

The Effect of Parent Volunteers on Reading Scores and Attitudes

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Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between student reading achievement and family involvement in urban schools. In this action research project, family members will be invited to participate as reading mentors during class time. In this study, the mentors will have the chance to impact the students by reading aloud to them in small groups. It is hypothesized that this will increase the student's reading scores and motivate students to read for enjoyment.

Theoretical Framework

The literature indicates that "lifelong enjoyment of reading is directly related to daily reading" (Wang, 2000, p. 122). Additionally, there is evidence demonstrating that time spent in recreational reading can be a predictor of academic success for children (Gallic, 1999). Over the last two decades, studies have documented the positive impact that parent involvement has on test scores and student achievement (Cooper, Lindsay, & Nye, 2000). Research has also indicated significant gains in children who were continuously exposed to a rich literacy environment and their emergent literary knowledge (Kwon, 2003). According to Drake (2000), reading mentors can significantly benefit elementary school students. A significant number of urban schools claim a lack of parental involvement (Pollard-Durondola, 2003). Henderson (1987) has stated that parental involvement sends a positive message to children about the importance of their education. Parents can be invaluable partners not only in their children's education, but to the overall functioning of schools. Thus, the more schools pursue a partnership with families, the more successful that they will be in accomplishing educational goals.

Method

This action research study features a quasi-experimental design comparing results between the experimental and control group following an intervention. Families in the experimental group will be asked via telephone and in person to volunteer to read to the students in class. The mentors will be scheduled to read twice per week for thirty minutes over a twelve week period. To measure the students' growth, the Diagnostic Reading Assessment and Reading Attitude Survey will be administered on a pre and post-test basis. Comparisons in reading achievement will be made between the students in the experimental and control groups. The aim of this study is to emphasize the importance of family involvement and at the same time to show how this can contribute to an increase in students' reading levels. In addition, the investigation will examine the impact of the intervention on increasing students' enjoyment for reading.

References

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