

The Effectiveness of Guided Reading Instruction and Students Reading Comprehension

by

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Abstract

The descriptive study tracked student performance after interacting with small-guided reading. The participants included four third grade students receiving guided reading instruction in a general education setting. The instrument used was Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment (F & P). Findings show trends of small grouping instruction affecting students read comprehension. In fall 2018, two students read a level I (end of 1st grade) and the other two students reading level J (end of 2nd grade). In winter 2019, two of the students had improved to the 2nd grade level and the other two students to the 3rd grade.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

According to Iaquina (2006), “Research conducted [in] the past two decades has produced extensive results demonstrating that children who get off to a poor start in reading rarely catch up” (p. 413). Therefore, a guided reading or small group, differentiated, instructional approach, is essential to meet the needs for all students. The essential goal of guided reading is to teach students reading strategies to help enhance the student’s reading comprehension. In order for guided reading to be successful, the classroom environment should be inviting and engaging to help build a community of readers. According to Nelson and Manset-Williamson (2006), “...students with reading disabilities...[or] the older the struggling reader, the more the struggle will be interpreted as reflection low ability with the child unmotivated to learn to read” (p. 213-214). In order to fill in the gap, reading interventions are recommended to help increase students’ reading development.

As a special education teacher, the researcher became interested in this study to find ways to increase comprehension with all students, including general and special education and English Language Learners (ELLs), and have subsequently learned that poor readers have developed over the past two decades and a variety of students are playing catch up. Guided reading is an effective way for teachers to help students, however; for the instruction to be taught with fidelity, Fountas-Pinnell (2012) suggests, “...our practices in an enduring way, we need to change our understanding. If we bring our old thinking to a new practice, the rationales may not fit” (p. 271). Based on research,

teachers tend to utilize modeling for struggling students, which result in minimal independent time. Teachers need to follow the explicit and implicit learning styles in order for the approaches for struggling readers to be effective. In order for students to have success with guided reading instruction, the students need to be engaged with instruction in order to display academic growth (Wall, 2014).

The researcher's school has an increasing number of students reading significantly below grade level across all grade levels. The administration declared that all teachers must have at least 5 to 6 students for small group instruction. There are at least three to four teachers per grade level for guided reading instruction (general educator, special educator, reading specialist and Paraeducators). Teachers are following the Level-Literacy Intervention lesson formats for two-day lessons and using the Fountas and Pinnell progression with reading behaviors. The researcher took an interest in guided reading instruction to determine if a student's comprehension and reading level will increase.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of guided reading instruction and comprehension.

Operational Definitions

The variable guided instruction implemented will be examined in small group instruction and are based on students' independent reading level and reading comprehension. Reading comprehension was measured with Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review will discuss the importance of guided reading and the increase of student reading comprehension. The first section will explain the importance of guided reading instruction. Section two focuses on reading strategies to help increase students' comprehension: scaffolding instruction, reading recovery strategies, implicit and explicit instruction. Finally, section three will give the positive and negative outcomes on guided reading instruction.

Why Is Guided Reading Important?

According to Iaquina (2006), "Research conducted [in] the past two decades has produced extensive results demonstrating that children who get off to a poor start in reading rarely catch up" (p. 413). A guided reading is small group, differentiated, instructional approach to meet the instructional needs of all students. The essential goal of guided reading is to teach students reading strategies to help enhance the student's reading comprehension. In order for guided reading to be successful, the classroom environment should be inviting and engaging to help build a community of readers.

According to Nelson and Manset-Williamson (2006), "...students with reading disabilities...[or] the older the struggling reader, the more the struggle will be interpreted as reflection low ability with the child unmotivated to learn to read" (p. 213-214). In order to fill in the gap, reading interventions are recommended to help increase students' reading development. According to the Nelson study, *The Impact of Explicit, Self-Regulatory Reading Comprehension Strategy Instruction on the Reading-Specific Self-Efficacy, Attribution, and Affect of Students with Reading Disabilities*, 20 students

entering grades 4 to 8 indicated positive results with explicit and self-regulatory intervention instruction. These results display instead students with learning disabilities are capable of closing the gap with reading.

