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# The Effects of an Intensive Reading Program on the Test Scores of Middle Level Students Who Read Below Grade Level

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**The Effects of an Intensive Reading  
Program on the Test Scores of  
Middle Level Students Who Read Below Grade Level**

**A Thesis**

**Presented to the  
Department of Education  
and the Faculty of the Graduate College  
University of Nebraska**

**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
University of Nebraska-Omaha**

**by**

**Robin K. Hayhurst**

**April 1993**

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**As for my husband, I give him great thanks for his patience and his ability to keep me sane throughout this entire process.**

## Thesis Acceptance

Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of  
Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Masters of Arts, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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<i>Raymond A. Schultz</i>	<i>Teacher Education</i>
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*Patricia A. Kolasa*  
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*April 20, 1993*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Abstract**

**Some students enter the middle school each year reading below grade level. This researcher saw a need to study the effects of a special language arts based reading class on the reading skills of those students. Nineteen students took part in this study. Nine were in the experimental group which attended the special reading class in addition to their regular classes. Ten were in the control group who attended only their regular classes.**

**Both groups of students were given the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test made up of a vocabulary and a comprehension section. The test was given to both groups before and after the experimental group attended the special class. The class itself was language arts based. In order to help improve the students reading scores, this researcher taught many skills including phonics, word recognition, writing, speaking, and thinking skills.**

**Although a t-test showed no significant difference between the post-test scores of both groups, there was a significant difference between the pre and post-test scores of the experimental group. The control group's pre and post-test scores showed no significant difference.**

## Table of Contents

	Page
<b>List of Tables.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Chapter</b>	
<b>I. The Problem</b>	
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Background.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The Problem and Purpose of the Study.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Scope and Delineation.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Hypothesis.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Importance of the Study.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Definition of Terms.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>II. Review of Related Literature</b>	
<b>Overview of Chapter.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Related Literature.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Summary of Research.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>III. Methodology</b>	
<b>Overview.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Research Design.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Selection of Subjects.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Collection of Data.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Limitations.....</b>	<b>16</b>

## Table of Contents

	Page
<b>Chapter (Continued)</b>	
<b>III. Classroom Procedures.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>IV. Results</b>	
<b>Overview.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Hypothesis Restatement.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Findings.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Other Tests.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Summary of Results.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>V. Summary, Discussion, and Further Research</b>	
<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Discussion.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Conclusions.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Further Research.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Appendix A.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Appendix B.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Appendix C.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Appendix D.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Appendix E.....</b>	<b>77</b>



## List of Tables

### Chapter IV

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>I. Results of the Pretests and Post-tests of the Experimental and Control Groups.....</b>	<b>22-23</b>
<b>II. Results of the Pretest and Post-test of the Experimental Group.....</b>	<b>23-24</b>
<b>III. Results of the Pretest and Post-test of the Control Group.....</b>	<b>24-25</b>
<b>IV. Results of the Vocabulary Pre and Post-tests of the Experimental and Control Groups.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>V. Results of the Comprehension Pre and Post-tests of the Experimental and Control Groups.....</b>	<b>26-27</b>
<b>VI. Results of the Vocabulary Pre and Post-tests of the Experimental Group.....</b>	<b>27-28</b>
<b>VII. Results of the Comprehension Pre and Post-tests of the Experimental Group.....</b>	<b>28-29</b>
<b>VIII. Results of the Vocabulary Pre and Post-tests of the Control Group.....</b>	<b>29-30</b>
<b>IX. Results of the Comprehension Pre and Post-tests of the Control Group.....</b>	<b>30-31</b>
<b>X. Summary of Results of Statistical Analyses.....</b>	<b>32</b>

## **Chapter I**

### **The Problem**

#### **Introduction**

**Illiteracy is an important problem facing the United States today. Since one of the National Goals for Education adopted by the nation's governors in February 1990 is that by the year 2000 all adults will be literate, educators today have a tremendous challenge facing them (NSEA Voice, 1991). The teaching of reading and writing must once again come to the forefront in educational importance. Learning to read and write must be held as the most important of all skills because everything else a person does educationally depends on his/her literacy.**

#### **Background**

**Reading has been defined as the ability to recognize printed symbols and to comprehend their meaning. Reading is also an essential skill in accomplishing many day to day tasks (Olson & Dillner, 1976). Many people believe that those who read well usually write well. There is a great need for schools to help strengthen the connection between these two language tasks (Smith & Dahl, 1984).**

**Traditionally, there have been several approaches to**

teaching reading in the elementary schools. Some schools use a language experience approach. This approach attempts to unify the language arts so that the learner is dealing with familiar concepts. Another approach is individualized reading. This approach teaches reading skills based on books selected by the child not the teacher.

The majority of schools use a basal reader series to teach reading skills. A basal reader series consists of a sequence of books that teach reading skills in an orderly manner. Each skill is built upon the skill before it. Students stay in one reader until they are ready to move to the next set of skills (Olson & Dillner, 1976).

One question that might be raised from this is: What happens to those students who do not grasp the information given them in elementary schools about reading? In this researcher's experience as a seventh grade English teacher, these students arrive at the middle school very unprepared for the contents of the various classes taught by a variety of teachers. Very few middle schools offer intensive programs in reading to help students who read below grade level to catch up on those vitally important skills.

### **The Problem and the Purpose of the Study**

The problem of this research was to discover if, when given a greater amount of time to work on their reading skills, students who read below grade level could become more successful than they had been in the past in terms of test scores and performance levels. This researcher felt there was a need for this study because information on intensive reading programs is very limited and no studies were found that pertained to that type of program.

The purpose of the study was to see if a program aimed at improving reading skills had any effect on those students reading below grade level. This study attempted to clarify any effects found and describe them as positive or negative.

### **Scope and Delineation**

This study focused on the effects a special reading program might have on the test scores of the students involved in this study. Students' past and present achievement scores and classroom performance were taken into account as factors in choosing participants for the study.

### **Hypothesis**

The hypothesis of this study was that there would be a

significant difference in the test scores of those students who took part in the special intensive reading class. That is to say that the students who took the course would find greater success on tests than those students who were in a traditional English class only.

### **The Importance of the Study**

This study could prove to be of importance not only to middle level educators but also elementary educators. It may give some insight into the success of special classes. If successful, this program could be implemented at lower grade levels with even greater success.

### **Definition of Terms**

1. **Middle School**. Middle school refers to the three to five years between the elementary and high school that focus on the various needs of students in these in-between years. The heart of the middle school is the learner (Alexander & George, 1981).

2. **Remedial reading**. Remedial reading is "reading instruction designed to counteract or correct a condition which has caused a student to function below his mental capacity in reading." (Kennedy, 1971, p. 2)

3. **At-risk readers**. At-risk readers are those children who

have difficulty learning to read and are underachieving in school (Williams & Brogan, 1991).

4. Whole language. Whole language unifies and integrates oral and written language development with development of thinking skills and building knowledge (Williams & Brogan, 1991). It is the infusion of an integrated language arts process (Cushenbery, 1989).

5. Phonics. "Phonics is the study of the relationship between speech sounds and their spellings." (Gunning, 1988, p. 11) Phonics is used as a tool for decoding words (Gunning, 1988).

6. Language-experience approach (LEA). LEA is "a holistic approach method for teaching reading that encompasses all four facets of communications--listening, speaking, reading, and writing." (Cushenbery, p. 24)

## Chapter II

### Review of Related Literature

#### Overview of Chapter

**This chapter will analyze literature related to literacy in the schools as well as reading programs already in place. This researcher will attempt to show the basis and need for this study because of the relatively few answered questions about the literacy problem in the middle school. In analyzing the results of this study, this researcher will attempt to answer more of those questions.**

#### Related Literature

**Reading is such a large part of everyday life that it is easy to take it for granted. At one time literacy was simply defined as the encoding and decoding of the written language (Bloome, 1989). Many researchers now agree that defining literacy and even illiteracy is much more complicated (Bloome, 1989; Scribner, 1984; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991).**

**Illiteracy does not necessarily mean the complete absence of ability to read, and literacy covers a wide spectrum of capabilities all the way from,**

**say, being able to decipher a want-ad in a newspaper to being able to enjoy a novel by Thomas Mann or read a scientific treatise with understanding. (Carroll & Chall, 1975, p. 6)**

**No matter how one defines literacy or illiteracy, most would agree that it is vitally important that society focuses its attention on the literacy problem. Very few problems facing society today are as serious as the literacy problem. The freedom this society has will be in jeopardy if every attempt is not made to educate citizens in the knowledge needed to make good choices to keep democracy working (Copperman, 1978).**

