Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

6-24-2013

A comparison of Read 180 instruction in a small learning community versus a traditional model

Mary Beth Donohue

A COMPARISON OF READ 180 INSTRUCTION IN A SMALL LEARNING

COMMUNITY VERSUS A TRADITIONAL MODEL

by

Mary Beth Donohue

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Language, Literacy and Special Education
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Master of Arts in Learning Disabilities
at
Rowan University
May 2013

Thesis Chair: S. Jay Kuder, Ed.D.

Abstract

Mary Beth Donohue
A COMPARISON OF READ 180 INSTRUCTION IN A SMALL LEARNING
COMMUNITY VERSUS A TRADITIONAL MODEL
2012/13
S. Jay Kuder, Ed.D.
Master of Arts in Learning Disabilities

The purpose of this study is to compare the growth in reading levels of ninth grade special education students who received Read 180 instruction as an intervention. The study implemented an experimental group pretest/posttest design. Both groups received Read 180 instruction for 40 minutes daily. Group 1 participants were part of a pilot small learning community and were receiving Read 180 intervention as a supplement to their English class. Group 2 participants were part of the traditional curriculum and receiving Read180 instruction as their English class. Data was collected for each group in the form of Lexile scores and the mean for each group's pretest, posttest and change was compared. Overall, Group1outperformed Group 2 by increasing their Lexile scores at a greater rate. Further research is needed to account for the factors that contributed to this growth.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents Continued

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

Academic achievement is the prevailing indicator of future success in career and life. Poor reading skills in children are often seen as one of the leading factors for low academic achievement and failure in school. Sobering statistics about the relationship between reading skills and future dropout rates lead educators to wonder what is the best way to tackle such a monumental problem. According to the American Educational Research Association, a student who can't read on grade level by third grade is four times less likely to graduate by age 19 than a child who does read proficiently by that time. Add poverty to the situation, and a student is 13 times less likely to graduate on time (Sparks, 2011).

Blame for poor readers is often placed on factors outside of a school's control; poverty, English as a second language, broken families, poor attendance, etc. Research suggests that the quality of teachers, principals and curriculum coupled with effective teacher professional development is instrumental in tackling this problem (Moats, June 1999). An effective, early intervention reading program may make the difference. Many lower level readers can catch up if the best interventions are used. Most of the time this means having a reading teacher or specialist trained in the intervention, but any certified teacher can also be trained in the program. Generally the intervention is supplemental to what is already done in the classroom.

Effective reading interventions for students with learning disabilities have been well publicized by the National Reading Panel. Direct instruction appears to be the most

effective approach for improving word recognition and comprehension skills in students with learning disabilities. Direct instruction refers to teaching skills in an explicit, direct fashion. It involves drill/repetition/practice and can be delivered to a small group of students at the same time. Many interventions are successful with elementary school students but fall short when students are in high school and still reading far below reading level.

Read 180 is a reading program designed for students in elementary through high school whose achievement is below proficient.   The program utilizes computer software, leveled literature and direct instruction in reading skills to address the deficits of those struggling readers. According to the What Works Clearinghouse Intervention Report on adolescent Literacy, Read 180 was found to have a positive effect on comprehension and general literacy achievement for adolescent learners. High school students who improve comprehension and overall literacy are more likely to access the general education curriculum.

The New Jersey Department of Education has adopted the Common Core Curriculum standards and demands that the 21st-century student acquire a deeper understanding of academic content at much higher levels than ever before. The revised standards create learning environments in which teachers and students work across traditional disciplines as engaged co-learners, critical and creative thinkers, and problem solvers. Many high schools are beginning to rethink traditional curriculums and implementation of those curriculums to address this shift in education. Project-based learning and the use of small learning communities (SLCs) in high schools is often a solution to engage at-risk students and struggling readers at the high school level. One

study (Heitin, 2012) shows that this emphasis on beyond-the-classroom learning is working in one alternative school with improvements in attendance and a decrease in dropout rates. Much research has been conducted to identify the impact and challenges of small learning communities. Although the research (Levine, 2010) neither supports nor refutes the ability of the SLC to improve academic achievement, it does show improvement in attendance, graduation rates and student experience of high school as a supportive environment.

<u>Research Problem</u>

This study will compare the achievement of ninth grade special education students participating in a traditional curriculum with Read 180 instruction replacing their English class to ninth grade special education students who are participating in a pilot small learning community (SLC) with read 180 instruction as a supplement to their English class. The overall question to be answered in this study is:

1) When ninth grade students with learning disabilities are part of a pilot small learning community and are participating in Read 180 as a supplement to their English class, will their Lexile scores increase at a higher rate than those ninth grade students with learning disabilities who have Read 180 in place of their English classes and are part of the traditional curriculum?

My hypothesis is that the ninth grade special education students participating in the SLC and receiving supplemental Read 180 instruction will increase their Lexile scores at a higher rate than the ninth grade special education students participating in a traditional curriculum and with Read 180 in place of their English class.

Key Terms

Fluency-the ability to read text with accuracy, appropriate rate, and good expression

Reading Comprehension-capacity to perceive and understand the meanings communicated by texts

Lexile measure-valuable piece of information about either an individual's reading ability or the difficulty of a text, like a book or magazine article. The Lexile measure is shown as a number with an "L" after it — 880L is 880 Lexile.

Lexile Range- suggested range of texts that a reader should be reading.

Constructivist-a theory of learning and an approach to education that lays emphasis on the ways that people create meaning of the world through a series of individual constructs.

Project Based Learning- an instructional approach built upon authentic learning activities that engage student interest and motivation

Direct instruction- refers to teaching skills in an explicit, direct fashion. It involves drill/repetition/practice and can be delivered to a small group of students at the same time.

Small Learning Community- also referred to as a *school within a school* is a form of school structure that is increasingly common in high schools to subdivide large school populations into smaller, autonomous groups of students and teachers.

Implications

It is expected that students who make progress in reading will begin to show academic achievement in all content areas. An effective intervention program should provide intensive, instruction that is aimed to a student's specific areas of need. A program such as Read 180 tracks progress and provides differentiation for more targeted instruction. Due to the importance of good reading skills and the rigorous demands of high school curriculums, it is crucial to deliver the program with fidelity while balancing the academic demands with the rich content that is delivered in the academic classes. If students can participate in a constructivist atmosphere that allows them to make sense of their own learning they are more likely to transfer that information across content areas.

Summary

Many students enter high school with severe reading deficits. Many high schools struggle with the most effective way to address this problem while meeting the demands of their curriculum. This study will compare the effectiveness of a ninth grade curriculum using Read 180 in place of the English class in comparison to a ninth grade special education class with the Read 180 as a supplement to the curriculum that is based on the constructivist view of learning with a strong focus on project based learning. My hypothesis is that the special education students in the small learning community with Read 180 instruction as a supplement to the English class will increase their Lexile levels at a higher rate than those ninth grade special education students who are receiving Read 180 in place of their English class in a traditional curriculum. These findings will bring insight into the most effective way to use the intervention program Read 180 in a

technical high school. This will also influence the schools decision to expand the SLC to more freshmen in the coming years.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Importance of Adolescent Reading

Educators and researchers have acknowledged the importance of mastering reading by early elementary grades. Those students who fail to master this skill often struggle in school and potentially drop out before earning a high school diploma. Living in poverty combined with these deficits in reading put a child at increased risk of school failure and dropout rates that far exceed those students from wealthier backgrounds (Hernandez, 2011).

According to Hernandez (2011) about 16 percent of children who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade do not graduate high school on time, a rate four times greater than that of proficient readers. Those children who lived in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and not reading proficiently, the proportion of dropouts rose to 35 percent. Hernandez (2011) also reported about 31 percent of poor African American students and 33 percent of Hispanic students who were not reading proficiently by that third grade checkpoint failed to graduate. The findings show that the racial gaps do not indicate potential failure when students master reading and are not living in poverty.

