

A CASE STUDY OF THE ANALYSIS OF FACTORS THAT OCCUR WITH READING PROFICIENCY IN ONE RURAL DISTRICT IN SOUTHEAST MISSOURI

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ABSTRACT

This study started over the concern that many schools in Missouri were receiving penalties from the state through the No Child Left Behind law. The law required adequate yearly progress on achieving proficiency for all students. If the school or district did not meet adequate yearly progress goals, they were placed in what was called “school improvement. After researching what many authors wrote on the subject of common assessments, this researcher felt that maybe some type of common assessment could be attained that may help predict how a student would do on the MAP test. The rationale being that it would be better to know of a problem ahead of time when intervention strategies could be incorporated, rather than to wait and find out after the student performed poorly on the MAP test.

To test this theory this writer chose the third grade MAP scores and compared them to STAR Test scores and grades in reading. Other factors examined were poverty and attendance. Since the third grade MAP test is basically a reading comprehension test, and since the STAR is a reading comprehension test, it was felt that there could be a strong relationship between the two.

While collecting the data one thing surprised me. The STAR and MAP scores on individual students did not always match up. Sometimes a student would score high on the STAR but low on the MAP. The same was true with grades. In looking back I think it was a little naïve to think that one score would predict another score. The relationship may be there but to predict a MAP score is stretching it.

MAP scores, STAR Test scores, reading grades, attendance, and poverty level were all put through Pearson’s Correlation to check strength of relationships. The results showed that the MAP, STAR Test, and reading grades all showed a strong relationship to each other. Attendance and poverty showed no or a very weak relationship to the variables.

The results showed that using any two of the strong variables can help educators take a close look at areas of concern. No score on one variable will “predict” a score on another, but it can point educators to potential weaknesses. If a student has a low STAR Test score and a low reading grade it could indicate that the student might perform poorly on the MAP. If student grades are high but MAP scores and STAR Test scores are low, it could indicate a problem with the reading program or possible teacher performance.