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The Effects Of The Press Intervention On Kindergarteners With Limited Early Literacy Skills

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THE EFFECTS OF THE PRESS INTERVENTION ON KINDERGARTENERS WITH LIMITED EARLY LITERACY SKILLS

By

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education

Hamline University
Saint Paul, Minnesota
May 2017

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To my family and friends for all their support and encouragement. Thank you to my husband and parents for continuing to motivate me. To my children for being patient while I worked on this research and for inspiring me to finish strong.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background Information</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Experience</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Literacy Development</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRESS Intervention Model</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Early Intervention</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of Early Literacy Skills</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits of Assessment</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER THREE: Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Participants</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FOUR: Results

Introduction

Overview

Initial Assessment

First Ten Day Intervention

Post Assessment and Findings

Second Ten Day Intervention

Second Post Assessment and Next Steps

Conclusion

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion

Introduction

Major Learning

Moving Forward

Connections to Literature

Implications

Limitations
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Reading, rhyming, singing, and talking — beginning from birth — profoundly influence literacy and language development, the foundations for all other learning (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2008). More than one in three American children enter Kindergarten without the skills they need to learn to read. Children introduced to reading early on tend to read earlier and excel in school compared to children who are not exposed to language and books at a young age (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2008).

Kindergarten has not always been as rigorous as it is now. Some students are ready for this rigor but many, developmentally, are not. Early literacy skills are important to the success of students in school. These skills begin to develop before a child even enters school and are important for many reasons. According to the NAEYC (2017), developing early literacy skills makes it easier for children to learn to read. Children who enter school with these skills have an advantage that carries with them throughout their school years.

For this reason, the evidence shows that many students come into Kindergarten not having any early literacy skills, including letter names, letter sounds, phonemic
awareness or writing exposure, while others come in with a variety of early literacy skills already. It would be beneficial to those students to have an intervention program that could be easily implemented for them, at their current level, in order to teach them those skills in a timely manner and to build on those skills needed to become a successful reader.

**Overview**

As a teacher, being able to provide early literacy exposure to students who have not had previous literacy exposure before they enter Kindergarten is important to me. I want to provide specific instruction to them with early literacy interventions that prove to be effective. I believe that early intervention is beneficial and as much exposure to early reading and writing skills and repetition in these skill areas is valuable to learning. However, I also know that all students learn differently and what works for one may not work for another. The school district I work for saw this need also and offered teachers the opportunity to pilot an intervention model that they felt would benefit all students and their reading progress. I welcomed this opportunity and I chose to use the PRESS, which stands for the Path to Reading Excellence in School Site, Intervention model in my classroom, to give small group instruction at each student’s level (Minnesota Center for Reading Research, 2016). The PRESS Interventions focus on the literacy skill that the students are showing that the students are working on at that time and moves them from skill to skill in a developmentally appropriate sequence.

**Area of Focus**
My area of focus is using the PRESS Intervention model to teach small group interventions focused on early literacy skills. My research question is, *what impact does the PRESS Intervention model have on Kindergarteners with limited early literacy skills?*

In order to research the impact of the PRESS Interventions, I will first be assessing my class on phonemic awareness and segmenting. These are two very specific early literacy skills and are the foundational skills for reading. For those students that are proficient in their phonemic awareness and are beginning to move into the segmentation stage of reading I will be implementing a small group intervention focused on segmenting words.

When beginning this journey of research for my capstone I wanted to find a way to reach students early on in the year that were coming into Kindergarten not knowing any or very few letter names and sounds. As I began researching interventions and looking into the PRESS model, it became clear that students with limited early literacy skills, are not yet ready to be working on letter names and sounds. Instead, they need to begin working on their phonemic awareness first. This changed my thought process of being able to get them to know letter names and letter sounds early in the year and instead we focused on phonemic awareness activities. This then led me to the next step in the intervention process which was segmenting and blending. Many students were able to make the jump into segmenting after we worked on phonemic awareness but were struggling with producing each sound of the given words. This is where I decided to focus my attention and my interventions, it was more developmentally appropriate and the need for these skills was very apparent in my kindergarteners.
It is important that all students coming into Kindergarten receive literacy instruction at their level and are given the opportunity to work on skills that are at their level. In order to see the most progress in the development of their literacy skills they need to be receiving instruction and independent practice in areas that they are developmentally ready. This will help them to begin their early literacy journey like their classmates who have already had prior experiences and exposure and may have already developed some of those literacy skills before coming to Kindergarten.

**Background Information**

According to Lester (2007), the national percentage of children that were attending at least a year of preschool, starting at age 4, was 64% of students. This number may seem pretty high but looking at it from the other side, that means that 36% of students are not attending any type of preschool program before they enter the Kindergarten classroom.

Using PRESS and the interventions it provides gives teachers a framework to follow that structures literacy achievement in grades K-5 within a multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and a tiered intervention program (Minnesota Center for Reading Research, 2017).

In an article written by Jones, Clark and Reutzel (2013), they stated that students’ knowledge of the names, sounds, and symbols of the letters of the alphabet or alphabetic knowledge are essential for learning to read and write. Specifically they argued, “alphabet knowledge is consistently recognized as the strongest, most durable predictor of later achievement in literacy including decoding, comprehension, and spelling” (p. 81).
Using PRESS will allow me to know which students already have this knowledge and which students are in need of support as well as at which tier that support needs to be implemented. It has a clear order of skills that it teaches and builds on as the students move through the interventions. PRESS will provide me with the data I need to plan appropriate instruction for all students.

**My Experience**

In my eight years as a Kindergarten teacher, I noticed that more and more students are entering Kindergarten having not been exposed to early literacy skills. It is my job to make sure they know this information before I can move on to teaching other reading skills. All students learn differently and have different background knowledge regarding early literacy. As their teacher I need to make sure they can name and recognize all letters and demonstrate the sounds that the letters represent because it not only affects their reading but also their writing and other areas of school as well. Based on my experiences, phonemic awareness is the building block to reading and all students need to be successful in this area. The earlier in the school year they can do that, the more time we have to focus on developing the other skills necessary to learn to be successful in reading and writing.

My first thought when thinking about my capstone work was going to be to find some great strategies to help students coming into Kindergarten with limited letter names and letter sounds. As I began my research, I noticed that students that attended preschool had more early literacy skills than those that had not attended any preschool. I then wanted to do more research around the benefits of preschool on the development of early
literacy skills. As I continued on with that research, I discovered the PRESS Intervention model from the University of Minnesota. Upon more research with PRESS and how the interventions are structured, it became clear that the foundation of early literacy really is not letter names and letter sounds like I had originally thought, but was actually phonemic awareness which is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in words. Which means that before children learn to read words they need to become more aware of how the sounds in words work. Since this philosophy was new learning to me I decided that I wanted to see what impact the PRESS interventions had on the student’s literacy learning.

In order to complete this task throughout my capstone, I will be using the PRESS Intervention model and will be focusing on the skill of segmenting with a small group of my students. I have pre-assessed all students and found a group of six students who are proficient in phonemic awareness and are now working on the skill of segmenting words. Segmenting is the ability to break words down into individual sounds and this is the next step in the process of early reading.

