

THE EFFECTS OF FOUNTAS & PINNELL'S LEVELED LITERACY INTERVENION ON
KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS READING BELOW GRADE LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

A changing society means that educational practices need to change as well. In the past 20 years, education has seen its greatest reform history (Wolk, 2010). Best practices are constantly changing as researchers and educators find evidence based research of how students learn. Small ability grouping for literacy instruction is a common best practice in elementary schools today. Educators are moving away from the traditional basal reading series as it does not meet the needs, reading levels, or learning styles of all students. Guided Reading, developed by Fountas & Pinnel in 2006 has taken the place of most basal reading programs in elementary schools. Meeting the needs of learners in small groups also inspired Fountas & Pinnell to develop the Leveled Literacy Intervention System (LLI) as an intense literacy intervention for struggling readers in grades Kindergarten through second. This study examines the use of Guided Reading LLI in a North Kansas City Elementary School. A comparative study was done to determine the effects of LLI on Kindergarten students reading below grade level as compared to Kindergarten students reading below grade level who were instructed with Guided Reading. Students serviced with LLI grew, on average, 3.4 benchmark levels in reading. Students who were not serviced with LLI grew, on average, 1.7 benchmark levels in reading. The study showed that there is a significant difference in reading level growth when students reading below grade level are serviced with LLI compared when they are not. It is recommended that the practice of administering LLI in the regular education classroom remain in place.

INTRODUCTION

Background, Issues and Concerns

As society develops and standards continue to rise in education, it is becoming easier for students to fall behind in school. Being a good reader is the core of a good education. When a child enters the public school system this process begins the first day of Kindergarten. Next year, all Missouri schools will be implementing the Common Core State Standards, which raise the bar even higher for school aged children due to the increasing demands of a changing society and technology-driven world. During a time of increasing demands, we need to make sure that all students are receiving the best education possible and are given the tools to succeed. Meaning, all students need to be given an education that delivers quality instruction that will help well-performing students excel and also help those who are behind perform at their highest level of ability, leaving no child below grade level and catching those students who, in the past, may have “fallen through the cracks”.

Practice under Investigation

The practice to be investigated in this study is the administration of the *Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System (LLI)* to kindergarten general education students who are reading below grade level. There was an investigation to see if there is significant difference in the literacy growth between students reading below grade level who were serviced with LLI and students who were reading below grade level and were serviced with Guided Reading.

School Policy to be Informed by the Study

LLI is a reading intervention that, until this year, was being delivered to students by only reading teachers in the North Kansas City School District. LLI was recently implemented into the regular education classroom and is now delivered by classroom teachers. It is a wonderful, research-based program. However, it requires a lot of extra planning for the classroom teacher. It also requires 30 minutes of uninterrupted time with a small group of 3-4 children every day. This can sometimes be difficult when there are 20 other young children in the classroom.

The findings of this study will inform school officials, administrators and teachers on whether or not classroom teachers administering LLI makes a difference in our struggling readers' performance. If there is a significant difference, the policy should remain in place and teachers should receive training on how to productively keep their other students engaged while delivering LLI to struggling readers. In addition, interventionists and instructional assistants who might service LLI groups should receive training on how to effectively administer LLI with fidelity. If there is no significant difference, the policy should be revisited so that classroom teachers may use their time in ways that best suit all children.

Conceptual Underpinning

The reading level of a third grade student may project upon their chances of graduating high school (Morris, 2009). Reading on grade level is very important to a young child when it comes to their future academic success. The building blocks of reading are formed in grades Kindergarten, first and second. Research has shown that early intervention proves to be more successful than later remediation (Schmitt & Gregory, 2005). Early intervention can also reduce learning disability placements and long-term remedial instruction (Schmitt & Gregory, 2005). As

a child is growing in their academic skills between the ages of five and seven they learn to read easier and have more of a drive to master the sometimes difficult task of literacy. If not intervened early, reading failure can cause long-term issues of self-confidence and motivation to learn, affecting their entire school careers. In 2007, Wanzek and Vaughn found greater effects of intervention when provided in grades Kindergarten and first than interventions in grades 2-5.

