6-1989

Reading Attitudes - Are They Affected by the Methods of Instruction?

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READING ATTITUDES - ARE THEY
AFFECTED BY THE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION?

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the Department of Education and Human Development State University of New York College at Brockport in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Education

by

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June, 1989
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Thesis Advisor

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Second Faculty Reader

[Signature]

Chairman, Graduate Policies Committee
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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine whether a whole language approach to beginning reading instruction makes a significant difference in kindergarten children's attitudes toward reading.

The sample consists of 39 kindergarten children. Two groups were assessed. One group received reading instruction through a traditional basal series. The other group received instruction through a whole language approach. The Heathington Primary Scale was used at the end of the school year. The scale contained six subscales. The hypotheses failed to be rejected in all areas except one. The first hypothesis was rejected for subscale 3, reading in the library. The whole language children had a significantly higher attitude toward reading at the library than the basal children.

This study suggests that if a whole language approach to beginning reading grasps the interests and fosters positive attitudes towards reading in young children then it must be looked at as a viable alternative to the basal reader.
CHAPTER I

Statement of the Problem

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a whole language approach to beginning reading instruction makes a significant difference in kindergarten children's attitudes toward reading.

Need for the Study

Reading receives a great deal of instructional time in classrooms today. The majority of this time is devoted to three components of reading: word attack skills, comprehension skills and study skills. While the cognitive skills are important, an affective component of attitude is also important.

Reading has been defined by Robeck and Wilson (1974, p. 83) as "a process of translating signs and symbols into meanings and incorporating new meanings into existing cognitive and affective systems." As stated by this definition, reading involves affective skills as well as cognitive skills. Attitudes, an affective component, are also important but less tangible.

The importance of a positive reading attitude has been supported by many authorities in the reading area
Reading attitudes

(Alexander & Filler, 1976; Estes, Johnstone & Richards, 1975; Koe, 1975). However, teachers spend the majority of their time on comprehension and study skills. When teachers ranked the components of reading in importance, attitudes were second, but only 8.6% of their instructional time was allocated for the development and assessment of attitudes (Heathington & Alexander, 1984).

According to Estes, "a student's attitude toward what he studies in school may well be more crucial to his future than the exact knowledge he accumulates" (in Golicz, 1982, p. 22). This opinion is widely shared by others in the field (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Koe, 1975; Tinker & McCullough, 1975), especially as it relates to reading.

Several studies have been aimed at reading attitudes and how they affect reading achievement of upper primary grade students (Blaha & Chomin, 1982; Nielson, 1977; Wallbrown, Brown & Engin, 1978). Yet little research has been conducted with early primary-grade children. It is imperative to assess the attitudes of these children, and to foster a positive attitude and to make efforts to extinguish negative attitudes. Because "bad attitudes precipitate intellectual atrophy" (Estes in Golicz, 1982, p. 22) it is "logical to assume that it must be an educational priority to investigate the parameters
of attitude so that they can be better understood for the good of teachers and students alike" (Champlin, 1982).

Research on the reading attitudes at the primary grades is limited. The few studies which have been conducted have examined the relationship of reading attitudes in regard to achievement, sex, grade placement, locus of control and socio-economic status (Askov & Fischback, 1973; Swanson, 1982). Although socio-economic status, reading achievement and locus of control may prove to have relationships with reading attitudes of a novice reader, these areas do not aid in developing appropriate instructional methods. It is necessary to determine what instructional approaches are best at fostering reading attitudes in the novice reader in order to provide information for appropriate curriculum planning.

Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following questions were posed:

1. Is there a significant difference in reading attitudes at the end of kindergarten between the basal group children and the whole language children?

2. Is there a significant difference in reading attitudes at the end of kindergarten between males and females in the basal group?
3. Is there a significant difference in reading attitudes at the end of kindergarten between males and females in the whole language group?

**Definition of the Terms**

1. **Attitude** - a mental position, feeling or emotion toward an act or state.

