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Evaluation of Reading Achievement for Students of The Carroll County Public School System's 2006 Summer Enrichment Program

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Evaluation of Reading Achievement for Students of
The Carroll County Public School System's
2006 Summer Enrichment Program

Thesis Submitted to:
Marshall University Graduate College

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Education Specialist,
School Psychology

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March 2007

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Approved on _____.

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2007

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of guided reading interventions with regard to individual reading achievement for elementary aged students who participated in a five-week summer enrichment program. Using a baseline and intervention design, a curriculum-based measure model of assessment was administered to each student. The analysis of data from the curriculum based measurement allowed for the implementation of guided reading interventions, which targeted increased student reading abilities for the chronological time period of July 5, 2006 through August 3, 2006. The results indicated that student academic deficits were not sufficiently impacted to normalize students to grade level expectation. The curriculum based measurement model of assessment procedures and guided reading interventions are described in detail and practical implications are discussed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who have encouraged and supported me during the completion of this thesis and my graduate studies. First and foremost I would like to thank Dr. Fred Jay Krieg for his ongoing support, guidance, and advice throughout the past couple of years. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Sandra Stroebel and Dr. Bruce P. Mortenson for their expertise and participation on my thesis committee. I deeply appreciate being provided the opportunity to participate in the CCPS Summer Enrichment Program and working directly with Dr. Bruce P. Mortenson. The experience and knowledge I gained is invaluable. Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Brian, for supporting me once again as I embarked on another educational pursuit. Without your patience, personal sacrifices, and encouragement I would not be where I am today. Thank you for everything.

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Introduction to Literature Review

Research shows that students across the nation are graduating high school with inferior reading skills. Reading is an important skill, necessary for survival in schools, and in adult life as well. Effective reading instruction in the early grade can prevent reading difficulties for many children who might otherwise be referred for remedial or special education services, or who might experience difficulty with remediation in later grades, even with the assistance of special education services (USDE, 2003). Reading instruction and reading outcomes have become a top priority in the United States, due to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, No Child Left Behind.

In keeping up with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) school districts are accountable for student academic achievement and progress. Although NCLB focuses on accountability for student achievement, many school systems are failing to find interventions, which improve student achievement, and more specifically assist struggling readers.

Early intervention is one of the most powerful ways to narrow the achievement gap. Through informal and formal classroom assessments teachers can design customized intervention strategies for young students who struggle to learn how to read. With the overwhelming demand from NCLB for accountability of all student achievement, school personnel are being forced to look closer at the advantages of early identification of potential students who may lack reading mastery. Assessment and early intervention of younger students who are at risk for potential reading problems affords these students the opportunity to receive reading interventions at a younger age, which might not have been detected until a much later time, and may have resulted in a missed opportunity for student success.

No Child Left Behind

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2003), *No Child Left Behind* puts the focus on instruction and methods that have been proven through scientific based reading research. Under NCLB, each state must measure every public school student's progress in reading and math in each of grades three through grade eight, and at least once during grades ten through twelve. The purpose of this monitoring is to close the achievement gap while focusing on four common sense pillars, which include: *accountability for results; an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research; expanded parental options; and expanded local control and flexibility* (USDE, 2003.)

Response to Intervention

All students are expected to become successful readers. However, many students require more effort and academically engaged time to make sufficient enough progress to keep up with their peers. In the past, special education focused on separating special need children and using specific instructional strategies that attempted to remediate their deficiencies. Recent research has focused on the Response to Intervention (RTI) model, which provides for all students to be general education students first (Tier I). Those students who require additional intervention in order to keep up with their peers are provided more academically engaged time at Tiers II and III. This model, the acceleration model, enables slower students to have additional time to keep up with their peers.

The legislation requires that at all tiers of instruction, scientific based reading research (SBRR) methods be utilized. The RTI approach requires teachers to identify which students need what type of instruction (data based decision making) and to progress monitor student achievement. Progress monitoring student achievement allows teachers to determine on a regular basis, which students are responding to the

intervention, modifications that may be needed, and lastly to identify students who need further support services from the school.