The study conducted by Hernandez (2011) analyzed the reading scores and the graduation rates of 3,975 students born between the years of 1979 and 1989 in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' National Longitudinal Study of Youth. His findings showed that a total of 16 percent analyzed did not graduate, and those students who struggled with reading made up 88 percent of those who did not graduate. Approximately 70 percent of

those students who did not graduate were affected by poverty. As a result, Hernandez (2011) concluded that poor reading skills are a stronger predictor of future dropout rates than poverty.

Even more sobering statistics show that although many U.S. students in grade four score high among other countries, by grade ten U.S students are among the lowest scores in reading in the world. Overall, this shows that we are failing to prepare students for the highly literate skills they need to be successful in a competitive global society (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2003, 2007).

A widespread problem is that many high school graduates are not prepared for the demands of college level coursework. As a result many colleges are introducing remedial reading programs to help freshman who are overwhelmed by the quantity of reading that they are assigned. Improving literacy for adolescents is an essential goal if we are to equip students with the necessary skills to interact with varying types of text and lifelong exploration and growth.

Adolescent Reading Instruction

The demands of college, career, and citizenship today confirm the importance of achieving proficiency in both basic and higher-order literacy skills. As a result, demand is greater than ever for effective approaches to adolescent literacy instruction and intervention that will prepare students to be successful and productive citizens of the 21st Century. We have a strong knowledge base about reading instruction for early elementary grades. However, literacy supports for high school students present greater instructional challenges and demand a range of strategies that will allow students to make

gains in reading while assisting students in accessing the more rigorous curriculum and standards of a comprehensive high school.   School leaders look to research to point the way to implement effective secondary literary initiatives. However, guidance on applying that research in high school settings and examples of successful implementation are difficult to access (Meltzer & Okashige, 2001).

Adolescents with learning disabilities and below proficient reading skills often have individualized education plans (IEPs) with goals stating an increase in reading level and comprehension skills. The IEP may also indicate that the student must receive specialized reading instruction. Archer, Gleason and Vachon (2005) noted that many secondary students have reading levels that range from 2.5 to 5.0 grade levels. Secondary students would clearly benefit from reading instruction that focused on increasing their reading levels. However, reading level alone will not prepare those students for the academic competence and skills required to access the complex text and vocabulary related to the content courses (Bohman-Kruhm & King-Sears, 2010).

Data from the Connecticut Longitudinal Study (2003) revealed that 74 % of children with reading disabilities in the third grade still met the criteria for reading disabilities in the ninth grade. As a result researchers believe that adolescents do not grow out of reading disabilities and that the core problems that inhibit progress in reading persist into adulthood (Lovett, Lacerenza, De Palma, & Frijters, 2011). Reading difficulty in older readers can be traced to many root causes including; poor word identification, guessing on words based on context, decoding unfamiliar words and lack of fluent word recognition (Papalewis 2002).

High school students with reading disabilities often exhibit large gaps in their letter-sound knowledge and decoding abilities. Persistent deficits in basic phonemic awareness and word identification skills require direct instruction in letter sound and cluster sound mapping. The instruction must use reinforcement of word identification learning through repetition and text reading practice using decodable reading vocabulary (Lovett, Lacerenza, De Palma, & Frijters, 2011).

In their study, the National Reading Panel(NRP), (2000) reported that fluency is one of the critical factors necessary for reading comprehension. One component of fluency is reading practice, particularly in the form of guided repeated oral reading practice and independent silent reading. The NRP notes that three skills are essential for reading comprehension: vocabulary development; intentional and thoughtful interaction between the reader and the text; and the preparation of teachers (Papalewis 2002).

Research on secondary school improvement regarding reading instruction is sparse. One study was published by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (2005), Works in Progress: A Report on Middle and High School Improvement Programs. The study surveyed various approaches that addressed the needs of struggling adolescent readers. The report did not endorse the adoption of any specific program but did cite many reading programs as "promising" and that schools have many programs from which to choose. The study also acknowledges that no one program will meet the needs of all adolescent readers and that schools should consider making instructional and infrastructure changes (Darwin & Fleischman, 2005).

A Report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York used literature on effective reading instruction to establish a list of the fifteen key elements of effective adolescent literacy programs. The list of elements is divided into two sections: instructional improvements and infrastructural improvements. It is acknowledged that it would be difficult to implement all 15 elements but the list can be used to create a unique blend of elements to serve the needs of individual students. It is not clear what mix creates the best results for learning disabled students but it is important to realize that instructional improvements will have a greater impact if they are implemented in conjunction with infrastructural improvements (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004).

One program that has a strong research base and success with adolescent struggling readers is the SRA's Corrective Reading Program. The program is designed for those students who are in grades 3-12, performing below grade level in reading and identified as learning disabled. Corrective Reading is divided into two strands: Decoding and Comprehension and each strand is further divided into four levels: A, B1, B2, and C. There are variations on how the program can be implemented and it can be differentiated according to the needs of the student. The objectives of the program are based on cumulative skill development and the difficulty of the material gradually increases with student success.   The elements that are incorporated into the program to ensure student success include: thoroughly developed and tested program design, scripted but engaging presentation approach, and comprehensive learning materials (Marchand-Martella, Ph.D., Martella, Ph.D., & Przychodzin-Havis M.Ed., 2008).

The SRA's Corrective Reading Program aligns with the recommendation set forth by the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) recommending effective instruction in

phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency building, vocabulary, and text comprehension for

beginning readers and intervention programs for struggling readers. Carnine, Silbert,

Kame'enui, and Tarver (2004) provide guidelines for educators to review that will assist

in selecting programs for children who are grade levels behind in reading. Corrective

Reading is designed with these guidelines in mind. Some key elements include extra

instructional time and utilizing small group instruction. Frequent progress monitoring

assessments assures that fluency goals are met. Teachers must be well trained in

implementing the program and the scripted lessons ensure uniform wording. The stories

are age appropriate and interesting. The placements tests ensure that students are placed

at their instructional reading levels so they will experience success rather than failure.

Research done on the effectiveness of the SRAs Corrective Reading Program with

learning-disabled students shows that the results were positive for students using

Corrective Reading compared to control groups and many students experienced positive

changes in behavior and increased school attendance (Marchand-Martella, Ph.D.,

Martella, Ph.D., & Przychodzin-Havis M.Ed., 2008).

Read 180

Raising students' literacy achievement requires high-quality adolescent literacy

intervention that includes comprehensive support for effective teaching and

implementation. Read 180 is a reading program designed for students in elementary

through high school who have below proficient reading achievement. The program

attempts to address the deficits in skills through a direct instruction approach combined

with a computer software program and leveled literature. Read 180 includes student

workbooks that address reading and writing skills, paperback books for independent reading and audiobooks for modeled reading. The computer software tracks student progress and provides supports for differentiated instruction. Read 180 uses an instructional model that is research-based and provides clear organization for whole and small group instruction. The 90-minute instructional model includes a 20-minute whole group lesson and three rotations for 20 minutes each followed by a ten-minute wrap-up. Students are broken into three groups and rotate among three areas in the classroom: small-group instruction, independent reading, and individual practice on the software. The 90 minute model can be modified to a 40 minute block in which the rotation takes place over a two day period.

Read 180 was piloted with more than 10,000 students between 1994 and 1999. The program was a collaborative effort of more than ten years of research between Vanderbilt University and the Orange County Public School System in Florida. Read 180 was developed by the Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt University, the Orange County Literacy Project in Florida and the development staff at Scholastic Inc. Dr. Ted Hasselbring researched the creation of the computer software in 1985. In 1997, the Lexile Framework for assessment was adopted as the Read 180 leveling system. Developed by Metametrics this framework provides a common metric for measuring text difficulty and student reading level. Research on the pilot project indicated that students made improvements in reading achievement, behavior and overall school achievement (Papalewis, 2002).

