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Developing a literature-based reading program in the third grade

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Developing a literature-based reading program in the third grade

Abstract

The late William Gray said, "Children differ so widely in interests, capacity to learn, and motives that it is impossible to provide adequate stimulation and guidance through the use of the same materials and group instruction." (West, 1964). The aim of reading instruction should be to develop readers who are independent learners. They need to learn how to rely on themselves to help them discern what is important from print and how to go about obtaining that information (Moore & Moore, 1987).

DEVELOPING A LITERATURE-BASED READING PROGRAM
IN THE THIRD GRADE

A Research Paper
Submitted to
The Department of Curriculum and Instruction
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

University of Northern Iowa

by
Janelle A. Bastian
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THIRD GRADE

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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Chapter 1

WHY USE A LITERATURE-BASED PROGRAM

Purposes of Reading Instruction

The late William Gray said, "Children differ so widely in interests, capacity to learn, and motives that it is impossible to provide adequate stimulation and guidance through the use of the same materials and group instruction." (West, 1964).

The aim of reading instruction should be to develop readers who are independent learners. They need to learn how to rely on themselves to help them discern what is important from print and how to go about obtaining that information (Moore & Moore, 1987).

A classroom environment needs to be developed wherein students learn to read through individual insights. Considerations in program development include: 1) building positive attitudes toward reading, 2) fluency, 3) comprehension, 4) progress in mechanics, and 5) word recognition. The stress in a reading program should be to develop readers who read fluently and with understanding. Allington (1983), states that fluency is regarded necessary for defining good reading. Evidence shows fluency training improves overall reading ability. It can be taught through several activities such as repeated readings and modeling by the teacher in oral reading. Pearson (1985), suggests teachers encourage students to use prior knowledge, make predictions, try story mapping, and give retellings as a few options in developing comprehension skills.

There is no value in saying students covered all material in a given reading program if they did not understand what they had read. Generally, the basal reading instructional goals attempt to teach a wide range of specific, isolated skills and follow a set scope and sequence. The basal reading levels contain controlled vocabulary and a highly structured program of skills teaching with an emphasis on testing. Such a rigid and non-integrative program is not supported by research (Carbo, 1987).

Any reading program can be a boring, ritualistic performance of unmotivating activities if teachers attempt to motivate students artificially and reward them extrinsically (Holdaway, 1982). Looking for an approach which would allow more opportunities for the development of independent readers, it would be appropriate to then consider the features of a literature-based program.

In a literature-based program, individual differences can be met as the teacher examines the areas of strength and limitations for each student and plans developmentally-appropriate instruction. This approach does away with static ability grouping and allows temporary groups to be formed for students experiencing the same problems or reading on the same topic. Literature-based instruction provides more individual interaction between teacher and pupil as well as allows children to select their own materials and read at their own rates. Conferencing provides added insight as the teacher discusses and teaches varied aspects of comprehension, mechanics, and fluency.

A Historical Perspective of the Literature-based Reading Program

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, Colonel Francis Parker emerged as a leader in beginning reading instruction. His philosophy centered on the premise that reading should be connected with children's interest and background. He suggested that formal reading instruction was only necessary in the first three grades of school and that the basis for instruction should be the students' written compositions. He also believed that children's reading achievement would increase if they were engaged in expressive activities (Kline, Moore, & Moore, 1987).

Laura Zirbes contributed many ideas to the progressive education idea during the first half of this century. She advocated getting students involved in purposeful activity which integrated the language arts skills of listening, speaking, and writing and which promoted wide reading. She stated, "If you are teaching reading creatively and developmentally, you are introducing children to satisfaction that will enrich their whole lives." (Moore, 1985).

Her progressive reading goals included balanced development in the areas of: 1) attending to more than one facet while providing reading instruction, 2) developing attitudes toward reading, and 3) providing a proportionate emphasis on abilities.

