2003

The difference in vocabulary acquisition for grade one students using shared reading or guided reading.

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THE DIFFERENCE IN VOCABULARY ACQUISITION FOR GRADE ONE
STUDENTS USING SHARED READING OR GUIDED READING

by

Brenda Plowman

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Faculty of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Education at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
2003

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ABSTRACT

This study examined two different reading methods used in the Ontario public elementary system, shared and guided reading, and their possible effects on students’ vocabulary acquisition. Both methods of instruction are supported by the Ministry of Education and are required teaching by primary educators within the Greater Essex County District School Board.

The sample consisted of 47 grade one children aged 6 to 7 years of age. All of the subjects attended an Essex County public school. The children were pretested and post tested by the researcher using the same instrument to determine whether an increase in vocabulary acquisition had occurred over the 4-week testing period.

The shared reading group child typically learned approximately 3 words that were not known before, without any attempted explanation by the teacher.
DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this research to my husband, Tony Plowman, and our daughter Rachel. Without their love and support I would not have been able to attain this personal educational goal. As a result, I hope that my love of learning and teaching will be instilled in my daughter throughout her lifetime and that she never thinks that she is too old to make a difference in the lives of others.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank Dr. Kara Smith for her encouragement and perseverance throughout this endeavor. This has been a valuable learning experience, both for me personally, and as a teacher, in that it has assisted me to teach using the best method possible for the students in my care.

This study would not have been possible without the assistance of other faculty members such as Dr. Dale Jacobs and Dr. Noel Williams, who gave of their time and expertise to guide my graduate education.

Lastly, I would like to thank the parents of the children that were involved with the study who trusted me to use these results for the betterment of their children’s education.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Definition of Terms

*Authentic Literature* refers to literature that is connected to the child’s real-life vocabulary as opposed to basal reading texts, or leveled reading texts, with graded vocabularies.

*Big books* are large, simple, colourful books with approximately two lines of text per page. They are twice the size of the normal print version for visual demonstration and read alouds in front of the class. The read-together big books are supplied by the Ontario Ministry of Education and usually have large print and big, colourful pictures so that all class members can view the printing simultaneously.

*DEAR* (Drop Everything And Read) This is a quiet, individual reading time that occurs in most classrooms when the children occasionally read simple stories to themselves independently.

*Guided reading* is a small group, formal reading instruction program. Guided reading begins by grouping two to five students together who are reading at the same instructional level, as assessed by a Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) or similar instrument such as Running Records, and giving each student a copy of the same book. Grouping students according to their skill level allows teachers to adapt their skills and strategies to concentrate instruction on a student’s specific needs (Teaching with the story box reading program: Resource guide, 1999). The teacher guides the students to work together to develop reading strategies, problem solve, and discuss what they have read. Guided reading provides the children with the opportunity to work in a small group
setting to learn reading strategies that will allow them to become independent readers. The teacher guides the children to develop basic book handling skills, firm concepts of print, understanding the story structures, and effective reading strategies. Both guided reading and shared reading provide an opportunity for the teacher to introduce the concepts of semantics (meaning), syntax (grammar structure) and phoneme-grapheme correspondences.

**Independent Reading** refers to the child reading unassisted.

**Interactive Writing** occurs when the children dictate the text and the teacher acts as the scribe.

**Read Aloud** refers to reading the literature out loud to the children.

**Running Records** are a reading method used to determine the child’s placement in a guided reading group. This method uses the following formula:

\[
\text{Miscue Rate} = \frac{\text{RW (running words)}}{M \text{ (miscues)}}
\]

Running words refer to the correct expressive vocabulary and miscues refer to the child’s mistakes in vocabulary.

**Shared reading** is a whole group instructional model where the teacher and class read together in unison or through choral reading from big books and other highly predictable materials. According to the resource guide, (Wright Group Publishing, 1999), shared reading sessions begin with rereading old favourites that the children or teacher select. Teachers model the reading process while students participate in a cooperative reading experience that takes place in a supportive environment similar to the reading with parents that some children experience at home. After a brief introduction to the big book, the teacher reads the story aloud, using a pointer to track the printed text.
Shared reading demonstrates word-by-word matching where children begin to emulate this behavior as they read very simple books with common language and only one or two lines of text per page. The teacher asks open-ended questions and uses natural conversation to encourage students to participate in making predictions and discussing the story. This initial shared reading experience enables the teacher to scaffold instruction of the book’s language structures and vocabulary to fit the students’ reading level. During these repeated readings the teacher rereads the featured story many times. The teacher gradually releases the responsibility for reading the text to the students, inviting them to share in the reading. During these re-readings, the featured read-together big book serves as a vehicle for explicit skills instruction based on assessed student needs (Wright Group Publishing, 1999).

Teachable moments refer to an incidental opportunity during teaching to explore a topic.

Vocabulary acquisition refers to the increase in oral or written language. Pretests and post tests will be administered to the children to measure the extent of new vocabulary the children acquire from either the shared reading method or the guided reading method of instruction.

Whole Language refers to a language teaching method using authentic children’s literature which stresses whole-word recognition.

A relationship exists between children’s reading achievement and the vocabulary that they acquire. For the purpose of this research, the following research question was examined: Is there a difference in vocabulary acquisition for grade one students using shared reading or guided reading?
B. General Statement of the Problem

In 1979, Holdaway coined the term "shared reading" and stated that it modeled the reading that parents do at home with their own children. The parent first reads the text aloud to the child to help them become familiar with the text before reading it with them. Guided reading followed as another method of literary instruction but was more of a small group, formal reading program. Guided reading groups were smaller and were comprised of children with similar reading abilities. Each child was given their own copy of the book to read individually. Proponents of the guided reading technique believed that grouping students of like abilities together enabled instructional activities to be more focused. (Wright Group Publishing, 1999).

Since then teachers have adjusted their teaching methodology to accommodate the redesigned versions of curriculum documents and developed new methods of delivering language concepts to students in elementary schools (Ontario Curriculum, Grade 1-8: Language, 1997). Stability and change in literacy programs is determined on the basis of recognized accepted trends and the profession's use of this knowledge. Many educational researchers have studied varied aspects of Holdaway's shared reading strategy (Elley, 1989; Elster, 1998; Pappas & Brown, 1989; Morrow, 1992). The different combinations of language arts methods and the implications of their union of methods on students' vocabulary acquisition is still somewhat unknown. Previous research contrasted past and present reading methods, or studied different aspects of literacy. There is a great deal of research supporting the shared reading process compared to the guided reading process or other alternative reading strategies. According to Holdaway (1979) a young child had to come to terms with certain important
characteristics of written language such as its sustained organization, its characteristic rhythms and structures, and the disembedded quality of written language. The functionality of language was extended by the child’s understanding that written language differed from spoken language. Young children acquired this essential insight only by hearing written language read aloud in their classrooms. Extensive, repetitive experiences with a range of favorite books that were read aloud enabled them to learn about the conventional registers of written language. Holdaway’s (1979) research on shared reading is now 24 years old and is still employed as a reading strategy for children.

Primary teachers face the task of providing learning experiences that support and challenge children, regardless of their literacy level. As educators we are required to help our students continually attain higher grades. Schools are continually required to report testing in grades 3 and 6 to the government. The Ontario Ministry of Education supports the use of both methods without permitting the teacher to instruct in only one of these methods, which may prove to be advantageous for the student and the way they learn vocabulary.

This research paper will address two different methods currently used in the Ontario public elementary school system, shared reading and guided reading, and their possible effects on students’ vocabulary acquisition.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Review of Literature

This literature review summarizes the current literature of Shared Reading, Guided Reading, Combined Programs, and the resulting query emerging from the review.

