

Incentive Reading programs and reading achievement at all reading levels 1

ARE INCENTIVE PROGRAMS TO ENCOURAGE AT HOME READING AFFECTIVE
WITH STUDENTS AT DIFFERENT READING LEVELS.

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Chapter 1

As an educator it is my duty to provide students with the opportunity to be successful at home and school. In order for me to be successful at this I must be aware of all the different learning levels, home life of each child, and provide them with the materials, encouragement, and incentives to be successful themselves.

I am currently teaching in a classroom where I use the Pizza Hut reading program as an incentive to encourage children to read at home, and parents to read with them. The Pizza Hut program is a program that you can choose to participate in as a teacher. The students are expected to read so many books a month. In my class's case that number is twenty books, then they will receive a personal pan pizza for achieving their goal. After receiving the first months reading logs it was extremely shocking to see how many students either didn't read at all at home, or only read a few books. The students that read the twenty books were the children that were in the higher reading group, didn't need it as much. Each month the reading logs continued to come back and each month there was a handful of students doing the reading at home. The question was then turned away from the students and towards the parents. Were the parents just not willing to read with their child at home even though they needed the exposure, and why were the students who were already exposed to reading at home the only ones completing the task?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify if reading incentives to encourage at home reading affect students achievement at all levels. I am currently teaching in a classroom where I use the Pizza Hut Book It incentive program. The students have the opportunity to earn a free personal pan

pizza from Pizza Hut if they read the required amount of books; in this case that amount is 20 books a month. They then have to fill out a reading log so we know how many books they read. The log is collected at the end of the month and then the rewards are passed out to the students who met the reading requirement. Reading is such an important part of a child's education, especially during the early stages of life, and is something they will always need to use.

I chose to conduct this study to see if reading incentives affect student achievement at all levels, and how the parents are involved in this process. I believe that the school-home connection is very important for a child to succeed. I want to give my students the most opportunities to be exposed to reading at home and wanted to try the incentive program. If parents, teachers, and students are all involved in the process of reading, the benefits will be amazing and greatly help the student!

Definition of Terms

Some terms that might be helpful while reading this paper include, Bee Book, reading log, affective assessment, parent survey, Pizza Hut Book It reading incentive program, benchmark assessing, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation.

Bee Book-- a green folder with a bee on the front, which the students use to bring things back and forth from school and home. That is the place where I put all their papers that need to be sent home, or returned. In this Bee Book you will find documents such as the reading logs.

Reading logs-- sheets that have twenty lines for the children to fill out the books they read. They are fastened in the back of their Bee Books at the beginning of each month and are kept in them until the first day of the next month. This is where the students are to keep track of the

books they are reading at home. They may fill out the reading log or whoever reads with them may also fill it out. The students are required to read twenty books a month and keep track on these reading logs. At the end of the month the reading log is used to determine who met the goal of twenty books, and the Pizza Hut personal pizza.

Affective assessment -- an assessment given to younger students, grades K-3. The assessment has a series of questions about reading and Garfield characters. The Garfield character is used so the students may circle one that demonstrates the way they feel about that particular question. Each question has four Garfield characters. Each Garfield has a different facial expression ranging from the happiest, slightly smiling, mildly upset, to very upset. The student is then read the questions and asked to circle the Garfield that tells others how they feel about that question. By doing this I am getting a feel of how the student feels towards reading.

Parent survey --a survey sent home with the students in their Bee Books. The survey is asking parents their about their attitude towards reading and the reading they do at home with their child. The survey will aide me in understanding what parents think about reading and how they value it at home.

Pizza Hut Book It Program-- established over 25 years ago to help motivate children to read more. The program's goal is to help students become better readers. Students are rewarded with a personal pan pizza each month if they met the required reading goal set forth by their classroom teacher.

Benchmark assessing-- completed at the end of each reading unit to assess children's reading level and achievement.

Intrinsic Motivation-- Motivation that comes from within an individual. Motivation comes from the pleasure an individual gets from completing a task.