During the 1950's an increase of individualized reading instruction was found in the school systems. This alternative to

group instruction gained much attention through publication of articles in professional periodicals. Despite the positive attributes of such teaching, objections were raised from experts in the field who felt instruction seemed incidental and success of the program was limited to measuring the number of books read, survey test scores, and cheerful dispositions of children.

In 1957 the International Reading Association proposed a plan which involved material selection involving the use of reading inventories, criteria for evaluating book quality, and how to determine student reading levels through standardized and diagnostic reading tests (West, 1964). This plan provided a backbone for teachers in their own development of individualized reading for the class.

Now, well into the 1980's, the idea of an individualized literature-based reading program still avails itself to teacher and student usage, but there remains a struggle with traditionalists believing the basal approach to be the best as well as the effective schools researchers who felt the need to remain on middle ground so as to not rock the boat with parents and well-meaning educators.

The Content of the Literature-based Program

The greatest value of using literature in a reading program is that children can get "hooked on books" and develop into lifetime readers (Huck, 1977).

Frank Smith (1983) has stated that children will learn to read better when they are actively involved in "real" reading experiences which are meaningful and purposeful to them. In a literature-based program the opportunities for those experiences are frequent.

Teachers have excellent opportunities to interest pupils in books through reading aloud to them. Teachers can read more difficult selections which students may not be able to read independently. They can introduce a variety of literary genres of literature as well as provide a pattern for fluency and expressive reading.

Shared reading experiences with students include the reading of poetry, old favorites in the literature realm, as well as the introduction of new pieces. Through these experiences directed lessons can be taught in areas such as prediction, role playing, and vocabulary development. As a result of sharing, students may be led to participate in activities which include independent reading, writing, or projects which provide opportunities for researching, experimenting, constructing such as making diagrams and models, or simulating, which may include role playing a scene from a book.

Teachers can also help students in: 1) finding quality pieces to read, 2) extending their interest in different topics and genres, and 3) developing an appreciation for reading.

In choosing materials for the reading program, teachers need to provide a wide array of literature which has relevance to the students' lives, but not necessarily a direct connection. It is therefore, important for teachers to listen to what students talk about and what they read and begin with those topics first.

"Everything children need to learn about language and literature can be taught from nontraditional materials." (Allen, Brown, & Yatvin, 1986). Some examples of materials to use in the classroom other than books are magazines, newspapers, recipes, schedules, and posters. Real-life reading materials provide relevant reading experiences so that children can more easily transfer their reading skills independently.

Books should be selected from varied genres and be well-illustrated so as to capture the student's attention. Huck (1977) states, "I believe that the motivation for learning to read comes from the desire to read "real" books and that imaginative literature must be the content of the reading program." Some criteria to keep in mind for teachers when selecting quality pieces are as follows: 1) truthful, honest writing, 2) meaningfulness to the reader, 3) content quality, 4) useful and purposeful, 5) effectively able to communicate a message, 6) well-illustrated, and 7) allowance for a wide range of readers to respond. Time should be set aside each day for students to apply their reading skills and for discussion of the materials read.

Children need to become involved in the ownership of their reading experience. This means they will make crucial decisions for the interpretation of reading material while engaging in the reading process. The literature-based program allows for this ownership to be developed as students must decide the topic and type of literature to explore, decide when to proceed further with a piece or stop, discover varied purposes behind reading, and decide what to do with the ideas (Harms, 1986).

Reading refers to getting meaning from a page; whereas, writing refers to putting meaning on the page. With the significant relationship between reading and writing, it seems only appropriate to incorporate writing into a literature-based program as well. Tierney and Pearson (1983) found similarities between the reading and writing process. Students in the planning stage establish a purpose for the text and influence what is understood and produced. During the drafting stage they deal directly with the print on the page. In the aligning stage reviewing, rereading, and rethinking strategies are put into practice. Revising allows for reflection upon ideas stated and the judgement of text quality. The monitoring stage allows students to take control of the reading or writing.

Squire (1983), also ties the reading and writing process together in before, during, and after stages. Before reading or writing students draw on prior knowledge and establish a purpose.

