KANSAS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS (PDS) COALITION

A COLLECTION OF ACTION RESEARCH REPORTS

Baker University

Kansas State University

Emporia State University

Pittsburg State University

University of Kansas

University of Saint Mary

Washburn University

Wichita State University
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INTRODUCTION

Many colleges and universities across the country began Professional Development School (PDS) partnerships with K12 schools in the mid to late 90’s. The idea of PDS partnerships grew out of a concern about the intense criticism of teacher training institutions and student achievement in K12 schools. The Holmes Group, a national group of research institutions, proposed PDS partnerships that would work together to improve teacher training, and improve professional development of PreK-12 practitioners, aimed at improving academic achievement of PreK-12 students.

Several universities in Kansas began PDS partnerships in the early 1990’s. Each institution and its partner districts and schools, established PDS models to best fit their programs. In Kansas, seventeen colleges and universities that have teacher preparation programs belong to a networking coalition, the Kansas Professional Development School (PDS) Coalition. In 1999, a charter was approved and Kansas became (and still is), the only state to establish a statewide organization involving all college and university PreK-12 partnerships that choose to participate. The major goals of PDS partnerships are to strengthen the preparation programs for preservice teachers and provide professional development for the improvement of PreK-12 teachers. The concern for quality teaching is critical for improving academic achievement of PreK-12 students in our schools.

One of the accomplishments of partnerships within the Kansas PDS Coalition is that of engaging in Action Research, practical research that is carried out in PDS sites. Engaging in classroom research is highly important for both preservice and classroom teachers who serve as mentors. Collaboration provides guidance and support, which will encourage preservice teachers to continue to practice classroom research in their own classrooms. The process of identifying problems in academic learning of PreK-12 students, selecting new or different strategies to improve student performance, implementing these strategies, and making formal and summative assessments on the results, is a critical factor in PDS relationships.

Action Research is important to PDSs because it is focused on improved student learning and quality teaching. The original proponents of PDS partnerships, The Holmes Group, recommended that partners, teacher training institutions and PDS teachers, engage in inquiry to improve the academic achievement of children and adolescents. Conducting classroom Action Research and sharing the results is one of the important benefits of PDS partnerships.

The brief reports of Action Research included in this document are examples of some of the projects that have been carried out in some of our partnerships, either by a preservice teacher with guidance and support from a classroom teacher mentor, or a classroom teacher and preservice teacher working in collaboration. From these kinds of projects, we all learn about the effectiveness of strategies or programs that may support academic learning of groups of PreK-12 students. Some project results show how the strategy helped certain groups of students. Some results are surprising and some are disappointing. From each of these we continue to learn.

It is critical that we continue to study and learn as professionals in order to perform as quality teachers. In PDS partnerships, we are engaged in collaborative inquiry, the most effective way to solve challenging problems.
ACTION RESEARCH SUMMARIES
BAKER UNIVERSITY
Spring, 2003

Baker University encompasses three schools. The College of Arts and Sciences at the main campus in Baldwin City, Kansas, serves students pursuing undergraduate degrees in any of 20 areas of study. The School of Professional and Graduate Studies serves working adults at campuses in Lee's Summit, Missouri, Overland Park, Topeka, and Wichita, Kansas. Here students pursue undergraduate or master's degrees in everything from business to liberal arts. Around 800 students attend the College of Arts and Sciences in Baldwin City.

The Mission of the Baker University Department of Education is to develop highly effective professional educators. The Department places strong emphasis on integrating theory into practice by requiring all candidates to participate in numerous and varied field experiences. As a result of the varied field experiences, candidates are able to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will enable them to transfer theory into practice and address the needs of diverse learners.

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Number Sense and Numeration
Amy Berg, Baldwin Elementary School Teacher,
Dr. Peggy Harris, Baker University Associate Professor,
and Christina Fenton, Baker University Teacher Education Candidate

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
Many students enter kindergarten with poor number recognition. The R.E.A.D. reading program has been a successful remediation program for students with reading difficulties. Can the format of the R.E.A.D. program be used to address mathematical concepts and assist students who score below average in number sense and numeration?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
Students in two kindergarten groups were tested on various math skills: counting to twenty, recognizing numerals to ten, one to one correspondence to 20, comparing quantities, and coin sorting. Students with below average number sense in the intervention classroom received an extra 10-15 minutes of math tutoring each day for the first semester of kindergarten. Students in the control classroom did not receive the extra math tutoring.

RESEARCH DESIGN
Students in two kindergarten classrooms were individually tested on various mathematical concepts within the first two weeks of school in the fall. Students in the intervention classroom who qualified on the pretest received 5-10 minutes of extra individual tutoring daily, while students in the control group did not receive the extra individual tutoring. All students completed the post-test at the end of the first quarter. Individual gain scores were computed.

Class gain scores were also compiled by comparing the mean growth between the pre and posttest scores of the intervention classroom to that of the control classroom.

RESULTS
- A comparison of gain scores of the four lowest-scoring students in each class reveals that the students in the intervention group who received the individual tutoring demonstrated the greatest gains on the posttest. (intervention group mean: 22.6, control group mean: 8.1)
- A comparison of mean class averages reveals that the intervention classroom had a mean class gain score of 20.04, while the control group had a mean class gain score of 5.72.
- All of the students in the intervention classroom posted gains, while 78% of the students in the control group did not. In addition, 86% of the intervention group posted 10 points gain, as compared to 33% of the students in the control group.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY
Modifying the R.E.A.D. program to provide math assistance results in improved number sense and numeration concepts. The students in the class using interventions posted the greater gain as evidenced through the use of the pre-and posttest format.

Since the intervention classroom had a very high number of low-performing students, they had more room for gain. In the future, it would be helpful to see if this procedure is as successful with students who are not as deficient as the students in this intervention group. A comparison of two typical kindergarten classes, one with interventions and one without, would provide valuable information regarding the applicability of this procedure to the general population.
Are K-6 Teachers Adequately Prepared to Assist Students With Exceptionalities?
Amy Wintermantel, Baldwin Elementary School Teacher,
Dr. Bill Neuenswander, Baker University Professor,
and Beth Tindle, Baker University Teacher Education Candidate

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
K-6 general education classroom teachers have not been given adequate training to equip them with instructional practices and behavioral management techniques to sufficiently promote learning for students with exceptionalities.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
The intent of the project is to survey area teachers in order to identify the abilities and/or skill levels of K-6 general education classroom teachers to address the learning needs of students with exceptionalities.

RESEARCH DESIGN
All K-6 teachers in the East Central Kansas Cooperative in Education were surveyed to ascertain a) their perceived skill levels, b) where skills were obtained, and c) their greatest needs relating to providing instructional practices and behavioral management techniques to assist learning for those students with exceptionalities. Survey questions addressed perceived teacher confidence levels to provide for the academic, behavioral, and social needs of students with exceptionalities.

This survey was conducted in late September-early October and data was compiled by the completion of the fall 2002 semester.

RESULTS
Of the 96 surveys distributed to K-6 teachers and support service educators in music, art, physical education, technology, and library in six different elementary schools, 84 were returned. Several were discarded due to incomplete responses, for an overall response rate of 83%.

Overall findings indicate that educators feel mostly qualified to address the needs of students identified with the various exceptionalities that they may encounter. The majority of responses (87%) fell in the top two categories of “very capable” or “somewhat capable” of teaching reading to students with special needs, and 86% felt “very capable” or “somewhat capable” of managing students with behavioral disorders. Most teachers felt they gained their expertise through experience and assistance from special education staff members.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY
The majority of k-6 teachers seem to build their comfort zone of working with special needs students through the two avenues of experience and using a special education teacher as a resource.

It is suggested that experiences dealing with special needs students be strengthened in pre-service teacher education programs, while the criterion of support from special education staff members needs to be enhanced with more fully qualified special education teachers and support resources.
Baker Intern Influences on Science Attitudes of Caruthers Elementary Fourth and Fifth Grade Students

Caruthers Elementary School Fourth and Fifth Grade Teachers,
Dr. Machele Timberlake, Baker University Assistant Professor,
and Jay Pratt, Baker University Teacher Education Candidate

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
Is there a positive difference in Caruthers students’ attitude toward science after lessons taught by Baker interns during a January internship, Caruthers Science Day, and Baker-Caruthers Campus Day?

Does Baker University intern involvement increase students’ knowledge of the scientific process?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
All fourth and fifth grade students took a pretest survey on attitudes toward science and knowledge of the scientific process. During the month of January 2003, Baker interns spent three weeks in the fourth and fifth grade classrooms helping to plan, deliver, and evaluate science lessons. In February, Caruthers fourth and fifth grade students attended a “Campus Day” at Baker University and participated in a presentation by science professors. In April, a “Science Day” was held at Caruthers and all students took part in a variety of science activities. A science post-test survey was administered again at the end of the school year and comparisons between the pre- and post means were computed.

RESEARCH DESIGN
Mean scores for each item on the pre-survey and post-survey were computed, as well as overall pre- and post-survey means. Survey items were specific to either attitudes toward science or scientific knowledge. In order to determine if knowledge of scientific process improved, the items on the survey specific to scientific process were computed and analyzed. In addition, the items specific to attitudes toward science were computed and examined separately.

RESULTS
- The mean pre-test score for all attitude items was 2.74, while the mean post-test score for all attitude items was 2.81, for a .07 increase.
- The mean pre-test score for all scientific knowledge items was 2.75, while the mean post-test score for all scientific knowledge items was 2.99, for a .24 increase.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY
The analysis of the survey data suggests that Caruthers fourth and fifth grade students benefited from the interaction and activities of the collaborated efforts of Baker University and Caruthers Elementary School. Both attitudes and knowledge of science increased for the Caruthers students. The pre- and post surveys yielded results indicating that students’ experiences with a variety of science activities concluded in more favorable attitudes and greater knowledge of the scientific process. This study helped students see the importance of science and increased their willingness to pursue this field of study in the future.

Implications from this study suggest that it is beneficial for students to have a wide variety of experiences relating to science. These experiences should not only focus on scientific content, but should also reflect the applicability to science in students’ everyday lives. This multi-level approach can result in increased positive attitudes toward science, as well as increased content knowledge.
Vocabulary Words in Context  
Gina Hill, Baldwin Elementary School Teacher,  
Dr. Peggy Harris, Baker University Associate Professor,  
and Jennifer Mallinson, Baker University Teacher Education Candidate

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
Which method of teaching vocabulary words is most effective in helping fourth grade students use new vocabulary appropriately in context?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
Two fourth grade classrooms used the Vocabulary Word A Day Cards! (Teacher's Friend Publications, Inc.) for vocabulary instruction. Class "A" used the complete instructional strategy specified in the directions and Class "B" used a modified version.

RESEARCH DESIGN
All students in the two fourth grade classrooms completed one cloze paragraph per day for four days at the beginning of the school year. Class means for each of the two classes were computed daily and overall means on the four pretests for the two classes were also computed.

For the next four weeks, students received one cloze paragraph on each Monday. During the daily morning activities, one word per day from the weekly list was taught. Class "A" followed the instructional strategy specified in the Vocabulary Word A Day Cards. Class "B" followed a modified instructional strategy. See attachment for step-by-step directions for both formats.

On Fridays, all students again completed the cloze paragraph activity.

Whole class gain scores were computed weekly by averaging the individual gain scores for both classes. At the end of the quarter, all students again completed all of the cloze paragraphs and overall means for all four posttests were computed per class.

RESULTS
The mean pretest for Class “A” was 3.70 while the mean posttest for the same class was 4.11, for a growth score of .41.

Class “B,” using the modified strategy, had a pretest mean of 3.53 and a posttest mean of 4.27. The growth score for Class “B” was .74, which was .33 higher than the growth score for Class “A.”

Individual gain scores were computed and averaged by class. The mean whole class gain score for Class “A” was .248, while the mean whole class gain score for Class “B” was .255.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY
Students in both Class “A” and Class “B” improved their vocabulary scores. The class that used the modified strategy posted the largest change between the pre- and posttests, as well as the largest weekly gain scores. An analysis of the results does not indicate that there is any advantage to using the complete strategy to help students use new vocabulary in context.

Since the experimental group had more students who scored 100% on the pretest, they had less opportunity to post learning gains. Future study could examine whether these results are replicated in other classes that are more closely matched in pre-test ability. Teaching vocabulary and spelling consumes many hours in an elementary classroom. If this process could be shortened, without hurting learning and achievement levels, more time can be allotted to more problematic areas of learning.
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Complete Instructional Strategy:

Using the word of the day, follow these simple steps to *Vocabulary Practice*!