As a Kindergarten teacher, and according to the Minnesota State Standards, our district and our school benchmarks and grade level requirements, Kindergarteners are required to master many early literacy skills. These exact skills will be talked about in chapter three but as the teacher, I am responsible for making sure students know all twenty-six upper and lower case letter names as well as the sounds that those letters represent. Students must demonstrate knowledge of phonemic awareness as well as other literacy skills and early reading concepts that are taught throughout the year.
As a teacher, it is beneficial to have interventions available to use with students that are beginning to develop their early reading and writing skills because they are important skills to build on throughout the year. All these skills are necessary to know and understand before we can move on to other early reading and writing skills. I would like to know that using the PRESS Interventions are going to be beneficial to my students as they are moving through the early literacy stages. Students that are coming from a background with no previous schooling are often struggling to learn this information quickly and efficiently. I am interested to find out what effect the PRESS Intervention model has on the early literacy learners and if the interventions are effective in moving them through the early literacy stages in an efficient amount of time.

**Conclusion**

With phonemic awareness and alphabet knowledge being a strong predictor of later literacy achievement the research and work I will be doing is important to the success of our Kindergarten students. Being able to give my students a strong foundation of literacy skills will allow them to build on those areas all year in Kindergarten and the years to follow.

In chapter two, a review of the literature related to my research question, *what impact does the PRESS Intervention model have on Kindergarteners with limited early literacy skills?* helped me to evaluate current and past instructional practices and how researched and thoroughly implemented interventions will increase the production of these important skills throughout the year. Chapter three will include a summary of the
early literacy skills that students need and why they are important and will also include
the definition of PRESS and a discussion about assessment in early childhood.

My capstone is intended to review the research and facts behind the PRESS
Intervention model, how it is used and how to best implement the interventions for
students that have not had prior exposure to those early literacy skills. The final chapter
will be a reflection of the results of the capstone, providing the reader with a summary of
my findings, outcomes and next steps in implementing this important instructional tool
for myself and the students in my classroom.

Upon completion of this capstone, I hope to use the data from assessments to
choose and successfully implement the PRESS interventions that can be used to provide
incoming Kindergarteners with the early literacy skills they need to be successful readers.
The students need these basic skills to build early literacy knowledge and to do so in a
timely manner so they can proceed with curriculum and instruction at the same rate as
their classmates that have had prior exposure to early reading skills. In addition, I hope
that what I learn through this capstone and research process will be beneficial to my
teammates, other early intervention teachers that I work with, and to parents, so they can
see the benefits of early exposure to literacy skills before they begin Kindergarten.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Early literacy skills are an important learning area to me in my career teaching Kindergarten. I want to have a tool, like the PRESS (Path to Reading Excellence in School Site) intervention model, to help teach those literacy skills effectively and efficiently when students are developmentally ready to begin reading. For this reason, my literature review, as well as my research, is centered around the importance of early literacy skills and the impact that the PRESS intervention model can have on Kindergarteners that have limited early literacy skills.

In this literature review, in order to answer my research question, I hope to identify; the importance of early literacy skills, the components of early literacy that are most important and how the PRESS intervention model impacts Kindergarten students. This chapter explores the different components and definitions of early literacy and the importance of those skills. This chapter also defines what the PRESS intervention model is and how it is used in the classroom with students, as well as how assessment of literacy skills can be beneficial in a kindergarten classroom.

Throughout this chapter I review literature that discusses how early literacy is developed and why those skills are important for children to gain before they enter Kindergarten, how assessment and intervention can be used to make a positive impact on
early literacy development and the importance of early exposure to literacy skills prior to a child entering formal schooling. The literature reviewed in this chapter originates from experts in the fields of early literacy development, assessment and early childhood education.

Early Literacy Development

What is early literacy? Early literacy is defined as the knowledge, skills and dispositions that precede learning to read and write in the primary grades (K-3). Early literacy is an emerging set of relationships between reading and writing which include the areas of phonological awareness, print knowledge, print motivation and oral language/vocabulary (Roskos, Christie & Richgels, 2003).

Phonological awareness is the child’s awareness of the sounds that make up words, for example letter sounds and patterns such as rhyming. Print knowledge refers to the child’s knowledge of print such as the difference between a letter and a word, and how words make up sentences. Print knowledge also indicates a child’s ability to recognize print as a form of communication. Print motivation refers to a child’s interest in books and their enjoyment of reading. Oral language development and vocabulary development refers to the child’s ability to use spoken word to express knowledge, feelings and ideas as well as to comprehend while listening and make sense while speaking (Chard & Osborn, 1999).

Early literacy is recognized as a combination of developmentally appropriate practice with an intentional focus on providing opportunities for children to learn about literacy and explore the world of letters, sounds, words and print (Rohde, 2015).
foundation of all learning is in the development of language and literacy abilities. Literacy development begins well before children enter school and can be enhanced by an early childhood setting that focuses on the important components of early literacy (Crim, Hawkins, Thornton, Rosof, Copley & Thomas, 2008).

Literacy development is not just a matter of learning a set of skills. It is a purposeful activity involving children in various ways of making, interpreting and communicating meaning with written and oral language. Content rich literacy experiences, either at home or in an educational setting, involves children in integrated instruction that helps them build an understanding of ideas and connects new learning to what they already know and can do. Children actively apply their early skills to learn about the world around them. When children are exposed to a language and content rich environment they begin to acquire the knowledge, skills and dispositions that serve as a foundation for early literacy learning (Neuman & Roskos, 2005).

Early literacy has been described as a developmental continuum and each of the components of early literacy is on its own path of development and the components are not strictly related to one another as part of a consecutive sequence. Although they are not consecutive they do depend on each other. There is not one clear path of early literacy development but rather a series of associated and related experiences that result in the building of knowledge and skills related to the early literacy process. Recognizing the different stages of development within early literacy is important in order to provide appropriate learning opportunities and guided support in the areas that students are needing the most exposure (Rohde, 2015).
Early literacy learning and exposure to letters, books and vocabulary is important for a few reasons. First, successfully developing emergent skills in young children is vital for their future academic successes. These skills provide them with a greater chance to successfully learn how to read and to use those skills in other academic areas as well. Research has shown that children who begin their kindergarten year with a delay in emergent literacy skills are more likely to continue to be delayed as compared to typically developing peers that have had prior exposure to the skills or have been enrolled in an educational setting that focused on early literacy (Hilbert & Eis, 2014).

Research has also shown that the preschool years are critical to the development of the early literacy skills that will lay the foundation for future reading skills and help prevent problems from developing (Strickland & Riley-Ayers, 2006) Thus it is important to focus on early literacy skills that should be taught in a preschool classroom and how they are best presented (Gischler & Vesay, 2014). Not all children attend a preschool program before they enter Kindergarten but being exposed to early literacy skills before they enter formal schooling is beneficial to reading readiness and success. The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) reported that phonological awareness measured in Kindergarten or earlier was found to be one of the most robust predictors of later decoding, reading comprehension and spelling skills (as cited in Hilbert, D. & Eis, S. 2014).