2. **Skills-based basal** - a basal series (MacMillan R, 1985) that teaches reading through drill and practice of many sub-skills.

3. **Whole language** - an approach based on the theory that language and reading skills are acquired through use. A whole language approach relies heavily on saturation of the child in literature and print.

**Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of this study are related to the small number of subjects and to the age of the subjects. Since there were only 39 students in this study, any conclusions drawn should not be generally applied without further research. Also, the subjects were kindergarten children, therefore their test taking skills are not perfected.
Summary

Because of the importance of attitudes upon reading, this study examined the relationships which exist between reading attitudes and the method of reading instruction for kindergarten children.

The sample consisted of 39 kindergarten children. Two groups were assessed. One group of subjects received reading instruction through a whole language approach. The other group received reading instruction through a traditional basal series. A Likert-type survey was administered to assess the attitudes at the end of the school year.
CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Reading has been defined by Robeck and Wilson (1974, p. 83) as "a process of translating signs and symbols into meanings and incorporating new meanings into existing cognitive and affective systems."

As stated by this definition, reading involves more than cognitive skills. Attitudes, an affective component, are also important but less tangible.

The importance of a positive reading attitude has been supported by many authorities in the reading area (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Estes, Johnstone & Richards, 1975; Koe, 1975).

Reading Attitudes

Reading Attitudes and Academic Aptitude

Numerous researchers have examined the relationship of reading attitudes and achievement (Blaha & Chomin, 1982; Bernstein, 1972; Engin, Wallbrown & Brown, 1976; Greenberg, 1965; Ransbury, 1973; Wallbrown, Brown & Engin, 1978) but the results have been far from conclusive.

included Expressed Reading Difficulty, Reading as Direct Reinforcement, Reading as Enjoyment, Alternative Learning Modes, Reading Group, Reading Anxiety, Silent vs. Oral Reading and Comics. The study found that four of the dimensions were significantly correlated with verbal academic aptitude. Expressed Reading Difficulty, Reading Anxiety, Silent vs. Oral Reading and Reading as Enjoyment were the areas affected by verbal aptitude.

The findings suggest that readers with less verbal ability have less positive reading attitudes than those with superior verbal academic aptitude. Blaha and Chomin (1982) also found that "students with less verbal ability did not perceive themselves as valuing reading type activities for their intrinsic worth as a source of information, learning and emotional satisfaction" (Blaha & Chomin, 1982, p. 8).

These findings echo the results of other studies. Wallbrown, Brown and Engin (1978) also found that scholastic aptitude affected the Expressed Reading Difficulty component; however, Wallbrown et al. did not find a significant correlation between aptitude and the other components.

In an earlier study, children in fifth and sixth grade, when asked, attributed their attitudes toward reading primarily to their ability to read (Ransbury, 1973).
Yet other researcher have found little or no relationship between reading attitudes and reading achievement (Bernstein, 1972; Greenberg, 1965).

**Reading Attitudes and Socio-Economic Status**

Numerous reading experts have examined socio-economic status and reading attitudes (Filler, 1973; Groff, 1962; Hall, 1978; Ransbury, 1971; Swanson, 1982). However, research has repeatedly found little or no significant relationship between children's reading attitudes and their parents' economic status.

Hansen (1969) hypothesized that the influence of the home literacy environment would have a greater effect on child's reading attitudes than his parents' economic status. The study found that the father's occupation and the father's education showed no significant relationship to the attitude scores of the fourth graders tested.

The presumed thoughts that lower income children have poorer attitudes toward reading have been disputed by recent research (Filler, 1973; Groff, 1962; Ransbury, 1971; Swanson, 1982). However, a few researchers have found a relationship between reading attitudes and a family's socio-economic status (Filler, 1973; Hall, 1978; Nielsen, 1977). The relationship has been an observable one but not a significant relation.
In addition, only at the lower economic level is there even an observable relationship, a relationship has not been found with middle and upper economic level children.