In addition to the NCLB act, the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act in 2004 (IDEIA 2004) follows in the footsteps of NCLB by emphasizing that students are general education students first. IDEIA 2004 “legitimizes” the use of RTI in working with special education students, including the use of RTI to identify special education students. The goals of RTI include the practice of: 1) providing high quality instruction/intervention matched to student needs and 2) using learning rates over time and level of performance to 3) make important educational decisions (NASDE and CASE). Therefore, RTI plays a key role in identifying and working with struggling learners in any setting, and helps educators make better decisions about which children should be referred for additional target supports (NASDE and CASE).

IDEIA 2004’s focus on RTI provides the opportunity for educators to have a major impact on how student’s progress is monitored in the general education environment. The expectation that all children can learn requires a commitment to the belief that everyone is responsible for creating conditions that support student learning. This commitment requires the transformation of current practice in order to create conditions that support student learning, and abandon those practices that inhibit student learning (NASDE and CASE). Through the implementation of RTI, one must plan, implement, assess, and act.

RTI: Tiered Levels of Intervention

Implementation of RTI requires the use of a tiered model of intervention. Tier I is the foundation and contains the core curriculum (both academic and behavioral). The core curriculum should be effective for approximately 80% -85% of the students. If a

significant number of students are not successful in the core curriculum, RTI suggests that instructional variables, curricular variables and structural variables (e.g., building schedules) should be examined to determine where instruction needs to be strengthened, while at the same time addressing the learning needs of the students not being successful. Tier I interventions focus on group interventions for all students and are characterized as preventive and proactive.

Tier II interventions serve approximately 15% of students. Interventions are targeted group interventions. Students at Tier II continue to receive Tier I instruction in addition to Tier II interventions. Based on performance data, students move fluidly between Tier I and Tier II. Tier III serves approximately 5% of students. Students at this tier receive intensive, individual interventions. Once students reach target skills levels, the intensity and/or level of support is adjusted. These students also move fluidly among and between the tiers (NASDE and CASE).

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is a curriculum based measurement that can be used to identify students with literacy difficulties and help teachers to know when to intervene to prevent those difficulties from escalating throughout the student's academic career (Good & Kaminski, 1996). The testing measures range from Kindergarten through sixth grade. DIBELS assess students in the areas of Phonological Awareness (Initial Sound Fluency and Phoneme Segmentation Fluency), Alphabetic principle (Nonsense Word Fluency), and Fluency with Connected Text (Oral Reading Fluency). The measures are brief, lasting only about one minute each (dibels.uoregon.edu).

DIBELS appear to be very helpful in setting goals for students and helping to adjust interventions as necessary to help students reach maximum potential on their

performance charts. Having this tool to guide learning strategies is a great example of a dynamic tool that can be applied to all classroom situations to monitor progress.

Curriculum based measures, which DIBELS is an example of, are much more time, cost, and resource efficient. As a result, they are becoming much more popular for school psychologists and teachers alike to use in estimating student status and growth (Roberts, Good, & Corcoran, 2005).

System to Enhance Educational Performance

DIBELS seem to be assisting in student development and growth, giving educators and school psychologists the assistance needed in order to monitor skill levels and implement new interventions that are conducive to the advancement of student learning. To advance the effectiveness of interventions, there needs to be continued effort to create interventions that influence specific factors and pathways regarding student reading skills. One intervention tool that is regarded as an efficient model for determining student's unique needs and appropriate interventions is known as the System to Enhance Educational Performance (STEEP).

According to Joseph Witt, Ph.D., the author of the STEEP system, STEEP is an intervention strategy used to deliver the appropriate level of instruction based on the teacher's determination of the student's needs. As an intervention component of the RTI model, teachers use curriculum based measurement data from DIBELS, classroom observations, and hands on experiences to pick the appropriate level of student instruction (isteeep.com). The process provides for integrated services between general and special education because, children who fail to respond to intervention may be considered for special education eligibility (www.joewitt.org).

