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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Sylvia Sisk Vanzant entitled "The Effects of Two Organizational Patterns on Reading Achievement in First Grade." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Elementary Education.

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THE EFFECTS OF TWO ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS ON READING ACHIEVEMENT IN FIRST GRADE

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ABSTRACT

Most of the recent research concerned with reading instruction focuses on method, with only a few studies dealing with the organizational pattern used in the classroom for reading instruction. Since the organizational pattern determines what takes place during the reading instruction period, research should be more concerned with this aspect of teaching reading. It was the purpose of this study to test the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between the word recognition scores of first-graders instructed in reading using a whole group organizational pattern and first-graders instructed using a three-to-five group organizational pattern.

2. There is no significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of first-graders instructed in reading using a whole group organizational pattern and first-graders instructed using a three-to-five group organizational pattern.

Two first-grade classes from the Franklin County School System, Franklin County, Tennessee, were selected for this study. There were forty-eight students enrolled in these classes. Those students who were in first grade for the second year and those enrolled in Special Education classes were excluded from this study.

The First Reader Achievement Test for the Harper and Row Design for Reading, the basal reader series used in both classes, was administered to the two first-grade classes upon completion of the First reader, or at the end of the school year if the First Reader had not been completed. The scores for word recognition and comprehension obtained from this test were analyzed using the analysis of covariance, with a probability level of 0.05. The Metropolitan Readiness Test was administered to each class at the beginning of the school year. The scores on this test for each group were used as a covariant to equalize the groups since already-formed groups were used.

There was not a significant difference between the scores of the two groups on word recognition. There was a significant difference between the scores for the two groups on reading comprehension in favor of the whole group organizational pattern.

On the basis of these findings, one could say that perhaps the students in both groups could read words. Perhaps the group taught using the whole group organizational pattern were better readers. Because of the significant difference in reading comprehension scores, it seems reasonable that the students in the whole group class were more successful in getting information from what they read and in answering questions.

Learning to comprehend what is read is an essential element in reading instruction. The whole group class had more time each reading period since the period was longer and there were two periods per day to read and discuss the reader selections with the teacher.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND THE EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

There are no definite figures on the extent of reading problems, but it is estimated that as many as one-third of today's school children do not read well enough to meet the standards set by schools and society (Karlin, 1971). The schools have taught many children to read well, but it cannot be denied that schools have failed to reach a large group of the school population.

In order to improve reading instruction, the educational community periodically reviews and changes its instructional strategies and organizational patterns to better meet the educational needs of students. In an attempt to provide a more effective approach to reading instruction, this researcher challenges the classroom organizational pattern most commonly used for primary reading instruction in today's schools. The organizational pattern determines to a great extent what actually takes place during the reading instruction period.

A few decades ago the "whole group" organizational pattern was used. Under this type of structure emphasis was placed on drill and group recitation. Teachers felt every child should be doing the work of that particular grade; hence, a single standard was set for every child in the class.

A few decades ago, in an attempt to provide for individual differences in reading ability and rates of growth, the "three-to-five group" organizational pattern within the whole class was adopted. In this structural pattern children are assigned to three-to-five reading groups per class on the basis of reading ability or achievement test scores. Reading instruction is given to each small group separately while other pupils are engaged in independent reading-related activities. Currently, this is the most commonly used organizational pattern in primary reading classes.

Even though schools have grouped children in an effort to provide more effective reading instruction, many, many children are still having reading difficulties. Research should be concerned with the effects of the current dominant organizational pattern on children's reading achievement and on children themselves.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE

The most commonly used organizational pattern for reading instruction is the "three-to-five group" pattern (Miller and Hering, 1975). In an attempt to provide a more effective approach to reading instruction, this study focused on the "whole" group organizational pattern. The hypotheses tested in this study were:

1. There is no significant difference between the word recognition scores of first-graders instructed in reading using a whole group organizational pattern and first-graders instructed using a three-to-five group organizational pattern.

2. There is no significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of first-graders instructed in reading using a whole group organizational pattern and first-graders instructed using a three-to-five group organizational pattern.

II. METHOD

Description of the Subjects

Two first-grade classes from the Franklin County School System, Franklin County, Tennessee, were selected for this study. There were forty-eight students enrolled in these classes. Those students who were in first grade for the second year and those enrolled in Special Education classes were excluded from this study.

