

Section I. Topic and Rationale

I. Topic: Guided Reading for Second Grade

II. Relevance of Topic: Reading unit test scores were analyzed at an elementary school using the Scott Foresman Reading unit tests. This is the first year the Scott Foresman reading series has been taught. The results of the reading unit test during the month of September 2001 showed that second grade scored a 79%. The results of the second reading test administered during the months of October and November 2001 revealed a score of 80% in second grade. The results of the third reading unit test during the month of December 2001 an average score of 78%. The 2001 Terra Nova Analysis showed the normal curve equivalents as second grade NCE 49%. The 2000 Terra Nova results in reading totals were second grade NCE 48.2%.

III. Rationale: To determine if children improve fluency by the implementation of guided reading strategies over a four week period. The school is implementing the Scott Foresman reading program which is taught using four areas of concentration. The purpose of guided reading is to enable children to use and develop strategies “on the run”. The idea is for the children to take on novel texts, read them at once with a minimum of support, and read many of them again and again for independence and fluency. The ultimate goal in guided reading is to help children learn how to use independent reading strategies successfully (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

IV. Organization

Week One: Individual Reading Inventories, begin strategies and begin running records. Selection tests will be given at the end of each week.

Week Two: Begin using various graphic organizers.

Week Three: Begin shared and independent reading and using leveled readers.

Week Four: Continue with all strategies and conduct unit test.

Section II. Questions and Research Support

Question: *How will the use of guided reading strategies improve a student's overall reading skills?*

Research Support:

David Booth is a renowned educator and the coordinator of elementary programs at OISE-University of Texas. He is the author of various books about all aspects of learning. Booth states that guided reading involves grouping children whom have similar reading abilities or who have a need to learn similar strategies for reading successfully. These guided reading groups are changing all the time depending on the needs of the child and the strategies they need to learn. This is different from the traditional reading groups that were formed after assessment at the beginning of the year and remained in those groups all year. The goal of guided reading is to have children read increasingly sophisticated text and develop strategies that they can use independently (Booth, 1998).

Activating prior knowledge reminds children of what they already know and helps them link what they know to new information (Booth, pg. 39).

Picture walk and predicting goes hand in hand with activating prior knowledge. Helping children make predictions before they read is a powerful strategy. Instead of the teacher setting the purpose and telling the children what to look for, the children set their own purpose (Cunningham, Hall & Sigmon, pg. 67).

Big books are oversized storybooks. These books offer the opportunity for sharing the print and illustrations with the whole group of children (Holdaway, 1979). In experiencing shared reading, the class first observes and listens to the text, and then they all read the same text together. The primary goal of shared reading is to enjoy reading selection and to participate as a member of a literate community (Booth, pg. 22).

Independent and paired reading is student-driven form of guided reading. After the teacher models a guided reading activity, the teacher could have the students work in pairs. The students will then work together to accomplish the objectives that the teacher and the students decide on. This

is a very powerful structure because it gives the responsibility for personal reading growth and autonomy to the students (Visser & Hangi, pg. 58).

A strategy that can be used during the guided reading lesson is the beach ball. The beach ball helps the children develop all the important concepts and helps them lead to the development of written story maps. The beach ball has a question printed on each colored stripe of the ball. The questions are:

What is the title and author?

Who are the main characters?

What is the setting?

What happened in the story?

How did it end?

What was your favorite part?

After reading the story, the teacher will begin tossing the ball to one of students. The student will then answer one of the questions on the ball. Then the student will pass it to another student so that they may answer a question. The beach ball is a favorite comprehension follow-up for the children in the classroom. When used regularly, the children begin to anticipate the answers they will give to the questions on the stripes that they read. These children have developed a clear sense of story structure and their comprehension (and memory!) increase as they organize what they are reading and thinking around those colored beach ball stripes (Cunningham & Allington, 1999).

The word wall serves as a foundation for spelling instruction and practice, using five words selected each week from a basal reading lesson or the children's writing. The words are posted and, as a whole group, the children practice reading and spelling them, with a daily chanting-clapping-writing routine. New words are added weekly, and a subset is practiced daily (Snow & Burns, p. 198).

Section III. Methods and Procedures

The research took place in a second grade classroom. There are 700 students representing a community with inner city problems ranging from substandard housing to high crime in the area. There were fifteen students involved in the reading inquiry. There were 8 boys and 7 girls. One of the boys is mainstreamed from special education. Data collection was done at the beginning of each week by using running records. Running records are a

tool for coding, scoring and analyzing a child's precise reading behaviors (Fountas & Pinnell, p. 89). Dr. Marie Clay, who is also known for founding the first grade reading tutorial program, Reading Recovery, created running records.

Section V. Results/Implications/Recommendations

The results of the guided reading strategies that were implemented over a four-week period are inclusive. It is felt that four weeks is not enough time to show the true benefits of guided reading and if guided reading improves a students' overall reading skills. In addition, guided reading centers only on a few concepts of reading. Results from this study will be reported by students' gain of words per minute, accuracy rates, and scores on the weekly selected tests.

To begin, running records were administered during the first week through the fourth week of this study. Each student read an unfamiliar text individually to the teacher. After each text was read, the students' word per minute rate was calculated. The result of those assessments is as follows: seven students gained an average of 8.4 words over the four week period, eight students lost an average of 6.6 words.

Accuracy rates were also calculated over the four-week period by means of running records. It was found that seven students gained an average of 2.57 points, six students decreased by 2.3 points and two students neither gained nor lost points.

The last assessment to be reported is the results of the weekly selection tests. It was found that five students gained an average of ten points on these tests. Four students scored an average 17.5 points lower than their first selection tests which was before the guided reading strategies were implemented. Lastly, five students neither gained nor lost points as a result of guided reading.

Also see charts attached.

Recommendations

1. Continue with guided reading strategies
2. Continue weekly running records and documentation
3. Ensure that all reading skills are taught not just guided reading.
4. A longer period than four weeks to do a complete study of the effectiveness of guided reading.

Bibliography

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