It is crucial that America's children possess the skills needed to be a good reader so that they will one day be a citizen who can positively contribute to society. It is the job of educators of young children to make sure that every child is given the tools that they need to succeed and that supplemental interventions are put into place for those children who are at-risk of falling behind. We want every student to be a *reader*- "a literate person who experiences the power and joy of comprehending." (Scharer, Pinnell, Lyons & Fountas, 2005)

LLI will enable students to demonstrate high achievement in reading. It was specially formulated as a reading intervention that is intense, explicit and scaffolded (Hienneman, 2011). The intervention builds upon itself by spiraling through the lessons. The program is structured, predictable, challenging and flexible. LLI was proving to work very well with students who were being serviced by reading teachers. In Spring of 2012, the NKC School District chose to buy an LLI kit for all K-2 teachers and give them the staff development necessary to carry out the program in their own classrooms. This decision was controversial because while it is a great program, it requires quite a bit of extra planning as well as 30 minutes a day with 3-4 students. Concerns were raised on what to do with the other 20 students for the 30 minutes LLI was being taught. At Ravenwood, it was decided to implement the Daily 5 structure (Boushey and Moser, 2006) to keep the other students involved independently in literacy activities.

Statement of the Problem

The problem in this study is to determine if LLI proves to yield greater growth in Kindergarten students reading below grade level than Guided Reading when taught by a classroom teacher.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the effects of the Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System when administered to regular education kindergarten students who are reading below grade level. The information gained will help teachers and administrators learn more about the effects of the Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System in comparison to traditional Guided Reading instruction so that they may give students struggling with literacy the best educational practice.

Research Question

RQ 1: Is there a difference in the rate of literacy growth between general education students reading below grade level who receive Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System and general education students reading below grade level who receive Guided Reading?

Null Hypothesis

There is no difference in the rate of literacy growth in general education students reading below grade level who receive Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System than general education students reading below grade level who receive Guided Reading.

Anticipated Benefits of Study

The result of this study will inform school officials, administrators and classroom teachers of the effects of the Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System on the rate of literacy growth of general education students who are reading below grade level. It will help create more informed decision making on literacy interventions use for students who need extra support.

Definition of Terms

LLI: Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System

NKC: North Kansas City

Grade Level: The expected reading a student is to be reading on at a certain grade and month determined by Fountas and Pinnell's Benchmark Assessment System.

CCSS: Common Core State Standards

Leveled Texts: Texts that are leveled based upon readability and difficulty according to Fountas & Pinnell (2006).

ELL: English Language Learners

Summary

Students who are reading below grade level normally remain below grade level and this puts them at-risk for an unsuccessful future in their education (Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2001; Denton & Otaiba, 2011; Morris, 2009; Schmitt & Gregory, 2005). It is the job of educators to put interventions into place that help move them where they need to be. The NKC School district is beginning to deliver LLI in the regular education classroom as a reading intervention for students who are reading below grade level. This study will investigate if there is a significant difference in the growth of students reading below grade level who receive LLI and students who receive Guided Reading. The results of this study will be informative to

administrators, school officials and classroom teachers when making instructional decisions for students reading below grade level in the general education classroom.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Wolk (2010) reports that since the 1980s, the United States has been “engaged in the most intensive school reform effort in its history” (p. 16). Educators are being innovative, collaborative and constantly changing best practices based upon research based outcomes. Teaching to a whole group of students the same way from the same level book everyday does not yield high quality results. Students have extremely easy, fast and engaging access to information and educational delivery needs to meet the needs of their lives and the society they live in. This requires individualized learning (Moore & Berry, 2010). Educators are expected to foster to students’ needs while at the same time raising scores every year on widely administered standardized tests (Moore & Berry, 2010). In order to do this, reading must be taught in small groups that cater to the needs of the individual readers.

Ford & Opitz (2008) report that teaches are rediscovering the value of small groups to differentiate reading instruction in their classrooms. Teachers use small group for instruction because the structure makes it easier to cater to the needs to individual students. Good teachers know that what works for one child does not always work for others and approaches their job with humility and an open mind (Tomlinson, 2001).

