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ABSTRACT

A practicum was developed to improve the inferential comprehension, the textual and functional skills, and the overall attitudes toward reading of fifth-grade students. A target group of six students in a private school who were deficient in these skills was established. The practicum contained basic strategies for improving reading skills and academic achievement; a change to a literature-based approach to reading; incorporation of the teaching of skills; the change from homogeneous grouping to heterogeneous classes; a one-on-one system for reading practice; journal writing; sustained silent reading; and a special Book Readers' Club through which students promoted, to fellow students, their interest in books and reading. Results indicated that: (1) 83% of the targeted students improved their reading attitude by 20%; (2) the recreational reading attitudes of 83% of the targeted students improved by 10%; (3) the inferential comprehension skills of 83% of the targeted students improved; (4) the objective that the textual and functional reading skills of 50% of the targeted students would be improved by 10% was not met; and (5) all of the students increased their reading of books by more than 50%. Students in the practicum reacted favorably to the change in the reading program, both in measurable and unmeasurable ways. The mood and tone in the classroom was positive and promoted camaraderie where once there was competition. (Contains 19 references and 6 tables of data. Appendixes of data, survey instruments, scoring sheets, and a sample lesson plan are attached.) (RS)

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IMPROVING THE READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS
OF UNMOTIVATED FIFTH GRADE STUDENTS
THROUGH LITERATURE-BASED INSTRUCTION

by

Caroline Ryan Kunze

A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Abraham S. Fischler
Center for the Advancement of Education of
Nova University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a
National Database System for reference.

April, 1994

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Abstract

Improving the Reading Comprehension Skills of Unmotivated Fifth Grade Students Through Literature-Based Instruction.

Kunze, Caroline Ryan, 1994: Practicum Report, Nova University, Center for the Advancement of Education. Descriptors: Reading/Whole Language/Phonics/Literature-Based Instruction/Heterogenous Grouping

This practicum describes a language arts program to improve the inferential comprehension, the textual and functional skills, and the overall attitudes toward reading of fifth grade students. A target group of six students who were deficient in these skills was established for the program. The program contains basic strategies for improving reading skills and academic achievement: a change to a literature-based approach to reading; incorporating the teaching of skills; the change from homogenous grouping to heterogenous classes; a one-on-one system for reading practice; journal writing; sustained silent reading; and a special Book Readers' Club through which students will promote, to fellow students, their interest in books and reading.

Authorship Statement/Document Release

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.


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Practicum Title Improving the Reading Comprehension Skills
of Unmotivated Fifth Grade Students Through Literature-Based
Instruction

Student's Name Caroline Ryan Kunze

Project Site St. Thomas Episcopal School Date April, 1994

Observer's Name LAUCA WAKEEL Lucia @ Thicker
please print *please sign*

Observer's position PRINCIPAL Phone # 665-4851

Observer's comment on impact of the project (handwritten):

Caroline Kunze's project has added to our understanding of our students and the impact of a well scheduled and (2) a new approach to reading. It has been an invaluable asset to St. Thomas and our vision for future curriculum and scheduling decisions.

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

Background

The setting for this practicum is a small, private, coeducational elementary school with grade levels ranging from preschool to grade six. There are 428 students enrolled for the 1993 to 1994 school year. The school is located in an affluent area, and the majority of its families are of middle to upper-middle class. A large percentage of the students' parents have completed four years of college or more; many are professionals in the fields of law, education, and medicine. Though most of the school's students come from non-Hispanic, White families, twenty-four percent of the students are from English-speaking Hispanic families, two percent are from Asian families, and one percent come from African-American families.

Most of the intermediate grade level students at this school read at or above their grade levels. A significant percentage of students read considerably above grade level. The reading program for grades two

through six has been primarily basal-oriented, using skills workbooks to teach phonics and vocabulary. Each homeroom class has had two to three homogeneously chosen reading groups. Fifth grade at this targeted school had previously been departmentalized, with English and reading taught as separate classes along with the separate classes of social studies, mathematics, and science.

The writer of this practicum has taught English on the intermediate level for eight years and has been teaching language arts at this school for seven years. The classroom population for the purpose of this practicum consists of eighteen students: nine girls and nine boys. A group of these students had negative approaches to reading and have scored low, by comparison to their fellow students, on standardized reading comprehension tests. These deficiencies may have been the result of poor attitudes toward reading caused by being homogeneously clustered in low basal reader groups.

For the purpose of this practicum, the targeted group to whom the program of literature-based language arts was introduced was fifth grade students: four

girls and two boys, ages ten and eleven, in a heterogeneously-grouped, self-contained classroom.