Also, the preschool years are a significant period of development during which young children acquire knowledge of the code and meaning based aspects of both written and spoken language. This knowledge base emphasizes its precursory relation to
conventional literacy abilities and skills such as; reading comprehension, word recognition and spelling (Justice, McGinty, Piasta, Kaderavek & Fan, 2010).

An effective way to expose children to early literacy skills could include many different components. Many preschoolers begin their first year of formal schooling, usually Kindergarten, with varying levels of emergent literacy skills. This variability is largely affected by prior home environments, their level of oral language they have been exposed to and the provision of good early intervention programs in preschools. Children learn from listening and talking to their parents and that contributes to their ability to read and write. Children that fall behind in oral language and literacy development are less likely to be successful beginning readers and their underachievement is likely to continue through the primary years of school and beyond (Callaghan & Madelaine, 2012).

Jones, Clark and Reutzel (2013) stated that knowledge of the names, sounds and symbols of the letters of the alphabet are essential for learning to read and write. Not only is learning these skills important but being able to apply the knowledge to the context of reading and writing is just as important. When students get to school instruction that includes teaching letters through multiple, distributed instructional cycles which allows for letters to be introduced, practiced and revisited several times as needed, during the course of the school year has proven to be beneficial for all students. For those students that have never been introduced to letters they are able to be exposed to all the letters, multiple times throughout the year and sooner than if they were waiting for a certain week. However, even with repetitive exposure some children will need more direct instruction that focuses on specific phonemic awareness concepts and skills.
Therefore, early literacy skills are shown to be important in getting children ready and on track for reading and success in school. However, we know that all children come to school with different skills and with various backgrounds in literacy knowledge, for those that are limited in their literacy skills and knowledge they may be in need of supplementary instruction in the classroom, a program like PRESS could be beneficial to meet their needs as a learner.

**PRESS Intervention Model**

What is PRESS? Press stands for Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites and is a program started five years ago at the University of Minnesota in response to reading statistics in Minnesota. PRESS was designed as a literacy intervention program and the goal of the program was for all students to be reading at grade level by third grade. Doing this provides struggling readers with individual or small group interventions at their current reading level. PRESS is a research-based tool that teachers can tailor to their classroom needs (Runck, 2016).

PRESS introduces teachers to a new way of collecting and analyzing data to ensure that what is happening in their classroom leads to effective instruction. It is an intervention tool that helps teachers to use student data to make better instructional decisions and implement classwide interventions tailored to students’ needs and current reading skills. PRESS was developed with the response-to-intervention model in mind, it was conducted similarly in that they made sure the data collected from the classroom techniques and interventions were actually having a positive effect with students in the classroom. During the pilot of PRESS they knew that had an effective framework for
literacy intervention when results from two third-grade classrooms showed a 32 percent increase in the number of students performing at or above their benchmark after receiving a PRESS intervention (Runck, 2016).

PRESS is beneficial for students and easy to implement for teachers. It is a comprehensive approach to early literacy, driven by research based practices. The program incorporates quality core instruction, data-driven instructional decisions and interventions and support for many different types of learners (Burke, 2013). According to Research Highlights from The Promise of PRESS (2013), in Kindergarten, PRESS reduced the number of students performing below grade-level proficiency by 27 percent. By providing students with intervention early in their school years approximately 70 percent of K-3 students receiving PRESS interventions made at least one year’s growth in one year’s time, considerably higher than students who were not proficient readers and did not receive PRESS intervention (p. 8).

**Importance of Early Intervention**

An intervention in education is a specific program or set of steps to help a child improve or make progress in a specific area. Interventions can be formal but are also flexible to meet the needs of the learner. They are not the same as teaching strategies. Strategies are usually more informal or are academic activities that are not tracked over time. Interventions may include strategies but interventions are more formal and are monitored with quantitative or qualitative data (Lee, 2014).

Interventions with literacy skills, including phonemic awareness, are conducted in small groups with students all struggling in the same areas. Phonological and phonemic
awareness are language-based skills that involve the ability to distinguish, remember, manipulate, articulate, and process the speech sounds in words. These skills are critical for long-term success in reading and reading fluency. Students in the intervention groups receive the necessary individualized support to increase their proficiency levels.

According to Research Highlights from The Promise of PRESS (Burke, 2013) in Kindergarten, PRESS reduced the number of students performing below grade-level proficiency by 27 percent. By providing students with intervention early in their school years approximately 70 percent of K-3 students receiving PRESS interventions made at least one year’s growth in one year’s time, considerably higher than students who were not proficient readers and did not receive PRESS intervention (p. 8).

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) shared that they had found that core deficits in phonological and phonemic awareness are the underlying cause of significant early reading problems (as cited in Balsiger 2010). Without early intervention the “reading gap” between struggling readers and their peers continues to widen over time. The longer students have to wait to receive help in these areas, the further they are behind their peers. Early intervention for reading difficulties makes a significant difference in the long term reading abilities of students. The early emphasis on academic skills and intervention for students at risk for reading failure is a recommendation by national committees and organizations that focus on young children and the prevention of reading difficulties. It is well known that many students need early intervention, it is finding the most beneficial individualized instruction that is most important to meet the needs of all students (Cooke, Kretlow & Helf, 2009).
Assessment of Literacy Skills

Assessing student’s knowledge and using that data to drive instruction is important for meeting individual students learning needs but also increasing instructional efficiency, such as, whole class instruction time that can be devoted to other important learning goals and language development and vocabulary (Piasta, 2014). “Children do not all progress equally in acquiring literacy skills. Not only may the outcomes vary among individual children, but they may also very different literacy instructional approaches may have different effects on children with different backgrounds” (Xue & Meisels, 2004, p. 193).

Using data to drive instruction provides in depth knowledge of misconceptions and allows the teacher to plan the lessons and instruction of the skills that meet the needs of all students. Identifying the patterns of student needs allows for appropriate grouping practicing for teaching letter, sounds and skills and creates opportunities for all students to receive instruction at their ability level.

According to Roskos (2004), the building blocks of high quality early literacy education include strong standards as well as appropriate and fair assessments. There are two main reasons why assessment in the United States is becoming a more important topic of discussion in Early Childhood Education. The first reason is the because of the progress being made in understanding the developmental foundations of early literacy. And the second is the accountability that comes with an emphasis on early literacy in early childhood. Children’s growth in the areas of oral language comprehension, vocabulary, phonological awareness, print knowledge and motivation is critical not only
to them learning to read but also to their general cognitive capacity to learn more and complex content. Roskos (2004) stated that assessment is the necessary means for systematically collecting and analyzing information on children's literacy development. Engaging in consistent assessment contributes directly to improvements in educational services that are provided to children and their families. Therefore using the data to help student instruction is a necessary component and discussion in Kindergarten and preschool.