Extrinsic Motivation--Motivation that comes from outside the individual, such as prizes or money for completing a task.

Limitations

This research is designed to fit the group of students I have been working with for the past eight months. There are some limitations that may make this research hard to conduct. I am the sole researcher conducting all the research. Since the group of students I am using for my research is comprised of students I have been with and teaching for the past eight months I could be bias. This may sway my results as opposed to an outside researcher coming into the class and using the students. Another limitation would be that some of my research is opinion based such as the parent survey and the affective assessment.

Another limitation that my design poses is that during the parent survey I may get different answers from the parents about reading at home then what I receive from their child during the affective assessment, and will not be able to explain why. I fear that some parents will put what I want to hear on the survey, rather than what they really think in fear that I may judge them for their responses even though they are strictly confidential. I also am concerned with the amount of surveys that will be returned from the parents. Some parents don't look at their child's Bee Book at night, thus they will not see the survey. I also worry that the parents

will not want to do either the survey or the interview because they don't want people to know what they really think about reading at home.

Another limitation would be that I fear some of my parents are unable to read what is being sent home, thus making it difficult for them to fill out the survey, or the child's reading log that is being sent home. So instead of a survey they will have the option to set up an interview where they don't have to read anything and can just answer the questions that have been asked.

My final limitation would be the demographics of the students (research group) I am working with. They all come from a rural area where poverty is a major concern and is present in most of the families. Reading in some of the families isn't a major concern. I have personally witnessed that through their reading logs and conversations with the students throughout my time with them in the classroom. For example when I asked a student how her reading was going at home she replied, "My momma don't have the time to read with me so we don't do it." I feel that reading is one of the most important things to teach a child and work on them with because it is the gateway to all the other content areas. I feel to be successful at all the content areas reading skills need to be mastered first.

Summary

I am involved in the teaching of reading to my kindergarten students and want them to improve and work on reading skills at home and school. Many of my children are in the lower reading groups and still struggle with reading items at their grade level. The students in my middle reading group still need some work and practice with reading skills, while the higher reading level is above grade level. I feel like they need to continue to strive by reading at home

as well as school that way they are exposed to many different types of texts. I also wanted to conduct the survey to get parents and students actual feelings about reading, the reading program we use, and the Pizza Hut Book It program that is currently in place.

Chapter 2

For the purpose of the review of literature I will be looking at research articles that relate incentive programs to achievement and research articles that find incentive programs to have little to no affect on student achievement. I will then use my own findings to see where my own research will fall.

Findings that are for Incentive programs and saw achievement in the students reading

According to Hauge (2001) “Extrinsic rewards sometimes nudge reluctant students to read more, with the likelihood that their reading skills will improve” (p.12). An article by Hall (2009), used a popular book such as Harry Potter to jumpstart Teen Read Week. The students were encouraged to read, and for every page they read they received \$1 of Muggle Money that could be spent during the event. “They were permitted to read any book they choose; the only stipulation was that it had to be pleasure reading and not a school textbook” (p. 28). The students were evaluated based on the amount of ‘Muggle Money’ they earned. The students who chose not to read during the program were still permitted to participate in the activities that were planned. The students who chose not to read weren’t given any Muggle Money to spend on supplies when they went to the store that was set up for one of the activities. The point of the program was to get everyone to experience the fun associated with reading. Hall (2009) stated that, “Punishing students by not allowing any participation could perpetuate further negativity toward reading and the library” (p. 29).

I liked the idea that even if the students didn’t read they were still able to participate in the activities. I have witnessed students being singled out for not reading and I have seen how they react. They then begin to hate reading and it becomes a struggle to get them involved again.