**According to Cushenbery (1989), the fact that there are very few long-term secondary reading programs nation-wide may contribute to the high rate of functional illiteracy in this country. One in five adults may be incapable of answering questions dealing with areas basic to social and economic survival.**

**One way to end the large adult literacy problem is to improve the teaching of reading and writing in the schools. This and a minimal literacy requirement for high school graduates may help society bring an end to the literacy problem (Carroll &**



**Chall, 1975). But where does one begin? One can not simply wish the problem away. It would be beneficial to explore the problem as it pertains to the educational system. In other words, how successful are the schools' existing programs? This researcher will focus on reading in the middle schools.**

**Reading is a complex process. Each reader brings experiences and competencies to this process. Since the range of variability increases with each passing school year, middle-grade teachers know the gamut of reading development. Middle school teachers, who daily face as many as 150 students, conceivably encounter 150 reading process variations, from novice to expert. (Roe, 1992, p. 190)**

**Teaching reading in the middle school has not received much emphasis. The teaching of reading has been generally left up to the elementary teachers and the teaching of literature has been the job of most secondary teachers; therefore, some middle school teachers are poorly prepared to effectively teach students who enter the middle grades performing below grade level. That is not to say one can blame the teachers. Many changes have occurred in educational philosophy toward middle**

**level learners and toward a school's responsibility in educating special needs students. This has led to mainstreaming and more attention being paid to ways of meeting individual needs within a regular classroom situation (Aulls, 1978).**

**Making things even more difficult for the middle school teacher is the fact that they face at least five class periods per day. These classes may contain thirty students or more. This could mean thirty reading levels and/or learning styles. When one considers the social make-up of each class also, one can see how uniquely challenging these teaching experiences can be (Roe, 1992).**

**There are other challenges facing these teachers as well. With new emphasis on whole language teaching, teachers need to integrate literature, reading comprehension strategies and writing processes through the reading/language arts program. This poses a unique problem for students who have difficulty reading. The implications of this are overwhelming (Williams & Brogan, 1991).**

**One common criticism of many middle school reading programs is that they are boring to the teachers and the students. This criticism has been made of both large group and**

**individualized reading programs. The problems seem to stem from the lack of relating reading to other forms of communication (Aulls, 1978). Students need to have a whole language approach that integrates all aspects of language into meaningful experiences. Even at-risk readers can benefit from such an approach; they just need more explicit teaching of skills and strategies (Williams & Brogan, 1991).**

**Researchers differ on what methods could best solve society's literacy problem, but many agree that integrating the teaching of reading and writing is essential in any program. As Smith and Dahl (1984) state: "Language reveals to us the ideas we possess. Reading and listening enable us to expand our ideas. Writing and talking enable us to show and reconstruct our ideas" (p. 4). Everything in the school's curriculum depends on one's ability to read and write and they depend on each other. Those who read well are those who usually write well, so there is obviously a correlation between the two that must be explored (Stein, 1984; Smith & Dahl, 1984; Alvermann, 1987).**

**The middle school can play a unique role in solving the literacy problem. The middle school has always had the intention of focusing on the whole student. According to one of**

**the earliest proponents of middle school, Eichhorn (1966), teachers must consider the physical and mental growth as well as cultural forces at work on a middle school student. Middle school teachers are beginning to become more aware of each student's emotional, social, physical as well as intellectual needs. One way to approach these multiple needs could be through a special reading program. This program could allow teachers and students to experience a learning environment that focuses on the skills the students need to be successful after the middle school years.**

**The primary function of schools is to teach students a body of skills and knowledge. The most important of these are the primary academic skills of reading, writing, and computing. When these are successfully developed, students can apply them to socially required tasks, life skills (Copperman, 1978). Although most educators would agree with this statement, it might be hard to admit that schools have sometimes failed to accomplish this function.**

**Although few children leave American elementary schools completely unable to read, an alarming proportion enter and ultimately graduate from high**

**school with the ability to read at only a late elementary level. (Snow et al., 1991, p. 1)**

**Too many middle schools are falling short in providing enough time and materials for exploratory reading, teaching strategies for better comprehension, providing opportunities for writing, and eliciting thinking (Moore & Stenganich, 1990).**

**Some students at the middle school level seem to need more help in reading than most middle schools are presently offering. The middle school must truly make itself a transitional time. Middle schools could do well to borrow a few ideas from some elementary schools. These ideas might include teaching reading strategies. Researchers are finding that at-risk readers develop higher level reading and thinking skills when they are taught certain instructional strategies (Williams & Brogan, 1991).**

**The correct emphasis on reading in the middle school is on content and process, with attention to motivation as support for what students are learning. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find instruction that balances content, process, and motivation. Teachers do not always have a clear idea of the middle school's mission and classroom complexities can override some decisions about instruction (Conley, 1990). Some middle school teachers**

are looking to their colleagues for assistance.

Some middle schools are also borrowing a teaching strategy from some elementary schools, mastery learning. Mastery learning allows students to remain in larger groups and still be allowed more time to master certain skills. Mastery learning is the heart of improving skills of students with some learning difficulties (Choate & Rakes, 1989; Bloom, 1976).

Some effective middle school reading programs put students in control of their reading. This is based in a reading curriculum that includes planned learning experiences to help students understand the reading process (Herrmann, 1990). Most of these programs, however, do not have special provisions for students who are reading below grade level.

### Summary of Research

Many criticisms are made of school systems on almost a daily basis. Although many of these are without merit, research shows that the school systems could be doing much more to help end society's literacy problem. Many methods to improve the reading skills of at-risk students have been largely ignored or deemed unworthy of an attempt.

The middle school's role in ending the literacy problem has

**not been fully examined. This study attempted to support the earlier stated hypothesis as well as the research done for the review of literature.**

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Overview**

**This chapter will focus on the methods used in this study. This will include the research design, selection of subjects, collection and analysis of data, limitations, and classroom procedures.**

#### **Research Design**

**This study was an experimental study. The design used was the pretest/post-test control group design. The experimental group attended the new reading class as well as a regular seventh grade English class. The second group, the control group, attended only the regular seventh grade English class.**

#### **Selection of Subjects**

**Nineteen seventh grade students who read at least two grade levels below the seventh grade level were studied. These students were selected out of this researcher's seventh grade English class. This selection was made based on classroom performance and the 1991 California Achievement Tests (CAT). The sections used to determine student selection for the**



research were: Total reading, language expression, language mechanics, total language, and spelling.

Half of the students chosen for the research attended a special reading class twice a week while still attending their regular English class. The other half of the students attended their regular English class alone.

Placement of these students was dependent on their availability at the time the new class was offered. Students whose schedules prevented them from attending the special class were placed in the control group. The experimental class was comprised of those students whose schedules allowed placement in the special class.

#### Collection and Analysis of Data

This study had a null hypothesis that the special reading class would have no effect on improving test scores of students who read below grade level. The data was collected from the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. A t-test was used to test the null hypothesis, and a .05 probability level was accepted as significant.

#### Limitations

One limitation of this study was that the students were in

**the class for only one semester every other day. For purposes of scheduling the experimental group was divided into two groups that met on opposite days. There was also the chance of some students leaving the school district.**

### **Classroom Procedures**

**All of the activities involved in this research took place at Papillion Junior High in Papillion, Nebraska with the full cooperation of the administration. The experimental group met twice a week for the first class period of the day. Half of the experimental group met on "A days" and half met on "B days". "A and B days" are simple organizational tools used by the school to keep classes that meet every other day on an equal basis. Neither class met on Fridays because this researcher was not available for class first hour. These students also attended their regular English classes. The control group attended the regular English classes only.**

**Both groups were given the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test before the new class started. The test consisted of forty-five multiple choice vocabulary questions and forty-eight multiple choice comprehension questions.**

**The students in the experimental group were instructed in**

several areas in hopes of improving their reading skills. This researcher took an integrated language arts approach to teaching this special course. In preparing lessons for the course, this researcher took into consideration phonetic, word recognition, reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking skills (see Appendix B).

The students in this class used textbooks already provided by the district. The majority of the course work involved the following textbooks: Basic Skills in English (McDougal, Littell & Company, 1980), The Riverside Spelling Program (The Riverside Publishing Company, 1984), Words: Using Words with Competency (Oxford Book Company, Inc., 1981), and Combo #302: An ACE Anthology (Scott, Foresman and Company, 1980)(see Appendix E).

