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The Effect of a Summer Oral Language and Literacy Intervention on the Literacy Acquisition of At-Risk First Grade Emergent Readers

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A Dissertation Submitted to

The Faculty of
The Annsley Frazier Thornton School of Education
Bellarmine University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education and Social Change

November 21, 2014

Dissertation directed by

Dr. Kathleen S. Cooter
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Mary Beth Stevens

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The Annsley Frazier Thornton School of Education of Bellarmine University certifies that Mary Beth Stevens has successfully defended her dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education and Social Change as of November 21, 2014. This is the final and approved form of the dissertation.

The Effect of a Summer Oral Language and Literacy Intervention on the Literacy Acquisition of At-Risk First Grade Emergent Readers

Mary Beth Stevens

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to the students of Jefferson County Public Schools, particularly to the emergent readers whose boundless potential drives the vision and purpose of every aspect of my work. The success of the summer program has implications far beyond four weeks in July. It represents what can be achieved when we implement research-based, culturally relevant practices meeting the needs of our most at-risk students. The data presented in the findings of this document represent one measure of success. However, the students the data represent are at the heart of this project. I dedicate my work to students like Olivia, who wrote the following at the conclusion of the summer intervention: "Thank you for letting me learn with people and kids like me."

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Judy Embry, Reading Recovery® Trainer from the University of Kentucky Reading Recovery Center, for instilling in me a love for learning and a belief that the answer to a literate future for our children lies in our search for knowledge. I also would like to thank Dr. Robert Cooter and Dr. Kathleen Cooter for envisioning the PhD for Education and Social Change, which empowered me to act as a change agent in our schools. Dr. Theresa Magpuri-Lavell, Dr. Grant Smith and Dr. Marcos Muñoz provided invaluable feedback as members of my committee. I am indebted to Dr. David Paige, Dr. Elizabeth Dinkins, and Dr. William Neace for helping me overcome my fear of all statistics, both quantitative and qualitative.

Several individuals were key to the successful implementation of the summer program, including the four cluster leads, Joy Mayfield, Allison Henry, Amy Goodenough and Heather Wright. Maria Carrico, Title 1 Component Specialist, and Linda Handley, Director of Title 1, offered much-needed administrative support. The entire district leadership team at Gheens Academy, including Dr. Dewey Hensley, Karen Branham, Suzanne Wright, and Beth Long supported the vision of the summer program. The Reading Recovery teachers based at the participating schools recruited students, administered assessments, and many also worked in the summer program. Additional Jefferson County teachers demonstrated their commitment to the success of the intervention by providing daily, research-based instruction to the participating students.

Finally, I thank from the bottom of my heart the four men in my life – my sweet, patient husband, Barry; my two inspiring sons, Porter and Joe; and my father, Bob Rowan. I appreciate their love and support.

Abstract of the Dissertation

The persistent achievement gap between children from low-socioeconomic and mid- to upper-socioeconomic homes is evident in both national and statewide literacy assessments. Although all children learn at similar rates during the school year, the inequities of their out of school lives contributes to the widening gap each summer. Although the summer months away from school are part of the problem, they also hold the potential for an effective solution. Interventions that accelerate literacy development during summer vacation, particularly for children of low-socioeconomic status, have the potential to shift the educational trajectory of our most at-risk students. We investigated the effect of a four-week summer oral language and literacy intervention on the literacy development of rising first grade students from at-risk elementary schools in Jefferson County Public School system located in Louisville, Kentucky. The participants included 95 rising first grade students attending the summer intervention; and 92 students eligible for attendance, but whose families did not register them for voluntary participation. Trained interventionists administered the six tasks of the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 2002, 2005) to both groups of students in May of their kindergarten year and again in August of their first grade year. The tasks included letter identification, a word test, concepts about print, hearing and recording sounds in words, writing vocabulary, and text level reading. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with the posttest data to determine the effect of the summer intervention. The analysis indicated there were significant differences between the treatment and comparison groups in each of the six tasks, demonstrating a positive effect of the summer oral language and literacy intervention.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Jefferson County Public Schools, a large urban school district located in Louisville, Kentucky, implemented a four-week summer oral language and literacy intervention targeting rising first- and second- grade students from 54 Title 1 elementary schools. Students attended the 2014 Summer Literacy Boost at one of four cluster locations, engaging in a research-based instructional framework delivered by teams of trained teachers. A sample of 187 rising first grade students participated in a study to determine if the summer intervention produced a significant change in the participants' literacy development. The summer intervention participants and non-participants were assessed in May of their kindergarten year, and again in August of their first grade year. The outcomes of the data analysis provide evidence as to the effectiveness of the intervention, and to guide future implementation of summer literacy programs for at-risk emerging readers.

