Tondi J. Hager

Professional Portfolio

Master's in Education, Reading Specialist

Concordia University, Nebraska

April 9, 2011

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GRADUATE STUDENT PROFESSIONAL VITA

Part I: Personal and Professional History

I am originally from York, Nebraska. I come from a family of three children that was raised by a single-father. My parents divorced when I was very young and my mother moved away when I was a second grader. She and I grew apart and she was never an important part of my life. I have always felt grateful to have a caring, dedicated father that sacrificed so much to raise his children. My father was a middle school teacher and coach. I saw how rewarding teaching was for him. My father was one of my earliest influences for myself to become an educator.

After graduating from York High School, I decided to stay in town and attend York College. It was a perfect fit for me. I was able to keep my job from high school, which was an office assistant at the Superintendent's Office for the York Public Schools. I felt this job taught me another perspective of education. I worked closely with the Superintendent and had duties involved with the school budget, teacher ordering, meetings with the school board, and other various responsibilities.

I graduated summa cum laude in May, 1999 from York College. Shortly after graduation I got married, moved to Lincoln, and landed my first teaching position. I teach second grade at Riley Elementary and am currently in my 11th year of teaching.

I am married to my high-school sweetheart, Kyle, and I am a mother of two wonderful children! My daughter, Brinley, is five years old and is a Kindergartener at Riley Elementary. I enjoy having her at the school I teach at. My son, Ryan, is two years old.

Now that I am near completion of the program, I am so proud of how far I've come. I am now completing my 12th year of teaching at Riley. My daughter is now 7 years old and completing 1st grade and my son is 4 years old and will be starting Pre-K in the fall. My family has been so supportive of me while I have been in this program. Looking back, I cannot believe how much I pushed myself while still being a wife, mother, and a teacher!

Part II: Description of Your Present Position

I teach second grade at Riley Elementary in Lincoln. I have taught for eleven years, all at the same school and at the same grade level. I love the school I teach at. It is a smaller elementary school with most grade levels having two sections. Our population is growing, however. We have become a Title 1 school within the past five years. We have a nice blend of children at our school. We are fairly diverse and represent many cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. Most families are involved with school activities and are supportive to their child's education.

As a second grade teacher for the Lincoln Public Schools, I am responsible for teaching and assessing students the required curriculum and objectives. I have both gifted and special education students within my classroom. I plan lessons to accommodate both spectrums and support and challenge along the way.

My school is a BIST school. BIST is a school-wide behavior model. BIST stands for Behavior Intervention Support Team. It is easy to work with and is consistent from teacher to teacher in my building. Students respond well to it because they know the expectations and what will occur when they have difficulties.

I have additional leadership roles at my school. I serve as Riley's health liaison. I am on the data-gathering team and the behavior support team at my school. I team with another second grade teacher. Together, we've developed SMART goals for our grade level and work together weekly, as well as on our PLC (Professional Learning Communities) meeting dates, to reach our goals.

After graduation, I will be wrapping up another school year in 2nd grade. This year's class has been wonderful to work with. Our school continues to grow. It appears that next year, almost all grade levels will be three sections. Growth is great, but it also brings more diverse students and challenges. Next year's class will be more difficult. I am excited that I will have the opportunity to implement many of the strategies I've learned in my studies at Concordia with my students.

Part III: Statement of Goals and Objectives for the Graduate Study

I am excited to accomplish my long-term goal of earning my Master's degree. When choosing the area to further my education, I selected this program that will give me a reading specialist endorsement. I feel all teachers can become better reading teachers. I have many goals for the graduate study.

- I want to learn new and innovative ways to teach children to read and improve their reading skills.
- I would like to learn more about guided reading groups. I currently teach guided reading groups, but would like to learn to be more effective with the short time I am allowed with each group.
- I want to learn the best practices in teaching reading, specifically those focusing on increasing fluency and comprehension.
- I want to learn how to best challenge students that are reading above grade-level and also how the bridge the gap and help the struggling reader.

I feel I am now more equipped with strategies to teach reading students. Dr. Uffelman, in particular, provided amble resources that I can pull from for assistance with any student with a reading difficulty. My future goals include implementation of the skills and strategies I've learned throughout my studies at Concordia.

Part IV: Philosophy of Education Statement

My philosophy of education centers around my belief that *all* children should love to learn. It is my duty to find ways to reach every learner. Every class is unique. Diversity in the classroom can vary greatly, such as in academic abilities, learning styles, cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and countless other factors. It is the teacher's job to recognize those differences and seek strategies to

engage all students in learning. I believe when a teacher is purposeful in planning, students will become excited about learning. When students are excited about learning, they are motivated to learn and will be successful in the classroom.

When I took the educational philosophy test, I scored pretty evenly among the four educational philosophies. I seem to relate most to essentialism. I feel I portray high authority in the classroom and I am an expert of content knowledge. I have curriculum I am required to teach, but I always try to connect learning to what kids need to know and why it matters. I tend to teach with techniques that have been proven to show success in the classroom.