Since the classes were from different schools in Franklin County, the two groups used in the study were from two schools with similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Both schools serve small-town and rural populations.

Measurement of Reading Readiness

The Metropolitan Readiness Test, Level II, Form P was administered during the third week of school. This

test measures traits and achievements of school beginners that contribute to their readiness for first-grade instruction. The scores from this test were used to form more homogeneous groups for comparing achievement test scores.

Measure of Achievement

The First Reader Achievement Test designed to accompany the Harper and Row Design for Reading series was used as the measure of achievement. This test was administered to the pupils upon completion of the First Reader, or at the end of first grade. It is designed to measure the reading skills stressed in the reading program. The scores for word recognition and comprehension were used in comparison for this study.

Procedures

The following criteria were set for selection of the classes:

1. The classes selected were to be representative of the two organizational patterns being studied.

2. Classes were to be selected from different schools.

3. Each teacher involved was not aware of the identity of the other group involved in the study.

4. The schools were to be matched as closely as possible according to socioeconomic backgrounds.

5. The number of years of teaching experience for each teacher were to be approximately the same.

The principals of the two schools selected distributed a questionnaire to their first-grade teachers to obtain information concerning the reading programs. A copy of this questionnaire is included in Appendix A. The teachers were not aware that this information was to be used by anyone other than their principals. The principals of the respective schools furnished information as to the years of teaching experience for each teacher.

The questionnaires were reviewed and one class was chosen from each school.

The test scores were obtained from the principals. The Metropolitan Readiness Test and the First Reader Achievement Test were given as a part of the regular curriculum by these schools. The two teachers involved were never aware of the fact that their classes were being used in this study.

Method of Instruction for Three-to-Five Group Class

The students in this group were placed into three groups on the basis of readiness test scores and the teacher's observations. After a few weeks of reading instruction the children read to "try out for reading teams." There were three groups formed from these "try-outs." Group I was "highest," Group II was "middle," and Group III was "lowest."

If time permitted, the three groups met with the teacher every day. Groups I and II each met for approximately thirty minutes each day and Group III for fifteen minutes each day.

The same procedure was followed for Groups I and II. During the reading period the story for the day was read, vocabulary words were reviewed, and letter-sound recognition skills were reinforced through the use of worksheets, workbooks, and games. Group III read teacher-made charts, reviewed vocabulary words and letter-sound recognition skills. This group also met with a teacher aide for reading work for thirty minutes each day.

While the teacher met with a group, the other students did their writing lesson, spent time at the listening center, worked on workbook assignments or activity sheets, learned new vocabulary words for the day's lesson, or read on their own in a supplementary reader. (The supplementary readers were read by students on their own time; class time was not used.)

Nine children completed the preprimers and primer. Eight children completed the preprimers. Seven children completed the readiness workbook and one preprimer. The First Reader Achievement Test was given to all children, as most were promoted to second grade.

Method of Instruction for the Whole Group Class

All children in the class participated in the basal reading program for one hour each morning. The hour was used for three major areas of reading. First, the new vocabulary words were presented, scenes from the stories were discussed, and aims for reading were set. The story was then read silently by the children, then read aloud by several children. The teacher then led the children in a discussion of the story. The second area was word analysis activities. These were provided with the basal reading program and included sound/symbol relation, speech/sound discrimination, sequence, and main ideas, to name a few. The third area was devoted to reinforcement activities. This included the use of workbooks which accompanied the basal readers and duplicating masters to reinforce and check reading skills, abilities, and understandings developed through the lesson. Also included were art projects, dramatizations, and games which pertained to the lesson/story for a given day.

Supplementary readers were also used in class. For about forty-five minutes each afternoon the children, in groups of six, read orally and discussed the stories from the supplementary readers. (Each group was reading the same story.) The children were given a reading assignment each night in these readers which were taken home. While the teacher worked with each group, the other children were

provided with seat work which pertained to reading, math, or a puzzle-type activity.

All children in the class were able to complete all six levels of the basal reading program and read twenty-five supplementary readers under teacher supervision.

III. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

1. Whole group instruction is an organizational pattern for reading instruction which involves the whole class working on the same selection in the basal reader at the same time. All of the children contribute to the discussion of the pictures and stories in the book. All of the children learn the new words and meanings in the selection, either before or during the reading. All of the children participate in sounding out hard words and in orally reading the selection to the class. All of the children participate in reading parts to answer questions asked either by the class or the teacher. Expectations are the same for all children involved in the basal reader program.

2. Three-to-five group instruction is an organizational pattern in which the students in a class are assigned to one of three-to-five reading groups, on the basis of teacher judgment of reading achievement and readiness test scores. Reading instruction is given to each small group separately, while other pupils are engaged

in independent activities. Independent work would be related to reading activities centering around a workbook accompanying the basal reader. Dittoed sheets are frequently employed. Other activities may include coloring, writing, and cutting and pasting. Expectations are set for each group individually.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The population for this study consisted of two first-grade classes in the Franklin County School System, Franklin County, Tennessee. Therefore, the conclusions are applicable only to that population or a similar population.

The two classes were already formed and were not randomly selected.

V. STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF THE DATA

The scores for word recognition and reading comprehension on the First Reader Achievement Test were analyzed using the analysis of covariance ($p \geq 0.05$). The scores on the Metropolitan Readiness Test for each group were used as a covariant to equalize the groups, since already formed groups were used.

The following null hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significant difference between the word recognition scores of first-graders instructed in reading using a whole group organizational pattern and

first-graders instructed using a three-to-five group organizational pattern.

2. There is no significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of first-graders instructed in reading using a whole group organizational pattern and first-graders instructed using a three-to-five group organizational pattern.

VI. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The ever-increasing number of students who are faced with reading problems, the persistent number of high school dropouts (and high school graduates) with reading difficulties, and the large number of remedial reading programs which have been introduced in the schools point to the need for more effective instruction in reading.

Some of the factors which affect a child's learning to read are: experiential background, attitude of the teacher, child's interest and motivation to read, and feelings of self-worth (Marita, 1966; Frymier, 1964; and Schubert, 1978).

The most common organizational pattern in use today is the three-to-five group organizational pattern (Marita, 1966). Research has not yet determined the best method of classroom organization for instruction. Koontz (1961) found no significant difference in achievement of students in three types of grouping situations. Marita (1966) found

no significant difference between three organizational patterns for instruction.

A teacher's attitude toward the child is one important factor which affects a child's learning to read. Teachers regularly report that they do not enjoy teaching the lower groups when students are grouped (Findley and Bryan, 1971). Pfeiffer (1967) reported that most teachers who taught low-ability groups expected their groups to make little progress. Heathers (1969) asserted that the quality of instruction in low-ability groups tends to be inferior. In fact, most recent studies suggest that, when grouping does affect student achievement, the affect is usually negative--students placed in low groups suffer an educational decline (Findley and Bryan, 1971).

The child's attitude toward reading and his feelings of self-worth are other factors which are affected by grouping. Williams (1972) found there was a significant relationship between grouping and academic motivation. When Mann (1960) interviewed students in different reading groups about reading, he received only negative responses from those students in the "low" groups. Kierstead (1963) also interviewed students about grouping and found the "higher" groups felt comfortable socially; the "slower" groups did not.

It is not good for those in the "high" sector to feel they are superior to most of the other children in their class. The negative self-concept possessed by those

children in the "low" group does not improve feelings of personal worth, nor is it conducive to development of aspiration, motive, and drive--all of which are essential for achievement in reading (Stauffer, 1966).

Since the basic goal in teaching reading to children is to make readers of them, it would seem that teachers should be concerned about developing a positive attitude toward reading. Educators should also be concerned with the relationship between the teacher and the students as an important factor which affects success in learning to read.

Because grouping for reading instruction has many disadvantages and does not seem to be providing every child with instruction which enables him to be an able reader, perhaps teachers need to take another look at the whole group organizational pattern for reading instruction.

VII. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter I of this study includes a statement of the purpose, a description of the method and procedures used in the study, a statement of the limitations and definitions pertaining to the project, a description of the statistical treatment of the data, and a discussion of the importance of the study.

Chapter II summarizes some of the literature related to the study.

Chapter III contains the statistical analysis of the data and the presentation of the findings.

