TEACHER RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Presentations by Candidates for the M.Ed. Degree and M.S. in Elementary Education Degree

College of Education
University of Mary Washington
May 2nd, 2012
North Building, Stafford Campus
From the Dean of the College of Education...

- A signature feature of the University of Mary Washington educator preparation programs is the critical action research project that our initial licensure candidates and advanced endorsement students complete. Through the research projects being presented this week, our graduates demonstrate how being an effective education professional is informed by practitioner executed action research. Through this program requirement our graduates are encouraged to bring a critical eye to their practice and to contribute to the knowledge-base of our profession right from the beginning of and throughout their careers. Welcome to our graduates' presentations of their research, and congratulations to all of them.

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- Dr. David Baker, Department of Foundation, Leadership, and Special Populations - Leadership
- Dr. John Broome, Department of Curriculum and Instruction – Social Studies
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- Dr. George Meadows, Department of Curriculum and Instruction – Science and Instructional Technology
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- Dr. Lillian Pailen, Department of Curriculum and Instruction - Arts
- Dr. Tamie Pratt-Fartro, Department of Curriculum and Instruction - Literacy
- Dr. Marie Sheckels, Department of Curriculum and Instruction – Mathematics
- Dr. Jo Tyler, Department of Foundation, Leadership, and Special Populations - ESL
- Dr. Dale Wright, Department of Curriculum and Instruction - Literacy
Session 1. 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Room 210

Attitudes and Instruction in Mathematics.  

Kaitlin Dinan. The subject of mathematics has long been the center of educational debate, and for many, academic distress. Mathematics instruction in the United States has changed greatly over the years; however, attitudes towards learning mathematics have not. If there are positive changes in the quality and type of mathematics instruction students receive why are there not positive changes in how students feel or perform in mathematics? An important question to ask then is what influences students’ beliefs about mathematics and their success in math? Does the type of mathematics instruction affect students’ mathematics attitudes and success? When considering student attitudes it is essential to examine parental attitudes as well. Many adults received a mathematics education that is very different from what their children receive now. One possibility is that parental attitudes about mathematics affect students’ attitudes and achievement in mathematics. The aim of this study was to establish the relationship between parental attitudes about mathematics and their student’s attitude and success in mathematics. This study will also examine the relationship between different instructional techniques and student attitude and success in mathematics.

Children’s Development of Mental Representations for Fractions.  

Kaylee McDowell. This study investigates children’s development of rational number concepts. Specifically, the study explores children’s development of rich mental representations for fractions. For many students fractions are a major stumbling block in their mathematical learning. This research utilizes stories and manipulatives in an experimental curriculum unit designed to promote children’s rich mental representations of fractions. All three models of fractions (area, length, and set) will be addressed in this study. This is a mixed-methods study analyzing data from surveys, pretests, posttests, and student interviews. Two fourth grade classes will participate in the study for a period of approximately 3 ½ weeks. One class will receive the experimental curriculum. The other class will receive the school’s regular mathematics curriculum. The average scores and responses from the classes will be compared on each measure. Individual student scores and responses will be compared and evaluated.

Music and Mathematics.  

Christina Lloyd. Music is comprised of mathematics and naturally lends itself to incorporating many mathematical concepts. Music and songs can also be used as a mnemonic device to help students rehearse information, which helps transfer information into long term memory. The purpose of this study was to determine whether teaching a mathematics unit through music would help first graders remember content over time. A kindergarten and first grade combination class were taught the concept of length through musical instrument demonstrations, as well as the recognition of coins through a mnemonic song. Students from the experimental group were able to use more mathematical strategies to determine length, and performed better on identifying coins as compared to a control group.
**Perceptions of the Inclusion Classroom.** Lisa Skeer. This study focuses on the perceptions of the inclusion classroom and the inclusion teacher as perceived by parents, teachers, and administrators. In addition to a literature review, a parental survey and teacher/administrator interviews helped to drive the research on this topic.