Basal readers were not fostering great reading outcomes as they only target a certain reading level and a certain learning style. In addition, the teacher centered whole group instruction that consisted of choral reading, skill worksheets and a blanketed district curriculum leaves no room for choice and therefore leaves students disengaged (Gahb, Kaiser, Long & Roemer, 2007). Whole group teaching for reading was becoming unpopular because the basal readers were not providing rich literature and the students were not remaining engaged. Grade level texts were leaving students behind as well as boring those students who were reading above

grade level. Therefore, when Fountas & Pinnell introduced Guided Reading in 1996 based upon the foundations of Marie Clay (1991), it seemed like a novel idea. What better way to meet the needs of every student than to meet with them 2-4 times a week based upon their needs in a group of peers with similar strengths and weaknesses?

Small groups allow educators to meet all students where they are academically whether it be to enrich what they have already learned, reteach comprehension and decoding strategies, or pull them back a few grade levels to help close the gap between the low students and their peers. When teaching in small groups, students are grouped by needs and abilities. Ability grouping refers to “the process of teaching students in groups that are stratified by achievement, skill or ability levels.” (McCoach, O’Connell & Levitt, 2006). A study by McCoach, O’Connell & Levitt in 2006 found that, on average, reading gain was positive across all children with the use of ability grouping. Evidence is beginning to show that classroom teachers who group their students by ability for instruction while differentiating and/or individualizing instruction have students with significantly greater reading outcomes than teachers who teach solely whole group (Denton & Otaiba, 2011).

When teaching in small groups, teachers can use leveled texts to cater to the needs of their students. Students are grouped homogeneously and are using books to practice their decoding and comprehension strategies with the guidance of a teacher on their instructional reading levels. In their article about teaching flexibly with leveled texts, Glasswell & Ford (2010) state that small group instruction benefits students reading below grade level because they can be serviced with skill instruction instead of spending time reading texts from the basal whole group that were too difficult for them. The leveling system is a common feature among most elementary reading programs (Glasswell & Ford, 2010). Teaching in small groups is the

philosophical theory behind Guided Reading and LLI and is a core strength the two programs have in common.

LLI is a series of planned daily 30-minute lessons that was designed to help struggling readers in grades Kindergarten, first and second (Heinemann, 2011). The research behind LLI is based upon empirical reading research, vocabulary acquisition and student motivation.

(Heinemann, 2011; Center for Research on Educational Policy, 2010). LLI is a short-term program written for small groups as a supplemental literacy intervention (Ransford-Kaldon, Flynt & Ross, 2011). The objective of LLI is to accelerate struggling readers so that they may quickly close the gap between their personal reading achievement and their expected reading level (Center for Research on Educational Policy, 2010; Heinemann, 2001; Ransford-Kaldon et. al, 2011)

LLI is described as a *system* because it incorporates reading, writing and word work, all which spiral systematically through the leveled text system by Fountas & Pinnell (2006) (Heinemann, 2011). The system is published in 3 levels: Kindergarten, First and Second grade. (Harvey, 2011). LLI is designed to provide 14-20 weeks of daily, intensive reading interventions. LLI is considered an intervention because it is to be taught in addition to regular curriculum reading instruction.

LLI lessons are structured the same every day so that they can be predictable for the students. The first ten days are set up to establish a routine. The first ten days begin with a lap book for shared reading and then the students read the same text in a little book. The lessons then move on to comprehension discussions, shared writing, word work, and take homework. The structure and predictability of the lessons help students to feel comfortable in their learning.

Lessons begin every day with a familiar read from the day(s) before. Students can read these familiar texts to build fluency and confidence. Students read every day at their instructional level with teacher support as well as on their independent level with little to no support. They then have a shared writing experience, word work, and are introduced to a new text.

