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The Effectiveness of a Teacher Aide- Instructed Beginning Reading Intervention with an Emphasis on Phonological Processing

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

Master of Education (Special Education)

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New Zealand

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2001

I certify that the thesis entitled

The Effectiveness of a Teacher Aide-Instructed Beginning Reading Intervention with an Emphasis on Phonological Processing

and submitted as part of the degree of Master of Education (Special Education) 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.

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4 March 2001

Abstract

This study had several aims; first, to examine the phonological awareness skills of 6 and 7-year-old children; second, to identify students who appear to be at risk for difficulty in acquiring reading skills; third, to ascertain whether a teacher aide-instructed reading programme, which included systematic training in phonological processing strategies and letter-sound relationships, would be effective in enhancing the literacy skills of those children.

Twenty-four out of 64 7-year-olds were identified as scoring the lowest on a test of context-free word recognition. They were then given a battery of tests that measured skills in phoneme awareness, decoding skills, reading connected-text and reading comprehension. The 24 children were then matched on the basis of his or her raw scores on a context-free word recognition test. Twelve children received an intervention under teacher aide instruction, while 12 children received no intervention. After 24 weeks on the programme, the intervention and control children were tested using the same pretest battery. Follow-up testing was also conducted after two years using the context-free word recognition test and a test of reading accuracy.

Results suggested that the teacher aide-instructed intervention programme was a particularly effective procedure for those children deficient in phoneme awareness, decoding ability and context-free word recognition skills, and that improvements in those skills led to improvements in overall reading.

Teacher aide assistance in reading for those children identified as at risk may not be including direct, systematic instruction of letter-sound relationships and phonological processing skills; the skills which children need in order to become successful readers. This issue is discussed, as well as appropriate identification of children at risk, the use of teacher aides in instructional settings, and educational implications when planning intervention programmes in general.

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