Problem Statement

As literacy becomes a more and more prominent topic, not only in educational circles, but in society as a whole, the emergence of different approaches to teaching reading has become a prevalent issue. For the school at which this practicum was implemented, it had become an increasing concern that students grow to love and appreciate literature. Ideally, this would be fostered while maintaining previously established high standards of the learning of comprehension skills. Approximately forty percent of the students in the targeted fifth grade class have superior reading skills, with standardized test scores in the ninetieth percentile or above and stanines in the eight and nine range. They have very good reading habits and comprehension skills. These students have excellent attitudes toward reading. Approximately thirty percent of the students in the targeted class have had poor attitudes toward reading. These students had

standardized test scores ranging from the twenty-sixth to the sixtieth percentiles and stanines in the four, five, and six range (Appendix A:42).

The students targeted for the purpose of this practicum have exhibited low levels of enthusiasm toward reading, as shown by recorded responses to a reading interest inventory (Appendix B:44). It had been difficult to motivate them to read for pleasure and to participate, fully, in reading and writing activities. Having been tracked in "lower" reading groups, low self esteem was endemic to them. Feeling that they were, perhaps, "not as good at reading," as their high-achieving fellow students, they have demonstrated low effort as shown by their reading effort grades from the previous spring (Appendix C:48).

Six students formed the target population for this study. As a result of poor attitudes toward reading, the targeted students had demonstrated lower scores, by comparison, than their fellow students. Through teacher-made student interest inventories and standardized test scores from the previous spring, it had been concluded that tracking students in basal

reading groups was detrimental to their overall self concepts and attitudes toward reading and learning.

The premise of this practicum, therefore, was to introduce and implement a heterogeneously-grouped language arts program, that, while being of whole language philosophy, continues to incorporate some aspects of phonics skills instruction. The goal of this practicum was to bring about a positive change in intermediate-level students' attitudes toward literature, and improvement in inferential comprehension, as well as textual and functional reading skills.

Outcome Objectives

The purpose of this practicum was to help a group of fifth grade students improve their overall attitudes toward reading and, ultimately, to improve their comprehension and thinking skills.

Five outcome objectives were identified and are as follows:

1. Following a period of twelve weeks, the academic reading attitudes of eighty-three percent of the targeted fifth grade students would be improved by twenty percent as measured by a pre- and post- test using the second part of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Appendix D:50).
2. Following a period of twelve weeks, the recreational reading attitudes of eighty-three percent of the targeted students would be improved by ten percent as measured by a pre- and post- test using the first part of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Appendix D:50).

3. Following a period of twelve weeks, the inferential comprehension skills of sixty-six percent of the targeted students would be improved by ten percent as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test, Intermediate 2, Forms E and F (Appendix E:52).

4. Following a period of twelve weeks, the textual and functional reading skills of fifty percent of the targeted students would be improved by ten percent as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test, Intermediate 2, Forms E and F (Appendix E:52).

5. Following a period of twelve weeks, the interest in reading books of fifty percent of the targeted students would be improved by ten percent as shown by a pre- and post- checklist or "reading Log" to be kept by each student in the target group (Appendix F:55).

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

Much research has been done and myriad articles have been generated on both sides of the literature-based reading program issue. On one side are the whole language theorists who believe that "teaching from a whole language perspective means teaching children to use the tools of communication (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) in a purposeful, meaningful, and integrated manner" (Linek, 1991:125). The other side is represented by a combination of those who are dubious of the merits of whole language and those who fear its misrepresentation and misapplication could result in its being more detrimental than beneficial.

So much research has been generated and reported on the topics of whole language instruction and phonics instruction that one study, (Bergeron, 1990), was devoted entirely to the analysis of sixty-four articles pertaining to reading instruction. According to this view, the very term whole language has become, in and of itself, a "unique enigma." Whole language has

"grown to become its advocates' response for any approach or program supportive of literature-based or integrated instruction and, yet, has been criticized by its opponents as an idea not founded by [sic] the basic principles of research" (Bergeron, 1990:301).

Bergeron is of the belief that the term "whole language" has been too widely defined and has thus been misused in professional literature.

One of the theories of whole language instruction is that children will read words better in the context of literature, rather than from lists or on workbook pages. In a study done at the University of Waikato in New Zealand, a researcher replicated and disproved a 1965 study which showed that children's reading accuracy improved 60 percent to 80 percent in context, in comparison with a word list (Goodman, 1965:643). In the Nicholson (1991) study, it was found that Goodman's study gave an overly optimistic impression of the benefits of context reading and reported that, over time, "good readers made no reliable context gains" (Nicholson, 1991:444). This is in conflict with the beliefs of whole language advocates that children learn better when the words they are reading are pertinent to

them.