1. Display the word on the board.
2. Discuss the word’s pronunciation and syllabication. Have students say the word orally.
3. Note the parts of speech represented by the word, (n. noun, v. verb, adv. adverb, adj. adjective).
4. Point out the “root” word and any prefixes or suffixes. Explain how these might change the meaning of the “root” word.
5. Ask students to “educationally guess” the word’s meaning.
6. Display the definition and read each definition to the class. Show students how the definitions change if the part of speech is changed. An example might be the word *coast*. As a noun it means “the land near the shore.” As a verb it means “to slide, run, or glide.”
7. Have each student write the word three times.
8. Ask students to look up the word in the class dictionary. Have them note any additional information and record the page number on which they found the word.
9. Instruct students to write a sentence using the word. Encourage them to read their sentences aloud to the class.
10. At the end of the week, have students write a paragraph or short story using all five words.

Modified Instructional Strategy:

Using the word for the day, follow these modified steps to *Vocabulary Practice*!

1. Display the word on the board.
2. Ask students to look up the word in the class dictionary. Have them note any additional information and record the page number on which they found the word.
3. Discuss the word’s pronunciation and syllabication. Have students say the word orally.
4. Point out the “root” word and any prefixes or suffixes. Explain how these might change the meaning of the “root” word.
5. Have each student write the word three times.
6. Ask one volunteer to use the word in a sentence.
Increasing Fifth Grade Student Fluency and Automaticity of Math Facts
Kathleen Dorsey, Baldwin Elementary School Teacher,
Dr. Bill Neuenswander, Baker University Professor,
and Dana Barker, Baker University Teacher Education Candidate

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
Students in 5th grade are not demonstrating sufficient fluency and automaticity in their knowledge of math facts.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
Dr. Don Crawford’s program, “How to Successfully Teach Math Facts to all Students,” was used in Kathleen Dorsey's 5th grade classroom. This program incorporated daily practice and testing sessions. Math facts were introduced at a rate of two facts per session.

RESEARCH DESIGN
Timed pre-/post-math fluency tests were administered to 5th grade students in Ms. Dorsey’s experimental classroom and in a control classroom. Math fluency was assessed for each operation (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division). In addition, 4th and 5th grade math scores were evaluated for the cohort experimental group. Quartiles for each operation were evaluated to determine if the intervention was successful in minimizing the number of students in the bottom quartiles.

RESULTS
Comparative results of the 5th grade experimental and control groups follow:
1. Both classes made significant math fluency gains in all four math operations.
2. The experimental class showed greater percentages of students in the top two quartiles than did the control class.
3. The experimental class ended the year with 0% in the bottom quartile for each operation while the control class averaged over 6% in the bottom quartile for each operation.

Comparative results of the cohort experimental group for 4th and 5th grade scores follow:
1. Students made significant progress in fluency for all math facts (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) from the end of the 4th grade to the end of the 5th grade.
2. A greater percentage of students in all math operations finished in the top two quartiles by the end of the 5th grade than finished in the top two quartiles by the end of the 4th grade.
3. Fourth grade students averaged 5% (for all math operations) in the bottom quartile at the end of the year, but 5th grade students ended the year with 0% in each of the bottom quartiles.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY
Use of the math program “How to Successfully Teach Math Facts to all Students:”
1. Increases student math fluency gains for the four math operations;
2. Increases the number of students that end in the top two quartiles (for all operations);
3. Virtually eliminates the number of students who remain in the bottom math fluency quartiles;
4. Does not insure that more students will end in the top quartile than could be expected from a control classroom; and
5. Works well with students who experience difficulty with the memorization of math facts.

With NCLB’s emphasis on decreasing the number of students in the lower achievement categories and increasing the number of students in the proficient or higher categories, this procedure seems promising.
Reading Resource Room Rate of Gain Study
Rhonda Hitchcock, Baldwin Elementary Reading Specialist,
Merrie Skaggs, Baker Education Assistant Professor
and Kim Sloop, Baker University Teacher Education Graduate

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
One of the challenges with which School Improvement Teams often wrestle while developing SIT plans is being able to predict the amount of progress that can reasonably be expected by any given student. The purpose of this project was to look at 2001-02 data for Reading Resource Room (RRR) students and determine the average rate of gain for students in first through third grade. This data can then be used to predict progress and establish reasonable goals for future RRR students.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
Data from the 2001-02 school year was analyzed to determine the average rate of gain for students receiving RRR services in first through third grade. The ten first graders had been tested at the end of each quarter over sight words. The 17 second graders and 7 third graders had been assessed on their fluency rate and reading comprehension.

RESEARCH DESIGN
First graders who received RRR services during the 2001-02 school year were tested over sight words, using the 224 word list adapted by C. Wilson Anderson from the Dolch Sight Word List. Comparing results from the end of the first semester to the end of the fourth semester, individual and group learning gain scores were computed.

The second and third graders who received RRR services during the 2001-02 school year were tested on fluency and reading comprehension. Fluency was determined by number of words read per minute minus errors = total correct words per minute, with 100 wpm as a goal. Reading comprehension was measured by using the STAR Reading Assessment Scaled Score (SS). Both individual and group learning gain scores were computed by comparing the first quarter results to the fourth quarter results.

RESULTS
- First Grade
  Average gain in number of sight words from 1st to 4th quarter: 135
  Average rate of gain for group: 66%
- Second Grade
  Average gain in fluency from 1st quarter to 4th quarter: 36 wpm
  Average rate of gain for the group: 51%
  Average gain in reading comprehension from 1st quarter to 4th quarter: 198
  Average rate of gain for the group: 80%
- Third Grade
  Average gain in fluency from 1st quarter to 4th quarter: 33 wpm
  Average rate of gain for group: 57%
  Average gain in reading comprehension from 1st quarter to 4th quarter: 152
  Average rate of gain for the group: 81%

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY
This research project was helpful in providing information on average rate of gain for first through third grade students receiving RRR services. Through the use of these results, members of the School Improvement Team can predict progress and establish reasonable goals on school improvement plans.
Kansas State University is a comprehensive, research, land-grant institution first serving students and the people of Kansas, and also the nation and the world. It is one of the six universities governed by the Kansas Board of Regents. K-State is also a member of the Big 12 Conference which consists of the following universities: Baylor, Colorado, Iowa State, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas, Texas A & M, and Texas Tech. The 664-acre campus is in Manhattan, 125 miles west of Kansas City via Interstate 70 in the rolling Flint Hills of northeast Kansas.

At the College of Education, we honor and celebrate teaching and learning. Our vision is fulfilled through our three main areas of emphasis: Teaching, Research, and Service. With over 300 new teachers, 200 masters level school personnel, and 30 doctoral students graduating annually, the College of Education is the largest professional education program in Kansas. We deliver exemplary instruction to students at the undergraduate and graduate levels; produce, interpret, and disseminate sound and useful research and scholarship; and provide leadership, collaboration, and service within the profession.

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Implementing Portfolio Assessment in a High School Physics Class  
Manhattan High School, Frederick L. Nelson

Problem Statement: According to the National Science Standards, the methods used to measure students’ scientific literacy need to be transformed. With a changing audience of learners and their changing needs, plus changing emphases in science content, curriculum, and pedagogy, it is an appropriate time to examine alternative methods of assessment of learning in the high school physics class. The goal of the researcher was to assess the validity of portfolios as an assessment strategy and to make improvements in the process.

Description: The teacher conducted a review of the literature to examine alternative methods of assessing high school physics students and selected a portfolio assessment process. This process involved students writing goals, selecting work as evidence of goal achievement, writing reflections to summarize achievement demonstrated, and presenting the completed portfolio to the teacher in an interview. During the interview, students were questioned about their evidence of achievement providing the opportunity for students to demonstrate learning in a comprehensive manner. Time was allocated in class for students to complete each step in the process and portfolio assessment resources were identified and linked to the class website. Parents and students were surveyed and students wrote journal reflection on the portfolio assessment process in an effort to establish the validity of portfolios as an assessment strategy and to improve the process.

Research Design: A background and attitude survey was developed and delivered to 34 parents and 81 students. From these surveys, student and parent attitudes concerning physics, learning activities, and assessment strategies were determined. Following completion of each of the first two portfolios, students wrote journal reflections responding to a series of questions posed by the teacher. Content from the reflective journals was analyzed for patterns of student experiences and opinions about the validity of the process. Based on the analysis of parent and student surveys and student reflections, areas for improvement of the process were identified.

Results: Parent surveys indicated that few parents (less than 20%) had completed physics as part of their own high school program. The majority of parents (71%) identified “Appreciation for science in everyday life” as the desired outcome for their children. Parents and students responded to the question “What should have the greatest impact on your (your student’s) grade? Based on five possible responses (including, comprehensive exams, lab reports, homework/quizzes/tests, and classroom participation) the most frequent response from both parents (38%) and students (47%) was student-selected portfolios of class activities and projects. Fifty-three percent of the students believed that portfolios were a more accurate assessment of learning compared to tests and homework while another 20% found portfolios to be an equally accurate assessment. An analysis of student reflections on portfolio assessment revealed the most difficult parts of the process to be: goal writing, reflection writing, and caption writing. Students also identified several ways to improve the portfolio assessment process: set goals earlier, grade more work, and establish clearer guidelines.

Conclusions: Parent and student background surveys support the premise that physics courses must be modified to support the needs of a changing audience of learners and a changing emphasis on scientific literacy. Both parents and students were supportive of portfolios as a valid means to assess learning. Parent and student perceptions should continue to be monitored as improvements in the process are implemented.
Mathematics PDS Improvement Project
ME Pearson Elementary, Gail Fein-clinical instructor

Problem Statement: ME Pearson is a high needs inner city school in Kansas City, Kansas, is located in an empowerment zone. Needed improvements in students’ mathematical performance have been identified through the Kansas 4th grade math assessment. The KSU PDS model is committed to improving K-12 achievement while improving undergraduate and graduate level teacher education.

Description: Each KSU PDS is asked to develop an annual PDS improvement action plan that identifies strategies to enhance the learning of K-12 students while simultaneously enhancing the teaching of future teachers practicing in the PDS. ME Pearson targeted mathematics for their improvement plan. KSU faculty in education and mathematics visited with school faculty to identify areas of needed improvement and plan improvement strategies. School faculty and district administrators agreed to pilot Investigation in Number, Data, and Space, an NSF support curriculum. Continuous professional development and implementation support was provided over two years to help teachers implement this new curriculum and standards-based practices in mathematics.

Research Design: A KSU mathematics educator and a PDS teacher familiar with this curriculum provided professional development to ME Pearson teachers for one week during the summer and monthly sessions during the academic year for two years. Implementation support was provided through Peer Coaching and model teaching by PDS teachers in Manhattan who visited ME Pearson teachers as they were implementing the new curriculum and as ME Pearson teachers observed Manhattan classrooms. KSU math methods students and student teachers were taught how to implement the Investigations curriculum and standards based practices as they completed field experiences at ME Pearson. State assessment scores were analyzed each year to monitor the effectiveness of this project.

Results: From 2000 to 2003, ME Pearson’s math scores have risen by 29.28%, teachers are implementing the new math curriculum. Sixty-three preservice teachers have participated in math methods field experiences and 42 students have completed their student teaching at this PDS since the beginning of this project.

Conclusions: It is possible to successfully align K-12 improvement with undergraduate and graduate level teacher enhancement efforts. Such efforts can enhance partnerships between K-20 educators where all partners gain. Similar projects might be investigated in different settings, grade levels, and subject areas. Other professional development options and implementation support activities might also be explored.
Improving Mathematics through a Problem-based Approach to Content Teaching
Ogden Elementary, Emily Finney, Katie Johnson, Angie Miller

Problem Statement: Ogden Elementary school is a very diverse, low-income school located adjacent to the Ft. Riley military instillation. Based on an analysis of the Kansas Math assessment, there is a strong need to improve Ogden students’ mathematical understanding. The goals of this action research project were to examine if ongoing professional development for teachers led to enhanced teaching practices and ultimately improved student learning.

Description: Project IMPACT (Improving Mathematics through a Problem-based Approach to Content Teaching) was supported through an Eisenhower grant directed by David Allen at KSU. This was a collaborative project between Ogden Elementary School and KSU designed to improve student learning in mathematics through a focus on standards-based practices and the problem solving process. The project included 11 months of professional development for all K-5th grade Ogden teachers and ongoing support as the school implemented Investigations in Number, Data, and Space. This action research project was designed to examine the impact of ongoing professional development on teachers, teaching behaviors, and student achievement.

