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A Pilot of a Behavioral Assessment Scale in Early Learning Literacy in Youth in United Way Suncoast ReadingPals Program

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Stakeholders

- University of South Florida
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Background and Significance

- Literacy begins long before a child enters kindergarten
  - Phonological awareness, letter knowledge, print awareness and oral language
    - Book handling skills
- Impacts of deficits of reading skills
  - Two-thirds of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of 4th grade end up in jail or welfare
  - Over 70% of America's inmates cannot read above a 4th

United Ways Suncoast: ReadingPals Program

- Academic mentoring focused on K-3rd grade
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ReadingPals Program continued…

- Community mentors
  - Background screening
  - Attend 3 hour training at the beginning of school year
  - Matched with children for once week for 60 minutes
- Mentor curriculum
  - Specification of donor
  - Structured curriculum
    - 20 minutes mentor reading to child
    - 20 minutes mentor listens to child read
    - 20 minutes to play activity
- 2013-2014 school year
  - 240 children and 150 volunteers

Research Questions

- Primary Objective
  - Is a pilot evaluation through a mentor questionnaire and an observation study validate positive behaviors around reading such as enthusiasm in children participating in ReadingPals?
- Secondary Objective
  - What are the core characteristics of an observational study needed to assist children to develop literacy skills?

Qualitative Research

- Observational Studies

Non-Participant Observation

- Limited interaction with the people observes
  - Examine details of how individuals behave together
- Observational tools
  - Field notes
  - Observational coding sheets
  - Theories and concepts can be driven by templates and result in focused data collection
- Benefits
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Methodology

- Utilization of observation method
  - Difficulty in interviewing children
  - Provide insight into mentor/child interaction related to positive reading behaviors
- Informed Consent Documentation
  - **Informed consent**: Parents of children in ReadingPals enrolled to observe
  - **Verbal Informed Consent**: Parents pre-survey to be used as secondary data analysis
  - **Waiver of Signed Assent**: ReadingPal mentors

