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Effects of Small Group Instruction on Oral Reading Fluency

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A Project Presented to
The Graduate Faculty of
Minnesota State University Moorhead

By

Tiffany Johnson

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Science in
Curriculum and Instruction

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Chapter One

General Problem/Issue

Schools across the United States are seeing that the percentage of students that are experiencing reading failure is growing year after year. By reading failure I mean that students are not coming in reading at what the schools have deemed adequate for their age and ability levels. For example, using A-Z reading levels, a first grader should come in reading at a D level, and end the year at a J. However, year after year, schools are seeing students come in lower than that, so they are caught playing catch up all year. Each year there are competing curricula that claim to know exactly what students need in order to succeed. It is a quality teacher's goal to bring students to their full potential, and as Lipp & Helfrich (2016) state, "Effective teachers are continually seeking opportunities to improve their craft" (p.639). It is because of this that I am doing my action research on the effectiveness of the curricula sets forth in our district. In a school with many English Language Learners and low socioeconomic students, as teachers we are often the sole providers of reading support for the students. In districts across the country, schools are finding that students are getting stuck at their current reading levels, and are not making adequate yearly progress by the end of the year. According to Wall (2014) "Inconsistent progress in reading is not a problem unique to our school. Many teachers in the United states spend large segments of their literacy blocks conducting guided reading sessions with their students only to find that some students, particularly English Language Learners, minority, or underprivileged students, make minimal progress over the course of the year" (p. 135).

With this in mind, teachers all over the United States are trying new ways to get through to all of their students in a way that will help them reach their full potential. In an attempt to do this, new small group reading models are coming out every year. It is this reason why I am

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going to do a study on which program works best for first grade students. Much like students across the nation, students in the Midwest are at risk in not meeting their Average Yearly Progress every year. As stated by Angell (2001) “Young people are at risk, or educationally disadvantaged, if they have been exposed to inadequate or inappropriate experiences in the family, school, or community” (p. 6). Students at many schools, including the one that the study is being done at, have not had exposure to literature, so they are coming in at a lower reading level each year. Kindergarten teachers are trying to get students from knowing zero letters or sounds, to reading at a level D. With the gap being so large, students are coming into first grade at level As or Bs, and teachers are expected to get them to jump to a level J or higher by the end of the year. Without strong small group reading instruction, an educator is unable to fill in this reading gap, and each year it gets larger. With the importance of reading progress in the primary grades, teachers are looking for the most effective reading curricula. It is with this in mind that I am doing this action research project.

Subjects and Settings

Description of subjects. The students chosen will come from an elementary school that has about 500 students with a 62% Free and Reduced Lunch demographic. There are eleven girls and eight boys in the class that will be participating in the study. The subjects are students who have reading levels that range from reading Level AA-Level M. There are 6 students who are receiving EL services at this time. Approximately 40% of the students are from single-parents households, with the rest living in two-parent homes.

Selection criteria. Twenty first graders in the class will be participating in this study. The students will not be split into groups using different curricula, but instead will be using the data growth from the first semester after using the basal *Journeys*' small group model, and

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comparing it to the growth in the second using the Jan Richardson guided reading model. Each of the small groups will be following Jan Richardson's lesson plans for each reading category: Pre-A, Emergent, Early, Transitional, and Fluent.

Description of setting. This study will be done in a schoolwide Title I building in a city in the Midwest. It is known for its high EL population and an even higher percentage of students taking part in the Free and Reduced Lunch program at 62%. The number of students in the school receiving IEP special services is currently at 53 out of 500. This school also has a high number of EL students, currently at 102 which is 20.4% of the population. There are 17 languages represented at the school, with English, Somali, Arabic, and Nepali being the most highly represented.