Scholastic, the publisher of Read 180, makes substantial claims about Read 180's effectiveness. They state that Read 180 uses research based reading strategies embedded

within the instruction along with effective use of technology (Scholastic Inc., 2011).

Read 180 utilizes many of the fifteen key elements of effective adolescent literacy

programs. The publisher asserts that it is appropriate for struggling readers and learning-

disabled students that fall below the 25th percentile or low standardized scores (Scholastic

Inc. 2011). Some of the activities that are supported by previous research include: the

use of teacher directed instruction that builds background and activates prior knowledge,

modeled fluency, comprehension strategies and differentiated instruction.   The

individualized computer instruction reinforces the skills of decoding, fluency,

vocabulary, and comprehension skills. The independent and modeled reading is aimed at

increasing motivation and time spent reading while students self-select high interest

books (Kim, Capotosto, Hatry, & Fitzgerald, 2011).

One study regarding the effectiveness of Read 180 (Papalewis, 2002) was

conducted in a large urban school district where students were selected for participation

based on standardized scores, report cards and teacher recommendations. Most of the

students were repeating 8th graders. The teachers participating in the study received

training and the Read 180 Observer Documentation Forms documented the

implementation of the program. Data was collected and the findings were analyzed using

baseline data across gender and ethnic groups. The implications of the study indicate that

the participants made significant gains in Reading and Language Arts for the year they

participated in the program compared to a group of equivalent students who did not

participate in the program. Overall, the Read 180 participants made gains of three normal

curve equivalents in reading and 2 normal curve equivalents in Language Arts

(Papalewis, 2002).

Seven Studies of Read180 effectiveness meet What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards with reservations. The seven studies included 10,638 students, ranging from grade four to grade nine, who attended elementary, middle and high schools in Arizona, California, Florida New York, Ohio, Texas and Virginia. The extent of evidence for Read 180 on the comprehension and general literacy achievement is considered to be medium to large.

One study was conducted by Lang, Torgenson, Vogel, Chanter, Lefsky & Perscher (2009). The study conducted a randomized controlled trial study of 1,265 struggling readers in seven high schools in Florida. Subjects were determined through the use of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. Ninth grade students who scored in the at risk category were assigned to one of four groups and assigned to receive Read 180 instruction and then compared to a control group of students who continued with "business as usual." The study reported student outcomes after one year of implementation and met with a rating of meets standards with reservations due to an inability to determine whether differential attrition occurred as well as missing data.

Another study examined the effects of Read 180 on students from 12 schools in Arizona. Three groups of ninth grade students were formed. The Read 180 students who were reading one or more grade level below their assigned level were matched to ninth grade students with similar demographic and reading levels. The comparison group students received the traditional curriculum. The WWC based effectiveness ratings on findings from comparing these groups. The study found that there was a statistically significant effect of Read 180 on the Reading Comprehension Subtest of the Stanford

Achievement Test and the WWC confirmed these findings (White, Haslam, & Hewes, 2006).

In summary, educators must recognize that improving adolescent literacy skills along with meeting the needs of diverse learners is a daunting task. Educators, administrators and policymakers must look beyond individual intervention programs as the "quick fix" and view reading as a developmental skill that must grow with the individual student. The urgency of adolescents who struggle with reading must be addressed in a systematic way that will focus on literacy growth for all students across all subject areas and will equip students with those 21st century skills so crucial for academic and lifelong success. Many schools look to reform movements that will address these monumental challenges. One such movement involves transitioning comprehensive high schools to smaller learning communities (SLCs).

Small Learning Community

Students who are considered at risk for failure due to reading difficulties or poverty are considered perfect candidates for small learning communities (SLCs). SLCs are created when an existing high school breaks into a smaller autonomous community. The last decade has seen substantial support and incentives to turn larger high schools into SLCs. Major funding has come from the Gates, Carnegie and Annenberg Foundations. Research about the impact of SLCs on student learning is still emerging and key findings will be explored. Within the framework of the small learning community is the constructivist instructional approach and project based learning. This approach uses projects as a way to increase motivation and allow students to demonstrate what they

have learned. Some SLCs organize their curriculum around a theme that conveys identity. This often results in a different curriculum, instructional approach and shared culture that may unite students and teachers based on shared beliefs and interests (Levine, 2010).

Large high schools offer an array of courses and students are often tracked into different levels of courses that vary in degree of rigor. Research on high school size has associated the large populations of students with increased dropout rates (Gardner, Ritblatt, & Beatty, 2000). Large schools are often seen as impersonal and bureaucratic in nature. This may limit the ability to promote student/teacher bonds and create a way to respond to the needs of the traditionally underserved population (Levine 2010). In addition, researchers also found that reformers find large schools make it difficult for teachers to form strong professional communities that will help improve instruction (Wallach & Galluci, 2004). These findings fuel the reform movement to break large high schools into smaller, academically, culturally responsive units.

One goal of the movement toward SLCs is to provide teachers with the resources to individualize the instruction on a more personal level and promote cohesion between students, teachers and families. SLCs are organized around a number of students in interdisciplinary teams in which teachers often stay with the students for several years. Teachers have the same students and share common planning time. The coursework centers on topics of student interest and is characterized by authentic student inquiry. Teaching teams have fewer students and are able to differentiate and individualize instruction to diverse populations (Armstead 2010).

Research findings about the impact and challenges of SLCs are just beginning to emerge. There is not yet sufficient evidence to support the effectiveness of SLC's to improve academic achievement (Levine 2010). There is some existing research that suggests SLCs can improve attendance, graduation rates and students sense of satisfaction with the school environment. Data collected regarding attendance rates showed that three of the four groups of SLCs studied had some improvement in attendance rates more than the comparison schools. Gates Schools showed no difference in attendance rates before or after implementation of SLCs. Other schools with data available showed differences that were statistically significant (Levine, 2010). Graduation rates were studied over a period of four years. In one study, graduation rates improved four percentage points when compared to the data from the same school prior to implementation of the SLCs. Surveys of student engagement showed mixed results. Some of the increases in levels of engagement were statistically significant in comparison to the levels of engagement prior to implementing the SLCs. The Gates school reported lower levels of engagement by surveying students. Finally, through the use of student and teacher surveys, the responses showed that there was a significant increase in feelings of student–teacher trust, classroom personalization, and sense of belonging and peer support for academic achievement(Quint, Bloom, Black , & Stephens, 2005).

The main challenges of SLCs include; focusing on instructional improvement, maintaining equity and rigor and transcending school culture. SLCs are a new reform lacking sufficient time or quantity of research to definitively show promise of improving academic achievement. As with any change, there is a learning curve involved before the

kinks are worked out. So the concern remains, are SLCs going to continue to show inconsistent results because they need more time to overcome various challenges?

The first challenge that will be examined is focusing on instructional improvement. One goal of SLCs includes teacher collaboration and teamwork to improve instruction and ultimately academic achievement. Although SLCs are autonomous by nature, they must coexist with district policies and initiatives as well as mandates passed down from the state and national level. In an evaluation of Gates schools, these issues along with practical issues regarding space, student schedules and staff needs overwhelm the intention of focused collaboration that targets classroom instruction (Shear et al., 2008).   Findings suggest that teachers would benefit from a system for training and support that would focus collaboration. One SLC intentionally structured collaboration to focus on instruction and student learning. The outcome was that more of the teacher talk was focused on instruction and student learning when compared with unstructured collaboration (Levine and Marcus 2010).