Shared Reading

Various explanations have been given for the learning difficulties experienced by children in the area of literacy. After generations of experience and research, some of the methods of teaching, such as round-robin oral reading, may still be inefficient (Holdaway, 1979). In an effort to become a more literate society, some teachers have not adapted their teaching methods to accommodate the achievement level of each new classroom to which they are assigned. For the current Ontario administration, vocabulary acquisition was paramount to fluent language development (Ontario Curriculum, Grade 1-8: Language, 1997). Children’s manner of emergent reading reflected their general level of language development as well as their developing knowledge and control of written language conventions, such as narrative devices, literary syntax and lexicon, and print orientation in the reviewed research (Purcell-Gates, 1988; Sulzby, 1985). The quality of emergent readings can be influenced by the number of times a child has heard a book read (Pappas & Brown, 1989; Putnam, 1989, Elster, 1998). Young children re-enact the reading of their favourite books over and over again. These extensive repetitive experiences enable children to learn about the conventional registers of written language by developing a literacy set. This literacy set involved the young child coming to understand that the registers of written and spoken language are different.
Elster (1998) found that text factors did influence the strategies that emergent readers used and it was important to see shared and emergent readings as transactions between real readers and real books in real contexts. Provided readers were sensitive to them, a variety of text features influenced emergent reading performance (Beach & Hynds, 1991; Elster, 1998).

Elley (1989) administered pretests and post tests to elementary children in New Zealand that measured the extent that new vocabulary children acquired from shared readings. Results showed that oral story reading constituted a significant source of vocabulary acquisition, whether or not the reading was accompanied by teacher explanation of word meanings. Shared reading results from the study supported the assumption that young children could learn new vocabulary incidentally from having illustrated storybooks read to them (Elley, 1989). Shared reading gave various readers—from emergent to fluent—an opportunity to read along with the support of other readers (Taberski, 1998). In order to develop expertise in reading, researchers had been especially interested in repeated reading as an instructional strategy. This rehearsal strategy provided substantial practice in reading text and allowed novices to feel like experts. Research on repeated reading had documented enhanced fluency (Dowhower, 1987; Herman, 1985; Rasinski, 1990; Samuels, 1979), vocabulary (Elley, 1989; Koskinen & Blum, 1984), reading comprehension (Dowhower, 1987; O’Shea, Sindelar, & O’Shea, 1985; Yaden, 1998), and motivation and confidence (Koskinen, Blum, Bisson, Phillips, Creamer, and Baker (1999). Another study of literary achievement by Morrow (1992) found that children scored better in both probed recall, oral and written retellings, and
vocabulary development using repeated readings. The experimental groups used a
greater variety of words in written story retellings and in both written and oral original
stories than the control group (Morrow, 1992).

Shared reading met the traditional objectives of making beginning reading pleasant
and easy. The teacher first read the text aloud to the children to permit them to become
familiar with the text before reading it themselves. This avoided the inappropriate testing
situations that children used to be subjected to when asked to read aloud too soon
(Eldridge, Reutzel, & Hollingsworth, 1996). They found shared reading was a valid
instructional strategy. Confident and enthusiastic teachers would encourage the children
to respond in kind. The shared reading approach was a departure from the classroom
practice of individual students being asked to read in front of others and receiving teacher
feedback regarding their reading errors (Eldridge et al., 1996).

Eldridge, et al. (1996) discovered that the shared book experience, as described by
Holdaway (1979), was a superior method of teaching based on the Iowa Tests of Basic
Skills post test. Students made significantly fewer oral reading errors than a round-robin
reading group. They found that the shared book experience group outperformed the
round-robin reading group on the acquisition of vocabulary. An estimate of the
magnitude of treatment revealed a 1.0 standard deviation unit difference between the
The students' ability to answer text-implicit questions, their vocabulary knowledge or
schemata, and their ability to answer text-explicit questions at the conclusion of the
experiment were the most important dependent variables discriminating the shared book
experience group and the round-robin reading groups. They discovered that vocabulary growth was affected by the schemas or conceptual frameworks that children developed. The predictions, construction of story structures, and personal and conceptual connections that the children made may have helped their vocabulary acquisition during shared reading activities.

Cunningham (1975) looked at the transfer of comprehension from listening to reading. This researcher found that reading ability surpassed listening ability somewhere during the secondary school years for most elementary children. Listening ability was superior to reading ability at that time. Elementary children understood more when a passage was read to them than when they read it for themselves because they were not focusing on decoding the words. Dr. Patricia Cunningham later collaborated with two additional authors and focused upon a Four-Block Literacy Model. This multilevel, balanced literacy program incorporated four different daily reading strategies to teach children how to become better readers, writers, and spellers. The four-block model was composed of four components – guided reading, self-selected reading, writing, and working with words. This four-block model acknowledged that students learn in different ways and that these reading strategies could provide instruction to support this diversity. Her methodologies combine these strategies so that one of these blocks (vocabulary acquisition) should be a main part (Cunningham, Hall, and Sigmon 1999).

Shared reading has been described by Holdaway (1979) as individual practice by every student in a controlled teaching context with an upbeat and lively spirit. This unison situation allowed for massive individual practice by every pupil in the teaching context.
A book review of Holdaway's work by Parker, Davis, Hardt, and Flood (1985) referred to the practical application of the shared reading principles as being the clearest and most complete exposition of how teachers could make this natural approach to learning work. This concept of shared-book experience was a pedagogical activity that encapsulated many of the processes that underpin the learning-to-talk process. It included the notions of immersion in the medium, demonstrations of how the process of reading worked, scaffolding, and the principles of expert-novice interaction in which an expert demonstrated the skill or concepts to be learned while providing support for as long as the novice needed it. The strategies for integrating reading, writing, listening, speaking, literature, art, craft, music, and dance are such that in any one classroom session the traditional boundaries between reading, writing, listening and speaking become so blurred that they all but disappeared (Parker et al., 1985). Children participated according to their levels of understanding and confidence, some with complete proficiency and others with approximations of the actual text. Because the texts used are meaningful and engaging, the children actively and enthusiastically chose to participate (Button & Johnson, 1997).

Holdaway stated that the child developed their own personal literacy set for literature through the understanding that written language differed from spoken language. This insight was acquired only by hearing written language read aloud (Holdaway, 1979). Pappas & Brown (1987) concluded that this did not mean that young children did not use the pictorial content to help them construct the linguistic message, but that they began to rely more and more on the structure of the linguistic message as well.
Repeated readings of a familiar story may provide the safety net that children need in order to obtain increased vocabulary. Martinez & Roser (1985) found that this safety net was of value during repeated readings and that this led the researchers to investigate how children’s responses to literature changed with increasing familiarity with a story. Children’s story talk changed in form and increased in amount when the story was familiar and the responses indicated increased depth of processing in repeated readings.

As teachers and children worked together on gaining meaning from print, teachable moments occur (Button & Johnson, 1997). Teachers often used these teachable moments during shared reading time to explicate such concepts as left and right directionality, differentiation between letters and words, recognition of high frequency words, and utilization of graphophonic cues. Children used illustrations, looked carefully at the print, considered sentence syntax, or re-read a passage. Teaching was often direct and explicit, but it took place within a highly meaningful whole-group context. Herb & Bufalino (1997) found that reading aloud was of vital importance during shared reading and was the single most influential factor in young children’s success in learning to read.