During the actual reading or writing they are actively engaged in the process. Upon completion they are able to go back to the text and evaluate, analyze, and apply judgement.

When students write, they learn to build relationships between the text and the experience they encountered. They develop comprehension and produce written language. Writing fluency is a long term and cumulative process requiring continued guidance, practice, and response.

Teachers can provide these learning opportunities by involving students in varied experiences, such as journal writing. Journals offer students the chance to practice both expository and narrative writing forms, as well as helping develop thinking and technical skills.

Sufficient time should be given to compose, edit, and revise pieces. As students progress in their writing, they'll be able to discern the effectiveness of a piece and decide whether to continue or discard the work.

Teachers can use literature to serve as a resource in helping to develop writing skills. Literary elements such as plot, setting, style, and characterization are examples of what can be taught, teaching children to read like writers and write like readers.

Teachers can offer writing workshops for children which teach for production, how to conference, how to respond to the writing of

others, and how to edit. Allowing time for the sharing of pieces with classmates is a powerful motivator for producing regular writing.

Evaluation of Student Progress in a Literature-based Program

An analysis of reading interests, comprehension, and cognition can be made through the following ways when using a literature-based program: 1) short written responses by students, 2) individual conferences, and 3) reading rates displayed by students' selection of materials.

Evaluation can also be made by examining scores made on standardized tests, assessment of independent seat work, book lists and logs kept by pupils, and parental feedback. However, in evaluating pupils' progress, teachers often aim too low when they measure ability only by performance on isolated-skills tests. Evaluation should be made on the use of books as well.

By appraising attitudes, skills, and reading habits, teachers can assess the progress of the students as well as the success of *the program*.

Results of Using a Literature-based Program

Research indicates that while no one single approach or method works best in the teaching of reading, the individualized reading program has stimulated and motivated the development of good reading habits (West, 1964).

Experimental studies (West, 1964) found that using a literature-based program 1) showed no significant loss in reading achievement as measured by standardized tests, 2) children's attitudes towards books and reading were more positive, 3) children read more, and 4) helped teachers to perceive the children they work with as individuals. One such study occurred in New York City where the Board of Education's Bureau of Educational Research examined and compared reading gains measured on standardized tests between fourth and fifth graders in literature-based programs and standard basal programs during the same period. The literature-based group, consisting of 351 students, obtained a significantly higher mean reading score (six months) than the 6,816 members of the control group.

A higher participation ratio by students in the program caused greater achievement as the self-confidence and self-respect increased. Children in such programs rarely had to be reminded to read during the allotted time frame and teachers were able to see more completely the strengths and limitations of individuals.

Research also found the comprehension themselves of material increased when students read individually (West, 1964). Since there were no discussions interrupting the text or listening to others read aloud, pupils were able to concentrate longer on the print before them.

Students involved in such programs were exposed to a large variety of experiences. They learned to interpret and appreciate literature forms, develop a better understanding of human relationships, increase knowledge of varied subjects, discover their own hidden talents, and determine their own moods and tastes for literature (Russell & Karp, 1981).

Reading aloud to students is a positive and important feature of a reading program. It was found that in literature-based programs in which teachers read aloud, children developed more mature language patterns, learned to read with greater ease, and developed a better understanding of literature (Allen et al., 1986).

In conclusion, a literature-based reading program can be successful if a teacher is willing to take the time and effort in implementing it in the classroom. The successful results of literature-based programs were attributed to positive teacher attitudes toward reading and administrative approval to conduct such a program, conferencing between teacher and pupil, assistance by teachers in helping students make material selections, provision of large amounts of material, and the opportunity available for both group and individual reading.

Chapter 2

DEVELOPING A LITERATURE-BASED THIRD GRADE CLASSROOM

Reasons for Starting the Program

A literature-based program was begun in the researcher's third grade classroom during a practicum as part of the required course work for a master's degree. This paper reports on expansion of that program.

Although the love of books and an enjoyment of personal reading were part of the researcher's life, she found, as an educator, dissatisfaction with teaching the subject. A general dislike and boredom with the basal series in use prompted the search for another way of organizing for reading instruction.