**Room 252**

**The Influence of Literacy Bags on Boys' Reading Motivation.** Sarah Schroeder. This study documents the effect of literacy bags on the reading motivation of fifth-grade boys. Each take-home literacy bag contained two books along with a related activity geared toward the interests of boys. The researcher administered the Motivation to Read Profile (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996) before and after the implementation of the literacy bag program to two groups of fifth grade boys: (1) those who participated in the literacy bag program, and (2) those who did not participate. The researcher also gathered data from reading logs and interviews with program participants and the classroom teacher. By comparing survey results, examining reading logs, and analyzing interview data, this study answered the following question: How does the use of literacy bags influence reading motivation for boys in fifth grade?

**The Effect of Partner Reading on Fluency in Kindergarteners.** Emily Wampler. This research study was conducted in a kindergarten class looking at partner reading programs to increase students' fluency. Students worked in similar leveled reading partners to read out loud to each other each day. Student fluency was tested weekly and graphed with the researcher. It was believed by the researcher that students reading out loud each day, as well as seeing fluency progress graphed would positively influence students' fluency scores. At the end of the study, student's fluency scores showed a positive trend in increasing fluency but no significant change from the beginning to end of the study. It is believed by the researcher that a longer term study and more emphasis on student involvement in fluency monitoring will result in a significant increase.

**Do Drawings Assist Kindergarten Students In The Comprehension of Text?** Lauren Jensen. The objective of this study was to determine how drawings assisted kindergarten students during the comprehension of text. Comprehension is an integral part of the kindergarten curriculum, especially because these students are beginning to learn how to read and write. There are many different ways to assess comprehension in the classroom, including written and verbal assessment of information. This 5-week study explored how students used drawings to analyze their interaction with different children's literature. One book was read to the students as a whole group each week, without the students seeing the pictures. The students were then instructed to draw what they remembered from the text and were interviewed the following day to assess the comprehension of the text. After observing the students during the activity, analyzing the students’ drawings and interviewing the students, the results indicated that using drawings does assist kindergarten students in the comprehension of text.
The Effect of Reader’s Theater on Comprehension vs. Traditional Storybooks. Danielle Velardi. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of Reader’s Theater on students’ comprehension compared to the traditional storybook. Students were placed in two groups based on ability. One group read the Reader’s Theater script one week and the other group read the same text in storybook form. At the end of the week all students answered the same comprehension questions. I was able to determine which method had the most positive impact on comprehension based on the students’ scores to the comprehension assessment. I found that overall the students thoroughly enjoyed Reader’s Theater. In addition, I more of my student’s comprehension scores were higher after reading than scripts than after reading the books. By the end of the study I was able to conclude that Reader’s Theater is effective and enjoyable for the students in my first grade class.

Room 217

A Third Dimension: Using Drama to Enhance Critical Literacy in a First Grade Classroom. Caitlyn Yost. This study focused on drama as an effective arts intervention for enhancing critical literacy skills in the primary grades. Conducted in a classroom of 20 students in Virginia, the purpose of the study was to determine if coupling drama techniques with curriculum content could improve first graders critical literacy skills in writing. Methods used included a survey, pre/post writings, writing in role, frozen moments, and character interviews. Student writings and verbal responses were coded for five themes indicative of critical literacy. Interventions successfully improved students’ use of critical literacy skills in writing by naturally engaging students in authentic writing opportunities.

The Effect of a Multi-Arts Integration on Student Comprehension in Third Grade Social Studies Curriculum. Elizabeth Reed. The purpose of this study was to see the effect of a multi-arts integration on student comprehension in the third grade Social Studies unit of Explorers. Throughout the three weeks of this unit, students participated in activities using visual art, music, and process drama to learn the curriculum. The students showed comprehension through the creation of songs, using familiar tunes and including facts on the Explorers, as well as a variety of process drama activities. Field notes, student work and assessments, and pre-and posttests showed not only an increase in student understanding, but also an increase in student interest in Social Studies in general and the ability to express their thoughts in their own words.

Using Literature Circles to Improve Oral Language Development of English Language Learners. Lydia Putney. “The rich resources that children of differing language backgrounds can give each other is one of the foundational pillars” of second language learning (Reyes & Vallone, 2008, p. 22). One way to ensure English Language Learner (ELL) students can develop their oral language and participate in the classroom effectively is to use literature circles. Literature circles “are formed when a group of readers gather together to talk about a book in depth” (Gilmore & Day, 2006, p. 194). The results of this study provide evidence that kindergarten ELL students benefit from a relaxed, small-group environment using literature
circles where they can interact with their English-speaking peers, become motivated to read in English, and authentically involve themselves in the classroom community.