**Guided Reading**

Guided reading was also a government advocated literacy program and it was not a program that was supported by all educators. Button and Johnson (1997) stated that shared reading was created in New Zealand to assist children who had been exposed to limited print before entering the school system. The basal reader shift in oral reading practice to shared reading had taken place without the support of empirical data according to Eldridge et al. (1996). Teacher-supported oral reading, which had been advocated by Holdaway’s (1979) ideas, was proceeding in today’s education materials
without quantitative evidence of effectiveness (Eldridge et al., 1996). After guided reading, the inevitable workbook and seatwork exercises followed. Children who learned to read and write easily, were also successful at these tasks. These isolated skill exercises during a guided reading program did not have any effect on reading competency.

Elster (1998) explored textural influences on emergent readings and shared readings by comparing shared and emergent readings of three narrative texts that differed in their story language, story structure, and picture-text relationships. The conclusions stated that there did not appear to be a connection between the frequency of participation sequences in shared readings and the level of content scores in emergent readings.

Eldridge et al. (1996) concluded that Holdaway’s (1979) shared book experience was the most widely used assisted reading practice in whole-language classrooms. This oral reading method had been widely used by educators in New Zealand, Australia, and the United States, especially among those committed to whole language. A great deal of literature argued indirectly for its effectiveness but these researchers could find no experimental studies that supported this literature (Eldridge et al., 1996). These reading practices were designed to help children read books independently. Proponents of group shared reading, dyad reading, and group assisted reading assumed that by immersing children in holistic connected-reading experiences, and providing them with some reading support, they learned to read better than by asking them to struggle through independent reading without any reading support (Sulzby, 1985).

Sulzby (1985) found that children developed tremendously through interaction with storybooks and that reading behavior was better understood through a young child’s silent reading. This only occurred in a guided reading program. It was discovered that a
number of children initially responded to a researcher's request to read to them by silently paging through the book. Children appeared to scrutinize the book during this activity and it seemed likely that this behavior displayed an important part of their preconceived notions about what reading was like. Only guided reading provided a silent reading aspect of literary development as well as an understanding of the conventional registers of written language.

The most effective way to scaffold children in a guided reading lesson was to group the children homogeneously by assessed needs (Herb & Bufalino, 1997). According to Loughlin & Martin (1987), some conditions had to exist for language acquisition to occur. Environmental stimuli and modeling, interaction opportunities, purpose and meaning, practice, and adult tolerance for trial and error were all important aspects that needed to be considered. Meaning resided in the experiences of the reader. What the reader brought to the text, both in terms of linguistic experience and world experience, greatly determined what the reader was able to take from the text. Because of this, teachers who used the shared reading method of addressing the whole group simultaneously may not have been able to assist all children. Loughlin & Martin (1987) reinforced this by stating that language tended to be acquired and extended within a framework of social purposes.

Reading Recovery is a supplemental reading intervention program designed by Marie Clay (1972) to assist children in first grade who are having difficulty learning to read and write. The program was developed to prevent literacy problems through early intervention. A major contribution of Marie Clay’s has been to change the conversation about what is possible for individual learners when the teaching permits different routes
to be taken to desired outcomes. Children are eligible for the program after being identified by their classroom teacher as the lowest in their class in reading acquisition. The Reading Recovery Specialist also screens these students through a series of six assessments. This system is designed to move these students from the bottom of the class to the average range in reading ability so that they are able to utilize regular classroom instruction. This individualized, short-term program of instruction is designed for the short-term, approximately 20-22 weeks in duration, to be proactive thus enabling the child to avoid a cycle of failure. Children are taught a variety of reading strategies to enable them to read increasingly difficult text and to independently write their own messages. Marie Clay focuses on many reciprocal connections – how one of a kind learning supports another in a circular fashion between oral language and reading, between writing and reading, between theory and practice. She believes that practice informs theory and theory informs practice in these continual relationships so that the diverse needs of children can be met.

**Shared and Guided Reading Combined**

As previously noted, Holdaway has had a tremendous following of his shared reading strategy over the past 24 years (Holdaway, 1979). Since this time, new researchers have continued to explore guided reading strategies (Cunningham, Hall, and Sigmon, 1999; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), while others were anxious to discover the results of these combined strategies. The discovery of multiple intelligences and kinesthetic reading strategies have also been a consideration since Holdaway (Cunningham et al., 1999; Clay, 1972).
In researching both of these methods, combined strategies which encompass both the shared and guided reading methods have been attempted by several researchers (Koskinen et al., 1999; Herb and Bufalino, 1997). This provided some interesting considerations for the research question that was developed. As learners have different ways of absorbing information, possibly this combined strategy would be a more effective way of teaching (Cunningham, Hall, & Sigmon, 1999).

Koskinen, et al. (1999) combined the elements of guided reading and shared reading procedures. They introduced the book to a small group of students, asked them to look at the cover to make predictions about the story line, to connect their own experiences, and to set the purpose for reading. The teacher and students then looked through the book together, continued to predict the story line as the teacher focused attention on pictures and print features and modeled the use of any unfamiliar language structures and vocabulary. Next, the book was read aloud by the teacher and then reread orally together with the students. Following this last step the book was placed in a basket so students could reread for fluency at other times during the school day. Teachers were impressed with the impact of the book introductions on students’ ability to understand text and on their motivation to read. Educators discovered that beginning with an introductory overview of the story helped students make connections to their prior knowledge, including links to other stories they had heard or read. Modeling the use of language structures and vocabulary helped the students prepare for independent rereading. This procedure encouraged students to actively participate and to readily take on the task of independent reading. Independent studies were not done on each method but the
combined reading methods of both shared and guided reading appeared to be advantageous for the children.

Herb and Bufalino (1997) explained the components of the Ohio State University Early Literacy Program. The elements of the method consisted of read alouds, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, interactive writing, independent writing, extensions, and documentation of progress. This method was originally established as a reading recovery method for struggling readers but they discovered that the components involved were of great value for any student.

According to Components of Kindergarten Literacy (retrieved 05, 30, 01 from the Kindergarten Literacy Web Page), maximum support for readers is provided by using shared and guided reading. Certain elements of predictability exist in both shared and guided reading books, poetry, rhymes and songs. Their predictable characteristics include; patterns or refrains that are repetitive, a match between the text and the illustration, a rhythm of the language used, sequences that are familiar, and rhyming. This research attempted to show whether one type of reading strategy, guided or shared, was superior for the acquisition of vocabulary in these grade one students. This will enable teachers to focus on the strategy that is most appropriate for teaching these children.

Patricia Cunningham (1999) was one of the contributors of the Four Blocks method of reading. The Four Blocks are comprised of four unique and independent but compulsory components. The Guided Reading Block is meant to expose children to a wide range of literature, teach comprehension skills and strategies and teach children how to read increasingly more difficult material. Teachers provide as much instructional-level
reading during this block as possible by using before and after reading activities to promote on-level comprehension. Before and after reading activities are detailed in their professional resource book.

The Writing Block is composed of three main components. A ten-minute mini-lesson is the introduction where the teacher models what writers do. Children then write and conference with the teacher and share their ideas. Cunningham et al. believed that children learn to read by writing because their own writing is often the first thing that they can read. Many children love the combination of writing and illustrating that leads to a published work that they can share with their peers at the end of the process. This is often done in the “author’s chair” where the child sits and shares their writing with their classmates.

The Self-Selected Reading Block is the part of the Four Blocks where the children are able to select what they would like to read and what parts of their reading they would like to share with their classmates and teacher. The teacher begins this block by reading aloud to the students. Intrinsic motivation for reading is the aim of this block. Children should get entertainment, enjoyment, and information from the books that they choose. They should be praised for all of their reading choices and guided in selecting books that are appropriate for their reading level.

The Working with Words Block is where children learn how to read and spell high-frequency words and patterns that allow them to decode and spell other words. The block is a cohesive component that draws all of the other blocks together for the Four Block reading structure. Children spell and express their thoughts better during the writing process while improving their reading fluency. They have the power to decode and
comprehend words within their reading. Word Walls are created in this block. These walls of common words are used daily along with other working words strategies (Cunningham, Hall, & Sigmon, 1999).