Establishing a warm and welcoming environment for learning is important to me. I have a calm demeanor in the classroom. I feel it is important to build relationships with the children I teach. Students in my classroom know I care about them and I respect them. I have high expectations for each and every child in my classroom.

I am a firm believer of teamwork. It takes a team of individuals to assist in the education of a child. That team includes all school personnel, but the core team involved is the classroom teacher and the child's parents. That relationship must be established early in the school year and be maintained throughout the year. When parents are on your side, learning can be extended at home. Students will see value in their education when parents are involved.

My philosophy hasn't changed, but I feel a sense of affirmation that my beliefs are a fit for me. It provides me comfort to read my philosophy. It reminds me that my focus is children and their learning.

Part V: Your Vision for the Future

In the next five to ten years, I see myself either remaining at my current position as a second grade classroom teacher or changing positions to become a reading intervention teacher. Either way, I plan on using my advanced degree and newly earned endorsement to become a more effective teacher

of reading. My hopes are that with the research, strategies, teaching methods learned within the program of study, I will have fewer students below grade level in reading and be able to close the reading gap that exists with the students I work with.

After nearing completion of the program, I believe I will remain a classroom teacher. I will use what I've learned, discussed, presented, and researched within my classes at Concordia to assist my students to improve their reading skills and have a life-long love of reading.

Tondi J. Hager

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Education:

Master's in Education, Reading Specialist, Concordia University, May 2011
GPA: 4.0 on 4.0 scale

Bachelor of Arts, Elementary Education, York College, May 1999
GPA: 3.8 on 4.0 scale
Graduated Summa Cum Laude

Certification:

Nebraska Teaching Certificate, K-6 Elementary, K-12 Reading, 7-12 Coaching

Teaching Experience:

2nd Grade Teacher – Riley Elementary School (August 1999 – Present)

- Teach at a Title I school
- Work with students with varied abilities, learning needs, and cultural backgrounds
- Teach differentiated curriculum to Gifted and High Ability Learners
- Team with SPED teachers to plan for SPED students
- Experienced with BIST – Behavior Intervention Support Team
- Has developed individual behavior plans for students
- Plans effective lessons with district's curriculum
- Maintain excellent classroom management skills and an ability to engage students in learning
- Communicate with parents monthly through newsletters and classroom website
- Experienced in using technological equipment in the classroom
- Serve on Riley's Data-Gathering Team
- Building Liaison for Health and Character Education
- Helped develop SMART goals and participate in Professional Learning Communities
- Previously served on the Behavior Support Team
- Previously served as Building Liaison for Social Studies and K-2 Writing
- Piloted 2nd grade Math Curriculum
- K-2 Math Implementation Leader and Facilitator

Student Teaching – York Elementary School (January – May 1999)

- Taught 24 second grade students in self-contained classroom
- Worked with students with varied abilities, learning needs, and cultural backgrounds
- Developed Science units on Birds and Space
- Participated in Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Participated and helped plan a field trip to Morrill Hall

Other Work Experience:

Office Assistant – York Public Schools Superintendent's Office (November 1993 – June 1999)

- Answer telephones
- Computer work
- Deliveries
- Operate office equipment
- File
- Assisted with all departments within office

Additional Information:

- Member of NEA, NSEA, and LEA

Community Service:

- American Red Cross Volunteer
- Capital Humane Society Volunteer

References: Available upon request.

Case Study Form

Name of student (pseudonym) - Jane
Date of report 12-16-10
Age of student – 8 years 1 month Gender - F
Grade in school - 2nd Grade
School name (fictional) Happy Elementary School
Parent's/Guardian's name (fictional) Mr. And Mrs. Doe

Background Information

Reason for Referral

- Developmental Reading Assessment level 12 – should be at DRA 18 at the beginning of 2nd grade
- Lack of fluency is the cause of not passing DRA level 14.
- Reading at a 1st grade level
- ELL Level 3
- Needed extra literacy support in 1st grade at her previous school
- Previous teacher noted that she needed extra support and practice with word work and phonics
- Unable to pass 1st grade dictation tests
- Joined RTI (Response to Intervention) reading group this year

Family Information (rank in family, composition of home)

- Oldest of three children, all sisters
- Living with biological mother and stepfather
- Has limited visitation with biological father
- Stepfather owns a restaurant
- Mother speaks limited English and helps at the restaurant at times, but mostly stays at home
- Moved schools this year because they were dissatisfied with daughter's education at previous school

Linguistic Background

- ELL Level 3
- Communicates in both Spanish and English at home
- Mother speaks limited English
- Stepfather encourages her to speak English at home
- Student sometimes has trouble with vocabulary
- Student expresses that teacher reads or speaks too quickly at times
- She struggles to generate sentences when writing