(Heinemann, 2011)

Each day, students being serviced with LLI take home a folder with the books they have been reading. LLI has a strong home-school connection providing students with take home books to read with their families as well as word work and response activities to do during independent work time in class or as homework. (Heinemann, 2011)

LLI is a very prescriptive intervention. Lessons are clearly planned out and the teacher manual has a teacher script for LLI instructors. The system uses this structure to incorporate explicit instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and the expansion of oral language (Center for Research on Educational Policy, 2010). This is a benefit to students who need structure, routine and predictability. It also provides teachers with great examples of language and phrases to use when working with struggling readers.

LLI is designed to service 3-4 students 30 minutes a day. This creates a problem for many teachers because of classroom management. It is hard to find effective and highly educational literacy activities for the other students to do in the classroom while the teacher is meeting with the LLI group. This is classroom teachers' number one complaint about LLI. When the Center for Research in Educational Policy did the empirical study for LLI in 2010, they reported, "LLI teachers reported that the most frequently encountered logistical issue when implementing LLI was time and/or scheduling of LLI groups to coordinate with classroom teachers' schedules." (p. 6) From the teacher survey, the study also found that teachers found it

difficult to complete a lesson in the 30 minute time frame, disliked the inconsistency of the materials and had problems with online data system.

When it comes to positive teacher opinion from the same study, it was also reported that teachers enjoyed the design and saw significant gains in their students. LLI has also been praised for creating a solid home-school literacy connection, being highly motivating, and for incorporating the familiar read with the lessons everyday in addition to the instructional text levels. A good reading system incorporates a balance of support and challenge for skillful reading (Pinnell, 1999) and LLI does just that. It gives children responsibility and ownership of their reading early and often and this is very important when teaching children comprehension as well as decoding strategies (Miller, 2011).

Studies have shown that LLI is highly effective. In 2011, Ransford-Kaldon, Flynt & Ross performed a randomized controlled trial of a response to intervention using LLI. They reported on other studies that showed K-2 students being serviced by LLI made significant gains on the Gates-MacGinire Reading test with 25-44% of the students reading at or above grade level by the time they were completed with LLI. In their own study, they compared students who received LLI to students who received basic classroom reading instruction. Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIEBLS) were used as indicators.

For the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, a significant difference in the two groups was found. Kindergarten and second grade students receiving LLI exceeded students in regular instruction by 1 benchmark level (benchmarks leveled A-Z). First grade students receiving LLI exceeded students in regular instruction by 2 benchmark levels. On the DIEBLS measures for the Kindergarten students, there was a significant difference in nonsense word

fluency with the LLI students exceeding the control group. First grade students receiving LLI scored significantly higher than the control group in letter naming fluency, oral reading fluency and nonsense word fluency. There were no significant differences found in the two groups for DIEBLS in second grade students. (Ransford-Kaldon et. al, 2011)

In 2009-2010 The Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP) performed an empirical study to evaluate the efficacy of LLI. This research base is shown on Heinemann's website to support LLI. The study was reported from the first full school year the system was implemented in the participating schools. Students were randomly selected in 5 school districts and compared to a control group using a match-pair design. In this study, the progress was also assessed using Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System and DIEBLS.

After 38 days of instruction, kindergarteners being treated with LLI achieved a mean gain of 1.56 benchmark levels compared to 0.78 mean gain in the control group and significantly exceeded students who were not treated with LLI in nonsense work fluency and phoneme segmentation in DIEBLS. On average, after 78 days of instruction, first grade students being treated with LLI achieved a mean gain of 4.46 benchmark levels compared to 2.63 benchmark levels for the first grade control group. In first grade DIEBLS, the treatment group significantly exceeded the control group on nonsense word fluency, oral reading fluency, and letter naming fluency. Second grade students being treated with LLI achieved a mean gain of 4.46 benchmark reading levels after 73 days compared to 2.99 mean gain of benchmark reading levels in the control group. There was no significant difference found in the two groups in second grade DIEBLS. Overall, the Center for Research on Educational Policy reports, "Across the three grade levels, the current study found that LLI positively impacts K-2 student literacy achievement in

rural and suburban settings.” (p. 6) In this study, it was also found that LLI positively impacts ELL students and is effective with students who live in low socioeconomic areas (2010).

