

ABSTRACT

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A Case Study Of Reading Education For Middle School Students
With Learning Disabilities

(Major Professor: Kimberly Kimbell-Lopez)

The purpose of this study was to investigate The Achieve Reading Curriculum, a reading curriculum based on whole language principles designed for middle school students with learning disabilities. A qualitative intrinsic case study was conducted using four sixth grade middle school students with learning disabilities as participants. Ethnographic methodology was used to focus on the multifaceted structure of classroom life and to acquire a thorough understanding of the connections between participants and teacher. A teacher as researcher approach facilitated insights on a daily basis due to the interaction between participants and teacher.

Data collection procedures included observations/field notes, teacher journal, student interviews, parent interviews, and student written work. Categories were generated through the constant comparison method with continual refining and analysis.

The participants' reading ability developed as a result of the Achieve Reading Curriculum. Data indicated the participants demonstrated their developing reading ability through increasing levels of class involvement, class discussions, novel study, teacher interview results, writing activities, and time on task/reading attending behaviors. The motivation of the participants to read increased due to components of the Achieve Reading Curriculum, an increase in class participation and discussion, and stronger writing and creativity efforts produced by the participants as the study progressed. Parental support was critical to the effective implementation of the program and the success of the participants. The perceptions parents had of the program and its results, the reading encouragement offered by the parents to the participants and the teacher appreciation were demonstrative of their support.

Data triangulated from parent interviews, student interviews, student written responses, teacher-researcher observations/fieldnotes, and teacher journal suggest the Achieve Reading Curriculum, based on whole language principles, can be effective in developing and improving the reading ability, enhancing the motivation to read, and facilitating parental support and involvement of middle school students with learning disabilities.