Social and Personality Factors

- Outgoing in class
- Lots of friends

- Tries hard, even when tasks are difficult
- Follows directions in class
- Participates best in a small group or one-on-one setting

Student Interests

- Singing
- Art
- Reading
- Jewelry
- Friends

Medical History

- Wears glasses
- No major illnesses or injuries

Educational History (includes instructional factors)

- Attended Kindergarten and 1st grade at another Title I school
- Received ELL and literacy support services
- No retentions
- Good attendance history

Results of Student/Parent Interviews

- Parents have very high expectations for their child
- Parents feel their daughter is receiving strong instruction at school and are confident she will be on-grade level soon
- Student likes to read, but knows she can improve
- Student wants to be able to read chapter books

Summary of Previous Assessment Data (Assessments given prior to the case study)

- Tested reading level when student came new to our school using the Developmental Reading Assessment
- Scored DRA level 12, which is below grade level

Summary of Assessment Data Derived During the Case Study

QRI Word Lists

- Scored an Instructional Level at second grade
- Scored a Frustration Level at third grade

QRI Level 2 Narrative – Oral Reading Passage

- Scored an Instructional Level
- Retelling of passage was basic; lacked details

QRI Level 2 Narrative – Silent Reading Passage

- Scored an Instructional Level

- Had a difficult time retelling ideas from the passage

Running Record

- Miscues made were all visual errors
- Students made 14 errors with no self-corrects

LPS Literacy Assessments

- Student has passed all 2nd grade LPS literacy assessments in the areas of comprehension, grammar/spelling, phonics dictation, vocabulary and high frequency words

Diagnostic Teaching

Hypothesis - Student guesses at words from initial consonant sounds as cues. She does not monitor her reading when she substitutes words that do not make sense.

Strategies

- word families
- word sorts
- cloze activities
- making words

Hypothesis - Student lacks details when retelling a story. She relies on prompts to show comprehension.

Strategies

- story mapping
- summarizing activities
- graphic organizers
- making connections
- think alouds
- summary glove

Suggestions and Recommendations

Strengths

- Great effort in class
- Good comprehension with guiding questions
- Strong spelling and phonics skills

Needs

- Story retelling
- Word work
- Fluency

Specific Methodologies

- Visual and auditory methods will work best

Materials
- Instructional level is at a beginning 2nd grade level

Level of Support
- Continue RTI group daily
- Continue Tier 1+ intervention daily in the classroom
- LEXIA computer program
- Take-home leveled book bag for home practice

Tondi Hager 12-16-10

Signature of Person Preparing Report *Date*

Shared Reading

By Tondi Hager

Shared Reading

- The Shared Reading model was first developed by Don Holdaway in 1979.
- His model was based on the use of big books so that teachers and children could share a book, just as a parent and child share a book at home.

Age Appropriate

- Shared reading is primarily used in Pre School - 2nd grade.
- It is most beneficial for emerging readers.

Shared Reading Philosophy

Shared Reading is an interactive reading experience that occurs when students join in or share the reading of a big book or other enlarged text while guided and supported by a teacher or other experienced reader.

Shared Reading

- Students observe an expert reading the text with fluency and expression.

- The text must be large enough for all the students to see clearly, so they can share in the reading of the text.

- It is through Shared Reading that the reading process and reading strategies that readers use are demonstrated.

- In Shared Reading, children participate in reading, learn critical concepts of how print works, get the feel of learning and begin to perceive themselves as readers.

Print Material Used for Shared Reading

- Big books
- Poetry
- Songs
- Morning message
- Classroom news

Basic Lesson Format

Before Reading

- Introduce book (title, cover, illustrations)
- Activate prior knowledge
- Picture walk
- Make predictions

During Reading

- Initial reading is generally for enjoyment
- Teacher points to each word when read aloud
- Encourage student participation

After Reading

- Check predictions
- Ask open-ended questions
- Help students build connections to the text

Additional Information

- Repeated readings usually follow for 3-5 times to allow for the students to read along with familiar words and phrases.
- Focus on specific skills such as:
  - ✓ Rhyming
  - ✓ Beginning sounds of words
  - ✓ Conventions
  - ✓ Vocabulary

Research

- Storybook reading is a critically important factor in young children's reading development (Wells, 1986)
- The storybook reading done by parents in a home setting is particularly effective (Strickland & Taylor, 1989)
- The shared reading model allows a group of children to experience many of the benefits that are part of storybook reading done for one or two children at home (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Schickendanz, 1978)

Cognitive Theory Elements

- Prior Knowledge
- Predicting
- Picture Walk
- Extended Practice
- Scaffolding

Benefits of Shared Reading

- Allows students to enjoy materials that they may not be able to read on their own.
- Ensures that all students feel successful by providing support to the entire group.
- Students act as though they are reading.
- Helps early readers learn about the relationship between oral language and printed language.
- Assists students in learning where to look and/or focus their attention.