An article by Shanahan (1998), discusses how her school read for one million minutes, the process by which they went about it, the rewards, and students achievement by participating in the event. The Million Minute Reading Incentive Program came about through the efforts of El Sierra’s School Improvement Committee’s desire to encourage students to read more. The committee members examined 5 years of the students test scores and discovered the reading abilities of their top students seemed to decline. After examining the test scores the committee came to the conclusion that the students were not getting enough reading practice to become

fluent. “We recognized that the students who practiced reading at home were better readers” (p. 93). Shanahan (1998) also stated the committee reported that some of their test scores improved and the parents saw improvement in their child’s reading skills and attitude towards reading. One parent of a struggling reader could not believe that her son would come home from school, set the oven timer and read for an hour” (p. 94). The school assessed the reading incentive program with a survey asking the students their thoughts and feelings. Shanahan(1998) also stated that “Of the 257 students who responded, 72% indicated that they had read more this year than ever before and were now more interested in reading” (p. 94). “The students not only believed they were reading more, but that their reading skills had improved as a result” (p.94).

An article by McQuillan (1997), discusses a student conducted by Institute for Academic Excellence. The study consisted on a very large sample of 10,000 students. The students used an incentive plan called Accelerated Reader. The students were to read a book and then tested over the material. They were then awarded points based on the difficulty of the book and their test scores. “The results were impressive: positive correlations between the amount of points students earned in the program and gain scores on standardized tests, with young children of “low reading ability” improving a little more than 2 grade levels for every 100 points earned reading” (p. 112).

In Fawson and Moore (1999) it was suggested that, “reading incentive programs are varied and widespread and generally perceived as desirable by all groups surveyed in their study” (p.330). “One hundred percent of principals who responded indicated that there was an incentive program in their schools” (p. 330). “Teachers and principals were in agreement that children like reading more as a consequence of such programs” (p. 333).

Findings that are against Incentive programs

According to Small (2009), “In education, it is possible to find dozens of examples of “forced” reading incentive programs.” “These types of programs categorize reading levels, provide limited reading lists coordinated with those reading levels, assess student reading through computer-based tests, and award tangible prizes when they pass the test.” “Those who perform best get the most rewards while those who perform less get fewer (or no) rewards” (p.27). “Typically, these “silver bullet” programs add even more stressful testing to an already test-heavy educational system and reward achievement but not effort” (p. 28). Ruth suggests that, “Most of the current research focuses on using extrinsic rewards to motivate learning.” “These rewards are typically used (like punishments) to control and manipulate behavior” (p.28). Fawson and Moore (1999) suggest that, “ Research on the effects of rewards and incentives implies that when teachers tell their student they will receive a reward for the completion of a task it is likely that the child’s value and liking for the task will be depressed” (p. 327). “The current study by Fawson and Moore points out that the organization and implementation of reading incentive programs in the past has violated much of what was known about human motivation” (p.338).

Chapter 3

Methodology

I am conducting this research to answer the question, “Are Incentive Programs to encourage at Home Reading Affective with Students at Different Reading Levels?” I am currently teaching in the kindergarten classroom where I am involved with reading. Children aren’t completing their reading logs for their at home reading. By not completing their reading logs for their at home reading I fear they might be already falling through the cracks at such a young age.

Description of Participants

There are 50 participants in this study, 24 of whom are kindergarteners that are attending an elementary school in Southeastern Ohio. The other 26 are the parents of the students in the

classroom. The kindergarten participants consist of 16 girls and 8 boys. The 24 participants are my students that attend reading and language arts with me. The 50 participants are mostly Caucasian, with a few bi-racial participants. Many of the students are receiving free or reduced lunch, which means they are at or below the current poverty level. Several of my students have IEP's for speech and are pulled several times a week by the speech therapist. They stay in the classroom throughout the day and are included in all of the activities and lessons that occur. Several of the parents are not currently working; some are divorced living in separate homes, while others are married with both parents working outside the home.

Informed Consent Procedure

For the purpose of this study I did not need to receive parental consent because 24 of the participants are a part of my daily class. They are currently participating on reading activities, reading logs, and benchmarking assessments that already take place in the classroom on a daily basis. The only difference is that I will be having them fill out an Affective Assessment which they are familiar with. The Affective Assessment is designed to elicit the children's reactions and thoughts about reading. The parent participants were asked to fill out an optional survey about their feelings toward reading and the Pizza Hut Book It program that is being used in their child's classroom. There is no part of the study that could harm the participants or make them feel uncomfortable. To make the study official, I have received written permission from the principal of the school I am teaching at and where the student participants attend.