Methodology continued…

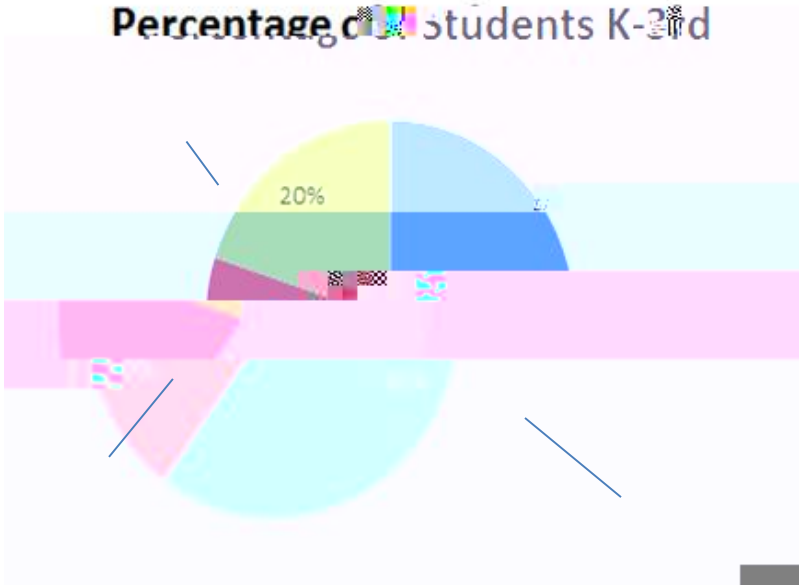
- Proposed

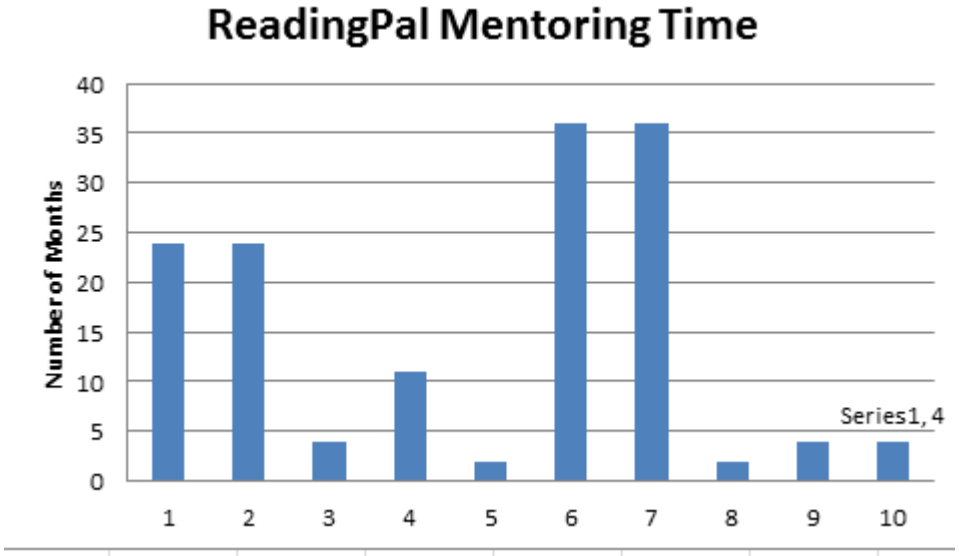
Data Analysis

- Pilot Study
  - Small sample size
- Population descriptions
- Analysis of data
  - Correlation coefficient
    - Limited sample for significance
- Observation analysis
  - Themes