Reading Attitudes and Locus of Control

Socio-economic status and student achievement have frequently been researched in regards to reading attitudes, however, in recent years a new vein of research in this area is being examined, that of locus of control.

The locus of control concept grew out of Rotler's (1954) social learning theory and is concerned with whether individuals perceive the events in their lives as being a function of luck, fate and chance or a function of their own behavior. Students with an external locus of control view the events of their lives as being beyond their control. In contrast, those with an internal locus of control attribute their lives events to their own behavior.

Phares (1976) claims there is reason to believe that locus of control is related to a wide range of academic behavior, including reading attitudes. Recent research has shown conflicting results. Blaha and Chomin (1982), when examining inner-city children in fifth grade, found that children who reported
a willingness to assume personal responsibility for successful academic achievement also valued reading activities for their extrinsic reinforcement value and for their intrinsic values as a source of emotional satisfaction. These results are contrary to the results of a previous study by Brown, Engin and Wallbrown (1979).

Research in the field of reading attitudes at the primary level is in its early stages. Although socio-economic status, reading achievement and locus of control may prove to have relationships with reading attitudes of a novice reader, these areas do not aid in developing appropriate instructional methods. It is necessary to determine what instructional approaches are best at fostering positive reading attitudes in the novice reader, in order to provide information for appropriate curriculum planning.

Whole Language

The debate between methods of reading instruction has been on-going for many decades. The choice has predominantly been a phonics and skills-based traditional basal series. Advocates of basal instruction stress the logic and successful tradition of the traditional method. Basal reading programs have dominated the
classroom for decade; 95 to 99% of American teachers relied on the basal in 1958 and 80 to 90% still did as of 1980 (Koeller, 1891). But recently a whole language approach to teaching beginning reading is being examined.

**Whole Language and Emergent Literacy**

Whole language, according to Kenneth Goodman (1986) "is an attempt to get back to basics in the real sense of that word - to set aside basals, workbooks, and tests and to return to inviting kids to learn to read and write by reading and writing real stuff" (p. 38).

Whole language is a term which is used to refer to reading and writing instruction which utilized complete text in communicative situations as contrasted with focused skills practice or the use of phonics or isolated drill (Goodman, 1986; Rhodes, 1985; Rich, 1985; Urzua, 1986).

Holdaway (1979), a proponent of whole language theory, strongly advocates that reading and writing ought to be taught in a way that parallels and complements early oral language learning. Few children, Holdaway insists, would learn language in infancy if they were taught to speak the same way they are taught to read and write in schools.
Although the whole language approach has been coined "new," the view that reading is a written language process which can be learned in much the same way as oral language can be traced back to the writings of Iredell (1898) and Huey (1908).

Iredell (1898, p. 237) assumes observation of children's oral and written language development could lead to the solution of "the long and eager search for the way to teach reading and writing." Huey (1908) concluded that beginning reading instruction, as it was taught in the schools was unnatural.

Goodman and Goodman (1979) state that children learn written language, as well as oral language, when it is functional to them. Clay (1977) declared after researching five-year-old school children:

it follows that a child may have developed good visual perception for forms and shapes and yet fail to learn to read because he thinks the task depends on visual memory for particular letters or forms and does not appreciate that his power to produce language has anything to do with it (p. 6).

In a traditional basal series a beginning reader's belief in himself is diminished because the passages are contrived and his knowledge of the language does not support his reading. By contrast, in a whole language approach, natural language is used. The child's
"power to produce his own language" is the center of the program.

The whole language approach is changing the traditional method of reading instruction. A whole language classroom allows students to develop a conscious awareness of the reading process and to talk about their reading (Goodman, Watson & Burke, 1987).

Whole Language and Writing

An integral component of whole language is writing. Children write many things, letters, stories, lists, etc. "Children must experience written language if they are to learn it" (McCracken, 1985, p. 1).

Marie Clay (1975), an expert in early writing, states that children who learn to write at the same time as they learn to read find that writing plays a significant part in early reading progress.