In 2011, Michael Harvey performed a study comparing LLI to Reading Recovery. Harvey wanted to know which intervention yielded greater results. In 7 elementary schools in the Union County Public Schools in North Carolina, LLI and Reading Recovery are both being implemented as literacy interventions. First grade students from three of the seven schools were selected to participate in this study. After the study was complete, LLI students gained an average of 5.12 reading benchmark levels compared to Reading Recovery students who gained an average of 7.22 reading benchmark levels. The ANOVA in this study yielded a p-value of 0.06 indicating no significant difference in LLI and Reading Recovery Interventions with an alpha level of .05. Students receiving Reading Recovery did exceed students receiving LLI. This can be contributed to the fact that Reading Recovery is a 1:1 intervention whereas LLI is a 1:4 intervention teacher student ratio. Both programs meet 14-20 weeks for 30 minutes a day.

Fountas & Pinnell developed Guided Reading in 1996. Fountas & Pinnell define Guided Reading as “an instructional setting that enables (teachers) to work with small groups of students to help them learn effective strategies for processing text with understanding.” (Ferguson & Wilson, 2009). Guided Reading is considered to be a ‘best practice’ in educational settings today because of the individualized instruction the structure allows (Ferguson & Wilson, 2009; Gabl, Kaiser, Long & Roemer, 2007; Ford & Opitz, 2008). Guided Reading allows teachers to group students homogeneously and select books that are not too easy yet not too hard and that present a variety of challenges for each small group of students (Gabl et. al, 2007). In the primary classroom, the purpose of Guided Reading is to provide scaffolded instruction to students of all reading levels (Ford & Opitz 2008).

Ford & Opitz (2008) state that Guided Reading requires teachers to determine what students already know and what they need to learn. Guided Reading is a great opportunity for first teaching of what students do not know and reinforcement of what they need to practice (Ford & Opitz, 2008). They go on to say that children learn to read by reading and that Guided Reading allows them to do this on their own level. This helps students become independent readers as quickly as possible. Because Guided Reading pinpoints each student's instructional reading level, the teacher is able to build upon their skills and knowledge base to steadily improve their language skills, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension skills (Shaffer & Schirmer, 2010).

Guided reading allows teachers to use a variety of rich literature beyond the basal series to engage students in the reading process. Amy Kulaga (2011) found that, "From my research, it was evident that the students were genuinely engaged by the use of wider range of texts for Guided Reading" (p. 24). Schaffer & Schirmer (2010) use the Guided Reading approach with their deaf and hard of hearing students because "the teacher can identify texts that are motivating and meaningful." (p. 41). An additional benefit of Guided Reading is that the basal series can still be utilized within the Guided Reading framework as texts in small groups (Ferguson & Wilson, 2009).

While reviewing the literature, it was found that LLI and Guided Reading are developed on the same philosophical basis of teaching in small groups with students of like abilities and areas of opportunity. Guided Reading is used to reach students of all levels and students are met with 2-4 times a week. LLI is designed as an intervention system to rapidly increase the skills of struggling readers and students are met with 5 days a week for 30 minutes.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

A quantitative study was conducted to see if there was a difference in reading growth of students reading below grade level who received LLI and students reading below grade level who receive Guided Reading. The independent variables are the Fountas & Pinnell LLI program and Guided Reading. The dependent variable is growth in reading level. If the difference is significant, classroom teachers should continue to administer LLI. If there is no significant difference, school officials, administrators and teachers should be informed so that students reading below grade level receive the best possible intervention to help them achieve reading success.