Results

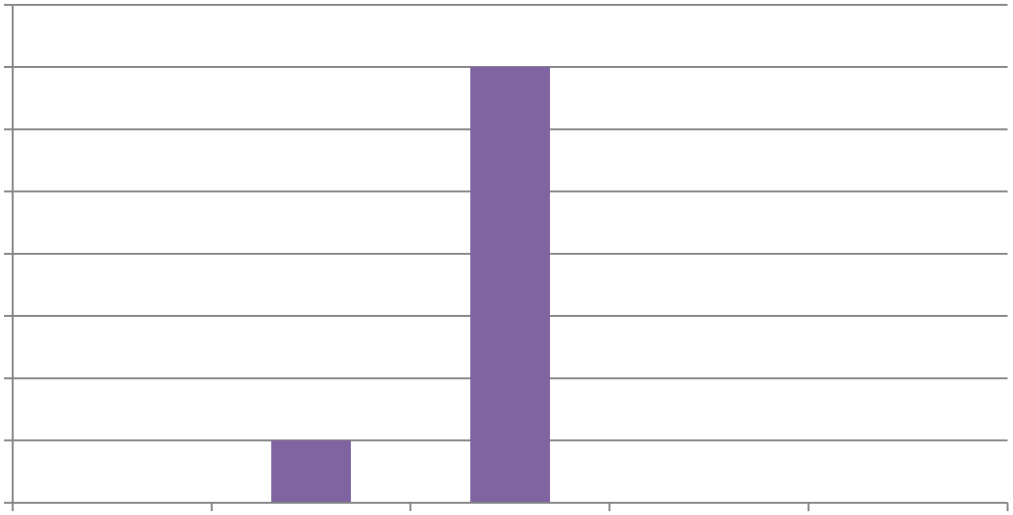
- Population description





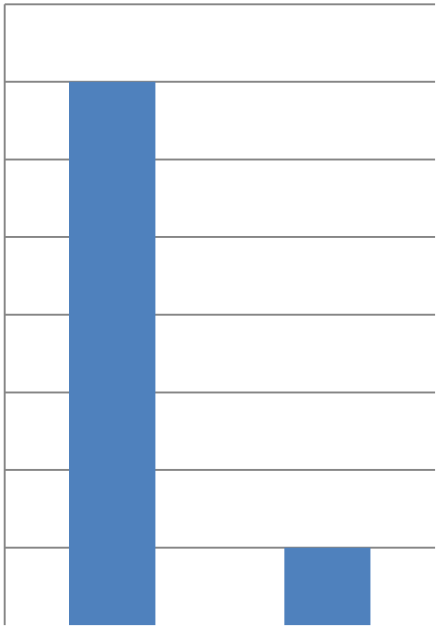
Results

- Population description



Results

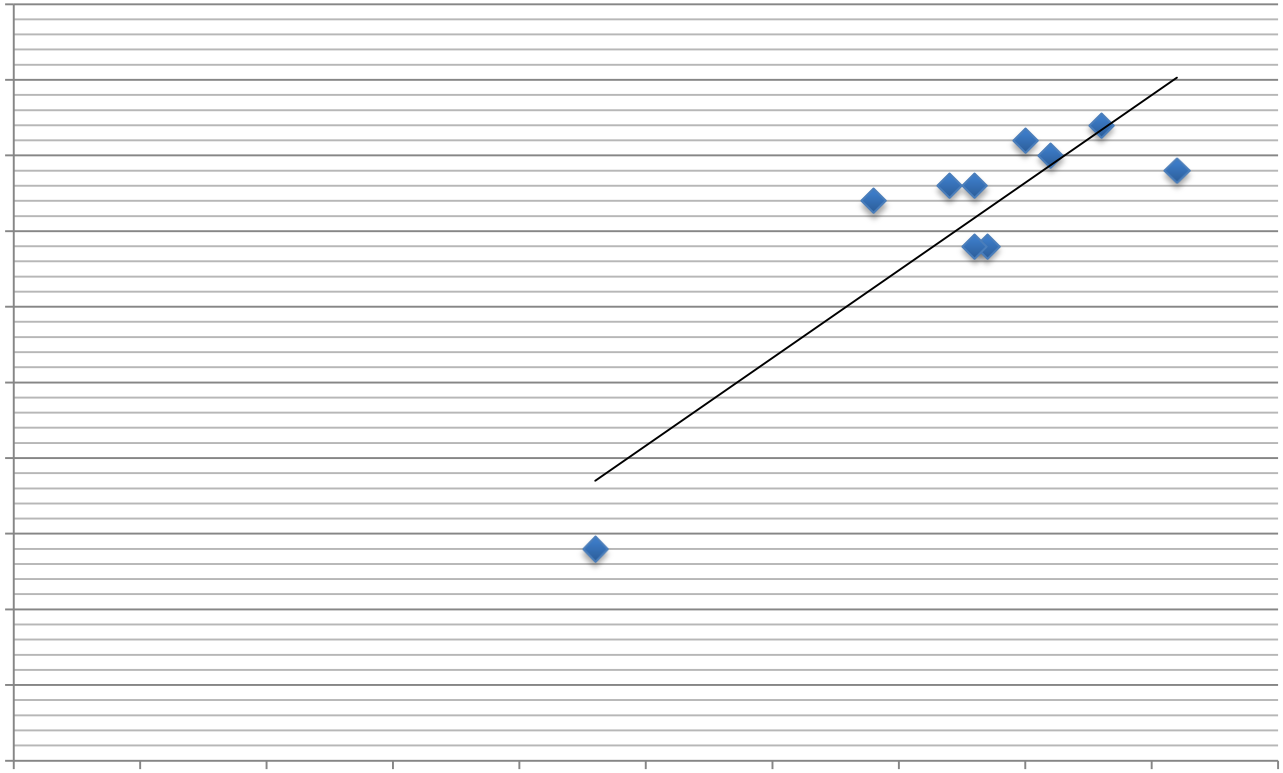
- Population description



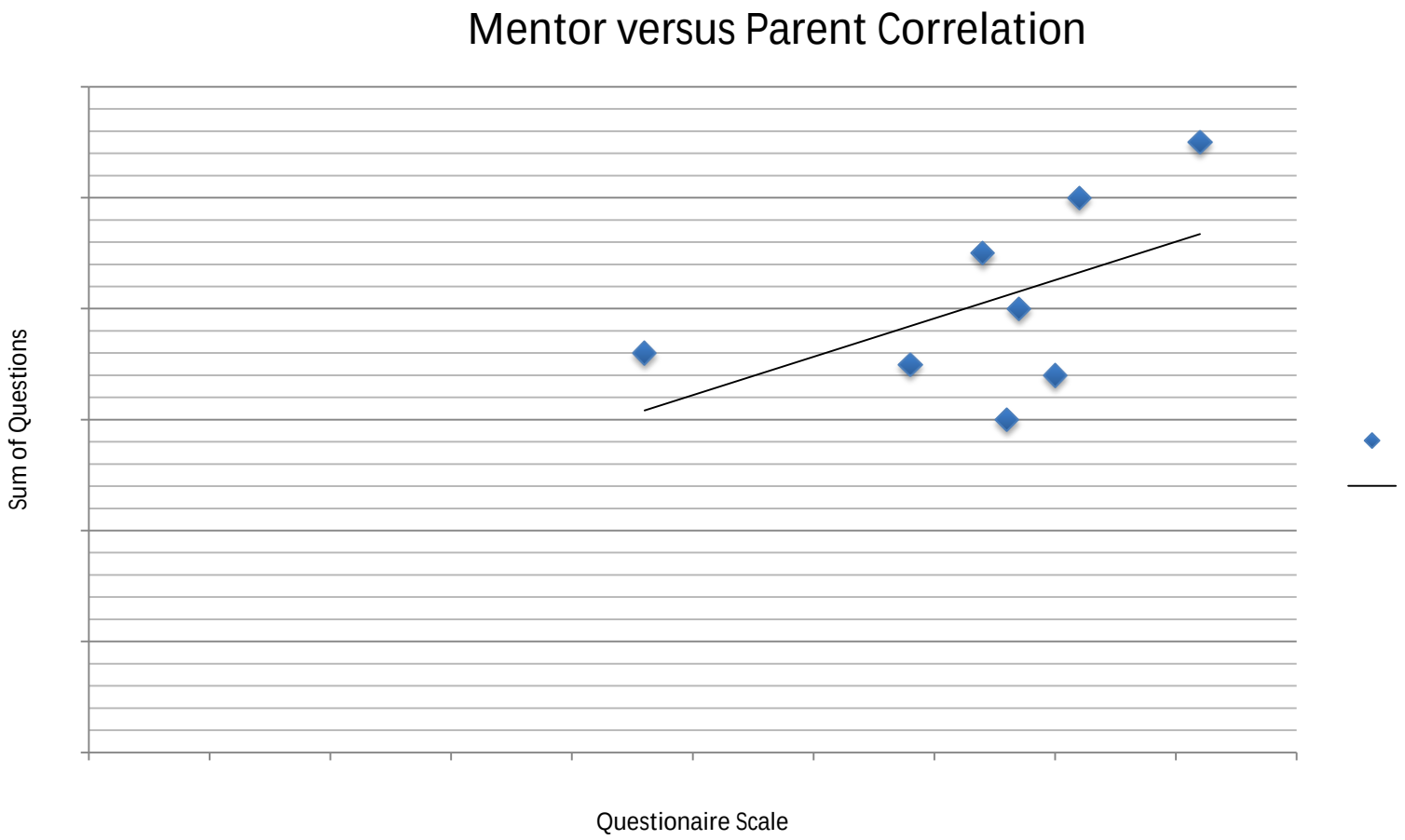
Analysis of Observation/Questionaire

1. Child expressed excitement with mentor.
2. Child attentive and engaged when reading with ReadingPal.
3. Child expressed or talked about reading books in a positive manner.
4. Child expresses excitement with books from ReadingPals.
5. Child shows excitement when able to solve words independently.

Results



Results


Mentor versus Parent Correlation
Sum of Questions
Questionaire Scale

Results

Analysis of Observational Themes

EXCITMENT

Recommendations for Program Improvement

- Fidelity of program
  - Challenges of fidelity of program
    - Structured curriculum
    - Structured environment
    - Mentor training
- Outcomes
  - Mentor questionnaire data
  - Observations
  - Other assessment tools
- Feedback to mentors

Conclusion

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