B. Statement of Research Question

Differences exist in the methods that are used to teach a guided reading or shared reading activity. Research could not be found that compared both method’s effectiveness for increasing vocabulary in young children. A relationship exists between children’s reading achievement and the vocabulary that they acquire.

For the purpose of this research, the following research question was examined: Is there a difference in vocabulary acquisition for grade one students using shared reading or guided reading?

Significance of the Study

While one of the studies cited above included information on a combined shared and guided small group program and its effects on reading achievement, other research could not be located that focused on which method was superior in young children’s language acquisition. Both methods have pros and cons just as all children have strengths and weaknesses. The Ontario Ministry of Education dictates that teachers use both strategies regardless of whether or not a student learns better using a particular instructional method. The results of teaching children to enjoy reading early in life can be measured only over the students’ lifetimes. Reading does not progress without the simultaneous acquisition of vocabulary. Increased ability in a subject area usually leads to increased interest in this area of learning (Wright Group Publishing, 1999).
Reading is important to the current Ontario Ministry of Education (Ontario Curriculum, Grade 1-8: Language, 1997). It is a cross-curricular necessity for higher learning. Mathematics, which was once comprised of only facts and figures, now needs an explanation in pictures, number and words to enable teachers to address specific learning gaps in a child’s knowledge and attend specifically to these areas of concern. A learner who is actively involved is an integral part of engaged reading, especially given its emphasis on drawing children into literacy in ways that will sustain their interest in reading during their lifetime. Utilizing this philosophy, students, teachers, parents, school administrators, school board officials, politicians at both the municipal and federal levels and the community at large would benefit from this research. Canada as a country is very concerned with literacy and that we sustain a position in the forefront of this important educational arena. School administrators and governments are adamant that teachers increase their education in order for them to provide a level of exceptional quality education to their students. This produces more intelligent children who further their education and proceed to attain higher-level occupations. The community benefits from this through private donations, better paying jobs and a more desirable economic status for their region of the province.

Differences exist in the methods that are used to teach a guided reading or shared reading activity. Smaller versus large, whole-class groups, individualized attention during reading strategy teaching, and possibly a less-intimidating environment of peers who read at approximately the same level are some of these differences. Research could not be found that compared both methods on the acquisition of increased vocabulary for young children. Vocabulary acquisition is an integral part of the child’s ability to expand
their reading ability and more to higher level reading materials. A child’s emergent reading reflects their general level of language development (Purcell-Gates, 1988; Sulzby, 1985). A relationship exists between children’s reading achievement and the vocabulary that they acquire.

For the purpose of this research, the following research question was examined: Is there a difference in vocabulary acquisition for grade one students using shared reading or guided reading?
CHAPTER III
DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A. Subjects

Research could not be located that addressed the concern of the superiority of either guided reading or shared reading as it relates to vocabulary acquisition. The Ontario curriculum encourages teachers to use both the guided and shared reading strategies in their classrooms, but with no regard as to which method will be more advantageous for the children of a particular class in acquiring vocabulary (Ontario Curriculum, Grade 1-8: Language, 1997).

A sample consisting of two classes of grade one students was used. Grade one was chosen for its emerging level of reading readiness. This sample consisted of 47 children in total, with a cross-representation from each of the two classes. The children ranged in age from 6 to 7 years of age and were Canadian or landed immigrants. The children were from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. A public school in Essex County, under the direction of the Greater Essex County District School Board, was used for this study. One child who was identified by an IEP (Individual Education Plan) was not included in the study.

Guided reading is a small group, formal reading instruction program. Guided reading begins by grouping two to five students together who are reading at the same instructional level, and giving each student a copy of the same book. Grouping students according to their skill level allows teachers to adapt their skills and strategies to concentrate instruction on a student’s specific needs (Wright Group Publishing, 1999).
Shared reading is a whole group instructional model where the teacher and class read together in unison or through choral reading from big books and other highly predictable materials. Shared reading sessions begin with rereading old favourites that the children or teacher select (Wright Group Publishing, 1999). The read-together big books are supplied by the Ontario Ministry of Education and usually have large print and big, colourful pictures so that all class members can view the printing simultaneously.

B. Design and Procedures

Based on the theories of and using the instrument developed by Marie Clay (1972), participants were sight-tested for the number of “100 most commonly used English words” which they possessed. The number was evaluated again at the end of the four-week period using the same instrument to compare which reading strategy, guided or shared, had effectively resulted in an increase in the number of most commonly used words (Wright Group Publishing, 1999).

Personalized letters of permission were sent to the Graduate Committee, the Ethics Committee, the Head of Psychological Services for the Greater Essex County Board of Education, and my principal (see Appendices B-E). Parent/guardian letters of information and consent to participate in research forms (see Appendixes F and G) were sent when the appropriate approvals had been received. A pretest-post test comparison group design was used for this experimental study. This study assisted in determining which method of reading instruction was superior for vocabulary acquisition of the 100 most commonly used words. Two classes of grade one students from our Essex County public school were given a pretest by the researcher based on the work of Marie Clay (1972). The
children ranged in age from 6 to 7 years of age. Teachers who administered the methods had been trained in both the shared reading and guided reading methods of instruction. Both teachers have at least two years experience teaching young children. There were no ethical concerns as both methods of reading instruction were acceptable to the Ministry of Education. The children were pretested by the researcher, using the same instrument which was based on the work of Marie Clay (1972). One class of grade one students received teaching using only the shared book instruction, while the other class of grade one students received only the guided reading method (Wright Group Publishing, 1999). Additional instructional poems were composed by the teacher who taught shared reading. Teaching encompassed a four-week period. A post test, based on the work of Marie Clay (1972), was given to both groups by the researcher to determine which method of instruction was superior concerning increased language acquisition for these children after the four-week period.

DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) also occurred in both classes. This reading time was a quiet, independent reading time when the children occasionally read simple stories to themselves.

Shared Reading Lessons

For the shared reading lessons, the children either sat on the carpet in a large group or a circle format to enable the teacher to see if the children were participating and engaged in the lesson. There were 12 lessons taught over the 4-week period and were approximately 20 minutes in length. Several different shared reading formats were utilized: sentence strips, large posters, the overhead projector, large print books (big books), and small books that the children followed along. The shared reading program
was a compilation of the grade one reading program and additional poems that were created by the teacher of the shared reading class. DEAR time occurred for about one hour each week. During these shared reading lessons, the researcher observed six of the shared reading lessons by the other teacher and made notes of methods, strategies and conversations that occurred. The shared reading teacher also kept field notes of her own instruction using the following criteria as guidelines:

"make journal entries every day, like a video, reactions by children, what was said, reflections, how it went, what you did, what you would do differently another time, teaching style, delivery, thoughts, note that differences in results cannot be due to personality differences, how children react to centres or books chosen, details, as much as you can think of".

**Guided Reading Lessons**

The guided reading teacher grouped the children in her class into reading ability groups based upon pre-existing running records. Running records are a method of placing the child in a reading group whereby the child will be able to successfully read over 90 percent of the story chosen. The pre-existing running records are based on a miscue rate formula.

For example:

\[
\text{Miscue Rate} = \frac{\text{RW (running words)}}{\text{M (miscues)}}
\]

Running words refer to the correct expressive vocabulary and miscues refer to the child’s mistakes in vocabulary.