A summary of the study and a statement of the conclusions are included in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

There was extensive research dealing with grouping children for instruction in reading during the fifties and sixties. There seems to be much less research dealing with organizational patterns for reading in the seventies. Much of the literature indicates that grouping has little positive effect on student achievement, self-concept, and motivation.

Schools exist to help children learn. The basic purpose of the elementary grades is to help children learn to read. Reading is considered so important because success in school depends on the child's learning to read.

Some of the forces which affect a child while he is learning to read are: experiential background, the availability of reading material, the value which parents place upon learning to read, the skill, personality, and attitude of the teacher, and the student's desire and emotional stability, to name a few (Frymier, 1964, p. 90). Also, the child's interest and motivation to read and feelings of self-worth are important factors (Marita, 1966).

There is very little research which deals specifically with the comparison of organizational patterns in teaching reading. Therefore, the survey of the literature deals with classroom organization for reading, relationship

between learning to read and real and vicarious experiences provided by the teacher, integration of the language arts, teacher expectations and teacher preferences, student mobility in grouping situations, effects of grouping on children's psychological and social development, and a comparison of different methods of classroom organization.

Classroom Organization for Reading

The organization of the classroom reading program determines what takes place during the reading instruction period. The organizational pattern used for reading instruction has varied over the years. At present, the traditional method of "whole-group" instruction has been almost abandoned in favor of grouping for reading instruction (Dolch, 1954).

The assignment of pupils to specific groups for instruction in reading is a well-established, little-questioned practice (Miller and Hering, 1975). Students are assigned to one of three-to-five reading groups on the basis of teacher judgment and achievement test scores (Marita, 1966). The general rationale for grouping is an attempt to reduce the range of abilities within the group so that the teacher can come closer to meeting the needs of individual pupils (Mann, 1960). The groups differ in a number of ways. For example, the amount of learning expected to take place, the rate of learning given, the

learning experiences which are provided and perhaps the individual expectations established by the teacher (Miller and Hering, 1975).

Relationship Between Real and Vicarious Experiences Provided by the Teacher

Reading is not merely the mastery of mechanics, the ability to translate visual symbols into corresponding sounds, nor the ability to recognize familiar words. Smith (1961) stated that the process of reading requires that the reader bring meaning to the printed page in order to take meaning from it. According to Marita (1966), the essence of the reading process is perceptual and conceptual, rather than sensory, even though the reading act must begin by the reader reacting visually to graphic symbols. Therefore, for adequate conceptual background, real and/or vicarious experiences should form an integral part of reading instruction.

Because of real and vicarious experiences provided for the class, interest is usually high and acts as a motivational force. Williams (1972) found in a study of sixth-grade pupils a significant relationship between grouping patterns and academic motivation.

Integration of the Language Arts

In a study which involved thirty first-graders, 789 pupils, three methods of coordinating language arts instruction around basal reader instruction were compared.

Callaway, McDaniel, and Mason (1972) concluded that achievement in the language arts is increased when the instructional program in one of the language arts, such as spelling, composition, speaking, or reading is carefully coordinated, or correlated with, the instructional program in the other language arts. Failure to correlate or coordinate appears to lessen achievement in the language arts.

Teacher Expectations and Teacher Preferences

Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) asserted, on the basis of research presented in Pygmalion in the Classroom, that teachers' expectations for student performance function as self-fulfilling prophecies. As Davis (1960, p. 215) has pointed out, "Attention to the process of grouping itself is less important than the type of instruction which is given to the group." Johnson (1970) suggested that teachers do not change their behavior to take advantage of grouping. Teachers were not provided with necessary skills and curriculum materials that were aimed specifically for different levels of students. Pfeiffer (1967) reported that most teachers who taught low-ability groups expected their groups to make little progress. Heathers (1969) asserted that the quality of instruction in low-ability groups tends to be inferior. In fact, most recent studies suggest that, when grouping does affect

student achievement, the effect is usually negative. Students placed in low groups suffer an educational decline (Findley and Bryan, 1971).

