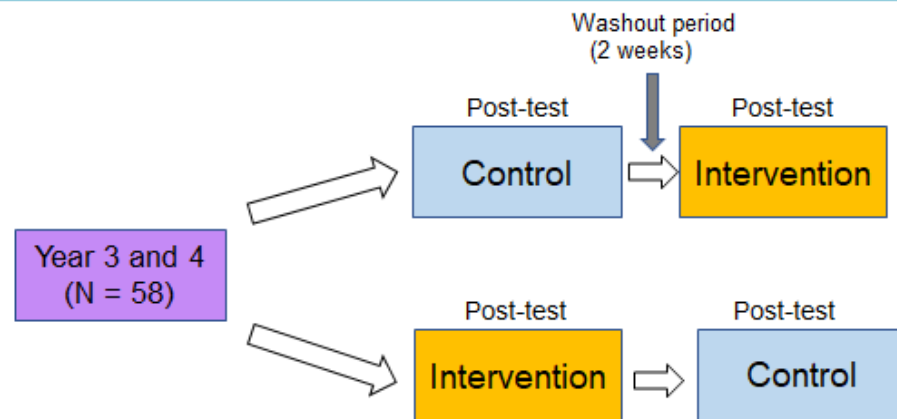




1. Purpose of research

For several years, educators have believed that children's writing will be improved if they are totally immersed in the writing topic through the use of drama, film, images and discussion. The purpose of this research was to discover whether this immersion during Literacy lessons positively affects writing outcomes in terms of quantity, vocabulary and variety of sentence starters.



2. The research design

A post-test only, within-subject design was used to address the aims of the research. The independent variable (the use of 'enhanced input teaching') was defined operationally by creating two counterbalanced conditions.

Independent variable 1: (control condition) Everyday classroom practice teaching input.

Independent variable 2: (intervention condition) Enhanced teaching input

Criteria

Choice of words – adventurous vocab

Quantity – number of words rounded to the nearest 10

Sentence starters – time conjunctions, fronted adverbials, -ing words

3. Methods

Participants, sample size and randomisation

One primary school in Lower Bemerton, Salisbury, took part in the research. In total the study involved 58 children from two classes; one Year 3 class and one Year 4 class (31 girls, 27 boys). The pupils were taught in mixed ability classes in which they experienced counter-balanced conditions.

Procedures

Control condition:

Nothing was changed during these sessions; the children continued to receive their 'normal' input for writing.

Intervention:

The children received enhanced teaching input during their writing sessions (drama, hot-seating, discussion, videos and pictures).

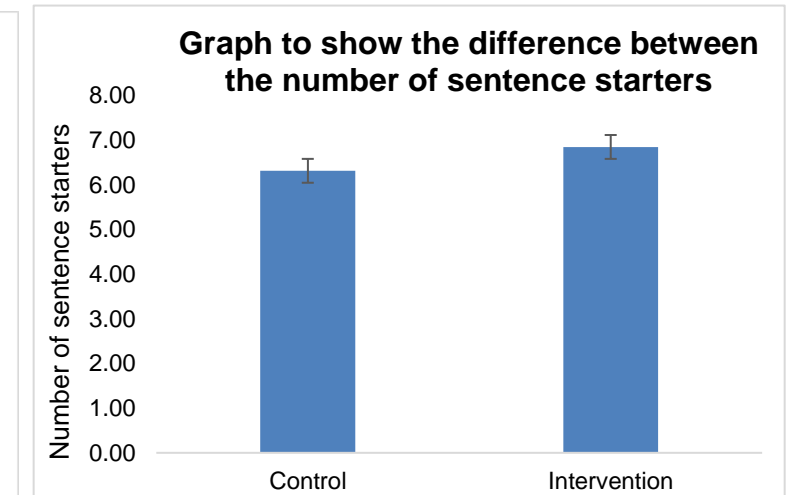
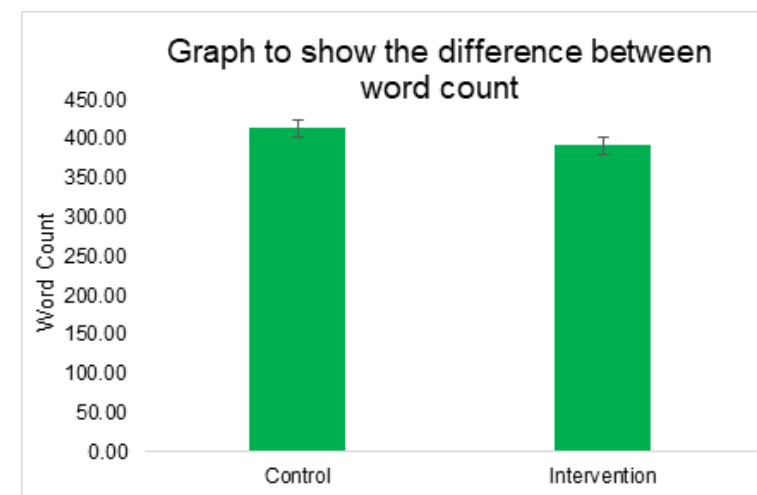
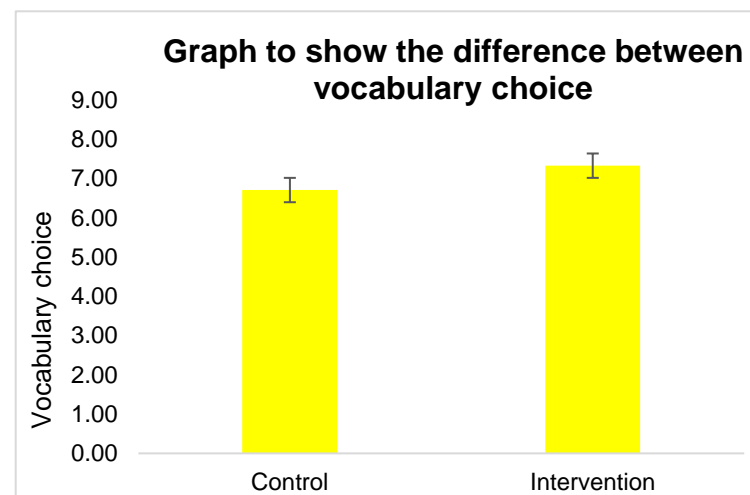
Between the control and intervention there was a two week wash-out period. Following both completed pieces of writing, the teachers assessed the writing against the three criteria and the data was recorded.

4. Results

A one-tailed paired samples t-test indicated that the intervention had a significant, but small, positive effect ($p = 0.048$) compared to the control condition, on pupils' vocabulary choices ($d_z = 0.22$).

A one-tailed Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicated that the intervention had a small negative effect ($p = 0.184$) compared to the control condition, on pupils' word count ($r = -0.045$).

A one-tailed Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicated that the intervention had a borderline significant ($p = 0.059$), but very small effect, on number of sentence starters used ($r = 0.077$).



5. Limitations

This research study may have been limited due to children's emotional and physical well-being on the day of writing. In addition, levels of enthusiasm and interest in the actual topic would have varied between children.

6. Conclusions and recommendations for future research

This research suggests that using an extended and more intensive input, results in a borderline significant effect on the number of different sentence starters used. In addition to this, there was a significant improvement on the vocabulary choices when the children experienced the extended input. However, the research found that the actual word count was affected negatively by this intervention.

A possible reason for the reduction in word count following the extended input could be that the children may have felt overwhelmed and bombarded by the volume and variety of information they had received.

A future study could replicate the design within different ability or demographic groups of children. However, this would need a larger sample in order to rule out invalid results.