The lessons involving these textbooks varied. When the class used the Basic Skills in English text, the lessons included: context clues, synonyms and antonyms, base word, prefixes and suffixes, empty sentences, padded sentences, and unity in paragraphs. The Riverside Spelling Program lessons included phonetic activities.

In the text, Words: Using Words with Competency, students studied special word lists in the context of short stories and

then applied the knowledge of the words by using them in new sentences. The Combo# 302 text contained short stories and plays that allowed for oral reading activities and class discussions (see Appendix B).

These students also had access to computer programs that tutor students in specific skills on which they might need extra work. These programs included: Those Amazing Reading Machines (I-IV), Grammar Monsters, and Grammar Gazette (see Appendix E). Both the textbooks and the computer programs were aimed at students who have some difficulty in reading.

The class began the first day of the second semester and lasted until the semester ended. At that time both groups of students, the experimental and control groups, were tested again. These tests were analyzed as the first set of tests had been in order to determine if there was a significant difference in the results.

### Summary

Although this study can not attempt to answer all the questions one might have about literacy or the importance of reading, it will attempt to find significant results in testing for those students who, in the past, have not been able to perform

**at grade level. The middle school has been the focus of a great deal of research and has certainly been in the forefront of educational discussions for the past few years, but little research has been done on the educational philosophy of most middle schools toward the intensive teaching of reading.**

**It is this researcher's opinion that much more research could be done on the effectiveness of an intensive reading program for students who perform below grade level on tests. Hopefully, this research can provide some information for other researchers interested in the same area of study. But more importantly, this research may provide some valuable insight for those educators who are faced with similar problems in the classroom and with national goals that are frighteningly out of reach at this time.**

## Chapter IV

### Results

#### Overview

Students at the middle school level face new curricula and a variety of teaching styles. If those students enter the middle school below grade level in reading, the reading challenges of the middle school curricula could prove to be overwhelming. Improving the reading skills of middle school students who read below grade level was the driving force behind this study. This chapter will include the following: a restatement of the null hypothesis, the findings of this study, other tests that were run in conjunction with this study, and a summary of the results of this study.

#### Hypothesis Restatement

The null hypothesis of this study was that a special reading class would have no significant effect on improving test scores of those students who read below grade level. The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test was administered as a pretest and post-test to collect data that would accept or reject the null hypothesis. A t-test was used to analyze the data, and a .05 probability level was accepted as significant.

## **Findings**

The results of this study were mixed. Several t-tests were run with varying results. The tests included the following comparisons: the pretests of the experimental and control groups, the post-tests of both groups, the pre and post-tests of the experimental group, and the pre and post-tests of the control group.

The pretest of the experimental and control groups showed no significant difference (Table I). These results were expected since the placement of students in a particular group was based solely on their availability to attend the special class.

The post-tests of the experimental and control group also showed no significant difference (Table I). Thus the first two t-tests that were run accept the null hypothesis that there would be no significant difference between the two groups.

**Table I**

**Results of the Pretests and Post-tests of the  
Experimental and Control Group**

<b>Pretest</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Experimental</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>36.22</b>	<b>7.04</b>	<b>1.48</b>
<b>Control</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>12.97</b>	<b>(non-sig)</b>

**Table I (Continued)**

<b>Post-test</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Experimental</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>44.44</b>	<b>7.16</b>	<b>.258</b>
<b>Control</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>(non-sig)</b>

However, when the second two tests were run, different results were discovered. The comparison of the pre and post-tests of the experimental group showed a significant difference (Table II) while the pre and post-tests of the control group proved to be non-significant (Table III).

**Table II**

**Results of the Pretest and Post-test  
of the Experimental Group**

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Pretest</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>36.22</b>	<b>7.84</b>	
<b>Post-test</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>44.44</b>	<b>7.16</b>	<b>5.15 (Sig)</b>
<b>Difference in Means</b>		<b>8.22</b>		



Table II (Continued)

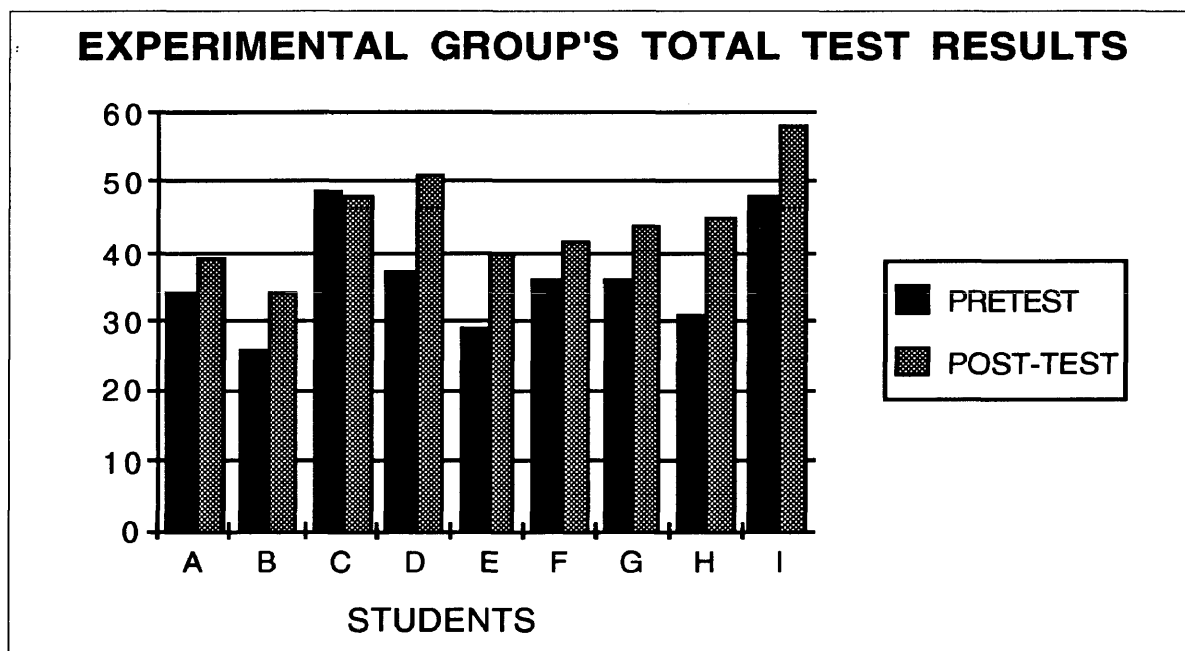
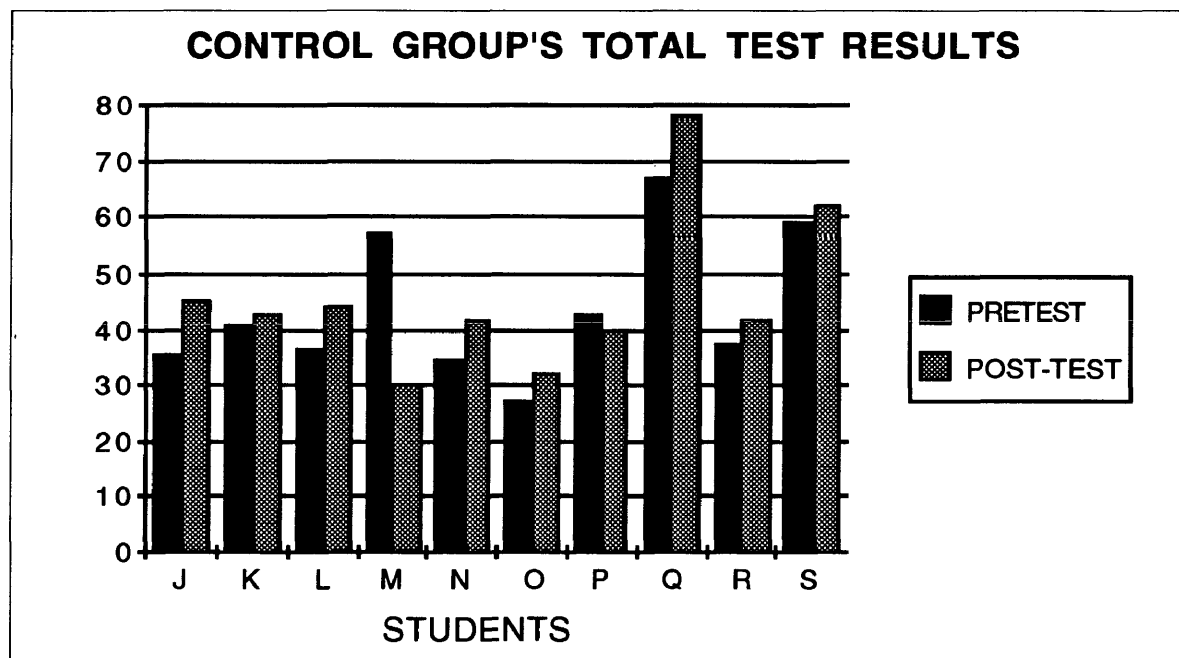


Table III

**Results of the Pretest and Post-test  
of the Control Group**

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Pretest</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>12.97</b>	
<b>Post-test</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>.629</b> <b>(non-sig)</b>
<b>Difference in means</b>		<b>2.2</b>		

Table III (Continued)



### Other Tests

After running the t-tests on the original data, this researcher decided to look at the information from a different angle. Since the Gates-MacGinitie Test is divided into two sections, vocabulary and comprehension, this researcher decided to run t-tests on the individual sections to see if those tests showed any significant differences. The results of those t-tests were quite interesting.