- Supports students as they gain awareness of symbols and print conventions, while constructing meaning from text read.
- Assists students in making connections between background knowledge and new information.
- Focuses on and helps develop concepts about print and phonemic connections.
- Helps in teaching frequently used vocabulary.
- Encourages prediction in reading.
- Helps students develop a sense of story and increases comprehension.

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LR5, LR7

IMPORTANCE OF SPELLING IN LITERACY EDUCATION

A Research Project Presented to Concordia University

Tondi Hager

Jen Johnson

Shari Timm

March 1, 2011

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Learning to read and spell is a complicated process that can be easy for some students but, not easy for others. Some students can read fluently without having any direct instruction on the correct use of expression or how to use punctuation to guide their reading. Other students can also learn to spell words without any direct instruction. They can look at the word and store it into memory for easy retrieval later. Recent researchers such as, Santoro (2006) has recognized that "spelling instruction that is carefully and intentionally integrated into a beginning reading program can help students improve both spelling and reading skills" (p. 122).

The major sources of difficulties include decoding and spelling words correctly, which can affect reading fluency. It has been observed by teachers of elementary students that spelling skills have been linked to reading fluency. Often times, emergent spellers struggle to read fluently. Proficient spellers are more likely to be fluent readers. Fluent readers can translate written text into an oral output with accuracy, speed, and prosody.

Students aren't learning to spell proficiently which might affect other academic areas. According to Wise et al. (2010), "Some researchers have argued that oral reading fluency is an important indicator of overall reading competence" (p. 341). Teachers need to implement direct spelling instruction in order to establish a foundation of the English language. Learning the spelling patterns of the English language helps students recognize words automatically. In order for students to gain fluency, words need to be directly taught and practiced so students can store the words correctly into memory.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between students' spelling skills and oral reading fluency for students in second grade at Riley Elementary School. Teachers have observed the interrelationship of spelling skills and reading fluency. Poor spelling skills can lead to poor oral reading fluency. Students who spell accurately are quicker at identifying words in text. This study will

explore the possibilities of a relationship between reading fluency and spelling skills and whether it is affected by gender.

Research Questions

The research questions in this study will be as followed:

Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between students' spelling skills and oral reading fluency in second grade students?

Research Question 2: If there is a relationship between students' spelling skills and reading fluency, is it affected by gender?

Definition of Terms

The definitions of terms used in this study will be defined as:

DIBELS- dynamic indicator of basic early literacy skills

fluency- reading without hesitancy, by recognizing words and accurately connecting text

gender- male and female

spelling- the ability to arrange letters correctly to form designated words

Learning to read is a complex process. Students must be directly taught spelling skills in order to help them become fluent readers. Having the knowledge of how spelling patterns work within the English language, help students automatically identify words. Being able to read words rapidly and accurately leads to a fluent reader.

Other researchers have studied the relationships between spelling skills and reading fluency. Chapter II will focus on the areas of spelling skills and reading fluency.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review will explore the possibilities of how spelling instruction is related to oral reading fluency. The following studies will address oral reading fluency, generalizations between reading and written language, and how grapho-phonemic enrichment strengthens keyword analogy instruction.

Wise et al., discusses the relationship between different measures of oral reading fluency and reading comprehension in second grade. Noell's study examined generalization between reading to spelling and from spelling to reading using whole word instruction. Ehri's study revealed how using grapho-phonemic instruction using keyword analogies helped struggling readers.

Wise, Sevcik, Morris, Lovett, Wolf, Kuhn, Meisinger

Reading is a very complex process. Sometimes, there are students who are very fluent readers, but can't comprehend what they read. Others can comprehend but struggle with fluency. According to Wise et al. (2010), "This study had two primary purposes: to examine whether different measures of oral reading fluency relate differentially to reading comprehension performance, and to examine whether the pattern of relationships between different measures of oral reading fluency and reading comprehension were different in two samples of second-grade students who evidenced different degrees of oral reading fluency skills" (p. 341). The study results will help special education teachers, classroom teachers, and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) identify specific strategies and methods to better serve students with potential reading problems with reading fluency and comprehension.

Participants

This study consisted of two groups of students. One group of students showed difficulties with nonsense-word reading fluency, real-word fluency, and oral reading fluency of texts (ORFD). The other group of students showed difficulties with oral reading fluency of text difficulties with nonsense-word, real-word, and oral reading

fluency skills (CTD). There were 146 second-grade students that participated in this study. Wise et al. (2010) summarizes that "The demographics of the participants consisted of 60 females, 86 males; 75 African American and 71 Caucasians" (p. 342). The CTD sample consisted of 949 second-grade students from public schools located in Georgia and New Jersey. Wise et al. (2010) also concluded, "Four hundred fifty-five students were female, and 494 were male" (p. 342). There were 457 African American students, 242 Hispanic students, 189 Caucasian students, 38 Asian students, and 23 other students.

