

Project Title

The Effects of Read Naturally Intervention on Student Fluency

A Special Project

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Dr. Robert P. Kraig

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Jamie L. Niemi

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FACULTY APPROVAL

The Effects of Read Naturally Intervention on Student Fluency

A Master's Special Project

by

Jamie Niemi

Approved for the Faculty

_____, Faculty Advisor

Dr. Robert P. Kraig

ABSTRACT

The Effects of Read Naturally Intervention on Student Fluency

Researcher: Jamie Niemi, B.A. in Ed., Washington State University

M.Ed., Heritage University

Chair Advisory Committee: Robert P. Kraig, PhD.

The second grade team at Onalaska Elementary School was looking for the most effective method of improving student's fluency scores as a number of previous fluency tests indicated that a high number of students were in the "some risk" category.

The purpose of this study was to determine what interventions helped children learn to read at a more fluent rate based on DIBELS oral fluency measures. The effectiveness of Read Naturally was measured as it is used as an intervention for those students in the "some risk" category.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

On January 8, 2002, President George Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This act reauthorized and amended federal education programs established under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The major focus of No Child Left Behind 2001 (also known as ESEA) is CHANGE ALL TENSE TOP PAST WAS to provide all children with a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. NCLB emphasized the implementation of educational programs and practices that had been demonstrated to be effective. In essence, it is a national extension of the standards-based education reform efforts undertaken in our state since 1993 (OSPI).

At the basic level, reading fluency refers to the ability to read text accurately, quickly, and with good expression so that time can be allocated to understanding what is read (Meyer & Felton, 1990). Recently there has been a lot of attention to reading fluency because of a growing understanding of its importance in reading comprehension.

Most researchers agree that accuracy alone is insufficient and that students need to read rapidly if they are going to understand the connections that need to be made between ideas in print (Nathan and Stanovich 1991). Controlling the difficulty of texts and providing feedback for words missed during reading seem to be associated with improved rate and accuracy for those students developing fluent reading. Advancing students through progressively difficult text based on their performance seems to enhance

their overall fluency as does correction and feedback for words read incorrectly (John J. Pikulski, Ph.D., and David J. Chard, Ph.D.).

Statement of the Problem

The second grade team at Onalaska Elementary School was looking for the most effective method of improving student's fluency scores as measured by the Dynamic Indicators for Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Previous fluency tests indicated that a high number of students were in the "at risk" category.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if the Read Naturally Intervention helped children learn to read at a more fluent rate based on DIBELS oral fluency measures. The effectiveness of Read Naturally is measured as it is used as an intervention for those students in the "some risk" category

Delimitations

This project was delimited to three second grade classes during the 2008 -2009 school year. This project took place at Onalaska Elementary School in Onalaska Washington. Material used to collect the data were DIBELS which was administered individually, and measured early literacy development.

Assumptions

All students will do their best when reading the DIBELS fluency measurement tool.

Hypothesis

Second grade students who are given Read Naturally intervention daily will show more significant improvement than those not receiving the Read Naturally program as measured by DIBELS.

Null Hypothesis

Second grade students who are given Read Naturally intervention daily will not show more improvement than those not receiving the Read Naturally program as measured by DIBELS.

Significance of the Project

The purpose of this project was to provide a factual base of information regarding using Read Naturally as an intervention for second grade students in the “some risk” category.

Procedure

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

1. Permission to conduct research at Onalaska School District was granted by Taj Jensen (See Appendix A).
2. A review of literature was conducted at Heritage University, Washington State University and the Internet.
3. A survey was created to analyze student’s feelings about reading.
4. A DIBELS pre test was administered to each student on September 20th, 2008.
5. A DIBELS post test was administered to each student on December 20th, 2008.

6. Data was tabulated.

Definition of Terms

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

Phonics – the system of relationships between letters and sounds in a language.

Acronyms

DIBELS – Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

NCLB – No Child Left Behind.

OSPI - Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

WASL – Washington Assessment of Student Learning

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

This chapter has been organized around the following topics: (a) Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, (b) No Child Left Behind, (c) Second Grade Reading Assessment, (d) Read Naturally and (e) Importance of reading fluency.

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. They were designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills.