Following the guidelines of STEEP, once it is decided that a student needs an intervention, the next question is what type of intervention do they need. The use of

intervention strategies is needed improve reading skills. It is necessary to use intervention strategies that can easily be integrated into the classroom or implemented with the RTI process.

Guided Reading

Guided Reading is an essential part of a comprehensive reading program (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996). The major purposes of guided reading are to develop reading fluency strategies and to move students toward independent reading. The strategy centers on developing the child's ability to successfully process text with limited teacher guidance and interaction (Reutzel and Cooter, 2004).

The student's are grouped according to their reading skill. Guided reading groups typically include four levels of reading development: a) early emergent, b) emergent, c) early fluency, and d) fluency. Membership in a guided reading group changes as student's progress during the year (Reutzel and Cooter, 2004).

Two types of effective guided oral reading are repeated readings with a peer and reading with the aid of a teacher. In each case, the student has ample practice re-reading texts for fluency and for getting feedback from a more fluent reader (Reutzel and Cooter, 2004).

Guided reading uses small-group instruction and developmentally appropriate books called leveled readers. Before a guided reading program is begun, the teacher must place students in the appropriate guided reading group based on DIBELS data. A child is placed in a small group with other children of similar ability and given a developmentally appropriate book to read. Each session, 15 to 25 minutes, begins with introducing a book, eliciting prior knowledge, and building background. The teacher monitors and guides the reading of each child as needed. Discussion of the book follows, and the child keeps the book to read repeatedly.

Purpose

The purpose of this program evaluation was to determine whether or not a brief guided reading intervention, based on curriculum-based assessments would improve student reading success. The program being evaluated is the Guided Reading Tier II intervention in a five-week summer enrichment program.

To measure the student's response to this intervention, TIER II guided reading sessions were administered. Additionally, a DIBELS oral reading fluency progress-monitoring probe was administered each week to track progress. The guided reading intervention probe was determined to have been successful if the student performed in the instructional range, on grade level, on the DIBELS oral reading fluency curriculum based measurement following the guided reading intervention.

Methods

Participants and Program Description:

The sample included 18 male and 1 female elementary aged students who had been identified as academically and behaviorally at risk by their home schools. All nineteen students participating in this non-biased study were referred to the summer program by their respective home schools. Additionally, the student population were of Caucasian race and consisted of varying emotional, social, intellectual, academic achievement levels, and socio-economic statuses. The program began on July 5, 2006 and ended on August 3, 2006, for a total of 19 instructional days. The program was an all-inclusive, activity based educational opportunity for students finishing Kindergarten through the fourth grade.

The program consisted of a student to adult ratio of 2:1. There were two classrooms in which the nineteen students were divided, based on their respective grade levels. These groupings were as follows: Kindergarten through 2nd grade, and 3rd through 4th grade. This resulted in 9 students in the K-2 class and 10 students in the 3-4 grade class. Each classroom consisted of five school psychology graduate students and one classroom teacher. The school psychology graduate students collaborated with the classroom teacher using effective research based practices, including team teaching and skill grouping, which allowed for differentiated instruction within the reading block.

Students in the 3-4 grade classroom were provided Tier II interventions of guided reading in an effort to assist with increasing their fluency. Due to these students being the recipients of the Tier II guided reading intervention, the 10 students in the 3-4 grade level classroom are the representative sample of this program evaluation.

Of the 10 students who were the representative sample, two did not have regular attendance to the program and thus, were not considered in the results for this study.

Additionally, three students from the remaining eight achieved at or above grade level during the initial DIBELS ORF measure, and subsequently did not qualify or receive Tier II Intervention in the area of guided reading. Therefore, these three students were excluded from the study as well. Thus, the results of this study are based on the remaining five students in the 3-4 grade level classroom.

Parental permission was received and parent/student intakes were completed with each student prior to the first day of the program. Parents provided written consent for their child to participate in the program and to participate in evaluations, which included formal and informal assessments (Appendix A).