There are title reading and math specialists in the school, that are currently serving between 20-25 students in first grade at this time. In a schoolwide Title I building, all students qualify for services, but at this time in first grade, students are chosen for title services according to their AIMSweb and Benchmark reading scores for reading, and AVMR scores in math. We choose our students with the lowest reading levels to receive title reading services. These students are chosen by comparing the data across the grade level. If the students are receiving EL services and do not have the language to gain any reading strategies at the time, students are put into EL reading groups until their language is developed at a high enough ACCESS score to qualify.

Informed consent. Permission was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at Minnesota State University- Moorhead and from Fargo Public Schools to conduct this study. The school district's IRB procedure was followed to obtain permission to conduct research. This

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involved receiving permission from the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction as well as from the principal at the school the study is being conducted at.

Protection of human subjects participating in research in research was assured.

Participants were informed of the purpose of the research and any procedures required by the participant, including disclosure of risks and benefits. Confidentiality was protected through the use of pseudonyms without identifying information. The choice to participate or withdraw at any time was outlined both verbally and in writing. Parents were fully informed about the nature of the study. The parents were each given information about the study and gave written permission for their children to participate in this study.

Review of Literature

There is no doubt in an educator's mind that reading is very important in a child's overall education. In the school for which I work in, most of the guided reading strategies are taught and practiced at the guided reading table. Each year, teachers are presented with the newest ways to effectively teach children how to read. Especially in the primary grades, reading strategies are taught and practiced each day. Without having this core knowledge, the older grades are unable to build upon those skills to comprehend more difficult texts. In fact, according to Fountas & Pinnell (2012) "Books are selected with specific students in mind so that with strong teaching, readers can meet the demands of more challenging texts over time" (p.268). The focus of this study will be to compare two programs to find out which one has pieces that benefit first grade students the most in their oral reading fluency. According to Connor, Morrison, Toste, Crowe, and Fishman, "The teacher can affect positive change by utilizing teaching strategies that work with at-risk children within the classroom. Teachers who

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are successful with a great amount of students at risk share similar traits in their teaching style. Using early intervention strategies at the primary level, teachers can help at risk student become more successful. The new mission can be stated simply- Learning for All: Whatever it Takes” (p. 11)!

In our district, *Journeys* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2017) is our adopted curriculum for whole group instruction, but many are trying to use the Jan Richardson model for small group. Both have their advantages and disadvantages, but *Journeys* tends to rely mostly on strategies over focusing on individual needs. The Jan Richardson model focuses heavily on word work and having books at the students’ instructional levels. According to Richardson, texts need to be at an instructional level so that students are able to use their decoding and problem-solving strategies with help from the teacher (Richardson 2016). In the *Journeys* curriculum, the students are grouped into below level, on level, and above level texts. This does make planning for small group much easier, but in many cases, the texts are either far above their instructional level or more of an independent level in which they get no ongoing practice with their reading skills.

The advantages to both curricula are that they both have an easy small group model to follow, but there is much more planning that goes into choosing the books with Richardson’s lessons.

Definition of Terms

For this study, a few terms must be defined:

Fluency:

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“Fluency is defined as reading text accurately, quickly, and with proper expression”

(Noltemeyer, Joseph, & Watson, 2014, p.221).

Expression:

“Proper expression refers to the prosodic features of language, such as loudness, duration, pitch, and pausing” (Noltemeyer, Joseph, & Watson, 2014, p.221).

Journeys and Jan Richardson Models

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s *Journeys* small group model has a strong focus on comprehension strategies and vocabulary, but has books that are already pre-chosen to fit with the theme of the week. These books, as stated before, are put into three categories: below, on, and above level. These books have a strong focus on the vocabulary and comprehension strategies that are the focus for the week, but are not always challenging the students with their reading skills. The texts are also broken up into many small mini-lessons, so the books only get read once or perhaps twice during the week. According to Guzel-Ozmen (2011), “Repeated readings require students to read orally a passage more than once. Findings from various students have indicated that repeated readings resulted in increased reading fluency and comprehension skills for variety of populations such as students with learning disabilities and reading difficulties” (p. 1067).

