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Success through Intervention

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Abstract

The focus of this action research was to utilize a daily exit ticket for Kindergarten students to decipher if they could continue success on their own following whole group instruction. Based upon the exit ticket scores students would then have small group intervention time to focus on the skill they need. Once small group intervention is complete, students will be re-assessed with the same exit ticket to verify their understanding with the content. The findings from exit tickets will show if there is student success through intervention.

Keywords: intervention, exit ticket, individualized instruction

Success through Intervention

The literacy skills that students must achieve in early elementary grades is on the rise and it's important they lay their foundation for future skills in Kindergarten. The essential skills that students must achieve in their first years of school has increased over time and students who fall behind in those skills will continue to lag behind their peers throughout their school years. Utilizing one-to-one or small group instruction is vital for these students that aren't acquiring the skills they need in the classroom. Does intervention time further student success? "Thus, early reading instruction that is high in quality and quantity can prevent children from experiencing significant delays" (Noltemeyer, 2013). You will find success through intervention in your classroom when you use intervention time with students to continue to build on their foundation.

East Elementary is in the process of driving intervention time with skills that students do not comprehend during whole group instruction. The school is currently identified as a School in Need of Assistance (SINA) per the Iowa Department of Education. Therefore, the goal is to continue to drive instruction from the data received via our students. The idea is to get all hands on deck during the intervention time so as many students can get support for skills they are lacking during that time.

Literature Review

There are many types of intervention that work in a kindergarten classroom. Bauer's (2016) study states the following:

"This crucial year of kindergarten is a time where children learn to be students. This first year of school should be filled with positive experiences in order to motivate students to be learners. A struggling student will feel frustration rather than enthusiasm, and

intervening early prevents students from going through several years of frustration” (p. 68).

Noltemeyer (2013) notes that whole group instruction can be too fast paced and overwhelming for lower skilled students. Small group or one-to-one intervention time would be most beneficial for these students that aren't getting enough practice and feedback in large group learning. One of the most beneficial things an educator can do is use their intervention time wisely by narrowing down students who are struggling with essential skills needed for continued growth.

Samuels' (2009) states that there are many programs to use for response-to-intervention or RTI to better a student's learning. He notes there is no harm in early screening and having too many students who qualify to get RTI methods. “In most RTI instructional models, students generally are screened early in the school year to spot any potential educational deficits” (Samuels, 2009, para. 3). Educators should use progress monitoring frequently to check if the intervention is helping the student or if other services should be sought after. If students are showing success they may no longer need intervention but further checks should be put in place for further monitoring.

In a California elementary school, students who scored below a given score were placed into an intensive intervention program. Steckbeck (2004) notes that after one year of completion of the intervention program students' progress was obvious. This article was very informational in regards to how to use other staff and colleagues in the identifying of students as well as the intervention process. A team approach gets all hands on deck in order to help students who need that extra support for growth. Steckbeck (2004) states, “Using a team approach to address the needs of struggling kindergarteners has made a difference in their academic achievement”

Utilizing all of your resources you have available to you to help students (and early on) will be vital in getting your intervention strategies to work.

Fratt's (2003) article describes a district that wanted to turn around their student success. Grade level benchmarks were reduced by 30% to help get teachers on board with this process. Minimizing their load activated their response in working harder on specific skills. This also impacted the amount of content that students had to master before continuing onto the next grade level. Intervention time with students is about limiting the content you work on and more of mastering the basic skills they are lacking. Reducing the skills that you re-teach during intervention will help your intervention students focus solely on those key phonics components.

There are many essential components to reading and a child's year in Kindergarten is just the start of the majority of them. Nikiforuk (1993) encourages teachers to use phonics and whole language both together to develop students into good readers. He notes three flawed assumptions in regards to whole language. One states that reading comes naturally to students and that isn't always true. Students who have had exposure at home have begun the process already and someone has worked with them. Another assumption is that teaching students how to spell is unnecessary. "Good readers use spelling patterns--such as "bake, cake, lake"--to help them sound out new words" (Nikiforuk, 1993, para. 7). This statement is bold and true. When students are exposed to those words as spelling words, they can then use them in context such as reading a book. The third flawed assumption states that reading material should be chosen by the student. As educators, we know the power of choices and choices are great. However, setting students up for failure with books that aren't their level can cause for even bigger disaster down the road. Frustration rises and the interest in reading is gone very quickly. It's important to give students a variety of reading books.