On the other hand, there are also reasons that people believe assessment should not be a component of an early childhood or kindergarten program. The discussion of young children being subject to assessments can be difficult because they are so young and because the link between assessment and accountability is new and scary and is usually associated with older students (Knestrick, 2013). With that being said, the purpose of assessing is one of the most problematic issues. Assessments have different purposes in education, such as instructional decision making and identifying students with special needs, program monitoring and accountability of teachers and programs. Although the purpose may be different depending on the child or the program, Roskos made a decision and included assessment in early literacy because she said, “we should and must conduct assessments because we possess scientific knowledge about literacy development that can help children” (p. 93). Using the data that is collected in an assessment can determine what structures and strategies are beneficial in early childhood programs, classrooms and schools. Teachers need to design and implement sound early literacy assessment systems that meet the needs of all the children as well as prepare
appropriate instruction tools to implement once they have the results of the data and know the different needs of all the students.

Another discussion that is appropriate to have is what does assessment look like in a kindergarten setting. Is there an appropriate amount of time or certain questions that should be included in the assessment or does it depend on the child? Roskos (2004) talked about the consideration that is needed in order for the assessment to be beneficial. Some of the aspects include the assessment having a clear purpose, it must be age appropriate and culturally and linguistically sensitive and fair.

**Benefits of Assessment**

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (n.d.) in order for assessment to benefit the children there must be a balance between procedure and practice. The use of the assessment is also an important discussion to have. After the assessment is given and the data is collected, what is the teacher or program going to do with the information. In order to make the assessment useful the teacher must analyze the data and find the areas that the students are in need of extra help. They can find patterns among the data to create group lessons that focus on the areas that most or all of the children are still working on. If the data collected from the assessment is not being used to drive instruction than it is not being helpful to the children (Roskos, 2004). Taking the time to do the assessments should be followed by taking the time to analyze the data and create meaningful instruction that benefits the most children. With PRESS this is laid out for teacher and has a clear starting point for all students at their ability level. Piatsa (2014) said, by intentionally selecting the content to
be taught educators can tailor instruction to the learning needs of children in their classrooms as aligned with the principles of developmentally appropriate practices and differentiated instruction.

**Conclusion**

“Alphabet instruction can take place in many fun, engaging and authentic contexts but can also be intentional and explicit” (Piasta, 2014, p. 208). If children receive appropriate instruction or early intervention in the areas of vocabulary and oral language, phonological awareness and print knowledge, as few as 5% may go on to experience future reading problems, as compared to the recent levels of 20%-30% of students. Research has shown that students do not need explicit or specific instruction in these areas because no one single instructional method has been identified, but they still need to be exposed to the content. With that being said, it shows that just giving children an opportunity to practice these early literacy skills should have a positive impact on their later reading ability (Gischler & Vesay, 2014).

Exposing young children to a language and content rich environment allows them to begin to acquire the broad array of knowledge and literacy skills that serve as a foundation for literacy learning. Involving children in purposeful activities and conversation, in and outside of formal education, in order to make, interpret, associate and communicate meaning with language and allows them to develop the literacy skills they need to become successful readers (Neuman & Roskos, 2005).

Many researchers, teachers, parents and administrators emphasize the importance of attending preschool or having a routine at home that is rich in literacy, conversation,
hands on activities and experiences that allow young children to learn, grow and build those early literacy skills needed to learn to read and be successful in school.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Early childhood professionals have long recognized the importance of literacy in preparing children to succeed in school. Early literacy plays a key role in enabling the kind of early learning experiences that research shows are linked with academic achievement, reduced grade retention, higher graduation rates and enhanced productivity in adult life (Strickland & Riley-Ayers, 2006).

I conducted action research using the PRESS Intervention model in order to see what impact the interventions make on students in Kindergarten with limited early literacy skills. This is important because all students learn at their own pace and all students are entering Kindergarten at different levels and with various skills. But they all need to meet the state standards when they leave Kindergarten, regardless of the skills and exposure that they had when the entered Kindergarten. The previous chapter provided a summary of research and literature related to the importance of exposure to early literacy skills before students enter Kindergarten and how the PRESS intervention model and assessment data can be implemented to help students at their current literacy skill level. Through the literature review, a common theme emerged, all students will be entering Kindergarten at various skill levels and all students are still expected to meet the Kindergarten state standards for reading. With that being said, it is my job as the teacher to make sure I have the instructional strategies planned that each child will need in order
for them to learn and provide evidence that they have met the requirements for the state standards and to enjoy reading and to be confident in their skills.

Chapter three further addresses my research question, *what impact does the PRESS Intervention model have on Kindergarteners with limited early literacy skills?*

With this research as my focus, the setting, participants, instructional strategies and goals and rationale will be described in this chapter to support this capstone. A summary of the learning outcomes, assessment procedures and data collection from my action research will also be provided in this chapter. It is my hope that at the culmination of this research and study that I will know if the PRESS Intervention Model is an effective tool to use with my students to help them develop and enhance the literacy skills needed to be a successful reader in Kindergartener.

**Methodology**

I used action research to answer my question and conduct my research project. Action research is conducted by teachers in their classroom where they are in control of decisions and instruction. Action research is used to make positive changes that improve educational practices, the school environment and meet the needs of students (Mills, 2014). Action research helps teachers to find out what works best in their classroom and with their students. It is important in our classrooms because we need to be able to make changes, reflect on those changes and make informed decisions based on the data and the facts that we found from that action research. Action research allows teachers to try new things, base instructional decisions off of data and to deliver individualized instruction for students at the appropriate developmental level.
Study Participants

The students in this action research were chosen based off of PRESS assessments. All students were given an Initial Phonemic Awareness Inventory (see Appendix A) which is designed as a diagnostic tool. This allowed me to determine the appropriate intervention that each student would need in one of the four phonemic skill groups:

- initial phoneme sound - hearing and producing the first sound of a word
- phoneme segmenting - breaking words down into sounds
- phoneme blending - identifying a word when given the sounds
- phoneme manipulation - manipulating sounds in spoken words to create new words (ie changing /c/an to /f/an)

After I gathered each student’s current skill level I was able to decide what skill group needed the most instruction. I chose the group that had seven students working on segmenting to do my action research with because this was the largest group, therefore the area with the greatest need. Of these seven students there were four White females and one White male, one African-American male and one mixed race female.

Classroom Setting

This action research took place in my Kindergarten classroom in January and February 2017. My classroom is in a suburban school with an ESL population of 13% and 42% of our students receive free and reduced lunch. Our school district has the highest poverty level in Dakota County with 13.3%. The students in our school include White (62%), Hispanic (21%), African American (5%) and Asian (2%) students that
come from diverse home lives and backgrounds made up of various socioeconomic statuses as well as single and two parent families. The classroom teacher to student ratio is 15:1, there are 69 full time teachers on staff and school enrollment consists 1,052 students in Kindergarten - fifth grade. Our classroom is one of six Kindergarten classrooms in the school and one of twelve in the district.