Statement of the Problem

Children in the United States begin school with substantial disparities in foundational literacy skills, and for many groups of children the disparities widen with each school year (Hart & Risley, 2003; Reardon, Valentino & Shores, 2012; Roderick, 2014; Waldfogel, 2012; Williams, 2014). Recent national (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013) and statewide (Kentucky Department of Education, 2014) assessment results clearly reflect these persistent gaps, evident by socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, and immigrant status. The cause of, and solution to, these discrepancies have puzzled researchers for decades (Waldfogel, 2012).

In the 1991 report *Ready to Learn: A Mandate for the Nation,* the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching claimed one out of every three children entering first grade was lacking the basic skills and motivation necessary for success in school. These children were

seen to be at substantial risk for early academic difficulties and future success in school (Spira, Bracken, & Fischel, 2005). The Carnegie Foundation report (1991) presented a call to action, a national "Ready-to-Learn agenda" (p. 9), to ensure all children would be ready to succeed when beginning school.

Almost seven years later, the National Research Council's *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998) provided researched-based recommendations on how to better prepare students in prekindergarten through third grade for success in grade four and above. The specific key recommendations of the report included increased access to kindergarten; greater attention to word-reading skills, including phonological awareness, phonics and decoding strategies; systematic vocabulary instruction; actively building linguistic and conceptual knowledge; and explicit instruction in comprehension strategies.

Shortly following the publication of the National Research Council's seminal report, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) published the *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* (2000), a document that considerably impacted educational policy and practice, and ultimately influenced the subsequent No Child Left Behind legislation (Duke & Block, 2012). While the National Research Council report focused specifically on preschool through grade three (Snow et al., 1998), the National Reading Panel report (NICHD, 2000) expanded its reach to include students in grades K-12. A central goal of both initiatives was to ensure all students could read on grade level by the end of third grade.

In 2009, the National Institute for Literacy published *Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel,* to examine instructional practices used for children birth to age five. This systematic meta-analysis of published research concerning children's early

literacy skills identified the conventional literacy skills children need for success in later grades, as well as the early literacy skills that act as precursors to more traditional literacy behaviors (National Institute for Literacy, 2009). The panel also identified instructional practices that contributed to gains in children's conventional and precursor literacy skills in hopes of improving home and instructional environments to foster early literacy development (National Early Reading Panel, 2008).

More than two decades after the publication of the Carnegie Foundation's *Ready to Learn* report (1991), and the subsequent reports from the National Research Council (Snow et al., 1998), the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000), and the National Institute for Literacy (2009), results from a 2013 statewide kindergarten readiness-screening in Kentucky highlight continued cause for concern. The Kentucky Department of Education (2013) has designated the Brigance Kindergarten Screen (Brigance, 2004) as a common kindergarten readiness screener to provide entry baseline data for the state's incoming kindergarten students. According to the 2013 screening results, 49 percent of the state's incoming kindergartners were ready for school (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013). In Jefferson County Public Schools the screening determined 52.3 percent of the students were ready for school, and 47 percent would need additional support to succeed in kindergarten (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013). However, there was a noticeable discrepancy among the district's 89 elementary schools, with the lowest level of readiness being 10.7 percent and the highest level 90.6 percent (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013). This inequity seems to be a clear reflection of the socioeconomic differences found among the district schools as the school with the lowest level of kindergarten readiness had a reported free- and reduced-lunch population of 89.4 percent; and the school with the highest level of readiness reported 14

percent of their students qualify for free- or reduced-priced lunch (Jefferson County Public Schools, 2013-2014).