Jan Richardson (2016) has put forth a small group model that allows teachers to pick books that are at students’ instructional levels as found by their benchmark reading scores. She has broken the lesson plans up into five categories: Pre-A, Emergent, Early, Transitional, and Fluent. Each lesson starts with a strong focus on sight words. There is a sight word inventory list that makes it easy to keep track of where the students are at, and which sight words they

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should be working on at each reading level. This allows a teacher the opportunity to pull books at students' individual levels that will have those words in them that need to be practiced.

According to Richardson (2016) there is a natural flow for the order in which sight words should be taught. With a focus on sight words and accurate reading levels, students will improve their reading fluency.

Leveled Readers

Numerous articles and thesis papers have been written on the importance of having books at students' instructional level. That being said, the guided reading books in the district curriculum are leveled. For each group, an appropriately leveled book would and should build on what the students already know. It would have sight words that they know, and new ones that can be taught during the guided reading lesson. It would also be a book that is just above their current reading level, so the teacher must guide them through it using taught strategies. This is called an "instructional reading level." According to Morris (2015), "Beginning readers who struggle need to be led efficiently through an interesting, carefully leveled book curriculum. These children also need to be led through a leveled word study or phonics curriculum" (p. 503). When a curriculum focuses on challenging the students just enough to give them practice with the skills you are working on, they will progress quicker through their reading levels. Richardson states that "Texts are chosen at the group members' instructional reading level, not at their independent level. In other words, the text should be a tad too hard. As students read, they should encounter challenges that require them to problem-solve and practice strategies that help them comprehend and discuss the passage. Celebrate errors as opportunities for teaching and learning" (p. 14). When a school is seeing a pattern of students who are not making adequate progress, a proven method like this one is too important to not try.

Sight Word Focus

In choosing appropriate leveled readers, there must also be a focus on sight words in those texts. If students cannot read the basic sight words, they will not be able to move on to a more complicated text. In using the Jan Richardson model, there will be a daily focus on sight words at their reading levels. The students that were using the *Journeys* curriculum model, were focusing on the 6 focus words for the week, which were the same for students at all the levels. Through this research, there should be a noticeable difference between the students who are moving through a progressive path, and those that are not.

Oral Reading Fluency

Oral Reading Fluency is when students read with automaticity and have appropriate accuracy, speed, and expression. When they have a high ORF, they are able to comprehend the text because they are able to focus on the meaning. Oral Reading Fluency is a critical component needed to have successful reading comprehension. In deciding a model to test out with curriculum improves students' general reading progress, there are many programs to choose from. It would be easy to use their benchmark reading scores as an indicator of progress, but in order to dig a little deeper and be able to progress monitor, a test of their oral reading fluency seemed like a more accurate indicator. Noltemeyer, Joseph, and Watson (2014) stated that "researchers find that dysfluent readers read passages slowly without proper expression. It is highly likely that students who read with little or no expression are not fully gaining meaning from what they read" (p. 221). Since oral reading fluency is of utmost importance in students' comprehension, focusing on this in my study will help teachers gain more understanding of what will help them build the most well-rounded readers.

Statement of the Hypothesis

A higher percentage of students will reach grade level oral reading proficiency by using the Jan Richardson small group reading model than that of the *Journeys* (HMH 2017) model. Jan Richardson focuses heavily on sight words, and by reading books at their instructional level as found by their Fountas and Pinnell benchmark reading assessments. By using this model, more students will reach the national oral reading proficiency set forth by *Aimsweb Plus*.

Chapter Two

Research Questions

As a teacher for the last 13 years, it has become more evident each year that fluency is something that is set to the side as unimportant. Gifted and talented teachers in our district have stated that they are surprised by how fourth and fifth grade students lack fluency skills in the GT program. Students are not given the opportunity to read aloud in many cases, so teachers are letting this skill slide more and more. Fluency is not even taken into consideration when students are benchmarked using the Fountas and Pinnell kits.