The students were recruited by parental/guardian consent. Once the signed parental/guardian consent was received by the researcher, the children were individually
tested using Marie Clay’s “100 most commonly used English words” instrument (Clay, 1972). After this, one class was taught using the shared reading strategy in one classroom and the other class was taught using the guided reading strategy in the other classroom. Journal field notes were taken by each teacher during the four-week period. Upon completion of this program, each class of students was again tested using the “100 most commonly used English words” by Marie Clay and an analysis of the data was compiled.

Guided reading occurred in small groups of 5 or 6 children at a specific location in the classroom. The teacher wore a white lei necklace which the rest of the children in the classroom understood to mean that the teacher could not be approached and interrupted during this 20 minute teaching time unless there was an emergency. No emergencies occurred.

The children who were not in this particular reading group went to small group, child-led literacy centres throughout the classroom so that the teacher could focus more closely on the reading abilities of the guided reading group. The guided reading groups averaged two sessions of different ability reading groups and two different books over the 4-week session. During guided reading the children all read aloud sequentially but the teacher did not and merely listened to the students read. Although the teacher had specific concepts that she hoped to cover during this guided reading session, the lessons were guided by the strengths and weaknesses that surfaced during these reading times. Phonics and whole language were also used. DEAR time averaged approximately one hour per week.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

A. Data Analysis

Although both methods have merit in classroom teaching, for these particular students at this particular school, shared reading appeared to slightly increase vocabulary acquisition. There appeared to be a slight increase in vocabulary acquisition for those students using the shared reading method.

The two convenience-sample groups were measured twice for vocabulary acquisition—once with a pretest and once with a post test. The qualitative data was analyzed for common phrases between the field note observations written by the shared reading instructor and the observation notes by the researcher of the shared reading teacher. These comparisons helped to provide the analysis for increases or decreases in either the shared reading vocabulary acquisition or the guided reading vocabulary acquisition.

Although the mode was calculated, the median and means provided more useful data for analytical purposes.

B. Limitations of the Design

No control groups were used during this study, as this would have been disadvantageous to the children, their parents and the school board involved. The Ministry of Education mandates both methods of instruction.

Due to the fact that the guided reading group only read 2 books per group over the 4-week period, the quality of the child’s reading was influenced by the number of times that the child was exposed to the same literature (Elster, 1998).
As both classes contain varied socio-economic backgrounds, there was no concern with the diffusion of treatment.

If evaluation apprehension was a threat to the external validity of this research, this was addressed by having the children evaluated by the researcher. The children in all of the primary grades were familiar to the researcher, either from Early Literacy lessons or because she has previously taught them in junior kindergarten or senior kindergarten.

Both the shared and guided reading lessons were comprised of 12 lessons each but only 2 books per group were read in the guided reading groups which enabled more concepts to be taught through the large group format of shared reading.

C. Findings

Vocabulary Tests:

Vocabulary acquisition was higher for the shared reading method versus the guided reading method for this study. Although both methods were required to be taught by teachers in the greater Essex county area, the shared reading method resulted in the students having slightly higher results in these grade one classes. This was an important finding for the children of these grade one classrooms since the teachers could adapt their instruction to focus more heavily on one method, resulting in the students acquiring a larger number of vocabulary words.

As noted in Tables I and II, there was higher exposure to more lessons (12) for the entire shared reading class of children with a higher level of contact (7.1 versus 3.04 with guided reading). The pretest-post test medians for shared were 9.5 words, and 19 words respectively. The pretest-post test medians for the guided reading group were 6 words,
and 13 words respectively. The pretest-post test means for shared reading were 18.50 and 38.36 whereas the guided reading means were 20.16 and 26.40. The shared reading group child typically learned 2.5 words that were not known in the pretest. Thus, shared reading appeared to be a more successful reading strategy for these particular children at this time.

These changes in vocabulary acquisition over the 4-week period are illustrated in the following Tables I through V.
Table I

Pretest Median

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Guided Reading Group</th>
<th>Shared Reading Group</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
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Pretest Ranking of Median Words

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<th>ranking</th>
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<th>Shared Reading Group (11th)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pretest</td>
<td>6 words</td>
<td>9.5 words</td>
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Table II

Post Test Median

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<th>Guided Reading Group</th>
<th>Shared Reading Group</th>
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<td>12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td></td>
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Post Test Ranking of Median Words

<table>
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<th>ranking</th>
<th>Guided Reading Group (13th)</th>
<th>Shared Reading Group (11th)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>post test</td>
<td>13 words</td>
<td>19 words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table III

Pretest Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guided Reading Group</th>
<th>Shared Reading Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(504/25) x = 20.16</td>
<td>(407/22) x = 18.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV

Post Test Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guided Reading Group</th>
<th>Shared Reading Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(660/25) x = 26.40</td>
<td>(844/22) x = 38.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table V

Mode (# that appears most often)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mode</th>
<th>Guided Reading Group</th>
<th>Shared Reading Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pretest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post test</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The shared reading group increase between the pre and post test was 9.5 new words while the guided reading group increase was 7 new words. For this research study of grade one students, the children in the shared reading group learned approximately 3 additional words as opposed to the guided reading group children based on the difference in pre and post test medians. The median was chosen as the primary tool for comparison because the scores were scattered and this gave the researcher a benchmark.

Commonalities Between Shared Reading Field Notes and Observations of the Shared Reading Teaching

Field notes were written by both researchers during the experiment to compare and contrast similarities or differences between the reading methods used. The following explanations incorporate the shared reading field notes that the shared reading teacher used. Observations of the shared reading teaching refer to notes taken while the researcher observed the shared reading teacher during class instruction on six occasions.
During the reading of *Five Little Monkeys* (Teaching with the story box reading program; Resource guide, 1999), there were several common themes. The contents page, exclamation marks, words that were printed in the colour red, the kinesthetic cue of jumping at the word *jump*, and the plural of *monkeys* were referred to in both the teachers lesson and the observations by the researcher. A flyswatter was also used by the children to frame text on the overhead projection screen in both the field notes and the observational notes by the researcher. This meant that the shared reading teacher purposely intended to teach these strategies to the children and they were noted in the researcher’s field notes as actually happening. For example:

Teacher: Point to the contents page and find what page the story (Five Little Monkeys) is on.
Teacher: The children were sitting in a circle so that the teacher could observe that the children had found the contents page and turned to the specific page (13) that was asked of them.
Teacher: What is at the end of the sentence?
Child: Exclamation because it sounds exciting.
Teacher: What is different about the sentence?
Child: (The) red words.
Teacher: What does it (*jump*) mean?
Child: We jumped when we did it because of the quotation marks.
Teacher: Who can explain the difference between *monkey* and *monkeys*?
Child: More than one.

During the shared selection of *One, One in the Sun*, commonalities of playing the game of *I Spy*, listening for the sound /x/ in the word *six*, and *trees*, being a rhyming word were all noted in both the shared reading teacher’s notes of lesson planning and the researcher’s field notes. For example:

Teacher: Raise your hand and let us know your *I Spy* words.
Child: I spy *are* - /a/ /r/ /e/
Teacher: Let’s find it.
Child finds the word with the flyswatter on the projection screen.
Child: I spy *three* - /θ/ /θ/ /r/ /æ/ /æ/
Teacher: I hear (another child) saying he has more than one word *three*. 


Child: I spy six.
Teacher: What hints do you find in that word to help you find it?
Child: /s/ /x/

Favourites, was another book that was used during shared reading to teach tracking by following the words with the child’s finger, matching words to the book with sentence strips, ordering the story by searching the sentence strips, counting the number of words and matching this concept with the sentence strips to self-check, and question mark punctuation. These concepts were again all dually noted in the researcher’s field notes as actually being accomplished. For example:

Teacher: Tracking fingers ready...
Children responded by pointing to the beginning word.

Teacher instructed the children to listen to the sounds and number of words as she read the strips. The children took turns searching for the correct sentence strip for the ones that had been placed on the floor.

