fluency; retell fluency, and word use fluency (Hall, 2006).

According to LaJueness (2009), even more than mathematics, reading was a subject proven by studies that students struggled with across the country. Reading was also identified as one of the most important and fundamental skills a child could learn in school. Inability to read affected a child's performance in school during later grades, and could also affect a child's self-confidence and motivation to learn (LaJueness, 2009).

The findings of the research determined that third grade students made greater than expected growth as measured by DIBELS. Based on the results of the research LaJueness (2009) concluded that using the Open Court Reading Program and the Walk-to-Read model were valid programs in order to improve reading fluency scores and strongly suggested using the program as a model.

Johnson (2009) began a study to determine if second grade DIBELS assessment scores would increase if the Walk-to-Read model was implemented and ability grouping was used. Johnson (2009) also found that ability grouping was an effective way to teach students to achieve success. In the study, half of the

second grade students began the school year with a deficit of being a year or more behind in reading ability.

Students in the study did not reach benchmark by the end of second grade, according to the district's test scores (Johnson, 2009). Teachers in the study used the Walk-to-Read model to assist students to make greater gains in reading. The Walk-to-Read model allowed students to be grouped according to ability and received individualized instruction.

The question the researcher of this study asked was "Can student's academic Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills scores be raised through implementing a Walk to Read program?" (Johnson, 2009). The purpose of the study measured the accomplishments of second grade students in the Walk-to-Read model using the fall and spring DIBELS Assessment scores. The goal was to help second grade students "gain greater fluency rate, overall reading ability, and ability to reach grade level by the end of the school year" (Johnson 2009).

The NCLB Act emphasized the importance of all students reaching grade level by the end of third grade, which forced second grade to become an important year of growth for students. The Walk-to-Read model was implemented to help struggling readers with phonics instruction, middle readers used the

Harcourt Reading Curriculum, and higher readers received extension activities in the Harcourt Curriculum (Johnson, 2009).

According to Johnson (2009), the goal of the Walk-to-Read model was to attain fluent readers. Fluent readers recognized words automatically and achieved word recognition and comprehension almost instinctively. If the reader could read quickly but not retain the information, fluency was not achieved, while fluent readers could focus on the connections and ideas presented in the passage and thus understand what was being read.

According to Hollifield (2009), ability grouping increased student achievement by putting students together with similar educational needs. Teachers were able to provide individualized instruction, repetition, and review for students who were at lower learning levels. Ability grouping was a form of the Walk-to-Read model.

The DIBELS Assessment was originated in Oregon State approximately 18 years ago (Hall, 2006). Reading First led to the growth of the DIBELS test. Studies had been performed on the DIBELS test proving the evidence of reliability and validity. "The seven indicators that were used to assess reading were: initial sound fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency, letter naming fluency, nonsense word fluency, oral reading fluency, retell fluency and word use fluency" (Hall, 2006).

The curriculum used during the time of the study was Harcourt Reading Curriculum, Harcourt Reading Intervention Curriculum, and Read Well Curriculum. Harcourt Reading Intervention Curriculum was used for small group instruction, providing extra support and reading practice for below level readers. Read Well Curriculum was used by lower level learning groups that were struggling with phonics.

Summary

The National Reading Panel found a child's inability to read had negative consequences on the child's confidence, motivation, and later school performance. No Child Left Behind led to many improvements in schools, and provided the implementation of an assessment system in schools (National Reading Panel, 2009). The main assessment system used was Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills, and was coined as being a fair and consistent assessment system.

Walk-to-Read was a form of ability grouping where students were placed into groups at grade levels by the student's academic ability. Lower level students achieved better in the ability groups than the higher level learners, who stopped achieving after the first year of ability grouping.

According to LaJueness (2009), the research had shown the use of the Walk-to-Read model and the proper reading curriculum was essential in the success of

20

students reading fluency scores. DIBELS scores were increased by the use of the

reading models. Based upon the available research, the author had found that the

Walk-to-Read model coupled with ability grouping was a successful teaching

method that could be used to increase individual student's reading fluency scores.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

The researcher compared Northwest Evaluation Association scores of fifth

grade students to find out if using the Walk-to-Read program would aid students

in achieving greater competency in reading comprehension. Walk-to-Read was

used to ability group students for a 90 minute reading block five days per week.