This is a frightening fact to me because students aren't gaining meaning when they are so choppy with their reading. It is because of this that I framed the following research questions:

1. Will students who are given books at their instructional level improve their oral reading fluency?
2. Does a focus on sight words/high frequency words help build a student's oral reading fluency?

Research Plan

Methods and rationale. The students were instructed using *Journeys'* small group model for the first half of the year. A baseline oral reading fluency score was found using AIMS Web Plus which is described below. They were then given small group instruction daily using the *Journeys'* model. The students were then tested again in January to check their oral reading fluency growth.

For the study, the same students will now be instructed in small group using the Jan Richardson small group model. Books will be chosen at their instructional level and instructed using Jan Richardson's set lesson plans. After four months, they will again be tested to compare their growth in each semester.

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The instrument that will be used for this study will be the *AIMS Web Plus* ‘Oral Reading Fluency’ test. The students will be formally tested in early January, and again in May by a testing team. They were tested at the beginning of the year, so that will be used as their baseline data. This test will be administered one-on-one by a non-biased testing team that will know nothing about the research that is being conducted.

During this specific assessment, students are given two passages to read for one minute each, and the two scores are averaged to calculate a student’s words per minute reading rate. It is this average that makes this assessment one that is looked at with very high validity across the nation.

AIMSweb also gives me an opportunity to progress monitor along the way using the same instrument, but different probes. I will print out reports to show the data I find from all of the subjects taking part in the study.

AIMS web was chosen as the district’s testing tool because of the validity of the data when comparing national results. It is given 1st through 8th grade, so progress can be easily graphed for students across their years in school. It gives information on reading rates and accuracy. AIMSweb was chosen as the testing tool for this particular study because it has an assessment for oral reading fluency. *AIMSweb Plus* is a newer version on *Aims*, and our district believes it is an accurate indicator of where students are at in their reading levels. Students are tested three times a year, and can be compared to other students within a district or students across the nation in first grade.

Schedule. The students have already had a baseline score from September of 2017. This will be compared to the next AIMSweb testing score in January of 2018. This will again be

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compared to the scores that will be obtained using the same testing tool in May of 2018. The students will be tested early so I can get the results to use in my action research project.

Ethical issues. One of the ethical issues that could arise during my action research is that of parents who are concerned that their students are not getting their proper education because I am changing what I have been doing this year. Also, the administration or the district may be reluctant to me going against a curriculum that was just purchased for our district. Lastly, the concern could be stress on the students to perform at a higher level in hopes of my research results showing major growth.

Anticipated response. There are no anticipated issues that will arise, but it is always a good idea to plan for the worse. When talking with parents, be sure to state that all of the students will continue to get small group time with me, in which they will be working toward their fullest potential. It will also be stated that that this is a different guided reading tool, but that students will not only be supported, but will be given the opportunity to exceed expectations. When it comes to the district and administration, it will be stated that the Jan Richardson model has been one that we have sent our title reading teachers to get trained in for the last year. That this particular model builds on the existing *Journeys*' framework. It is not taking away from the instruction, but instead is adding to it. For students, they will be supported as they have been all year. It will be confirmed that the lessons will not be significantly different, but just adjusted to meet their needs.

Chapter Three

Description of Data

Teacher observation. Teacher observation throughout the year was used to determine students' growth and ability to move on to new levels in reading. Students were only formally tested three times, so the daily observations of their work during small group was crucial to move them up and down. Along with the daily monitoring of skills, Figure 3.1 shows the rubric that was used to determine level of engagement of students during small group guided reading time. The goal was to have the levels of engagement almost equal so the achievement was a more accurate representation of how the different programs worked.

Figure 3.1. Teacher Observation of Student Engagement

1	2	3	4
Student rarely participates in small group activities.	Student sometimes participates in small group activities.	Student mostly participates in small group activities.	Student always participates in small group activities.
Student rarely answers questions or does the work.	Student sometimes answers questions or does the work.	Student mostly answers questions and does the work.	Student always answers questions and does the work.