Malmquist (1961) found a high correlation between a beginning reader's ability to read alphabet letters and his ability to write alphabet letters \( r = 0.81 \). He concluded that "the development of both writing and reading ability evidently follow each other rather closely" (p. 153). According to many researchers, writing should be a central activity for kindergarteners from the first day of school for a variety of reasons. Writing helps children develop their concept of words
(Henderson, 1985; Morris, 1981). It promotes their ability to segment words phonemically, as well as their knowledge of letter-sound mapping, spelling and decoding (Dyson, 1984, 1985; Ehri & Wilce, 1987; Temple, Nathen & Burris, 1982) and it fosters their abilities in composing and comprehending (Graves, 1983; Sulzby, 1985, 1986; Tierney & Pearson, 1985).

In other words, writing is a means of teaching the written language (Mason, 1989). As previously stated, there is a definite connection between reading and early writing.

During the 1980's much research has been conducted on the reading and writing connection. Ferreiro and Tiberosky (1983), Ferreiro and Gomez Palacio (1982) and Sulzby (1981, 1985, 1986) have provided case study information on the relations between reading and writing for young children.

"Reading and writing mutually reinforce each other in the process of literacy development" (Mason, 1989, p. 184).

Children read their own writing when given the opportunity to write as part of their reading program. A whole language approach to beginning reading instruction incorporates writing as an integral element. A traditional basal reading series does not provide experiences for natural writing. As Carol Chomsky (1971) suggested, children should "write first, read later."
Written language must be presented to children as "a whole meaningful communication system" (Goodman & Altwerger, 1987, p. 56).

Whole Language and Predictability

Advocates of whole language express the invaluable aspect of patterned materials and predictable books. As Smith (1978) states children learn to read by reading. Yet those who oppose this approach argue that the children are only memorizing the text and they, in fact, are not reading. Holdaway (1979) and Doake (1981) both maintain that memorization of text or reading-like behavior as Doake calls it is the beginning point of reading for some children. In writing about his subjects Doake states:

The patterns of language that they used to reproduce their stories, however, revealed that they had not only internalized and intuitively developed their control over the structure of their stories, but they had succeeded in building into their repertoire of language skills the ability to retrieve their favorite stories using the more complex patterns of written language. (1981, p. 539)

In an earlier study, Doake examined the shared book approach, a component of a whole language reading approach. The shared book approach included big books with print and pictures large enough for the entire class to participate in reading. Using this approach, according to Doake (1980):

The children were able to follow
the same language learning principle that they had used to learn oral language. They were able to use the principle that seems to govern all human learning, that of going from the meaningful whole to the parts, rather than from meaningless parts to the whole. (1980, p. 4)

The shared book children in the Doane study achieved greater than their basal counterparts in reading comprehension and reading vocabulary. Bridge, Winograd and Haley (1983) found similar results when they examined beginning readers. Their experimental group used patterned predictable books for beginning reading instruction and the control group used a traditional basal series. The experimental group learned significantly more targeted vocabulary words as well as significantly more additional vocabulary.

Whole Language and Reading Achievement

A concern of some reading experts is that the lack of a vocabulary control and the lack of systematic repetition of the vocabulary would be harmful to children's reading growth and development (Burns, Roe & Ross, 1984). According to Chall (1983), many of the experts believe that vocabulary control is necessary at beginning levels. However, in a year-long study of first grade students in a whole language classroom, their written vocabulary was compared with basal reader vocabulary. The study found that the whole language students generated more words than would
be encountered in a basal series. More words with less repetition were found in writing of the whole language children. Shapiro (1988) concluded that children involved in a whole language approach would have more varied and therefore more stimulating and interesting literacy experiences than children in basal reader programs.