Correspondingly, in order for guided reading to be effective, the teacher's role in guided reading includes modeling and explaining strategies. In order for the teaching to be successful, the teacher needs to explicitly teach the instruction by selecting an appropriate text and then following a concrete lesson plan: introducing the text, reading the text, discussing the text, and teaching a strategy related to the text (Iaquinta, 2006). Bookrooms include books at the student's instructional level to provide differentiated instruction for small-guided reading groups. Running records are implemented in order to monitor the student's instructional levels and growth (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Effective Guided Reading Strategies To Increase Students Reading Comprehension

In order for guided reading to display positive results in reading comprehension there are a series of strategies: scaffolding instruction, technology, and direct and explicit instruction.

Scaffolding Instruction

According to Ankrum, Genestbel and Castro (2014), "...the careful guidance of a teacher enables the learning to complete a task that would otherwise be impossible" (p. 40). Scaffolding instruction helps support students learning with complicated tasks in order to establish mastery. Students that need high support require more assistance rather than low support which features minimal adult assistance. The goal of scaffolding instruction is to provide students with adjusted adult support to aid the needs for all readers. Scaffolding instruction is based on universal language and small group

conversation, which can result in meaningful and high order thinking to help enhance reading comprehension development

Direct and Explicit Instruction

Struggling readers have positive results with direct and explicit instruction mainly due to student-teacher interaction and guidance. According to Ripley, Blair, and Nicholas (2009), “Explicit/direct instruction has been shown to be efficacious in learning and teaching the major components of the reading process—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension” (p. 126). In order for direct and explicit instruction to be effective there needs to be guidance to student learning, modeling, and conversation.

For instruction to be delivered successfully, teachers follow the format of: review and check previous work, present new material, guidance, feedback and corrections, independent practice, and review student progress. Additionally, students need the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the strategies that are scaffold by students’ academic abilities based on teachers running records and observational notes. The goal is for students to use the strategies independently in order to display reading achievements.

The Outcomes On Guided Reading Instruction

Positive

Research indicates that guided reading is successful in the primary and also intermediate grades. According to Brown, Danvers and Doran (2016), “...the successful implementation of using guided reading questions in [the] intermediate-level accounting course, it is likely that similar results would be attained in other courses as well” (p. 269).

Research has discovered that a combination of both guided reading and explicit instruction has displayed success towards student reading development (Nelson & Manset-Williamson, 2006).

Negative

Guided reading is an effective way to teach students, however; in order for the instruction to be taught with fidelity, Fountas-Pinnell (2012) suggests, “ To change our practices in an enduring way, we need to change our understanding. If we bring our old thinking to a new practice, the rationales may not fit” (p. 271). Based on research, teachers tend to utilize modeling for struggling students, which results in minimal independent time. Teachers need to follow the explicit and implicit learning styles in order for the approaches for struggling readers to be effective. In order for students to have success with guided reading instruction, the students need to be engaged with instruction in order to display academic growth (Wall, 2014)

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this study is to determine if the implementation of small-guided reading instruction will have an impact on students reading comprehension.

Design

The descriptive study measured student performance after interacting with small-guided reading instruction on reading comprehension. The study compared scores from the beginning, middle, and end of the academic year with Fountas and Pinnell. The subjects received guided reading instruction based on the students' instructional reading levels based on the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment. A descriptive study was implemented due to the small sample size.

Participants

The participants included four third grade students receiving guided reading instruction in a general education setting. In the group there were two male students and two female students. The group contained 75% African American students and 25% other. Two students were on Individualized Education Plans (IEP) with a range of disabilities from other health impairments of autism. One of the students was an English Language Learner that is bilingual and in an English speaking environment for two years.

Instrument

The instrument used was Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment (F & P). The benchmark was administered to students in a one-on-one scenario to establish the students' independent, instructional, and frustration level. There were two benchmark assessment kits for grades K-2, levels A-N and grades 3-8, Levels L-Z that included

fiction and nonfiction texts for each level. The data was collected with a running record sheet to measure student-reading behaviors with reading accuracy (percent), fluency (score of 0-3), comprehension and an optional written response section. F & P has been required for Harford County Public Schools for grades K-5 as a dependable measure for students' reading level. F & P is shown to be reliable due to the Leveled Literacy system, an intervention that aligns with the F & P assessment from levels A-Z with a number of system kits. The system kits contain lessons that include phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency vocabulary, comprehension and writing with all levels A-Z. The validity of the F & P system gives an outcome of the student's current instructional level for reading (Ransford-Kaldon et al., 2010).