Children of families from poverty make up a disproportionate number of those most at-risk for school failure (Knapp, Turnbull, & Shields, 1990). These children often start school with significantly less exposure to the language of books as compared to kindergarteners exposed to text structures through read-alouds (Purcell-Gates, McIntyre, & Freppon, 1995). Children from families of low socioeconomic status often face problems attributed to at-risk students, including high mobility rates, severe behavioral and emotional problems, and limited English proficiency (Knapp et al., 1990).

However, provided with appropriate instruction, children identified as at-risk progress at the same rate as their more advantaged peers during the school year (Purcell-Gates et al., 1995; Schacter, 2003). But, during the subsequent summer vacation, the inequities of students' out of school lives serves to further widen the gap (Alexander, Entwisle & Olson, 2007; Schacter, 2003). Summer reading loss effectively widens the achievement gap between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds every year (Cahill, Horvath, McGill-Franzen, & Allington, 2013). As school leaders, along with policymakers at the district, state and national level, are focusing their energy and resources on improving learning outcomes for all students and closing long-standing gaps in literacy performance that separate low-income students from others (Rowan, Hall & Haycock, 2010), it is believed that efforts to link prevention, early intervention, and ongoing instructional improvement may optimize school achievement for all students (Slavin, Karweit & Wasik, 1992). Specifically, interventions that accelerate literacy development during summer vacation, particularly for children of low-socioeconomic status, may have the

potential to shift the educational trajectory of our most at-risk students (Alexander et al., 2007; Cahill et al., 2013; Duke & Block, 2012; Schacter, 2003).

Purpose of the Study

William White (1906) noted the effect of summer loss as long ago as 1906. A century later, Alexander et al. (2007) attribute more than half of the gap in ninth grade reading comprehension scores between low and middle income students to the cumulative effects of summer loss between first to fifth grade. Hippel and Broh (2004) contend that, when addressing inequality by socioeconomic status, schools can be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Therefore, an intervention to address summer learning loss may help disadvantaged students prevent loss of skills acquired during the previous school year, and potentially promote gains in literacy during the summer months (Waldfogel, 2012).

The primary purpose of this research study was to evaluate the effect of a summer intervention on the foundational literacy skills of 95 at-risk rising first grade students from twenty-five Title 1 elementary schools located in Louisville, Kentucky. The research questions guiding the study were:

1. What is the effect of an oral language and literacy summer intervention on the participants' print awareness, understanding of the alphabetic principle, and successful reading of continuous text?
2. Is there a difference in the literacy skills between the participants in the summer program and the non-participants at the beginning of first grade?

It was hypothesized that an oral language and literacy summer intervention would positively effect literacy acquisition for the targeted at-risk students; and there would be a difference between the treatment and comparison groups.

Significance of the Study

As the Brigance readiness screening data (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013) suggest, Kentuckians have yet to successfully answer the call for change declared by the Carnegie Foundation in 1991. Just as the Brigance data highlight our children's lack of skills needed to succeed in school as kindergarteners (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013), the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data represents the achievement of students in fourth, eighth and twelfth grades (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). NAEP (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013) assessments serve as a common metric for all states and selected urban school districts, providing results over time on subject-matter achievement for populations of students, as well as groups within those populations. Nationally, from 2011 to 2013, fourth-grade reading performance for both low- and higher-income students remained unchanged, as did the gap separating these groups of students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). The average reading score for Jefferson County Public School's fourth graders in the most recent NAEP assessment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013) also remained unchanged since 2011 with 33% of students performing at proficient reading levels.

Kentucky state accountability testing outcomes for the 2013-14 school year reveals similar trends in student achievement in reading (Kentucky Department of Education, 2014). The accountability system defines members of the "gap group" as students in one or more of the following at-risk groups: African-American, Hispanic, Native American, Special Education, free and reduced lunch, and limited English proficiency (Kentucky Department of Education, 2014). Although the percent of all Jefferson County students reading at proficient and distinguished levels rose from 41.8 % in 2013 to 49.0% in 2014, the gap between students placed at-risk and

all students assessed remained at 9.7 percentage points in reading, virtually unchanged from the 10.2 percentage point difference in 2013 (Kentucky Department of Education, 2014).