In the Bronx, twenty second grade classes were randomly separated into two groups. Ten groups were systematically read to every day. Many library books were in the room. Each day the students did activities in conjunction with the stories, including rewriting, dramatizing, and illustrating. The remaining ten classrooms were taught with a traditional basal reader. At the completion of the 10 weeks, the experimental groups were significantly ahead in reading, vocabulary and comprehension (Cohen, 1968). As examined in the previous study, a whole language classroom is filled with books, newspapers, menus, charts, etc. Activities in a whole language classroom, such as the experimental group in the Bronx are child-centered not teacher oriented.

Whole Language and Reading Attitudes

Whole language classrooms, in the limited available research conducted, promote high interest, and motivation and success in students.

Sixth grade students of Saint Michael School, Marquette Michigan discarded the basal primarily because children
were "bored" with the basal and replaced it with "real books." Instead of the skills laced lessons the children had been accustomed to, the sixth graders read, discussed and wrote about their "real books." The students were 'turned on' to reading (Laurin, 1988).

Eldredge and Butterfield (1986) conducted a study in Utah involving 1,149 children in second grade. They compared a traditional basal approach to five other experimental methods including two variations of whole language literature based programs. Eldredge and Butterfield concluded that "the use of children's literature (whole language approach) to teach children to read had a positive effect upon students' achievement and attitudes toward reading - much greater than the traditional methods used" (1986, p. 34).

According to Estes, "a student's attitude toward what he studies in school may well be more crucial to his future than the exact knowledge he accumulates" (in Golicz, 1987, p. 22). With this in mind, if a whole language approach to teaching beginning reading generates a more positive attitude towards reading, then it certainly needs to be examined further.

The purpose of this study is to determine if using a whole language approach to teaching beginning reading significantly affects the reading attitudes of kindergarten children.
CHAPTER III

Procedure

Introduction

The purpose of this investigation was to acquire affective information from two groups of kindergarten children. One group received reading instruction through a traditional basal approach and the other group through a whole language approach. These data were analyzed to see if the different approaches to reading instruction affected the reading attitudes of the kindergarten children.

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference in reading attitudes between the basal group children and the whole language children.

2. There will be no significant difference in reading attitudes between males in the whole language group and males in the basal group.

3. There will be no significant difference in reading attitudes between females in the whole language group and females in the basal group.

Methodology

Subjects

The school district in which this study was conducted
is in a rural village in Western New York. The students are from mixed socio-economic and racial backgrounds. The students involved ranged from ones whose families receive public assistance to students whose parents are professionals with upper-middle incomes.

The subjects of this study were 39 kindergarten children from two self-contained all day classrooms. One classroom used a whole language approach to reading instruction. This classroom had 19 children, 10 males and 9 females. The other classroom used a skills-based basal series. This classroom had 20 children, 12 males and 8 females.

The subjects of this study were of varying ability levels, below average, average and above average.

**Instrument**

The Heathington Primary Scale (1975) was used to determine the reading attitudes of the subjects. The scale is designed to assess the reading attitudes of children in six areas: free reading, organized reading in the classroom, reading at the library, reading at home, recreational reading and general reading.

The Heathington Primary Scale contains 20 Likert-type attitude statements to which the students respond by circling one of five faces: 1. very unhappy,
2. unhappy, 3. don't care, 4. happy, 5. very happy.

The scale is administered individually and the statements are read to the subjects three times.

**Administration of the Scale**

Data gathering for this project took place on two successive days in June 1988. The researcher administered the Heathington Primary Scale individually in a secluded hallway.

The subjects were given markers so that only one row of faces could be seen in order to limit the confusion. The administration was untimed. The first session was devoted to the subjects in the classroom that used a whole language approach. The second day was used for the subjects that used the basal series. The scale was administered in the morning to both groups.

**Statistical Design**

The results from this project were calculated using a Likert scale. The overall attitudes of the whole language classroom were compared with the attitudes of the children in the basal classroom. Also, the comparison was made between the males and females in both classes.

An independent *t* test was used to examine the
relationships between the reading methods. The attitude scale test was divided into six subscales. Each subscale was individually analyzed by the independent \( t \) test. The subscales represent the six areas of reading that the Heathington Primary Scale examines.