The vocabulary pretests of the experimental and control groups showed no significant difference. The same is true of the post-tests of the vocabulary section (Table IV). When analyzing

the pretests and post-tests of the comprehension section for both groups, again they showed no significant difference (Table V).

**Table IV**

**Results of the Vocabulary Pre and Post-tests  
of the Experimental and Control Groups**

<b>Vocabulary Pretests</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Experimental</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17.78</b>	<b>4.55</b>	
<b>Control</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>1.41 (non-sig)</b>
<b>Vocabulary Post-tests</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Experimental</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>3.46</b>	
<b>Control</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>6.81</b>	<b>.832 (non-sig)</b>

**Table V**

**Results of the Comprehension Pre and Post-tests  
of the Experimental and Control Groups**

<b>Comprehension Pretests</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Experimental</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18.44</b>	<b>3.81</b>	
<b>Control</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>8.89</b>	<b>1.14 (non-sig)</b>

**Table V (Continued)**

<b>Comprehension Post-tests</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Experimental</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22.44</b>	<b>5.34</b>	
<b>Control</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>8.88</b>	<b>-.218 (non-sig)</b>

When the experimental group's vocabulary sections were analyzed, there proved to be a significant difference between the pre and post-tests. The same can be said of the comprehension sections. There was a significant difference between the pre and post-tests (Tables VI-VII). However, the control group's results were mixed. There was a significant difference between the vocabulary section's pre and post-tests. The comprehension section's pre and post-tests, however, showed no significant difference (Tables VIII-IX).

**Table VI**

**Results of the Vocabulary Pre and Post-tests  
of the Experimental Group**

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Pretest</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17.78</b>	<b>4.55</b>	
<b>Post-test</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>3.46</b>	<b>6.01 (sig)</b>
<b>Difference in means</b>		<b>4.22</b>		

Table VI (Continued)

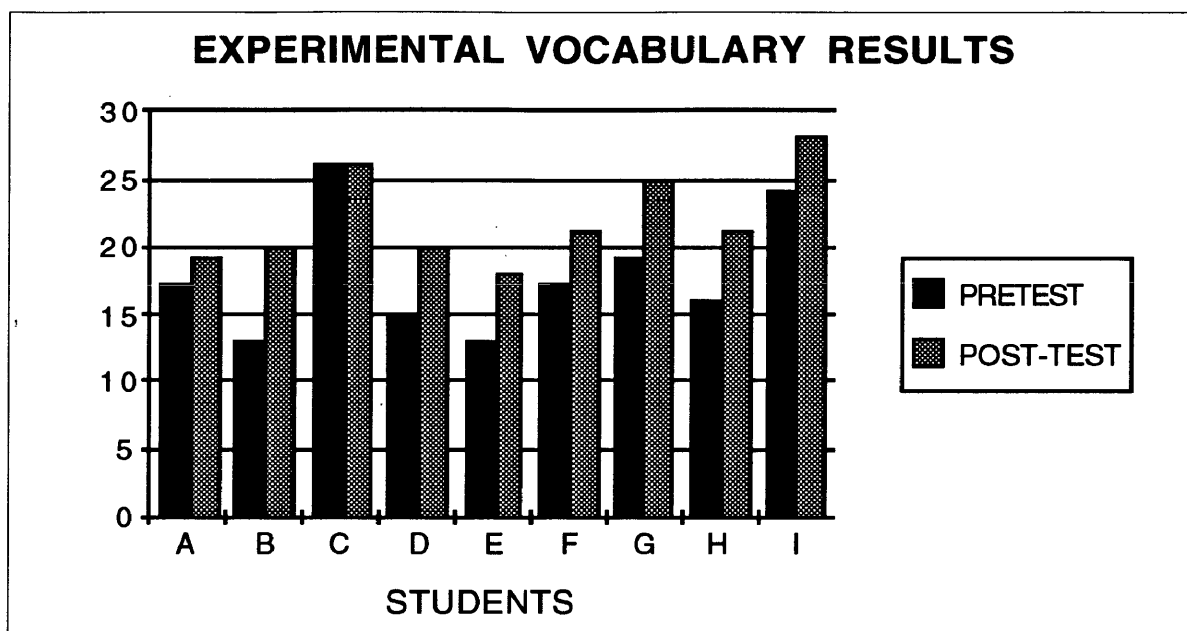
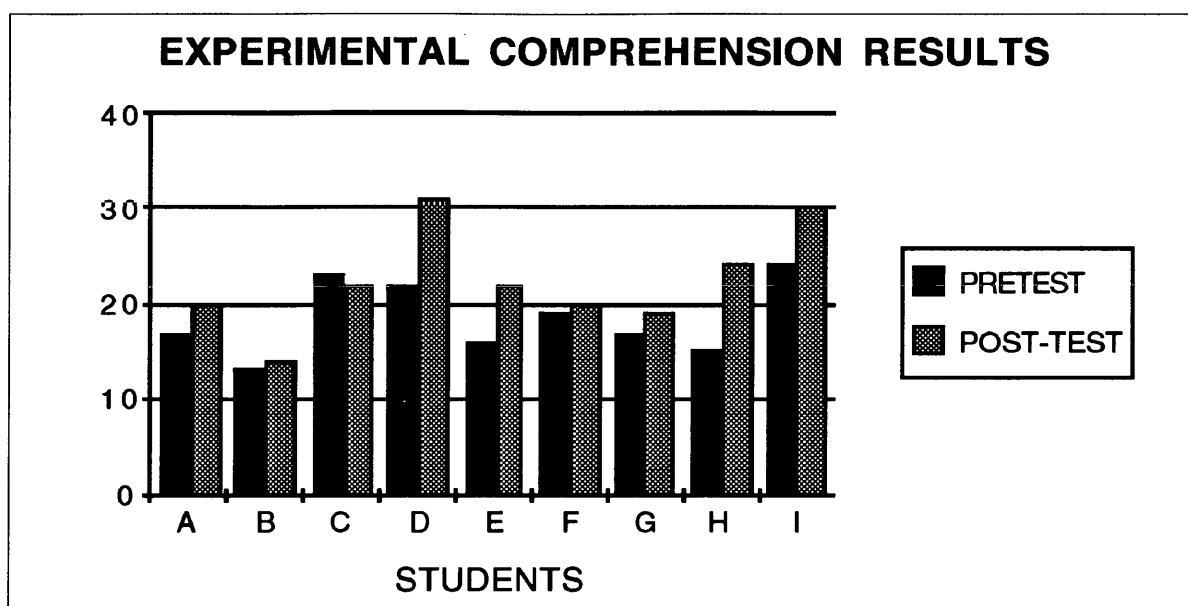


Table VII

**Results of the Comprehension Pre and Post-tests  
of the Experimental Group**

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Pretest</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18.44</b>	<b>3.81</b>	
<b>Post-test</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22.44</b>	<b>5.34</b>	<b>3.3 (sig)</b>
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>				
<b>Difference in means</b>		<b>4.0</b>		

Table VII (Continued)



**Table VIII**  
**Results of the Vocabulary Pre and Post-tests**  
**of the Control Group**

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Pretest</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>6.6</b>	
<b>Post-test</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>6.81</b>	<b>2.44</b> <b>(sig)</b>
<b>Difference in means</b>		<b>2.6</b>		

Table VIII (Continued)