Teacher: What’s the thing at the end?
Child: A question mark because it’s a question.

Repetitive Themes

Several common reading strategies were used by both the shared reading group and the guided reading group.

Directionality, which is following a top-down, left to right direction was successfully accomplished during both methods of teaching. Return sweep is part of directionally and refers to the strategy of the child bringing their finger back to the left side of the page that they are reading to continue following this top-down, left to right direction. This method prepares the child to read in the proper sequence. If this skill is not mastered, the child is unable to successfully read sentences, or sound out words in the proper order.
One-to-one correspondence refers to the matching of a word and saying that word was taught in both the shared and guided reading groups. This skill enables the child to focus on each word individually to build fluency. In addition, the child is not encouraged to make up words or provide additional words if they are following and tracking each word with their finger while reading.

Comprehension was stressed in both the shared and guided reading groups using several questioning techniques to test for this concept. The children were asked “why” on many occasions to enable the teachers to test for this comprehension.

The skill of sequencing the story parts was taught to both reading groups as well. Sequencing occurs when the children can retell the parts of the story in the order in which they occurred. This strategy is not just a test of comprehension but enables a child to move on to creating a story that flows sequentially and logically in their own creative writing.

Punctuation was also stressed during both the shared and guided reading activities. Question marks and exclamation marks were recurrent themes in the readings.

During the four weeks of separate shared and guided reading, the shared reading teacher taught 12 shared reading lessons and contacted approximately 13 children during each lesson. This resulted in a direct pupil-teacher contact average of 7.1.

The guided reading teacher also held 12 guided reading sessions with an average of 3.04 direct contacts with an individual child. This lower contact per child may have possibly contributed to lower scores on the guided reading post test for vocabulary acquisition.
Differences exist in the methods that are used to teach a guided reading or shared reading activity. Research could not be found that compared both methods on the acquisition of increased vocabulary for young children. A relationship exists between children’s reading achievement and the vocabulary that they acquire.

For the purpose of this research, the following research question was examined: Is there a difference in vocabulary acquisition for grade one students using shared reading or guided reading?

D. Summary

Teachers model the shared reading method in kindergarten by using Big Books and a large group format for their lessons. Parents also model reading with their children. This shared reading method is also how teachers begin the school year. When a child begins a teacher’s class, the teacher is unaware of the child’s reading ability. Guided reading groups can only be formed after the teacher knows the child’s reading ability in order to place them in a group of children with the same ability level.

Shared reading covers a broader spectrum of concepts. The larger group shared reading enables the children to learn a great deal from each other. The comments, ideas, and strategies that are discussed in this format provide a powerful tool that enable the child to learn things that teachers sometimes do not even bring into the discussion. This broad spectrum of concepts that are covered are not always planned and the children are more in control and lead this type of discussion more so than a guided reading group where the teacher has planned concepts in mind when beginning the lesson and allows the children to lead through their reading. Martinez and Roser (1985) found that children were attempting to gain some control or mastery over their world through repeated
readings of the same story. They discovered that children talk more, made more
comments, and focused on more detailed information when the story was more familiar.
These children’s responses indicated to the researchers that a more in depth processing
during repeated readings was occurring. Taberski (1998) found that elementary children
understood more when someone else read a passage than when they read it themselves.
For children to internalize vocabulary, oral language must precede written language. As
only 2 books per group were read during the guided reading research period, we could
infer that the children did not focus on such in depth information or that this deeper
processing had occurred.

In a guided reading group the teacher has planned concepts that are to be covered
during this time, focusing on the needs of this particular group of readers. This may also
be a child-led procedure in that periodically a new concept may need to be introduced if
the group is struggling with a concept that the teacher may not have intended on
introducing. Generally though, the children are reading and the teacher is listening for
places to interject concepts that need to be taught. The guided reading group pacing
proved to be a bit slower, approximating about 20 minutes per group, and covering only
about 3 concepts whereas the shared reading group covered approximately 8 concepts.
During the 12 guided reading sessions, the teacher averaged 3.04 direct contacts whereas
the shared reading lessons enabled the teacher a direct contact average of 7.1. A contact
occurs when the teacher has a one-to-one conversation with the student. As a result,
greater vocabulary acquisition may have resulted from the number of direct child contacts
that happened between the child and the teacher during these teaching methods and the
amount of vocabulary words that were acquired.
Shared reading groups may pull along children with lower skill levels. As stated earlier, children sometimes notice concepts that teachers do not always overtly bring to the children’s attention. The “child-speak” that happens during this large group format is invaluable for a child-friendly learning environment. Lower skill children may notice or comprehend concepts that they could not relate to when addressed by their teacher but are able to understand and apply when spoken by another classmate. In a guided reading group, the children may be limited to the caliber of the children in that group. Although running records determine the reading ability at that particular time they were done, children are ever changing and influences such as parental involvement or practicing reading at home can definitely contribute to their abilities.

Shared reading groups may also provide a less competitive atmosphere where the children are more relaxed and learn better. When the children know that the teacher is not directly listening to them read they may be more comfortable with their abilities and participate more. Two children did not verbalize any answers during the guided reading sessions.

During shared reading a child may learn by quietly listening to and observing the actions of the reader. Cunningham (1975) found that elementary school children could understand more if a passage was read to them rather than when they read it themselves. As the teacher tracks and verbalizes the word the child is able to follow this one-to-one correspondence and directionality even if he himself is unable to perform this activity. Shared reading teachers “touch” the words so children can watch and listen to written and spoken text synonymously. Hearing written language proficiently read aloud, as in shared reading, provides an example of certain important characteristics such as its
organization, rhythm, structures, predictability, refrains, rhymes and alliteration. Shared reading may also increase familiarity with the literature thus message patterns, phonics, etc. can be internalized.

Repeated readings build familiarity, depth of processing, confidence, enhanced fluency and comprehension. This follows Vygotsky’s “expert-novice” interaction as discussed in a book review of Holdaway’s work by Parker, Davis, Hardt, and Flood (1985). The expert demonstrates the skills while providing support for the child. This support continues as long as the child needs it. The child builds self-esteem and may attempt to answer questions that he previously felt uncomfortable answering. Children at this age are continually asking caregivers to reread the same story over and over. This is a wonderful idea that helps to reinforce past ideas and alert the child to new language structures through each reading.

Oral language development precedes and parallels literacy development according to Loughlin and Martin (1987). A child learns to speak before they are able to read. They must become aware of our language structures and nuances before being able to read fluently. The more spoken language a child hears, the better his decoding skills and thus better reading skills.

The possibility exists that in guided reading the children may have been concentrating more on phonics and decoding and therefore may not have been able to internalize vocabulary or attend to text messages. The pictures provide invaluable cues for the reader to aid in their ability to figure out an unknown word.

Guided reading has no discussion of real-life experiences to ground the reading so that it becomes internalized. Shared reading is usually initiated by a poem or a discussion in a
meaningful context that the children can relate to. More discussions follow that help to form connections to their prior knowledge so that new information is retained.

During shared reading lesson the teacher explains unknown words which can increase the amount of vocabulary the child learns. This may not be addressed during a guided reading lesson in which the teacher is listening to 5 or 6 children read simultaneously and the child may skip this word without the teacher being aware of this error.

This research focused on expressive vocabulary acquisition and did not comment on comprehension skills or reading ability. Shared reading appeared to slightly increase vocabulary acquisition. Both through the exposure to more lessons (12) for the entire class of children, and the increased level of contact (7.1 versus 3.04) with children, shared reading enabled the teacher to have a higher level of student contact.