Research suggests that many children from low-socioeconomic backgrounds begin school with foundational literacy skills, including oral language and phonological awareness, significantly below children from higher-socioeconomic households (Hart & Risley, 2003; Honig, 2007; Locke, Ginsborg & Peers, 2002; Nation & Snowling, 2004; Reardon et al., 2012). These foundational skills are thought to be essential for learning to read successfully, suggesting that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are at greater risk for poor literacy acquisition, as well as subsequent reading comprehension problems (Lee & Burkham, 2002; McGee & Richgels, 2003; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). And, although success in the early grades does not ensure success throughout school, failure in the primary grades seems to virtually guarantee failure in later schooling (Lee & Burkham, 2002; Slavin et al., 1992).

The achievement gap by family socioeconomic status is significantly linked to inequitable learning opportunities outside of school (Alexander et al., 2007; Downey, Hippel, & Broh, 2004). This gap is particularly evident at the onset of schooling; and although children progress at similar rates during the school year, the experience of schooling appears to be offset by the unequal out-of-school learning environments between low- and mid- to upper-income families (Alexander et al., 2007; Downey et al., 2004). Therefore, there are lasting consequences of summer learning differences over the elementary grades, particularly since achievement at any level can predict success at the next level, ultimately narrowing the achievement gap and improving student outcomes (Alexander et al., 2007; Downey et al., 2004).

Stagnant NAEP achievement literacy data (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012) and the persistent achievement gap in Jefferson County Public School's Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) reading outcomes (Kentucky Department of Education, 2014) represent the future impact of this failure in the early grades (Slavin et al., 1992). Research has confirmed the relationship between early and later reading achievement, providing the evidence supporting early intervention to prevent reading failure in later grades (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Juel, 1988; Collins & Dennis, 2009).

Since out-of-school learning for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds often lags behind their peers, the gap continues to grow with each passing school year (Alexander et al., 2007). According to Alexander et al. (2007), the summer shortfall in five years of elementary school appears to account for more than half the difference in the achievement gap between high and low socioeconomic students in ninth grade. Since much of the widening gap occurs during elementary school, Alexander et al. (2007) contend that is where corrective interventions will be most effective. The findings of this study will contribute to effective instructional practice in a summer literacy intervention to possibly narrow the achievement gap, particularly in schools with at-risk student populations.

Conceptual Framework

The framework for the study is situated within a sociocognitive theory of literacy learning, described as a socially based, interactive process focused on meaning (Gee, 2001). Gee's (2001) view of learning to read integrates cognition, language, social interaction and culture. He defines reading as a "semiotic meaning-making process" (p. 719), central to early literacy acquisition (Gee, 2001). Clay (1991) describes reading as a "message-getting, problem-

solving activity which increases in power and flexibility the more it is practiced" (p. 6). Similarly, Whitehurst & Lonigan (1998) assert, "reading even in its earliest stages is a process that is motivated by the extraction of meaning" (p. 849-850).

Tharp's (2012) larger framework of Delta Theory brings together a number of theoretical and research domains and their treatment of influence and change. One of the theoretical domains implicit in Delta Theory is Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development to explain how change in both learning and development is brought about by social influence. Tharp's (2012) Delta Theory and Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development postulate that no one is a passive recipient of influence, but the developing person transforms or reinvents the world as represented to him through the influence of others, or "guided reinvention" (Tharp, 2012, p. 26).

Delta Theory describes three phases of psychosocial systems influencing change (Tharp, 2012). Alpha represents a state of disequilibrium and instability (Tharp, 2012), bringing to mind a struggling literacy learner. Beta represents behavioral and social equilibrium and stability (Tharp, 2012), much as we would envision our students as their literacy learning needs are met within appropriate zones of proximal development. The Delta phase is organized for enhancing influence and change, encouraging the movement from alpha (instability) to beta (stability) (Tharp, 2012). This study will determine if the teachers and environment of the summer intervention provided just such a context for influence and change in the participants' literacy development.