The measures were developed upon the essential early literacy domains discussed in both the National Reading Panel (2000) and National Research Council (1998) reports to assess student development of phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, and automaticity and fluency with the code. Each measure has been thoroughly researched and demonstrated to be reliable and valid indicators of early literacy development and predictive of later reading proficiency to aid in the early identification of students who are not progressing as expected.

No Child Left Behind

On January 8, 2002, President George Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This act reauthorized and amended federal education programs established under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The major focus of No Child Left Behind 2001 (also known as ESEA) is to provide all children with a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. NCLB emphasizes the implementation of educational programs and practices that have been demonstrated to be effective. In essence, it is a national extension of the standards-based education reform efforts undertaken in our state since 1993 (OSPI). The references selected, as part of the review should be contemporary. The literature should have been published within the past five years. There may be occasions when literature which is more dated is used. The literature selected should be noteworthy and credible. Most importantly, it must be pertinent to the problem.

Second Grade Reading Assessment

All second-graders in Washington are required to have their oral reading skills tested within the first six weeks of the school year. Assessing reading comprehension is optional, but strongly recommended.

The Second Grade Reading Assessment Law (RCW.28A.300.320) mandates that every student in the state of Washington be assessed at the beginning of the second grade using a grade-level equivalent oral reading passage. Students whose performance is found to be “substantially below grade level” must be accorded an intervention plan that involves the student, parents, and school. Assessing reading comprehension is optional,

but strongly recommended. Scores are not reported to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), but should be used by the teacher, school, and district to provide support for students who need help (OSPI).

Read Naturally

The strategy of the Read Naturally program supports and reinforces the five essential components of reading, as determined by the National Reading Panel: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Using stories, audio recordings, students work with age-appropriate material at their skill level.

The strategy behind the Read Naturally program combines teacher modeling, repeated reading, and assessment and progress monitoring. In teacher modeling, a proficient reader models good, correct reading for a less skilled reader. Students practice reading stories with a timer until they reach a pre-determined goal rate of fluency, accuracy, speed, and vocal expression. Progress monitoring plays a central role in helping students achieve their targeted reading goals (John J. Pikulski, Ph.D., and David J. Chard, Ph.D.).

Reading Fluency

At the basic level, reading fluency refers to the ability to read text accurately, quickly, and with good expression so that time can be allocated to understanding what is read (Meyer & Felton, 1990).

Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the words, they can focus their attention on what the text means. They can make connections among the ideas in the text and their background knowledge. In other words, fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time. Less fluent readers, however, must focus their attention on figuring out the words, leaving them little attention for understanding the text (<http://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/reading101/fluency>).

While the National Reading Panel's definition of fluency as the ability to read text with accuracy, appropriate rate, and good expression (NICHD, 2000) is widely accepted among fluency researchers, these experts continue to debate the more subtle aspects of fluency (Stecker, Roser, and Martinez, 1998; Wolf and Katzir-Cohen, 2001). However it is defined, this much is certain: Fluency is necessary, but not sufficient, for understanding the meaning of text. When children read too slowly or haltingly, the text devolves into a broken string of words and/or phrases; it's a struggle just to remember what's been read, much less extract its meaning. So it's important that teachers determine if their students' fluency is at a level appropriate for their grade (Jan Hasbrouck, 2006).

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of the Data

Introduction

The Onalaska Elementary school adopted the Read Naturally Intervention to help students meet reading fluency standards based on the DIBELS assessment. The researcher sought to find out if students who are given Read Naturally intervention did show more significant improvement than those not receiving the Read Naturally program as measured by DIBELS. In the data analysis a t test was used to determine if students participating in the intervention improved their fluency rate more significantly than those not receiving the intervention.

Methodology

The researcher chose to use an experimental research study. The researcher used two different groups of “at risk” students. One group received the intervention daily, while the other group did not receive the intervention.

Understanding the need to get students reading at grade level the researcher questioned the principal about doing a study on the effectiveness of the Read Naturally program.

Next, the researcher administered the DIBELS test on September 20th, 2008 and December 20th, 2008. The researcher then collected and analyzed the data and charted and recorded the information in Excel for ease in data analysis. The researcher next created a questionnaire for student on their feelings about reading before and after the intervention was used.