During the pretest, the guided reading students scored a lower median (6) compared with the shared reading students (13). This continued in the post-test where the guided reading students scored lower (9.5) compared with the shared reading students (19). The pretest median between the shared and guided reading groups showed a difference of 3.5 words. The post-test median between the shared and guided reading groups showed a difference of 6 words which was the slight increase for the shared reading group. One child in the shared reading group was removed from the original data because of an individual education plan.

Vocabulary acquisition is a continuous variable, evolving throughout a person’s lifetime. The children in this study were tested using Marie Clay’s instrument of “The First 100 Most Commonly Used English Words” (Clay, Marie, 1972). The guided
reading group began the study with a slightly lower median than the shared reading group and ended the study with a slightly lower median than the shared reading group.

As Sharon Taberski (1998) found, the shared reading method provides many opportunities with support from their peers and the teacher. The shared reading group child typically learned about 3 words that were not known before, without any attempted explanation by the teacher.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

Differences exist in the methods that are used to teach a guided reading or shared reading activity. A relationship exists between children’s reading achievement and the vocabulary that they acquire. For the purpose of this research, the following research question was examined: Is there a difference in vocabulary acquisition for grade one students using shared reading or guided reading?

A. Conclusion

Shared reading was a more successful method than guided reading for children acquiring the 100 most commonly used words as vocabulary at this public school. Shared reading may have been more familiar to the children because it was modeled after reading that parents do in the home (Holdaway, 1979). The shared reading method covered a broader spectrum of concepts, and may have pulled along children with lower abilities because of the group dynamics. The less competitive atmosphere provided in a large group, shared reading environment coupled with the opportunity to quietly view and listen to the teacher perform repeated readings may have been contributing factors to the greater success of vocabulary acquisition in the shared reading method. The internalization of vocabulary may have been easier during shared reading because the children were not concentrating on decoding skills so heavily and were able to attend more fully during repeated readings (Martinez & Roser, 1985). Real-life experiences could easily be introduced during a shared reading lesson so that the big books were more logical to the children. Reading a passage to the child rather than having them read it themselves enabled the child to attend to more vocabulary processing (Taberski, 1998).
Unknown words were explained during shared reading lessons which helped to further expand the children’s vocabulary acquisition. Additional reading strategies such as phonics and whole language were utilized during shared reading methods and a larger amount of time was spent per child during these large group lessons (7.1 versus 3.04 for the guided reading group). The quicker pacing of the shared reading lessons enabled approximately 8 concepts to be taught while only 3 were taught in the guided reading groups. The “expert-novice” interaction may have contributed to this (Parker, Davis, Hardt, and Flood, 1989). Oral language development precedes and parallels literacy development enabling the children more exposure to an environment with rich, accurate language (Loughlin & Martin, 1987).

The capability of the shared reading class began slightly higher in their pretest ranking of median words (9.5 words versus 6 words). The post test ranking of median words saw an increase to 19 words for the shared reading group and only 13 words for the guided reading group. Teacher enthusiasm appeared equal in both classrooms.

Shared reading proved to slightly increase vocabulary acquisition by approximately three words for these grade one children versus the guided reading method of reading. This research enabled grade one teachers to use an instructional reading method that would be more advantageous for the particular students in their class to assist in the highest vocabulary acquisition during this school year.

B. Areas For Future Research

Future research could possibly examine the results of both strategies being taught simultaneously in one classroom. A side-by-side method could be introduced if two teachers were to work as a team in the reading program within the same classroom.
Another grade could also be examined for vocabulary acquisition. Grade two students have still not learned many of the strategies necessary to decode words and sometimes compensate by only memorizing sight words. These students would be researched using these contrasting reading methods to be able to focus on which method would enable them to learn the strategies that were required for them to increase their vocabulary more. There is also the possibility that bad habits or negative feelings toward reading have been formed by grade two and this would have to be accommodated.

Possibly contrasting the same methods again with grade ones to test for vocabulary acquisition while having a researcher who has not previously taught any of the children may be an additional consideration. Familiarity with the researcher may have interfered with the findings, either making some children comfortable or uncomfortable with a new person at the beginning of the school year.

Each of these methods, shared and guided, may also have a particular time during the school year when the children are more receptive to the particular reading method. Nuances presented early in the school year may be a distraction from the reading that might be accomplished in either group as the child learns the routines and expectations that are required. Earlier grades also need more time to adjust to the school routines at the beginning of the year. As this research was completed during the first term of the school year, results may be different during the third term, although adjustments would have to be made for the pull-out programs which assist struggling readers with extra help during the second and third terms. Testing the children at a later time in the year may also yield different results as the children become more adjusted to the grade one routines.
CHAPTER VI
REFERENCES


Retrieved [05,30,01] from [kindergarten literacy web page] database ([Components of Kindergarten Literacy]) on the World Wide Web:

[http://www.usd320.k12.ks.us/solar/Kinder/kind_lit_webpage.html]


The First 100 Most Commonly Used English Words

These most commonly used words are ranked by frequency. The first 25 make up about one-third of all printed material in English. The first 100 make up about one-half of all written material, and the first 300 make up about sixty-five percent of all written material in English.

All Second Graders should be able to sight read these words.

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(Marie Clay, 1972)
APPENDIX B

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE

UNIVERSITY
of WINDSOR

Brenda Plowman
222 Gauthier Drive
Tecumseh, ON N8N 4E4

June 5, 2002

Dr. L. Morton
Coordinator of Graduate Studies
Faculty of Education
University of Windsor
Windsor, ON N9B 3P4

Dear Dr. Morton:

As a graduate student at the Faculty of Education I would like to request approval to conduct a research project on the difference in vocabulary acquisition for grade one students using shared reading versus guided reading. Successful completion of this research provides the basis for a thesis that must be completed to fulfill the requirements of my Master of Education degree. Results of this study may be published.

A copy of the research proposal has been submitted with this correspondence for your perusal. Subject to receiving a favourable response from the committee, the appropriate letters requesting further permission will be forwarded to the Director of the Board of Education and school principals.

Participation in the study is voluntary and, to the best of my knowledge, there does not appear to be any risk to anyone who would be taking part in the research. Information obtained from participants throughout the study will be kept strictly confidential and accessible only by myself. The data obtained may be used to further research concerning the best methods for vocabulary acquisition in young children. All participants would also have the option of withdrawing at any time before or during the study without any repercussion. Results of the study will be made available to anyone requesting this information.

Should you have any questions or concerns with respect to the intended research, please contact either my advisor, Dr. Kara Smith at 253-3000, extension 3826 or myself at 735-4176. Your consideration of this request is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Brenda Plowman
Enc.
APPENDIX C

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO THE ETHICS COMMITTEE

UNIVERSITY
of WINDSOR

Brenda Plowman
222 Gauthier Drive
Tecumseh, ON N8N 4E4

August 21, 2002

Dr. Maureen Muldoon
Chair of the Ethics Committee
Faculty of Education
University of Windsor
Windsor, ON N9B 3P4

Dear Dr. Muldoon:

As a graduate student at the Faculty of Education I would like to request approval to conduct a research project on the difference in vocabulary acquisition for grade one students using shared reading or guided reading. Successful completion of this research provides the basis for a thesis which must be completed to fulfill the requirements of my Master of Education degree. Results of this study may be published.

A copy of the research proposal has been submitted with this correspondence for your perusal. Subject to receiving a favourable response from the committee, the appropriate letters requesting further permission will be forwarded to the Director of the Board of Education and school principals.

Participation in the study is voluntary and, to the best of my knowledge, there does not appear to be any risk to anyone who would be taking part in the research. Information obtained from participants throughout the study will be kept strictly confidential and accessible only by myself. The data obtained may be used to further research concerning the best methods for vocabulary acquisition in young children. All participants would also have the option of withdrawing at any time before or during the study without any repercussion. Results of the study will be made available to anyone requesting this information.