**Goal of this Study**

The goal of this capstone was to determine the impact that the PRESS Intervention Model had on my kindergarten students that had entered Kindergarten with limited early literacy skills. I used my small group research to determine future use of this model; my research explains if it met the students needs at each of the different levels they are currently at, and if it progressed them through the different skill levels in order to adequately meet the expectations set by the state standards for them to be considered proficient readers when they leave kindergarten. I collected specific data as to the progress that was being made by each student with each intervention and with pre and post assessments in the specific area of segmenting.

**Learning Outcomes**

The learning outcomes of this capstone are aligned with the Minnesota State Standards for English Language Arts in Kindergarten. The following standards that we will be working to meet are:

- Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.
- Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.
Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.

Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.

Recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.

Recognize and produce rhyming words.

Blend and segment onsets and rimes of single-syllable spoken words.

Isolate and pronounce the initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in three-phoneme (consonant-vowel-consonant, or CVC) words (Minnesota Department of Education, 2010)

With these goals in mind I needed to find a way to meet the needs of my kindergartners that came in with limited literacy skills. They need to meet these standards by the end of Kindergarten no matter what knowledge or skills they came in with, so I had to find a way to give them the instruction they needed at their current ability level. This is where I decided to see what impact the PRESS interventions would have on the students. I wanted to know if the scripted, small group, focused lessons would be beneficial to increasing the students literacy skills and I began to implement the PRESS model in my classroom.

Data Collection Methods and Assessment Procedures

I used a quantitative method of data collection. All of my intervention decisions were based off of the assessments and next steps would be determined by the percentages that the students scored on their post assessments in each skill area.

The process of collecting data and analyzing included:
1. All 19 students in the class were given the Phonemic Awareness Inventory (see Appendix A).

2. Based on students scores they were placed into one of five phonemic awareness skill groups, those were determined by the pre assessment and in what skill area an intervention was needed; initial phoneme sound, phoneme segmenting, phoneme blending or phoneme manipulation.

3. Based on the outcome of the initial assessment, I focused my research with the group that was the largest, this showed me what skill area the most students were struggling.

4. Those students were given the Phoneme Segmenting Pre Assessment (see Appendix B) to use as baseline data

6. The first ten day intervention was implemented in a small group setting for ten - fifteen minutes every day.

7. The first post assessment was given individually to each student (see Appendix D).

8. Students that scored a 90% or higher moved on to the next skill group, students that score below 90% were given the next ten day intervention in phoneme segmenting.

9. After the second ten day intervention the students were given another post assessment (see Appendix E) and the scores again determined the next steps, either they moved on to the next skill group or they received another ten day intervention.

   All assessments were ten questions and were specific to the skill that they are assessing. I kept informal notes throughout the interventions to help remind myself what
the students were saying, how they were responding, what parts of the intervention seem
to be most effective and how the intervention overall was going.

Overall, after I got used to the process of the intervention and how the program is
scripted, it was easy to follow and the students were able to understand what was being
taught and what was being asked of them during the intervention time. As a teacher it is
nice to have something already laid out for me to implement and for it to be effective and
easy to follow is also very helpful. The students learned a lot and I was able to easily
implement the interventions and give the assessments without a lot of work on my part.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the classroom setting, the participants, the
data collection and analysis I plan on using and the reason why I am choosing this topic
and more specifically the interventions. I will be using this information and data collected
in this action research to determine if the PRESS intervention model meets the needs of
the learners and provides them with the early literacy skills they need in order to become
readers and successful Kindergarten students. As stated in chapter three I will be working
towards all students meeting the state standards that are required of them to go on to first
grade, and more specifically to move them through those five phonemic awareness skills
so they can continue on to the next literacy skills that they need in order to become
successful readers.

Chapter four will provide a detailed summary of the interventions I chose to
implement at this point in the school year as they relate to the best instructional methods
to gain early literacy skills. It will also provide details about the data I collected and how
I analyzed it and used it to drive my instruction. Chapter four will also summarize the reason I chose the strategies that I did and discuss connections to the literature behind my choices and the best practices of early literacy instruction.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This research study was done in order for me to determine the impact that the PRESS intervention model had on my students with limited early literacy skills. I wanted to know if it would be an effective tool that I could use in the future for my students, and if it was, when and how was the best way to use it for it to make the most impact for my students. The research was completed and the data was collected, analyzed and used to determine the answer to the question, *what impact does the PRESS intervention model have on Kindergartners with limited early literacy skills?*

Overview

In the Fall of 2016, my students were given the initial Phonemic Awareness Inventory (see Appendix A). After looking at the scores and where the students showed they were at with their reading skills, I determined that phoneme segmenting was the skill area that needed the most focus from the students. For this reason I began implementing the PRESS intervention for phoneme segmenting. Phoneme segmenting is the second of four skills in the phonemic awareness group of skills. Seven students worked with me every day during our reading block time, for 10 - 15 minutes and I would implement the intervention as it was scripted in the PRESS teaching manual. The seven students were a mix of males and females, all of which had gone to preschool, but were still lacking some of the early literacy skills that they needed in order to be considered meeting Kindergarten expectations for reading.
Initial Assessment

All the students in the class were given the Phonemic Awareness Inventory (see Appendix A) which assess students on initial phoneme sounds of words, segmenting, blending and manipulation. Of the 19 students that were given the assessment the following table shows how many students would be needing each intervention.

Table 1. Phonemic Awareness Inventory Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention Skill</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Phoneme Sounds</td>
<td>3 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoneme Segmenting</td>
<td>7 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoneme Blending</td>
<td>3 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoneme Manipulation</td>
<td>3 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tested out of Phonemic Awareness</td>
<td>3 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those results showed me that the largest skill level in need of an intervention was the Phoneme Segmenting group, which is the skill of breaking words down into individual sounds. This is the group I would begin my data collection with during their intervention time.

First Ten Day Intervention

To begin the intervention for Phoneme Segmenting I gave the students a pre-assessment (See Appendix B) so I had baseline data to compare future data and results. This was different than the initial Phoneme Inventory assessment for two reasons. One difference was that the initial assessment was only five questions and the pre-assessment was ten. The other difference was that I was using the percentage of their
score to determine whether or not they had learned the skill well enough to pass out of
the segmenting intervention and move onto the blending intervention, in order to do this
they needed to score a 90 percent or above. Table 2 shows how the scores of the
Phoneme Segmenting Pre Assessment really varied. This showed me that some students
had an idea of what it meant to segment a word and for others this was the first time they
were being introduced to the concept of segmenting.

Table 2. 
Phoneme Segmenting Pre Assessment Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Percent Correct</th>
<th>Number Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>5/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>6/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>5/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>8/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>8/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student G</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>7/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After all the students were given the pre-assessment for baseline data they were
ready for the ten day intervention to begin. Even though all of the students were in need
of work in the same skill level, even within that skill level there was a wide range of
scores. This showed me that some of the students were beginning to understand the skill
of segmenting while other students were still unsure of what segmenting was and how to
demonstrate the skill when it came to reading.
For ten days the students worked in a small group on the specific skill of segmenting words. Each day we worked to hear the sounds in given words, on days 1 and 6 the students just listened and participated orally but the other eight days the students worked with sounds boxes (see Appendix C). Students worked on two sound words on days two thru five and three sound words on days six through nine. Each day had a different word list that included words that ended with sounds that stopped (d, t, b, k, etc) and words that ended with continuous sounds (s, l, r, m, etc).