Methodology

There were two different sample groups of students selected to participate in this study. One is the ORFD sample group, and the second sample of students was the CTD group of students. The ORFD group of students were struggling with all areas of fluency, while the CTD group of students had mastered all of the basic literacy skills and were now focusing on increasing their fluency of text. ORFD students were given versions of Sight Word Efficiency and Phonemic Decoding subtests, which are called the Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE). The CTD students were given the Sight Word Efficiency and Phonemic Decoding subtests of the TOWRE. According to Wise et al. (2010) the "Sight Word Efficiency subtest is composed of a list of read words that increase in difficulty" (p. 343). The task is to orally identify as many words as possible within 45s. The Phonemic Decoding subtest consists of a list of nonsense words that increase in difficulty, with the goal of the test to orally identify as many nonsense words
as possible within 45s.

Analysis

A number of models were tested that depicted the possible relationships that exist between fluency and comprehension. LISREL 8.51 software was used to examine the unique relationships that were tested. Wise et al. (2010) states "The selection of these models was based on theory, fit indices, chi-square difference analyses between competing nested models, and the rule parsimony" (p. 344).

The Comprehensive Test of Reading Related Phonological Processes (CTRRPP) was given to the ORFE sample to test sight words and phonological awareness. Gray Oral Reading Test (GORT-IV) was administered to both samples to assess reading rate and accuracy. The Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT) tested both samples on readability and comprehension.

Results

Results from this study are very important because it is often assumed that oral reading fluency of connected text is a great indicator of reading comprehension because it represents the ability to fluently and automatically incorporate a number of literacy skills needed to gain meaning from text. Wise et al. (2010) indicated "that real-word oral reading fluency was related most strongly to a measure of reading comprehension performance across a number of different variables (e.g., degrees of oral reading fluency skills, degrees of reading comprehension performance)" (p. 345). These results also indicated that real-word reading fluency could be an efficient way to identify potential problems with reading comprehension. Wise et al. (2010) also concluded that the "Results indicated that real-word oral reading fluency was most strongly related to reading comprehension performance when compared to nonsense-word oral reading fluency and oral reading fluency of connected text. It is also important to note that these students entered the study with different levels of reading comprehension skills" (p.347). The ORFD sample shows nonsense-word fluency was strongly related to both real-word oral reading fluency (.50) and reading comprehension (.29). Real-word fluency was more strongly related to reading comprehension (.57) than was nonsense-word reading fluency. The CTD sample had a path coefficient from nonsense-word fluency to oral reading fluency to real-word reading fluency was very strong (.18). The path coefficient from nonsense-word fluency to real-word fluency was significant (.83). The path coefficient from real-word fluency to oral reading fluency was also strong and significant (.77). Finally, the path coefficient from oral reading fluency of connected to comprehension was strong too (.28), and from real-word fluency to comprehension was much stronger (.57).

Wise et al. (2010) studied the relationship between different measures of oral reading fluency and reading comprehension in second grade. Although this article doesn't specifically address the relationship between spelling and fluency it relates to the area of oral reading fluency. In the next study, Noell specifically addressed the generalizations between reading to spell and spelling to read using whole word instruction.

Noell, Connell, and Duhon

Phonemic/phonetic based instruction aids in the understanding of reading and written language. In the English language, there are numerous phonetically irregular words that may need a whole language approach to instruction. This study looks at the responses students make with reading and spelling whole word instruction and the generalization made with reading to spell and spelling to read.

According to Noell, Connell, and Duhon (2006), "Teaching can be described as the process of establishing responses, developing stimulus control for those responses, and obtaining generalization of that responding" (p. 121). Response generalization is the existence of something new from the result of learning something similar. For example, learning to spell a word without having been taught the meaning of the word.

As stated by Noell et al. (2006), "This study examined generalization between from reading to spelling and from spelling to reading following whole word based instruction using a delayed prompt procedure" (p. 121). The authors of this study wanted to explore the area of generalization and the need to devote instructional time towards it.

Participants

Participants were three first-grade students who were receiving regular instruction by a teacher in the classroom. As written by Noell et al. (2006), "All of the participants did have some reading and writing skills, their skills were simply less well developed than their peers" (p. 123). The participants included: Darren, a seven-year old boy, Sharon, a seven-year old girl, and Mario, an eight year old boy who was repeating first grade. All students were African-American. None had been diagnosed with any

learning disability or any developmental delay. These students were in the regular education classroom and received instruction based on literature and decoding skills.

Methodology

Participants for this study were referred by their teachers for their lack of reading skills. Sessions with each student were in a space away from the classroom. One session was conducted each day. Each session was presented within four session blocks. Each block contained two acquisition sessions followed by two generalization sessions. A reward box was used that contained items like stickers, food, and school supplies.