Three additional drawbacks to the whole language movement are explained in an article by Vail (1991). The first is that accurate word recognition and decoding develop only when students know that words have sounds and structures. The second drawback is the relatively exclusive reliance on story. It is claimed that "whole language does not teach the skills necessary for content reading in science, history, math, and even English class" (Vail, 1991:24). The third drawback is that some students "fall through the hole" in whole language programs (Vail, 1991:24). An example was given of an elementary school which had switched to whole language several years prior and had seen three years of steady drops in the reading comprehension scores of their fifth and sixth grade students. It was concluded that the students, who were understanding increasingly complicated abstract ideas in reading, were finding "reading distasteful because they lacked the [phonics] tools" (Vail, 1991:24).

Another study of current research of whole language and code-oriented and phoneme approaches states that while a majority of research findings

tended to favor the "major theoretical premises on which code-emphasis approaches to reading instruction are based and are at variance with the major theoretical premises on which whole language approaches are based," the compatibility of certain features of both approaches should not be precluded (Vellutino, 1991:437).

Among proponents of the pure whole language approaches to teaching reading is Regie Routman, an elementary school teacher and author of several books and articles on the subject. Routman's primary beliefs include that literacy acquisition is a natural process, that becoming a reader and becoming a writer are closely related, and that optimal literacy environments promote "risk taking and trust" (Routman, 1991:9). Routman also believes that "daily reading and writing with real literature. . . [are] the best preparation for testing of the types of tests we are using" (Routman, 1991:9). She further says that "teaching discrete skills may yield temporary high scores on isolated subtests, but these results do not necessarily transfer to comprehending meaningful text" (Routman, 1991:9). Routman writes that skills can indeed be

taught in a whole language setting: "A skill, no matter how well it has been taught, cannot be considered a strategy until the learner can use it purposefully and independently" (Routman, 1992:35). Skills, in a whole language, literature-based classroom, are "taught in a broader context because the learner demonstrates a need for them" (Routman, 1992:34).

It has been found that whole language incorporates more of a "language experience" (Newman, 1985:62). As a way of incorporating skills with reading, journal writing, an element of the whole language classroom, "evolves as a record of what students have learned and what they have done" (Newman, 1985:63). Journals "provide a non-threatening place to explore learning, feelings, happenings, and language through writing," (Routman, 1992:196) and are an important part of the literature-based reading program.

In using literature books, instead of programmed basal readers, students are given the choice of what they are to read. According to Newman (1985:5), "choice is an essential element for learning; there must be opportunities for students to choose what to

read and what to write about."

In order to establish permanent reading habits, students must find reading "interesting, informative, and enjoyable" (Richek, List, and Lerner, 1989:153). Students should be encouraged to choose their own reading materials, and independent reading of books of easier levels should not be discouraged (Richek, List, and Lerner, 1989). Shared reading, with the whole class or group and one-to-one story reading, pairing students to read to each other, are important components of a literature-based curriculum (Newman, 1985). The technique of one student reading and another following along is powerful for supporting less able readers. A more competent reader is paired with a less competent one. The more able reader reads the text aloud while the less able reader follows along. The less able reader, "with no pressure or expectations to read, follows the text visually and enjoys the story" (Routman, 1992:35).

Another important activity is "sustained silent reading" (Leu and Kinzer, 1991:314). This is a brief time set aside each day when everyone reads by himself or herself. Students select their own materials; they

are encouraged to read anything they want. Structured "sustained silent reading" consists of three procedural steps which include introducing the purpose and procedures, being sure every student has something to read, and seeing to it that everyone has the opportunity to read silently without interruptions.

Leu and Kinzer (1991) outline another activity which incorporates whole language and skills teaching: "Readers' Theatre." This activity is a method framework in which a group of students use the following steps: 1. Chose and read a literary selection; 2. Write a short script; 3. Practice reading the script; and 4. Orally perform the script for the class.

Story mapping (Davis and McPherson, 1989) is another activity for strengthening understanding of literature while building skills. A story map is a graphic outline which expands on each feature of a particular story. The story map organizes the structural information of a story and helps with comprehension (Davis and McPherson, 1989:233).

In a study done by two practitioners in Cincinnati, it was concluded that phonics and skills

can be taught in a whole language classroom. Phonics instruction in the whole language classroom, they state, "is focused on the learner needs, is contextualized in communicative acts, and is presented after foundation concepts are learned" (Freppon and Dahl, 1991:195). According to this report, "research that considers the influence of context, socio-linguistic elements, and the learner's responses to instruction will help clarify issues inherent in the phonics debate," and, "studies investigating how the function, form, and code of written language are being taught and learned in a wide variety of classroom settings will provide information on children's orchestration of knowledge about reading and writing" (Freppon and Dahl, 1991:196).