Procedure

Baseline data was collected with the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment to identify the students' current instructional reading level. Data based on students reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension was analyzed to develop the guided reading group. The group had met for four to five times a week for 15 to 20 minutes. Each guided lesson took approximately two days.

On the first day of instruction, the students' were independently reading the guided reading text and/or choice picture book or chapter books for at least 20 minutes. During guided instruction, the students' discussed unfamiliar words using context clues to determine meaning. Then students answered and discussed implicit questions—within the text (e.g. sequence of events, problem/solution, facts) and explicit questions—Beyond and About the Text (characters feelings, main idea, cause and effect, inference) and the students' data was collected based on the conversations in the small group.

On the second day of instruction, the students reread the text and were asked to take notes related to the common core standard. The lesson consisted of a third grade Common Core standard with guided questions and prompting. Later, during group, the students reviewed the Common Core standard discussed during whole group. The students turned and talked with partners while the strategy was being taught in-group and data was collected based on conversations. If the strategy was new, then the teacher modeled and guided the instruction, but if the standard was familiar, the students used reading journals and created their own organizers to demonstrate understanding of the standard. The standard was taught for the remainder of the week to increase students' independence to demonstrate their understanding in whole and small group. This process was repeated for 36 weeks.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine if guided reading instruction would help improve students reading comprehension for four students.

