

ABSTRACT

This research study documents the observed and reported experiences when poetry is implemented as a strategy to teach reading skills, therefore motivating and developing young readers. The participants were 13 first grade students in a rural elementary school located in New Jersey. The students were introduced to weekly poems that included a variety of reading strategies such as concepts of print, oral language, phonemic awareness, letter-sound associations, analogy, and learning to think about words.

This study suggests that using poetry to teach these skills helps increase students' abilities to read. Throughout the research, a variety of games and activities were employed to provide practice with word recognition and decoding. The students also completed DRA and sight word assessments to track progress. Along with observable student improvement in reading, sight word recognition growth also emerged. Peer-helpers formed through the process of buddy reading, which aided in students abilities to edit misunderstandings and clarifications. The incorporation of all learning modalities throughout the study helped target specific areas of weakness in reading ability. Overall, all learners were positively impacted due to successful classroom management and fostering a positive reading environment.