Steps to Indentify Confidentiality

In order to protect the identity and confidentiality of the 24 kindergarten participants, at no time will their names be used. Instead I will be using their initials to show on the tables for the reading logs. The parents will be filling out the survey as an option and sending them in a

sealed envelope in their child's Bee Book. The teacher aide will take then envelopes out in the morning before I arrive in the afternoon and place them in the box provided. The parents were asked not to put their names on the survey when they returned them. I am not concerned with which parent sent in which survey. I strictly want to gather information about their feelings towards reading and the Book It program to be used as data.

Demographics

The school in which I am currently working and conducting this research is a rural, poverty stricken area in Southeastern Ohio. The elementary school which the participants attend is composed of grades Pre-k-6, with around 300 students. The student population is 97% White and non-Hispanic, 62.6% of the students are economically disadvantaged and 24.2% of the students have disabilities. The school is labeled under "Effective", and has not met their Adequate Yearly Progress improvement. This school is one of two elementary schools in the district.

Sampling

The students in my research were assigned to me at the beginning of the year, and are in my classroom daily. There is no control group; therefore I will be unable to compare the results with another group. The sample will be obtained by sending home a voluntary survey for the parents of each child to fill out and return regarding reading at home and the Pizza Hut program and their feelings towards reading. The students in my class will also be my research participants. They will be given an affective assessment as a whole class about reading at home to see how they feel about reading in general. I will also be collecting their reading logs and monitoring their reading progress through benchmarking several times.

Description of Instrumentation

My data collection techniques will include sending home a parent survey in each child's Bee Book with a note explaining what I am doing and asking them if they would be willing to fill it out. I will also include in the note that if a parent would rather do an informal interview with me then that would be an option. I am aware some of the parents might have a hard time reading and filling out the parent survey so they will be able to talk with me personally if they choose. This will give them the chance to tell me how they feel about the program we have in place and their overall feeling about reading at home with their child, and why they are or are not reading with their child. I will also continue to send home the reading logs each month until the end of the year and see if a child reads more towards the end of the year than what they did in October when we started the Book It Program. I will also be collecting an affective assessment from each child regarding how they feel about reading and reading at home. Each month I will be collecting benchmarking from each child to see if they are making any progress in reading, such as reading more, and better reading skills. I will be looking at the scores from the beginning, middle, and end of the program to see how their scores have changed.

The interviews a parent may choose to do rather than the survey, will be semi-structured and informally conducted with the parent. The questions will be focused on their attitudes towards reading at home and the current reading incentive program (Pizza Hut) that is in place in their child's classroom. The data will be analyzed by looking at each student's reading level at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year to see if they had made any progress in the levels at which they are reading. I will make a table for each child that shows how many books they read each month. Instead of using the students' names I will be using their first and last initial on the graph to keep confidentiality. There will also be a parent survey that I will put into a table to examine the responses. For the interview, I will record the responses only with the

parent's permission. I will then be able to look back at the parent responses while looking at the student's affective assessment to see if their responses are similar or different. By doing this I will be seeing if it's the child who may not be that interested in reading at home, or the parent isn't willing to help their child read.

Summary

The research I am conducting with my kindergarten class is being used to determine if incentive reading programs are affective with student achievement across different reading levels. By having the students and parents participate in this research I will be able to compare the attitudes of the parents and students towards reading.

Chapter 4

Results

This study attempts to answer the question, Are Incentive Programs to Encourage At Home Reading Affective with Students at Different Reading Levels? I am hoping to find out if the Pizza Hut Book It Reading Incentive program used at the school in which I am teaching is affective with the students and if the pizza incentive is affective at promoting reading at home by each child.