British reading teacher Sue Lloyd has documented further evidence that experience in Great Britain with the whole language approach to teaching reading has some weaknesses. Lloyd and her colleagues found that "some children simply did not learn well under the visual, whole-word approach to reading" (Gorman, 1993:2). Children with poor memory skills were found to be unable to remember words or sounds, and whole

language left them more confused about reading. She has written that educators should "be encouraged to consider a more balanced approach [to teaching reading]" (Gorman, 1993:2).

A final aspect of the whole language literature-based classroom is the issue of ability grouping. Research on the achievement effects of grouping at the intermediate levels states that "every means of grouping students by ability or performance level has drawbacks that may be serious enough to offset any advantages" (Slavin, 1988:68). A study of four second grade classrooms in a small public school concluded that "the reading groups function as social and linguistic communities that can promote or hamper school success" (Borko and Eisenhardt, in Bloome, 1989:120). According to Routman, while most of the research on ability grouping is centered around achievement, the long range psychological effects on children's attitudes toward reading cannot be ignored. "If our job is to teach and develop whole students, then we must begin to structure our classes more heterogeneously and treat all students intelligently and with respect" (Routman, 1991:78). Additionally,

allowing for uninterrupted blocks of time in the day is also important (Routman, 1992:497). Self-contained classrooms -- with no switching for various subjects -- offer the best opportunities for integration of literature based reading and writing (Routman, 1992:292).

For this practicum, the following strategies were incorporated:

Schedules were changed to allow for a combination of reading and English and to provide for a longer block of time during which a "whole" approach to reading and English may be applied, as described by Routman (1992). Instead of a program of total departmentalization with English and reading taught as separate classes along with separate classes of social studies, mathematics, and science, fifth grade met as self-contained homerooms for the morning hours in order for the literature-based approach to be applied to the teaching of reading, English and spelling, as described by Routman (1992).

Traditional basal reading textbooks and phonics/skills workbooks were replaced with a literature-based reading series and improved classroom

literature libraries, as advocated by Newman (1985), and Routman (1992). Writing journals were emphasized and spelling and vocabulary were taught within the context of the literature, as described by Routman (1992), and Newman (1985). Students were no longer homogeneously-grouped, but were placed in heterogeneous classes, which, according to Slavin (1989) and Borko and Eisenhardt (1989), is more desirable.

A structured time of "sustained silent reading," as described by Leu and Kinzer (1991), was implemented on a daily basis. For recreational reading, students were not discouraged from choosing books of easier reading levels than those at which they are currently reading, as explained by Richek, List, and Learner (1989).

In order to foster greater enjoyment of reading, shared reading and reading in pairs, as described by Newman (1985) and Routman (1992), was implemented. Such activities as story mapping, as described by Davis and McPherson (1989), and "Readers Theatre," as described by Leu and Kinzer (1991), were used.

Throughout the course of this practicum, a program of whole language, literature-based instruction was

incorporated with the instruction of basic phonics, comprehension, and vocabulary skills, as advocated by Vellutino (1991) and Gorman (1993).

CHAPTER III

Method

This practicum has implemented a language arts program of a whole-language literature based nature which will incorporate skills instruction. The program took place within a heterogeneously-grouped class of eighteen fifth grade students. A group of six students, all found to be lower achievers, was targeted for the purpose of this practicum.

To implement the identified literature-based language arts program, the following plan was used: 1) Fifth grade classes were changed from totally departmentalized schedules to a self-contained morning, giving the teacher approximately two hours each day for language arts instruction, instead of two fragmented periods of forty-five minutes each to teach reading and English in isolation; 2) Fifth grade classes were heterogenous, and any groups established within the class were of heterogenous nature; 3) The use of non-literature based basal reading books and workbooks was

discontinued; 4) Classroom libraries were enhanced, multiple copies of age-appropriate works of literature were purchased, and a literature-based reading series was adopted; 5) Teacher-made literature units were produced to be used with literary novels in order to teach skills along with the literature (Appendix G:57).

To improve the attitudes toward reading and the comprehension and academic skills of the targeted group of six students, the following activities were conducted during the implementation of this practicum study:

Week One

1. Two Parts of The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, Recreational Reading and Academic Reading, were administered to the entire class of eighteen students. The percentile ranks for the targeted six students were recorded (Appendix D:50).
2. The Reading Comprehension section of the Stanford Achievement Test, Intermediate 2, Form E, was administered to the class. The percentile ranks and stanines, as well as content cluster scores in Textual Reading, Functional Reading, Recreational Reading, and

Inferential Comprehension for the six targeted students were recorded (Appendix E:52).

3. A Reading Log was started by each of the targeted students. Logs were kept in individual file folders designated for targeted students (Appendix F:55).

