

Beginning Reader Skills in Kindergarten 2013-2014

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(with support from administration)

Introduction:

The group of students that comprise this subset of this kindergarten class are lower academically than the other students in the class. They are slowly grasping the letter-sound recognition, but are not progressing as quickly as the rest of the class. They are not as focused as the rest of the students, and have a hard time following some directions. There are issues that are impeding learning and thus affecting student achievement. One of the identified reasons is lack of parental support due to split family situations and lack of communication among parents. In one case, there are many social and emotional issues that are causing the environment to not be conducive to student engagement and learning.

Goal:

The goal of this project is to enhance and build strong beginning reader skills and a solid foundation in reading among the K children. More specifically,

- for students to master blending sounds to form simple CVC words
- for students to successfully read simple sentences and stories by utilizing strategies learned from the Jolly Phonics program
- to master dictation skills by identifying sounds in words and correctly spelling phonetic words

Strategies:

- Teaching students how to represent speech sounds with letters. Includes explicit instruction in the connections between sound segments and letters of the alphabet. Both phonological awareness and the letter-sound instruction are necessary components of training. (Letter-sound recognition, letter-sound recall)
- Early, structured, focused and rapid teaching of phoneme segmentation and blending skills and of grapheme-phoneme correspondences does accelerate development of reading and writing skills. (read words, read CVC nonwords, write words, read sentences)
- Phase 1 (October-January) - Letter-sound recognition - 42 phonetic sounds
- Phase 2 (February-June)- Dictation, Read words and non words, read sentences)

Data Collection Tools:

Engagement checklist
Dictation/reading scores
Letter sound recognition checklists and table

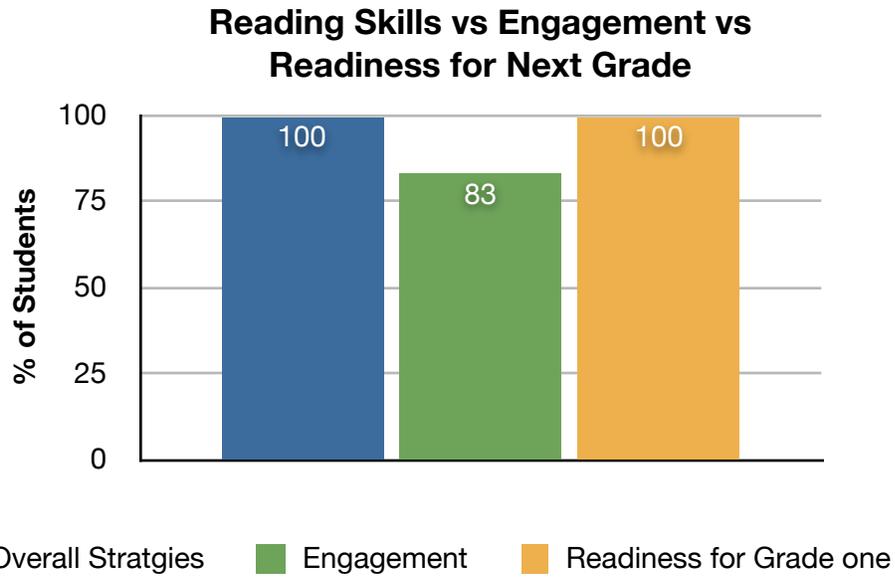


Figure 1. This figure seems to indicate that the strategies implemented were effective in providing students with the necessary skills to be ready for grade one and to be more engaged in their learning.