Study Group Description

The study group consists of Kindergarten students at Ravenwood Elementary School in the NKC school district who tested as reading below grade level in December of the 2011-2012 school year. These students will have received LLI between January and May and their reading scores will again be tested to measure growth as an outcome of the LLI treatment. The results will be compared to kindergarten students in the 2010-2011 school year who tested below grade level in December but received only Guided Reading from their classroom teacher.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

Reading level will be measured by the *Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System 1*. Reading levels of independent and instructional level will be determined. A student's instructional grade level will be used in this study. In the *Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System 1*, students read a leveled book and a running record is taken. Comprehension

questions are then answered and the reading level is derived based upon accuracy and comprehension. The reading levels begin with A and end with N. For research and statistical purposes, reading levels of A-N will be recorded with numbers 1-13. Reading level will be measured in May after the LLI treatment. Grade level in December is a level A. Those students who were included in this study were not reading at a measurable level in December of their Kindergarten year.

Statistical Analysis Methods

A Statistical Package (ASP) was used to calculate statistic equations in this study. Using ASP, an independent t-Test was calculated to find if there is a significant difference in reading growth when using data from students who received LLI as a reading intervention and students who received Guided Reading alone. The mean, mean D, df, and p-value were also calculated in ASP. The alpha level was set at 0.25 for this study. Microsoft Excel was used to organize data and create graphs and charts.

FINDINGS

An independent t-Test was conducted to determine if there is a significant difference in reading growth in students who are below grade level and received LLI as an intervention and students who received only Guided Reading as an intervention. The following tables, charts and graphs will show the findings in different ways based on the data derived from the t-Test.

Figure 1

Test Analysis results for reading growth with LLI and Guided Reading.

Source	Mean	Mean D	<i>t</i> -test	df	<i>p</i> -value
Guided Reading (n=20)	1.7				
LLI (n=21)	3.4	1.7	-3.4	39	0.0015

Note: Significant when $p \leq 0.25$

May reading levels were tested and collected from 2 groups of students who tested below grade level in December of their Kindergarten school year (reading level of 0). One group of students was serviced with Guided Reading (n=20). The other group of students was serviced with LLI (n=21). A t-test was performed to see if there is a significant difference between the two groups of students when it comes to growth in reading levels. Students who received Guided Reading had a sample mean (\bar{x}) of 1.7. Student who received LLI had a sample mean (\bar{y}) of 3.4. The Mean D, or difference between the means, is 1.7. The t-test result was -3.4 and the df was 39. Students who received LLI have a higher average reading level growth than students who were serviced with Guided Reading. The null hypothesis states there is not a significant difference in reading level growth based on reading instruction of Guided Reading or LLI. The alpha level for this t-test is 0.25. When comparing the alpha level with the p-value of 0.0015, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between students who are below grade

level who receive Guided Reading and students who are below grade level and receive LLI. Students who are reading below grade level and receive LLI do, in fact, have a higher average rate of reading growth than students who receive Guided Reading. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Figure 2