**Dialogue Journals and Their Effects on English Language Learners' Writing.** Rachel DeVerna. Education theorists John Dewey and Vygotsky argue that learning is a social process. Essentially, a learner constructs new knowledge through social interactions and experiences. Dialogue journals encourage students to learn to write in a social context as they interact with a more proficient writer. In this action research study, I asked the question: Does the use of dialogue journals with pre-service teachers increase writing fluency for elementary English language learners? In this study, I worked with seven English language learners (ELLs) on improving their writing fluency through these interactive dialogues with pre-service teachers from a local university. While communicating on an online blog, the pre-service teachers modeled correct writing syntax, grammar, and spelling for their ELL partners. During the study, students formed strong bonds with their partners. Writing samples, as well as interviews with the ELLs, indicate that the modeling techniques used by their partners were effective, and that their writing fluency was beginning to improve.

### Session 2. 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**Room 210**

**Using Inquiry-based Cooperative Learning to Improve Upon Third Graders’ Interest and Achievement in Science.** Meghan Buckles. This study examined the results on third graders’ interest and achievement in science when a combination of scientific inquiry and cooperative learning was used throughout a unit. Participants worked in groups of three to four on various inquiry leveled assignments that focused on soil and ecosystems. Students participated in three different inquiry-based assignments that became increasingly less guided as the weeks progressed. Students were interviewed by the researcher after each assignment, to determine the effect of working in groups, as well as, on the nature of the inquiry based assignments on his or her interest in science. Students were also given a grade using the same rubric throughout the research for each assignment. The researcher used this rubric to determine if student achievement increased or decreased when the combination of inquiry-based cooperative learning was implemented in the classroom. Overall, student interest increased but many students cited difficulty working with their peers. However, the quality of student work greatly increased over the course of the research based on increasing scores using the same rubric for the three assignments.

**Do teacher read alouds promote understanding and interest of science concepts in first grade students?** Ashley Maynard. The benefits of read alouds in the classroom are widely known among educators. However, there is little research looking at science read alouds. This study hoped to find a relationship between read alouds and science achievement and interest. First grade students participated in a three week study, during which science related texts were read aloud and students were tested based on knowledge gained from the read alouds. Results
show that students were better able to answer questions about a particular science concept after the read aloud. Findings also showed that students found the read alouds entertaining and engaging.

**iLearn With iPods: An English Language Learner’s Journey Through Homophone Differentiation Using Technology. Sirena Montgomery.** An English language learner’s (ELL) literacy instruction is crucial for further success in the student’s academic career. The ability to read, write, and think coherently expands past knowing what is written, but understanding and applying the information. For the first grade curriculum, it is expected for students to recognize and understand the meaning of the most frequently used words in the English language. Although used frequently in stories and writing, most homophones are not included in this list. Homophones are words that sound the same, but are sometimes spelled differently. Although these words are a struggle for English-only students, homophones are especially difficult for English-language learners (Optiz 2009). Recently, ELL literacy has improved with technology. Technology allows for explicit instruction with visuals and consistently maintains student engagement rather than traditional instruction. Apple® iPods were used in this homophone intervention to improve five ELL students’ understanding of homophones versus their current traditional method. Analysis of the results demonstrate that the Apple® iPods increased the students’ understanding of homophones and maintained their motivation and on-task behavior throughout the intervention.

**Room 252**

**Using a Peer Support System in an Inclusive Classroom to Decrease Transition Time. Margaret DeMaria.** This study examined whether implementing a class wide peer support system, in a general education inclusive classroom, could decrease transition time for three targeted students with special needs. Research data consisted of the times it took for the students to transition between two subjects. Data was collected in two phases, fist before the peer support system was implemented then after it was implemented. Comparison between phase 1 and phase 2 transition times was of an insignificant increment of time proving no correlation between implementing a peer support system and improved transition times.