4. "Sustained silent reading" was introduced as "Quiet reading time," a time for students to enjoy reading anything they want to read. Reading logs were kept.

Week Two

1. An introduction to a designated novel was given to the entire class (Appendix G:56).

2. The author's purpose in writing the novel was discussed. The concept of genre was introduced.

3.. The class learned about the novel's author and illustrator.

4. Students wrote, in journals, their predictions about the novel.

5. The theme of the novel was tied in with other areas of study.

6. "Quiet reading time" took place every day for ten to fifteen minutes.

Week Three

1. Students completed pre-reading exercises for the novel.
2. The teacher read aloud, to the class, the first chapter of the novel.
3. Students wrote sentences describing each character introduced in the first chapter.
4. Students were paired for oral reading. Those for whom oral reading was more challenging were paired with stronger readers.
5. "Quiet reading time" took place every day for fifteen to twenty minutes.

Week Four

1. Students read the second chapter of the novel to themselves in class.
2. The teacher read the second chapter of the novel aloud to the students.
3. Vocabulary words for the first two chapters were defined by the students and were discussed in class.
4. Comprehension questions for the first two chapters were answered in class.
5. "Quiet reading time" took place for twenty minutes

each day.

6. Story discussions took place as a whole class and within groups of students.

Week Five

1. Literary concepts such as metaphor, foreshadowing, and irony were introduced and were taught within the context of the novel.
2. The theme of the novel was, once again, tied in to other subject areas and to everyday life.
3. Students wrote, in their journals, personal reflections concerning matters brought up in the novel.
4. Students read the next two chapters. Some read silently, and some were paired up for oral reading.
5. Vocabulary and comprehension questions were done in cooperative groups.
6. "Quiet reading time" took place each day and extended beyond twenty minutes, as time permitted.

Week Six

1. Story mapping was introduced. Students, in groups,

mapped out different chapters read in the book.

2. The next two chapters of the novel were read, vocabulary words were defined using context clues, and characters were discussed.

3. Quiet reading time continued. Reading logs were kept.

Week Seven

1. As the end of the novel approached, the students revised their predictions in writing.

2. The class finished the reading of the novel as a group.

3. Literary concepts were tied in when discussing the ending. Students "hunted" in the book for examples.

4. Students individually drew maps of the plot, indicating the climax and resolution in the novel.

5. "Readers Theatre" was introduced. Students met in groups to write play scripts for different chapters of the book.

5. Quiet reading time continued. Reading logs were kept.

6. Groups of students met and wrote reviews of the novel.

Week Eight

1. Readers Theatre groups worked on writing their scripts and on practicing their lines.
2. Readers Theatre performed for their fifth grade class.
3. Quiet reading time continued; reading logs were kept.

Week Nine

1. Novel excerpts were read from the literature-based reading books. Skills were incorporated.
2. Reading pairs met to re-read excerpts.
3. Journal writing of predictions and reactions took place.
4. Quiet reading time was discussed. Reading logs were shared with the teacher.
5. Quiet reading time continued.

Week Ten

1. Novel excerpts were read from the literature-based reading books. Skills were incorporated.
2. Reading pairs met.
3. Writers' Theatre met to write scripts and perform

novel excerpts.

4. Journal writing continued.
5. Quiet reading time continued; reading logs were updated.

Week Eleven

1. Students were asked to choose from three novels to read in groups as their next novel unit.
2. Heterogenous groups were formed. Reading pairs were assigned within groups.
3. Journal writing continued with predictions of new novels.
4. Quiet reading time continued; reading logs were updated.

Week Twelve

1. The two parts of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey were administered to the entire class of eighteen students. The percentile ranks for the targeted six students were recorded (Appendix E:52).
2. The Reading Comprehension section of the Stanford Achievement Test, Intermediate 2, Form F, was administered to the class of students. The percentile

ranks and stanines, as well as content cluster scores in Textual Reading, Functional Reading, Recreational Reading, and Inferential Comprehension for the six targeted students were recorded.

3. Students continued to work on reading their novels. Journal writing and quiet reading time continued.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The purpose of this practicum was to help a group of fifth grade students to improve their attitudes toward reading while improving their comprehension and thinking skills. This chapter will describe the evaluation tools used to measure the academic reading attitudes, the recreational reading attitudes, the inferential reading comprehension, and the textual and functional reading skills of the targeted students, and to give the results attained.

The evaluation tools for the five objectives of this practicum were as follows:

Objective 1

Following a period of twelve weeks, the academic reading attitudes of the targeted fifth grade students would be improved as measured by a pre- and post- test using the second part of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Appendix D:50). The goal that eighty-three percent of the targeted students would improve by

twenty percent was reached.