The tables that follow are a collection of the data derived to help answer the question, Are Incentive Programs to Encourage at Home Reading Affective with Students at Different Reading Levels? Table 1.1 contains the results from the parent survey that was sent home. The information provided by table 1.1 is the parent's attitude towards reading, the incentive Pizza Hut Program, and how much they read at home with their child. Table 1.2 contains the results from the Affective Assessment the children filled out. Each student was to fill out the survey about their attitude towards reading. Table 1.3 contains the results from each student's reading log. The information provided will allow me to see how many books each student read per month. Table 1.4 contains the benchmark assessment for each student at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The information will be used to see if students made progress throughout

the year and then compare it with the students reading logs to see if the incentive program appears to correlate with student achievement. If there is a positive relationship between the two, it would provide evidence that the incentive program actually worked.

Table 1.1
Parent Survey

The table below shows the results from a parent survey that was sent home. The parents were to fill out the survey that had to do with their attitudes about reading, the incentive program that is in place in their child’s class, and how much they read with their child at home. Out of the 24 sets of parents asked to participate, 18 of them returned the completed survey.

Does your child enjoy reading?	A lot 17	Quite Often 1	Not Often			
Does your child read at home?	A Lot 12	Quite Often 5	Not Often 1			
Where Does your child tend to read at home?	Bed 3	Couch 3	Table 4	Living Room 7	Anywhere 1	
When does your child read at home?	Anytime 1	Evenings 10	Bedtime 6	When they are bored 1		
Does your Child read on their own or to someone else?	Both 11	Someone else 2	On their Own 5			
Does your child bring a reading book/s home from school regularly?	Yes 10	Usually 5	No 3			
Do you know what reading books are available to your child in school?	Yes 12	Mostly 3	No 3			
How do you feel about the Pizza Hut Book	Really Like it 10	It’s Okay 5	Don’t Care for it 3			

It! Program?						
Have you seen an improvement in your child's reading at home?	Yes 10	Somewhat 4	None 4			

The table allows you to see how many parents responded to the survey, and their answers. By looking at the combined answers from the survey it's safe to say that the parents who sent the survey back are stating that their children are reading at home. They responded to the "A Lot" and "Quite Often" categories. From the survey I can also conclude that the children who are reading are also enjoying it. The parents were also able to answer a question about the Pizza Hut Book It program, and out of the 18 responses 15 of the parents are in the "Like It" and "Its Okay" range; only 3 that respondents indicated that they really didn't care for it. By looking at the table I can also conclude that the parents have seen an improvement in their child's reading at home. 14 parents said they saw an improvement at home, while only 4 said they didn't see an improvement.

Table 1.2
Affective Assessment

The table below shows the results of all 24 students in the study. They filled out an Affective Assessment survey, an Assessment about their attitude towards reading. The questions were read to read aloud to the students as a group and were asked to circle a Garfield with facial expressions that range from the happiest, slightly smiling, mildly upset, to very upset expression.

Question	Very Happy Garfield	Slightly Smiling Garfield	Mildly Upset Garfield	Very Upset Garfield
How do you feel	17	3	4	0

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when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?				
How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?	18	2	2	2
How do you feel about reading for fun at home?	8	6	6	4
How do you feel about getting a book for a present?	4	6	10	4
How do you feel about free time reading?	15	5	2	2
How do you feel about starting a new book?	10	6	4	4
How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?	3	10	5	6
How do you feel about reading instead of playing?	2	6	13	3
How do you feel about going to a bookstore?	8	12	2	2
How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?	15	7	1	1
How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?	6	11	6	1
How do you feel about doing reading workbook pages and worksheets?	9	11	2	2
How do you feel about reading in school?	18	6	0	0
How do you feel about reading your school books?	11	10	2	1
How do you feel about reading learning from a book?	8	5	7	4
How do you feel when it's time for reading class?	17	5	2	0
How do you feel	20	24	0	0

about the stories you read in reading class?				
How do you feel when you read out loud in class?	5	10	6	3
How do you feel about using a dictionary?	0	10	8	6
How do you feel about taking a reading test?	7	13	4	0

This table provides information on the student’s attitudes towards reading. By looking at the information provided in the table, I can conclude that out of 24 students 18 of them enjoy reading books in school during free time. I can also conclude from the information provided that most of my students do enjoy reading, with only several of them indicating that they do not enjoy reading. The students who stated they enjoyed reading were also the students who filled out their reading logs consistently each month. The students who didn’t like reading were the ones who didn’t read at all each month at home. The information on this table can be correlated with their reading logs (see table 1.3).