The students were each given a rubric value during the guided reading lesson depending on their observed engagement level. The average level of engagement during the Fall was 3.4, and was 3.8 in the Spring.

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Student achievement. The students were tracked for progress on their oral reading fluency using the *Aimsweb Plus* assessment in the fall, winter, and spring. Assessments were administered by the same group of retired teachers at the school. The students were each given two separate reading selections to read through to determine their score. The first assessment was given at the start of the year in September to get a baseline score for each student. The second was given at the start of January to show their oral reading fluency growth using the *Journeys'* small group reading model. The final assessment was given in mid-May to find their oral reading fluency growth using the Jan Richardson small group model.

Figure 3.2 shows the cutoff scores for *Aimsweb's* Oral Reading Fluency for the fall, winter, and spring. Blue are the students who are above average, green is average, and yellow is below average. The numbers represents words read accurately per minute.

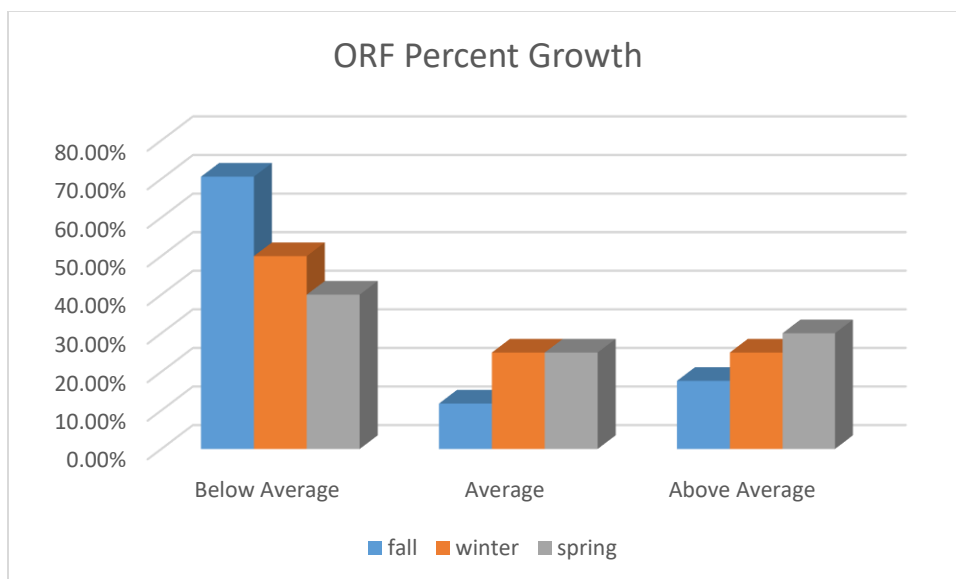
Figure 3.2. *Aimsweb Plus* Cutoff Scores for Oral Reading Fluency

Grade	Tier	Fall	Winter	Spring
	1	55+	79+	97+
1	1	19 - 54	36 - 79	51 - 97
	2	0 - 18	0 - 35	0 - 50

Figure 3.3 shows the percentage of students that were found to be below average, average, and above average with oral reading fluency according to *Aimsweb's* set national standards. The colors of each testing session are distinguished by color.

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Figure 3.3. Student Rankings at Each Assessment Period



The data shows that the students that were below average went down from 70.59% to 50% using the *Journeys* small group model in the fall, and down another 10% to a total of 40% by the spring assessment using the Jan Richardson model. The students that were at an average rate went up from 11.76% in the fall, to 25% by the winter. The percentage stayed the same at 25% of students meeting the *Aimswest* national standards for Oral Reading Fluency by the spring using the Jan Richardson model. The data shows that the students who were above average, reading at over 97 words per minute, went up slightly from 17.65% to 25% from fall to winter, and went up to 30% of the class using the Jan Richardson model.