As stated by Noell et al. (2006), "The dependent variable targeted in this study were the percentage of words read and spelled correctly" (p. 124). A correct reading of a word was defined as saying the word in 3 seconds or less when shown on an index card. A correct spelling of a word was defined as saying the letters in sequence to make the word that was read aloud. The participant needed to say the next letter within 3 seconds.

A set of words from the students spelling books were used. Each word was printed in 3x5 inch index cards. If the student read the word within 3 seconds the word was scored as a known word and separated from the others. If the student did not read the word correctly within 3 seconds that word was placed in a set of unknown words and would be the ones used for the study. This word testing continued until 30 unknown words were found for all three participants. Then three sets of 10 words were randomly selected to be used for reading acquisition, spelling acquisition, and control conditions.

For the reading acquisition piece, the experimenter showed the participant the 10 words in random order. The student had to say the word within 3 seconds. If the student could not say the word, the experimenter said the word correctly and had the student repeat the word correctly. The student would receive praise when the words were said correctly. Each session would allow for practice of the words 5 times. If the student improved their score from the previous session, the student received a prize from the reward box.

For the spelling acquisition portion, the experimenter read the spelling words to the student in random order. The participant was required to spell the word allowing 3 seconds at the most between letters. If it wasn't spelled correctly, the experimenter modeled the correct spelling and allowed the participant to repeat it. If the student made an error, the experimenter told the student that it was incorrect and gave the correct letter. Praise was given if the word was spelled correctly. Each session would include one viewing and spelling of each word. The student received a prize from the reward box if improvements were made from the previous session.

During reading to spelling generalization sessions, the reading acquisition words were read to the student and the student was asked to spell them. During spelling to reading generalization sessions the spelling acquisition words were shown to the participant in index cards and the students were asked to read them. These generalization sessions provided no prompts or feedback by the experimenter.

Analysis

The data from this study resulted from the percentage of words read correctly and the percentage of words spelled correctly from each session with each participant. The words used came from the spelling book the students were using in class. The areas tested were reading acquisition, spelling acquisition, reading to spelling generalization, and spelling to reading generalization. The number of sessions with each student varied from 58 sessions to 86 sessions. Praise and a reward box was used during each session. According to Noell et al. (2006), “Inter-observer agreement (IOA) data were collected for both tasks by an independent observer for 29% of sessions. IOA was calculated based on trial-by-trial agreement and was over 100%” (p. 124).

Results

Instructional gains were measured by all participants in the study. Authors noted that there were three main findings in the data. First, the quickness of gains varied with the three participants. Some showed initial improvements before others regardless of amount of practice within each session. Second, generalization occurred for all students from reading to spelling and spelling to reading using a

non-phonetic whole word instructional model. Lastly, the showing of generalization varied from the participants.

Darren acquired reading more quickly than spelling initially, but by session 42 results were similar for reading and spelling. He scored a higher percentage responding on the spelling to reading generalization part throughout the study. For sessions 72 and higher, he scored 100% correct for both reading and spelling acquisition. In the final sessions, Darren scored 80% correct responding for spelling to reading generalization and 67% correct responding for reading to spelling generalization.

Mario showed faster acquisition of reading than spelling. He showed greater generalization from spelling to reading initially through session 35, but leveled off at 60% after session 38. His generalization from reading to spelling was slightly higher.

Sharon's acquisition of reading and spelling was about the same. She scored 100% responding for spelling. She scored 98% responding for reading. Her generalization scores were 80% for reading to spell and 87% for spelling to read.

To quote Noell et al. (2006), "The most striking finding was that oral spelling instruction in which the printed word was neither presented nor produced resulted in substantial generalization to reading" (p. 121). This is the finding the study set out to prove.

Noell et al. studied the generalizations between reading to spell and spelling to read using whole word instruction. Although this article doesn't specifically address the relationship between spelling and fluency it is related to the area of spelling instruction. In the next study, Ehri specifically addresses how grapho-phonemic enrichment strengthens keyword analogy for struggling readers.

Ehri, Satlow, and Gaskins

The purpose of this study was to investigate ways to help struggling readers read. The study assessed other recent theories that suggested that grapho-phonemic instruction is essential in order to learn to spell and learn to decode words. Ehri, Satlow and Gaskins (2009) state, "Based on this theory

we predicted that struggling readers who were taught to read with an analogy-based word identification program supplemented by grapho-phonemic analysis during the first 4 years of elementary school would outperform those instructed using the same program without grapho-phonemic analysis" (p. 163).

Another idea that was explored was the idea that a student's IQ will influence learning to read. The authors hypothesized that students with higher IQ's would improve significantly more than students with average intelligence.

Participants

The entire student body of Benchmark School in Media, PA participated in this study. (Benchmark school is a private elementary school for struggling readers. They are mostly white and live in the suburbs of a large metropolitan city.) There were a total of one hundred two students who participated. (21 girls and 81 boys between the ages of 6 years; 1 month to 8 years; 7 months) None of the students had been diagnosed with any neurological or emotional disorders. All students had attended kindergarten, first, or second grade and had experienced some kind of reading failure. According to Ehri, Satlow, and Gaskins (2009), "Many of these students were unable to identify all of the letters of the alphabet, and most had limited sight vocabularies" (p. 168).