Summary of Methodology

The participants in the study included 187 rising first grade students from 25 Title 1 elementary schools in Jefferson County Public Schools, a large urban school district located in northern Kentucky. Students were selected based on district assessment data and classroom

teacher recommendation in the spring of their kindergarten year. The families of the kindergarten students determined in need of a summer oral language and literacy intervention received an invitation to voluntarily enroll their child in the four-week daily intervention. The students who were registered to attend the summer intervention comprised the treatment group. The students whose families chose not to register them for the summer intervention comprised the comparison group.

All students invited to attend, both participants and non-participants, were assessed in the spring of their kindergarten year and again in August of their first grade year to determine the effect of the summer oral language and literacy intervention on literacy acquisition. The analysis of the assessment data provided a measure of the effect of the summer oral language and literacy intervention on the literacy acquisition of the participants.

Limitations

One threat to the study's validity was the possibility that the participants' gains were attributable to the maturation of the first grade participants during the course of the study. The design controlled for this threat by including students in both treatment and comparison groups observed for a period of time before and after treatment. The pretest assessment occurred approximately six weeks before the beginning of the summer intervention; and the posttest assessment took place approximately two weeks after the conclusion of the summer intervention.

Another threat to the study's validity was the possibility of students from both the comparison and treatment groups participating in alternative summer interventions during the course of the study. The inclusion of a comparison group, determining equivalence before the onset of the study, and the sample size of 187 students all provided controls for this threat.

The possibility of a variance in teacher expertise across the four summer program clusters participating in the study posed another threat to the reliability of the study outcomes. This threat was controlled for by the required six hours of professional development for all teachers prior to the onset of the program. Also, a common instructional framework, lesson planners and student materials were accessible at all clusters for teachers to utilize in their planning and delivery of instruction. An observation walkthrough was conducted at each cluster location, providing evidence of the fidelity of the framework's implementation across cluster locations and teams.

Another study limitation was the high mobility of the district's student population and the probability that study participants would not be present for the duration of the study. The sample size of 187 students provided a control for this threat. The only students dropped from the study were those moving out of district. District personnel traveled to local schools to assess students who moved within-district since the onset of the study.

Definition of Terms

The study seeks to evaluate the effect of a summer intervention on the foundational literacy skills of 95 at-risk rising first grade students from 25 Title 1 elementary schools located in Louisville, Kentucky. The foundational literacy skills identified as essential to literacy acquisition include print awareness, understanding of the alphabetic principle, and successful reading of continuous text (National Institute for Literacy, 2009; Puranik & Lonigan, 2014. According to Puranik and Lonigan (2014), children exhibiting a control of these skills learn to read more efficiently than children with fewer of these skills.

Print awareness includes concepts about print related to the visual features of text as it represents written language (McGee & Richgels, 2003). Knowledge of print conventions

includes moving left to right across a line of text; and knowledge of print concepts include understanding the print conveys a specific message (National Institute for Literacy, 2009). Another facet of print awareness is print knowledge, including alphabet knowledge and a concept of word (McGee & Richgels, 2003).

The alphabetic principle, or a strong understanding of letter-sound relationships, is a good predictor of future reading success (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). *Phonemic awareness*, or the ability to manipulate the sounds of spoken language, represents one component of what children need to grasp the alphabetic principle. They also must realize that alphabet letters in text represent phonemes that are heard in spoken words (McGee & Richgels, 2003), a goal of *phonics* instruction (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000).

Early readers who have developed an understanding of how print works (print awareness), the alphabetic principle (phonemic awareness and phonics) and have acquired an adequate number of *sight words* (words read automatically) can read easy, beginning level texts (McGee & Richgels, 2003). Easy texts have many high frequency words repeated throughout and words that beginning readers are capable of decoding (McGee & Richgels, 2003). A successful reading is defined as accurate (known words are read correctly) and meaningful (the message of the text is understood) (McGee & Richgels, 2003). Another skill impacting successful text reading is *oral language,* the ability to produce and understand spoken language, and includes vocabulary and grammar (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Clarke, Snowling, Truelove & Hume, 2010; National Institute for Literacy, 2009; McGee & Richgels, 2003).