Figure 1

Fountas and Pinnell Reading Yearly Data

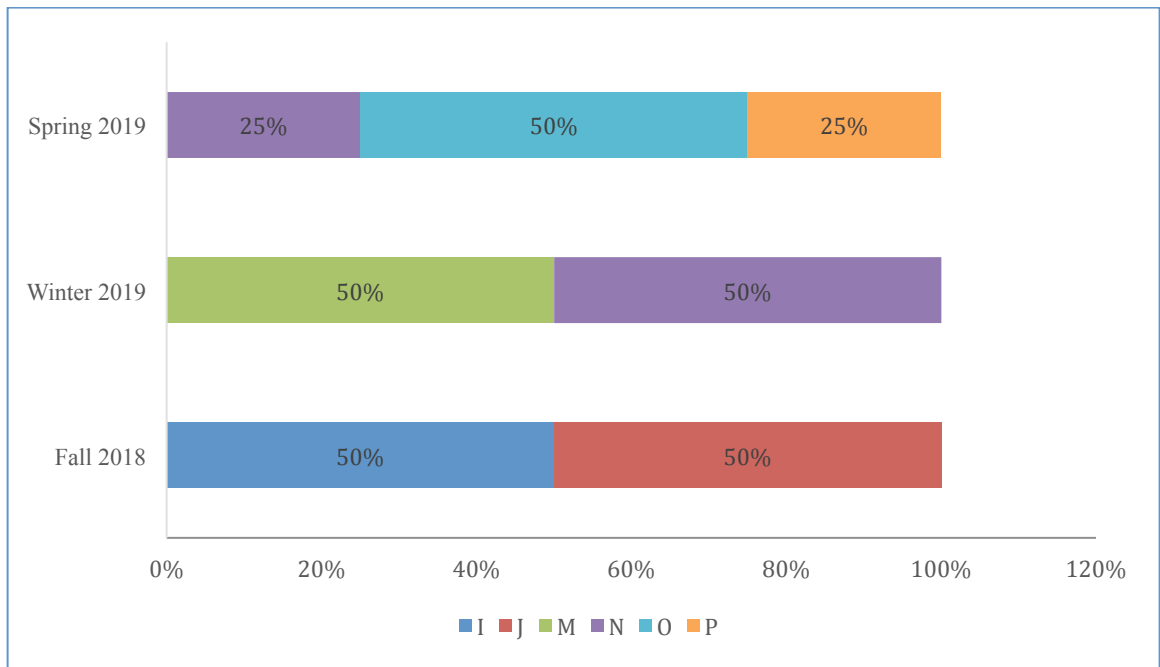


Figure 1 displays a summary of the four students' reading level results within a yearly timespan. In fall 2018, two of the students read at level I (end of 1st grade) and the other two students read at level J (beginning of 2nd grade). In winter 2019, two of the students read at level M (end of 2nd) and the other two students read level N (beginning of 3rd). In spring 2019, one of the students read level N (Beginning of 3rd grade), two students read level O (Middle of 3rd) and one student read level P (End of 3rd). Across the four students an increase in reading level was observed.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Implications of Results

This was a descriptive study. Findings show trends of small grouping instruction affecting students read comprehension. In fall 2018, two students read at level I (end of 1st grade) and the other two students reading level J (end of 2nd grade). In winter 2019, two of the students had improved to the 2nd grade level and the other two students to the 3rd grade. By the end of the study, all of the students had improved their reading ability with all of them reading at 3rd grade level.

Theoretical Consequence

The study suggests that small-guided reading groups had a beneficial impact on student's reading comprehension level.

As discussed in chapter 2, guided reading is an effective way for teachers to help students, however; in order for the instruction to be taught with fidelity, Fountas-Pinnell (2012) suggests, "...our practices in an enduring way, we need to change our understanding. If we bring our old thinking to a new practice, the rationales may not fit" (p. 271). Based on research, teachers tend to utilize modeling for struggling students, which result in minimal independent time. Teachers need to follow the explicit and implicit learning styles in order to help struggling readers to be effective. In order for students to have success with guided reading instruction, the students need to be engaged with instruction in order to display academic growth (Wall, 2014).

Also, guided reading shows effective results with specific strategies such as scaffolding instruction and direct and explicit instruction. For scaffolding instruction,

according to Ankrum, Genestbel and Castro (2014), "...the careful guidance of a teacher enables the learning to complete a task that would otherwise be impossible" (p. 40). Scaffolding instruction helps support students learning with complicated tasks in order to establish mastery. With direct and explicit instruction, according to Ripley, Blair and Nicholas (2009), "Explicit/direct instruction has been shown to be efficacious in learning and teaching the major components of the reading process—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension" (p. 126). In order for direct and explicit instruction to be effective there needs to be guidance to student learning, modeling, and conversation. The results of this study provide support of these theories.

Threats to Validity

While this study exhibits positive results, the study does represent some threats of validity. The sample size of the small-guided reading group consisted of four students. A larger sample size would provide a wide range of results in order to compare with the population.

Also, the four students in the study were reading below grade level expectations. Having a larger sample size would provide information to determine if guided reading instruction has valid beneficial effects on students who are reading below grade-level expectations.

There was a brief duration that impacted the results obtained. In the timeframe from of March to May, the school for grades 3-5 decided on PARCC boot camp lessons which includes strategies (i.e. highlighting, multiple choice, create a graphic organizer and answer PARCC written response). The students were not being exposed to instructional level text for about 3 months. Due to these lessons and PARCC testing for 4 weeks, the

students guided-reading instruction did not take place. These lessons resulted in students missing small-guided reading group instruction, thus, the lack of instruction may have impacted students spring results.

Connections to Existing Literature

This study is similar to another study that examined the relationship between with guided reading instruction and the positive effects of students reading instruction. Research indicates that guided reading is successful in the primary and also intermediate grades. According to Brown, Danvers and Doran (2016), "...the successful implementation of using guided reading questions in [the] intermediate-level accounting course, it is likely that similar results would be attained in other courses as well" (p. 269). Research has discovered that a combination of both guided reading and explicit instruction has displayed success towards student reading development (Nelson & Manset-Williamson, 2006).

Implications for Future Research

Future research should have a bigger sample size for guided reading instruction and reading comprehension. Having a larger sample size would provide information to determine if guided reading instruction has valid beneficial effects on students who are reading below grade-level expectations. Another idea to consider is following the student's year to year scores to see the students 'growth over the course of several years.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if guided reading instruction would help improve students reading comprehension. The study suggests that small-guided reading groups provided beneficial effects on students' reading comprehension level.

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