Class Background

The research for the literature-based program was conducted in a classroom of twenty-three students, ten girls and thirteen boys, in a private Christian school. All students were Caucasian.

Twenty-one children lived in town, while two students resided in rural areas. The communities of Cedar Falls, Waterloo, and Reinbeck, Iowa were represented.

The children came from families with an average of 2.8 children per household. Twelve students were the youngest child in the family. Six students were the oldest, while five were middle children. One student was adopted and one student came from a home with a step-parent. All students lived in a two-parent home.

Eighteen mothers worked in the home. Five mothers worked outside the home; two were part-time and three were employed full-time.

The class ranked in the 61st percentile on the reading portion of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, which was administered in April, 1986.

How the Program Began

The program began in September, 1986 with seven third-grade students. The group, consisting of three third-grade girls and four third-grade boys, was selected at random from 23 students to participate.

After a reading competency skills test given at the beginning of the school year was reviewed, the whole class was divided into three reading groups. All students had completed the 2² basal. Desiring to eliminate ability grouping and promote healthy self-esteem in the students, the groups were mixed so that low, middle, and high ability readers would be part of each. The Rascals group, which participated in the program, had an average ranking at the 65th percentile on Iowa Test of Basic Skills at the national level. In Table 1 there is a breakdown of scores.

Table 1

Rascals' ITBS National Percentiles

Number of Students	Percentile
1	99%
1	92%
2	78%
2	47%
1	13%

In the regular reading groups two days were normally spent on a lesson. The first day consisted of teaching skills, while the second day centered on discussion of the basal story assigned the day before. The Rascals were also taught the skills, but brought their own books to the circle to discuss. The children read silently in their books, while one at a time, a student sat by the teacher to read orally or discuss the book's content. The researcher was able to assess comprehension of the material and oral reading fluency, as well as instruct mini-lessons on such topics as vocabulary and punctuation usage.

After completing books, students were required to write a short review on a 3" x 5" index card and place in a file which was available for the whole class to browse through as a reference for book selection. They also recorded each book read on a chart. After completing five books, students chose a book of their choice to make a project. Some ideas chosen were to create posters,

dioramas, or book jackets. The projects were presented in the reading group and displayed around the room. Children chose materials to read from the class library, the school media center, or from home.

The remainder of the class continually asked if they could be taught reading the same way as the Rascals. After seeing an attitude change in reading occur with the Rascals and an interest by the other students for change, it was decided to use the literature-based approach as the method of instruction for all students in reading for the second semester.

The Skills Taught

After the other two reading groups completed the 3¹ basal, the researcher followed the standard procedure of administering the routine Economy competency skills test to the whole class in mid-January, 1987.

A careful examination of the test, which covered the areas of word perception, word structure, word meanings, comprehension, and study skills was conducted. The researcher broke down each area into the sub-tests and then tallied the areas posing difficulties to the students. The class strengths and limitations were determined from the results. Next, the limitations were listed from high to low; the areas of greatest need to those needing the least instruction. The third graders' limitations fell in the following areas: 1) main idea, 2) root words-suffix/prefix,

3) finding details, 4) reading graphs/charts, 5) syllable stress/division, 6) sequence of events, and 7) inference skills.

Research has found that direct instruction has positive results with students. The teacher leads the lesson face to face by telling, showing, or modeling and is able to monitor a student's understanding, provide feedback, and reteach when necessary (Baumann, 1984). Based upon these findings the researcher decided to instruct the whole class by working on the limitations in the order they appeared in difficulty and to use the basal as the base for teaching those skills. This was accomplished by going through the workbook which accompanied the 3² basal and recording all the pages listed on the topic beside the list of limitations. Exercises from the teacher's manual were located as were worksheets which could be used to instruct and help reinforce the problem areas.

The decision was made to begin teaching the individual skills to the class as a whole first. Assignments to practice the skills were then given. Upon correction of the work it was then found which pupils still needed more drill in the area. The skill and students' names were recorded and plans made to work with them the following day, either in a small group or on a one-on-one basis.