**Summary**

In summary, this project was conducted in order to analyze the impact of the reading method on the reading attitudes of kindergarten children. Two different approaches were analyzed, a skills-based basal series and a whole language approach. The attitudes of the kindergarten children were assessed through a Likert-type scale.
CHAPTER IV
Analysis of the Data

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a whole language approach to beginning reading instruction makes a significant difference in kindergarten children's attitudes toward reading. Specifically, the intent of this study was to determine the relationships among the six subscales of reading attitude and the method of reading instruction. The six subscales were free reading, organized reading in the classroom, reading at the library, reading at home, other recreational reading and general reading.

The data of this study were derived from testing two classrooms of kindergarteners (39 students: nineteen whole language, twenty basal series). The Heathington Primary Scale (1975) was given to each subject independently.

Statistical analyses were completed with a series of independent t tests. The findings and their interpretation are presented in this chapter.

Findings from the Independent t test

The three null hypotheses were tested, in all six subscales, at the .05 level of significance by the
independent t tests. The results are presented in Tables 1-6.

The first hypothesis states that there will be no significant difference in reading attitudes between the basal group children and the whole language children. The second hypothesis states there will be no significant difference in reading attitudes between males in the whole language group and males in the basal group. The third hypothesis states there will be no significant difference in reading attitudes between females in the whole language group and females in the basal group. The data pertaining to these hypotheses are presented in Tables 1-6.
Table 1

**Free Reading, Whole Language vs. Basal Series**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Whole Language</th>
<th>Basal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>7.78</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8.19</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1A

**Free Reading, Whole Language vs. Basal Series**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t test</th>
<th>critical value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>2.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-.589</td>
<td>2.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-.377</td>
<td>2.042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of these data, the three hypotheses failed to be rejected for the first subscale, free reading.
On the basis of these data, the three hypotheses failed to be rejected for the second subscale, organized reading in the classroom.
### Table 3
Reading at the Library, Whole Language vs. Basal Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Whole Language</th>
<th>Basal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>8.78</td>
<td>1.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.99</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3A
Reading at the Library, Whole Language vs. Basal Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t test</th>
<th>critical value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.004</td>
<td>2.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-.7581</td>
<td>2.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13.135</td>
<td>2.042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of these data, the first hypothesis for the third subscale was rejected. However, the second and third hypotheses for the third subscale failed to be rejected.
Table 4

Reading at Home, Whole Language vs. Basal Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Whole Language</th>
<th>Basal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>17.33</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17.22</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4A

Reading at Home, Whole Language vs. Basal Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t test</th>
<th>critical value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.348</td>
<td>2.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>2.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.307</td>
<td>2.042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of these data, the three hypotheses failed to be rejected for the fourth subscale, reading at home.
Table 5

Other Recreational Reading, Whole Language vs. Basal Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Whole Language</th>
<th>Basal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>13.89</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14.85</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5A

Other Recreational Reading, Whole Language vs. Basal Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t test</th>
<th>Critical Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.245</td>
<td>2.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-.783</td>
<td>2.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.197</td>
<td>2.042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of these data, the three hypotheses failed to be rejected for the fifth subscale, other recreational reading.
Table 6

General Reading, Whole Language vs. Basal Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Whole Language</th>
<th>Basal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>15.89</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16.69</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6A

General Reading, Whole Language vs. Basal Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t test</th>
<th>critical value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>2.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>2.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-.141</td>
<td>2.042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of these data, the three hypotheses failed to be rejected for the sixth subscale, general reading.
Interpretation of the Data from the Independent t test

The three hypotheses failed to be rejected in all areas except one. Subscale 3, reading at the library, was rejected for the first hypothesis. There was a significant difference in reading attitudes in regards to reading at the library. The whole language children had a significantly higher attitude toward reading at the library.