Table 1

Pre- and Post Percentile Ranks on the
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey
Second Part - Academic Reading

Student	Pretest Rank	Posttest Rank
1	60%	86%
2	49%	71%
3	49%	60%
4	21%	77%
5	60%	49%
6	82%	82%

Created by two education professors, the purpose of this tool is to "enable teachers to estimate attitude level efficiently and reliably" (McKenna and Kear, 1990:627). A student-friendly test, the instrument is comprised of twenty questions which are answered by circling one of four "Garfield" cartoon characters: Happiest Garfield, Slightly smiling Garfield, Mildly upset Garfield, and Very upset Garfield. The students reacted very favorable to the test. The questions on the second part of the test all have to do with reading at school. The goal was reached primarily because reading, at school, had

changed for these students. This shows a positive reaction to the changes made.

Objective 2

Following a period of twelve weeks, the recreational reading attitudes of eighty-three percent of the targeted students would be improved by ten percent as measured by a pre- and post- test using the first part of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Appendix D:50). This goal was met, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Pre- and Post Percentile Ranks on the
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey
First Part - Recreational Reading

Student	Pretest Rank	Posttest Rank
1	42%	65%
2	59%	87%
3	20%	65%
4	48%	91%
5	48%	71%
6	77%	77%

This first part of the "Garfield" test is comprised of questions having to do with reading outside of school. The same four Garfield characters

are printed as the choices students have for answers to the questions.

Several important criteria were established by the creators of this instrument, including that it have a large-scale normative frame of reference, that it be applicable to all elementary students, and that it comprise separate subscales for recreational and academic reading (McKenna and Kear, 1990).

Objective 3

The next objective was that following a period of twelve weeks, the inferential comprehension skills of sixty-six percent of the targeted students would be improved by ten percent as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test, Intermediate 2, Forms E and F (Appendix E:52). Though the goal of ten percent improvement was not met, all but one of the targeted students, or eighty-three percent, showed some improvement. This improvement can be attributed to the changes in the ways reading classes and literature discussions were conducted. Students were encouraged to think more; with this their inferential reading skills have improved.

Table 3

Pre- and Post Raw Scores in Inferential Reading
on the Stanford Achievement Test, Intermediate 2,
Forms E and F - Content Clusters

Student	Pretest Score	Posttest Score
1	24	25
2	14	17
3	13	16
4	23	26
5	19	18
6	19	24

The Reading Comprehension subtest contains two approaches to the measurement of comprehension skills: comprehension as it relates to the type of material read, and comprehension as it relates to the particular questions asked. Because different kinds of reading material often require the use of different reading skills, three types of reading passages are included in the test. Some are passages that are typical of the kinds of material found in grade-appropriate text books, some are passages that reflect the printed material students will find in everyday life, such as directions and advertisements, and some represent the kinds of material students read for enjoyment, such as humor, fiction, or poetry (Gardner, et al. 1982:5).

Objective 4

The fourth objective, that following a period of twelve weeks, the textual and functional reading skills of fifty percent of the targeted students would be improved by ten percent, was also measured by the Stanford Achievement Test, Intermediate 2, Forms E and F (Appendix E:52). Content cluster breakdowns for textual and functional reading skills measured these skills. This objective was not met.

Table 4

Pre- and Post Raw Scores in Textual and Functional Reading on the Stanford Achievement Test, Intermediate 2, Forms E and F - Content Clusters

Student	Pretest Score	Posttest Score
1	34	30
2	17	15
3	15	16
4	23	31
5	21	19
6	23	31

Objective 5

The last objective, that following a period of twelve weeks, the interest in reading books of fifty percent of the targeted students would be improved by ten percent, was measured by a tally of the books read

by the students. All of the students in the study increased their reading of books by more than fifty percent.

Table 5
Increase in Number of Books Read

Student	Books Read In and Out of School
1	7
2	6
3	5
4	5
5	6
6	6

The largest measurable improvement in this study was the students' attitudes toward reading. There was also a measurable increase in the inferential reading skills. It is interesting to note that though there was an increase in scores in the content cluster area of inferential reading, (Table 3:33), there was not a significant increase in overall comprehension, as shown by the percentile ranks and stanines on the overall Reading Comprehension Subtest of the Stanford Achievement Test. This factor could explain why the fourth objective, in increase in scores in textual and functional reading, was not met.