Students were placed into groups according to their ability. Teachers were able to

provide a more focused instruction for the group of students they were providing

instruction for. For the study the author used fifth grade NWEA scores to show

growth in reading fluency and comprehension. The group of fifth grade students

was tested in September of 2009, and again in May of 2010. The pre- and post-

test scores were compared by the researcher.

Methodology

Using quantitative research the study was conducted to see if using the

Harcourt Reading Program and Walk-to-Read Model would show growth in

NWEA scores from fall to spring. The experimental group consisted of three, fifth

grade classrooms two of the fifth grade classes participated in the Walk-to-Read

Model and the third did not. The data collected was compared to show if using the

Walk-to-Read Model was beneficial to the reading curriculum as shown on NWEA scores from fall to spring.

Participants

The population of the school was culturally diverse, as was the population of the fifth grade class in the study. The population of the k-5 school was 503 students. The school was one of many elementary schools in a Central Washington town. The Caucasian population of the school was 46.9 percent (Washington State Report Card, 2008). The percentage of Hispanic students was higher yet at 48.1 percent. The population of the remaining students was 2.4 percent black, 2.0 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 2.0 percent Asian, and 0.6 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native. The free and reduced lunch rate at this school was 68.9 percent. The combined average years of teaching experience for the 28 teachers employed at this school were 14 years, and 57.1 percent of the teachers had a master's degree (Washington State Report Card, Office of the Superintendant of Public Instruction, 2008).

The 67 students used in the study came from three separate fifth grade classrooms. Students were grouped by Northwest Evaluation Association scores from the previous year's assessments. Students from two of the classrooms were placed into two separate groups based on reading comprehension levels. Students

below grade level were given a second dose of reading intervention in one of the three classrooms. Data for the study was taken from the three classrooms.

Instruments

    The NWEA assessment was administered in the schools computer lab by a lab teacher and trained para-educators. All classrooms in the school were tested under the same circumstances and by the same staff. Procedures for the test administration were: (a) each student worked independently, (b) each student had an individual computer terminal to work on, (c) each student was expected to work quietly without the assistance of other students or staff, and (d) each student was given enough time to complete all components of the test.

    The researcher was provided with NWEA assessment scores from both spring and fall testing dates by the school administrator. The NWEA assessment and the means of administration were both valid and reliable.

Design

    The researcher studied all students in the fifth grade level, both students at benchmark who are reading at grade level, and strategic students who are at a lower level of learning and need intervention in the reading curriculum. All students received 90 minutes of reading instruction per day five days per week. Two of the fifth grade classes participated in the Walk-to-Read Model while the third did not. All classes used the Harcourt Reading Curriculum.

The study was conducted using quantitative research; fall and spring NWEA assessment scores were used in the study. NWEA scores were compared to show if progress was achieved during the 2009-2010 school year.

Procedure

The NWEA pre-test of all fifth grade students took place in September of 2009. The NWEA assessment was administered by the school's computer lab teacher and trained para-educators in the school's computer lab. Directions for the assessment were strictly followed.

The fifth grade teachers in the study began using the Walk-to-Read model and the Harcourt Reading Program, Monday through Friday at the very beginning of the 2009 school year. The fifth grade students in two of the classrooms went to one of the two classrooms for reading instruction. One of the fifth grade classroom's instructions was at or above grade level, while in another instruction was below grade level. The third fifth grade classroom kept all students from the classroom in the assigned class and did not participate in the Walk-to-Read model. Instruction in the third classroom was generalized with no individualized instruction. A 90 minute block was used in all three of the fifth grade classes. The first fifth grade classroom also employed a Double-Dose of reading instruction for 30 minutes per day. NWEA post-tests were administered in May of 2010, to the students in the study.

The computer lab teacher and trained para-educator administered the NWEA assessment in the school's computer lab. After the data was collected in the fall and spring the researcher used a program called StatPak to conduct the *t*-test.

Treatment of the Data

The researcher collected fall and spring NWEA assessment scores for 67 fifth grade students during the 2009-2010 school year. The data was treated by conducting a non-independent *t*-test from the StatPak program to determine the significance of the scores. The NWEA pre-test scores were compared to the post-test scores collected in September of 2009 and May of 2010 respectfully.