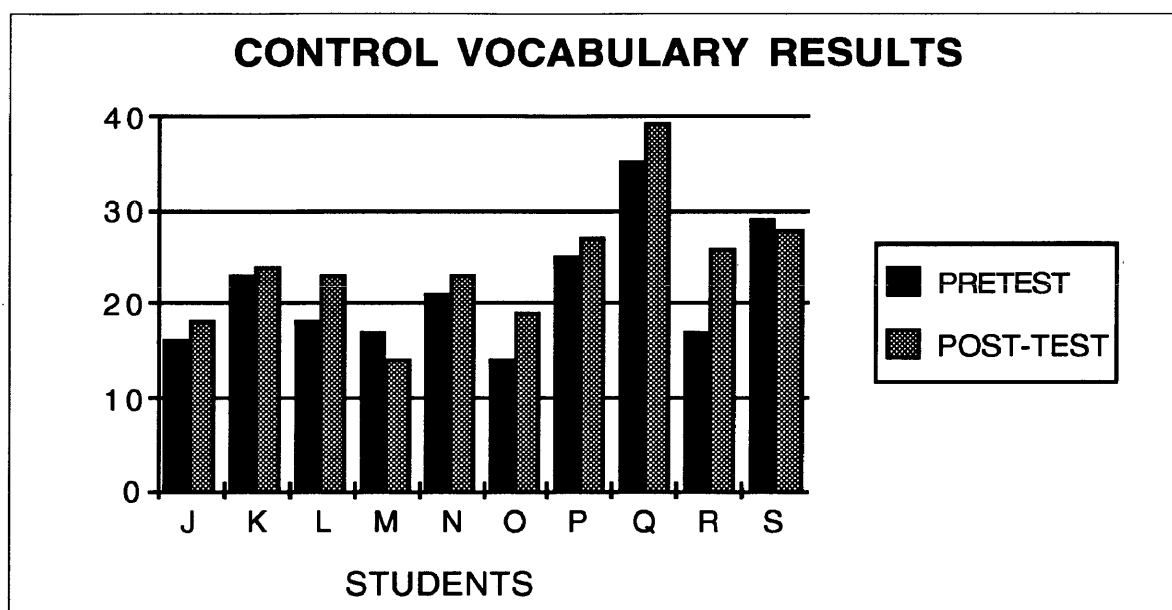
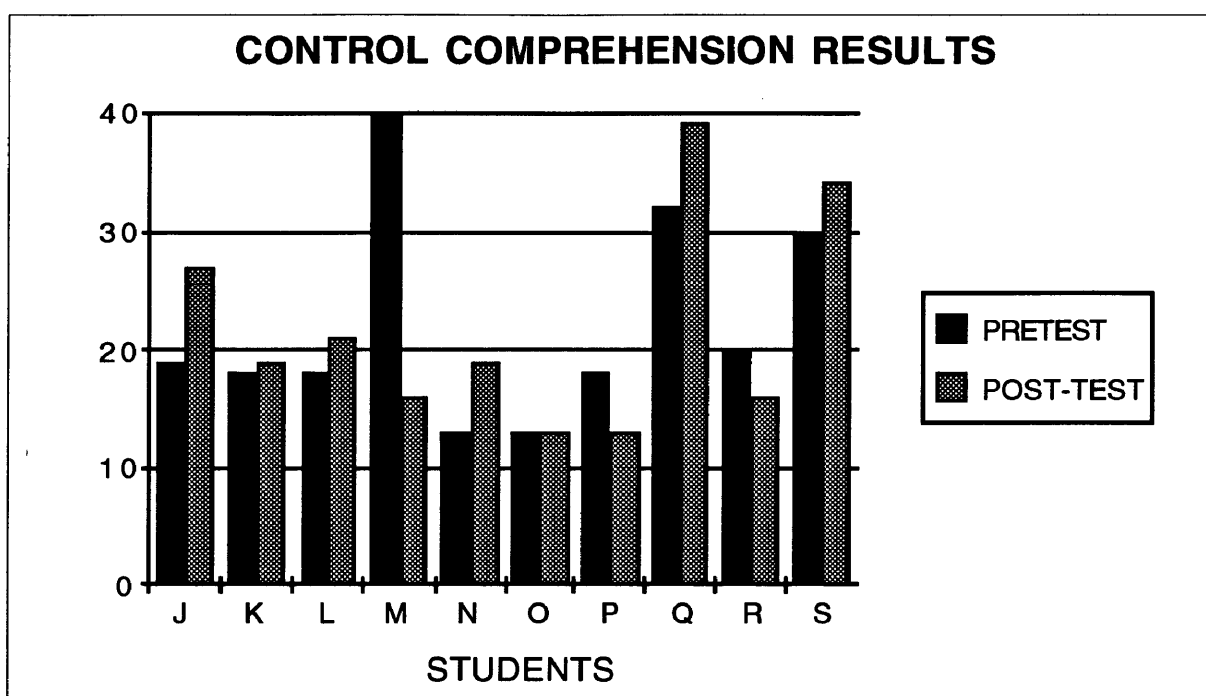


Table IX

**Results of the Comprehension Pre and Post-Tests  
of the Control Group**

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Pretest</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>8.89</b>	
<b>Post-test</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>8.88</b>	<b>-.13 (non-sig)</b>
<b>Difference in means</b>		<b>-.4</b>		

Table IX (Continued)



### Summary of Results

The results of the numerous t-tests run were fascinating to analyze. There were a few surprises that could have been caused in a variety of ways. After analyzing each of the tests, this researcher interpreted the results (Table X).

Anytime human subjects are used in research, the only thing of which one can be absolutely sure is that nothing is for certain; and when those subjects happen to be seventh grade boys and girls, the results can be even more confusing.

As was expected, the pretests of the two groups showed



**Table X**  
**Summary of Results of Statistical Analyses**

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Pretest E.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>36.22</b>	<b>7.84</b>		
<b>Pretest C.</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>12.97</b>	<b>1.48</b>	<b>NS</b>
<b>Post-test E.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>44.44</b>	<b>7.16</b>		
<b>Post-test C.</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>.258</b>	<b>NS</b>
<b>Pre-Post E.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>36.22</b>	<b>7.84</b>		
	<b>9</b>	<b>44.44</b>	<b>7.16</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
<b>Pre-Post C.</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>12.97</b>		
	<b>10</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>.629</b>	<b>NS</b>
<b>Vocab. Pretest E.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17.78</b>	<b>4.55</b>		
<b>Vocab. Pretest C.</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>1.41</b>	<b>NS</b>
<b>Vocab. Post-test E.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>3.46</b>		
<b>Vocab. Post-test C.</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>6.81</b>	<b>.832</b>	<b>NS</b>
<b>Comp. Pretest E.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18.44</b>	<b>3.81</b>		
<b>Comp. Pretest C.</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>8.89</b>	<b>1.14</b>	<b>NS</b>
<b>Comp. Post-test E.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22.44</b>	<b>5.34</b>		
<b>Comp. Post-test C.</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>8.88</b>	<b>-.218</b>	<b>NS</b>
<b>Vocab. Pre-Post E.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17.78</b>	<b>4.55</b>		
	<b>9</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>3.46</b>	<b>6.01</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
<b>Comp. Pre-Post E.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18.44</b>	<b>3.81</b>		
	<b>9</b>	<b>22.44</b>	<b>5.34</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
<b>Vocab. Pre-Post C.</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>6.6</b>		
	<b>10</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>6.81</b>	<b>2.44</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
<b>Comp. Pre- Post C.</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>8.89</b>		
	<b>10</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>8.88</b>	<b>-.13</b>	<b>NS</b>

**no significant difference. However, the difference between the means of the two pretests was reasonably large. The control group's mean was 7.38 points higher than the experimental group's mean. Even though this did not constitute a statistically significant difference, it does show that the groups were not as even as this researcher thought they would be.**

**When choosing a group of students to participate in this study, this researcher used California Achievement Test(CAT) scores and classroom performance. These two indicators produced a list of twenty students fairly equally matched (one student moved leaving nineteen for the actual study). Several members of the control group scored much higher on the Gates-MacGinitie pretest than their CAT scores and classroom performance indicated. Because of these students, the two groups were a little unbalanced from the start.**

**The fact that the post-tests of the two groups also showed no significant difference was somewhat unexpected. The means of these two tests were much closer than on the pretests. The control group's post-test mean was only 1.36 points above the mean of the experimental group's post-test.**

**One student in the control group scored much lower on the**

post-test than on the pretest. There could be many reasons for this drop in test scores. This student may have been guessing on the test and did a much better job of guessing on the pretest, but more than likely the student's attitude at the time of the pretest was better than at the time of the post-test. This student was preparing to move to a different town shortly after the post-test was administered. This may have affected his attitude about participating in this study. Because this student moved before the test results were analyzed, this researcher had no way of discovering the real reason for his performance.