In a study which involved first-graders, Brophy and Good (1970) found that teachers demanded better performance from those children for whom they had higher expectations, and were more likely to praise such performance when it was elicited. In contrast, they were more likely to accept poor performance from students for whom they held low expectations, and were less likely to praise good performance when it did occur, even though it occurred less frequently. Achievement levels of the classes were related to the teachers' performance demands and expectations. In a study which involved eleventh-grade English teachers teaching classes of two different levels of ability, three of four teachers teaching low-ability classes believed little progress could be expected from their lower groups. The teachers indicated that those expectations were reflected in limited assignments and lower goals (Pfeiffer, 1967).

An example of the effect of teacher expectation on performance is found in a study by Douglas (1964). A group of high-ability students were assigned, at age eight, to different groups. Some were assigned to groups higher than their ability suggested; some to groups lower than suggested by their ability. Also, a group of low-ability students were similarly misplaced. Three years later, at

age eleven, the effects of grouping were observed. The same results were observed for both high- and low-ability students: those students placed in higher groups improved; those students placed in lower groups deteriorated.

Teachers regularly report that they do not enjoy teaching the low group when students are grouped (Findley and Bryan, 1971). Miller and Hering (1975) conducted a research project to see if there would be a significant relationship between student's placement in reading groups at first grade and the teacher's preference for teaching the student to read. The teachers were instructed to list their children in order of their preference for teaching them reading. A correlation of 0.5215 of reading group with teacher preference for teaching reading supports the belief that teachers do prefer to teach better students.

Student Mobility in Grouping Situations

If the three-to-five group organizational pattern is used, there is a need for this grouping to be "flexible." "The composition of these reading groups must not be rigidly fixed," said Gray and Reese (1957, p. 160). "Such groups should be arranged so that a child can move readily from one group to another," wrote Bond and Wagner (1960, p. 375). "Good grouping practices never form rigid lines between good and poor readers" (Whipple, 1953, p. 70). Groups should be tentative and flexible. Mackler (1969)

concluded from data collected in a longitudinal study of more than one thousand children in a Harlem ghetto school, that placement into a low group has permanent effects on the student. If a capable student is assigned to a low group, the road to the top is very steep. In first-grade class, the low group is filled with immature students who cannot learn as quickly as students in the top group, and much teacher time is spent in dealing with student needs and problems, rather than with instruction. According to Mackler, it will be difficult for students to succeed under such circumstances, but if they do, they might make the middle group by second grade. If they try very hard, they might make the top group by third grade. Mackler's data showed that no student made it to the top group after third grade.

In a study of group mobility, Hawkins (1966) found in thirty-four classrooms, grades one through six, over a seventeen-week period, that 41 percent of the teachers made no changes in reading groups for the duration of the study. Ninety-one percent of those making changes made fewer than ten changes. The rate of change was relatively constant in grades one through four, and only 8 percent of the changes occurred in grades five and six. Groff's (1962) findings were the same in a study that involved sixty-six second-, third-, and fourth-grade classes over a thirteen-week period. There were 2,179 pupils enrolled in the sixty-six classes. At the end of the thirteen weeks Groff found

there was an average of 5.4 changes made per class. He concluded that teachers do not review their groups and change pupils from one group to another as the authorities have prescribed.

Rist (1970) followed thirty students from kindergarten through second grade, and showed how powerful and lasting the influence of the first grouping was on their educational lives. After observing the class for eight days, the teacher made permanent seating assignments. At Table 1, the one physically closest to the teacher, the teacher placed those children who were highly verbal and those who came from the higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Interviews with the teacher revealed that the groupings were based on the teacher's expectations of students' success or failure. The teacher spontaneously verbalized low expectations for the children at Tables 2 and 3. The kindergarten teacher's differential expectations for the children were observed in differential teacher behavior toward the children at Table 1 and those at Tables 2 and 3. The teacher showed more attention and interest in the experiences of children at Table 1. Students at Tables 2 and 3 received less contact with the teacher and less instruction, and hence, were less involved in classroom activities. The children at Table 1 picked up the teacher's low esteem toward those at Tables 2 and 3, and as the year progressed, children at Table 1 more frequently ridiculed children at Tables 2 and 3.