Summary

The author studied the benchmark and strategic students in the fifth grade during the 2009-2010 school year. The students received 90 minutes of reading instruction per day five days per week, using the Harcourt Reading Program and the Walk-to-Read Model. The rationale behind this reading model was to provide uniformity across grade levels, and learning stability for all students.

The study was conducted using quantitative research. Fall and spring NWEA scores were collected as data. Pre-test scores were collected in September of 2009 and post-test scores were collected in May of 2010. The pre-test scores from September 2009 were then compared to the post-test scores from May 2010. The comparison of pre-test scores from September 2009 and post-test scores from

May 2010 allowed the researcher to review scores for the academic year. The data

was compared using a non-independent *t*-test from the StatPak program to

determine the significance of the scores.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The researcher conducted a study to determine whether using the Walk-to-Read Model and the Harcourt Reading Program would increase fifth grade Northwest Evaluation Association scores. Fifth grade students in strategic and benchmark groups were included in the study. Fifth grade students participated in the Harcourt Reading Program for 90 minutes per day, five days per week. In one of the fifth grade classrooms students received a Double-Dose of reading for 30 minutes per day, five days per week. Students were tested using the NWEA assessment in September of 2009 for pre-test scores and again in May of 2010 for post-test scores. Pre-test scores from September 2009 were compared to post-test scores from May 2010 using a non-independent t-test.

Description of the Environment

The population of the school was culturally diverse, as was the population of the fifth grade classes in the study. The population of the k-5 school was 503 students. The school was one of many elementary schools in a Central Washington town. The Caucasian population of the school was 46.9 percent (Washington State Report Card, 2008). The percentage of Hispanic students was higher yet at 48.1 percent. The population of the remaining students was 2.4

percent black, 2.0 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 2.0 percent Asian, and 0.6 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native. The free and reduced lunch rate at this school was 68.9 percent. The combined average years of teaching experience for the 28 teachers employed at this school were 14 years, and 57.1 percent of the teachers had a master's degree (Washington State Report Card, Office of the Superintendant of Public Instruction).

The 67 students that participated in the study came from three separate fifth grade classrooms. Students were grouped by Northwest Evaluation Association scores from previous year's assessments. Students were placed into two separate groups based on reading comprehension levels. Students that were below grade level were given a second dose of reading intervention in one of the three classrooms. Data for the study was taken from the three groups as well as a Double-Dose group.

Hypothesis/Research Question

Students involved in the Walk-to-Read model will make significant gains in Northwest Education Association reading scores from the fall to spring assessments. Students involved in the Double-Dose intervention will make greater than expected gains in reading scores as measured by Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA).

<u>Null Hypothesis</u>

Students involved in the Walk-to-Read model will not make significant gains in Northwest Education Association reading scores from the fall to spring assessments. Students involved in the Double-Dose intervention will not make greater than expected gains in reading scores as measured by Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA).

<u>Results of the Study</u>

Table 1.

t-test for Pre-Post Fall to Spring NWEA Scores for Benchmark and Strategic Students in Fifth Grade Classroom Number One

Test	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pre	24	204.00	18.58
Post	24	212.75	14.49

df= 23   *t*= 5.24   p<0.05

The study conducted by the researcher was significant according to Table 1. The students demonstrated greater than expected growth in the pre-test scores from September 2009 to the post-test scores from May 2010 in classroom number one after participating in the Walk-to-Read Model, using the Harcourt Reading Program, and employing the Double-Dose of reading. When the author conducted the non-independent *t*-test for the fifth grade students the *t*-value was 5.24 and the

degree of freedom was 23. The *t*-value was significant beyond the 0.05

probability level.

   The null hypothesis was rejected. Fifth grade students participating in the

Walk-to-Read Model, the Harcourt Reading Program, and the Double-Dose made

greater than expected growth from fall scores in September 2009 to spring scores

in May 2010 as measured by the NWEA assessment using a *t*-test.

