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Daily 5 Implementation to Improve ELL Students' Performances

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Abstract

This paper focuses on an action research project that integrated the "Daily 5" literacy framework into a fourth-grade classroom in a small rural town in Kansas. The study aimed to enhance the literacy skills of English Language Learners (ELL) using the Daily 5 method, which includes five key activities: Read to Self, Work on Writing, Read to Someone, Listen to Reading, and Word Work. The research involved a six-week intervention and used student performance data, including daily assignment scores and oral reading fluency, to assess the impact of this framework on ELL students. The findings indicated significant improvements in students' literacy skills, suggesting the effectiveness of the Daily 5 in this context.

Keywords: Daily 5 Literacy Framework, English Language Learners (ELL)**,** Action Research**,** Literacy Skills Improvement, Rural classroom

Introduction

In this paper, we delve into an essential educational endeavor that addresses the heart of literacy advancement for young learners. Researchers and educators have long contended that elementary children literacy is of paramount importance as it lays the foundation for a lifetime of learning and success. Bhagat et al. (2018) argued the ability to read and comprehend at a young age not only opens doors to a vast world of knowledge but also equips children with essential communication skills. Literacy empowers them to engage with diverse perspectives, think critically, and express their ideas effectively. Early literacy skills are closely tied to academic achievement across subjects and later stages of education. Moreover, a strong foundation in literacy fosters a sense of confidence and self-esteem in children, enabling them to navigate an increasingly complex and information-driven society. By investing in elementary children's literacy, we invest in their future, ensuring they become informed, capable, and empowered individuals. Our focus centers on a dynamic action research project where "Daily 5" literacy

framework developed by Boushey and Moser (2006) was integrated into the context of a fourth-grade classroom within a small rural town in Kansas. At its core, this framework offers a quintet of empowering choices - Read to Self, Work on Writing, Read to Someone, Listen to Reading, and Word Work - each nurturing students' individual literacy goals. Yet, beyond the mechanics lies a pivotal aspiration: to empower all children to become proficient readers. We recognize the significance of engaging our readers right from the outset, igniting their curiosity by elucidating the compelling predicament this work endeavors to unravel. While we do delve deeper into this purpose in subsequent sections, we understand the paramount importance of inviting our readers on this journey from the very start. Our mission extends beyond implementing a methodology; it aims to fortify the bedrock of literacy, thus molding not just skillful readers, but also active and enthusiastic learners. The "Daily 5" is a literacy framework first introduced by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser in their 2006 book, *The Daily 5: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades*. This method offers students the following five choices of activities to work independently toward personal literacy goals:

- Read to Self

- Work on Writing

- Read to Someone

- Listen to Reading

- Word Work

During "Daily 5", students select from five authentic reading and writing choices, working independently toward personalized goals, while the teacher meets individual needs through whole-group and small-group instruction, as well as one-on-one conferring.

There is an extensive body of literature describing effective strategies and the impact of integrating the "Daily 5" framework in schools to help elementary students improve their literacy. For instance, Geloff (2013) observed an overall increase in first grade students' assessment scores from trigger scores given at the beginning of the year to baseline scores, four weeks later after the "Daily 5" implementation. A trigger score is a preset benchmark indicating a point at which specific actions are initiated. It's used to monitor students' progress or behavior. When a student reaches this score, teachers take targeted steps, like extra support for struggling students or advanced opportunities for high achievers. Trigger scores ensure timely interventions to aid students' success and promote a tailored learning environment. The researcher argued that using the management system of "Daily 5" may be a great way to improve students' assessment scores in a primary setting. In the same vein, based on his research findings, Duty (2016) concluded that the "Daily 5" literacy framework benefited struggling fourth grade readers by producing positive results in reading comprehension as well as contributing to better student attitudes and increased student engagement.

While this framework is grounded completely in research-based practices for early literacy instruction and has been widely implemented in classrooms throughout the country, there has been little research examining how the "Daily 5" aligns with best practices for teaching English Language Learners (ELL) (Pasfield, 2014). This issue becomes increasingly more relevant and important as the ELL population in rural areas continues to grow in P-12 schools nationwide (Lavalley, 2018).

As a fourth grade ELL teacher in a small rural area, the teacher in this action research project experienced an increasing migrant student population in her classroom in recent years. More specifically, around half of her students were ELL. According to the teacher, this was such

a blessing, but their biggest trouble oftentimes was learning the English language, and all of its "rules" to be able to succeed in their current classroom and further their future education. Also, in her own reflection as a third-year teacher, she never wanted to fall into the rut of doing the same things over and over again, specifically when it came to something that she had already known but was not her strongest subject area. Her students were so incredibly important to her and if this was something that worked for them, then she was all for it. Upon identifying the need, the teacher consulted the lead researcher about possible intervention that she could use to help her students as well as refresh her teaching. We agreed that she should try implementing that "Daily 5" framework into her English/Language Arts class time as an action research project. This action research project would also serve as a capstone project for her graduate program under the lead researcher's supervision, based on her specific instructional context and the literature about the potential of the "Daily 5" literacy framework. We worked closely with the teacher from the beginning of the project, assisted in modifying and approving her research procedure and gave constructive feedback to each of her milestones. At the end of the project, the teacher agreed to let us use the result of her action research to write a paper and submit it to an appropriate journal.