Research Design: Student achievement was assessed using the Kansas Mathematics exam and a criterion-referenced test designed by David Allen to correlate with the Kansas Mathematics Standards. Classroom practices were examined through observations of questioning strategies, student engagement, and on-task behavior. A teacher survey was used to study teachers’ perceptions of professional development activities and how these activities impacted their teaching philosophies and the development of standards-based practices.

Results: Observations indicated that teachers were asking higher level questions 37% of the time and students were engaged, on task, or receiving help 74% of the time. The survey results indicated that all teachers felt the ongoing professional development helped them become familiar with and implement standards-based practices and to grow professionally. Pre and post test comparisons indicate a higher level of achievement on higher level problem solving and state assessment showed a 31.25% increase from 2000 to 2003. Achievement gains from 2002-2003 were 46.14% and Ogden Elementary School met the state standard of excellence in mathematics for the first time.

Conclusions: These findings indicate that on-going professional development helped teachers to understand standards based practices and problem solving strategies, to expand their teaching strategies, and to implement a reform curriculum. This professional development impacted teaching practices and ultimately it enhanced student achievement. The researchers would like to investigate further to see if teachers retain what they learned and continue to grow in their use of problem-based mathematics.
The Ebb and F.L.O.W. of Reading
Woodrow Wilson Elementary, Dorothy Claussen and Susan Bosco

Problem Statement: Teachers at Woodrow Wilson identified improved reading as an area of school-wide need. They believed that increased fluency would lead to increased comprehension and improved reading. Project FLOW was developed to explore the idea that student reading fluency could be influenced through the use of paired reading, poetry recitation, and readers’ theatre strategies.

Description: Based on the school need for improved reading Susan Bosco, the library media specialist, designed Project FLOW (Fluency and Literature Opportunities at Woodrow Wilson). Five intermediate classrooms participated in the FLOW project. Dorothy Claussen, a sixth grade teacher, joined Susan Bosco to conduct the action research. Students were engaged in paired reading activities for 45 minutes each Tuesday. Every Thursday the students practiced or performed a piece of poetry. Fridays were Readers’ Theater day where students performed a pre-selected script.

Research Design: Every two weeks, during paired reading, anecdotal records were written by Dr. Bosco and the classroom teacher. Reading “probes” were used once a week to assess reading rates of each student. The STAR test, a computer-generated test from Accelerated Reader that assigns a reading band, was used to assess reading comprehension every six weeks.

Results: An analysis of anecdotal records and increased fluency rates appear to support the staffs’ original premise that students’ reading fluency would be influenced through the use of paired reading strategies, the recitation of poetry and readers’ theatre. The most dramatic results came from the probes of reading fluency. All students, the most fluent as well as the least fluent, progressed in fluency. The majority far surpassed the average expected gain in one year, 17 words per minute. Only one probe, the day after Halloween, showed a decline in fluency. Anecdotal records reinforced the need to work with students during paired reading. Many word attack skills were lacking, or misplaced. Average STAR scores also increased, some students gained two grade levels. But teachers noted the progress on the STAR exam was uneven, confusing the relationship between fluency and comprehension.

Conclusions: Teachers working collaboratively using a variety of reading strategies have helped students make significant progress toward becoming fluent readers. The teachers continue to wonder how to measure the relationship between fluency and comprehension. They question the reliability of the STAR exam across time with different readings. Future additional questions include: “What will happen to fluency if these strategies are stopped?” and “Are there manageable ways to incorporate these collaborative strategies in a single classroom every day?”
How Can I Improve the ELL Program at Ware Elementary?
Ware Elementary, Lori Roether

Problem Statement: Kansas in general and Geary County in particular is experiencing a dramatic increase in English Language Learners (ELL). Many schools are implementing new programs to provide services to these students. Teachers at Ware were eager to learn how to improve the ELL program to meet the needs of students, parents, and teachers.

Description: Ware Elementary School is a large school with 700 students, which provides ELL services to 60 K-fifth graders who use eight different language backgrounds. Student needs ranged from high, with the non-English speaking students, to those whose language skills were more advanced. The program assisted students through the use of class-within-class support, pullout services, small group instruction, the modification of curriculum, native language translation in Spanish, German, and Korean, translated curricular materials, and teacher support.

Research Design: To gain information concerning the improvement of the ELL program, the opinions of 20 students, 20 parents, and 17 teachers were explored using surveys with both open ended and closed questions. Students were surveyed using an interview format to enable the researcher to clarify questions and to prod students for additional information when answers were vague. Parent surveys were mailed home and were translated for parents who have requested school communication in their native language. Teacher surveys were passed out at school. All surveys asked the responder to identify the strengths of the ELL program and to suggest necessary improvements.

Results: Students, parents, and teachers all provided a wealth of information concerning the ELL program. The common strengths identified by all three groups were considerate and caring staff, academic assistance for students, and native language translation. Common suggestions for improvement included providing more services for students (including one on one support, pullout, small grouping, assistance with testing, and tutoring) and providing more information to parents and teachers concerning the ELL students and the ELL program.

Conclusions: This project provided the ELL teacher an opportunity to interact with students, parents and teachers for the benefit of the ELL program. She identified five specific strategies she will implement (1) to maintain high standards for her students, (2) to find additional funding and resources to provide additional services, (3) to provide training on English Language Learners for school faculty and support staff, (4) to better inform Ware parents about the ELL program and its services, and (5) to create a system to enhance communication between the ELL program staff and the entire Ware school staff.
Using Early Field Experience Pre-service Teachers as Mathematics Tutors in the High School Special Education Resource Room for Learning Disabled Students
Manhattan High School (West and East Campus)
Cindi Dunn and Ange Sullivan – clinical instructors

**Problem Statement:** Disaggregated results of the state mathematics assessment indicated that the subgroup of learning disabled special education students were not performing at standard. Faculty determined they needed assistance completing homework and studying for exams. Early field experience students at KSU need meaningful opportunities to interact with students to enhance their understanding of teaching and learning.

**Description:** Each KSU PDS was asked to develop an annual improvement plan that identifies strategies to enhance the learning of students in their school. Manhattan High school indicated a need to improve the mathematic skills of their learning disabled students but lacked the personnel to provide the tutoring. KSU students enrolled in their first field experience who volunteered to tutor mathematics were assigned to work with learning disabled students in the resource room. KSU students received training in strategies for working with learning disabled special education students.

**Research Design:** In the spring of 2003, thirteen KSU students each spent 2 hours per week tutoring students in the resource classroom at the west campus. The east campus had three KSU students working in the resource classroom for 16 weeks yielding 416 hours of math tutoring for west campus students and 96 hours of tutoring for east campus students. Regular education mathematics classroom teachers of these students were asked if they noticed an increase, decline or no difference in the student’s performance in class. Teachers at the East Campus were also asked if they noticed a difference in the performance of those special education students who were not tutored. High school students were surveyed to obtain their perspectives on the experience.

**Results:** Teachers reported:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Improved (%)</th>
<th>No Difference (%)</th>
<th>Declined (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turning in Homework</td>
<td>54% (WC)</td>
<td>43% (WC)</td>
<td>2.7% (WC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28% (EC/T)</td>
<td>48% (EC/T)</td>
<td>26% (EC/T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20% (EC/NT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completeness/Accuracy of homework</td>
<td>56% (WC)</td>
<td>40% (WC)</td>
<td>2.7% (WC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45% (EC/T)</td>
<td>39% (EC/T)</td>
<td>16% (EC/T)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>60% (EC/NT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Test/Quiz performance</td>
<td>64% (WC)</td>
<td>32% (WC)</td>
<td>2.7% (WC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39% (EC/T)</td>
<td>42% (EC/T)</td>
<td>23% (EC/T)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10% (EC/NT)</td>
<td>70% (EC/NT)</td>
<td>20% (EC/NT)</td>
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WC = West campus [31 students [8 teachers reporting on 37 students]
EC/T = East campus with tutoring [5 teachers reporting on 31 students]
EC/NT= East campus without tutoring [5 teachers reporting on 10 students]

75% of WC high school students reported receiving tutoring 3 or more times a week. All indicated the tutoring should be continued and 75% reported their grade improved because of the tutoring.

**Conclusions:** Students at WC received more time tutoring than those at EC which could explain the difference in the percent of improvement between the two campuses. Comparing students at the EC who received tutoring to those who did not receive tutoring indicates the tutoring was effective.
Paired Reading as a Strategy to Enhance Simultaneous K-16 Improvement.
Bergman and Amanda Arnold Elementary Schools,
Jeanne Fridell and Nancy Bridges – clinical instructors

Problem Statement: State reading assessments and the Scholastic Reading Inventory given at Bergman and Amanda Arnold elementary schools identified students reading below grade level. Many of these students do not receive any special educational services. These students need individualized assistance that is often difficult for classroom teachers to provide. Early field experience students at KSU need meaningful opportunities to interact with students to enhance their understanding of teaching and learning.

Description: Each KSU PDS is asked to develop an annual PDS improvement plan that identifies strategies to enhance the learning of K-12 students while simultaneously enhancing the teaching of future teachers practicing in the PDS. Bergman and Amanda Arnold both identified reading as a targeted area of improvement and the clinical instructors of each school designed a program to teach KSU students to use paired reading as a one on one practice strategy to increase reading fluency and comprehension of at risk readers. As part of an early field experience associated with Principles of Elementary Education, KSU students received instruction in paired reading strategies and implemented these strategies weekly with elementary students reading below grade level. This project has been in place for over two years. Data was gather for two semesters at Bergman school to assess the effectiveness of the program.

Research Design: The Bergman Title 1 teacher used the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) to identify twenty-nine second through fifth grade students who were reading at least one grade below grade level but not receiving any other special services. Twenty-nine KSU students were identified from the Principles of Elementary Education course to work with these students in the fall semester and a second set of KSU students continued this work during the spring semester. The KSU students were taught paired reading strategies and spent at least one hour a week implementing these strategies as part of their first field experience in elementary education. The elementary students were tested before and after the intervention using the SRI and their lexile growth, stanine change, and change in fluency was calculated. The amount of time each elementary student received assistance through paired reading was then compared to his or her achievement gains in reading. The KSU students were surveyed to assess their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of this field experience in terms of enhancing their understanding of teaching and learning.

Results: Eighteen of the twenty-nine elementary students participating in this program were reading on grade level before the end of the year. This is particularly noteworthy since ten of these eighteen students were rated as beginning readers (pre primer) at the first of the year. Eighteen students (not all the same students as previously mentioned) increased two or more stanines by the end of the year (a statistically significant increase). There was a strong positive relationship between the amount of time each student received assistance and the increase in their reading scores. The KSU students surveyed indicated positive perceptions and attitudes regarding the experience, their understanding of students and their growth as educators.

Conclusions: Paired reading is an intervention strategy that can be implemented by KSU students early in their teaching program to enhance their own understanding of teaching and learning while simultaneously enhancing the reading achievement of elementary students. Students who received fewer hours of assistance last year are receiving greater assistance through a similar program this year. Their achievement will continue to be monitored. The actual, as compared to perceived, benefits of this experience for KSU students can now be measured using the performance assessments designed as part of the KSU student assessment system.
Using Paired Teaching to Promote Cooperation and Enhance Student Learning
Manhattan High School, Mike Kohake

**Problem Statement:** KSU encourages all student teachers and their cooperating teachers to use co-teaching strategies to provide additional assistance for K-12 students while providing more intensive cooperation and interaction between the teacher and student teacher. Several methods of co-teaching are stressed, including the model of parallel teaching. As a student teacher, Mike Kohake decided to explore the effectiveness of parallel teaching as a strategy to promote cooperation with very talkative and sometimes unruly students and therefore enhance the learning of his students.

**Description:** KSU teacher education students participate in four semesters of field experiences culminating in a 16 week full time student teaching experience at one of several high school sites. Student teachers placed at Manhattan High Professional Development School are expected to complete an action research project as part of their experience. This is a description of one of these projects conducted by a student teacher in a geometry classroom at Manhattan High. The teacher, Tracy Anderson, and student teacher utilized parallel teaching for all the instruction associated with one chapter in the geometry text and compared this approach to the single teacher instruction used during the previous two chapters. Each day the teacher worked with half of the class and the student teacher worked with the other half of the class in a separate classroom. They varied the groups each day.

