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Need for Comprehension Remediation in a University-Based Online Reading Clinic

Patricia T. Ash, Dr. Tiffany Mulally, Ph.D., Chairperson

INTRODUCTION

Reading scores in the United States for fourth grade students in the lowest 10th and 25th percentiles have not improved with any statistical significance since 1990 despite the implementation of national, state and local standards and high-stakes testing. The number of children with reading difficulties in fourth grade is 65%. Interventions to remediate reading comprehension are vast and address student's struggles with expository text and narrative text. Not enough resources or time exist in the school day to address all the reading difficulties of students. With the onset of COVID-19, an online solution to deliver this instruction is required. The platforms to support such an endeavor must be easy to manipulate and navigate for both the teacher and students.

This research used a survey to follow a quantitative action research design. School district's reading comprehension remediation needs were measured by Likert scale questions.

SIGNIFICANCE

The school districts in this study will be provided with potential opportunities to mitigate their current struggle to serve students at risk of reading difficulty. Students and families in the community served by the university will gain another tool to shore up difficulties before they become significant deficits in the student's ability to progress in their literacy learning.

The implementation of the online reading clinic has the potential to lead to the more widespread availability of the services, including in-person tutoring intervention services. Conceptually, students and their families may benefit from similar online clinics in other academic subjects. Additionally, a collaborative venture with other institutions of higher education is possible. This endeavor would further enhance teacher education programs throughout Luzerne County and proliferate to other Pennsylvania communities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The specific questions this study focuses on answering are:

1. Is there any interest in reading comprehension interventions administered by a university-based online reading clinic in the upper elementary grades?
2. Is there a need for reading comprehension intensive intervention in the upper elementary grades?
3. Are the suggested technology platforms complementary to the district's curriculum?

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Interest level questions yielded a mean of 3.76 with over 80% of the survey responses confirming the interest in establishing a reading clinic. Responses to questions about the need for a reading clinic addressing reading comprehension difficulties revealed a mean of 2.57 or about 50 to 99 students within an average school with 251 to 550 students.

The most complimentary learning management platform conveyed by all respondents is the Google Classroom/Google Meets product. The comprehension strategies most endorsed by the respondents were guided reading, activation of prior knowledge, previewing with purpose setting, questioning, and summarizing, and vocabulary and word recognition.

FIGURE 1 INTERPRETATION

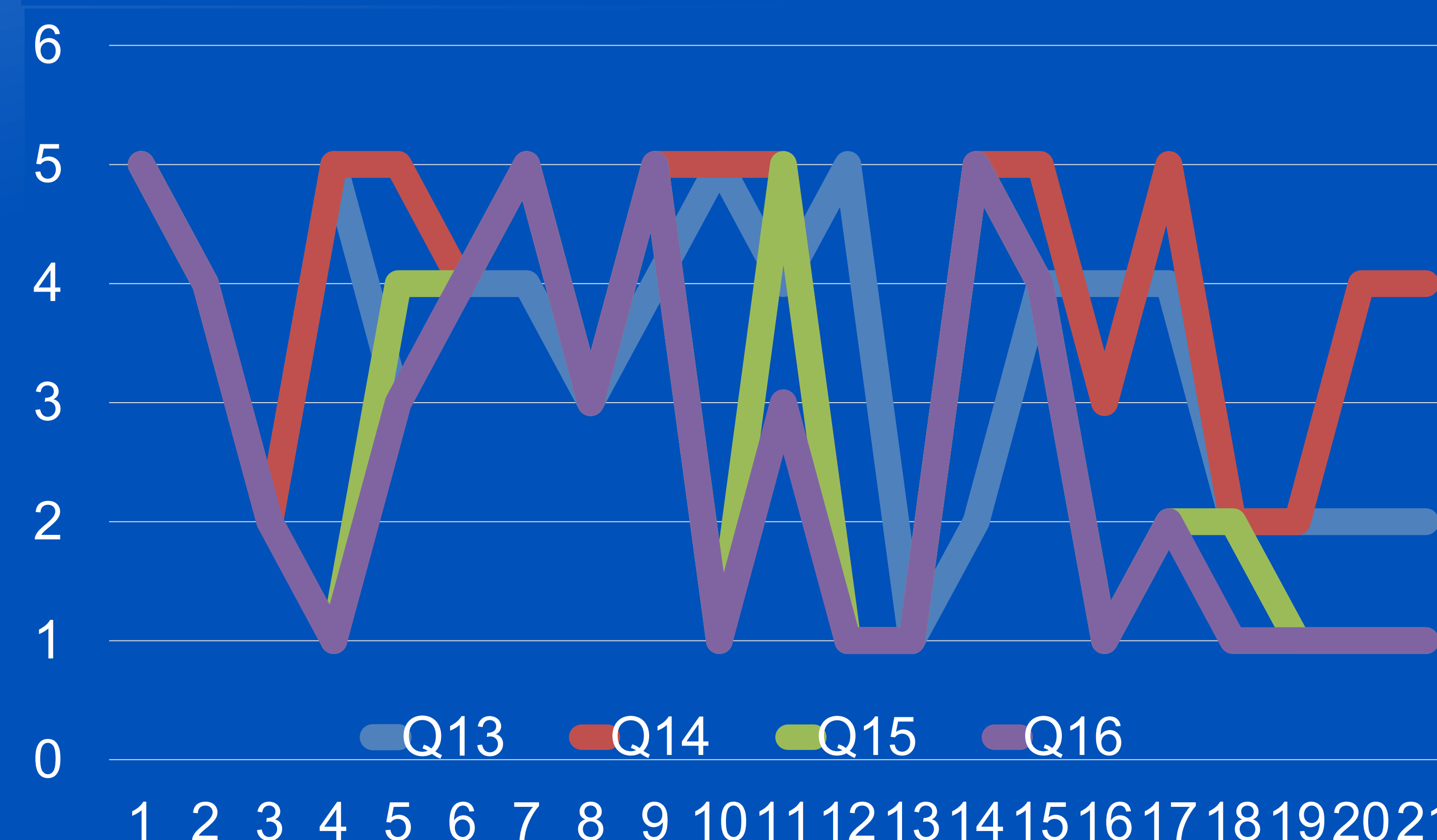
Delivering an online reading clinic during and after the school day, represented in questions 13 and 14 are contrasted in figure 1 with question 15, remediation in an online setting, and question 16, remediation in an online setting when online platform training is required. Interest levels increased for after school intervention, decreased for an online setting and plummeted when training is required in an online platform. Results consistently confirm a tendency of respondents for face-to-face remediation.

CONCLUSIONS

The action research study highlighted broad strokes of information that lay the groundwork for further study of a university-based reading clinic in the Northeastern Pennsylvania geographic area. The first revelation is a need beyond the classroom for reading remediation. The second conclusion is that an online environment needs careful consideration before moving headlong into a reading clinic using this setting. The third conclusion was that comprehension strategies used in the university-based reading clinic should consist of various evidence-based instruction.

The outcome of this study has components of surprise and confirmation of theories stemming from well-designed research by industry experts. The researcher thought that online learning was a welcome alternative and integral part of the education process, especially after our world's experience with pandemic lockdowns.

FIGURE 1



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