A second challenge is the unintentional grouping of students that may result in the traditionally underserved population receiving academics that are not rigorous enough to prepare students to meet the new core content standards. This often stems from the promise of creating diverse options that match student interests. V. E. Lee and Ready's study (2007) looked at high schools with distinct SLCs offering very different themes, vocational focus and academic expectations. This stratification of choices caused some SLCs to create clear racial imbalances. One example is an SLC that acquired the nickname "the ghetto" and had a reputation for enrolling African American students and holding them to low academic and behavioral achievement. Another SLC had the

reputation for requiring a lot of academic effort and time, which attracted a disproportionate number of white students. In another high school the SLC had a lower reputation and was termed by the staff as the "dumping ground" (Lee & Ready, 2007).

A final challenge that faces SLCs is the idea of transcending school history and culture. SLCs are usually formed from an existing comprehensive high school with staff that has been part of the school's history, routines and patterns. Generally the community may also have clear expectations of that school. Many studies show that the transition to SLCs does not constitute a significant change from the curricular offerings that the school typically provided and there is often pressure to retain such courses. As a result the SLCs may lose their identity or their cohesion as students filter into the regular high school for certain coursework (Levine, 2010). This makes for a difficult balancing act: the creation and delivery of a completely new model with a progressive philosophy while existing within the historical framework of what has been in place for decades.

Summary

Research points educators to focus on the importance of reading for future success in life including college and career readiness. Students with reading disabilities and those who fail to master reading by high school are at increased risk for academic failure and dropout rates significantly higher than those students who master the skill of reading. It is critical for high school students to achieve proficiency in reading as well as higher order literacy skills. This leads educators to carefully select the most effective remedial reading instruction especially for those high school students who have been struggling readers due to a reading disability. Effective reading instruction in high school must

close the gaps of the deficiencies in reading mastery and meet the criteria for the key elements of effective instruction.

High school teachers and administrators struggle with the daunting task of meeting the demands of the new common core curriculum standards while delivering effective reading instruction that will both improve the standardized scores of readers far below grade level within the framework of the traditional high school. Many reading programs make substantial claims about effectiveness with high school students. Read 180 is one such program that has been used successfully in many school districts across the country to address the diverse needs of struggling readers. Research shows that in addition to remediation there must be instructional and infrastructural improvements before significant improvements in dropout rates will occur. Many school reformers turn to the small learning community (SLCs) as a way to reach those students at risk for failure. SLCs show some promise in improving attendance and high school graduation rates but the research is in the early stages and the findings are not sufficient yet to support the effectiveness of SLCs in improving academic achievement. The purpose of this study is to show ninth grade students who participate in the pilot small learning community and receive Read 180 instruction as a supplement to their English class will improve their Lexile levels at a greater rate than ninth grade special education students who are participating in the traditional curriculum and have Read 180 instruction in place of their English classes.

Chapter 3

Methodology

<u>Setting and participants</u>

This study compared the increase in the Lexile scores of special education ninth grade students who participated in the pilot small learning community and received Read 180 instruction as a supplement to their English class with ninth grade special education students who received Read 180 instruction in place of their English classes and participated in a traditional curriculum.

The setting of the study is a county technical school in a suburban area of southern New Jersey. The school provides vocational and technical education to high school and adults in the Camden County area. The high school has two campuses, one in Gloucester Township and one in Pennsauken. The study took place in the Gloucester Township campus. The Gloucester Township campus has a total enrollment of 1,358 students from sending districts around Camden County. There are a total of 374 freshman students enrolled with 212 male students and 162 female students. The ethnic breakdown of the ninth graders is 113 Caucasian, 113 African-American, 80 Hispanic, 11 Asian and 37 Multi-ethnic. There are 174 out 374 ninth grade students with Individualized Education Plans who receive services for special education.

The study focused on 88 ninth grade students with IEPs who were identified as students on a reading level two years or more below grade level and placed in a special class program for English. These students receive Read 180 instruction for a 40 minute period every day. Sixty students are classified as specific learning disability, eight are

classified as communication impaired, five are classified as emotionally disturbed and four are multiple handicapped.

The control group of students in Read 180 and participating in the traditional curriculum consists of 61 students who have IEPs and the following disabilities: 44 specific learning disabilities, six communication impaired, five emotionally disturbed, two multiply handicapped, three other health impaired and 1 autistic. Three students have English as a second language and approximately 14 students had Read 180 instruction in their sending district before attending the high school. According to their IEPs the majority of these students participated in small class programs prior to entering high school. These students are placed in traditional class settings based on their IEPs.

A total of 100 ninth grade students were selected to participate in a pilot small learning community (SLC). The students were chosen from six shop areas because the "shops" represent a snapshot of the school population. The selection of these career areas was based on research of the small learning communities and the goal of creating a diverse population. The demographics of the community tried to create equity in relation to gender, ability and ethnicity. All ninth graders in the carpentry, masonry, fashion design, video productions, printing and graphic arts and ornamental horticulture shops were selected for participation in the small learning community. A final consideration for the selection of career area was the idea that each career has a high level of creativity and design. The theme of project-based learning is a thread in all instruction. The students receive all academic instruction in four classrooms located in the same corner of the main building. There are four academic teachers, one paraprofessional and two special education teachers that work with all students participating in the SLC. The instruction

occurs on a rotating schedule in which the students receive their instruction in 80 minute blocks or single 40 minute periods on a rotating four day schedule. Delivery of instruction is cross-curricular with English/social studies being co-taught together most days and math /science co-taught together. Fourth and fifth period consist of 80 minutes devoted to advisory time in which students receive specialized instruction, enrichment and individualized help from one of the six academic advisors. Students complete independent projects and work primarily through an online tool called Moodle. The students receiving Read 180 instruction participate in the advisory for the first 40 minutes and then leave the SLC to go to special Read 180 classrooms for the supplemental instruction.

The 22 SLC students selected to participate in Read 180 all have IEPs and Lexile levels ranging from 178 to 1060. Their disabilities are as follows: 18 specific learning disabilities, two Communication Impaired, one Other Health Impaired, and one Multiply Disabled. Two students have Spanish as their primary language. According to their IEPs, four students previously participated in Read 180 at their sending districts and most were in small class programs.

Ninth grade Read 180 instruction occurs in a total of five different classrooms with five different teachers. Two classes consist of 22 students from the SLC and are those students receiving Read 180 instruction every day during fifth period advisory and as a supplement to the English instruction being received in the small learning community. The other six classes of ninth graders receiving Read 180 instruction occur randomly from first through ninth period and are taught by three other teachers. All five teachers have received the initial two-day training. The teachers also received follow-up

training after 10 weeks. All Read 180 materials are located in the classrooms and the teachers follow a similar format and structure.

Materials and Instruments

The Read 180 program has specialized materials that have both student and teacher components. The materials are divided into three stages; Stage A is for elementary schools, Stage B is for middle schools and Stage C is for high schools. The material is broken into nine workshops with varying themes. Each workshop focuses on specific reading and writing skills.

The student component consists of student workbooks called r-books. The r-book contains interactive activities and readings that provide daily instruction in reading, vocabulary, writing and grammar skills. The r-book is used during both whole and small group instruction. The computer software has a student dashboard that gives students access to performance data in areas of reading vocabulary and spelling performance. Instructional software guides students through five learning zones of differentiated and specialized instruction that helps build reading and writing skills. The leveled paperbacks are age appropriate and high interest and allow students to experience success with reading on their independent level. Audiobooks provide students with the modeled fluent reading and "think alouds" to model comprehension strategies.