Another factor that may have affected the outcome of the tests was the fact that there were relatively few subjects involved with the testing. Since the pool from which the subjects were chosen was this researcher's seventh grade English class, it was limited to about one hundred and thirty students. When the CAT scores were examined, about thirty students were identified as reading at least two grade levels below their current grade. When those students who were labeled for special education were eliminated, only about twenty students remained. Given the small number, any one student could greatly affect the outcome of the tests as was

**mentioned earlier.**

**Even though there were some factors that complicated the tests' results, the significant difference between the experimental group's pre and post-tests proved to this researcher that the treatment given to that group in the form of a special class was effective. The difference in the means of those two tests was 8.22 points, and that is quite an impressive improvement.**

**Although not all of the tests rejected this study's null hypothesis, this researcher still feels that enough evidence was gathered through this study to support the idea of a broad-based language arts intensive reading program for those students reading below grade level.**

## Chapter V

### Summary, Discussion, and Further Research

#### Summary

It was the intent of this research to discover if an intensive reading program could benefit students who were reading at least two grade levels below the seventh grade. This researcher felt the need for such a study because of the limited amount of research available on similar programs. The program set up through this research took a broad-based language arts approach to the teaching of reading to students with reading difficulties.

The test used to determine the significance of this research's results was the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. This is a standardized test involving multiple choice questions on vocabulary and comprehension. This test was given as a pretest and a post-test to two groups of students, an experimental and a control group.

The test results were analyzed for significance in several ways. The pre and post-tests of the experimental group were compared as were the pre and post-tests of the control group. Also included in the statistical analysis were the results of the

pretest of the experimental group compared with the pretest of the control group. The post-tests of each group were also compared and analyzed. The null hypothesis was accepted, thus the directional hypothesis was rejected.

A special class was established specifically for the treatment aspect of this research. This class was taught by this researcher as part of the regular school day at Papillion Junior High where this researcher is employed as an English teacher. This research had the full cooperation of the administration of Papillion Junior High and of the Papillion-LaVista school district.

The experimental group members attended this special class in addition to their regular English class. The control group attended their regular English class but did not attend the special class that was used as the treatment for this study.

The special class's language arts base emphasized many skills. Among these skills were: word recognition, phonetics, reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking skills. These skills were integrated into special lessons and activities aimed at improving overall reading performance.

### **Discussion**

This researcher found the research and results of this

**study to be quite interesting. Working so closely with the students involved in the experimental group of this research was exhilarating and frustrating at the same time. The exhilaration came from the fact that this researcher saw these students in a totally different light. They were excited about the class and participated much more than in the regular classroom.**

**The frustration came when the time limitations were realized. After the experimental class began, it became evident that there was a lot of work to be done. Since the experimental group was split into two classes that met on opposite days to accommodate more students' schedules, the amount of time each student was in the class was cut in half.**

**Once in the class with these students, this researcher found them to be ready to learn especially when they were not inhibited by large classes of twenty-five to thirty students. When asked which kind of classroom situation they preferred, the students unanimously stated that they preferred the smaller classes. They mentioned that they felt more comfortable answering questions and particularly reading out loud in a small group of students who had similar difficulties.**

**The care and concern the students felt for each other in this special class was an unexpected bonus to this researcher. They genuinely seemed to care when a fellow classmate was struggling. They were supportive of each other especially when a classmate was struggling while reading aloud. They would often times turn to the student to lend support and offer any assistance they could. This was a sight that this researcher was unaccustomed to seeing in the regular classroom. It was refreshing and heartwarming to see these students working together.**

**It is hoped that the students benefited in some way from this class; but it is assured that this researcher did. Never again can this researcher step foot in a classroom without thinking of the lessons learned from this research. This researcher has become more aware of difficulties some students have with the curricula of the middle school. Also it has become clear that there are many approaches that can be used successfully with these students so their difficulties may be lessened. This researcher can never forget the spirit of these students who, when striving for the same goal, showed such compassion for their fellow classmates.**



## **Conclusions**

**While only tentative conclusions can be drawn from the limited data collected in this research, some valid information was gathered. There was a significant difference in the experimental group's performances on the pretest and the post-test. There was, however, no significant difference in the performances of the experimental and control groups on the post-tests as one might expect.**

**There might be several reasons for the aforementioned results. The fact that the two groups did not perform equally on the pretests might have been a factor. Although there was not a significant difference between the experimental group's pretest scores and those pretest scores of the control group, the reasonably large difference in the means of those scores could have contributed to the results.**

**One interesting fact about the means of the test scores was that the mean of the control group's pretest was 7.38 points higher than that of the experimental group's. On the post-tests, however, the control group's mean was only 1.36 points higher than the experimental group. The mean score of the experimental group went from 36.22 on the pretest to 44.44**

on the post-test which is a difference of +8.22 which was a significant difference at the .05 level. The mean score of the control group went from 43.6 on the pretest to 45.8 on the post-test which is a difference of +2.2 which was not significant. Although this did not prove to be statistically significant, it did show a marked improvement by the experimental group over the control group.

### **Further Research**

It is hoped that this research could encourage further research into a special reading program for middle school students. This research could go in many directions. One thing that could be studied is how the students' attitudes toward a special class could affect their performances on tests resulting from such a class. The students' overall attitude toward reading and/or school in general could affect test performances as well.

Another focus of study could be a truly intensive reading course. Given the time and capabilities, this researcher would have liked to study the effects of a reading program that would immerse students into reading all day, every day for a period of at least six weeks. This could be conducted at the start of the school year and students with special difficulties would

**complete the six week class before joining the other curricular areas.**

**Another type of research that could be conducted could involve the attitudes of students toward each other in a special class. This researcher saw signs that a special class could become a community of sorts and that each member of that community could rely on other members for needed support.**

**There are many directions in which this research study could be taken. These studies could discover other effects that a special class such as the one developed for this research could have on students, their attitudes, and their test performances in various areas.**

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## **Appendix A**





**PAPILLION  
LAVISTA  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS**

7552 South 84th Street

LaVista, Nebraska 68128-2424  
ROGER A. MILLER, SUPERINTENDENT

(402) 339-3411

January 10, 1992

Mr. and Mrs. John Doe  
0101 W. St.  
Papillion, Nebraska 68046

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Doe:

I am developing a new communication skills program for second semester. This class is being designed to help students improve their reading and writing skills. After reviewing past grades and test scores, I have selected your child as a possible participant.

Most of the students in the program will meet every other day (first hour). The students will be working on skills in phonics, dictionary use, reading aloud, and writing sentences and paragraphs. They will be using the computer to help develop these skills as well.

This program is completely voluntary, but I do believe your child could benefit from such a program. I will start doing some initial testing at the end of this week. If I haven't heard any objections by then, I will include your child in the new program.

Please feel free to call me at 339-3262 if you have any questions or concerns. Also, please have your child return this letter with your signature for my records. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Robin Hayhurst  
English/PJH

---

Parent's Signature

## **Appendix B**

## Sample Lesson Plans

**Day one:**

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to identify times in life one needs to read outside of school.

Students will be able to comprehend the purpose of learning to read better.

Students will understand and apply what is meant by words in context.

**Activities:**

Students will make a list of times in their lives they would like to be able to read better. Class will discuss lists.

Students will read pp. 4-5 in Building English Skills and class will discuss the concept of context and context clues.

**Methods:**

Small group discussion

Large group discussion

Teacher-led questioning

**Materials or Resources:**

**Basic Skills in English text (BES)**

**Chalkboard**

**Day two:****Objectives:**

**Students will be able to identify and apply the concepts of definition and restatement as they relate to context clues.**

**Students will be able to identify some of the most commonly used words.**

**Activities:**

**Students will read pp. 6-7 in BES and complete Try Your Skill p. 7.**

**Students will list four unusual words that they can define. Then they will write sentences with those words providing context clues .**

**Students will share their sentences with fellow classmates.**

**Students will use some of most common words in these sentences.**

**Methods:**

Lecture

Large group discussion

Small group work

**Material or Resources:**

Building English Skills

**Day three****Objectives:**

Students will be able to identify the concepts of a long vowel sound.