**Implementing a Buddy Reading Program to Help Struggling and Non-Struggling Readers. Jacklyn Faraci.** This study explored the implementation of a cross-age paired reading program between first and fourth graders to give a learning opportunity in which all students, both struggling and non-struggling, could be engaged and educated to their highest level of proficiency. Previous research has shown that paired reading programs, or buddy reading, can significantly improve reading skills as well as motivate and engage all students to become overall better readers (Gutshall, 2009). After implementing this buddy reading program results indicated that the fluency of almost all the readers in the focus group improved and there was also a significant increase in the reading enjoyment of every struggling or non-struggling student involved in the program.
Fewer is Greater: Cooperative & Differentiated Small Groups Increase Satisfaction & Achievement in Mathematics. Shanna McPherson. In this action research study, differentiated small group instruction increases academic satisfaction and achievement for fourth grade mathematics students. After nine weeks of differentiated homogenous small group math instruction and heterogeneous cooperative learning, participants expressed a strong desire to continue learning math in homogenous small groups. Results revealed an increase in achievement, positive attitudes toward mathematics, and a higher self-concept of mathematical abilities, which were associated with academic needs being better met in small groups with readiness appropriate challenges (differentiation) and a growing math community of learners due to positive feelings for heterogeneous cooperative learning groups.

Room 217

Using Multi-Arts Strategies in a First Grade Science Class. Michelle Rodriguez. The purpose of this study was to see how integrating multi-arts (music, visual arts, and drama) affected first grader's science comprehension. This research was implemented throughout three weeks and focused on animals, a concept found in the Virginia Standards of Learning. During implementation students participated and created songs, participated and created visual arts and created drama. Students were given a pre-test before beginning the animal unit and then a post-test, as well as a unit test after it is was finished. Student data was collected from each art form, where students responded positively. The results show that the first graders were positively affected by the integration of multi-arts, inferring that arts integration works and should be integrated into all content areas.

Enhancing Social Studies Comprehension Through Visual Discovery and Artful Thinking. Jenna Shevlin. This study examined whether the combination of visual discovery and Artful Thinking increases comprehension of social studies material, specifically Ancient China. Students were shown an image and were asked to respond to three questions: what do you see, what do you think, and what do you wonder. These questions were used in the hope that students would create connections to other material which would in turn make comprehending the new material easier. Student responses showed many occurrences of both the integration of prior knowledge and higher level thinking. These two things, in addition to high test scores, lead us to believe that the combination of visual discovery and Artful Thinking do in fact aid in the comprehension of social studies material.

Exploring Multi-Arts Use in a Fifth Grade Geometry Unit. Alison Morrow. The purpose of this action research project was to study how incorporating the arts into a Virginia fifth grade geometry unit would affect the students’ understanding of this material. The research took place over a period of approximately five weeks from mid-January through February, 2012. Throughout this time, the class of 24 students worked in six groups of four to complete a “Math Museum” about a given geometry topic and then presented these to the class at the end of the unit as a review. Data was collected through a student questionnaire in which the researcher asked a variety of questions to assess students’ position about combining the arts with math. The researcher also gave the students a pre and post-test about various geometry topics and took anecdotal notes throughout the creative process. The questionnaire showed an
overwhelming majority of students did enjoy combing the arts with math content and had a genuine interest in learning mathematical content through the arts, and the researcher learned through careful observation that the students did enjoy completing this project. However, the project was inconclusive in showing whether incorporating the arts into a fifth grade geometry curriculum increased the students’ understanding of the material and further research is required to determine if this is the case.

**Session 3. 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**Room 210**

**The Impact of Computer Based Instruction on Student Achievement.** Phillip Kight. The purpose of this research is to analyze the impact of computer based instruction on student achievement. Computer based instruction can be student-led, teacher-led or facilitated through the guidance of a teacher. The focus of this research is student-led computer based instruction (CBI) in which a student is learning content without the guidance or assistance of a teacher. Students were surveyed and teachers were interviewed to determine both teacher and student opinions of student achievement in student-led CBI. The results of the survey as well as the teacher interviews determined that students tend to find student-led CBI easier than a face-to-face classroom, however student-led CBI does not effectively prepare students for returning to a face-to-face setting. This research suggests that the implementation of student-led CBI needs to be altered to maximize student achievement.