The first couple days the students were excited to be working in a small group with their friends and were anxious to use the sound boxes. At first, some of the areas I noticed them struggling with were hearing the correct ending sounds, saying the correct vowel sounds and putting the sounds together into blends in words like -at in cat, instead of segmenting all three sounds in the word c / a / t. These were the teaching points I worked on and the focus points of the intervention for the next ten days. As the intervention went on the students became very tired of doing the same thing every day, they did not understand the need for the repetition and the continual practice of the skill.

**Post Assessment and Findings**

After the ten day intervention the students were given a post assessment (see Appendix D) of ten words that they had to segment. Even though the students were tired of the repetition of the intervention, their scores, for the most part, showed that the small group, focused skill work had been working. Table 3 shows how the students scores improved from the Pre Assessment they had taken.
Table 3.  
First Phoneme Segmenting Post Assessment Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Percent Correct</th>
<th>Number Correct Post Assessment</th>
<th>Number Correct Pre Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>5/10</td>
<td>5/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>3/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>6/10</td>
<td>6/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>7/10</td>
<td>5/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>8/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>8/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student G</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>7/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With those scores after the first ten days, three students Students E, F and G had already gained the skills needed to segment words and passed on to the next skill. I was pleasantly surprised by the results and the increase in their scores. After only ten days three out of seven, or almost 43% of the group had already improved enough to move onto the next skill level.

Of the four students that remained two of the students scores stayed the same and the other two increased. I was excited to see what would happen with the next ten day intervention for these remaining four students.

**Second Ten Day Intervention**

Four of the students that remained in this skill group were given the next ten day intervention. Although it is considered the next intervention it is actually the same intervention from the first time around. The repetition of the skill and the practice with
the different types of words and hearing the sounds is what the students needed to be working on every day. Again, like the first time they did the intervention, they quickly became tired of doing the same thing every day but this time were not making the same mistakes that they did the first time. They were hearing the vowel sounds more clearly and were understanding that they had to separate the middle and ending sounds instead of putting them together as a blend. They were now listening for the separation of the sounds in the words and were focusing on making sure they heard and pronounced the ending sound.

**Second Post Assessment and Next Steps**

After the second ten day intervention was complete the four students were given another post assessment (see Appendix E). Table 4 shows the results of the second post assessment, again, all the students scores increased.

Table 4.
Second Phoneme Segmenting Post Assessment Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Percent Correct 2nd Post Assessment</th>
<th>Number Correct 2nd Post Assessment</th>
<th>Number Correct 1st Post Assessment</th>
<th>Number Correct Pre Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>5/10</td>
<td>5/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>3/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>6/10</td>
<td>6/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>7/10</td>
<td>5/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results showed that after the second ten day intervention that the remaining four students had passed the assessment and were able to move on to the next skill. After only twenty days, spending ten to fifteen minutes a day on one skill, all seven of the students in the initial segmenting phoneme group had gained the skills they needed to move on to the next skill group. These students were able to provide evidence on the post assessment that they now knew how to hear the sounds in words, were able to segment the sounds separately and could provide each sound in a given word.

**Conclusion**

In chapter 4, I wrote about the results of my action research and share the evidence that I collected during the process of answering my research question, *What impact does the PRESS intervention model have on kindergarten students with limited early literacy skills?* I described details about the intervention process and the assessment process and results throughout the experience.

Overall, I found that the Phoneme Segmenting intervention was beneficial to students and made a positive impact on their ability to hear the sounds in words and segment the sounds of a given word, which is an important skill in beginning to read and gain the skills needed to become a successful reader.

In chapter 5, I describe how I used the information that I gathered, what I learned as a teacher throughout this process and how I plan to share my findings with others.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Introduction

In my Kindergarten classroom I was seeing a need in early literacy skills for some students coming in with limited experience with literacy. I chose to implement the PRESS intervention for phoneme segmenting with some of my students to determine if it could make an impact on their reading skills. They were given a pre assessment, a ten day intervention and a post assessment. Three of the seven students passed the skill after the first ten day intervention, the other three were given another ten day intervention. After two, ten day interventions all seven students showed mastery in phoneme segmenting and passed the post assessment with a 90 percent or higher.

The reason for my action research project was to determine what impact the PRESS intervention model had on Kindergarten students with limited early literacy skills. I liked the idea of using small group interventions in my classroom but was unsure how to go about assessing the students and choosing skills that were most important in the reading process. I was intrigued with how the PRESS model broke down the skills for five and six year old students and was excited to see if PRESS could be a beneficial addition to teaching reading skills in my classroom. I also knew that phonemic awareness is one of the language based skills that is critical for long term success in reading and reading fluency (Balsiger, 2010).
In my action research, I was able to work with a small group of students on one specific skill, using the scripted and focused intervention from PRESS. It included an initial assessment, a scripted ten day intervention for ten to fifteen minutes a day and a post assessment following the intervention. It was important for me to see how this intervention impacted the students with it being such a short amount of time for only ten days. I was pleasantly surprised as the days of the interventions went on, without even assessing the students, I could see them starting to make progress and beginning to understand the concept of segmenting the sounds in the given words. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), 95% of children that have trouble learning to read can reach grade level if they receive focused, explicit help when they are young. Without early intervention the “reading gap” widens between struggling readers and their peers (as cited in Balsiger, 2010). As a kindergarten teacher I am able to provide the early intervention that many students need to gain the necessary skills in order to read. After researching PRESS I was excited to have possibly found a tool that I could use with my students that does not take a lot of preparation from me and does not take a large amount of time during our already busy, academic day.

**Major Learnings**

To my surprise after the first ten days, three of the students had already passed the assessment and provided evidence they had mastered the skill. They were able to segment words with at least 90% accuracy in a short amount of time. It seemed that the students that came in with more early literacy skills were able to pick up the skill faster than the students that started the intervention with an initial score of 50% or lower. The students
that began the intervention around 50% seemed to stay the same for the first intervention and the students that were below 50% showed they were making progress after just ten days.

The big surprise came after the second intervention when all of the students passed the post assessment for phoneme segmenting! After only 20 days of 10-15 minutes of direct instruction all seven students learned the skill and were able to show evidence that they had learned how to segment with scores of 90% accuracy or higher. They will then move on to the next skill, which is blending, they will build on what they learned in the segmenting intervention to learn how to blend those sounds together to hear the words being said. I will know that they have learned the skill when they begin to use it, practice it and demonstrate their knowledge of segmenting while building on the skill during the next skill level and beyond. In the past I have seen success with interventions but with not having a clear scope and sequence I was never able to see if they continued to show mastery of the skill because they were not moving on to another skill level. With past interventions after they passed the interventions they needed help on then the program stopped. With PRESS you continue to work through all of the skills until they have mastered all skills in the group, for example all four skills in phonemic awareness, then they move onto the skills in phonics, onto fluency, to comprehension and last is vocabulary.