The teacher component consists of a teacher dashboard that can be accessed anytime to build the capacity for effective teaching. The lessons and research-based strategies are embedded within the implementation of the lesson plans. The r-book teacher's edition provides procedure for whole and small group instruction. A

comprehensive suite of assessment tools and reports provide teachers with data driven formative assessment that identifies student needs and allows teachers to adapt the instruction accordingly. Finally, the Scholastic Achievement Manager (SAM) is an online management system that collects and organizes student data to correctly group and instruct students. The tool also allows reports to be generated for the purpose of assessment and progress monitoring.

<u>Procedures</u>

This study follows an experimental group design using pretests and posttests. All special education ninth graders who are in special class program for English receive Read 180 instruction with different settings depending on whether they are participating in the traditional curriculum or the pilot small learning community setting. Data will be collected in the form of an online SRI test that generates a Lexile score. Students who entered the technical school as ninth graders go through a three-week trial prior to being admitted to the program. During that time a number of formal assessments were given to assure the students were properly placed in career programs and academic classes. Students take the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) for the first time in order to get a baseline of scores. The Child Study Team uses these scores and information from the student's sending district to determine individual placement into classes. All students who score below a 700 Lexile and determined to need remediation in reading skills are placed in Read 180 classes as their English I class for freshman year. The pilot small learning community determined those students who would receive Read 180 instruction as a supplement to their English class by the same criteria as the other ninth graders.

Read 180 instruction is implemented daily using the 40 minute two day model: Day one includes 20 minutes of whole group instruction and one 20 minute rotation, Day two includes two 20 minute rotations. Students do end of workshop wrap-up projects and r-skills tests to determine groups and differentiated instruction.

Data collection Procedures

All students who enter the technical school as ninth graders will take the SRI during the first two weeks of school as part of their English classes. The students have login and passwords for the SRI test through the Read 180 computer software. The students are then prompted to select areas of reading interest. It takes approximately 20 minutes to take the computer adaptive test. Computer-adaptive technology monitors the student's response to every question. If the student answers incorrectly, the next question will be slightly easier. If the student answers correctly, the next question will be slightly harder. Therefore the test adapts to the student's ability, adjusting the difficulty level of each question until the student is precisely matched to a Lexile level. The students are given a Lexile score upon completion and the program generates a recommended reading list.

The students began Read 180 instruction around the second week of October because materials were ordered but did not arrive until that time. Teachers used the SRI reading report to encourage students to choose reading materials at the appropriate Lexile levels. Students were encouraged to set individual goals for growth during the introduction of the program. The SRI is designed to measure how well students understand literary and expository texts of varying degrees of difficulty. It measures

reading comprehension by focusing on the skills readers use when studying written materials from various content areas. These skills include identifying details in a passage, identifying cause-and-effect relationships and the sequence of events, drawing conclusions, and making comparisons and generalizations

Students who participate in Read 180 will be given the SRI test four times a year at the end of each marking period to measure Lexile growth and progress. Each class will be tested in the Instructional Materials Center or the Distance Learning Computer lab. After each administration of the SRI, the teachers generated the SRI progress report that showed the growth of the individual Lexile scores. The data will be collected after each administration and findings will be analyzed.

Analysis of variance will be presented with demographic data that includes classification, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Data will be presented on a bar graph that shows the mean of Lexile scores from the pretest to posttest and the change

Chapter 4

Results

Summary

In this experimental group pretest /posttest study, 106 ninth grade special education students received supplementary reading instruction using the Read 180 program for a total of 40 minutes daily. Of this sample, 22 students were part of a pilot small learning community who received Read 180 instruction as a supplement to their English class. The other 87 students participated in a traditional curriculum and had Read 180 instruction as their English class. The research question to be answered was:

When ninth grade special education students are part of a pilot small learning community and are participating in Read 180 as a supplement to their English class, will their Lexiles scores increase at a higher rate than those ninth grade special education students who are part of the traditional curriculum and have Read 180 in place of their English class?

This study consisted of a pretest, ongoing intervention in the form of daily Read 180 instruction, and a posttest. Following the protocol for Read 180, the initial baseline test was administered and Lexile scores were available to both the teacher and students. Lexile scores were used throughout the study as a way to track progress and for selection of books within the proper Lexile range. A posttest was given after the end of the second semester and the data was collected and organized on an Excel spreadsheet for comparison and analysis. Results were calculated using the mean score of the pretest, posttest and change.

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the average Lexile scores on the pretest and posttest for all of students combined as well as the average change in Lexile scores from the pretest to the posttest. Group 1's (learning community) pretest mean score was 462. The posttest mean score was 617. The average change for this group was 154 points in the positive direction. A t-test on these results yielded a score of 4.39, p< .01. Group 2's (traditional instruction) pretest mean Lexile score was 661 and the posttest mean score was 718. The average change for this group was 57 points in the positive direction. A t-test on these results yielded a score of 2.58, p< .05. The mean Lexile score of the entire group on the pretest was 615 and 695 on the posttest. The average change for the entire group was an increase of 79 points. Figure 2 illustrates that Group 1 had the greatest change in Lexile scores with an average change of 154 points in the positive direction compared to group 2 having an average change of 57 points in the positive direction. Both were compared to the entire group that had an average change of 79 points. A t-test on of variance on the differences in scores between the groups yielded a t-score of 2.19, p<.05.

Table 1 Comparison of Lexile Scores

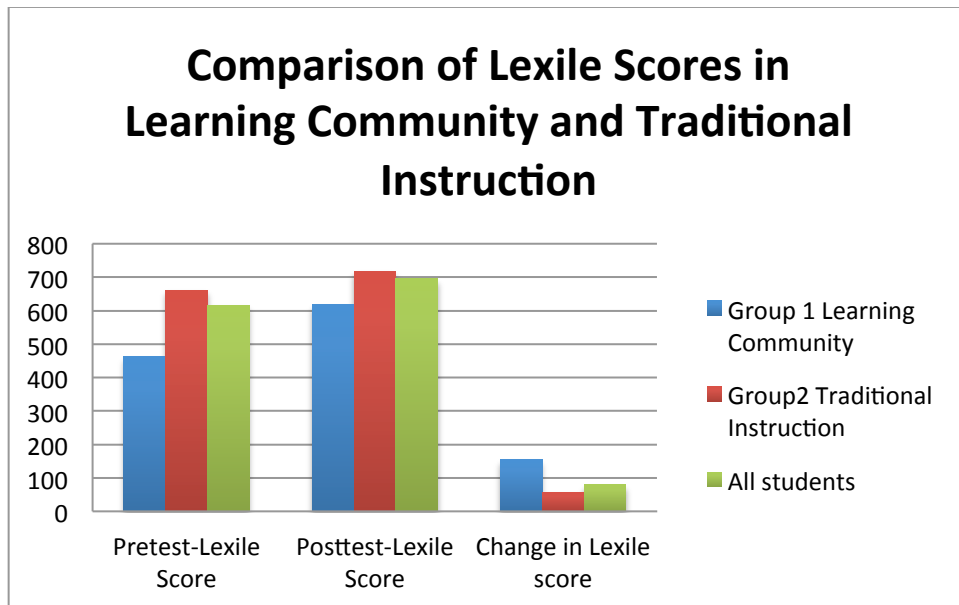|	Pretest-Lexile Score	Posttest-Lexile Score	Change in Lexile Score
Group 1 Learning Community	462	617	154
Group2 Traditional Curriculum	661	718	57
All students	615	695	79

Figure 1.   Comparison of Lexile Scores

Group 1(learning community) had 13 individual students who increased their

Lexile scores ranging from 41 points to 404 points and three individual students who

decreased their Lexile scores ranging from -95 points to -3. Group 2 (traditional instruction) students had 32 out of 53 students increase their Lexile scores ranging from 26 to 604 points and 21 students who had Lexile scores that decreased from the pretest to the posttest ranging from -3 to -285. For Group 1, 76 % of the individual students who increased their Lexile scores compared to Group 2, in which 60% of the individual students who increased their Lexile scores.