The researcher used additional activities from the text, an SRA kit, a Specific Skills kit, and other teacher aids to instruct those pupils needing extra help.

Reading Materials Used

A wide variety of books were used in the classroom. A collection of over 200 books had already been built in the third-grade classroom over the years and served as the backbone for selection.

Throughout the year the researcher was able to purchase new titles with an educational grant awarded her from a Waterloo service organization, from book sales sponsored by the Cedar Falls and Waterloo Public Libraries, through book clubs such as the Trumpet Book Club based in Holmes, Pennsylvania, and at the local Goodwill store.

Many free books were earned from book club orders and Weekly Reader offers as well. Loans of book collections were available from the Area Education Agency and the school media center for classroom usage. Children were also encouraged to bring titles from their own personal libraries or ones they had checked out from the public library or media center.

The researcher frequently gave book talks and introduced authors and illustrators through their works to the class. Books recommended included classics as well as more recent pieces.

The books brought into the classroom provided a variety of reading levels for the students' reading abilities. It was necessary to provide a wide range of materials then so as to accommodate all pupils.

Weekly newspapers on current events, back copies of children's magazines, such as Ranger Rick and Humpty Dumpty, and filmstrip series with words on each frame, were other materials used for reading in the classroom. The filmstrip series were very popular and allowed students to work together in pairs or trios while viewing. Series used included "Patriotic Holidays" and "Stories for Children."

Schedule of Reading Time

Reading time began each day after lunch when the researcher read aloud to the class from a full-length book for approximately twenty minutes. This was done to instill in students an enjoyment for literature, to serve as a model for fluency and oral expression, introduce a variety of story forms, and increase listening skills.

After a short break students returned to the room to write in their personal journals. Each student received a notebook from the researcher for this project. Students generally wrote ten to fifteen minutes on a variety of topics. When the class first began the venture, many needed guidance in choosing a topic to write on, but as they became more familiar with the exercise, they were able to write more on their own. Many started stories or letters they would complete at another time.

Forty minutes were then spent on teaching and practicing skills with the whole class. This time included direct teacher instruction

and work on an assignment to practice what was taught. Assignments were kept to a minimum and usually consisted of two or three workbook pages. If students completed the assignment before recess, the remaining minutes were their free time. When students were working on assignments, the researcher used that time to help pupils with problems in small groups or one-on-one.

After a recess break the students were given thirty minutes for personal reading time each day. They had the option of reading anywhere in the room, alone, or in pairs or trios. They selected books from the classroom, ones they had brought to school, or were allowed to go to the media center to make a choice.

Students kept charts where they recorded the title, author, and number of pages for each book read. They also kept monthly calendars on which they recorded how they spent each personal reading time.

After students completed five books they chose a project to report on a particular book. Charts were displayed on the bulletin board which gave five ideas to select from. Different ideas were given after five, ten, fifteen, and twenty books. If students read more than twenty-five books, they could select a project from any chart as long as it was not a repeat of a previous choice. Some suggestions for projects included making mobiles, pantomiming a scene from a book, creating a game, and writing and presenting a puppet play.

The activities required children to be involved with the writing process as well as serving as a method for assessing comprehension on a selection read. Students generally worked on their projects in the room, but plays and pantomimes were practiced and performed in the empty room next door. Projects were displayed in the room and in the school media center.

The researcher guided the students in project selection and often discussed the books chosen thoroughly before allowing them to proceed ahead. The researcher also took opportunity to use the personal reading time to listen to students' oral reading and read together with individuals. Often students were asked to read material below grade level to insure fluency and build confidence. An adult aide frequently listened to students read also. Tapes occasionally were made of oral reading as well.

Recognizing the significant connection between reading and writing, Wednesday's reading time was set aside for writing workshop during the fourth quarter. All students designed their own personal writing folder and kept pieces they had written or wanted to expand upon in them. Writing fables, tall tales, and imitating predictable books were a few of the forms of writing third graders tried in the short time the workshop was conducted.