Consistently the students showed growth throughout the year. The number of below average students went down, while the number of students who were above average went up slightly throughout the action research process.

Methods

Journeys' small group model. The following lesson plans are an example of plans that were used from the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt *Journeys* (2017) curriculum during the first half of the school year. The books that fit with these lessons are put into three categories: below grade level, on grade level, and above grade level. They each have a strong introduction for the story before students have a chance to read it independently. This introduction includes a lot of “front-load” vocabulary for the students. In the 20 minute time frame of our lessons, about 10 minutes of that is focused on building that background content before beginning reading. This leaves about 7 minutes of reading, and 3 minutes of responding to the text. On the first lesson of the week, the response focuses on response to reading, and on the second day, a written response is added. This did not leave a lot of time for students to work on words daily, but as you could see by the data, they still made growth.

During these lessons it was observed that occasionally the texts were either too easy or too difficult for the students. When it was too easy, they were not able to practice new reading strategies that would be taught during the lesson. If the text was too hard, some students would show frustration and either give up, or get too caught up in decoding difficult words that they would lose all sense of the meaning of the text. Figure 3.4 shows an example of the lesson plan used during the first half of the school year.

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Figure 3.4. Example of *Journeys*' Lesson Plan

Life in the Coral Reefs by Erin Spencer

Build Background
Help children use their knowledge of things that live in the sea to think about the book. Help them anticipate the text with a question like: *What kinds of things can you think of that live in the sea?*

Front-Load Vocabulary Some everyday words may be unfamiliar to English learners. Before reading, check understanding of the following words: *plants, animals, ocean, shallow, worm, soft, hard, hide, danger, fly, roar, safe, dying, save.*

Introduce the Text
Guide children through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Call their attention to any labels. Here are some suggestions:

Page 2: Explain that this book tells about places underwater called coral reefs.
Suggested language: *Turn to page 2 and look at the picture. The first sentence reads: Many plants and animals live in the ocean. Say the word live. What letter would you expect to see first in live? Find the word live and put your finger under it. What are some plants and animals you know that live in the ocean?*

Page 3: Explain that some pictures in the book have labels to name things. The label in the picture on page 3 says: coral reef. Coral reefs grow in shallow water. The word water starts with the letter w. Point to the word water in the first sentence. The book says that the water in coral reefs is warm, not cold. The word cold begins with the letter c. Can you find the word cold on page 3?

Cultural Support: Use a map and show children the location of the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland, North-East Australia, the largest coral reef in the world.

Pages 4-5: Remind children that information in the pictures can help them read. On page 4 you can see a close-up picture of coral. Tell what you see. How does the diagram on page 5 help you understand what coral is?

Page 8: Turn to page 8 and look at the picture. Point to the label: frogfish. Can you see the two smaller words in that name? Put your finger under each of them. Can you find the frogfish in the picture? Frogfish can change their color to hide in coral reefs. The word their begins with the letters th. Find the word their on page 8 and put your finger under it.
Now go back to the beginning and read to find out all about coral reefs.

Words to Know
cold live many their warm water

Read
As the children read, observe them carefully. Guide them as needed, using language that supports their problem-solving ability.

Respond to the Text

Personal Response
Ask children to share their personal responses to the book. Begin by asking what they read best about the book, or what they found most interesting.
Suggested language: *Would you like to visit a coral reef? Why or why not?*

Ways of Thinking
As you discuss the text, help children understand these teaching points:

Thinking Within the Text	Thinking Beyond the Text	Thinking About the Text
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many plants and animals live in the ocean. Coral reefs grow in the ocean and many animals and plants live in them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coral reefs are amazing habitats. People need to work at preserving coral reefs or they may disappear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The color photographs reflect the sensory details described in the text. The use of labels helps readers learn the names of plants and animals in the sea. The writer's purpose is inform readers about the wealth of life living in coral reefs.