Finally, the researcher entered the data in a Stat Pak and used a t test for independent samples to test for significance. The numbers were compared to a probability chart, which showed the distribution for the t test to see if there was a significant change.

Participants

The researcher selected students from the second grade classes who fell into the “some risk” category. The students were from lower to middle class families who lived in rural community about 20 miles from Centralia. Although family culture is mixed the bulk of students, both male and female, come from mostly two parent households.

The ethnic diversity of the population was 81.9% Caucasian, 8.2% Hispanic, 1% African-American, and 6.7% Native Indian. 51.7% of the population received free or reduced priced meals.

Instruments

The data was gathered from the DIBELS assessments. DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills.

The measures were developed upon the essential early literacy domains discussed in both the National Reading Panel (2000) and National Research Council (1998) reports to assess student development of phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, and automaticity and fluency with the code. Each measure has been thoroughly researched and demonstrated to be reliable and valid indicators of early literacy development and

predictive of later reading proficiency to aid in the early identification of students who are not progressing as expected.

Design

The study was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Read Naturally program as an intervention for “some risk” students. Fluency rates were calculated in a pre and posttest in the 2008 school year. Students were given a survey to gather their feeling on the effectiveness of intervention. An experimental research study was constructed.

Procedure

For this study the researcher sought to gather as much information about the effects of reading fluency of student achievement. Several articles were reviewed at Heritage University and the Internet. The researcher collected and analyzed the data from the pre and post DIBELS assessments given to students in the 2008/2009 school year. The data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet for each test. Graphs were created to show the findings.

Figures for student’s receiving the intervention and those not receiving the intervention were entered into a statistical calculator to test for significance and a table was created.

The researcher developed a student survey and the survey was conducted. The answers were tallied and analyzed.

Findings were shared with building principal and staff.

Treatment of Data

The tool used to analyze the data by the researcher was a statistical calculator (stat pak). This tool was used to test for significance and told the researcher the probability values of a t-test, given the t-value and the degrees of freedom.

Summary

The researcher gathered data from Onalaska Elementary Schools 2008/2009 second grade class. The students were given a pre test in September and a post test in December. The researcher chose to do an experimental research study with the same group of students. After the assessment scores were recorded the researcher created graphs and entered the data into a statistical calculator and a t test for independent samples was conducted.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

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

Description of the Environment

This project was delimited to three-second grade classes during the 2008 -2009- school year. This project took place at Onalaska Elementary School in Onalaska Washington. The material used to collect the data were DIBELS which was administered individually, and measured early literacy development.

The researcher selected students from the second grade classes who fell into the “some risk” category. The students were from lower to middle class families who lived in rural community about 20 miles from Centralia. Although family culture is mixed the bulk of students, both male and female, come from mostly two parent households.

The ethnic diversity of the population was 81.9% Caucasian, 8.2% Hispanic, 1% African-American, and 6.7% Native Indian. 51.7% of the population received free or reduced priced meals.

Hypothesis

Second grade students who are given Read Naturally intervention daily will show more significant improvement than those not receiving the Read Naturally program as measured by DIBELS.

Null Hypothesis

Second grade students who are given Read Naturally intervention daily will not show more improvement than those not receiving the Read Naturally program as measured by DIBELS.

Results of the Study

There was not significant evidence that either supported the hypothesis nor rejected the null hypothesis. However, Read Naturally did increase the student scores more than those not receiving the intervention. A longer study, more time, and more

students might increase results.