Other factors that may have influenced group results were considered and further analysis of scores was conducted to identify any patterns or outliers. Analysis of the socioeconomic status of the two groups was conducted.   The data were sorted by showing students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch and thus from a lower socioeconomic status compared to students who are not eligible for free or reduced lunch and thus from a higher socioeconomic status. Table 2 and Figure 2 show the average Lexile scores on the pretest and posttest for all of students by socioeconomic level as well as the average change in Lexile scores from the pretest to the posttest. Group 1's (learning community free and reduced lunch) pretest mean score was 453. The posttest mean score was 592. The average change for this group was an increase of 138 points. Group 2's (traditional instruction-free reduced lunch) pretest mean Lexile score was 664 and the posttest mean score was 727. The average change for this group was an increase of 62 points. Figure 2 illustrates that Group 1 had the greatest change in Lexile scores for those students who receive free and reduced lunch with an average change of 138 points compared to Group 2 having an average change of 62 points. Group 1's (learning community non- free and reduced lunch) pretest mean score was 498. The posttest mean score was 721. The average change for this group was an increase 223 points. Group

2's (traditional instruction non-free reduced lunch) pretest mean Lexile score was 649

and the posttest mean score was 689. The average change for this group was 39 points in

the positive direction. Figure 2 illustrates that Group 1 had the greatest change in Lexile

scores for those students who do not receive free and reduced lunch with an average

change of 223 points in the positive direction compared to Group 2 having an average

change of 62 points in the positive direction.

Table 2 Comparison of Socioeconomic Status

	Pretest-Lexile Score	Posttest-Lexile Score	Change in Lexile score
Group 1 Learning Community- Free Reduced Lunch	453	592	138
Group 1 Learning Community- Non-Free and reduced Lunch	498	721	223
Group 2 Traditional Curriculum -Free and Reduced Lunch	664	727	62
Group 2 Traditional Curriculum-Non-Free and Reduced Lunch	649	689	39

Comparison of Socioeconomic Status

Legend:
- Group 1 Learning Community Free Reduced Lunch
- Group 1 Learning Community Non-Free and reduced Lunch
- Group 2 Traditional Curriculum Free and Reduced Lunch

Categories: Pretest-Lexile Score, Posttest-Lexile Score, Change in Lexile score
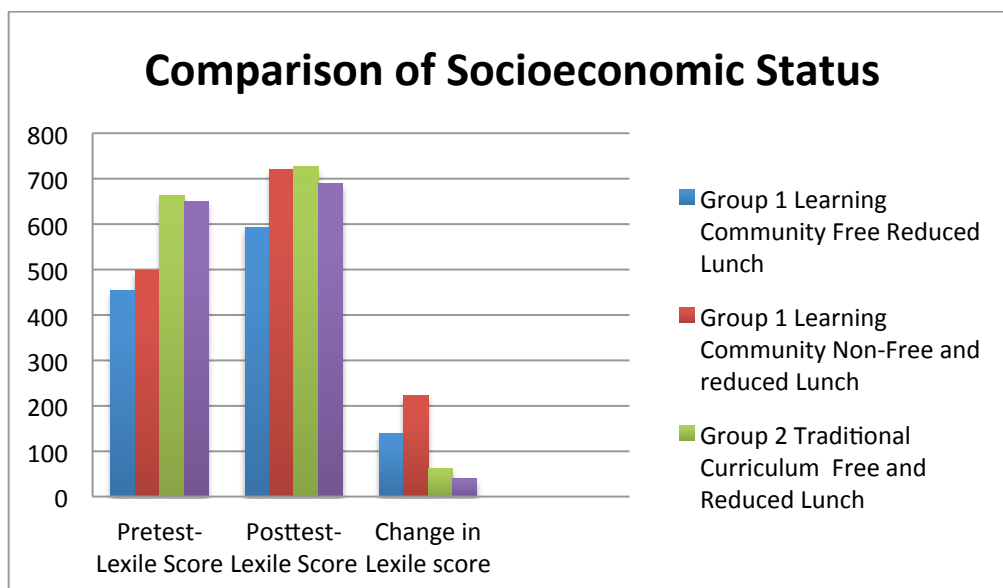
Figure 2 Comparison of Socioeconomic Status

Analysis of gender differences of the two groups was conducted. The data were sorted by showing students who are male and female from each group. Table 3 and Figure 3 show the average Lexile scores on the pretest and posttest for all students as well as the average change in Lexile scores from the pretest to the posttest. Group 1's (learning community males) pretest mean score was 461. The posttests mean score was 612. The average change for this group was 150 points in the positive direction. Group 2's (traditional instruction-male) pretest mean score was 690 and the posttest mean score was 746. The average change for this group was 55 points. Figure 2 illustrates that Group 1 had the greatest change in Lexile scores for males with an average improvement of 150 points compared to Group 2, which had an average improvement of 55 points. Group 1's (learning community female) pretest mean score was 463. The posttests mean score was 626. The average change for this group was 163 points in the positive direction. Group 2's (Traditional curriculum female) pretest mean score was 624. The posttest mean score was 644. The average change for this group was 19 points. Figure 2

illustrates that Group 1 had the greatest change in Lexile scores for both male and female

students with an average increase of 150 points in for males and 163 points for females

compared to Group 2 having an average increase of 55 points for males and 19 points

for females.

Table 3 Comparison of Gender Differences

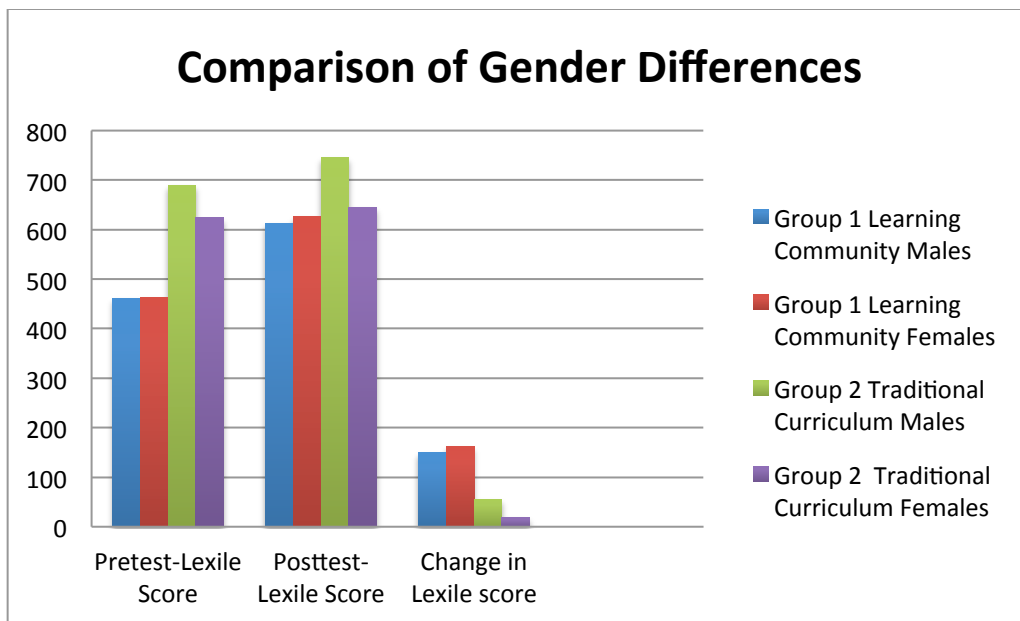|	Pretest-Lexile Score	Posttest-Lexile Score	Change in Lexile score
Group 1 Learning Community Males	461	612	150
Group 1 Learning Community Females	463	626	163
Group 2 Traditional Curriculum Males	690	746	55
Group 2 Traditional Curriculum Females	624	644	19