Should you have any questions or concerns with respect to the intended research, please contact either my advisor, Dr. Kara Smith at 253-3000, ext. 3826 or myself at 735-4176. Your consideration of this request is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Brenda Plowman
Enc.
APPENDIX D

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO THE GREATER ESSEX COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY
of WINDSOR

Brenda Plowman
222 Gauthier Drive
Tecumseh, ON N8N 4E4

August 26, 2002

Mr. Don Abrash,
Head of Psychological Services
Greater Essex County District School Board
451 Park Street West, P.O. Box 210
Windsor, ON N9A 5V4

Dear Mr. Abrash:

As a student in the Master of Education program at the University of Windsor, I am currently working on my thesis to fulfill my program requirements. I am interested in conducting research concerning the difference in vocabulary acquisition for grade one students using shared reading or guided reading.

Approval to proceed from the Ethics Committee at the University of Windsor is in process. I now would like to request your approval to undertake this study at Belle River Public School. The research will consist of a pretest being administered to both classes before treatment with either the shared reading method or guided reading method of literacy. Upon conclusion of these four-week teaching methods, a post test will be administered to compile data concerning the vocabulary acquisition of these children.

All information will remain strictly confidential. All participants will have the option of withdrawal from this study at any time before or during the process without any repercussions. There is no perceived or intended psychological or physical harm inherent in this research. Results of the research will be made available.

Any inquiries concerning this matter may be directed to my advisor, Dr. Kara Smith at 253-3000, ext. 3826 or me at 735-4176. Your consideration of this request is appreciated. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Brenda Plowman
Enc.
APPENDIX E

LETTER OF AGREEMENT TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

University of Windsor

Brenda Plowman
222 Gauthier Drive
Tecumseh, ON N8N 4E4

August 29, 2002

Mrs. Fran Pohanka
Principal
Belle River Public School
370 St. Peter Street
Belle River, ON
N0R 1A0

Dear Mrs. Pohanka:

As a student in the Master of Education program at the University of Windsor, I am currently working on my thesis to fulfill my program requirements. I am interested in conducting research concerning the difference in vocabulary acquisition for grade one students using shared reading or guided reading. Approval to proceed with this research is also being obtained from the Ethics Committee at the University of Windsor and from Ms. Gallagher, Director of Education at the Greater Essex County District School Board.

I am now seeking your agreement to participate in the study. The research will consist of two grade one classes, both from your school. A pretest will be administered to both classes before treatment with either the shared reading or guided reading method of literacy. Upon conclusion of these four-week teaching methods, a post test will be administered to compile data concerning the vocabulary acquisition of these children. All responses will remain strictly confidential. Participation is voluntary and any individual will have the option to withdraw from this study at any time. There are no perceived or known risks associated with this study. At the conclusion of the research, the results of the study will be made available upon request.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. Your support of this endeavor is of significant value. Should you have any questions concerning any aspect of this request, please contact me directly at 735-4176.

Sincerely,

Brenda Plowman
APPENDIX F

LETTER TO THE PARENT/GUARDIAN

UNIVERSITY

of WINDSOR

Letter of Information

Belle River Public School
370 St. Peter St.
Belle River, Ontario
N0R 1A0

Dear Parents,

I am pursuing my Master of Education degree at the University of Windsor. I am now at the stage where I am required to collect data for my thesis. Two different reading strategies, shared and guided, are used in teaching. I am interested in which method increases vocabulary for grade one students in both Mrs. MacNeil’s and my class. The children will be asked if they know certain words before one of the teaching strategies is used and then asked again after the four week period to see which strategy has improved vocabulary acquisition. The data from these two tests will be compared to analyze the effectiveness of building vocabulary based on reading strategies used. In order for this to be done, I invite you to sign the consent from the parents of the children whose data will be analyzed in the study.

There are no risks to your child for the participation in this study and I work closely with Professor Kara Smith from the University during this time. If necessary, it is possible for you to withdraw your child’s test data from this study. I am interested in which strategy allows grade one students to acquire new words faster. General results from the four-week study will be available in 2003. All information will be kept confidential.

Please return the parental consent forms attached if you wish your child to participate. Your cooperation is appreciated.

If you require additional clarification, the school phone number is 728-1310 and my home phone number is 735-4176, or contact the Research Ethics Board Co-ordinator at 253-3000, Ext. 3916.

Thanks for your help,

Brenda Plowman, B.A., B. Ed.
Belle River Public School
APPENDIX G

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

University of Windsor

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The Difference in Vocabulary Acquisition For Students in Essex County Grade One Classrooms Using Shared Reading Verses Guided Reading.

Your child is being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Brenda Plowman and Dr. Kara Smith, from the University of Windsor. Results of this study will contribute toward a Masters of Education for Brenda Plowman.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Brenda Plowman (Student Investigator) at 728-1310 (day), or 735-4176 (evening), Dr. Kara Smith (Faculty Supervisor) at 253-3000, Ext. 3826.

- **Purpose of the Study**
  This study is designed to assess whether shared reading or guided reading results in an increase in vocabulary over a four-week period for grade one students at Belle River Public School.

- **Procedures**
  If you volunteer your child to participate in this study, we would ask that s/he do the following things:

  1. The child will verbally answer whether or not he or she knows a certain sight word during the pre-test.
  2. For four weeks, each child in Mrs. MacNeil’s grade one class will participate using one reading strategy, while the children in Mrs. Plowman’s grade one class will participate using the other reading strategy. This reading strategy will reverse following the four-week period.
  3. After this time period, both classes will be administered a post-test using the same sight words to determine which words the child knows at this time. The testing will be performed at Belle River Public School between the hours of 9:00 and 3:30 p.m. during the first term of the 2002-2003 school year.

General research findings will be made available to individual parents or their children.

- **Potential Risks and Discomforts**
  There are no known risks to this study.
• **Potential Benefits to Subjects and/or Society**
  A direct benefit to the subjects from their involvement will be that both myself and Mrs. McNeil will be more informed as to which reading strategy works better for these children. I would also like to forward the general reading results to the Greater Essex County District School Board.

• **Payment for Participation**
  Subjects will not receive compensation for participation.

• **Confidentiality**
  Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. This confidential data will remain with Brenda Plowman for a five-year period and will then be destroyed by shredding.

• **Participation and Withdrawal**
  You can choose whether you wish to have your child involved in this study or not. If you volunteer your child's results, they may be withdrawn at any time without consequences of any kind. You may exercise the option of removing your child’s data from the study. The investigator may withdraw your child from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

• **Rights of Research Subjects**
  You may withdraw consent for your child at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your child’s rights as a research subject, contact:

  Research Ethics Co-ordinator
  University of Windsor
  Windsor, Ontario
  N9B 3P4
  Telephone: 519-253-3000, Ext. 3916
  E-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

• **Signature of Research Subject/Legal Representative**
  I understand the information provided for the study “The Difference in Vocabulary Acquisition For Students in Essex County Grade One Classrooms Using Shared Reading Verses Guided Reading” as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree for my child to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

  ________________________________  ________________________________
  Name of Subject                   Date

  ________________________________  ________________________________
  Parent’s Signature                Date
• **Signature of Investigator**
In my judgment, the parent is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent for their child's participation in this research study.

______________________________  ________________
Signature of Investigator                  Date
VITA AUCTORIS

Brenda Plowman was born in 1965 in Windsor, Ontario. She graduated from Forster Secondary School in 1983. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1991 and her Bachelor of Education degree in 2000 from the University of Windsor. This thesis was the final component of her Master of Education degree at the University of Windsor in 2003.