Rist followed eighteen of these children when they were placed in first grade, and he found that all children who had been placed at Table 1 in kindergarten were placed at Table A (the best group) in the first grade. No students from Tables 2 and 3 were placed at Table A. When these children entered second grade, data revealed the same pattern. Only those students from Table A were placed in the top group. Instead of forming groups on the basis of expected performance, these groups were formed according to the children's previous group placement. Rist (1970, p. 422) explains the rigidity of the grouping system this way:

> No matter how well a child in the lower reading group might have read, he was destined to remain in the same reading group. This is, in a sense, another manifestation of the self-fulfilling prophesy in that a "slow learner" had no option but to continue to be a slow learner, regardless of performance or potential.

Effects of Grouping on Children's Psychological and Social Development

With some evidence which indicated that children are labeled in first grade (sometimes even in kindergarten) and carry this label throughout their school years, educators should consider the effects of grouping on the child's psychological and social development. Pryor (1975) believes that the first step toward improving a reader's academic problem should be changing the individual's feelings about himself/herself--one's self-concept. Combs (1957, p. 137) described self-concept as:

> . . . what a person believes about himself. . . . the individual himself infers from his experiences who he is and what he is. He perceives of himself as . . . liked or unliked, acceptable or unacceptable, able or unable, depending upon his experiences with the world about him, but most particularly from how people who inhabit the world treat him. All these perceptions contribute to this perception of himself, to his phenomenal self.

Students who needlessly find themselves in the bottom group in every phase of classroom life may come to view themselves as incompetent, and in time they may give up in the classroom and accept the idea that they are inferior. When this happens, students begin to mobilize their efforts to avoid potentially humiliating circumstances rather than try to learn new skills or to improve existing ones (Brophy and Good, 1970). There is evidence that strong self-concepts not only result from academic success, but often are antecedent to, and predictive of, reading accomplishment (Wattenburg and Clifford, 1964). According to Athey ([n.d.], p. 261),

> Poor readers are characterized by emotional immaturity, impulsivity, and negative feelings concerning themselves and the world.
>
> Good readers on the other hand, by feelings of adequacy and personal worth, self-confidence and self-reliance.

Motivation to achieve is only one aspect of the complex self-concept of the individual child, but an important factor to be considered in his success in school (Williams, 1972). Finger and Schlesser (1965) concluded from the data they collected that the academic motivation

of individuals is affected by a number of factors, but the important determiner of the pupil's desire to achieve in school is his feeling toward the school. Williams (1972) felt that a child's feelings toward the school and his motivation to succeed may be affected by grouping children. She collected information on intelligence quotients and a motivation scale was used to measure the academic motivation of the pupils. A significant relationship was found to exist between grouping and academic motivation.

Pride in self and feelings of personal worth are essential to respect and acceptance of others. Clausen (1960, p. 353) says, "Classroom organization must afford every child the chance to feel satisfaction in himself at the same time it is encouraging him to broaden his horizons and add to his talents." In a study involving 102 fifth-grade children, Mann (1960) found that grouping did not foster positive feelings in terms of ability or achievement. The teachers involved in the study used four groups. When the children were interviewed, there were no negative responses from those in groups one and two, only a few in group three, and only negative responses in group four (the lowest group). In a study with seventh- and eighth-graders, Kierstead (1963) also surveyed students on their feelings about grouping. He found the students in "higher" groups appeared to feel comfortable socially; the "slower" groups did not.

In order to see if there was an association between poor self-concepts and reading disabilities, Wattenberg and Clifford (1964) obtained measures of mental ability and self-concept for 128 children in the first semester of kindergarten. Two and one-half years later, measures were obtained of their progress in reading, and self-concept measures repeated. The measures of self-concept taken in kindergarten proved significantly predictive of progress in reading. The results of a three-part study by Lynch and Haase (1976) involving kindergarten, first-year and third-year students indicated that changes in self-concept do accompany changes in reading achievement. The effects on self-concept appeared to be small but accumulative.