Table 2.

t-test for Pre-Post Fall to Spring NWEA Reading Scores for Strategic and
Benchmark Students in Fifth Grade Classroom Number Two

Test	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pre	21	208.95	13.65
Post	21	215.95	10.11

df= 20   *t*= 4.79 $p<0.05$

   The study conducted by the researcher was significant according to Table

2. The students demonstrated greater than expected growth in the pre-test scores

from September 2009 to the post-test scores from May 2010 in classroom number

two after participating in the Walk-to-Read Model and using the Harcourt

Reading Program. When the author conducted the non-independent *t*-test for the

fifth grade students the *t*-value was 4.79 and the degree of freedom was 20. The *t*-

value was significant beyond the 0.05 probability level.

The null hypothesis was rejected. Fifth grade students participating in the Walk-to-Read Model, the Harcourt Reading Program, and the Double-Dose made greater than expected growth from fall scores in September 2009 to spring scores in May 2010 as measured by the NWEA assessment using a *t*-test.

Table 3.

t-test for Pre-Post Fall to Spring NWEA Reading Scores for Strategic and Benchmark Students in Fifth Grade Classroom Number Three

Test	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pre	22	201.41	14.97
Post	22	211.91	13.56

df= 21   *t*= 5.70   p<0.05

The study conducted by the researcher was significant according to Table 3. The students demonstrated greater than expected growth in the pre-test scores from September 2009 to the post-test scores from May 2010 in classroom number one after participating in the Walk-to-Read Model, using the Harcourt Reading Program. When the author conducted the non-independent *t*-test for the fifth grade students the *t*-value was 5.70 and the degree of freedom was 21. The *t*-value was significant beyond the 0.05 probability level.

The null hypothesis was rejected. Fifth grade students participating in the Walk-to-Read Model, the Harcourt Reading Program, and the Double-Dose made

greater than expected growth from fall scores in September 2009 to spring scores in May 2010 as measured by the NWEA assessment using a *t*-test.

Findings

   After the data was analyzed from the *t*-tests, the author found the fifth grade students who participated in the Harcourt Reading Program made greater than expected growth in reading according to the NWEA assessment scores. There was no significant difference in using the Walk-to-Read Model or the Double-Dose of reading. The three fifth grade classrooms employed three different models in the reading curriculum and showed nearly the same growth in NWEA reading scores.

Discussion

   The results from the study indicate that fifth grade students increased NWEA assessment scores by participating in the Harcourt Reading Program. Using the Walk-to-Read Model and Double-Dose had little bearing on the test score results. The *t*-tests conducted on the pre-test scores from September 2009 and the post-test scores from May 2010 showed significance beyond the 0.05 probability level.

Summary

   The fifth grade students were tested using the NWEA assessment in reading from fall in September 2009 to spring in May 2010. The researcher gave a description of the environment at the beginning of the chapter. The hypothesis

and null hypothesis were restated. The hypothesis was not supported by the

NWEA data and the non-independent *t*-tests. The study concluded that fifth grade

students participating in the Harcourt Reading Program made greater than

expected gains in reading according to the NWEA assessment and the non-

independent *t*-tests, the presence of using the Walk-to-Read Model or Double-

Dose was irrelevant.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

<u>Introduction</u>

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 was in part created to improve oral

reading fluency of students throughout the country. As a result of the Child Left

Behind legislation the district implemented a program called Reading First. The

purpose of Reading First was to ensure that all students learned how to read by

the end of third grade. (Fact Sheet on No Child Left Behind, 2002) Reading

First's job was to provide grant money to schools in order to improve reading

achievement using scientifically proven methods of instruction. Northwest

Evaluation Association (NWEA) and the Harcourt Reading curriculum were

approved programs by the Reading First Grant.

The National Reading Panel proposed five components necessary in a reading

curriculum which included (a) phonemic awareness, (b) phonics, (c) fluency,

(d) vocabulary, and (e) text comprehension. All of the five items were necessary

for a student's reading literacy throughout the country (U.S. Department of

Education, 2009).

In two of the three fifth grade classrooms in the school being studied, the

Walk-to-Read Model was used, while in only one of the fifth grade classrooms a

Double-Dose of reading intervention was used. The comparison was in finding if

the Double-Dose reading intervention helped to improve Northwest Evaluation Association Assessment scores for the students that participated in the study.