Methods

Participants

This action research project was conducted in a public school Kindergarten classroom. The class is made up of 13 students. Within the 13 students, eight are girls while five are boys. Two of the students are English language learners (ELLs) whose first language is Spanish; however, they speak English as best they can in school. Among these students, there are also two students who are on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for both Reading and Math. They received roughly 100 minutes of pulled-out classroom setting otherwise they remain with the class the majority of the day.

Data Collection

The focus of this action research project was to determine whether students could gain success through intervention by utilizing information from daily exit tickets. Jolly Phonics is the curriculum used for phonics in this classroom. Each day there is a daily lesson (whole group instruction) followed by a workbook page to check for understanding. Majority of the pages are done as a whole group, however, at times students may be required to complete portions on their own. A replica of the student workbook page is up on the SMARTboard for additional support to students who need it. Prior to students transitioning to next subject, they must complete a daily exit ticket regarding the day's lesson content.

The data collection process took place over a three week time period at the end of February and into the beginning of March. These weeks were only four day weeks as there was one Snow Day, a Teacher In-Service day, and one day with a substitute teacher. This left 12 days

of daily exit tickets to be utilized and reviewed as a check for understanding and provide data on whether a student needed intervention time regarding that day's topic.

Throughout the data collection period other, observational data collected was collected through teacher observation as well as workbook page completion; however, it will not play a role in this action research project. The goal of this project is to look only at the daily exit ticket completed by the student to determine whether they need intervention time. During the course of the implementing of exit tickets, there was a variety of methods used. Students showed their knowledge in a variety of ways such as using paper and pencil to write their response, white boards, and iPads. The difference use of resources for the exit ticket methods was used just so there was a variety for students.

Findings

Data Analysis

Data is analyzed in two ways when reviewing the data collected via the exit tickets. One way is to look at the student for the twelve days of the study and determine what the percentage of scores are proficient or not proficient. Three students earned a 100% proficiency rating on all 12-exit tickets. This therefore means that no intervention time is needed for the Jolly Phonics skills. Four students, A, G, H, and K scored a 50% or less as a proficiency score throughout the exit ticket implementation (see Appendix A). This is a red flag indicating that these students need intervention time on these skills.

When looking at the data there needs to be exploration to determine if a student is struggling with a specific concept. For instance, February 21, 28, and March 6 all include words and sentences for the Jolly Phonics lesson. Those previous four students were only proficient on

one of those days. Immediately that represents in the data that those students are struggling with the words and sentences lessons. Additional support during intervention time in writing would greatly benefit them.

Another lesson for the Jolly Phonics curriculum entails Tricky Words. These are words that students need to know that are similar to sight words. Every five days students get two or three new Tricky Words in the lesson. Prior to the research study, the learning of Tricky Words was difficult for some students. Not all students are visual learners so these words do not come as easy to them as others. In looking at the proficiency percentages there is a consistency with Tricky Word lesson days. These days include 77%, 85%, and 69% proficiency rate from all students. In the midst of learning these words, practice is needed. Within first introducing the words at the beginning of the lesson to the completion of the day's exit tickets was around a thirty-minute window. Continued use of these words and practice is necessary, however, the data shows students struggle with Tricky Words when given a same day exit ticket.

Qualitative data was observed every day throughout the whole group lesson. Teacher observation could potentially be right on when comparing the raw data from the exit ticket scores. The daily exit tickets were given though to have a clear-cut answer whether a student would need intervention based on the Jolly Phonics days' lesson. Daily exit tickets were implemented to check for student understanding. It was to decipher whether the student needed intervention time on the Jolly Phonics lesson the following day to follow up. Appendix B shows the data. Students B, E, F, and L show progress from intervention time. After additional support with the previous day's content those four students show proficiency based on the exit ticket.

The lowest four students in the class showed less than 50% proficiency throughout the research. All four students were given support during intervention time, however, big gains were

not shown. Students A remained the same but still only earned 50% proficiency. The other three students (G, H, and K) slightly increased their percentage after they received support during the intervention time. A red flag is still seen in the data is that those four students are still earning only 60% even after post-intervention. As seen in Appendix C the other intervention students improved their knowledge and their percentage rose post-intervention.