According to Puranik and Lonigan (2014), the primary goal of schooling in the early grades is the acquisition of literacy skills enabling children to read and write proficiently in later

grades. The identification and assessment of these skills provided evidence of the effect of a summer oral language and literacy intervention on children at-risk for literacy failure. The research base providing correlational evidence of the relationship between the attainment of these early skills and later literacy growth establishes a need for this study.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction

Educators have been searching for explanations and solutions to the persistently poor reading levels of our nation's school children for decades (Carey, 2014; Carnegie, 1991; Kamhi, 2007; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; National Institute for Literacy, 2009; Reardon et al., 2012; Snow et al., 1998; Waldfogel, 2012; Williams, 2014). Although minimal progress has been made, the proportion of children reading below the basic level has hovered around 35% in the last 25 years, and 70% never attain reading proficiency (Carnegie, 1991; Kamhi, 2007; Kentucky Department of Education, 2013, 2014; National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Research has established a strong link between early and later reading achievement, demonstrating the strong likelihood that a poor fourth grade reader struggled as a first grader as well (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Gut, Reimann & Grob, 2013; Juel, 1988; Locke et al., 2002; Nation & Snowling, 2004).

However, there is a growing body of evidence that school failure is preventable with intensive early intervention, including opportunities for summer learning for emergent readers (Allington, 2013; Alexander et al., 2007; Schacter, 2003; Schacter & Jo, 2005) followed by long-term instructional improvements and support services (Carey, 2013; Purcell-Gates et al., 1995; Slavin et al., 1992; Spira et al., 2005; Williams, 2014). By determining which emergent literacy skills are the most influential in accelerating struggling students' literacy development, summer literacy intervention instructional design that includes these elements may help ensure at-risk emergent readers have the opportunity to make progress during the summer months instead of losing ground (Alexander et al., 2007; National Institute for Literacy, 2009; Puranik & Lonigan, 2014; Schacter, 2003; Slavin et al., 1992; Spira et al., 2005). However, first understanding the

underlying causes for the underperformance of low-income students in our schools will allow educators to better frame the discussion of the achievement gap and develop effective solutions (Carey, 2013; Neuman, 2009).

Description and Critique of the Scholarly Literature

Defining At-Risk.

Children's early literacy experiences are critical for their success in learning to read and write, and statistics demonstrate that failure to do so is related to their future success (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2005; Lee & Burkam, 2002; McGee & Richgels, 2003; Neuman, 2009). According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL), poor skills in reading and writing are associated with poverty (NCES, 2007). Forty-three percent of adults functioning at the lowest levels of literacy live in poverty compared to only four percent of those functioning at proficient literacy levels (NCES, 2007). Poor reading and writing skills are related to dropping out of high school, and subsequently to unemployment, with unemployment rates highest for high school dropouts compared to high school or college graduates (NCES, 1995).

Living in poverty is one of the highest predictors of low reading and writing achievement (Entwisle et al., 2005; McGee & Richgels, 2003; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). According to Rothstein (2004), many manifestations of social class have significant implications for learning. Limited access to out-of-school experiences, adequate health care, secure housing, and economic stability are all factors impacting the low academic performance of students from lower income families (Carey, 2013; Rothstein, 2004). For example, children from low socioeconomic homes have poorer vision than their middle- to higher-income peers, partly due to prenatal conditions and partly due to lack of adequate early pediatric healthcare (Lee & Burkham, 2002; Rothstein, 2004). Children of poverty also have poorer oral hygiene, inadequate nutrition, and more

exposure to secondhand smoke and to lead poisoning (Lee & Burkham, 2002; Rothstein, 2004). Another factor associated with poverty is the lack of affordable, adequate housing for low-income families. Children from families having difficulty finding stable housing are more likely to be mobile and to demonstrate poor attendance, an important cause of low achievement (Lee & Burkham, 2002; Rothstein, 2004).