The researcher took the students through the writing processes step-by-step so they could see the detail an author must use in order to produce a fine piece. The students were always shown

many examples of a form they were to reproduce. The repetition allowed them to write more comfortably and confidently.

Often the class produced a piece together, allowing many students to offer an idea and thoroughly go through the writing process. These pieces quite frequently took several days to produce and complete.

Children often shared finished products with the whole class or in small groups. Some pieces were put in folders on the bulletin board which made them available for students to read in their leisure time. A predictable text book was written by the whole class and put in display in the media center along with the original copy for other grade levels to read and enjoy.

In summary, this literature-based program used was able to incorporate basic reading and writing skills, expose students to many forms of literature, and develop responsibility for decision-making. It also allowed for students to experience much peer interaction through the direct instruction of lessons as well as through reading project presentations done in groups.

Students learned how to choose for themselves what writing style, audience, or purpose was appropriate and make correct choices in editing.

They decided what literary forms were appealing to them and whether or not a piece was too easy or too difficult.

They were also allowed to make choices for responding to what was read through project selection which often referred them back to the basic reading and writing skills touched upon in direct instruction.

Chapter 3

THE OUTCOMES OF USING A LITERATURE-BASED PROGRAM IN THE THIRD GRADE

Results in Reading Attitudes

In the researcher's classroom the 23 pupils read a total of 359 books from the end of January, 1987 to the end of May, 1987 (approximately 4 months). This made for a class average of 15.6 books read per student. The most books read was 27 while the fewest read was 6.

Favorite authors included Robert McCloskey, Peggy Parish, Russell Hoban, Don Freeman, and Dr. Seuss. Varied genres were chosen by students. A popular classic piece read frequently was The Tale of Peter Rabbit. Expository selections were often selected. Snakes, helicopters, and puppets were among the topics read about by students.

When polled by the researcher at the end of the third quarter if students liked the literature-based approach, only 2 out of 23 responded negatively. One of these was a boy who experienced difficulty in making friends and, therefore, wasn't chosen to participate in group projects by his peers. The other response was made by a girl who expressed the desire for all girls to be in one reading group and all boys in another.

The researcher polled the students again at the end of the fourth quarter. This time all responses for the program were

positive. Comments showed that the children enjoyed doing the projects best. Their favorite project choices were writing plays and creating games. Many students expressed an appreciation for being able to select their own materials instead of having to read "boring" stories from the basal. Several commented how they liked to read anywhere in the room and the freedom to be by themselves or in small groups. A few said they were glad they were given a lot of time for free reading (approximately 30 minutes a day). Other remarks made indicated an increase in reading enjoyment and amazement at how many books they could actually read.

Several students expressed negative feelings for the assignments given in the workbook. Some felt the pages were boring and finished them in record time. Others indicated they'd rather be writing or reading on their own.

Rarely did students need reminding as to how they were to use the actual reading time. Only two students required a very structured set-up where they needed direct guidance in their reading activities.

Results of Reading Achievement on Standardized Tests

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills was administered in April, 1987, and the basal competency skills test was given in May, 1987. These two tests were used to measure and compare reading achievement with scores from the previous spring.

Students' scores from second grade placed the class average on the reading portion of the ITBS at the 61st percentile using national norms. The April, 1987 test scores revealed the class' national average to be at the 56th percentile. In the researcher's class of 23 third graders, 12 students' scores went up, 5 students' scores went down, 4 students' scores remained the same, and 2 students' scores were unable to be compared as they were new to the school in third grade and there were no records of ITBS testing in the cumulative folders. The scores using the national norms ranged from the 9th to the 97th percentile. One possible explanation for the group decline in percentile ranking may be attributed to the mode of administration of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. In second grade a majority of the test is given orally; whereas, in third grade students read on their own after being given a set of instructions. This may account for some differences in scoring. No comparison of previous sets of scores was made to determine if this pattern occurs every year.