**Room 252**

**Virtual Field Trips: Videoconferencing as an Enriching Educational Tool.** Alexandra Jaffee. A tool that is widely used in the business world has only recently begun to find its place in everyday life and the classroom. The purpose of this study was to research the use of videoconferencing as an enriching educational tool and adapt former research for a primary grade. According to the Northwest Educational Technology Consortium, “Videoconferencing is a live, two-way, interactive electronic means of communication. Two or more people in different geographic locations can engage in face-to-face audio and visual exchanges using cameras, monitors, and document software” (as cited in O’Connor, Atkinson, Matusевич, Greene, Pope, & Good, 2007). First graders took virtual field trips using the TANDBERG, a videoconferencing system. Students were virtually connected to a second grade class in New York, Mount Vernon, author, Stuart J. Murphy, in Boston, a former Peace Corp volunteer in Indiana, and the Puppetry Center for Arts in Atlanta. The methods by which data was collected were observations, interviews, and reflections. The results demonstrate that virtual field trips can be engaging, educational, and enjoyable.
Using blogs to effect student’s motivation, attitude and quality of writing. *Virginia Stratton*. This action research study examines how blogs can be used in the classroom to affect student’s motivation, attitude and quality of writing. Students were asked to blog at least once a week on a teacher chosen topic via the blogging platform Kidblog.org. Students were also allowed to access the blog during their I.E. block as well as at home to free blog. After six weeks of blogging through observations, student interviews, and student surveys it was shown that students were more motivated to write and had a better attitude towards their writing.

The Tag Reading System’s Effect on Lower Level Readers’ Motivation to Read. *Amy Van Ness*. This action research project provides insight into the ways in which technology can be utilized to motivate children to read. During the course of this four-week study, three second grade students were given the opportunity to work with a variety of Leap Frog Tag Reading books. At the commencement of the study, the students were given basic instructions as to how to operate the technology but were primarily let to explore the books, tag pens, and activities independently. After analyzing the data, the results seem to indicate a positive interaction between the technology (Tag Reading Books) and the students' desire to engage and read with the books independently and with each other. Further research should be conducted on the correlation between technology and a child’s motivation to read in order to create a greater understanding of how and why technology serves as a dynamic and purposeful tool for educators and students.

Room 217

Student Efficacy Towards Social Studies Instruction Through the Use of Project-based Learning. *Erika Clevenger*. Research into student efficacy towards Social Studies instruction has found that a lack of positive experiences within the subject are related to the subsequent negative attitudes students have when considering the relevance of the content area to their own lives. In order to promote a more positive outlook towards Social Studies in a primary grade classroom, Project-Based Learning was utilized as an instructional tool to allow for the student-centered instruction of a 1st grade Virginia Standards of Learning Social Studies unit. Surveys to determine student attitudes towards: school, how they like to learn, and Social Studies were given pre and post unit. Student interviews were conducted during the unit; student work was assessed to determine how students perceived Social Studies instruction, and if there were any significant changes in student efficacy after the implementation of the unit using Project-Based Learning design.

Building a Classroom and a Nation: Exploring the Effects of Developing Perspective Recognition on Primary Source Analysis. *Mairin Martin*. This study was conducted in order to explore whether introducing perspective recognition-based activities, in a Virginia fifth-grade history classroom, leads to improvements in students’ ability to analyze primary sources. Students were given a primary source analysis pretest before spending five weeks participating in a history unit specifically designed to develop perspective recognition. At the end of the five weeks, students were given a primary source analysis posttest. The general results of this study show a positive trend between developing perspective recognition and student ability to analyze primary sources. The majority of the students demonstrated growth in their depth of
analysis. In the posttest, students drew more profound conclusion as well as made connections between the painting and historical content knowledge and ideological movements. As hypothesized, the conscious development of one skill, perspective recognition, did much to increase unconscious development of the secondary skill, primary source analysis.

**Fifth Graders Discovering the Westward Expansion through Literature Circles.** Allison Miller. This action research examines how literature circles enhance fifth graders historical content knowledge about the Westward Expansion in a Virginia classroom. Today, teachers are finding new ways to expand social studies motivation and engagement. One way is through historical trade books and literature circles. This research pays attention to how social interaction between fifth graders and accurate, reliable and valid trade books create better understanding about historical content through the use of discussion. This study used a pre and post short response activity to help compare content knowledge and understanding before and after literature circles. The results revealed and found that literature circles enhanced fifth graders historical content knowledge through students processing their peer’s ideas as well as looking from different people’s perspectives who lived during this time period. If this research was repeated, it would ensure that students were given enough time to discuss the book in depth.