**Table 1.3
Reading Logs**

The table below is the results from each student’s reading log. The students were to read a total of 20 books and record them on their reading logs to receive the incentive award (free Pizza Hut personal pizza). The student’s initials have been used to protect their confidentiality. For the purpose of this study I am looking for students who read consistently throughout the 7 months the reading Incentive program took place. For a student to show consistency throughout the program they would have to read 20 books for 3 of the 7 months. The reason for only having to

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read 3 out of the 7 months is because during the months of October, November, December, and April there is a number of other activities that distract the students' from reading. These activities include beginning a new program at home, holidays, breaks, and end of the year testing and activities that might have limited their reading at home. Also many of the students are involved in baseball which began during the month of April so they had practices and games to attend in the evenings.

Student	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
A.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M.B.	0	14	0	25	20	20	20
S.B.	8	20	0	25	0	0	0
J.B.	0	1	0	25	20	14	14
L.B.	0	7	6	25	6	20	4
B.B.	9	4	0	4	6	10	1
J.C.	0	34	7	29	20	20	11
A. C.	0	0	3	0	5	4	1
W.C.	0	20	0	24	20	20	14
A.F.	21	3	22	28	30	20	20
A.G.	21	20	20	25	23	21	20
H.G.	0	20	0	11	22	3	5
A.H.	0	40	2	27	15	20	1
J.H.	0	7	5	22	20	20	20
G.J.	20	20	25	25	23	20	20
R.J.	14	20	21	27	20	20	20
S.M.	0	20	0	14	20	4	17
B.L.Q.	25	17	13	25	23	20	18
B.Q.	16	17	13	25	22	20	17
A.R.	0	14	0	14	16	15	20
D.R.	0	0	0	7	0	10	8
T.S.	12	22	22	11	20	20	6
K.S.	12	0	33	40	55	29	36
K.W.	0	20	1	33	27	24	0

The table provides information about how many of the students read consistently throughout the Pizza Hut Incentive program and the total amount of books each student read each month. The table allows you to see that out of the 24 students 14 of them read consistently, where 10 of them didn't read consistently throughout the program. I can now compare the

students who read and didn't read consistently with their benchmark assessment scores to see if they made progress.

Table 1.4
Benchmark Assessments

The table below shows each student's Benchmark Assessment from the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The beginning assessment score is before the reading incentive program was started, while the middle and end assessments are during the reading incentive program.

Student	Beginning Benchmark Assessment worth 67 points	Middle Benchmark Assessment worth 27 points	Final Benchmark Assessment worth 38 points
A.A.	79%	74%	92%
M.B.	73%	100%	95%
S.B.	94%	96%	97%
J.B.	78%	89%	95%
L.B.	75%	96%	95%
B.B.	78%	100%	92%
J.C.	100%	100%	Absent
A. C.	46%	63%	97%
W.C.	93%	89%	100%
A.F.	82%	96%	97%
A.G.	91%	100%	100%
H.G.	94%	96%	95%
A.H.	96%	70%	97%
J.H.	58%	85%	97%
G.J.	87%	100%	82%
R.J.	91%	100%	100%
S.M.	48%	100%	97%
B.L.Q.	90%	63%	95%
B.Q.	96%	93%	79%
A.R.	0%	93%	95%
D.R.	96%	96%	97%
T.S.	96%	74%	97%
K.S.	94%	100%	97%
K.W.	96%	74%	95%

The table provides information regarding each child's benchmark assessment from the beginning, middle, and end of the Pizza Hut Book It incentive program. By looking at the scores of each student it is evident that each child made progress throughout the program.