The basal competency skills test for the 3² basal was also administered since the skills taught in the program were taken from the basal material. The areas covered on the test included word structure, word meanings, comprehension skills, and study skills. The scores received in each above area were categorized as competency demonstrated, reinforcement needed, and reteaching needed. The scores attained were compared to those earned on the

3¹ basal competency skills test given in January, 1987. Results showed 8 students' scores remaining the same in all four areas. One student scored lower in the word structure area. In word meanings, five scores went down, while two went up. Six students' scores declined while three students' scores increased in general comprehension skills. One score decreased, whereas, one score increased on the study skills portion of the test. There were a total of 13 scores decreasing and six scores increasing.

After giving the basal competency skills test in May, the limitations as measured by the test were main idea, sequence, skimming, and map reading. These were the same limitations exhibited by the 3¹ basal competency skills test given in January, 1987. Since basal tests are notoriously inaccurate these scores may or may not indicate actual reading problems.

Anecdotal records of reading behaviors kept by the researcher indicated many students displayed knowledge of main idea, skimming, and sequencing while reading. During conferencing, students were required to draw upon their resources in these skills to describe their book experiences, as well as when they were working on projects.

Results in Teacher Perception of Students

Experimental studies concluded that students were perceived more as individuals by teachers when using a literature-based program (West, 1964). The researcher found this to be the case as

she conducted pupil conferences, recorded observations, reviewed student participation, and was involved in selection assistance of books and projects. These activities allowed the researcher to observe what types of literature were being chosen, to note how many books and projects were being completed, to assess comprehension of materials read, and to watch peer interactions.

Success of the Program

The researcher felt the literature-based program was a success in her classroom for various reasons. First, a new attitude and zeal for teaching reading was discovered. Although she loved to read personally, the researcher did not enjoy teaching the subject of reading. Being more enthusiastic herself and being willing to deviate from traditional reading groups caused the enthusiasm to transfer to the third grade students.

The second reason for success stemmed from administrative approval to incorporate such a program in the classroom and positive-feedback for the types of activities taking place in the class. The administrator openly and publicly praised the researcher for receiving a grant to purchase books for her room and for presenting her program at a session for the Iowa Reading Association. The administrator also recommended her to present the program at the Association of Christian Schools International's fall conference in October, 1987.

Another reason for the success resulted in the availability of reading materials in the classroom. The researcher was able to purchase over 80 books during the school year which built the class library to over 270 books. In addition to materials brought from home, the school media center, and area education agency, the supply included a great deal of variety in subject matter and reading level.

Finally, a fourth major reason for success came from the students themselves. A self-confidence was developed in many as was a love for books and new enthusiasm for reading. Students were exposed to a larger variety of experiences which allowed them to develop some tastes in literature, discover their own hidden talents, and learn problem-solving skills as well. This was seen by the researcher through observation and conferencing.

Conclusion

Although the standardized test scores seemed low, the researcher was not discouraged. The tests seem to assume that reading can be divided into sub-skills and measured on those terms, but learning to read means more than scores of sequenced bits and pieces.

The two students who read the most books and completed the most projects were a boy and girl who scored poorly on the ITBS and at the reinforcement and reteaching levels of the basal competency skills tests. If the researcher were to classify these

children by the standardized test scores they would be categorized as remedial readers. Yet the researcher found their comprehension of materials they chose to read adequate and was amazed by the projects they selected and presented to the class. Their enthusiasm was exceedingly high and the boy commented to the researcher excitedly one day, "I didn't know I could read so many books!" After seeing the enthusiasm for learning increase on the part of the students, it convinced the researcher that a literature-based reading program has a place in the classroom.

The researcher will reconsider using the basal skills as a base for teaching in the fall of 1987. She will probably attempt to proceed with more of a whole-language approach which will continue on with an abundance of reading materials, writing activities, and the addition of more learning centers and thematic units. Increased efforts will be made to diagnose students through observation and more anecdotal record keeping. The researcher will also work more closely on matching skills to students' needs. With these considerations the researcher anticipates an even more successful literature-based program.

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