**Research Design:** Both teachers recorded their observations and perceptions throughout the experience and the high school students described their perceptions of the experience in their journals. Student test scores for the chapter taught using parallel teaching were compared to two previous chapter tests. More specifically, these test scores were examined to identify differences in performance of students with special educational needs.

**Results:** Both teachers observed several positive results of parallel teaching, including: fewer students off task (based on an on-task frequency chart), positive feedback from students, an increase in student understanding, more effective coverage of material, greater number of students asking questions, and more time for questions. The teachers also noted negative consequences such as: the need for two teachers and two classrooms, the difficulty of readjusting to a single setting, and some students wanting to be placed with one group and not the other. An analysis of twenty-one student journals revealed than 16 students stated they really liked parallel teaching and found it beneficial, two students stated they liked parallel teaching but felt there was too much talking with this approach, and three students didn’t have a preference. Overall, the chapter test taught through parallel teaching showed a higher class average score (81%) than either of the two previous chapter tests (79.4% and 73.5 %). More specifically, seven students, including an inclusion student, had what the teacher considered to be a dramatic improvement on the chapter test (over seven points higher than previous tests).

**Conclusions:** This inquiry provides evidence that, in a classroom setting as described, parallel teaching using varied groups is effective in increasing learning and learner satisfaction. This teacher plans on trying to implement the strategy in his own teaching. Since this may be a challenge without additional assistance, he plans to implement the basic concept by using after school sessions to provide struggling students an opportunity to relearn in smaller settings.
Emporia State University is a comprehensive Regents university primarily serving residents of Kansas by providing leadership in quality instruction-related scholarship and service. A student-centered institution, its central mission is to develop lifelong learning skills, impart society's cultural heritage, and educate and prepare for both the professions and advanced study.

The purpose of The Teachers College of Emporia State University is to develop skilled practitioners who are prepared with essential knowledge and applications in their fields of specialty. Student learning reflects historical and contemporary knowledge, research, theory, experience, and practice that meet the academic, personal, and social needs of their clientele. Professional programs are carefully designed to reflect the current knowledge base, including existing and envisioned practices in constituent institutions and clearly delineated models. Curricular coherence is strengthened through faculty study and dialogue on purpose, course content, and intended student-learning outcomes.

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Application of Geometric Concepts With Two and Three Dimensional Shapes: A Teacher Work Sample
Amy Gaughan, Second Grade Intern; Havencroft Elementary School, Olathe, Kansas Emporia State University Professional Development School Program.

Statement of the Problem
Olathe School District second grade curriculum outcomes in geometry require that students learn to compare, recognize draw/describe 2 dimensional shapes and recognize 3 dimensional solids. Students were pre-tested on these outcomes and the class average was 55.5% of the points possible. The most important variable related to differences in scores was reading ability. There was a 23% gap between students reading below grade level and students reading above grade level, while ethnic and language differences did not seem to make a difference in achievement.

Brief Description of the Project
PDS interns in the ESU program are each required to complete a teacher work sample in their assigned classroom. They work in collaboration with their mentor teacher designing this work sample and deciding which curricular area to target. This is only part of the intern teaching requirements during this semester. Interns must achieve a passing score on this project in order to receive the B.S. in Elementary Education.

Research Design:
The PDS intern designed a complete learning unit from pre-assessment through formative instruction and assessment and the post-assessment of the outcomes. The learning characteristics of each of the 16 students were analyzed. The pre-assessment data pinpointed for each student, the knowledge gaps as well as the prior knowledge of geometric concepts. Instructional design was adapted from the Olathe “Math Plan that Works” to meet the needs of the individual students. Those strategies were: Problem solving; Mental Math; Cyclical Review; New Vocabulary and Concepts; Guided Practice; and Journaling. Accommodations for both instruction and assessment were made for English Language Learning students.

Results:
This project had five learning objectives divided into two at the knowledge level, one at the skill level and two at the reasoning level. The post-assessment was conducted three weeks after the pre-assessment after students had completed all planned learning activities and formative assessments. 100% of the students experienced overall learning gain improvements of 54% or greater. Each subgroup made considerable learning gains.

Conclusion:
Pre-service candidates can successfully demonstrate student gains in the student teaching venue. This intern reported that, “Every aspect of your teaching is carefully researched, planned, justified, critically analyzed, and reflected upon. I was able to incorporate the multiple intelligences into my daily instruction and reach each student on a deeper cognitive level. I was able to honor the background knowledge that each student brought with them and use it to create a strong foundation upon which to construct new knowledge.”
Pittsburg State University is a multipurpose state supported university whose primary objective is to offer strong undergraduate and graduate educational programs to those in its service area. Sound higher education should enhance the best intellectual, social, and personal development of the university community. Moreover, it must provide professional and vocational training of high quality. The university is committed to the basic concepts of democracy and to the democratic processes in solving common problems at all levels of government and in all areas of contemporary society.

The goal of the College of Education is to prepare professionals who are competent to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Its mission as a professional school is to provide high quality programs at the bachelor, master, and specialist degree levels for the preparation of individuals in areas of human services which may lead to professional growth, advanced graduate study or to employment in schools, social and government agencies, and business and industry. This mission also includes providing service courses and programs for majors in departments of other schools on the campus, providing diagnostic and educational services (both proprietary and free), conducting research and disseminating research results.

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Will Proximity to the Teacher Enhance Listening Skill in Second Grade Students?  
Betty Peterson, USD 249, Frontenac  
Alice Sagehorn and Julie Samuels, Pittsburg State University  
Paul Haney, Teacher Candidate

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
A mentor teacher and intern focused on improving the listening skills of second grade students. The mentor teacher was a veteran of more than twenty-five years and had noticed a significant change in student listening skills over the past few years. She termed the student behavior as “listening with half-an-ear.”

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
Each week the educators read a developmentally appropriate Accelerated Reader book to the students. The second graders then answered questions about the books using pencil/paper or the computer. The teacher and intern employed various levels of student-to-teacher proximity and they videotaped several read-aloud sessions for further study.

RESEARCH DESIGN
The team made note and recorded the proximity of the teacher or intern reading the story to the students. Sometimes students sat at their desks while the teacher or intern read the story from behind the teacher’s desk. Sometimes students sat on the floor next to the teacher or intern as s/he read while sitting in a rocking chair. On occasion, the teacher or intern would stand at the back of the room and read the story while the students sat at their desks with their backs to the teacher. At the end of the school year, the teacher/intern team examined the students’ scores from the paper/pencil and computer Accelerated Reader tests and matched those results with the level of proximity to the teacher. They calculated a mean score for each.

RESULTS
The results showed that students scored one to two points higher than average when the teacher was in closest proximity to the students, that is with the teacher seated in a rocking chair while the students were seated on the floor next to the teacher. Student scores were lowest when the teacher read from the back of the room and the students sat with their backs to the teacher.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY
After reviewing the results of the study, the team used the information to guide their teaching of other subject areas, such as mathematics, science, and social studies. The team plans to expand the study to incorporate some of the other variables, such as enthusiasm of the reader, opportunity for discussion, and setting a purpose for reading in a future study. They also want to determine if the results are the same for younger and older students, so they are recruiting other teachers to participate in their study.
Can the Use of Games and Simulations Improve Academic Achievement in an Eighth Grade History Class?
Teri Blanco and Anne Marie Husdon, Pittsburg Middle School, USD 250
Julie Samuels and Alice Sagehorn, Pittsburg State University
Allison Gorman, Teacher Candidate

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
The teacher/intern team in a sixth through eighth grade middle school wanted to improve the academic achievement of students in an eighth grade history class. The team-taught four sections of history to approximately 100 students.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
The team decided to create their own or use commercially available games and simulations during alternating quarters of the school year. In the first and third quarters, the team would teach history in a traditional manner without games or simulations. During the second and fourth quarters, they would teach social studies using games and simulations.

RESEARCH DESIGN
In reviewing the literature, they found an article about a teacher who developed centers based on Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences. As a result of using the centers, his students developed increased responsibility and independence, developed and applied new skills, and improved their cooperative learning skills. The team also reviewed the work of Rieber (1996) who found there are many advantages to using games and simulations within learning environments. The team further learned that simulations in the classroom encourage student participation. Simulations have the power to recreate complex, dynamic political processes in the classroom. The team decided to create their own or use commercially available games and simulations during alternating quarters of the school year.

RESULTS
Every quarter the students took a pre-test and post test for each unit of study. During the second and fourth quarters, the educators used games and simulations for teaching content and reviewing before the posttest. The teacher/intern team compared the mean increases in scores from the pre-test to the posttest for each quarter. The mean posttest scores for the quarters when students used the games and simulations ranged from three to six percentage points higher when compared to the quarters when the treatment was not used.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY
Some of the games and simulations did a better job of reinforcing the concepts taught than others did. The team found that they needed to alter the commercial simulations to fit the time, space, and resource constructs of their classroom. They also found the simulations very labor intensive and time consuming. Furthermore, the simulations generally took more than one 55-minute class period. The commercially produced games also needed some modification, but not as much as the simulations.
Will the “Success for All” Reading Program Increase the Comprehension Scores on the Flynt Cooter Reading Inventory for Second and Third Grade Students?
Mary Ann Gobetz and Martha Harper, Frank Layden Elementary, Frontenac, USD 249
Alice Sagehorn and Julie Samuels, Pittsburg State University
Kendra Perry, Teacher Candidate

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
The “Success For All Reading” [SFA], reading program was implemented in a kindergarten through grade six elementary school. Two classroom teachers (grades two and three) and their interns decided to investigate the efficacy of this new program.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
SFA Reading is a comprehensive reading program created by Johns Hopkins University. It uses early intervention strategies to help students who are below grade level in reading receive immediate attention. Key elements of SFA Reading include grouping children by reading level and providing tutors for those students who need additional help. Teachers provide intense reading and writing instruction, stress problem solving strategies, and give frequent assessments to determine reading progress.

RESEARCH DESIGN
During the first two weeks of school, the AR team randomly selected nine students from the second grade and nine students from the third grade as the action research sample. The teachers included in the sample boys and girls from the top, average, and low academic levels based on SFA scores. Teachers administered Success for All assessments every eight weeks. Students read a passage from the Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory (1998) on his/her grade level and a reading attitude survey every quarter. Additionally, teacher and student reflections and observations were made throughout the year.

RESULTS
Every quarter students read passages from the Flynt-Cooter Reading inventory on his/her grade level. On a 100-point scale students answered 72% of the comprehension questions correctly during the first quarter. The second semester results increased to 80%, the third quarter to 83%, and the fourth quarter to 87%. This is an overall increase of 15%. The students from the third grade sample read a third grade passage from the Flynt-Cooter reading inventory during the fourth quarter. Eighty percent of the sample read the passage independently and fluently with no mistakes. This was a significant increase over the students’ performance in August.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY
Most students liked the SFA reading program. They liked to move to other rooms because they were able to be with students and teachers who were not in their homeroom. Most students reported that the reading activities were “fun.” Conversely, several students did not like moving to other rooms, thought ninety minutes was too long, and claimed that the reading activities were boring. These students were generally in the lower ability groups. Teachers and interns noted that some students who lacked intrinsic motivation did not progress as rapidly as other students.
Founded in 1864, the main KU campus consists of 950 acres atop historic Mount Oread in Lawrence. The University of Kansas is a major international center for teaching and learning, scholarship, and creative endeavor. The University is committed to excellence in its academic programs and to fostering a multicultural environment that respects the dignity and rights of individuals. Intellectual diversity, integrity, and disciplined inquiry in the search for knowledge are of paramount importance.

Within the University, the School of Education serves Kansas, the nation and the world by (1) preparing individuals to be leaders and practitioners in education and related human service fields, (2) expanding and deepening understanding of education as a fundamental human endeavor, and (3) helping society define and respond to its educational responsibilities and challenges. To accomplish this mission, the School of Education (1) offers an extensive curriculum leading to academic degrees and professional licensure, (2) requires faculty and students to engage in scholarship, and (3) provides a wide range of professional services to schools, other institutions, and individuals.

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Using Guided Buddy Reading to Improve Students’ Reading Comprehension
University of Kansas Interns – South Park Elementary PDS, Shawnee Mission
Suzanne Holdgrafer, Randall Holt, Tracy Lucas, Aislinn Meyeres and Marci Reed
With Clinical Supervisors, Suanne Yarborough, Teri Moore, Carla Max,
Rhonda Chiles, and Sylvia Smith

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Students across grade levels need improvement in their reading comprehension skills.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Interns taught fifth and sixth grade intermediate students the strategies of guided reading for one week. The students were then tested over their knowledge of the strategies. The following four weeks, these intermediate level students implemented the guided reading strategies with their primary level reading buddies in kindergarten and first grade.