Methodology

Students in four classes who entered in the fall between 1990-1993 received the KEY program. The KEY program is designed to teach students to decode by applying an analogy approach. According to Ehri et al. (2009), "Students were taught to read 120 keywords containing the most common English spelling patterns and to use these words to read unknown words" (p. 171). A beginning program was taught in the first year followed by an intermediate program for Years 2 through 4. Spelling was taught by using a choral chanting of the letters in the words.

Four classes of students admitted into the school in the fall between 1994-1997 received the

KEY-PLUS program. This program taught student to analyze the grapheme-phoneme parts of the keywords, discover spelling regularities and to utilize spelling activities to reinforce phonemic segmentation skills. Students were taught only 90 keywords in this program and spelling did not encompass choral chanting. Instead, it used phonemic segmentation and sound-symbol relationships to teach spelling.

Four tests were used in the study and the beginning and end of each year. The Wide Range Achievement Test was used to assess word reading and spelling. A pseudoword test was given to measure automaticity. The Qualitative Inventory of Word Knowledge was given to baseline students' instructional-level spelling. Finally, A Metropolitan Achievement Test measured their reading comprehension. School psychologists administered the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for an IQ test upon entering the school.

Analysis

A 2 x 2 analysis of covariance was used to evaluate the effects of the reading and spelling instruction. The independent variables were the KEY program vs. the KEY-PLUS program and high IQ vs. average IQ levels. The dependent variables: real word decoding, pseudoword decoding, word spelling, and reading comprehension were evaluated at the end of each year. Ehri (2009) stated, "Analyses were conducted separately on each outcome measure for each year at the school because the number of students declined slightly across years as a result of students leaving the school or missing one of the tests" (p. 174).

Results

Students who received the KEY-PLUS program achieved higher scores on the WRAT word reading and the WRAT spelling test at the end of the first and second year than the students of the KEY program. However, after the third and fourth year the differences disappeared. The QIWK spelling test indicated that students in the KEY-PLUS program improved greater than the KEY program students even though those students' scores did improve.

The pseudoword decoding test showed that the students in the KEY-PLUS program outperformed the KEY group at the end of the first and second year. There was also a significant interaction between the instructional method and IQ in Year 1. Ehri et al. (2009) state, "Inspection revealed that the KEY-PLUS group read more pseudowords than the KEY group at both high-and average-IQ levels, but the difference favoring the KEY-PLYS group was much greater among average-IQ students" (p. 180).

The researchers' theory of higher intelligence meant greater improvement for reading and spelling was incorrect. According to the results, intelligence only made a difference when it came to comprehension The MAT test indicated that students with high IQ's comprehend text better than average–IQ students. It didn't show any difference to either the KEY or KEY-PLUS groups.

Wise et al. (2010) showed that oral ready fluency impacts other academic areas such comprehension. Noell et al. (2006) examined the use of generalizations from spelling to read and reading to spell. Ehri et al. (2009) showed that using keyword analogies can help students decode new words.

This study will help show the importance of the relationship between spelling skills and reading fluency. Struggling readers as well as fluent readers benefit from direct spelling instruction. It is important to incorporate implicit spelling instruction into the everyday curriculum. Chapter three will discuss the methodology of showing the relationship between spelling and reading fluency, and if there is a relationship affected by gender.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

There are many components to learning to read and learning to spell. According to Santoro (2006), "Spelling is a multifaceted linguistic skill that integrates and depends on several layers of knowledge: phonological awareness of speech sounds in words, morphological awareness, semantic knowledge, and orthographic knowledge of the letter sequences and patterns that are used to spell words" (p. 122). Oral reading fluency is reading without hesitancy, recognizing words and accurately connecting text using prosody and inflection. Therefore, teachers need to implement direct spelling instruction in order to establish a foundation of the English language.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between students' spelling skills and oral reading fluency for students in second grade at Riley Elementary School. This study will explore the possibilities of a relationship between reading fluency and spelling skills and whether it is affected by gender.

Design

A correlational design will be used to conduct this study. According to Creswell (2008), "An explanatory research design is a correlational design in which the researcher is interested in the extent to which 2 variables (or more) co-vary" (p. 358). This design is appropriate for this study because it is relating the variable spelling to the variable fluency. It is also measuring whether gender is affected if there is a relationship between spelling and fluency.

There are several components to literacy education that should be explored further. One of those areas is the relationship between spelling and reading fluency. Other academic areas may also be influenced by this relationship such as comprehension.

This study will investigate if there is a relationship between spelling skills and reading fluency in second grade students. If there is a relationship between these two variables is it also affected by gender?