**Colonial Life: Building Historical Inquiry through Visual Primary Sources.** Amtulnoor Peterson. History in fourth grade is an essential SOL subject and requires students to memorize many historical facts which can be very demanding and challenging on the students. This research study explored how the use of primary visual sources could enhance 4th grade student historical content knowledge. Visual Discovery was used as a step by step method in which the students viewed primary source visuals and student wrote about it using guided questions. These questions helped student to display their ability to gather basic historical knowledge, interpret it, and make hypotheses using evidence to support it. Visual Discovery allowed student of a variety of academic background to engage with historical content knowledge. Students were able to apply the knowledge learned from previous units and use that information to interpret the primary visual source. Results revealed that student benefited from partaking in the visual discovery activities and found them to be more fun and engaging. Students enjoyed making their own interpretations of history and being able to own their learning, while applying knowledge gained in class. Future studies will benefit by providing more regimented visual discovery practice activities and providing students with the guided questions.

**Session 4. 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.**

**Room 210**

**The Use of a Smart Table to Increase On-Task Behavior.** Taylor Warner. This study explored the use of a SMART Table during math small groups to see its effects on on-task behavior. Hussain (2006) and Preston and Mowbray (2008) found that when technology is used in the classroom, teachers are better able to reach the needs of their students because it
keeps students engaged and it’s interactive. I observed four male students (two with off-task tendencies and two with on-task tendencies) for four weeks without the SMART Table and four weeks with the SMART Table. Results indicated that there were increases in on-task behaviors for all four students.

A Qualitative Meta-Analysis of Behavior Modification Interventions for Students with ADHD. Mariana Hermosilla. Due to the high worldwide prevalence of ADHD, there is currently a greater need for the identification of what makes an intervention successful in the modification of problem behaviors that are typical of this disorder. Despite the fact that multiple individual investigations report the beneficial effects of behavior modification interventions for ADHD, there are very few examples that aggregate data in a qualitative design in order to provide a descriptive picture of what composes current effective interventions. A qualitative meta-analysis of Applied Behavior Analysis studies that use single-subject design for the behavior intervention modification of students with ADHD was conducted by identifying relevant behavioral intervention studies carried on between 2000 and 2010. A series of descriptive tables were created in order to identify patterns that helped reveal information about the main features of interventions that produce results that are better than previous studies. The descriptive globalization of information allowed the creation of a database of findings and their implications for further research and practical applications oriented to the educational context.

The Effects of Shakespearean Graphic Novels on Reading Comprehension of Twelfth-grade Special Education Students. Heather Carafiol. Special education (SPED) students, or students with learning disabilities (LD), are one of the most at-risk groups of struggling readers. These students face high stakes in the secondary English classroom. The inability to comprehend texts dramatically affects student performance, especially when faced with complex literature such as the works of William Shakespeare. In an effort to enhance reading comprehension in SPED students, this study explored whether the use of graphic novels improved SPED students’ comprehension of challenging language while reading Shakespeare's play Macbeth. Two twelfth-grade inclusion English classes read both text-only and graphic novel versions of scenes from Macbeth, and reading comprehension was compared and measured based on student-generated summaries, multiple choice reading check quizzes, as well as student preference surveys. Findings from this study shed light on how graphic novels can be an effective resource to enhance the reading comprehension of struggling SPED students.

The Effect of Response Cards on Off-task Students. Jennifer Price. This study examined the effects of response cards on reducing off-task behaviors. Research shows that more active environments will decrease off-task behaviors. Response cards require the active participation of all students, having each student raise their response. Four consistently off-task students were observed in a language arts setting. The purpose of this study was to reduce disruptive off-task behaviors by actively engaging these students in instruction. Behaviors were observed for single-student hand raise response and response card response, a simultaneous rising of answers by all students. Off-task behaviors significantly decreased when the response cards were used during instruction.
The Impact of Word Study Instruction on Second Grade Students and Teachers. Melissa Kalas. This quantitative research project investigates the impact of word study on second grade students and teachers. The study was conducted at a rural elementary school in northern Virginia. Participants included 19 second grade students and five second grade teachers. Words study was shown to positively impact second grade students and teachers in many ways; however, the results also shed light on some conflicting evidence. My research will help myself, as well as fellow educators better understand how teachers and students view word study and how it affects students' ability to transfer their spelling words to their writing. Due to the limitations of this study more research is undoubtedly necessary to better understand the impact of word study.