Instruments

In order to obtain data on individual student reading levels and achievement, Curriculum Based Measurement probes (DIBELS) were administered class wide in the area of reading. During the administration of the DIBELS, oral reading fluency scores were obtained to assess the student's performance relative to their classmates and relative to their current grade reading level. When the student reached mastery range, the next level of DIBELS oral reading fluency progress monitoring probes were administered, thus assisting in tracking the student's growth until the student mastered that reading probe, or until the program concluded.

Oral reading fluency probes were scored as words read correctly per minute (wcpm). The instructional standard applied for reading was 110 wcpm for grade 3, and 118 wcpm for grade 4. This is the standard administrative procedure set forth by the Administration and Scoring Guide for the DIBELS 6th Edition (see Appendix B).

Procedures

During the performance/skill deficit assessment, the school psychologist graduate student provided the student with a copy of a guided reading intervention probe that had previously been administered to the student. Students were told they could earn a reward of their choice from the treasure chest by “beating their last score”. The probe was then re-administered. This component required no more than 10 minutes per assessment.

Student’s whose performance improved to the instructional range, as indicated on the DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency benchmark, did not participate in further assessment. Following the class-wide screening of oral reading fluency, students that were identified with a skill deficit in the area of oral reading fluency, began receiving Tier II Interventions from the school psychology graduate student who implemented scripted guided reading intervention probes.

Data Collection Procedures

Students exhibiting skill deficits in oral reading fluency participated in daily guided reading interventions performed by the classroom teacher. Additionally, a standard guided reading intervention probe continued to be applied individually to each student with skill deficit by a school psychology graduate student. The school psychologist graduate student worked individually with the student for approximately 15 minutes, applying the guided reading protocol based intervention at the student’s instructional range.

The guided reading protocol based interventions (Appendix C) shared basic components of modeling, guided practice with immediate error correction (to improve accuracy), choral reading, independent timed practice (to build fluency), and the opportunity to earn a reward for “beating the last highest score”. The interventions were designed to produce evidence for treatment integrity. The school psychologist graduate

student collected the oral reading fluency intervention data daily, quantifying two critical variables: the student's performance on a novel, instructional-level probe of the target skill and a novel, criterion-level probe of the target skill.

The purpose of the brief intervention was to measure the student's response to the guided reading intervention probe. To measure the student's response to this intervention 12 to 14 consecutive integrity sessions were required. Additionally, a DIBELS oral reading fluency progress-monitoring probe was administered each week to track progress. The guided reading intervention probe was determined to have been successful if the student performed in the instructional range, on grade level, on the DIBELS oral reading fluency curriculum based measurement following the guided reading intervention.

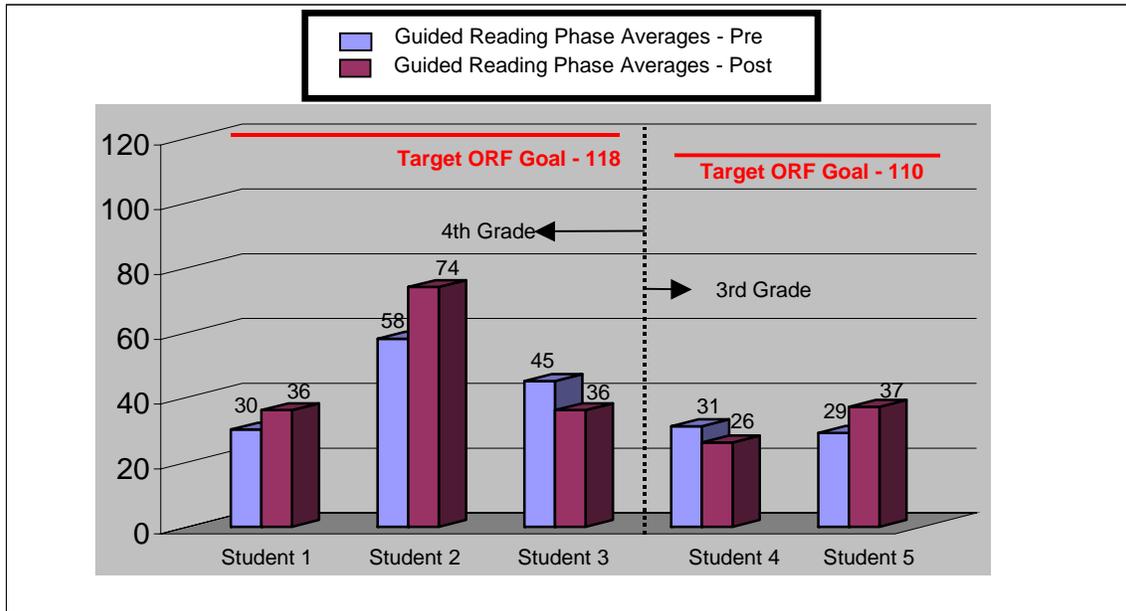
The DIBELS oral reading fluency progress monitoring data was also examined on a weekly basis to ensure that reading growth was occurring and to determine when to increase the difficulty level of the materials used during intervention sessions.