Before implementing the PRESS interventions in my classroom I was unsure of how it would work and how the students would respond to the skill work. I thought that ten days seemed like a long time to do the same thing over and over again but with the
research showing that it was beneficial to the students I was determined to implement it accurately in hopes that I would see the same results. There were a few different things I learned throughout this process that were eye opening but I am glad that I discovered them so I can continue to use them and build on them in the future.

The segmenting intervention included a paper with two or three boxes on it, the students had cubes and as they said each sound of a given word they pushed a cube into the box of the corresponding sound. This intervention activity seemed so simple and I thought that if they were really going to learn to segment words that the intervention needed to be more complex. However, after sticking to the script of the intervention and having the students practice the skill of segmenting with the cubes and boxes for ten days, the intervention proved to be working. The simple, yet repetitive intervention was breaking down the skill of segmenting to be very easy for the students to understand and pick up each day.

I was also reminded that repetition is key to students this age being able to learn, practice and apply a skill. The amount of repetition needed for every student to learn something new is different but everyone, including adults, need to practice a skill before they can master it. This hold true especially for children, often it is hard to remember, it seems like after we show them something or tell them something they should be able to remember it and apply immediately, but they need time to process, practice and eventually they will learn it and be able to apply it.

The last thing I took away from this experience was the reminder of how small group and focused, consistent instruction is beneficial to students learning. As teachers
we always feel like we never have enough time to fit in everything we need and want to
get done in a day and to take time to work with small groups, every day, on a simple skill
does not always seem like the best use of time. However, it is beneficial to students to get
that focused attention and specific instruction at the level or on the specific skills that
they need. It goes back to best teaching practices for the students and not necessarily
what works best for the teacher or the class as a whole.

The PRESS intervention setup and implementation proved to work and be
beneficial to the students in the small group. The intervention process, the
implementation, the assessment and sequence of skill work was developmentally
appropriate and the students gained new knowledge in short amount of time as a result
the PRESS intervention process.

**Moving Forward**

Early intervention for students that have difficulty reading makes a significant
difference in the long-term reading abilities of children (Balsiger, 2010). Considering
how much progress a reader makes from the first day of school to the last day of school
in first grade, it is easy to see how students who fail to learn to read early in their school
years fall behind their peers and have difficulty catching up (Ziowlkowska, 2007).

With the research showing how important it is that students receive reading
intervention for those students that are working on their literacy skills it proves that small
group instruction is what is needed and beneficial for students. Since PRESS proves to
meet the needs of the students using it consistently in my classroom as a teaching tool is
something I look forward to doing for the rest of this school year and will be beginning it early next school year.

Cooke, Kretlow and Helf (2009) affirmed that it is beneficial to the students to begin the interventions early in the school year versus waiting until struggles begin to show or for a certain time in the school year. It is important to get the year started with interventions and instruction for each child at their incoming literacy level. As a Kindergarten teacher it is important for me to start the school year with these best practices to make the most out of the instructional time I have with the students.

**Connections to Literature**

Throughout my action research I found various connections to the literature that I had reviewed. In an article by Rohde (2015) she talks about how early literacy is a developmental continuum and each of the components of early literacy is on its own path of development and although they are not consecutive they do depend on each other. I found this to be very true when it came to the skills and the sequence that PRESS assessed them. They are all stand alone skills but they depend on each other and have a specific order they should be taught in, in order to build on the prior skill and to gain each skill needed to move onto the next.

The next connection I found was to an article written by Roskos (2004) that talked about assessment and data collection. Using the data that is collected in an assessment can determine what structures and strategies are beneficial in your classroom. Using PRESS helped me to rediscover the benefit of small group instruction and how using assessments and data to create those groups and drive the instruction in the areas that are
challenging to the students is really best practice and meets the needs of all learners. PRESS uses assessment and the data to determine skills, groups and developmentally appropriate activities and strategies to teach all the content that the students needs to know.

The last connection that I made was the reason behind why I had chose this topic and action research in the first place. In an article by Cooke, Kretlow and Helf (2009) they state; “it is well known that many students need early intervention, it is finding the most beneficial individualized instruction that is most important to meet the needs of all students”. Many of my Kindergartners start school with limited to no early literacy skills. They are in need of individualized instruction to learn the content in a timely manner so we are able to use the rest of the school year to build on those skills so they can become readers. I wanted to have an intervention model that I could use for all students, but one that was appropriate developmentally and was not a lot of work for me to prepare and implement. PRESS provides beneficial instruction through the interventions to small groups of students, which meets the needs of individual students and their developmental level.

There was a lot of good research regarding the importance of early literacy and best practices for exposing students to all the information and skills they need to become successful readers at a young age, which in turn sets them up to be successful throughout their school years and beyond. Assessment and using data to drive instruction were also areas that had good information and research to support the idea of assessment for students at a young age.
**Implications**

With the new information I gained throughout this action research I realized that the sequence in which our Kindergarten team begins teaching phonics does not really match what research says about best practice. I brought my research and results to my grade level team and we have decided to spend beginning of the school year teaching phonemic awareness first and the letter names and sounds after the students have been introduced to all the letters, their sounds as a whole, instead of individually. This will lead us naturally into the phonemic awareness skills that PRESS has deemed important and the interventions that have proved to make a difference.

**Limitations**

As with all changes in a classroom there are limitations that can cause some unexpected disruptions. For example, with implementing PRESS the ideal timeline of an intervention would be ten straight days. However, students are absent for different reasons, days off of school are in the middle of some of those interventions and other things that come up in a school day that could distract from the focus of the intervention area possible as well. With that being said, we do our best with what we have and if we use our time wisely and are intentional with our work then as the results showed, progress can still be made and students can still be successful.

**Future Research**

When thinking about future research there were three different things that I wondered about. The first was to following these seven students as the years go on and to monitor how their reading skills compare to their peers. It would be interesting to see if
they continued to make progress, if they continued to need interventions or if the impact that the intervention had on them in Kindergarten even made a difference on their reading skills once they left Kindergarten and moved to a new grade with new reading skills.

I also wondered if there would someday be a part of PRESS that started interventions with students in preschool. Would there be skills that they could be working on and receiving interventions with that could help them be more successful when they began Kindergarten? I wonder what that would look like developmentally and if a preschool intervention would be appropriate to set students up for success in Kindergarten.

The last thing I had wondered about was if students had success with PRESS does it impact, or could it impact other areas of the school day. Would their math scores increase because they could read the question and comprehend what it is asking them to do? Could teachers see a change in behavior with students that were struggling before but now since they are more successful they are no longer bored and causing disruptions in class? It would be interesting to compare their behavior before the intervention and after the interventions, in different areas of the day, to see if it had any other impacts on them as students.