Participants

The participants in this study will include all second grade students who have been in attendance for the entire first quarter for the 2011-2012 school year at Riley Elementary School. These students were chosen because they were located at Riley Elementary School and are easily accessible for the study. Participants will be selected using the convenience sample. According to Creswell (2008), "In convenience sampling the researchers selects participants because they are willing and available to be studied" (p. 155). A consent form will need to be signed by a parent giving permission to have their student included in the study. (See Appendix A)

Instrumentation

The purpose of this is to investigate the relationship between students' spelling skills and reading fluency for students in second grade at Riley Elementary School. The variables in this study are spelling, fluency and gender.

The research questions that will be addressed in this study include the following: Is there a relationship between students' spelling skills and reading fluency in second grade students? If there is a relationship between students' spelling skills and reading fluency, is it affected by gender?

Second grade students will be given the Dynamic Indicator of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). This test measures how many correct words are read in one minute (See Appendix B). A spelling test will be given to the second grade students taken from the second grade spelling curriculum. The spelling pre-test is provided by the Lincoln Public School District second grade curriculum and will measure how many words students can spell correctly the first time the words are introduced. (See Appendix C)

Data Collection Procedures

The following steps will be taken to conduct this study:

1. Consent forms will be given to parents/guardians of second grade students at Riley Elementary School who were in attendance for the first quarter. (See Appendix A)

2. All students who have been in attendance at the end of the first quarter, for the 2011-2012 school year, will be included in the study with proper consent.

3. All second grade students will be given the spelling pretest from theme 2, taken from the second grade curriculum.

4. All second grade students will be given probe number 5 on the DIBELS oral reading fluency test for second grade.

5. Spelling tests will be scored by giving one point to each word spelled correctly.

6. DIBELS tests will be scored by giving one point to each word read correctly in one minute.

7. All second grade students in the study will be determined if he/she is male or female by corresponding the name on the spelling and DIBELS tests to their gender.

8. After data has been scored results will be analyzed using a scatterplot to examine if a relationship exits between spelling and reading fluency. (See Appendix D)

9. A second scatterplot will be used to investigate if gender is related to spelling and fluency.

Data Analysis by Research Question

For this study, a correlational analysis will be used to analyze the data because there is one group of participants and two variables. The variables include spelling and fluency. A scatterplot will be used to determine if there is a relationship between the variables.

Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between students' spelling skills and reading fluency in second grade students? A spelling pretest will be given to the students as well as a DIBELS test. A correlational analysis will be used to determine if these two variables are related. The results of both tests will be scored and plotted on a scatterplot to find a positive or negative relationship between them.

Research Question 2: If there is a relationship between students' spelling skills and reading fluency, is it affected by gender? After data has been collected on the gender of each student, another correlational analysis will be used to determine if gender impacts the relationship of spelling and

fluency. A scatterplot will be used to graph the results and investigate if there is a positive or negative relationship between the variables.

In conclusion, learning to read and learning to spell are skills that some students learn implicitly, but some students need to have it explicitly taught. Through this study, it will be explored whether or not spelling and reading are linked together. Are good spellers better readers? According to Cooke, Slee and Young (2008), "Research and teaching experience demonstrate that spelling provides information about words that facilitates reading, and that lessons which take advantage of this reciprocity build strength in literacy acquisition skills" (p. 42). If this study indicates there is a relationship between reading and spelling this will help guide teachers' instruction for all students.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Title: Spelling and Reading Fluency

The following information is provided to help you decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with this department, the instructor, or the University.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between spelling skills and reading fluency in second grade classroom at Riley Elementary School.

Data will be collected using a spelling pretest at end of the first quarter, with scores recorded. A DIBELS test will be given to record an oral reading rate at the end of the quarter also to gather data. The spelling test and DIBELS scores will be the only data collected in the study.

Do not hesitate to ask questions about the study before participating or during the study. We would be happy to share the findings with you after the research is completed. Your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and only the researchers will know your identity.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. The expected benefits associated with your participation are the information about the experiences in learning research methods. If this study is later submitted for publication, a by-line will indicate the participation of all students in the class.

Please sign this consent form. You are signing it with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures. A copy of this form will be given to you to keep.

_____ _____

Signature Date

Tondi Hager, Jen Johnson, Shari Timm, Concordia University, Nancy Elwell, Project Advisor, (402-643-7337)

Appendix B

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Appendix C

Spelling Words
Theme 2

1. hill
2. these
3. bone
4. grass
5. hope
6. cute
7. glad
8. lost
9. egg
10. all
11. use
12. off
13. brave
14. swim
15. trip
16. stone
17. mess
18. next
19. club
20. add

SPELLING PRETEST Name_____

1. _____ 11._____

2. _____ 12. _____

3. _____ 13. _____

4. _____ 14. _____

5. _____ 15. _____

6. _____ 16. _____

7. _____ 17. _____

8. _____ 18. _____

9. _____ 19. _____

10. _____ 20. _____

Appendix D

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