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The Effectiveness of a Phonological Awareness with Decoding Training Programme for Three Struggling Readers During Their First Year at School

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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2011

I certify that the thesis entitled The Effectiveness of a Phonological Awareness with Decoding Training Programme for Three Struggling Readers During their First Year at School and submitted as part of the degree of Master of Educational Psychology is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this research paper (or part of the same) has not been submitted for any other degree to any other university or institution.

Signed_____

Date_____

Abstract

The intention of this study was to add to the already substantial body of research regarding the instructional conditions that need to be in place to accelerate reading development in young children who are experiencing early reading failure in New Zealand schools. This study aimed to examine the efficiency of using an empirically validated approach to teach phonological awareness and decoding to struggling readers during their first year of schooling. The study was a single-subject, multiple-baseline across participants design involving three participants who were identified by their class teacher as falling significantly behind the Ministry of Education benchmark for reading acquisition after 6 months of schooling. The intervention programme was a moderated version of Phonological Awareness Training for Reading (Torgesen & Bryant, 1993) which included clearly structured games and activities focused on developing phonological awareness and knowledge of letter-sound patterns. Instructional sessions took place four times a week for 30 minutes over 6 weeks. Ongoing assessments demonstrated the existence of a functional relationship between the intervention and dependent variables of blending and segmenting accuracy, pseudo-word reading, and word recognition accuracy. The latency effect between the introduction of the intervention and the change in dependent variables was examined to determine the process of change. Improvements in these reading-related skills appeared to generalise to accuracy and fluency in reading connected text, assessed by their reading book level. The educational implications and limitations of the study are discussed.

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