Students will be able to identify the long vowel symbol.

Students will be able to comprehend how long vowel sounds are spelled in a variety of ways.

**Activities:**

Students will complete pp. 5-8 (an introduction to The Riverside Spelling Program). Class will discuss the answers to the activities on those pages.

**Students will compose a list of words that they know that contain a long vowel sound.**

**Methods:**

**Small group discussion**

**Large group discussion**

**Independent practice**

**Materials or Resources:**

**The Riverside Spelling Program (RSP)**

**Overhead projector**

**Day four**

**Objectives:**

**Students will be able to comprehend and demonstrate knowledge of the pronunciation key of the classroom dictionary.**

**Students will be able to apply listening skills discussed by completing a related activity.**

**Activities:**

**Students will discuss the purpose of the pronunciation key**

**in a dictionary.**

**Students will complete worksheet using phonetical sounds from the pronunciation key.**

**Students will successfully answer questions based on information presented orally. (Success will be measured at 80% correct or above.)**

**Methods:**

**Large group discussion**

**Teacher-led question--answer**

**Independent practice**

**Materials:**

**Houghton Mifflin Student Dictionary**

**Vocabulary for Enjoyment (Listening activity)**

**Worksheets**

**Day five**

**Objectives:**

**Students will comprehend the concept of context clues through the use of examples.**

**Students will apply the concept of examples as context clues in their own writing.**

**Activities:**

**Students will read Section 4 pp. 8-9 in BSE aloud.**

**Students will complete worksheets on context clues in small groups.**

**Students will create their own sentences with examples as context clues and share with a partner.**

**Methods:**

**Large group discussion**

**Teacher-led question--answer**

**Small cooperative group work**

**Materials:**

**Building Skills in English text**

**Context clues worksheets**



**Day 6****Objectives:**

**Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of synonyms and antonyms.**

**Students will apply knowledge of synonyms and antonyms to their own writing.**

**Activities:**

**Students will read Section 5 pp. 10-11 in BSE.**

**Students will complete worksheets on synonyms and antonyms.**

**Students will create lists of synonyms and antonyms.**

**Methods:**

**Teacher-led question--answer**

**Large group discussion**

**Independent practice**

**Materials:**

**Building Skills in English text**

**Synonyms and antonyms worksheets**

**Day 7****Objectives:**

**Students will demonstrate knowledge of definitions of ten vocabulary words.**

**Students will use the words studied in creating sentences of their own.**

**Activities:**

**Class will orally go over Lesson One “Kid Stuff” pp. 6-15 in Words: Using Words with Competency.**

**Students will do Lesson Two “Benny Solves a Problem” pp. 16-25 on their own.**

**Students will then discuss answers to questions in lesson number two in a large group discussion.**

**Students will create new sentences using the vocabulary words studied.**

**Students will share these sentences in small groups.**

**Methods:**

**Large group discussion**

**Small group discussion**

**Teacher-led question--answer**

**Materials:**

**Words: Using Words with Competency text**

**Overhead projector**

**Day eight****Objectives:**

**Students will demonstrate ability to read with inflection.**

**Students will show knowledge of basic drama skills.**

**Students will comprehend the play that they will read  
aloud in class.**

**Activities:**

**Students will discuss some basic concepts of drama: stage directions, verbal clues, dialogue, etc.**

**Students will volunteer to read parts in the play “The Big Foot Mystery”. All students will have at least one speaking part.**

**Students will successfully (80%) answer comprehension questions about the play when the class has finished reading it.**

**Methods:**

Lecture

Large group read-aloud

Questions and answers

**Materials:**

Combo #302 text (play)

Overhead projector

**Day nine****Objectives:**

Students will comprehend the concept of base words and will be able to use the base word *cast* to form several words with similar meanings.

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the prefix *re*.

Students will comprehend the concept of dictionary respelling and be able to identify the dictionary respelling of several vocabulary words.

Students will analyze several vocabulary words to find similarities in suffixes.

**Activities:**

Students will complete Lesson One pp. 10-13 in The Riverside Spelling Program. These pages contain activities such as:

Identify the vocabulary words that are related to *Cast*.

Identify the vocabulary words that have similar suffixes.

Define the prefix *re* and use that knowledge to define vocabulary words with that prefix.

Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary respellings.

**Methods:**

Large group discussion and Independent practice

**Materials:**

The Riverside Spelling Program text (RSP)

**Day ten****Objectives:**

Students will be able to use knowledge of phonics to identify vocabulary words with a certain phonetical make-up (double letters, /j/, /k/, /g/, /t/, and long o sounds).

**Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of prefixes and suffixes.**

**Students will be able to identify vocabulary words in the context of a short story.**

**Students will also be able to identify the etymology of words.**

**Activities:**

**Students will complete Lesson Two pp. 14-17 in RSP including:**

**Identify the vocabulary words that contain: double letters, /j/, /k/, /g/, /t/, and the long o sound.**

**Identify vocabulary words in context of a short story.**

**Look up five words in the dictionary to discover etymologies.**

**Students will play affixmatic in small groups. Affixmatic is the adding or subtracting of prefixes or suffixes.**

**Methods:**

**Independent practice and cooperative learning**

**Materials:**

**The Riverside Spelling Program text**

**Houghton Mifflin Student Dictionary**

**Day eleven****Objectives:**

**Students will demonstrate knowledge of the concept of a split screen (from television or the movies) which relates to previous vocabulary units.**

**Students will apply skills learned in previous vocabulary to their own writing.**

**Students will demonstrate ability to work in cooperative groups.**

**Students will demonstrate good speaking skills.**

**Activities:**

**Class will review concept of split screen from Lesson One of RSP.**

**Students will work in small groups to create a mini-sitcom involving the concept of a split screen to class.**

**Methods:**

**Large group discussion**

**Cooperative groups**

**Student presentations**

**Materials:**

**Chalkboard**

**Day twelve****Objectives:**

**Students will demonstrate knowledge of concept of base words.**

**Students demonstrate knowledge of concept of prefixes.**

**Students will be able to apply that knowledge to new vocabulary words.**

**Activities:**

**Class will review concepts of base words and prefixes.**

**Students will read pp. 12-14 in BSE.**

**Students will successfully (80%) complete “Try Your Skill” p. 13 and “Try Your Skill” p. 15 on own. These activities focus on locating base words and prefixes from special vocabulary words.**

**Methods:**

**Large group discussion**

**Independent practice**

**Materials:**

**Building Skills in English text**

**Chalkboard**



**Day thirteen****Objectives:**

**Students will demonstrate knowledge of suffixes.**

**Students will comprehend the meanings of different suffixes.**

**Students will analyze words to determine suffix and meaning.**

**Students will successfully (80%) use knowledge of base words, prefixes, and suffixes to complete worksheets.**

**Activities:**

**Class will review concept of suffixes.**

**In small groups, students will discuss suffixes (er/or, less, able/ible, ful, ous) and their meanings.**

**Class will read pp. 16-17 in BSE.**

**Students will break apart eighteen words to find base word and suffix and to determine meaning.**

**Students will complete Worksheets 6, 7, and 8 on base words, prefixes, and suffixes.**

**Methods:**

**Teacher-led questions--answers**

**Small group discussion**

**Large group discussion**

**Independent practice**

**Materials:**

**Building Skills in English text and worksheets**

**Overhead projector**

**Day fourteen**

**Objectives:**

**Students will demonstrate knowledge of ten new vocabulary words.**

**Students will be able to use those words in a variety of activities.**

**Students will apply these words in writings of their own.**

**Students will work cooperatively.**

**Students will demonstrate good speech skills.**

**Activities:**

**Students will do Lesson Three "Murder at Felton House" pp. 26-30 in Words.**

**Students will work with a partner to create a mini-murder**

**mystery using vocabulary words from this Lesson Three.**

**Students will present mysteries to class.**

**Methods:**

**Independent practice**

**Cooperative groups**

**Student presentations**

**Materials:**

**Words: Using Words with Competency text**

**Day fifteen**

**Objectives:**

**Students will demonstrate basic computer skills.**

**Students will use basic grammar skills and reading skills to participate in computer games.**

**Activities:**

**Class will review some basic grammar skills such as types of sentences and parts of speech.**

**Class will review several different types of computer**

**programs that involve those basic grammar skills and basic decoding skills.**

**Students will choose programs with which to practice these skills. Students will do this activity in pairs.**

**Methods:**

**Large group discussion**

**Cooperative groups**

**Hands-on computer work**

**Materials:**

**Chalkboard**

**Computer**

**Computer Programs:**

**Those Amazing Reading Machines (I-IV)**

**Grammar Gazette**

**Grammar Monster**

**These are just a few of the many lesson plans used during the experimental treatment class. They have been included to allow the reader to see specifically some of the activities that were presented in the treatment of the experimental group. The other lesson plans are similar to these.**

## **Appendix C**

**Sample Journal Entries  
From Experimental Class**

**I. Entry #1**

I can certainly see why people call this *action* research. I have been on the go nonstop the last few days. I think I waited until the last minute to do some activities that could have been done earlier.