Results

The data from this study indicates in Table 1 (3rd and 4th Grade participants) that student academic deficits in the area of oral reading fluency were identified and interventions were implemented but the impact was not sufficient to normalize student responding to grade level expectations. This result was evidenced by no student achieving 110 wcpm for grade 3 or 118 wcpm for grade 4, as set forth as the instructional standard according to DIBELS Administration and Scoring Guide 6th Edition.

Additionally, the data collected from the attendance records and reading scores, indicate that regular attendance (those who missed two days or less), did positively influence student success in the CCPS program.

Table 1



Discussion

This study examined the efficacy of guided reading interventions with regard to individual reading achievement for elementary aged students who participated in a five-week summer enrichment program. This evaluator desired to determine if the participating students made academic gains in the area of oral reading fluency when provided Tier II guided reading interventions.

During the performance/skill deficit assessment of oral reading fluency, the school psychologist graduate student provided the student with a copy of a guided reading intervention probe that had previously been administered to the student. Following the performance/skill deficit assessment, students that were identified with a skill deficit in oral reading fluency, began receiving Tier II Interventions from the school psychology graduate student who implemented scripted guided reading intervention probes.

The purpose of the brief intervention was to measure the student's response to the guided reading intervention probe. To measure the student's response to this intervention 12 to 14 consecutive integrity sessions were required. Additionally, a DIBELS oral reading fluency progress-monitoring probe was administered each week to track progress. The guided reading intervention probe was determined to have been successful if the student performed in the instructional range, on grade level, on the DIBELS oral reading fluency curriculum based measurement following the guided reading intervention.

The results of this study indicated that student academic deficits in the area of oral reading fluency were identified, but that the guided reading interventions were not sufficient to normalize student responding to grade level expectations. These academic deficits were assessed and intervened on but proved to be more resistant to change.

These results could be due to the small sample of students that was obtained. Another variable that may have affected the results of this study is the limited amount of time within which this study was conducted, and also the attendance rate of the students.

The data collected from the attendance records and reading scores, indicate that regular attendance and those with days missed did influence student success during the CCPS Summer Enrichment Program. The results of this study are congruent with the literature which indicates that students who attend school regularly should perform better on tests and daily schoolwork, due to the fact that they are present for learning and have access to the available interventions needed to assist them in developing their reading skills. Further exploration into attendance rates also indicates that the students who did attend the program on a daily basis, and with fewer than 2 absences, did experience gains in their level of reading achievement.

Qualitatively, I have followed up on the students involved in the CCPS Summer Enrichment Program. Results from their receiving teachers show that students who did participate in the program, with regular attendance, have not declined in the area of reading. The student's reading skills have either stayed the same or are showing improvement. This information reinforces the literature research, which highlights the importance of providing targeted group interventions to students classified as "at risk" (Grimes and Kurns, 2003), and also supports the notion that students who participated in the summer enrichment program benefited from the targeted guided reading interventions, and avoided experiencing a decline in reading skills over the summer.