Discussion

Challenges with Data

Due to the complexity of the exit ticket for Kindergarten students, reliability of the data could be called into question. Completing an exit ticket all on their own with no help or support could show lower proficiency percentages. One option that could have added validity to the action research would be to verbally assess students as well. Verbal assessments are used with early childhood or early elementary students.

One additional aspect that challenges the data findings is many of the Jolly Phonics skills are just being introduced at the Kindergarten level. They are not all required to reach mastery level before moving onto the next grade. Students starting the phonics foundation remains to be the goal, however, building upon it throughout the year is vital to growth too. Noltemeyer (2013) noted that using small group or individual instruction to teach basic literacy skills is essential. Intervention is just that and will continue to build on those early skills.

Conclusion

It is suggested that for additional research in regards to the intervention concept with building student knowledge there would be further assessments rather than just one exit ticket once a day. One exit ticket doesn't decipher whether a student is proficient or not. It can give a

good idea of the skills a students has, however, more frequent checks for understanding would provide better evidence of the students' skills.

This action research concludes intervention does in fact help students with skills they struggle with after learned it in a whole group setting. Continuous practice and support with difficult skills at a lower elementary age will benefit students over the course of their education.

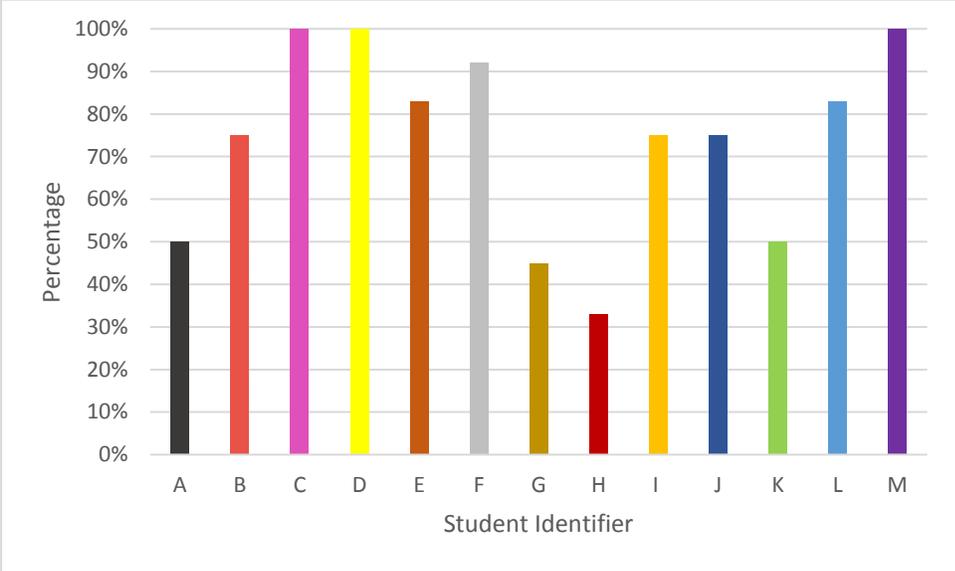
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Appendix A

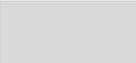
Student Exit Ticket Percentages



Appendix B

After Intervention Re-Assessment Data

Identifier	Date (following day)												Total	Percentage
	2/21	2/22	2/23	2/28	3/1	3/2	3/3	3/6	3/7	3/8	3/9	3/12		
A		+	-		+		+		-			-	3 of 6	50%
B						+	+			+			3 of 3	100%
C														
D														
E				+			+						2 of 2	100%
F						+							1 of 1	100%
G	+	+	-						+		-	-	3 of 3	50%
H	+	+	-	+		+			-		-	-	4 of 8	50%
I			+				-					-	1 of 3	33%
J					-			+			+		2 of 3	66%
K	+	-	-				+		+		+		4 of 6	66%
L				+					+				2 of 2	100%
M														

 student did not need an intervention or re-assessment

+

indicates the student passed the Exit Ticket after intervention time

-

indicates the student didn't pass the Exit Ticket after intervention time

Appendix C

Pre & Post-Intervention Student Percentages