I am starting to receive the parent permission slips back. I have only received one concern and that was from a parent who thought his/her child needed his/her study hall. He/she did say, however, that the student would give my class a try.

I start administering the Gates-MacGinitie test tomorrow and Friday. Most students seem willing to take part in the testing. I hope they feel that way when it comes to the class.

I am getting more and more concerned about the students only being able to attend this class two days a week. I am not sure what I can really accomplish in that amount of time.

**II. Entry # 3**

**I met with my first group of students this morning. This group will meet on all A-days except Fridays. I thought things went well (see lesson plans for activities). I did have all the students read out loud and some seemed a bit uncomfortable. They did, however, seem more willing to read in this small classroom setting.**

**I was really happy with one student in particular. He talked more and took part more in this class than he ever has done in our regular classroom. I hope he feels comfortable in this new setting.**

**One of the students I intended to use as a member of my B-day experimental group informed me today that she would be moving on Friday. So that makes my experimental group one person smaller than my control group.**

**III. Entry #4**

**This was the first day that I met with my B-day group. Today went well, also! I saw two more students open up more**

that I ever have before! Their participation today was more than I can ever get out of them in the regular class. I hope this continues.

At first all of the students seemed unsure. Some seemed unwilling to participate, but as the hour went along that changed. The students even started suggesting computer programs we should use in class to help improve reading skills. I need to look into getting copies of some of them.

#### IV. Entry # 6

It is a little bit tougher to follow this A-day--B-day schedule than I thought. Since we do not meet on Fridays, I have met with my A-day group three times and my B-day group only once. I know that it will eventually balance out, but right now it is tough to follow.

Since my student moved on Friday, that left another student to be the only girl in her group. I hope this won't cause any problems for her or the class. I do not anticipate any problems since she seems to get along with boys as well as she



does girls.

Today we worked on some phonic activities. I can tell that two of the students are going to have a lot of difficulties with this. It is as if they have never heard of this material even though I know they have. Obviously spending more time on these activities in future lessons would be beneficial.

#### V. Entry # 8

I probably will only write on the first day of each lesson unless something very interesting or unusual occurs.

Today was another good day, but we did not get as much done as I expected us to. We only got one page of The Riverside Spelling Program done. We did one listening activity but we did not get to the dictionary pronunciation key today. We will pick up with that tomorrow.

I really liked doing the listening skills activity with the students. It seemed they enjoyed it also. It was not as easy for them to do as one might think. All the students in the groups can use a little work on listening and concentration skills.

**VI. Entry # 9**

**I could tell right away today that B-days will be more of a challenge. I got the distinct impression that some of the students did not want to be here today, but as the class went on, all of the students were raising their hands to answer questions.**

**This group seems to grasp things more slowly than my A-day group. They seem to have little or no background in phonics and some of the other concepts I have started to address. I have a lot of work ahead of me.**

**I get frustrated when I think of how little time I actually have with these students. However, when I see them participating freely and wanting to take part in class, I feel much better about what I am trying to do even though I am limited in the amount of time I get to spend with these groups.**

**VII. Entry # 10**

**Today we finished Riverside Spelling and continued talking**

**about context clues.**

**Some of the activities seem to be difficult for the students to do on their own. Some of the students rush through the activities and put down answers that do not make sense just so they have something down and they finish at the same time as everybody else does.**

**Some of the students can do the work if I read the sentences to them but they struggle if they have to do the work on their own.**

**There are so many things I need to learn about these students and their reading problems. I hope through time and patience I can discover a way to help each student in some way.**

## **VII. Entry # 12**

**We started work in the Words book today. I think this is going to be a great deal of help for some of the students.**

**I feel like I am losing a few of the students in my groups. Some of them struggle so much with oral reading that they get too frustrated to keep going.**

**I feel a certain sense of frustration with these classes.**

**The more I learn about their problems, the more I realize how little I have done in the past and really how little I could ever do for some of them in a regular classroom setting. I do believe, however, that this whole experience is going to make me a stronger teacher in my regular classes. People always say that in teaching you gain as much as you give. I am certainly learning and gaining a lot from working with these students in these special classes.**

**IX. Entry # 14**

**Today we reviewed what the class accomplished on Monday. After that we started reading “The Bigfoot Mystery” from the Combo 302 books.**

**I was really happy to see the students wanting to read and take part in class. I was especially happy that they all wanted to help the one student who struggles more than the rest. The other students turned to read toward him today so they could help him pronounce words. It was very nice to see them being so helpful and understanding. (In a regular class, one would not expect to see such support.)**

The students really seemed to enjoy the play because I made them play detective. Before the mystery was revealed, I made them close their books and make a prediction as to the outcome of the story. It was a lot of fun.

**X. Entry # 23**

Today we covered Words pp. 26-35. I also took grades on the activities on pp. 29 and 30. Most of the students did well on the graded activities except for one student. I had not noticed that this student was struggling. I am not sure why he did poorly on today's activities. I don't know if he was not paying attention, if he rushed through his work, or if this is just very difficult for him. I am going to keep an eye on him.

Since the Words activity involved a murder mystery, I assigned groups of two to come up with their own murder mystery. Each pair contains one reader and one writer and during our next class, the reader will read the story on which he/she and the writer worked today in class. The rest of the class will then try to solve the mystery. (The students really worked hard on their stories today. I am anxious to hear them.)

**These are just a few of the journal entries. They have been included to give the reader a better insight into the researcher's concerns and overall feelings toward the classes involved with the experiment.**

## **Appendix D**

**Pretest Data for the Experimental  
and Control Groups**

**Experimental Group Pretest Data**

<b><u>Student</u></b>	<b><u>Vocabulary (45)</u></b>	<b><u>Comprehension(48)</u></b>	<b><u>Total (93)</u></b>
<b>A</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>48</b>

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**Control Group Pretest Data**

<b><u>Student</u></b>	<b><u>Vocabulary (45)</u></b>	<b><u>Comprehension(48)</u></b>	<b><u>Total (93)</u></b>
<b>J</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>K</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Q</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>59</b>



**Post-test Data for the Experimental  
and Control Groups**

**Experimental Group Post-test Data**

<b><u>Student</u></b>	<b><u>Vocabulary (45)</u></b>	<b><u>Comprehension(48)</u></b>	<b><u>Total (93)</u></b>
<b>A</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>58</b>

**Control Group Post-test Data**

<b><u>Student</u></b>	<b><u>Vocabulary (45)</u></b>	<b><u>Comprehension(48)</u></b>	<b><u>Total (93)</u></b>
<b>J</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>K</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Q</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>62</b>

## **Appendix E**

**Materials Students and Instructor  
Used in the Special Reading Class**

**Computer programs:**

**Grammar gazette [Computer program]. (1991). Omaha, NE:**

**ESU #3. MECC. Apple Computer, Inc.**

**Grammar monsters [Computer program]. (1991). Omaha, NE:**

**ESU #3. MECC. Apple Computer, Inc.**

**Those amazing reading machines I-V [Computer program]. (1986).**

**Omaha, NE: ESU #3. MECC.**

**Dictionary:**

**Houghton Mifflin student dictionary: An American heritage**

**dictionary. (1986). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.**

**Textbooks:**

**Cooper, J. (Ed.). (1980). Combo #302: An ace anthology.**

**Glenview, ILL: Scott, Foresman and Company.**

**Ford, E.R., Criscuolo, N.P., Fineman, S.R., & McCarthy, A.P. (Eds.).**

**(1981). Words: Using words with competency. New York:**

**Sadlier-Oxford.**

**Levine, H. (Ed.). (1987). Vocabulary for enjoyment. New York:**

**Amsco School Publications, Inc.**

**Littell, J. (Ed.). (1980). Basic skills in English. Evanston, ILL:**

**McDougal, Littell & Company.**

**Wallace, E.E. (Ed.). (1984). The Riverside spelling program.**

**Chicago: The Riverside Publishing Company.**