

Efficacy Summary:

Decodable Readers and Decodable Fluency Builders

Title and Author: Decodable Text Study. An excerpt of the study is available in *A Fresh Look at Phonics: Common Causes of Failure and 7 Ingredients for Success* (Blevins, 2017, p. 161–166).

Location: Two New York City Public Schools

Duration of study: September 1999 to February 2000

Assessments used in study: Four assessment measures were used in the study: Woodcock Reading Mastery Test (WRMT), Blevins Phonics-Phonemic Awareness Quick Assessment, Decoding Assessment (only administered at post-test), and Reading Attitudes Survey.

Number and grades of participants: A total of 101 students in Grade 1 participated in the study. Two Grade 1 classrooms were selected at each school. One class used decodable texts (treatment group) and the other classrooms (comparison group) used trade literature.

Procedure: Students in the treatment and comparison groups read a major piece of literature for the week and received phonics lessons. The follow-up practice materials used by the groups is where the two groups differed in their instruction. The treatment group practiced reading with decodable texts for their phonics lessons follow up. For the comparison group, after receiving the same phonics lessons, the follow-up practice was with patterned and predictable text using popular Grade 1 books written by well-known authors.

Results: For the WRMT – Word Identification Sub-test, the treatment group significantly outperformed student in the comparison group ($p < .001$) with 72 percent of decodable text students achieving on-level mastery, compared to 54 percent of the comparison group using trade literature. Some students using decodable texts achieved as much as two years' growth during half the school year. The other three assessments in the study also showed greater achievement for the treatment group. Overall, the treatment group was more prepared to transfer their phonics skills to new words on the formal assessments and results reinforced students reading self-confidence and enjoyment of reading.