Table 6

Pre- and Post Percentile Ranks and Stanines
on the Stanford Achievement Test, Intermediate 2,
Forms E and F, Reading Comprehension Subtest

Student	Pretest Score		Posttest Score	
	Percentile	Stanine	Percentile	Stanine
1	86%	7	85%	7
2	33%	4	37%	4
3	28%	4	46%	5
4	67%	6	83%	7
5	57%	5	49%	5
6	57%	5	85%	7

CHAPTER V
Recommendations

Though less motivated when compared to their super-achieving classmates, many of the targeted students in this study were already functioning at an above-average level. Any appearances of lack of motivation proved to be a lack of exposure to different types of literature. The students in this practicum reacted favorably to the change in reading program, both in measurable and unmeasurable ways. The mood and tone in the classroom, with a change to heterogenous grouping, was positive and promoted camaraderie where there was once competition. Stronger students helped those experiencing difficulty. There has been a general feeling that the entire class is achieving something good and worthwhile.

Many of the resources of this practicum will be made available to teachers and administrators at the targeted school. Copies of the teacher-made novel units are being distributed to other fifth grade teachers.

The completed Practicum Thesis paper from this project, along with all the activities and evaluation materials, will be made available to the faculty and staff of the author's school at the school's professional library. Prior to the start of the 1994 to 1995 school year, the author of this practicum will present a workshop on her findings and new ideas to the faculty of her school.

The changes made in the school schedule, which have made the implementation of this practicum possible, will continue. Fifth grade students will meet for self-contained blocks of time in the morning, rather than in departmentalized segments during which reading and English were taught in isolation. The use of a literature-based reading series will be continued.

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Appendix A

Reading Comprehension Stanford Achievement
Test Scores of Targeted Students
Spring, 1993

APPENDIX A

Stanford Achievement Test Scores
Reading Comprehension Subtest
Targeted Students
Spring, 1993

<u>Student Number</u>	<u>Percentile</u>	<u>Stanine</u>
01	60	6
02	50	5
03	26	4
04	44	5
05	60	6
06	47	5

Appendix B
Teacher-Made Student Reading
Interest Inventory
and
Sample Student Answers
Fall, 1993

APPENDIX B:1

Reading Interest Inventory - Grade Five

Name _____ Date _____

1. Some of my favorite books and stories are _____

_____2. The kinds of things I like to read are _____

_____3. When I come to a word I don't know, I _____

4. I picture in my mind what I am reading about.

All the time Sometimes Never

5. I think about what is going to happen next in a story.

All the time Sometimes Never

6. When someone reads to me, I feel happy.

All the time Sometimes Never

7. When I read by myself, I feel happy.

All the time Sometimes Never

8. When I finish reading a story, I _____

APPENDIX B:2

Sample Student Answers to Reading Interest Inventory

Student # 01:

1. Indicated books much below grade level
3. Said "I skip it" when he/she comes to a word he/she does not know
6. Is happy "sometimes" when someone reads to him/her
7. Is happy "sometimes" when reading by him/herself

Student # 02:

1. Indicated books much below grade level
7. Is happy "sometimes" when reading by him/herself

Student # 03:

1. Indicated a short poetry book as only favorite
2. Wrote "I don't like to read"
3. Wrote "I get mad" when he/she comes to a word he/she does not know
4. Indicated "sometimes" for picturing stories in his/her mind
6. Is happy "sometimes" when someone reads to him/her
7. Is happy "never" when reading by him/herself
8. Wrote "I don't finish books"

Student # 04:

2. Indicated comic books and magazines as favorite things to read
3. Wrote "I do nothing" when he/she comes to a word he/she does not know
5. Indicated "never" for thinking about what will happen next in a story

APPENDIX B:3

Sample Student Answers to Reading Interest Inventory
(Continued)Student # 05:

1. Indicated books much below grade level
4. Indicated "sometimes" for picturing stories in his/her mind
6. Is happy "sometimes" when someone reads to him/her
7. Is happy "sometimes" when reading by him/herself

Student # 06:

1. Indicated short books and books below grade level
4. Indicated "sometimes" for picturing stories in his/her mind.
8. Wrote "I am happy" when finished reading a story

Appendix C
Reading Effort Grades
Targeted Students
Spring, 1993

APPENDIX C

Reading Effort Grades From Spring, 1993
Targeted Students

Student #	Effort Grade
01	1 -
02	1
03	1 -
04	1 -
05	1 -
06	1

Effort Grades:

1 + = You are interested and cooperative. You always put forth the best effort of which you are capable in fulfilling required class and home assignments, and you seek additional work.

1 = You are interested and cooperative. You generally put forth effort in fulfilling required class and home assignments.

1 - = Though you are generally interested and cooperative, you need to be more consistent and careful in completing class and home assignments and in turning work in on time.