Comparison of Different Methods of Classroom Organization

Research has not yet determined the best method of classroom organization for instruction. Koontz (1961) divided about 150 fourth-graders according to their scores on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, into four homogeneous achievement levels in arithmetic, language, and reading. At the end of one year of instruction, none of the groups were significantly different in any curricular area from equated heterogeneous groups that had received usual fourth-grade instruction. In a study involving sixth-graders, Balow and Ruddell (1963) compared homogeneous, heterogeneous, and cluster grouping. They found no significant difference between the three groups when the

Metropolitan Achievement Test was given after one year of instruction. Marita (1966) compared beginning reading achievement for 810 first-grade children in three organizational patterns: (a) whole-class, experience approach, (b) three-to-five group structure, and (c) individualized approach. She found no significant differences in achievement between the three organizational patterns.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

This study was designed to determine if there was a significant difference between word recognition scores and reading comprehension scores on the First Reader Achievement Test of first-graders taught using a three-to-five group organizational pattern for instruction and first-graders taught using a whole group organizational pattern. It is the purpose of this chapter to summarize the methods of analyzing the data and to present the results of those analyses.

I. ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST READER ACHIEVEMENT TEST

Experimental Design and the Statement of the Hypotheses

The First Reader Achievement Test was administered to the two first-grade classes upon completion of the First Reader, or at the end of the school year, if the First Reader had not been completed. The scores for word recognition and comprehension obtained from this test were analyzed using the analysis of covariance, with a probability level of 0.05. The scores on the Metropolitan Readiness Test for each group were used as a covariant to equalize the groups, since already-formed groups were used.

The analysis of covariance was used to test the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between the word recognition scores of first-graders instructed in reading using a whole group organizational pattern and first-graders instructed using a three-to-five group organizational pattern.

2. There is no significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of first-graders instructed in reading using a whole group organizational pattern and first-graders instructed using a three-to-five group organizational pattern.

Results of the Analysis of Covariance

Tables I and II present the data resulting from the analysis of covariance of word recognition and comprehension. Results indicated there was a significant difference between groups on the comprehension scores. The *F* was significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the second hypothesis was rejected. The analysis of groups on word recognition did not show a significant difference; therefore, the first hypothesis was not rejected.

Discussion of the Results

There was not a significant difference between the scores of the two groups on word recognition. There was a significant difference between the scores for the two

TABLE I

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE--WORD RECOGNITION

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value
Model	2	26.824	13.412	2.89*
Error	45	208.655	4.637	
Total	47	235.479		

*Not significant.

TABLE II

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE--READING COMPREHENSION

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value
Model	2	464.705	232.353	8.74*
Error	45	1,195.774	26.573	
Total	47	1,660.479		

*Significant at the 0.05 level of significance.

groups on reading comprehension in favor of the whole group organizational pattern.

On the basis of these findings, one could say that perhaps the students in both groups could read words, either these were part of their sight vocabulary, or they possessed sufficient word attack skills to figure the words out. Perhaps the group taught using the whole group organizational pattern were better readers. Because of the significant difference in reading comprehension scores, it seems reasonable that the students in the whole group class were more successful in getting information from what they read and in answering questions.

Learning to comprehend what is read is an essential element in reading instruction. The whole group class had more time each reading period, since the period was longer and there were two periods per day to read and discuss the reader selections with the teacher.

The teachers reported, of the twenty-four children in the three-to-five group class, nine children completed the preprimers and primer; eight completed the preprimers; and seven completed the readiness workbook and one pre-primer. In the whole group class, all twenty-four children completed all books designated first-grade level in the basal reader series. (First-grade level readers included one readiness book, three preprimers, a primer, a first reader, and a content reader.) All children in the

whole group class were promoted to second grade, and most of the children in the three-to-five group class were promoted.

Since the children in the three-to-five group class did not complete all the readers designated first-grade level, and since the readers in the basal reader series present skills which build on those in preceding readers, it will be necessary for the second-grade teacher to pick up the readers not read in first grade and have the children complete those readers before moving on to the second-grade level books. It seems that children may be reading below grade level readers in each subsequent grade. This may be an "ideal" way to teach reading, but how do the teachers handle the reading of other subjects' textbooks and avoid frustrating the children when they reach third, fourth, and so on, and may not have the necessary vocabulary to read and understand the textbooks?

The whole group class will be able to begin second grade with second-grade level readers and should be better able to use the social studies, science, etc., textbooks.

Since the sample was limited in size, it is difficult to draw conclusions from the data. The differences in comprehension scores could have been affected by the organizational pattern, since in the whole group situation the children did more teacher-supervised reading and more teacher-directed reading activities. The children in the whole group class may have a more positive feeling toward

reading and themselves, since they are using books they know are meant for their present grade and no one will be classified as "better" than or "worse" than others in the class.