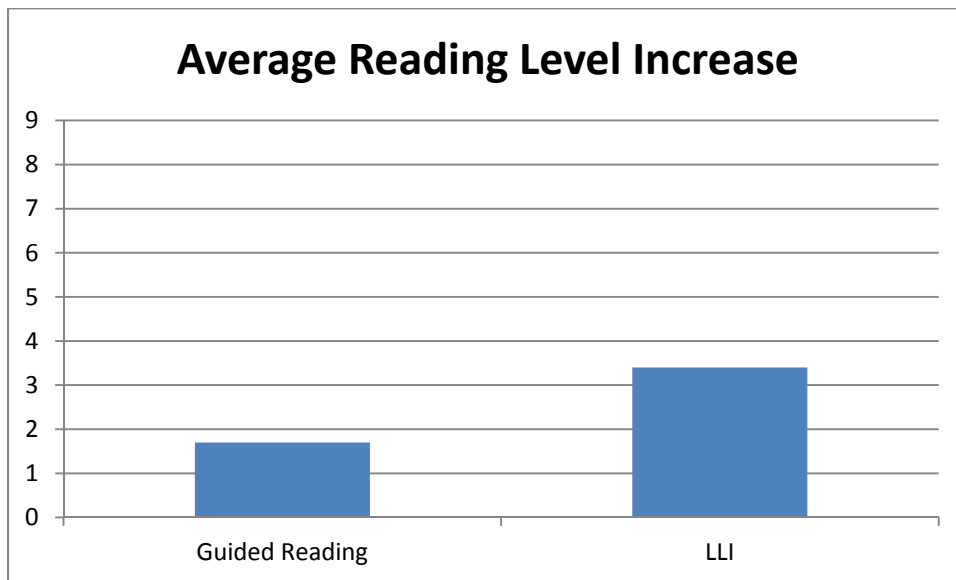


Figure 2 illustrates the average reading level increase of students who were reading below grade level in December and were serviced with LLI or Guided Reading. The chart goes to 9 because that was the highest number of levels increased. As shown in this bar graph, students who received LLI had a greater average level of increase than those students who were serviced with Guided Reading. The students who received LLI had double the average reading growth than students who received Guided Reading alone. Students serviced with LLI grew, on average, 3.4 benchmark levels as opposed to the average growth of 1.7 benchmark levels for students who were not serviced with LLI.

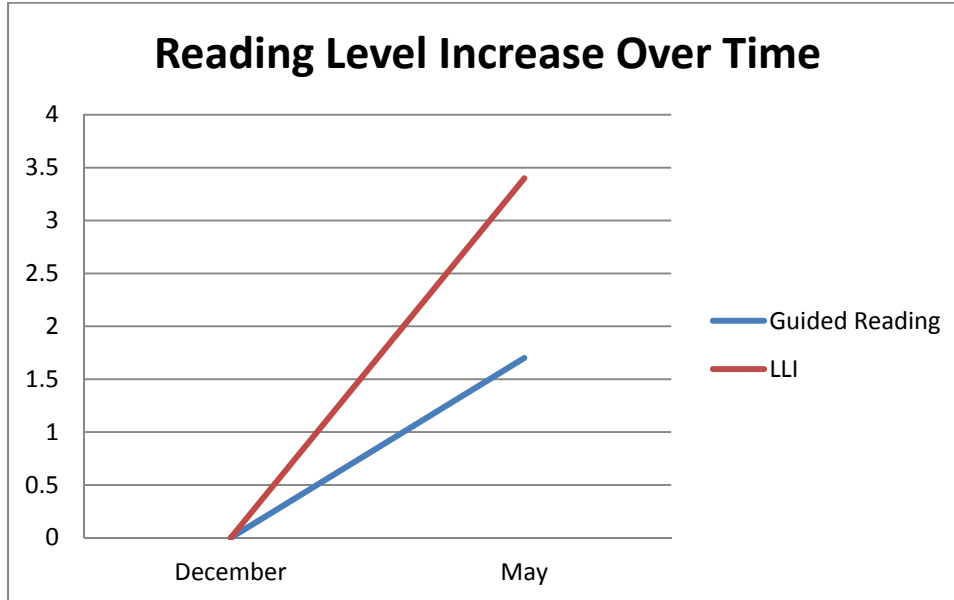
Figure 3

Figure 3 illustrates the reading growth over time. The red line illustrates average reading growth of students who received LLI from December to May. The blue line illustrates average reading growth of those students who received Guided Reading from December to May. It can be concluded that students receiving LLI had a significantly greater average reading growth than students who received Guided Reading.

Figure 4

Levels Advanced	LLI	GR
0	1	4
1	1	4
2	4	6
3	8	6
4	2	0
5	2	0
6	1	0
7	0	0
8	0	0
9	1	0

Figure 4 illustrates the number of LLI and Guided Reading (GR) students who advanced 0-9 levels between December and May of their Kindergarten year. GR students did not increase any more than 3 levels. Students who received LLI steadily increased up to 6 levels while one student increased 9. From this table, it can be said that students serviced with LLI show greater reading gains than students serviced with GR.