© 2006, Fountas, I.C. & Pinnell, G.S. *Secretary for Comprehending and Fluency, Haverhill, Portsmouth, NH*

Choices for Support

Fluency
Ask children to choose a page of the book to read aloud. Remind them to pay attention to phrasing. By breaking each sentence into natural phrases, readers reflect the meaning of the sentence.

Phonemic Awareness and Word Work

- Compound Words Materials:** whiteboards, markers. Write these compound words from the story on the board: *clownfish, butterfly, lionfish, frogfish*. On their whiteboards, have children write the two words that make up each compound word.
- Ending Sounds** Say each of the following words one at a time: *plant, coral, find, warm, water, deep*. Have children repeat each word, and then say the ending sound.

Grade 1 © Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company Lesson 11: Life in the Coral Reefs

Jan Richardson's small group model. The following lesson plan was used with students during the second half of the school year. Books were chosen at their specific reading levels as found by their F & P benchmark assessments' data. Students were grouped according to their level, and books were picked at their instructional reading levels each week. As the students showed independence at a level, they were moved up so the books they were reading were always at a level that would promote opportunities for them to use new strategies, which caused them to be pushed just enough, but not too much as to cause frustration with reading.

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Books were also, as much as possible, chosen to fit their interest. This may be why the students showed they were more engaged during the lessons.

The lesson plans have a strong focus on sight words in levels A-G. A new word was taught each day, with a review on two previously learned sight words. The students would get an opportunity to learn the word, practice building it with magnetic letters, and then writing it on a whiteboard. As you can see by the plan, there was also a strong 3-4 minute book introduction before the students were given a strategy to focus on, and got to their reading. During reading time, I would take the time to read with each of them, and pick a “teaching point” to focus on with them.

The benefits, as seen by myself, were that the students did not find the texts too easy or too difficult, which caused much less frustration throughout the second half of the school year. It was also observed that they found more enjoyment from the books than that of the books during the first half of the year.

Figure 3.5 shows an example of the Jan Richardson small group model lesson plan used during the second half of the action research.

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Figure 3.5. Example of Jan Richardson's Lesson Plan

Early Guided Reading Plan (Levels D-I)			
Students:		Dates:	
Title/Level		Strategy Focus	Comprehension Focus
DAY 1		DAY 2	
1. Sight Word Review 1-2 minutes		1. Sight Word Review 1-2 minutes	
		New SW from Day 1	
2. Book Introduction 3-4 minutes		2. Reread Yesterday's Book (and other familiar books)	
Synopsis:		Observations or take a running record on one student.	
New Vocabulary or Language Structures			
3. Read With Prompting 8-10 minutes			
Monitoring and Word-Solving Prompts <input type="checkbox"/> Reread and make the first sound. <input type="checkbox"/> What would make sense and look right? <input type="checkbox"/> Check the middle (or end) of the word. <input type="checkbox"/> Cover the ending. Find a part you know. <input type="checkbox"/> Do you know another word that looks like this one? <input type="checkbox"/> Try the other vowel sound.		Fluency and Comprehension Prompts <input type="checkbox"/> Don't point. Read it faster. <input type="checkbox"/> Read it the way the character would say it. <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher frames 2-3 words or slides finger to support phrasing. <input type="checkbox"/> What did you just read? What happened at the beginning? <input type="checkbox"/> Why did the character do (or say) that? What are you thinking? <input type="checkbox"/> What have you learned?	
4. Discussion Prompt 2-4 minutes			
5. Teaching Points for Early Readers (choose 1 or 2 each day) 1-2 minutes			
Word-Solving Strategies <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor for M, S, V <input type="checkbox"/> Reread at difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> Attend to endings <input type="checkbox"/> Use known parts <input type="checkbox"/> Contractions <input type="checkbox"/> Use analogies <input type="checkbox"/> Break words	Examples:	Fluency & Expression <input type="checkbox"/> Attend to bold words <input type="checkbox"/> Reread page ____ for expression <input type="checkbox"/> Read it like the character <input type="checkbox"/> Attend to punctuation.	
6. Teach One Sight Word 1-2 minutes		6. Reteach Same Sight Word 1-2 minutes	
Word:	1. What's Missing?	2. Mix & Fix	3. Table Writing
7. Word Study (choose one) 3-5 minutes		7. Guided Writing 8-10 minutes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Picture sorting <input type="checkbox"/> Making words <input type="checkbox"/> Sound boxes <input type="checkbox"/> Analogy charts		<input type="checkbox"/> Dictated sentences <input type="checkbox"/> B-M-E <input type="checkbox"/> Problem-Solution <input type="checkbox"/> SWBS <input type="checkbox"/> New facts you learned <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
8. Next Steps	Text was: Hard Appropriate Easy	Next Focus:	Students to assess and analyze:

Complete the shaded boxes before you meet with the group. Add observations and notes during the lesson.

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Research Questions

Will students who are given books at their instructional level improve their oral reading fluency? It is evident by the data that yes, the students made significant gains using books at their instructional reading levels. However, the students also made growth when using books that were around their instructional level. Specifically picking books at their instructional level did not make a huge impact on their growth in oral reading fluency.

Does a focus on sight words/high frequency words help build a student's oral reading fluency? With the focus on sight words or high frequency words, students made growth with their oral reading fluency. Both lesson plans had sight word practice, but with the Jan Richardson plan, words are strategically taught using a 4 step process shown on figure 3.5. However, the data did not show that having a focus on sight words made any more growth with their oral reading fluency scores. The students made similar growth with both small group reading models.

Conclusion

The data does not conclusively show that either small group model made more or less of an impact on student growth. Both models show that students made growth in their oral reading fluency as they progressed through the year. Without more time, I cannot say which model would be most effective with first graders.

What does show is that students showed more interest in books used with the Jan Richardson model. These books were chosen specifically for these students according to their interest and instructional reading levels. When students are engaged, they showed more of a willingness to work through words that they struggled with. They were able to use the strategies

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taught because they wanted to finish the texts to hear about what happened or what was being taught through informational texts.

Chapter Four

Action Plan

Small group reading instruction in both forms were shown to help students make growth in oral reading fluency. In the classroom, the small group time is effective at meeting students where they are at, and helping them grow when it comes to oral reading fluency. With the focus on sight words and having books at their instructional reading levels, students were able to read more words per minute accurately. They were more confident in their reading abilities, and they also seemed more willing to try more difficult texts.

Using Jan Richardson's model gives teachers very effective strategies to help students find success in the area of reading. Each of the small group models helped the students make growth, but with the focus on books at their levels, students showed more interest and engagement during the lessons.

Looking at the year as a whole, in order to reach all students, the ability to have many small group teaching strategies is imperative to effective reading instruction. Since the data did not show definitively which small group model helps students make the largest amount of growth in fluency, next year the entire first grade team at this school will be working to find more accurate data. The students make a large amount of growth at the beginning of the year, so 2 of the 4 sections at this school will be using the Jan Richardson model all year, and the other 2 sections will use the *Journeys*' model. Each student will be tracked to see who makes the most growth over the entire year. Since each class is always evenly filled with students of varying abilities, an accurate measure of growth will be found.

Chapter Five

Plan for Sharing

The results of this study were first shared with the rest of the common grade level, first grade, teachers at the school where this study was conducted. In the district, teachers gather weekly, mostly in common grade levels, in something called Professional Learning Communities, or PLCs. During these times, educators discuss different subject area data. The different small group models were shown to them. The differences in styles were discussed by all, and the pros and cons of both were listed. Data was then shared with the teachers, and it was decided that we will all use the Jan Richardson model next year, and track the data of our entire grade level.

The data was also shared with the principal of the building where the study took place. More decisions on whole school instruction will be discussed after the entire grade works with both of the small group models during the next school year.

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