How At-Home Reading Habits Affect Reading Achievement in School. Debra Tharp. Students develop reading habits at home at a very early age. Students' experience with at-home reading can have a substantial effect in attitudes towards reading that are evident in the classroom. This study examines how kindergarteners' reading attitudes and at-home reading habits affect reading achievement in school. The data collected from parent surveys, student interviews and nightly reading logs were evaluated and compared to actual reading test scores to examine if the attitudes students have toward reading have an effect on achievement as demonstrated by the PALS reading test results. The findings in the study indicated that out of the 18 students in the study who were evaluated in the PALS reading test the 4 students who had the lowest reading scores were the students who did not return their nightly reading logs. Of the 14 students in the study who did return their reading logs, 14 demonstrated good reading progress since the beginning of their kindergarten school year on both reading a text, and words in isolation. The scores of the beginning PALS testing scores to mid-year scores were evaluated. Findings also indicated that the majority of the students who showed reading success on the PALS testing are reading at home. Students who were not reading at home showed much lower reading scores on both text and word lists. Findings of this study also demonstrated that parents, mostly mothers, are doing the majority of the oral reading in the home. Students attitudes toward reading were high. Only 3 students had a lower attitude toward reading, and having someone read to them. Of the students surveyed, all of the students who returned their reading logs had positive attitudes toward reading at school. Therefore at-home reading has a positive effect on reading in school. This study is important to parents and educators to assist them in gaining a better understanding of the monumental effect that students' at-home reading has on reading achievement in kindergarten students.

The Extended School Effects on Reading Instruction and Reading Achievement. Amy Colwell. This mixed-method research report presents findings on how an extended school day affected reading instruction and reading achievement. Data were collected through the use of student assessments, teacher surveys, classroom observations, and interviews. Findings indicated that the extended school day and modified schedule had positive and negative impacts on student achievement in terms of testing as measured by reading tests. Administrators and teachers had differing beliefs as to the effectiveness of the extended school day. Participants agreed that the extended day was only one small factor that influences
student achievement. In the end, there was conflicting data on the effectiveness of the extended school day on reading achievement and instruction.

An Exploration of Academic Vocabulary Instruction for Elementary Language Learners. Bridget Votta. This mixed method study was an exploration of how general education teachers in grades K-5 are teaching academic vocabulary to English Language Learner (ELL) students in a suburban, Northern Virginia school. The study focused on whether teachers were effectively teaching vocabulary strategies with English Language Learners. Teachers were given a school-wide survey prior to a classroom observation about how they instruct academic vocabulary towards ELLs in their classrooms. Following the classroom observations, teachers were given a follow-up interview to check for inconsistencies. The study found that there were some inconsistencies in differentiation in my school. In addition, although teachers were saying they were using a variety of strategies in the school-wide survey and follow-up teacher interview, they were using visuals the most. The results of this study provided insight into some of the many best practices in the instruction of vocabulary directed to ELL students. Providing knowledge to teachers about methods to teach academic vocabulary will help promote further discussion. These discussions will help to create more effective professional development and to hold teachers, administrators, reading specialists, and the school division accountable in meeting state and national objectives.

What Makes Graphic Novels Appealing to Adolescent Males? Amanda Ayers. This study examines what makes graphic novels appealing to adolescent males in order to help educators gain a better understanding of the educational significance of using graphic novels in classroom instruction. Participants of this study include adolescent males from eleven freshman English classes in a rural high school. This study consists of both quantitative and qualitative measures. Data collection includes a survey that inquires about graphic novel format feature preferences, a book checklist that indicates if a student prefers a graphic novel over that of a text only novel, and interview questions for those students who choose to read a graphic novel over reading a text only novel. The researcher analyzed data searching for trends in responses that indicated what makes graphic novels appealing to adolescent males.