There was no significant difference in reading attitudes between the males in the whole language group and the males in the basal group. Also, there was no significant difference in reading attitudes between females in the whole language group and females in the basal group. There was, however, a statistically significant difference in the total whole language group in the area of reading at the library.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a whole language approach to beginning reading instruction makes a significant difference in kindergarten children's attitudes towards reading. Three hypotheses were generated and analyzed in six subscales. Independent t test analyses revealed a significant difference between whole language children and basal group children in the area of reading at the library. However, no significant differences were found in the other five subscales for the total groups or for the categories of males and females.
CHAPTER V
Conclusions and Implications

Purpose
The specific intent of this study was to determine the relationships among the six subscales of reading attitude and the method of reading instruction with kindergarten children.

Conclusions
It should be noted that the conclusions drawn in this chapter refer specifically to the kindergarten students who participated in the study. Any generalizations should be applied with this fact in mind.

The three hypotheses failed to be rejected in all areas except one. Subscale 3, reading at the library, was rejected for the first hypothesis. The whole language children had a significantly higher attitude toward reading at the library.

There was no significant difference in reading attitudes between the males in the whole language group and males in the basal group. Also, there was no significant difference in reading attitudes between females in the whole language group and females in the basal group. There was, however, a statistically significant difference in the total whole language group in the area of reading at the library.
Although the significant differences are few, the particular differences can not go unnoticed.
The importance of library reading is paramount. This is an area that affects all aspects of academia.

The data collected also showed the males in kindergarten to be consistently more positive in their attitudes toward reading than the females, who also used the whole language approach. This information could weigh heavily on the minds of curriculum coordinators in that so frequently it is said "boys have more trouble learning to read," and "boys aren't as interested in learning to read as girls." If a whole language approach to beginning reading grasps young males' interests then it must be looked at as a viable alternative to the basal reader.

**Implications for the Classroom**

The children in the whole language kindergarten classroom scored significantly higher in the subscale of reading at the library than did their counterparts in the basal classroom. This subscale perhaps, has the most global importance in that valuing reading at the library could greatly influence their library practices including borrowing books. The whole language approach immerses children in print of all kinds.
They are exposed to many different types of print which cultivate their interests in reading. A whole language classroom allows the students to develop a conscious awareness of the reading process and to talk about their reading (Goodman, Watson & Burke, 1987). Through the development of their reading process, there is a feeling of ownership. The students have a larger part in their reading lessons, from the skills taught to the extension activities. Furthermore, a whole language classroom is dominated by authentic oral language, not preformulated oral language. It is dominated by children's own writing, not by workbooks. The language is used in content not in isolation (Slaughter, 1988).

A whole language classroom is not centered around a scope and sequence of a basal reader but is child centered and based on the children's development. Whole language teachers treat students as if they are members of the same literacy club as the teachers (Smith, 1985), rather than as if the teachers were surrogate authors and students had little to contribute to the discussion besides text bound "correct" responses. When an approach to reading is adopted it is important to remember the freedom and independence a whole language reading program gives to a child. A goal of an educator is to foster growth, individuality
and independence in children, yet when a basal program is chosen it promotes dependence and conformity.

In the words of Kenneth Goodman, whole language teachers "exude their belief in children. In their words and body language, in their programs and classroom ambience, they say, 'I know you can do it,' 'Go ahead and try.' "Take your time.' 'I am here to help'" (1986a, p. 79).

Isn't that what the environment of all early readers' classrooms should say?

Suggestions for Further Research

Positive reading attitudes are imperative since "bad attitudes precipitate intellectual atrophy" (Estes in Golicz, 1982, p. 22). Further research is needed to fully understand the effects of a whole language reading program on children's reading attitudes.

Research in the field should be directed at the following:

1. Investigation of the relationship between a whole language reading program and reading attitudes of children who have been involved in the program for several years.

2. Investigation of the relationship between a whole language reading program and reading achievement.
3. Investigation of the relationship between males' attitudes and a whole language reading program.

REFERENCES