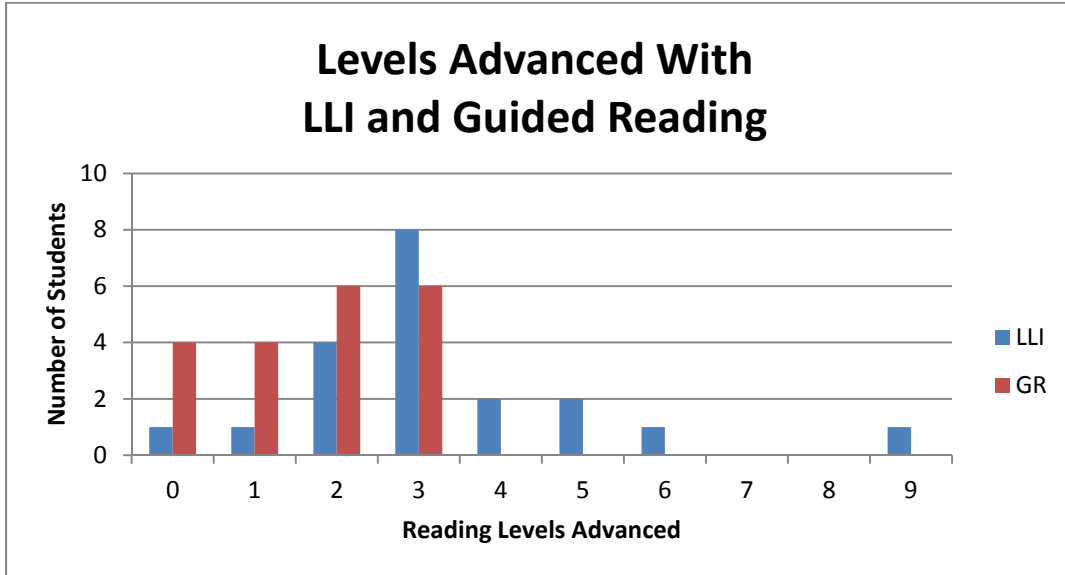
Figure 5

Figure 5 illustrates the number of students in LLI and Guided Reading (GR) who advanced 0-9 levels. Students serviced with Guided Reading largely increased 0-3 reading levels. Students who were serviced with LLI minimally increased 0-1 reading levels. Most LLI students increased 2-6 reading levels and one student even increased 9 reading levels. This chart shows that students who were serviced with LLI had more students make greater gains than those students who were serviced with Guided Reading.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The outcomes reported in this study have shown that there is a significant difference in the reading growth of students reading below grade level who receive LLI compared to those students who receive Guided Reading. This suggests that LLI is an effective program and should continue to be used by classroom teachers as well as reading teachers in the NKC school district. The independent t-Test yielded a p-value of 0.0015. This is much less than the alpha level of 0.25. The null hypothesis is strongly rejected.

The conceptual underpinning of this study emphasizes that early intervention is better than later remediation and more conducive to the learning styles and abilities of young children. LLI can be proven to work better than Guided Reading by this study and can be used by the NKC school district to help ensure that all students are given every opportunity to read on grade level by the time they leave 3rd grade.

It is recommended that LLI continue to be used by classroom teachers. It has proven to be successful in the aid of helping struggling readers grow in their literacy skills. However, LLI is something classroom teachers find difficult to implement due to the extra demands it places on their planning as well as their classroom management. It is recommended that the school district provide efficient and effective tools and trainings for teachers so that they can feel as if they can successfully implement this program into their daily routine. Training in The Daily 5 (Boushey and Moser, 2006) would be an effective way to aid teachers in classroom management and structure when administering LLI.

After discovering the findings of this study at Ravenwood, it is recommended that the same t-Test be ran with data from the other 20 elementary schools in the district. This would ensure that the program is being delivered with fidelity and rigor as the NKC district has

intended it to be. It can be said that Ravenwood delivers the complete program with fidelity due to the author's experiences with staff and administration. Results from the same test with data from other schools should be extremely comparable to those of this study.

The research question of whether or not there is a difference in the rate of literacy growth between students who receive LLI and students who receive Guided Reading has been answered. LLI does yield greater results and reading growth than Guided Reading in Kindergarten students who are reading below grade level. The difference is strongly significant and this intervention should remain in place in all K-2 classrooms in the NKC school district to ensure that all students are given the greatest opportunity to succeed.

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