Further, the DIBELS benchmarks were conducted the first and final week of the program, when students were most likely experiencing personal anxiety and stress, and preparing mentally for the final day of the program.

Another problematic aspect of this study is the fact that interventions were limited to fifteen minutes when the research indicates that thirty minutes is the most effective time frame to use with Tier II interventions. This limitation could not be overcome due to limited scheduling time available. Another variable that may have affected the results of this study is the limited amount of time within which this study was conducted and also the attendance rate of the students.

In conclusion, if replication of this study were to be conducted it would be beneficial to look into mandating student attendance during the enrichment program. Additionally, it would be equally important to compare and contrast the student participants' progress during the beginning, middle, and end of the program. By gathering data on student progress at the beginning, middle, and end this would lend support to reading achievements, determine if a relationship exists between attendance and reading achievement, as well as provide additional data as to how the students are progressing.

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Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT for P.R.I.D.E. SUMMER PROGRAM

INFORMATION

Thank you for accepting the invitation for your child to take part in the summer program this year. Throughout the P.R.I.D.E. Summer Program, your child will receive tailored academic instruction, social skills training, group counseling services, and field trips. Experienced CCPS teachers will be providing your child with high quality academic instruction to supplement what has been accomplished in the classrooms during the school year. Additionally, school psychology graduate students will assist in the classroom to provide behavioral and/or academic skills assessments and counseling services.

In order to determine your child's learning and behavioral strengths and needs, several forms of assessment will be conducted. These will include, but are not limited to, classroom observations, curriculum-based assessment, completion of behavioral rating scales (by parent and teacher) and targeted interventions designed to improve academic or social emotional functioning. In addition, we are interested in getting feedback from each child's parent or guardian throughout the program. Hence, initial interviews and helpful workshops for parent education are offered during the P.R.I.D.E. Summer Program.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information obtained prior to and throughout the program will remain strictly confidential. Information will be stored securely and will be made available only to the appropriate personnel. Your child's participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your child from this program at any time.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Bruce P. Mortenson (410) 704-3204 or Dr. Mike McGrew (410) 751-3109.

I have reviewed the above information. With my signature, I hereby give consent for my child to participate in the P.R.I.D.E. Summer Program. The program has been explained to me and my questions and concerns have been addressed. I have been told that the information obtained may not be shared with anyone other than those associated with the summer program and this information will remain confidential.

Student's Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Dr. Bruce P. Mortenson

Date

Appendix B

DIBELS Benchmark Goals & Timelines

Time	DIBELS measure	Minimal goal for reading success	Cut-off for needing intensive support
Winter, K	Initial sound fluency	25-35 s.p.m.	Below 10
Spring, K	Phoneme segmentation fluency	35-45 s.p.m.	Below 10
Winter, 1 st grade	Non-word reading fluency	50 w.p.m.	Below 30
Spring, 1 st grade	Oral reading fluency	40 w.p.m.	Below 10
Spring, 2 nd grade	Oral reading fluency	90 w.p.m.	Below 50
Spring, 3 rd grade	Oral reading fluency	110 w.p.m.	Below 70
Spring, 4 th grade	Oral reading fluency	118 w.p.m.	Below 92
Spring, 5 th grade	Oral reading fluency	128 w.p.m.	Below 100
Spring, 6 th grade	Oral reading fluency	135 w.p.m.	Below 110

Source: *DIBELS: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, 6th edition, Administration and Scoring Guide*, Ronald H. Good III and Ruth A. Kaminski, University of Oregon

Appendix C

Student Copy

Lesson: 7a

Lisa loved to run. She ran everywhere she went. She ran to school and home again. She raced all her friends and always won. She was the fastest kid in her school. She loved to feel the wind on her face as she ran fast. One day, Lisa decided to see if she could run all the way to the park without stopping. She tied her shoes on tight and took a deep breath. She ran as fast as she could. She was tired, but did not stop until she saw the trees in the park. She made it! She sat under a tree to rest happily.

Source: Witt, Joe. Retrieved December 6, 2006. <http://joewitt.org>