RESEARCH DESIGN

To assess reading comprehension, every student was given a pre and post Individual Reading Inventory (IRI). To measure reading interest, primary and intermediate level students were given a pre and post grade level specific reading surveys. The primary survey was based on a positive/neutral/negative scale. The Intermediate survey was more thorough and based on a five-point scale, strongly agree-strongly disagree. This data was used to pair up the students based on interest and ability levels.

RESULTS

In looking at individual growth of students’ reading comprehension, the results of the pre and post IRI’s showed that the percentage of students improving by one reading level was 51% of kindergartners, 40% of first graders, 31% or fifth graders, and 24% of sixth graders.

The reading interest survey for primary level students showed an increase in the number of students who viewed reading positively. In the post survey, no students felt negatively about reading. The intermediate level students overall indicated an increase in interest in reading after the guided buddy reading. There was a slight increase in the number of sixth graders who viewed reading negatively.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Students and teachers viewed the use of guided buddy reading as successful. The use of guided reading strategies by intermediate level students contributed to the intermediate level students’ sense of leadership. The intermediate level students liked being a “teacher” for their buddy and took pride in being good role models for their primary level buddies throughout the school day. The primary level students responded well to their older peer buddy.
Webquest: Enhancing General Education to Meet the Needs of a Diverse Classroom

Flora Wyatt, University of Kansas Professor
Todd Pennell, New Stanley Elementary School Teacher
Laila J. Richman, University of Kansas Teacher Education Candidate

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Students with special needs included in the 5th grade classroom are not receiving adequate support in accessing the general education curriculum.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The intent of the project was to determine if the use of a WebQuest for a social studies activity was able to minimize achievement differences between students with special needs and their peers in the general education classroom.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Initially, students were assigned a state to research and were provided with printed materials to use to answer a given set of questions about that state. Then, students were assigned a different state and were asked to answer the same set of questions about the new state using the WebQuest where the information was available online. Also, a quiz about the assigned state was administered after each activity. Mean quiz scores and mean project scores for students identified with disabilities (n=2) and students not identified with disabilities (n=19) were compared to determine if the WebQuest helped reduce the differences in mean scores between these groups of students.

RESULTS

Upon initial analysis, the students identified as having a disability preformed better on the WebQuest project and quiz than the book version. Use of the WebQuest also lowered the number of students who chose to “opt out” of the assignment. Most importantly, the WebQuest activity did “close the gap” between the scores of the students with disabilities and their peers.

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<th>Mean Quiz Scores</th>
<th>Mean Project Scores</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Book Project</strong></td>
<td><strong>WebQuest Project</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified LD (n=2)</td>
<td>Not Identified LD (n=19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Book Project</strong></td>
<td><strong>WebQuest Project</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified LD (n=2)</td>
<td>Not Identified LD (n=19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All students in the class performed better when the WebQuest was utilized and all students provided written feedback that they preferred that method of instruction.

CONCLUSIONS

The WebQuest tool appears to be successful in helping make the curriculum more accessible for students with special needs. This project demonstrated that the WebQuest was able to “shrink the gap” between the achievement of students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities. It is important to note that this was a very limited sample and that this study needs to be replicated in order to obtain more generalizable results.
Using Technology to Improve a Specific Writing Trait in an Elementary PDS – Grades 1, 3, and 5
Greta Danner, Jenny Wilk, and Nic Slayton, Interns, The University of Kansas
Clinical Supervisors: (3 classroom teachers) ______  PDS, Lawrence
Teri Albracht, KU faculty liaison

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Students struggle with the skill of organization in writing across grade levels and is a trait that has not been targeted apart from the other traits. The improvement of writing is a school improvement goal at ______ Elementary.

Will the use of Kidspiration improve the skill of organization in children’s writing according to the assessment rubrics used in grade 1, 3 and 5?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

This study was done across grade levels to determine whether the specific technology tool, Kidspiration, would influence the writing skill of organization with three groups of students. Students in the study included eight IEP students in grade 5, fifteen students in grade 3, and eleven students in grade 1.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A writing sample from each student was scored on the trait, organization, according to the grade level rubric appropriate to each group. Students were introduced to creating writing webs using Kidspiration through guided instruction using a web sample. All students then created webs independently. A writing sample using the webs created independently was scored on the trait, organization. The analysis of the data was based on comparison or pre-post scores from the assessment rubrics.

RESULTS

Student Pre and Post tests were scored on a 5.0 rating scale.
Fifth grade: Pre-test scores ranged from 1.0 to 3.0. Post-test scores ranged from 2.0 to 3.2. average scores ranged from pre 2.0 to post 2.8.
Third grade: Pre-test scores ranged from 1.0 to 4.3. Post-test scores ranged from 2.0 to 5.0. average scores ranged from pre 3.0 to post 3.4.
First grade: Pre-test scores ranged from 1.0 to 4.0. Post-test scores ranged from 2.0 to 4.0. average scores ranged from pre 1.6 to post 3.2.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Kidspiration does improve the organizational skill for most children. Children tend to be motivated more by computer time than pencil and paper time. Many students in this school do not have technology at home, which may have influenced high motivation. It is significant that minority students made the greatest gains. Teacher reflections spoke to improvement in sequential order in writing as a result of this project. For IEP students, this program assists independent writing.
Teaching the Concept of Goal Setting in an Urban School  
Susan Mička, KUPDS Intern at J.C. Harmon High School

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
Many ninth grade students are not motivated to participate in class activities, concerned about grades, and are often absent from school. Knowing these factors have a significant impact on student achievement, this study was designed to see if teaching strategies to encourage goal setting would influence these factors.

Will teaching goal setting in the classroom increase motivation toward school, improve grades, and decrease absenteeism?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
Students were introduced to the concept of goal setting through examples and models. In small groups, students practiced writing short-term (two-week) goals concerning grades in language arts class, participation in class, and school attendance. Students were also taught strategies, such as: keeping an assignment notebook, making up work the day after a class absence, and staying after school to meet with the teacher.

Every two weeks students wrote educational goals. At the end of each two-week period, students monitored themselves to see whether or not they had succeeded in reaching the goals they had written. If success was not met, students were required to identify strategies that might help them reach their goals for the following two week time period.

RESEARCH DESIGN
Prior to the introduction of the concept of goal setting, students were given a motivational survey. The survey included attitudes about the importance of school and self-perceptions about school performance and completion of tasks such as homework. This survey, grade standing, and attendance records served as the pre-assessment.

The same survey was given at the end of the project that was carried out over a period of ten weeks. Grades and attendance records were again analyzed. The intern kept a journal that included notes on participation, after school meetings, and observations about attitudes.

The cooperating teacher and the teaching team involved, also held informal conversations about students in relation to the project.

RESULTS
only 5 students of 85 made significant improvement in grades
Approximately 10 students stayed after school each day and turned in assignments (an increase in number and not the same students every day)
for most students, grades did not improve significantly
for most students, attendance remained about the same

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION
During the ten weeks of this study, the majority of students did not show significant gains in attitude, grades, nor attendance. It is recognized that for these students, goal setting, both long and short term, is not a habit. It may be that learning and practicing these skills would improve over a longer period of time. Other examples of things that may have a negative influence on these factors are lack of family support and modeling of goal setting as well behavior that resulted in out of school suspension. This study brought about a question concerning long-term out of school suspension.
Instructional Strategies to Increase Assignment Completion
Carlisha Bell, Rebecca Goodin, Chris Heatwole, Michelle Hillman, Dustin Mortenson, KU Interns
at a Junior High School 2002

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
One factor that contributes to student achievement is that of completion of assignments that provide practice. Some middle level students have little concern about turning in assignments that influence achievement and grading.

Research question: Can specific instructional strategies paired with complementary assignments increase student assignment completion levels?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
This research was done at a Junior High (grades 7-9) with approximately 500-600 students. Each intern chose two or three of their regular education classes to which they introduced the instructional strategies intended to increase completion rates of assignments given in class. The five interns involved in this project were in classrooms that taught different content so there was an attempt to select strategies that best fit with certain content areas.

RESEARCH DESIGN
In order to obtain a baseline, each intern used a traditional teaching method (lecture) and assigned traditional assignments (worksheets or homework from a textbook) for one week, for a total of five assignments. The interns organized their baseline data into a table (Table 1)* reflecting the completion rates for their five baseline assignments. The completion rate was calculated by dividing the number of assignments completed by the number of students present on the day the assignment was given. The individual total baseline completion rate and the collective total are also included in Table 1.

After the baseline, each intern spent approximately two weeks implementing two instructional strategies: one strategy at a time. The interns assigned between three and five assignments* for each strategy. When all data were collected, interns created a table (Table 2) containing individual and collective results for each strategy (the completion rates were calculated in the same manner as the baseline completion rates). The interns were looking for significant changes in assignment completion rates: during the time that we implemented our instructional strategies, we expected to see an increase in the number of completed assignments turned in by students as a direct result of the specific instructional strategy.

Strategies introduced were: active learning, (social studies), graphic organizers-dichotomous key and organizing class notes into chart form, (English), organizational and study skills instruction, (writing), and appealing to multiple intelligences, (geography), and cooperative learning, (math).

*Table 1 and Table 2 can be viewed in the Raw Data selection of this report.
*Assignments are defined as in-class work, and assigned work that must be turned into the teacher. Tests are not included in our data. In order to remain consistent in the interpretation of completed assignments, each researcher adhered to the following standards of completion:
1. assignments must be turned-in within three school days of its original due date
2. assignments must receive a numeric grade of 70% or greater
Interns also calculated their personal completion rate total and the total for all five interns collectively.
RESULTS

Table 1
Baseline Data (Completion Rate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisha</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dustin</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>82.3%</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Baseline Data Completion Rate: 63%

Table 2 shows the completion rates that the interns witnessed while implementing their instructional strategies. Researcher 1, the primary researcher, collected information on their chosen strategy as did researcher 2. Both researchers, for a given strategy, implemented that strategy for approximately 1 week. Number of assignments used to obtain the completion percentages range from 3 to 5.

Table 2
Instructional Strategy (Completion Rate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Strategy</th>
<th>Researcher 1</th>
<th>Researcher 2</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Organizer</td>
<td>Chris: 75%</td>
<td>Carlisha: 62.4%</td>
<td>Total: 69.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Learning (community based)</td>
<td>Carlisha: 82.5%</td>
<td>Dustin: 82.9%</td>
<td>Total: 82.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Strategies</td>
<td>Michelle: 91.7%</td>
<td>Rebecca: 80.15%</td>
<td>Total: 80.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Intelligences</td>
<td>Dustin: 89.3%</td>
<td>Michelle: 75.2%</td>
<td>Total: 80.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Learning Groups</td>
<td>Rebecca: 97.24%</td>
<td>Chris: 79%</td>
<td>Total: 83.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The changes that we expected to see after the intervention had more to do with the instructional strategies that teachers choose to implement than any student behavior. We believed that the study would show that traditional teaching methods (lecture/worksheet or lecture/homework) are not necessarily the most effective. Specifically, we predicted that the individual instructional strategies would yield a higher completion rate than the composite baseline completion rate.

All strategies implemented did increase assignment completion. We found that the primary researcher of a given strategy obtained a higher assignment completion rate than the secondary researcher, with one exception. This leads us to believe that there is some correlation between understanding the proper way to implement an instructional strategy and obtaining positive results during this implementation. One limitation to this study is the length of time for implementation of strategies.
Increasing Independent Reading Time to Improve Reading Comprehension at the Middle School Level

Amanda McMillion, Intern, The University of Kansas
Clinical Supervisor, Mary Martin, Argentine Middle School, KCK

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many students in this middle school do not engage in silent independent reading during the time this activity is scheduled. Students exhibit off-task behavior, do not perceive themselves as readers, and have a negative perception of reading. Engaging students in independent silent reading was identified as a concern by the clinical supervisor.

Will increased independent reading time improve reading comprehension of 7th grade students?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

This study was conducted with eight reading classes at the 7th grade level at Argentine Middle School. A specific class of nineteen students was selected for data collection, identified as the test group. The study was implemented over a twelve-week period.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Data was compared on SRI scores, number of books read independently, on task behavior, reading perception surveys, goal setting, and book conferences. Baseline data was compared to end of project data.

The researcher instituted strategies for accountability and for motivation. Examples included active reading journals followed by conferences during reading workshop, class goal setting, and class competition.