In the school district that took part in the study, reading comprehension and fluency of fifth grade students were below grade level as per the Northwest Evaluation Association's test scores taken from the fall of 2009. Choice of a different reading program was necessary to improve both reading comprehension and fluency.

The researcher wanted to know if using Walk-to-Read and Double-Dose intervention had helped students improve Northwest Evaluation Association test scores in reading comprehension and fluency.

Summary

The researcher investigated increased fifth grade NWEA scores using the Harcourt Reading Program, the Walk-to-Read Model, and Double-Dose. Students participated in reading 90 minutes per day, five days per week during the 2009-2010 school year. NWEA Assessment scores were collected in September 2009 and May 2010. Pre-test scores taken in September 2009 were compared to post-test scores taken in May 2010 to find growth of fifth grade students on the NWEA assessment scores in reading. The author predicted that fifth grade students would make greater than expected growth using the Harcourt Reading Program, the Walk-to-Read Model, and Double-Dose from fall to spring testing dates.

36

The researcher studied the areas of importance in reading, No Child Left Behind, Reading First, Harcourt Reading Program, NWEA, ability grouping and the Walk-to-Read Model. Reading was found to be one of the most important skills a student can learn in school. Children across the country have struggled in reading for years, more than mathematics or writing. Poor reading skills impacted children's self-confidence and motivation to learn. In addition, reading performance affected students' school performance in later grades. (National Institute for Literacy, 2003).

The study was conducted using quantitative research. Fall and spring NWEA scores were used as data in the study. Pre-test scores were collected in September 2009 and post-test scores were collected in May 2010. The pre-test scores collected in September 2009 were compared to the post-test scores collected in May 2010. The pre-test scores collected in September 2009 and the post-test scores collected in May 2010 allowed the researcher to review reading of the fifth grade students for the entire academic year. The scores were compared using a non-independent t-test.

After the researcher analyzed the data from the t-tests, the researcher found fifth grade students made greater than expected growth in NWEA reading assessment scores using the Harcourt Reading Program. No significant growth was found using the Walk-to-Read model or Double-Dose.

Conclusions

In conclusion, fifth grade students in the benchmark and strategic groups made better than expected growth in NWEA reading assessment scores by participating in the Harcourt Reading Program. No significant growth was measured by using the Walk-to-Read model or Double-Dose. The hypothesis was not supported by the data collected. Students participated in a 90 minute reading block five days per week. Using the Harcourt Reading Program contributed to the increase in NWEA reading assessment scores of the fifth grade students during the 2009-2010 school year.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the researcher discovered that using the Harcourt Reading Program is a valid program to use for fifth grade reading instruction with proven results. The author believes using the Walk-to-Read model or Double-Dose is not a valid means of instruction for students in the fifth grade. The researcher also believes that the Harcourt Reading Program should continue to be used as a valid reading program for this grade level. The NWEA assessment scores were beneficial in assessing students' growth in reading during this study.

The author suggests using the Harcourt Reading Program in the future. Future studies should be continued over a longer period of time, to ensure using the Walk-to-Read model and Double-Dose are not significant to the reading success

of students in the fifth grade. Similar studies should be conducted in surrounding

grade levels to map the reading growth of students before and after students enter

and exit the fifth grade.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1

NWEA Assessment Scores for Benchmark and Strategic Fifth Grade Students for the 2009-2010 School Year

Student	Classroom One		Classroom Two		Classroom Three	
	Fall 2010	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2010
1	156	172	176	194	173	176
2	155	173	188	197	171	185
3	198	200	199	203	173	198
4	198	205	209	208	198	201
5	178	206	183	210	203	206
6	199	206	198	212	182	207
7	193	210	206	214	206	208
8	209	211	211	214	208	209
9	202	212	208	214	218	209
10	203	213	205	215	192	210
11	211	214	212	212	188	212
12	212	215	215	219	203	212
13	192	215	213	219	203	213
14	210	216	214	219	203	215
15	223	217	213	221	211	218
16	206	218	222	222	207	222
17	220	220	213	223	212	222
18	212	221	227	224	214	224
19	217	223	220	226	209	226
20	225	224	228	234	220	226
21	226	226	228	235	219	226
22	210	228			218	237
23	224	228				
24	219	233				