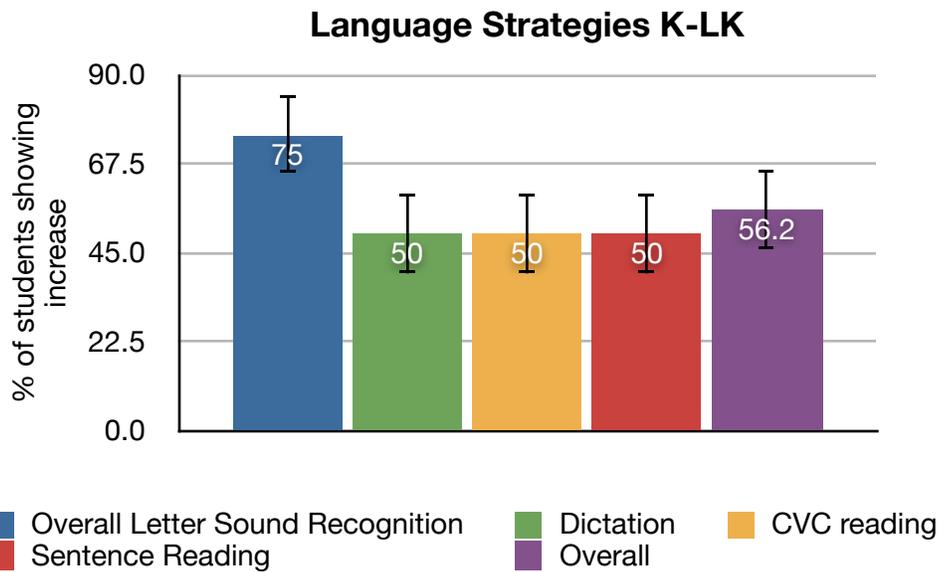


Figure 2. The strategies utilised were relatively successful with these students. Especially the letter sound recognition, it seems to have produced better results.

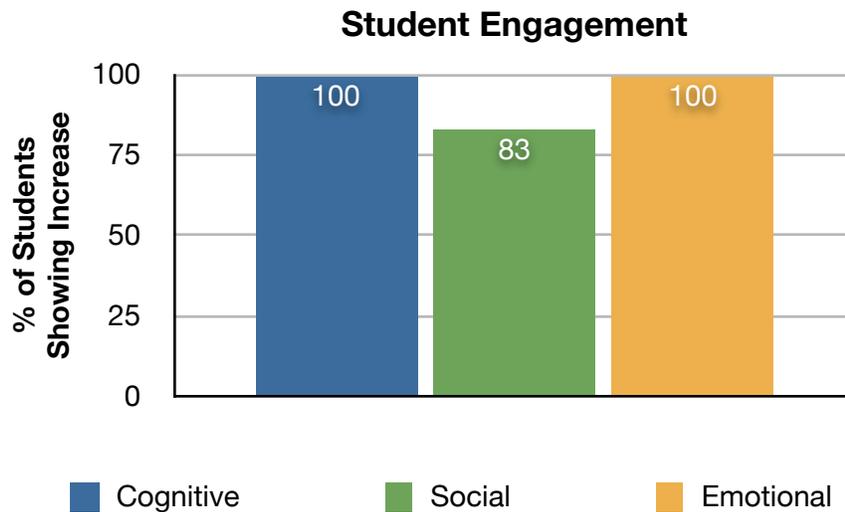


Figure 3. This figure seems to indicate very significant increases in student engagement in each of the three categories.

Conclusion & Discussion:

The identified and implemented strategies have been successful in helping this group of kindergarten students learning reading skills, become more engaged in learning and therefore be more prepared and ready for the next grade.

The most effective strategy was the letter sound recognition. Once this was in place, everything else seemed to come easier to the students. This is the foundation of reading. They must learn the sounds letters make in order to move forward. Once this was in place, the other academics and strategies was easier to deal with. This help set the stage for the development of other skills.

It seems that cognitive and emotional engagement had the greatest increase. It seems that when given the right skills, encouragement and support all the way through the year, the ability to deal with academics increases. The growth is seen across the board when students are provided with continued support and encouragement. It seems that the younger the students are, the more primed they are to learn and they thrive in a supportive learning environment. This evidence really supports the idea that small, homogenous groups are more beneficial for all students involved. When there is a homogenous group, it is easier to provide proper programming. It helps to provide a conducive learning environment. When this is in place, the children can gain acquisition of skills, therefore become more engaged, therefore their achievement increases.

From anecdotal notes and observations it seems that some factors affected the growth of several students in my small group:

- Two students were removed from this small group because it seemed they were successful in learning all their letter sounds and they started reading small sight word books.
- One of the students experienced a trauma. It seems that this trauma has inhibited his engagement. This was evident in the student engagement, not the achievement.
- It seems that one student was successful in reading CVC words and sentences. Oral strategies for the same words were not successful. This suggests she's a visual learner not an oral learner.
- It seems that several factors such as lack of parental help and poor attendance hindered one student's learning significantly. They did not show a significant increase in several areas.

Bibliography:

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