II. SUMMARY

The results of the analysis of the First Reader Achievement Test have been presented in this chapter. Also, a discussion of the results has been included.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

Most of the recent research concerned with reading instruction focuses on method, with only a few studies dealing with the organizational pattern used in the classroom for reading instruction. Since the organizational pattern determines what takes place during the reading instruction period, research should be more concerned with this aspect of teaching reading. It was the purpose of this study to test the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference at the 0.05-level between the word recognition scores of first-graders instructed in reading using the whole group organizational pattern and first-graders instructed using a three-to-five group organizational pattern.

2. There is no significant difference at the 0.05-level between the reading comprehension scores of first-graders instructed in reading using a whole group organizational pattern and first-graders instructed using a three-to-five group organizational pattern.

Method

Two first-grade classes from the Franklin County School System were selected for this study. One class was

taught reading using the three-to-five group organizational pattern; the other was taught reading using the whole group organizational pattern. The First Reader Achievement Test was administered to each group upon completion of the First Reader, or at the end of the school year. This test was administered by the teacher of each class as a part of the regular classwork.

Analyses of the Data and the Results of the Analyses

The scores for word recognition and comprehension on the First Reader Achievement Test were analyzed using the analysis of covariance ($p \leq 0.05$). The scores for each group on the Metropolitan Readiness Test were used as a covariant to equalize the groups, since already-formed groups were used.

There was no significant difference between the scores of the two groups on word recognition. However, there was a significant difference between the two groups on the reading comprehension scores, in favor of the whole group organizational pattern.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Statement of the Conclusions

Since the sample was limited in size, it was difficult to draw conclusions from the data.

On the basis of the data, one could say that perhaps the students in both groups could read words,

either these were part of their sight vocabulary, or they possessed sufficient word attack skills to figure the words out. Perhaps the group taught using the whole group organizational pattern were better readers. Because of the significant difference in reading comprehension scores, it seems reasonable that the students in the whole group class were more successful in getting information from what they read and in answering questions.

Learning to comprehend what is read is an essential element in reading instruction. The whole group class had more time each reading period, since the period was longer and there were two periods per day to read and discuss the reader selections with the teacher.

The differences in comprehension scores could have been affected by the organizational pattern, since in the whole group situation the children did more teacher-supervised reading and more teacher-directed reading activities. The children in the whole group class may have a more positive feeling toward reading and themselves, since they are using books they know are meant for their present grade, and no one will be classified as "better" than or "worse" than others in the class.

Suggestions for Further Research

Suggestions for further research include the following:

1. Investigate further the difference in reading achievement of classes taught using the three-to-five group pattern and those taught using a whole group approach to determine if there is a significant difference in other areas of reading, i.e., word attack skills, word meaning.

2. Investigate the level of anxiety toward reading for students taught using three-to-five group and the whole group organizational patterns.

3. Investigate students' attitude toward reading to determine if there is a significant difference for students taught using three-to-five group and the whole group organizational patterns.

4. Investigate to determine if there would be significant changes in achievement, attitude, and anxiety if a child taught using one organizational pattern for reading in first grade was taught using another organizational pattern in subsequent grades.

5. Investigate teachers' feelings toward their students to determine differences, if any, in teacher attitude toward children in a three-to-five group situation and in the whole group situation. This could probably best be determined through observation combined with some type of interview and/or questionnaire.

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APPENDIX

Name_____

How is your reading program organized?

Whole Group

Small Group

If whole group, please explain how your program is organized, including the amount of time allotted to reading each day, teaching method, provisions for oral reading, whether or not supplementary readers are used, their use and amount of time allotted to their use each day. What type of provisions do you make for those children, if any, who are unable to participate in the regular reading program? For example, those students enrolled in Special Education classes.

If small group, how many groups do you have?

What criteria was used to place the children in reading groups?

Is it possible for a child to move from one group to another during the year?

When a child moves from one group to another, what criteria are used for evaluation?

How much time is allotted to each group for reading?

Do all groups meet every day?

While the teacher works with one group, what types of activities are the other groups engaged in?

What teaching method is used? Is the same method used with all groups?

Are supplementary readers used? Are they read under teacher supervision?

VITA

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