

Using Music to Improve Reading Fluency with Kindergarten Students

Abstract

This research study investigated the use of songs to help students in Kindergarten to learn high frequency words and improve their reading fluency. The study will be conducted over 8 weeks. Students are given a song with the high frequency words highlighted. The teacher sings the songs with the students each day in class.

Supporting Summary

A common struggle for teachers of typical and ESE students is teaching students reading fluency and helping them to improve their reading fluency. Kindergarten students especially ones who are in school for the first time or ESOL students struggle with reading fluency and learning how to read. The more high frequency words the students can read the more their reading fluency will increase. Students need to have good reading fluency to do well in school and help them succeed in their future. The earlier students improve their reading fluency the better it will be. Elementary and middle school students struggle with reading fluency. This is an area of weakness for many students. The sooner we can implement an intervention and help the students improve their fluency the easier it will be for them to continue to improve their reading fluency. Although many teachers are trying to work with students and help them improve their reading fluency currently we still have many students who do not know how to read or struggle and get frustrated when trying to read because they are not fluent readers. We then have students who do not want to read or they hate to read.

The *purpose* of this action research study is to help improve students reading fluency using songs. Using songs to teach students reading fluency is given them an alternative mode of learning. This offers a fun way of giving the students the repetition of the words to help them read fluently.

The literature that was reviewed for the action research supported the intervention used in the study. The article by Trinick (2012) talks about how song can help students with language learning by incorporating things such as syntax, rhyming words, and parts of speech. According to Trinick (2012), books and songs for young children share features that help with memory and retention such as “rhythm, rhyme, repetition, and refrain” (p. 7). In a similar article Hines (2010), they talk about how students who know lyrics to songs are able to use this in helping them to be able to read the words by matching. Hines found that using song lyrics as instructional material is a promising technique for adolescents with disabilities who need remedial decoding instruction but who may have lost the motivation to engage in more traditional instructional practices due to repeated failures (p.21). Similarly, Sevik (2011) explores how teachers feel about using music to teach young learners English. A questionnaire was given to teachers to find out thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and how often they used songs to help teach student’s English. The survey used a five point Likert scale and found that, overall most of the teachers thought that songs were an important part of teaching students Language Arts. Sevik explains song is thought of as one of the best ways to teach young students listening comprehension (p.1029). In all of these articles it finds that song and music is an effective teaching tool.

This action research plan took place in an inclusive kindergarten classroom there are 16 students, ages 5 and 6, who will all be participants for this intervention. The teacher gave all of the students a song and had the high frequency words that appear in the song highlighted. The

teacher sung the song to the students while they would point along on the lyrics printed for them each day during reading class. The students would also place the lyrics into a poetry notebook that would go home with them each week for them to practice reading and singing the song at home. Each Friday the teacher will give the students a high frequency word list and ask for the students to read the words to her. The teacher would record the rate at which the students can read the words on the list. The students were given a Fair test on the computer prior to the start of this intervention back in October 2013. They were given a second Fair test on the computer one week after the intervention began being implemented. They are anticipated to be given another FAIR test at the end of the intervention time.

It is anticipated that using music and song to help teach Kindergarten students' high frequency words and improve their reading fluency will show major gains in their Fair scores and in the weekly high frequency word assessment. The teacher hopes the intervention not only proves to be effective but that it proves to have lasting effects and to be something that can be implemented in different grade levels to help all students improve their reading fluency and not become so frustrated when trying to read. If this intervention can help students to learn their high frequency words and improve their reading fluency rate then they will be able to continue to increase their reading fluency in the future to help them succeed in school. This action plan should be able to demonstrate that it is effective and a new interesting way for the students to be able to learn and improve their reading fluency. There should be major improvements in the rate at which they are able to read the high frequency words lists. The increase in the recognition of the high frequency words will be able to help in the increase of the reading fluency rate.

If this intervention is shown to be effective then it can be an easy way for students to learn and improve reading fluency not only through school but at home. The students can get the intervention benefits twice during the day. This intervention will also be able to be implemented with many different grade levels and students. It will be an effective intervention for typical and ESE students. If this intervention is proven effective then it could help close the gap in the reading fluency of our students. It can so help students become more confident in their reading ability.

References

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