Students receiving Read Naturally

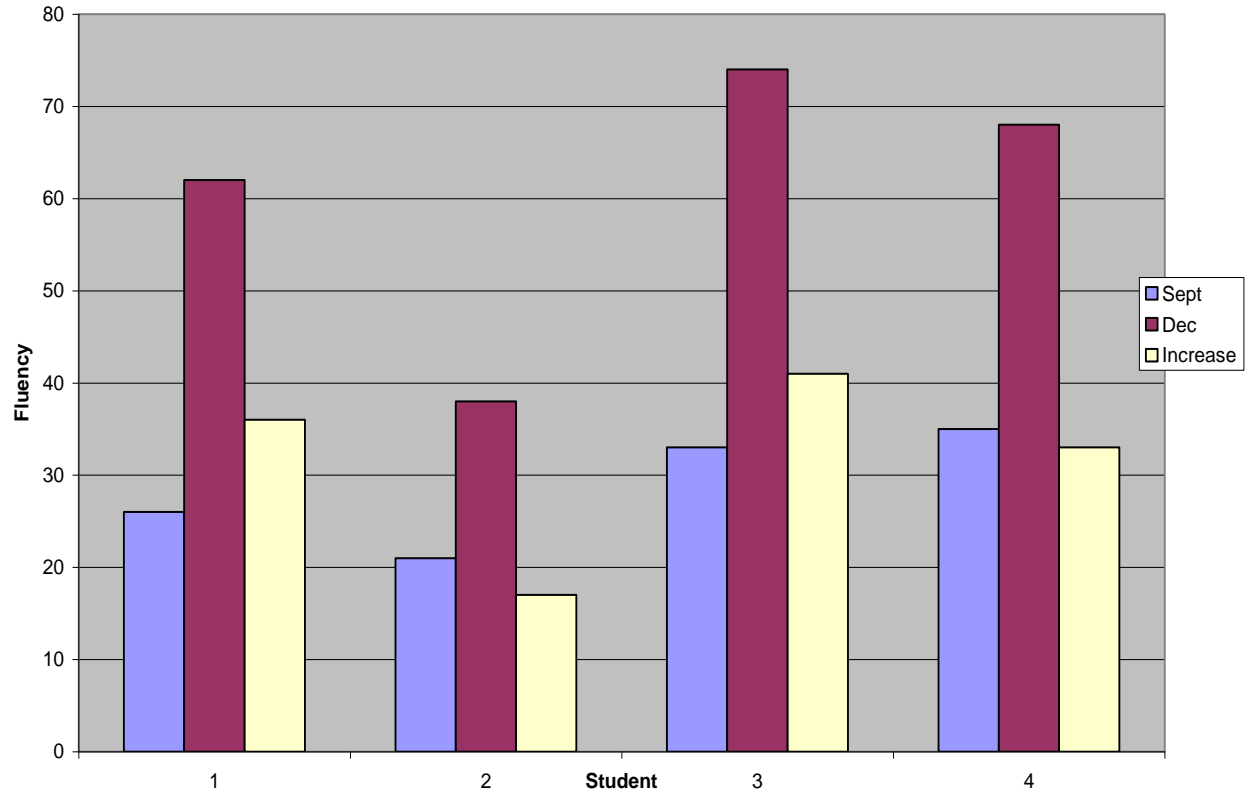


Figure 1

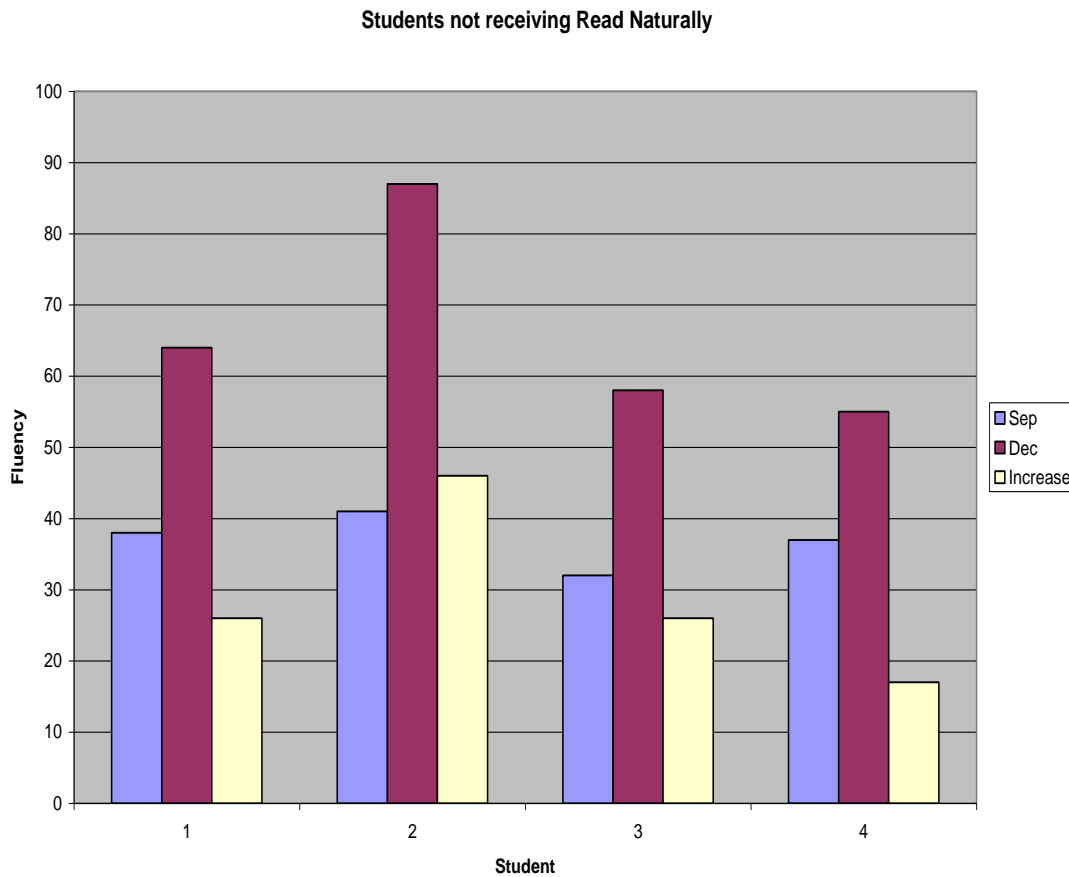


Figure 2

The data was entered into a stat pak and a t test was conducted to test for significance. With the degree of freedom 6 and a probability of .7399 a value of 2.00 needed to be exceeded to show significance. There was not significant evidence that neither supported the hypothesis nor rejected the null hypothesis. However, Read Naturally did increase the student scores more than those not receiving the intervention.

Findings

The researcher could not reject the null hypothesis nor support the hypothesis based on the data results. There was not significant evidence that neither supported the

hypothesis nor rejected the null hypothesis. However, Read Naturally did increase the student scores more than those not receiving the intervention. A longer study, more time, and more students might increase results.

Discussion

At the basic level, reading fluency refers to the ability to read text accurately, quickly, and with good expression so that time can be allocated to understanding what is read (Meyer & Felton, 1990).

Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the words, they can focus their attention on what the text means. Read Naturally is an intervention to help students achieve this level of fluency.

Summary

It was found that the hypothesis could not be supported nor could the null hypothesis be rejected. Read Naturally did increase the student scores more than those not receiving the intervention. A longer study, more time, and more students might increase results.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

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

Summary

The second grade team at Onalaska Elementary School was looking for the most effective method of improving student's fluency scores as measured by the Dynamic Indicators for Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Previous fluency tests indicated that a high number of students were in the "at risk" category. The researcher sought to conduct a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention Read Naturally.