Analysis of Data

After collecting my data I can now analyze it to see if the reading incentive program really helped children at all reading levels, or just at certain levels. It is also possible to look at parents' and students' attitudes towards reading to see if that played a role in the students achievement. After looking at the parents responses to the survey about reading it seems that the majority of their children are reading at home and enjoy doing so. I believe that parents who encourage reading at home, and read with their child often are helping their children become successful readers at a young age. Although I can't tie the survey directly to a parent since they were confidential, I feel strongly from other research that relates reading success with reading at home, that the parents who said their children liked reading and that they read with them, often were the parents who were sending their child's reading log back to school with 20 or more books on it. As far as the Affective Assessment completed by the children, many of them had very good attitudes towards reading, which I believe played a huge part in how much they actually read at home. There was one question that I had asked the students' about reading over playing, and wasn't shocked with the response. I feel like the majority of children at any reading level or age would choose to play than read. As you can see in table 1.3 the amount of books read by the students initially each month were not substantial. As each month progressed so did the amount of books that were read until the end of the year, when reading began to decrease for some of the students. Out of 24 students, 14 of them were reading consistently. By looking at

tables 1.3 and 1.4 I can conclude that the students who read consistently had higher beginning and end scores than the students who didn't read consistently. I would conclude that by comparing the reading logs of each student and their benchmark scores, it's safe to say that all of the students made progress. I conclude that reading at home probably played a part in this gain, but for the most part I don't think it can be responsible for the students' gains throughout the year. For example, if you look at the student A.A. she did not read a single book during the entire year at home, and still made gains similar to the students who didn't read consistently. I can also conclude that the incentive program did not work because it did not appear to encourage those students who did not like to read to begin with. From my personal observation, I have also witnessed those students who read consistently leave their free pizza coupon in their Bee Book for several months and never claim their pizza.

Overall, I believe that the reading incentive programs are a great way to encourage at home reading, and a way to get and keep the parents involved in their child's learning, but I feel like students can still make gains regardless of this type of extrinsic motivator. From the data you can see the top readers in the class were the students who received the "award" and didn't seem to care about the pizza. My observations show that they just left the coupon in their Bee Book's, while they continued to read the required amount of books throughout the duration of the program. Another reason the program appears to not work was because it didn't encourage those children who didn't like to read or chose not to read to begin to earn the pizza. The students who needed to be encouraged to read weren't. You can see that in tables 1.3 and 1.4 by comparing the students reading logs and their benchmark scores.

Limitations of Results

One thing that limited my results was that I didn't have a controlled group of students who didn't participate in the incentive program to compare to my treatment group of students to see if there would have been a difference in the benchmark scores throughout the year, or if they would have stayed the same. The final limitation was the lack of possible parent responses. I wasn't able to get the responses for all 24 sets of parents, since I know some of the results may have been different than what they were. By this I mean that the parent's who sent back the survey were the parent's who had children reading at home. I would have liked to receive surveys from all the parents so I could compare the readers with the non-readers.

Conclusions

Overall I believe that all the students were able to make gains in all reading levels throughout the year. At this time I am unable to conclude if those gains were made because of the incentive program or simply that they were age appropriate gains for kindergarten students towards the beginning, middle, and end of the year. I would like to conclude that by doing the incentive program the parents were able to become engaged in their child's learning by making that home-school connection, and the students who choose to participate were excited about reading and were eager to tell me how many books they had been reading.

Recommendations for Future Research

My recommendations for future research on this topic would be to have a controlled and treatment group of children. By doing so you would be able to tell if one group made more gains than the other or if they made the same amount of gains. I think that by just having a treatment group, I limited the research and the results that I was able to conclude. I would also recommend

doing weekly checks with the children on reading skills to have more assessments to compare at the end with the reading logs. I would also suggest not making the parent survey confidential so you could compare their responses with the children's, the reading logs, and the achievement the child made throughout the year.

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