RESULTS

Data was compiled on the nineteen students in the test group. SRI scores increased significantly for all students in the study. The number of books read increased from 15 to 65 books. On task behavior increased profoundly, based on timed observations. Scores on both the reading perception survey and the perception of self as a reader, increased significantly according to percentage scores.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Introducing strategies that encourage students to increase on task independent reading improves not only SRI scores but also student attitudes about reading and about themselves as readers. Requiring accountability that includes goal setting is important to helping students become more responsible.

One of the factors that interfere with learning is classroom behavior and time on task. This study demonstrated how effective planning, and making students more responsible, can make a difference in achievement and student attitude.
The University of Saint Mary is a Catholic liberal arts college that prepares graduates for value-centered lives of learning, service and character, rich according to the best resources within each person. Saint Mary College's three co-educational campuses have a combined population of 833 students, and the Leavenworth campus residence halls offer space for up to 340 students. Satellite campuses are located in Overland Park, Kansas and Kansas City, Kansas.

The department of education is dedicated to liberal professional preparation for teaching, manifested through its Critical Reflective Teacher model. The education program standards promote teacher candidate outcomes that are based upon national standards for beginning teachers and require the teacher candidates to demonstrate skills and knowledge throughout their coursework and field experiences.

Contact Information:

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juiliano@stmary.edu
Self-Directed Learning
Julieanna Hendricks

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:
Mardziah Abdullah claimed that self-directed learners demonstrate a greater awareness of their responsibility in making learning meaningful and monitoring themselves. Does self-directed learning help to raise test scores?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:
In order to obtain the information I need to answer my question, I needed to implement Venn Diagrams and students teaching students. I implemented these new strategies over a 2 week time period from the time we began a new unit to the time it came for the quiz. I wanted to make sure that the students were teaching each other for the duration of an entire unit so that when it came time to take the unit quiz, their scores would not be based on both my teaching and their own self-directed learning, but solely on their self-directed learning techniques.

RESEARCH DESIGN:
There were several types of data that needed to be collected in order to answer my question. Student interaction in each group would help to determine the depth of understanding of the material each student took away from the two self-directed learning strategies. A second type of data was the textbook literacy of each student. Were students not passing the quizzes because they could not understand the technicalities of the textbook, or were they not studying? The last type of data was the test scores. I compared the quizzes from the last unit to the scores of the current unit to see if there were any significant differences.

RESULTS:
I learned that forming groups takes much more time than just randomly placing students in a particular group. The groups that had real good interaction and communication with each other understood the material better than those groups who did not have strong interactions. Textbook literacy showed deficiencies in vocabulary and understanding diagrams. The test scores indicate that there was no drastic change when self-directed strategies were implemented in the classroom.

DISCUSSION and Plans for Further Study
As a result of this study, I plan on including many more self-directed learning activities in my classroom. I would also like to change the way the textbook is used. Students need guidance with vocabulary and reading diagrams.
**Garnering Success**
Denise Northern

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:** The problem is lack of consistent active student engagement from a major portion of the students in my class. The situation jeopardizes the amount of learning taking place in the classroom on a daily basis. Will the implementation of cooperative learning groups and structures increase active student engagement in order to create a more equitable learning environment for a given student within my classroom community?

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:** Although it would be fascinating to include the entire class in this study, I will focus on one student in particular. I want to find out if I can reduce the learning problems that she encounters by proving that the use of cooperative learning structures that will encourage, promote, and provide a more equitable learning environment for her.

**RESEARCH DESIGN:** My goals for the inquiry project are:
- To measure the number of times she is actively engaged and compare it with her behavior prior to the implementation of the cooperative learning groups
- To observe “K” to be actively engaged in every lesson that utilizes a cooperative learning structure as demonstrated by offering ideas, answers and solutions to problems or questions as part of a cooperative group
- To observe “K” exhibiting less of a resistance and more of an openness toward her daily learning as a confident and responsible student

**RESULTS**
I used a seating chart to tally the number of times “K” was actively engaged both before and after the implementation of cooperative groups and structures. I compared the number of times she was actively engaged during the previous whole group questioning sessions and found that she responded to the structured cooperative lessons with much more enthusiasm and increased active engagement close to 100%.

**DISCUSSION and IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDY**
Future study would be to examine achievement and mastery, not just active engagement.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
Will the Spot and Dot method of decoding enhance vocabulary development?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
When using this method the student are to first identify all of the vowels in the word and mark them with a dot. If there are two vowels that appear together, they are to count them as one sound. The number of vowels can then be used to determine the number of chunks or syllables a word will have. They are to chunk the word so there is one vowel sound in each section. Then the word is broken down into more manageable parts so the student has a better chance of correctly pronouncing it.

RESEARCH DESIGN
I took the targeted students and did a more intensive teaching of the strategy. This was a group of five students, which allowed me the opportunity to give more one on one attention to each of their needs. During the time that I worked with the small group, I would give the students words they were unable to pronounce and ask them to use the Spot and Dot method. I would also have them read passages and ask them to use this same decoding strategy when they encountered an unfamiliar word.

RESULTS
Through my various attempts to include decoding skills in the classroom I discovered some interesting results. Most of the students do not want to take the time to decode a word, so they will wait for it to be pronounced, skip it or pronounce it incorrectly and continue reading. Another problem with the Spot and Dot method is that it calls for basic phonics skills to be in place for it to work correctly.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY
After completing this project, I can see the importance of phonemic awareness. When the student cannot correctly identify sounds, there is no value in chunking a work. To do this project again, I would start the year by reviewing and teaching different sounds and combinations so the students would be well aware of this information before even beginning the decoding process. This strategy could be very helpful, but only when it had been taught in combination with other critical factors in reading.
Using Graphic Organizers to Promote Retention  
Jessica McEnroe

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:
To meet the school improvement plans to increase comprehension, graphic organizers were introduced in the 2nd grade.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:
Graphic organizers served as an overview of our assigned book. Because the graphic organizers were given to the students prior to reading, the graphic organizers allowed us to focus on the main concepts of the reading book.

RESEARCH DESIGN:  The type of data collected for this project will comprise of completed graphic organizers as well as a completed test at the conclusion of each book. Half of the students will complete graphic organizers prior to the test, while the other half will have a discussion regarding characters, setting, problem and solution. The goal is to have both groups exposed to these areas, however, the test group will also fill out a graphic organizer to support their understanding of the book read.

RESULTS
The data from this survey proved that the graphic organizers did not make significant difference in the reading comprehension skills for the students. Looking at the results of both tests, none of the students tested had difficulty recalling characters from the story. However, within the first book, five out of eight students had trouble recalling the setting. Also, for the second book, only one of the eight students had trouble with the setting. When evaluating this information, the setting for book one was not as clearly marked within the book as it was for the second book.

DISCUSSION
The results from this study prove to me that these graphic organizers may be too much for a second grader. Discussion or completing one master graphic organizer as a group may be a better solution for the younger grades.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY
I would recommend that we have students complete the graphic organizers individually in the upper grades because:
Their attention span is longer
Their handwriting is more legible
They have more of an ability to “think outside the box”
They can work independently; they do not need the teacher as much

My recommendation for the use of graphic organizers in the classroom at this particular grade level would be to model a master copy that can be displayed for the students.
How Exposure to Vocabulary and Self-Selective Reading Can Improve Reading Ability
Rebecca Tilton

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
Will self-selective reading and more exposure to vocabulary improve students’ ability to read?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
In order to add additional exposure to reading and vocabulary, the first grade implemented a new reading program to join with the current program. The new addition is called The Four Block Literacy Program. The Four Blocks consist of guided reading, self-selected reading, writing, and working with words. Two blocks will be implemented: Self-selected reading and working with words.

RESEARCH DESIGN
Over the next eight weeks, the students will begin experiencing some of the changes in their reading program. The students’ progress will be checked through observation, records of child reading stories, comprehension tests on the computer and spelling tests. Every two weeks, the students will read a story to the teacher. The student will have several opportunities to read the story before they read it to the teacher. As the child reads the story, the teacher will underline each mispronounced word in the text and record the score. Every eight weeks, the children will be tested on their outlaw words. Throughout the study, the students will be tested regularly on the computer for comprehension.

RESULTS
As a result of my research, I found a variety of results in different areas. After incorporating the Four Block direction of self-selective reading, the majority of the students improved in their reading and comprehension skills. During the experimental weeks, the students’ scores on outlaw words and practice books improved overall. The class percentage rose from an average of 88%-99%.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY
In the future I will introduce a word wall at the beginning of the year. I would then spend several days going over words, checking for understanding and familiarity. This program will work best when introduced at the beginning of the year.
Q. A. R.
Michelle Swarthout

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
Does teaching the Q.A.R method enhance student understanding and comprehension of narrative text in the primary grades?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
I will introduce the Q.A.R strategy to my guided reading groups.

RESEARCH DESIGN
I will first collect baseline data before the implementation of Q.A.R. This will take about three weeks. I will then take a week to teach the strategy, model it and have the students practice it. I will collect data using the same story maps and comprehension techniques after the introduction of Q.A.R.

RESULTS
According to the data collected on group number one, students began responding on their own with fewer teacher prompts. In the baseline data, students had a difficult time determining the setting of the stories and also had a hard time deciding what happened to the beginning, middle and end of each story. The second group of students showed the same type of results. Before the implementation of Q.A.R., they struggled with the actual content of the story and the setting of the story. The ending data for both groups showed improvement on completing story maps. There were only a few teacher prompts after the Q.A.R. implementation for each data sheet.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY
As a result of my findings, I will introduce the question-answer-relationship strategy to my students. Having an understanding of this strategy will prepare the students for the intermediate grades in understanding what they read and consequently will increase the reading scores.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
To increase the reading ability and interest of a below grade level reader

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
The first grade student was to have the flexibility of choosing among several reading skill oriented software to use during a daily scheduled time period usually set aside for independent reading.

RESEARCH DESIGN
As skill practice was the intent of my project, I chose to have Lisa use the computer for drill and practice during Drop Everything and Read time. By using software, skills would be practiced in a stimulating and non-threatening manner.

RESULTS
Lisa did find the computer stimulating. She was eager to work on it and not intimidated by the software. Lisa’s reading ability did improve, but only slightly. She did not reach the primer level that I had hoped.

DISCUSSION and IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY
The most important aspect to change is to use software that explicitly reinforces what lessons are being taught in class or to have some type of follow-up activity for the software activity. Additionally, I could have improved Lisa’s learning process greatly if I had more follow-up. With the computer time as an isolated activity, there was no coherence between what Lisa did on the computer and what was happening in class.
Story Sequencing Activities
Terri Davis

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM: What impact do story-sequencing activities have on student reading comprehension scores?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT: The intent of the project is to identify a new strategy: story-sequencing activities.

RESEARCH DESIGN: The design of the project included modeling and 6 weeks and implementation of the strategy.

RESULTS
The effect of story-sequencing activities on comprehension is unclear. Only 1/3 of the students showed increased comprehension scores and almost half of the students scored lower on their comprehension test. There was a net decrease in comprehension scores of 75%.

DISCUSSION
Based solely on these figures, one might make the assumption that the project produced negative results. Only a few of the students appear to have benefited from the story sequencing activities based on only comprehension scores. There were other variables to consider and the test content was different for each test. It was not possible to take out the reading retell element from the comprehension test and to analyze it independently of the other comprehension components of the test. It was impossible to determine whether or not the students scored higher on reading recall alone. However, I observed that all students were enthusiastic about the activities, and the lesson objectives were met for each student.

PLAN FOR FUTURE ACTION:
I will plan; a similar future action research project, using a different comprehension assessment tool. I will design or obtain a comprehension assessment that evaluates the students’ abilities to pull out the main events in a story, and to put those events in proper order. I would recommend to other teachers to use story sequencing to build comprehension skills, based on the individual results of the activities.
Creating a Positive Environment
Leanne N. Geanes

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:
My problem is to create a program where Student A can work towards being more independent, self-controlled, able to follow directions and participate with confidence and positive self-esteem with his peers.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:
I would like to increase Student A’s ability to stay on task, follow classroom rules, respect others’ personal space and maintain personal control. To do this I will initiate some reinforcement vehicles to motivate appropriate behavior:

- Visual incentives
- Positive reinforcement with verbal cues
- Motivation to stimulation independent work
- Motivation of positive, acceptable behavior
- Create an environment free from as much distraction as possible

RESEARCH DESIGN
I will set up and implement the following strategies:

- Individual “Star” chart (10 stars=1sticker)
- Para assistance at beginning of day and during specific times
- Visual Cues (hand Signals)
- Assigned seating (group, individual, line transition, evaluation, testing)
- Removal of items from desk

These strategies will be focused on improvement in the following areas:

- To eliminate yelling out for assistance
- To increase desire to stay of task
- To improve personal body control and respect of others personal space
- To increase listening, following directions

RESULTS
Success was seen in:

- Staying on task and focused.
- Peer assistance in the morning to begin the routine.
- Visual cues with eye contact indicated he should wait until the appropriate time to ask or answer questions.
- Assigned seating helped him focus on appropriate behavior and staying on task
- The removal of Student A to an isolated area during evaluation eliminated distraction.
- The strategy of removing all items to eliminate distractions.