Figure 3. Comparison of Gender Differences

Analysis of ethnic differences of the two groups was conducted. The data were sorted by differentiating between students who are white and those who are considered minority from each group. Minority students include Black and Hispanic. Table 4 and Figure 4 show the average Lexile scores on the pretest and posttest for all students as well as the average change in Lexile scores from the pretest to the posttest. Group 1's (learning community white students) pretest mean score was 512. The posttests mean score was 670. The average change for this group was an increase of 192 points. Group 2's (traditional instruction-white students) pretest mean score was 714 and the posttest mean score was 725. The average change for this group was 10 points in the positive direction. Figure 2 illustrates that Group 1 had the greatest change in Lexile scores for white students with an average change of 192 points in the positive direction compared to Group 2 having an average change of 10 points in the positive direction. Group 1's (learning community minority students) pretest mean score was 432. The posttest mean score was 563. The average change for this group was 131 points in the positive direction. Group 2's (Traditional curriculum minority students) pretest mean score was 636. The posttest mean score was 714. The average change for this group was 17 points. Figure 2 illustrates that Group 1 had the greatest change in Lexile scores for both white and minority students with an average increase of 192 points for white students and 131 points i for minority compared to Group 2 having an average increase of 10 points for white students and 77 points for minority students.

Table 4 Comparison of Ethnicity

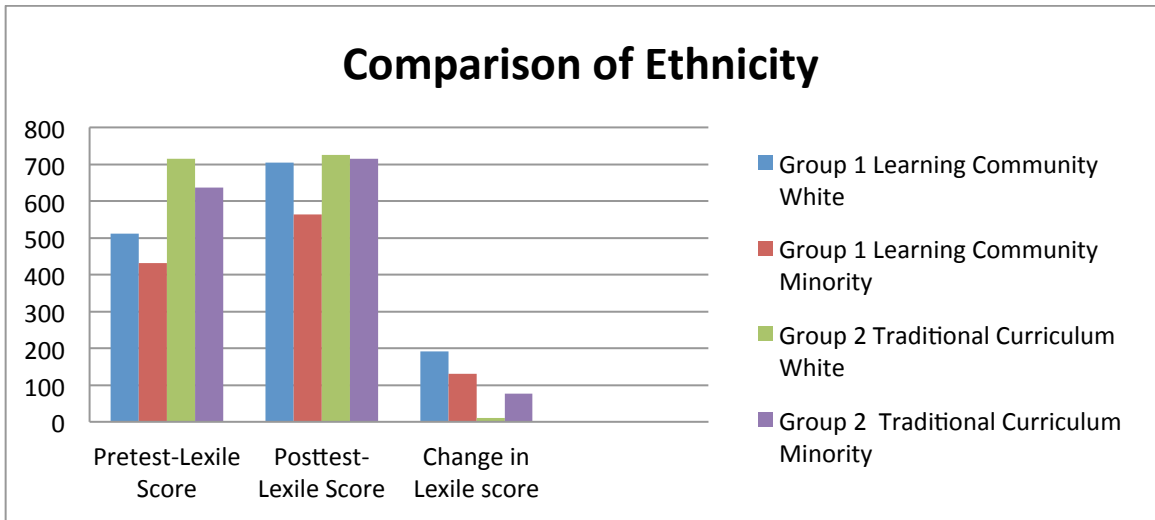|	Pretest-Lexile Score	Posttest-Lexile Score	Change in Lexile score
Group 1 Learning Community White	512	705	192
Group 1 Learning Community Minority	432	563	131
Group 2 Traditional Curriculum White	714	725	10
Group 2 Traditional Curriculum Minority	636	714	77

Figure 4 Comparison of Ethnicity

Chapter 5

Discussion

<u>Review</u>

In this study, the reading scores of a group of special education ninth grade students who participated in a pilot small learning community and received Read 180 instruction as a supplement to their English class was compared to a group of special education students who participated in a traditional curriculum and receive Read 180 instruction as their English class. The students selected to participate attend a technical high school in southern New Jersey and represented a diverse group of students from Camden County, New Jersey. All students were reading far below grade level and were identified to be in need of Read 180 as an intervention to improve reading levels. The Read 180 program uses Lexile scores as the indicator of growth. The study followed an experimental group design and used a pretest/ posttest format. The student's Lexile data was collected and analyzed. The intervention of Read 180 instruction appeared to be effective for both groups with average change in the positive direction. However, the group that received their instruction in the small learning community outperformed the students who received Read 180 as their English class and from the traditional curriculum.

It was hypothesized that the ninth grade special education students who participated in the small learning community and received Read 180 instruction as a supplement to their English class would increase their reading scores at a greater rate than the ninth grade special education students who participate in the traditional curriculum

and have Read 180 instruction in place of their English class. It was also hypothesized that the learning community group would increase their reading scores at a greater rate because research is beginning to emerge that suggests that students who are part of a small learning community have increased achievement and are more likely to graduate. While both groups had an average change of reading scores in the positive direction, the learning community group increased their Lexile scores on average 97 points greater than the group that received the intervention in their English class.

Analysis on the socioeconomic differences yielded interesting results. Group 1 (learning community) students from high and low socioeconomic status backgrounds outperformed the traditional students, however the largest discrepancy of change appeared to be within the high socioeconomic status learning community students yielding an improvement in scores an average 223 points compared to the students in the traditional program who only yielded an improvement of 39 points.   This could be an area of further research.

Another difference in results that is worth noting is that Group 1 (learning community) white students significantly outperformed the Group 2 traditional curriculum white students by increasing scores an average 182 points greater. Further research would be valuable to identify the factors that account for these differences.

Previous research on the importance of reading indicates that about 16 percent of children who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade do not graduate high school on time, a rate four times greater than that of proficient readers. Those children who lived in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and not reading proficiently and are

from minority backgrounds, the proportion of dropouts rose to 35 percent. The findings also show that the racial gaps and socioeconomic gaps do not indicate potential failure when students master reading. In conclusion, a poor reading skill is a stronger predictor of future dropout rates than poverty (Hernandez, 2011). Future research of the graduation rates of the ninth graders from poor and minority backgrounds who increase their reading levels would be valuable.

It is difficult to compare this study to previous research regarding the effectiveness of Read 180 conducted in a large urban high school (Papalewis, 2002). That study showed that the participants made significant gains in reading and language arts for the year they participated in the program. However the data compared groups of students who received Read 180 instruction compared to a group of equivalent students who did not participate in the program. Overall, the Read 180 participants made gains of three normal curve equivalents in reading and 2 normal curve equivalents in Language Arts (Papalewis, 2002). Most previous research showing gains in reading comprehension compared the ninth grade students receiving Read 180 instruction with those students who were participating in the traditional curriculum but not receiving Read 180 instruction.

Research findings about the impact and challenges of small learning communities (SLCs) are just beginning to emerge. There is not yet sufficient evidence to support the effectiveness of SLC's to improve academic achievement. There is some existing research that suggests SLCs can improve attendance, graduation rates and student's sense of satisfaction with the school environment (Levine 2010). The students in the small learning community outperformed the students in the traditional curriculum by increasing

their Lexile scores an average of 154 points compared to students participating in the traditional curriculum who increased Lexile scores 57 points.   Further research on the effectiveness of the small learning community in this school would be valuable to identify the factors that contribute to student achievement.