The researcher reviewed several articles and background knowledge was gained on the importance of reading fluency.

After analyzing the data using a t test, it was found that there was not a significant change with the students receiving Read Naturally as an intervention.

Conclusions

The findings of this study were important because the researcher shared the results with the administration and staff. Having data supporting that more change came to

students receiving the intervention than not, will help staff/administration decide future interventions.

For this study to be more meaningful at Onalaska Elementary School the study should be conducted for a longer period of time and include more students.

Recommendations

After finding more improvement for the students involved in the Read Naturally intervention it is the recommendation that the school continues with the intervention. The researcher also recommends that the fluency rates continue to be closely monitored and the intervention selection be revisited as needed.

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Meyer, M. S. & Felton, R. H. (1999). Repeated reading to enhance fluency: Old approaches and new directions. Annals of Dyslexia, 49, 283-306.

Nathan and Stanovich 1991

Fluency: The Bridge from Decoding to Reading Comprehension
by John J. Pikulski, Ph.D., and David J. Chard, Ph.D.

<http://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/reading101/fluency>

Jan Hasbrouck (2006), Understanding and Assessing Fluency

Pikulski, J.J. and Chard, D.J. (2005). Fluency: Bridge between decoding and comprehension. *The Reading Teacher*, 58(6), 510-519.

Appendix A

Jamie Niemi has permission to conduct the study *The Effects of Read Naturally Intervention on Student Fluency*, at Onalaska Elementary School.

Administration Approval,

_____, administrator,

Taj Jenson