Action Research

Classroom action research is a powerful tool to improve the active learning environment for students. This type of research allows for natural pauses and reflection even during a project so that teachers can test new ideas and make timely adjustments to their own classrooms (Bennett at al., 2022). While definitions of classroom action research may vary, the general consensus is that it is a process in which classroom teachers examine their own educational practice systematically to improve and/or refine their performances, using the techniques of

research. The first step of an action research project usually starts with the teacher identifying an issue that s/he wants to examine and resolve, and then working on the intervention. In this particular project, the teacher wanted to help improve her ELL students' language literacy through the "Daily 5" framework.

Detailed Description of Intervention

The teacher implemented a comprehensive six-week intervention in her fourth-grade classroom, centered around the "Daily 5" framework developed by Boushey (2006). Within her 90-minute language block, she orchestrated a series of five distinct activities, tailored to each group of students with a deliberate focus on their individual needs and progress. Each of these specialized groups engaged in approximately 17 minutes of dedicated activity time before smoothly transitioning to the next task, accounting for a minute of transition time between rotations. One of these rotations, the "Read to Self" segment, allowed students to immerse themselves in independent reading. During this period, students were given the autonomy to select their preferred book from the classroom or school library, finding a solitary spot to engage in quiet and focused reading.

In the context of the "Word Work" component of the Daily 5 framework, which emphasized spelling and vocabulary development, the teacher fostered collaborative learning. Students were organized into small groups and given access to a diverse array of classroom materials, such as markers, tools, and maps, which they utilized to interact with words, patterns, and families. This interactive approach aimed to enhance their understanding of language structures.

The third rotation, known as "Work on Writing," was designed to stimulate creativity and exploration. Here, students were encouraged to delve into diverse writing topics without being

constrained by predefined expectations. The teacher also guided them in the process of curating a repository of writing ideas, meticulously organizing them into anchor charts. Often, the "Work on Writing" component seamlessly merged with "Word Work," as the two shared thematic elements that complemented each other.

The "Read to Others" and "Listen to Reading" components, both focused on auditory learning and engagement with texts, were amalgamated into a single rotation due to their inherent interconnectedness. During this combined session, students were provided with multiple avenues to engage with reading material. The teacher read aloud from novels or picture books related to ongoing lessons, while students also took turns reading stories to their peers. Occasionally, the teacher leveraged multimedia resources, such as Google Slides presentations or informative videos, to deepen comprehension of concepts or texts.

Data Collection and Findings

Collected data for this project included two different sources. The purpose of having more than one data source was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena, and also to test the validity through the convergence of information from different sources (Richey & Klein, 2014). The first data source was students' records/scores of daily assignments from the first six weeks of school prior to the intervention, and the second six weeks of school after the intervention. These assignments involved a variety of daily language or literacy- related learning activities such as reading comprehension, reading charts, sight word practice, and vocabulary building. Students were assigned to complete the assignments both at- home (homework) and in- class, the results of which were graded by the teacher. Other assignments, including math, were not collected in this project. The analysis of the data revealed that students' average scores before the intervention were in the 60% range. After the six-week intervention,

their average scores were in the 75%-80% range. The teacher also noted that 1) from her experience in the previous years, students' average scores did not normally jump up that high but were almost in the same 60% range, and 2) She was able to see her students' overall grammar and sentence structure significantly improve throughout their weekly work.

The second data collection was from students' scores on the Oral Reading Fluency passages, also before and after the intervention. Oral reading fluency is the ability for students to read text accurately, at an appropriate rate, and with expression. Baker et al. (2008) argued that when used as a predictor of reading comprehension tasks, an assessment of oral reading fluency performed as well as or better than many other comprehensive tests of reading. Our teacher in this project decided to use the Oral Reading Fluency passages to measure the impact of integrating "Daily 5" on her students' literacy progress, specifically in the reading domain. During the first six weeks before the "Daily 5" implementation, her students' average reading speed was 130 words per minute on fourth grade level texts. After employing the "Daily 5" framework, the students' reading speed reached to were approximately 155 words per minute. According to the teacher, this was something that even her students' parents also noticed and made comments that they recognized the benefit and the improvement.

Discussion and Reflection

On reflection, according to the classroom teacher, throughout her research process it was very evident that implementing the "Daily 5" framework within her classroom was incredibly beneficial. The collected data showed that most students had improved in every area, if not all in certain areas. She personally had seen improvement in students' ability to independently do grammar within the classroom. This was incredibly important and something that she had been trying to work on specifically with her ELL students. Another reflection the teacher shared was

that although implementing "Daily 5" into her schedule had taken more time on her end, it had proven to help students in multiple areas, which was the most important. Now she believed that by taking the time to break everything down, she would be able to use it for years to come and many more students would be able to benefit as well.

The results of this intervention have also shown that putting students into specific groups that fitted their needs while implementing the "Daily 5" was significantly beneficial when it came to language arts. She had been able to see students truly work together and to break apart the certain lessons that she was trying to teach. As commented earlier by the journal editor/reviewer about what factors ("Daily 5" framework implementation or small specific groups for targeted instruction or both of them) actually had impact on students' performances, within the scope of this action research project, we were not sure what factor really played a role. We think that will be an interesting question or topic for future experimental studies.

Finally, these findings echo what has been reported in the literature about the positive impact of integrating the "Daily 5" into the classroom. In addition, it helps address the concern by Pasfield (2014) about how the "Daily 5" can be used for teaching English Language Learners. Furthermore, this action research also indicates that doing action research like this project could help both classroom teachers to reflect on what they are doing and improve students' performances. It is a learning process for both the researchers and the classroom teacher to work together to identify a classroom problem, find and implement an intervention, collect and analyze the data, and report and reflect on the results. That is the power of classroom action research. The preliminary result of this action research also opens up new research opportunities to examine the impact of "Daily 5" in larger scale settings.

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