Limitations

The results of this study support the original hypothesis that the experimental group would increase their reading scores at a higher rate than the control group. Even so, there are several limitations of this study. The pretest for both groups was given in September prior to starting the intervention program. A number of factors could have influenced the outcome of the test. Students need to be instructed on how to get the best results. Students are encouraged to use their "skips" to get a more accurate picture of their Lexile level. The "skips" are a feature built into the program to account for cultural bias in test questions. Many teachers were not aware of this feature and did not explain to their students before the initial pretest. This has the potential to yield a lower pretest score for some students. Out of the five teachers who facilitated the pretest, four teachers were administering the test for the first time. The students were all tested in the IMC or Instructional Materials Center but the conditions were different depending on what part of the IMC the class was placed and the level of activity that was going on during any given class testing time. Some classes were giving the initial pretest in distracting conditions such as a noisy, busy area in which students could have difficulty concentrating. Teachers varied in emphasis on the importance of the test and students may not have taken it "seriously" which explains the outliers who initially were given scores categorized as BR(beginning reader) and were below 50. Many of these students

clearly had Lexile levels much higher and had to be removed from the study because their increase would skew the data. Another limitation of the study is that the veteran Read 180 teachers were supported by a consultant that is no longer involved with the school and the original consultant encouraged Lexile testing only three times per year while the new consultant encouraged Lexile testing after each marking period. The one teacher tested her students on a different schedule so her student's results had to be removed from the study.

Another limitation of the study involves the fidelity of implementation of the Read 180 program. Each teacher varied in how well the program was followed. Scholastic, the publisher of Read 180 asserts that research shows the best results when the program is followed with fidelity and following the 90-minute whole group/small group rotation. The school was limited to a modified 40-minute protocol, and some teachers further stray from the program by introducing novels and writing units. It is difficult to compare group results when there is such a variance in the implementation of the intervention. A final consideration is teacher competence. Two of the five teachers hold Teacher of the Handicapped certificates and one is a reading specialist, while the other two have English degrees and no special education background. Read 180 does require a full two-day training and follow up through the year with coaching and classroom visits.

The participants were screened initially through a trial prior to the beginning of school. The trial is a three week period in which students are given a number of tests to determine career interests and skills   Based on school records and previous school recommendations, students who were recommended for small class program were placed

in the Read 180 class as their English I program. Some students proved to be much too high level for this class and a few were removed during the school year and placed in regular inclusion English classes. Those students who were receiving Read 180 instruction in supplement to their English class and participated in the pilot small learning community already had English and returned to an advisory period during that 40 minute class to work on independent work and projects.   These outliers were removed from the data. There were also students who should have been screened by the Scholastic Phonics Inventory due to possible gaps in phonemic awareness, which could impede the proper rate of progress expected by students involved in this intervention. The screening did not take place until after the study was completed so these students remained in the data.

The small learning community is a pilot program with students participating in an integrated and project based constructivist style of learning. Part of the day is structured to allow students 80 minutes of advisory time in which the entire learning community is together and teacher advisors guide students to complete independent work and projects. This time is very unstructured with many students using the time to play computer games and socialize with their peers. The students who have Read 180 are pulled away from this advisory time for the second period of 40 minutes. These students are encouraged to do well in the Read 180 intervention and get their "Lexile scores up" in order to test out and go back to advisory for the full 80 minutes. They have more motivation to do well than the control group who are very seldom moved out and it is often at the discretion of each case manager.

Overall, continued research on the use of Read 180 as an intervention for adolescents who are reading below grade level would be helpful in deciding the most effective way to implement the program at a high school level.

Conclusion

In this study the question to be answered was "would special education ninth grade students who participated in a small learning community and had Read 180 instruction as a supplement to their English classes increase their Lexile scores at a higher rate than those ninth grade special education students who have Read 180 instruction in place of their English class and are participating in a traditional curriculum?" After reviewing the data, the Read 180 instruction increased both groups' Lexile scores on average, but the experimental group increased their Lexile scores at a higher rate than the control group. Despite the limitations of the study the intervention appeared to a have a greater effect on the experimental group by increasing the Lexile scores of these students at a higher rate than the control group. The implications of this study provide educators with valuable insight into what may impact the success of a reading intervention for special education students in a high school setting. Providing students with exposure to core curriculum content standards while remediating deficits in reading skills is crucial to successful outcomes and ultimately graduation rates. Students with reading deficits need to see the value in making gains in reading levels and participating in grade level courses. Making gains in reading at the high school level is a monumental challenge and one that frustrates even the most competent educators. Providing students with the most effective instruction that will close the achievement gap is not only a school priority but also a national one.

References

Archer, A., Gleason, M., & Vachon, V. (2005). *Rewards secondary.* Longmont CO: Sopris West.

Biancarosa, G., & Snow, C. (2004). *Reading Next: A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy.* Carnegie Corporation of New York. Washington D.C.: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Bohman-Kruhm, M., & King-Sears, M. E. (2010). Attending to the specilaized reading instruction for adolescents with mild disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children , 42* (4), 30-40.

Darwin, M., & Fleischman, S. (2005). Fostering Adolescent Literacy. *Educational Leadersip , 62* (7), 85-87.

Gardner, P., Ritblatt, S., & Beatty, J. (2000). Academic achievement and parental school involvement as a function of high school size. *High School Journal , 2* (83), 21-27.

Hernandez, D. (2011). *Double jeopardy: how third grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation.* Baltimore MD: The Annie E Casey Foundation.

Kim, J., Capotosto, L., Hatry, A., & Fitzgerald, R. (2011, April). Can a mixed method literacy intervention improve reading achievement of low performing elemntary students? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis ,* 183-201.

Lang, L., Torgenson, J., Vogel, W., Chanter, C., Lefsky, E., & Petscher, Y. (2009). Exploring the effectiveness of reading interventions on high school students. *Journal of Reasearch on Educational Effectiveness ,* 149-175.

Levine, T. (2010). What the research tells about the impact and challenges of the smaller leraning Communities. *Peabody Journal of Education ,* 276-289.

Lee, V., & Ready, D. (2007). *Schools within schools: Possibilities and pitfalls of high school reform.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Lovett, M. W., Lacerenza, L., De Palma, M., & Frijters, J. C. (2011, December 19). Evaluating the efficacy of remediation for struggling readers in high school. *Journal of Learning Disabilities ,* 151-169.

Marchand-Martella, Ph.D., N. E., Martella, Ph.D., R. C., & Przychodzin-Havis M.Ed., A. M. (2008). *The reasearch base and validation of the SRAs corrective reading program.* Philadelphia: The Mcgraw Hill Company.

Meltzer, J., & Okashige, S. (2001). First literacy, then learning. *Leadership for Literacy ,* 16-21.

Moats, L. (June 1999). *Teaching reading is rocket science. What expert teachers of reading should know and be able to do.* Washington DC: American Federation of Teachers.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel, teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction.* www.nationalreading panel.org

Quint, J., Bloom, H., Black , A., & Stephens, L. (2005). *The challenge of scaling up educational reform: Findings and lessons from First Things First.* New York: Manpower Demonstrations Research Corporation.

Papalewis, R. (2002). Results and validation. The Los Angelos Read 180 study. *Scholastic Intervention Convention.* San Francisco, California.

Scholastic Inc. (2011). *Read 180 Next Generation ;Scholastic Research and Results.* New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.

Scholastic Inc. (2009, November 30). *About Read 180*. Retrieved from http//Read180.scholastic.com

Sparks, S. D. (2011). Study: how third grade reading predicts later high school graduation. *Education Week* .

Wallach, C., & Galluci, C. (2004). *Elevating the conversation: building professional community in small high school.* Washington DC: Small Schools Project.

What Works Clearinghouse. (2009). *Intervention Read 180.* Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education.

White, R., Haslam, M., & Hewes, G. (2006). *Improving Student Literacy: Read 180 in the Phoenix High School District .* Washington DC: Policy Studies Associates.