Appendix D
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Test
Scoring Sheet

McKenna and Kear (1990)

APPENDIX D

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Test
Scoring Sheet

Student Name _____

Grade _____ Administration Date _____

Scoring Guide

4 Points	Happiest Garfield
3 Points	Slightly Smiling Garfield
2 Points	Mildly Upset Garfield
1 Point	Very Upset Garfield

Recreational Reading

Academic Reading

1. _____

11. _____

2. _____

12. _____

3. _____

13. _____

4. _____

14. _____

5. _____

15. _____

6. _____

16. _____

7. _____

17. _____

8. _____

18. _____

9. _____

19. _____

10. _____

20. _____

Full Scale Raw Score (Recreational + Academic): _____

Percentile Ranks: Recreational _____

Academic _____

Full Scale _____

Appendix E

Stanford Achievement Test, Intermediate 2, Forms E/F
Reading Comprehension Subtest
Letter of Permission to Use Test
Sample Answer Sheet

Gardner, Rudman, Karlsen, and Merwin (1982)

APPENDIX E:1

SAINT THOMAS EPISCOPAL
PARISH SCHOOL

November 11, 1993

Nova University GEM Practicum Department
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

To Whom It May Concern:

In order to facilitate the implementation of Mrs. Kunze's practicum, she has the permission of St. Thomas Episcopal School to administer the Reading Comprehension subtest of the 1983 Stanford Achievement Test as a pre and post test.

Our school is no longer using this version of the test, however we are an authorized testing site for the Stanford Achievement Test.

If you have any questions, please call me during school hours at 665-4851.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Lee Curtis".

Carol Lee Curtis
Assistant Principal

APPENDIX E: 2

Name _____	Form: E F (circle one)
Teacher _____	Grade _____
School _____	Today's Date _____

Reading Comprehension

1 () (b) (c) (d)	9 () (b) (c) (d)	17 () (b) (c) (d)	25 () (b) (c) (d)	34 () (b) (c) (d)	43 () (b) (c) (d)	52 () (b) (c) (d)	
2 () (b) (c) (d)	10 () (b) (c) (d)	18 () (b) (c) (d)	26 () (b) (c) (d)	35 () (b) (c) (d)	44 () (b) (c) (d)	53 () (b) (c) (d)	Textual Reading _____
3 () (b) (c) (d)	11 () (b) (c) (d)	19 () (b) (c) (d)	27 () (b) (c) (d)	36 () (b) (c) (d)	45 () (b) (c) (d)	54 () (b) (c) (d)	Functional Reading _____
4 () (b) (c) (d)	12 () (b) (c) (d)	20 () (b) (c) (d)	28 () (b) (c) (d)	37 () (b) (c) (d)	46 () (b) (c) (d)	55 () (b) (c) (d)	Recreational Reading _____
5 () (b) (c) (d)	13 () (b) (c) (d)	21 () (b) (c) (d)	29 () (b) (c) (d)	38 () (b) (c) (d)	47 () (b) (c) (d)	56 () (b) (c) (d)	Literal Comprehension _____
6 () (b) (c) (d)	14 () (b) (c) (d)	22 () (b) (c) (d)	30 () (b) (c) (d)	39 () (b) (c) (d)	48 () (b) (c) (d)	57 () (b) (c) (d)	Inferential Comprehension _____
7 () (b) (c) (d)	15 () (b) (c) (d)	23 () (b) (c) (d)	31 () (b) (c) (d)	40 () (b) (c) (d)	49 () (b) (c) (d)	58 () (b) (c) (d)	Reading Comprehension Number Right _____
8 () (b) (c) (d)	16 () (b) (c) (d)	24 () (b) (c) (d)	32 () (b) (c) (d)	41 () (b) (c) (d)	50 () (b) (c) (d)	59 () (b) (c) (d)	
			33 () (b) (c) (d)	42 () (b) (c) (d)	51 () (b) (c) (d)	60 () (b) (c) (d)	

Appendix F

Student Reading Log Sheet
Pre- and Post- Books Read

APPENDIX F

Name _____ Date _____

READING LOG SHEET

Date	Title and Author	Rating
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Rating: *** = Great; ** = Good; * = Not Good

Appendix G
Sample Lesson Plan
Novel Unit

APPENDIX G

Sample Lesson Plan: Novel Unit

Lesson: An introduction to the novel My Brother Sam is Dead by Collier and Collier

Objectives: Fifth grade students will understand the concept of literary genre as it related to the novel My Brother Sam is Dead.

Students will associate this novel, which is set during the Revolutionary War, with their studies in United States history.

Students will be able to distinguish the features of the historical fiction genre as:

- a setting in a time from the past
- a recreation of the spirit of an historical era
- the use of fictional characters with occasional real historical personages
- the use of invented dialogue that reflects the way people spoke at that time
- a plot based on the experiences and events of the period

Materials: Student copies of the novel My Brother Sam is Dead, by Collier and Collier; Teacher-created novel guides

Evaluations: Students will be evaluated primarily by their responses to the class discussion.