DISCUSSION and IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY
All of the strategies went well, but from this experience I would make a few modifications. I would meet with Specialists and other teachers who are involved with the student prior to establishing a plan and initiating strategies. This way there would be a smoother transition and more immediate effect.
Does Individual Goal Setting Improve Spelling Performance?
Julie Daicoff, University of Saint Mary

Statement of the Problem
This action research paper examines the affect of goal setting on spelling performance. The concept of personal motivation and goal setting is broad and could be applied to many academic areas. At Bonner Springs Elementary the QPA/SIP targets language arts as a goal. There are noted inconsistencies in the way spelling is treated within the classroom so spelling has received heightened disability. The problem to be considered within this research; does individual goal setting improve spelling performance?

Brief Description of the Project
Student goal setting is an important part of the education process. In this research students set their own goal, gain ownership, and feel connected with the goal. For Language Arts, there will be a connection between spelling scores and goal setting in the curriculum content.

Research Design
Students were asked to select a goal for a spelling test they would take at the end of the week. In the classroom spelling pre/post tests are taken weekly. The assessment includes both spelling test and dictation, so data in this project is combined as one spelling grade. In the action research project the established student goals will be averaged in relation to performance on assessment.

Result
Most students, eleven out of eighteen students, were able to set goals appropriate to their skill level. The variation of spelling goals over this time period shows that individuals generally stayed the same over time. However, there were five students that set lower goals throughout the weekly per/post testing. The analysis considers an individual students performance compared to their previous performance. Examining the data is could be determined that 50% of the students made their goals in the beginning of the week.

Discussion
The action research data was not consistent with one might expect and with what the experts described in a review of the literature. It would have been expected for students’ scores to improve with goal setting. The problem is however is that the same individual did not administer the spelling test for the same time periods. If this study was redone in a static classroom where external differences were minimized, it is predicted the results would be more favorable. Applications to future action; it was noted that students demonstrated a distinct ability to reach their spelling goals. Students who did not perform well on the spelling test rallied and challenged themselves to perform well on the next test. Overall, it is highly suggested that additional research in a static classroom environment be completed to further validate the action research results.
Washburn University is located in the capitol city, Topeka, Kansas, which has a population of approximately 124,000. Washburn's 6,000+ students have access to more than 190 programs of study and over 100 student organizations.

The Department of Education faculty is committed to preparing educators to work in rural, suburban, and urban settings and to educating leaders and professional specialty practitioners for leadership roles in schools and other community settings. We seek to facilitate the education and development of reflective educators along the professional continuum, from pre-service to nationally certified teachers, as well as individuals in educational leadership positions.

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Phonics Instruction for a Struggling Reader  
Jeff Bangs

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While working in first grade classroom, I was introduced to a student who was reading and writing well below grade level. I noticed that he has a very good memory and knows several difficult sight words, yet usually struggles with decoding even very simple new words. I chose to see what effect, if any, several weeks of intensive, one-on-one phonics study would have on his reading ability.

QUESTIONS THAT I HAD

• What are the student’s current deficiencies in terms of reading/phonics?
• How does intensive, daily, personalized instruction affect reading performance?
• What affect, if any, does this program have on the student’s focus and/or behavior?

RESEARCH DESIGN

• Pre-research word list
• Post-research work list
• Anecdotal records
• Interviews with Kindergarten and 1st Grade teachers
• Miscellaneous records from Kindergarten and 1st Grade

Learning Aids
• Phonics Windows cards by Carson-Dellosa
• Wipe-off Learning Cards (Phonics) by Good Grades
• Prof. Wacky’s Wahoo Word Lab by Trend Enterprises

RESULTS

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<th>Errors</th>
<th>Self-Corrections</th>
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Post Study Data

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CONCLUSION/IMPLICATIONS

The data shows that there was an improvement in his reading ability, at least in this isolated environment. Even more promising, however, was the difference in his attention to the process, his overall focus, and the type of questions he was asking. In general, he appeared to be better able to assemble sounds into a single word. This student should receive the additional assistance he needs now in hopes that he can catch up to his peers. The time and effort expended at this stage will help avoid more severe problems in the future.
Effects of Daily Language Intervention on
A Student with Language Delays
Pam Works

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
1. Will one-on-one intervention with a kindergarten student increase her scores in the areas of upper and lower case letter identification and high-frequency sight words?

2. Will the student’s confidence about pre-reading increase as a result of positive Intervention (the student currently had limited confidence in this area, and also has a low frustration level when she did not know something)?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
1. Blue’s Clues Alphabet Time CD-ROM
2. Lower case alphabet puzzle
3. Plastic Easter Egg Game (top-half had upper case letters on it; bottom half had Matching lower case letter on it)
4. Sight word flash cards

RESEARCH DESIGN
I was to meet with the student on a daily basis; for 15 minutes. We met in the Media Center for most of the sessions

Data Collection Resources:

RESULTS
From Week 1 to Week 4, the student showed 24% increase in her ability to correctly identify upper case letters.

From Week 1 to Week 4, the student showed a 27% increase in her ability to correctly identify lower case letters.

From Week 1 to Week 4, the student went from identifying 1 sight word to 5 sight words.
Grouping higher-level readers with lower level readers to improve comprehension.

Natausha Stewart

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In a class of twenty fourth graders, the majority of them were reading well above their expected level. There were four that were below a fourth grade level, and I was curious as to why. How could these students reach a fourth grade level and maintain it? What was it that was holding them back? However, I was not sure who to obtain the answers to my questions.

I decided to use literature circles to read A Letter to Mrs. Roosevelt by C. Coco De Young, as our novel study to our unit on Children of the Great Depression. As the teacher and I were determining the groups to place students in, I wondered if I could answer my previous questions via literature circles. I decided to place my highest-level readers into groups with the lowest level readers. I thought that I could observe the interaction between the group members to see if the higher level readers would act as motivators for the lower level readers.

If the students who were struggling could be involved in a more stimulating conversation about what they read, would their comprehension increase? What I found was very interesting, as well as rewarding.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

The way I arranged two of the groups was by placing the lowest level readers with the highest-level readers. The two groups that I focused on were the Dustbowlers and the Boxcar Bunch.

The Dustbowlers consisted of four girls. Who were the higher-level readers in this, while 2 students consistently received low Accelerated Reader scores. The Boxcar Bunch was a group containing four girls and one boy as well. The male student in this group was a very strong reader. There were four female students who scored very well on their Accelerated Reader tests, the other three usually did not.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Topic: Grouping higher-level readers with lower level readers to improve comprehension

Research Questions:

1. How do the lower level reader’s Accelerated Reader test scores change as a result of being grouped with higher level readers?

2. How does the observable literacy conversation change as a result of the lower level readers being grouped with the higher level readers?

Data Sources:

1. Accelerated Reader test scores
2. STAR results
3. Student observation
4. Audio-taped student conversations
Time Frame:

My research: April 8, 2003 – April 28, 2003
STAR research: August 15, 2001 – May 5, 2003

RESULTS

◊ During literature circles, I sat in on each of the four groups to listen to the conversation among students.
◊ I audio-taped one of the Dustbowlers literature circle meetings to listen for elevated conversation among the group.
◊ The teacher and I reviewed the students past and present STAR results.
◊ The teacher and I reviewed and compared the ten students’ Accelerated Reader scores from A Letter to Mrs. Roosevelt.
◊ Prior to allowing the students to take their Accelerated Reader test, I held a review session of the book.

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS

During the duration of literature circles I noticed that despite the Dustbowlers sometimes difficult meetings with students, their conversation was a whole really bloomed. Rather than simply talking about their literature circle tasks, they expanded upon what they had already written down. I often noticed that they would talk about multiple connections outside the book that related to their own lives. When it came time for the Dustbowlers to take their Accelerated Reader tests, they did well on average. One student, one of the lower level readers, scored 90%, while another student, did not improve and only scored 30%.

The Boxcar Bunch really improved on their conversation skills as a whole. The higher-level readers adjusted very well to the needs of the lower level readers. I was thrilled when I observed one student, a lower level reader, participating a great deal in the book talks. Unfortunately, one low reader scored 90%. I was very pleased to see that some of the struggling readers were able to benefit from the literature circle interaction.

Throughout this action research project I have discovered that there certainly are benefits to group discussions about books to improve comprehension. I also found that it does help motivate lower readers to be in groups with higher-level readers. As I observed the students in their literature circles, they came alive. I could really tell that they had read the book. Even if they did not enjoy a certain part of the book, I could still hear that they were interested enough to passionately discuss those parts as well. I could tell that the students were comprehending the book just from the questions the students were asking me. It was very rewarding.

Although group work is not always easy, it is well worth the extra effort when there are struggling students in a classroom. I feel that if given more time, or in my own classroom, implementing these opposite groupings would really start to show significant improvements in comprehension. These types of groups, I feel, could also benefit any other subject area. Overall, this was a fantastic learning experience for me.
Making Algebra Child’s Play
Glynis Kickhaefer

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

I chose this topic because algebraic concepts are one of our state mandated goals. I took a workshop called Making Algebra Child’s Play to help me teach some of these concepts. It is a hands-on approach that got me excited about teaching algebra to elementary students.

I also was excited about the chance to watch my students take responsibility for their own learning, and this problem allows the student to take charge, and puts the teacher in more of a facilitator role – once the basic skills are taught.

BRIEF DISCRIPTION OF PROBLEM

*Fifth grade classroom
*Small groups of 8 to 10 students
*This spring was an ideal time to try this, because I was fortunate to have a student teacher. While I was working with the rest of the small group, she was working with the rest of the class. We would switch groups the next day, thus giving us each more one-on-one time with our students.

RESEARCH DATA

I gave the students a teacher-made algebra pretest. Out of 21 students, 20 failed it. They completed 0-2 problems correctly. The one child who scored 6 out of 10 had some exposure to algebra in the 4th grade at another school.

The students were also given a survey to record their feeling about “algebra” before lessons were taught and after they had exposure to the Making Algebra Child’s Play lessons.

I found that most children had heard the term “algebra” before, and knew that letters were used with numbers, but that was the extent of their “pre” knowledge

RESULTS

*I gave the students a pre-algebra test – I recorded this information on a chart
*I taught four lessons given the Making Algebra Child’s Play kit. After I introduced the lessons, I took a backseat role, and had the students take over the modeling of different problems. They worked and argued a problem solved together. I would mediate when needed, and kept them on the right track when needed.
*I gave the students a post-test when the lessons concluded.
*Finally students filled out the teacher-made (Kickhaefer) algebra survey.

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS

*20 out of 21 fifth grade students did not understand algebra concepts at the beginning of the lessons in March
*At the end of four lessons, 19 students passed the beginning algebra test with flying colors. The two students that didn’t pass understood the processes of algebra, but their inability to master basic facts kept them from getting the right answers.
*Using this hands on method allow the teacher to see exactly where a student is “getting stuck” and help that student get back on the right track.

*Using this method allows for reciprocal teaching students take charge. When they are able to do this, they use the correct vocabulary, and are able to show other students how to problem solve. This makes the student a more powerful learner.

*Fifth graders think they know algebra skills after using this program. They feel that they know this material well enough to teach it to others.

*Fifth grade students CAN learn algebra skills!
How Can I Help First Grade Students Establish Comprehension?
Cindy Pounds

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
I chose this topic because;
● 3 students were struggling with comprehending literature.
● I want students to develop strategies to use when listening and responding to literature.
● I want students to express their predictions, think a loud, and recall events confidently.
● I feel students need to experience the comprehension process.
● I want to empower students to read for a purpose.