**Communicating Results**

As I shared earlier I was able to use my results and research to present to my Kindergarten team a new approach to teaching our letter names and sounds. I was able to share results and research at our weekly team and professional learning meetings. This has helped us to rethink the way we are teaching and approaching phonemic awareness
skills with our students. Also, our reading intervention team has been implementing PRESS and have been very helpful to discuss ideas, challenges, successes and next steps.

Another way I plan on communicating my results is with the first grade team. By putting all of my interventions and scores into an excel spreadsheet I can easily share with them all the information that I have and they are able to pick up where I left off in Kindergarten.

Communicating the intervention results is equally as important as the research and implementation of the interventions. To make an impact for the students it is important that everyone that works with the students are on the same page and that each student continues to get the instruction that they need and deserve.

**Conclusion**

PRESS interventions are effective in the Kindergarten classroom. With small group instruction and focused skill work students can learn the skills they need to know in order to become readers. The data from one study shows that kindergarteners who received supplementary reading instruction throughout the school year outperformed those who received some supplementary instructions in measures of phonemic awareness. These finding suggest there may be an advantage to starting reading intervention from the beginning of the school year as a way of ensuring strong performance in key early literacy skills before first grade. With everything I learned throughout this research I believe I have found an intervention tool to implement in my classroom that I know will be beneficial to my students, it will help them gain the reading skills that they need to catch up to their peers and to become readers. PRESS is scripted
and comes with the resources I need to implement the interventions immediately so there is not a lot of preparation of instruction or materials that I need to worry about. This intervention program works for teachers and more importantly for students that are coming into Kindergarten with limited early literacy skills, to give them the tools and knowledge they need to become confident and skilled readers in the future.
REFERENCES


Burke, S. (2013). *The Promise of PRESS. Now entering its third year, a partnership to improve literacy is showing results*, CONNECT: Research Highlights, 7-8.


## Phonemic Awareness Inventory

**Student:**

**Date:**

**Administered by:**

### Isolated Sounds

Use bird as an example. Say to the student, "I’m going to say a word and then I will say the beginning sound, which is the first sound in a word. For example, in the word bird, the beginning sound is /b/. Now you try (using the same word, bird)." If the student answers incorrectly, then provide a second example using the word hat. If the student still cannot identify the beginning sound, then discontinue the assessment. If the student responds correctly, praise the student and continue by asking him or her to provide the beginning sound for the following words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>cat</th>
<th>top</th>
<th>pet</th>
<th>sun</th>
<th>mop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- ≤ 4 consider PA-1
- > 4 move to Segmenting

### Segmenting

Use pen as an example. Say to the student "I’m going to say a word. Please tell me the sounds you hear in the word. For example, if I say the word pen I hear the sounds /p/ /e/ /n/. Which sounds do you hear?" Then ask the student to segment a second word. If the student does not answer correctly, model the correct response and ask him or her to segment a third word. If the student still does not respond correctly, discontinue the assessment. If the student responds correctly, praise the student and continue segmenting the following words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>fan</th>
<th>set</th>
<th>bin</th>
<th>dot</th>
<th>nut</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>segmented sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- ≤ 4 consider PA-3
- > 4 move to Blending
Appendix B

Phoneme Segmenting Pre Assessment
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Skill Monitoring: Phoneme Segmenting- (PS 2)

Name: __________________________________________________________________________ # of Correct Items: ______ Date: __________

Directions: I am going to say a word and I will ask you to say the word and then tell me the sound in the word. EXAMPLE: When I say the word “pen,” I hear the sounds /p/ /e/ /n/. Now you try one. Say the word “hop.” (Have student repeat “hop.”) What sounds do you hear in the word “hop”? 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct Response</th>
<th>Incorrect Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good. The sounds in “hop” are /h/ /o/ /p/.</td>
<td>The sounds in “hop” are /h/ /o/ /p/. Your turn, what are the sounds in “hop”?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Okay. Now here is your first word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Sounds</th>
<th>Student Response</th>
<th>Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. red</td>
<td>/r/ /e/ /d/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. bop</td>
<td>/b/ /o/ /p/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. sick</td>
<td>/s/ /i/ /k/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. hat</td>
<td>/h/ /a/ /t/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. shop</td>
<td>/sh/ /o/ /p/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. hill</td>
<td>/h/ /i/ /l/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. tie</td>
<td>/t/ /i/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. lake</td>
<td>/l/ /ä/ /k/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. sad</td>
<td>/s/ /a/ /d/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. van</td>
<td>/v/ /a/ /n/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Sound Box Example
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Appendix D

First Phoneme Segmenting Post Assessment  
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Skill Monitoring: Phoneme Segmenting- (PS 3)

Name: __________________________  # of Correct Items: ______  Date: ____________

Directions: I am going to say a word and I will ask you to say the word and then tell me the sound in the word. EXAMPLE: When I say the word “pen,” I hear the sounds /p/ /e/ /n/. Now you try one. Say the word “hop.” (Have student repeat “hop.”) What sounds do you hear in the word “hop”?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct Response</th>
<th>Incorrect Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good. The sounds in hop are /h/ /o/ /p/.</td>
<td>The sounds in “hop” are /h/ /o/ /p/. Your turn, what are the sounds in “hop”?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Okay. Now here is your first word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Sounds</th>
<th>Student Response</th>
<th>Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. kid</td>
<td>/k/ /i/ /d/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. made</td>
<td>/m/ /ã/ /d/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. pack</td>
<td>/p/ /a/ /k/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. hug</td>
<td>/h/ /u/ /g/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. hope</td>
<td>/h/ /œ/ /p/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. sit</td>
<td>/s/ /i/ /t/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. fish</td>
<td>/f/ /i/ /sh/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. boot</td>
<td>/b/ /oo/ /t/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. dime</td>
<td>/d/ /i/ /m/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. see</td>
<td>/s/ /ee/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Second Phoneme Segmenting Post Assessment
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Skill Monitoring: Phoneme Segmenting- (PS 4)

Name: ___________________________  # of Correct Items: ______  Date: ____________

Directions: I am going to say a word and I will ask you to say the word and then tell me the sound in the word. EXAMPLE: When I say the word “pen,” I hear the sounds /p/ /e/ /n/. Now you try one. Say the word “hop.” (Have student repeat “hop.”) What sounds do you hear in the word “hop”?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct Response</th>
<th>Incorrect Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good. The sounds in hop are /h/ /o/ /p/.</td>
<td>The sounds in “hop” are /h/ /o/ /p/. Your turn, what are the sounds in “hop”?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Okay. Now here is your first word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Sounds</th>
<th>Student Response</th>
<th>Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. bed</td>
<td>/b/ /e/ /d/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. hike</td>
<td>/h/ /i/ /k/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. mix</td>
<td>/m/ /i/ /x/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. much</td>
<td>/m/ /u/ /ch/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. rug</td>
<td>/r/ /u/ /g/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. fog</td>
<td>/f/ /o/ /g/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. me</td>
<td>/m/ /ɛ/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. luck</td>
<td>/l/ /u/ /k/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. fan</td>
<td>/f/ /a/ /n/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. home</td>
<td>/h/ /ö/ /m/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>