RESEARCH DESIGN
● 1ST Grade room, one certified teacher, student teacher, and paraprofessional for a 1 on 1 situation;
Language Arts; Establishing Comprehension
● Small group instruction - 3 students
● Student #1: quiet; sensitive, perfectionist; on grade level reader; not a lot of support from single mom;
appears to “go through the motions” of reading; difficulty retelling story elements/summarizing, misses
school frequently due to not feeling well.
● Student #2: quiet; transferred from prior school in January; lives with grandma; very poor support from
family; average reader; difficulty retelling elements/summarizing
● Student #3: seeks adult attention; appears distracted with events going on at home; very-poor support
from family; single parent with low intelligence, very low comprehension and motivation

Questions:
● How do pre reading, during reading, and post-reading strategies support reading
comprehension?
● What strategies influence student’s ability to recognize characters and the main events
in a story?

Data Sources:
● Say Anything! Strategy
● Think Aloud Strategy
● Story Pyramid
● Post-it Note Strategy

RESULTS
● sorted data by placing student samples in folders
● color-coded data to each question;
● Pink= How does pre reading, during reading, and post reading strategies support
reading comprehension= Say Anything Strategy; Think Aloud Strategy
● Blue= What strategies influence students ability to recognize characters and the main
events in a story. = Story Pyramid; Post-it Note Strategy
● peer evaluated by 5 Mentors in a whole group setting
● they commented that they liked the way I used calendars to help me organize my
design of the study
● they liked the way I color coded my data and encouraged me to continue doing so
● see charts, organizers, and calendars in the Appendices

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS
● I was able to color code based on associating which comprehension strategy correlates
with each research questions;
● Pink= How does pre reading, during reading, and post reading strategies support
reading comprehension= STRATEGIES: Say Anything Strategy and the Think Aloud Strategy.
● Blue= What strategies influence students ability to recognize characters and the main events in a story.
= STRATEGIES: Story Pyramid and the Post-It Note Strategy.
● pre reading, during reading, and post reading definitely support reading comprehension
● the Post-It Note strategy and the Think aloud strategy influenced student’s ability to recognize the characters and main events in a story the most.
● 1st/Pattern observed was the “Say Anything!” strategy proved to be the most difficult for each student. I suggest due to the fact that it was more verbal than the other three strategies.
● With each strategy that I taught, each student gradually improved on identifying story elements, re-reading, making real life connections, retelling, and extending their comprehension through writing.
● 2/3 students consistently proved to be NOT At-Risk on the Reading Practice Diagnostic Report
● On March 6, 2003 all three of the students were identified as “low points earned-less than ½ of median” and student #3 was also identified as low average percent correct (70%-79%) on the Diagnostic Reading Practice report
● On April 18, 2002- the Reading Practice Report indicates that ONLY student #3 continued to be At-Risk. She had “low points earned-less than ½ median” BUT… her average percent correct was 86.7% which marks improvement.
● Another observation/pattern I observed was that the students appeared more actively engaged across the curriculum when discussing, predicting and sharing.
● The pyramid activity was hard to complete for students at this level. HOWEVER… I feel that students 2&3 learned the MOST from this activity. (Student #1 was sick that day)They could recall and retell with much more detail.
● All three students showed improvement on their K-3 Developmental Continuum as well as on their Comprehensive Rubric for Story Retellings.
Powerful Writing Among Second Graders
Patty Seib

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
I chose to do an action research project on Powerful Writing because I heard about it at a staff meeting when two of my colleagues presented what they learned from a conference they attended. I have always tried to find a better way to teach writing to my students with the hopes that their writing conventions would also improve. One of the objectives for the second grade is to use capitalization and punctuation correctly. This is an area that continuously needs work. I hoped that through the use of this strategy, their writing skills would show progress. I read the manual my colleagues received from their conference and made copied of the activities to use with my class.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
My project was researched in a second grade classroom with nineteen students. I taught Powerful Writing to the whole class, but focused on six students for my research.
I chose three students for each area that I was assessing. For the conventions question, I chose to observe “Student #1” (a low-average reader and writer), “Student #2” (an average reader and writer), and “Student #3” (a very strong reader and writer). For the question regarding details, I chose “Student #4” (a low average reader and writer), “Student #5” (an average reader and writer), and “Student #6” (a strong reader and writer). My descriptions are generalizations in order to get a variety of levels to assess. Their ability levels are a combination of reading, spelling, and writing. They were chosen because they showed a weakness in the particular areas I wanted to research.

RESEARCH DESIGN
Questions:
1. What impact does using the Powerful Writing strategy have on students’ use of capital letters and punctuation correctly in their writing?
2. How does this strategy effect the students’ use of details in creative writing activities?

Data Sources:
1. Students’ daily writing journals for the use of details and conventions.
2. Creative writing samples for use of conventions.
3. Anecdotal records for both questions.
(I chose not to use the creative writing samples for question number two because the use of the writing tree already included using more details in the process. By using a journal writing without the prewriting activity, I felt I had a more accurate assessment of whether or not this process transferred into the students’ everyday writing.)

Plan:
1. Teach the parts of the Powerful Writing Tree (topic, major details, minor detail).
2. The students will practice making the “trees” as a class.
3. The students will make their own “trees”.
4. The student will put the tree parts into sentence strips of different colors for each part.
5. The students will edit the sentences on their strips.
6. The students will copy the strips onto a story paper.
I thought these lessons during the first few sessions to make sure the students understood the steps in using the tree. I then let them work independently on their own writings using the trees by themselves to see how they did. I did follow up lessons in the areas that seemed to be more of a challenge for the students. I then took a sample writing at that end to compare to my baseline for the beginning to check for growth in the areas I have targeted.

Data Gathering:
Baseline Data: I took a sample writing from the students’ journals as well as a creative writing sample (both with assigned topics) before the strategy was taught (Jan./Feb.). I then taught the steps of the
writing tree over several days and we did some whole class writings as examples. After that we used the writing tree to write a story about our spring break (Mar.)

Concluding Data: My WUT used the writing tree to have the students create a story titled “My Pet Dinosaur”. I also had the class write a final evaluation about the WUT in their journals (again, assigned topics, in late Apr./May).

RESULTS
I sorted the data by filing the writing samples into two folders. One file for journals and one stories. I also kept notes of comments I had or heard students say.

I compared the baseline samples of journals and creative writing stories to the final writings in the journals and stories, and listened to students comments. The result lead me to believe that this is a successful way to improve students writing in the areas of correct use of conventions and details. (see appendices)

My WUT was also doing an action research project using writing, so we spent a lot of time discussing the writing tree process and its success. We both felt that it was a great was to teach the inclusion of details in writing and made correct use of conventions easier for the students by looking at on sentence at a time. It was a struggle in the beginning for both the students, and us because this was a new process for them.

Findings:
Question 1: Previous writings had very few capital letter and punctuation. By using and editing the individual sentence strips before they wrote the final draft, the students did a better job of copying the sentences correctly and have capital letters and punctuation in place.
Question 2: In reading through each student’s writings, I could see a lot of growth in the use of details. The writing tree process made the inclusion of details very easy for the students to do. This seemed to have transferred over into their daily writing, even without the use of the prewriting activity. The length of the writings in the journals of my three target students doubled.
I also heard many comments from the students about how this was a lot easier and more fun than “the way we used to do it”. Once they understood the process, they seemed to enjoy writing a lot more than the “old” way I taught writer’s workshop!

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS
The Powerful Writing strategy is a great way to help beginning writers. I definitely plan to use this strategy in future years during my “writer’s workshop”. I believe it will help my students write better quality stories, reports, etc… because they will have a prewriting activity that helps them organize the writing and include the necessary details to make it interesting. This strategy uses such a step by step process that it makes it easier for the students to understand. The different colors of sentence stripes also helps the students to visualize the parts of their writing. By editing one sentence at a time, they also do a better job correcting their own mistakes.
I also learned that it is not an easy process to teach in the beginning. Each step must be done slowly and understood before moving on to the next level of the tree. I think that I will try teaching the “branches” of the tree differently next year. I will complete one branch (paragraph) before moving to the next one.
This year I tried completing each part of the tree going across (major details) first, then adding the minor details going down. That seemed more confusing for the students.
It is also very important to have PLENTY of colored sentence strips cut ahead of time! The students use certain colors (minor details) very quickly and then have to wait on you to get more cut. We also discovered that by stacking the strips in order and holding them together with a large paper clip, it made getting them out the next time much faster.
Overall, I really like this strategy and plan to improve on it next year!
Wichita State University, founded in 1895 as a Congregational institution, is distinguished from other state supported schools in Kansas by its urban setting. Wichita State's location in the largest city in Kansas enhances the traditional classroom experience by providing students greater opportunities in resources, contacts with business and government leaders, employment, and internships.

The College of Education at Wichita State University offers programs to develop skilled and competent teachers, administrators, counselors, school psychologists, speech and language clinicians, and other specialists. College faculty also contribute to the improvement of education at local, state, and national levels through their teaching, research, and professional service.

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Brain Gym: Results, Reflections, and Questions  
Denai Dalke WSU/WPS PDS Candidate

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Does structured physical activity positively influence student learning?

Does structured physical activity positively influence student behavior?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

A diverse group of kindergarten students were given a variety of structured physical exercises based on Brain Gym activities during the second semester of the school year.

RESEARCH DESIGN

22 Kindergarten students were pre-assessed on behaviors using an observational checklist. Students were then monitored weekly and reevaluated at the end of the semester. They were also given a computerized test in beginning and ending sounds as a pre- and post-assessment.

Students were instructed in Cross Crawls and Hookups and teacher directed to do these at several points during the day. They were also allowed to do them on a self-directed basis as needed.

RESULTS

Most of the students showed gains in time-on-task behaviors and few showed exceptional gains. A few who had scored significantly lower than the others on the reading assessment showed gains of 50% or more. It was also noted that many students added these exercises to their repertoire of self-management behaviors.

CONCLUSIONS

Many of the students struggled with the exercises in the beginning but became more proficient with practice. The students also were able to self-correct and peer-correct when the exercises were done incorrectly. The students enjoyed and looked forward to doing the exercises and they became part of the classroom routine that was continued after the candidate left. These activities only caused small changes in the classroom schedule and took a very short time to complete but utilizing the cross-hemisphere exercises was very beneficial to the students. The study generated additional questions to be addressed in the future: Would additional exercises increase the benefit? Are there others that are more useful? Will the students continue to use the exercise to self-manage in other classrooms?
Math and Manipulatives
Kristina Glover WSU/WPS PDS Candidate

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Does hands-on instruction increase student acquisition of math facts?

How does direct instruction impact students in math?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Two different groups of fourth grade students were given math instruction using different teaching methods.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A dual language 4th grade class with approximately 75% Hispanic ethnicity was used. Two groups of students were given a preassessment on ordering fractions. One group was then taught using whole class direct instruction including use of the overhead and worksheets. The other group used games and manipulatives in centers to learn the concept. These activities included fraction cards, Go Fractions, Capture Fractions, and Guess the Fractions. At the end of the unit, the students were again given an assessment on ordering fractions.

RESULTS

Of the two groups the students in the hands-on groups showed the best overall gain. These students showed a proficiency level of 80% or more.

CONCLUSIONS

The gains by the hands on group were remarkable but every student showed some aspect of progress. It was determined that a combination of whole class, direct instruction and hands-on small group strategies would be most effective. An 80/20 split would be most conducive to learning. 20% being the time spent on direct instruction, while 80% of time is spent on hands-on learning.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

What are successful intervention strategies for a below-grade level reader that the student can use on her own?

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

A 3rd grade student, significantly below grade level, was given one-on-one tutoring sessions that enabled her to learn various strategies that she could then use on her own to increase her reading skills.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The student’s reading level was based on her state and local assessments as well as anecdotal evidence of her teacher. She was below grade level in reading comprehension, fluency, and word recognition. The student was also interviewed about her reading skills and attitudes. In both areas, she scored herself low. She was given instruction in phonics because she did not understand the sound/letter connection. She was then given basic instruction in “chunking” and “stretch and read” to help decode words. She also exhibited problems with tracking and was given strategies to help. Instruction began with intensive one-on-one sessions for several weeks and then progressed to less frequent individual time and reminders about self-monitoring and usage.

RESULTS

The student showed gains on her in-class assessments for reading. Although she is still below grade level, she showed an improvement of 1.3 reading levels. She also showed remarkable improvement in her self-assessment of her reading skills and attitudes.

CONCLUSIONS

This action research focused on providing strategies that the student could use anytime without teacher assistance. The strategies were very successful for the student and raised her scores as well as giving her strategies that she could use herself. An added benefit of the interventions was the student’s feelings of self-worth and efficacy were enhanced.