In addition to the socioeconomic level of the families, the school's socioeconomic data can predict students' reading and writing achievement (Duke, 2000; Neuman & Celano, 2001). According to Duke (2000), children who live in poor neighborhoods attend school with other children living in poverty. These schools frequently have chronically low achievement scores compared to schools where more children from low- to middle-income families attend (Duke, 2000). Schools in poor neighborhoods tend to have lower-quality libraries and fewer books in the classrooms (Duke, 2000; Neuman & Celano, 2001). Therefore, socioeconomic status seems to have a cumulative effect as children from low-socioeconomic families attend schools with higher percentages of low-socioeconomic children; and these children are the most at risk for reading difficulties (Duke, 2000; McGee & Richgels, 2003; Neuman & Celano, 2001).

Limited proficiency in English also presents a powerful risk factor for proficiency in reading and writing (August & Hakuta, 1997; McGee & Richgels, 2003). Hispanic children, the largest group of English-language learners, score lower on reading achievements tests than white children (Rowan et al., 2010). These concerns are especially urgent as approximately eight percent of all kindergartners are English-language learners, with significantly greater numbers in many schools (August & Hakuta, 1997). Higher percentages of children who are nonwhite and non-English speaking are living in poverty, creating a cumulative effect of risk factors predicting who will fail to learn to read and write (McGee & Richgels, 2003).

The Impact of Poverty on Oral Language Development.

Children from home environments lacking opportunities for shared reading and easy access to print materials are likely to have poor oral language skills, despite the children's cognitive abilities being comparable (Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo, & Coll, 2001; Locke et al., 2002; McIntosh, Crosbie, Holm, Dodd, & Thomas, 2007; Vasilyeva & Waterfall, 2011; Walker, Greenwood, Hart, & Carta, 1994). Adams (1990) estimates that a typical middle-class child enters first grade with 1,000-1,700 hours of one-on-one picture book reading, whereas a child from a low-income household averages just 25 hours.

Hart and Risley (2003) highlight the enormous differences in the quantity of language addressed to children from different socio-economic backgrounds in their first two and a half years of life. As a result, although children from different backgrounds develop language skills around the same age, children from higher socioeconomic status families gain vocabulary at a quicker rate than their peers in families living in mid- to lower socioeconomic circumstances (Hart & Risley, 2003). Their findings suggest that the early linguistic environments of young children have long-term effects on their development and subsequent academic achievement (Bradley et al., 2001; Hart & Risley, 2003; Locke et al., 2002; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Walker et al., 1994). The strong relationship between oral language proficiency and code-related skills, and the correlation to later reading achievement, places children from low-income backgrounds with early deficits at risk for later reading difficulties (Collins & Dennis, 2009; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002).

The Impact of Oral Language Development on Literacy Acquisition.

According to Roskos, Tabors, and Lenhart (2009), oral language is the foundation of learning to read and write. Children who do not develop strong oral language skills start to fall

behind their peers even before they start school (Hart & Risley, 2003; Snow et al., 1998). Language ability at kindergarten entrance, including the abilities to repeat sentences or recall stories and to name objects in pictures, are correlated with success in reading achievement during the early primary years (Snow et al., 1998; Walker et al., 1994).

There is a high correlation between code-related skills and oral language early on the literacy acquisition continuum as a child's skill with spoken language plays an essential role in reading achievement (Collins & Dennis, 2009; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). Research has demonstrated a high degree of association between theses two sets of skills with a strong influence flowing from oral language to code-related skills, particularly since language proficiency skills develop much earlier than do code-related skills (Spira et al., 2005; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Oral language abilities are linked to the code-related skills that promote word-reading abilities, and provide the foundation for the development of the more advanced oral language skills necessary for successful comprehension in more mature readers (Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). According to Spira et al. (2005), improvement in reading achievement through elementary school was strongly related to linguistic strengths measured in kindergarten, even after encountering initial reading difficulties in first grade.

Phonological awareness is another language skill highly related to success in reading (Adams, 1990; Griffith & Olson, 1992; Muter, Hulme, Snowling, & Stevenson, 2004; Snow et al., 1998; Yopp & Yopp, 2000). Children who have strong understandings about the phonemic structure of spoken language are more likely to become proficient readers (Griffith & Olson, 1992; McGee & Richgels, 2003; Muter et al., 2004; Snow et al., 1998; Yopp & Yopp, 2000). According to McGee and Richgels (2003), phonological awareness is necessary for reading

development because of the alphabetic nature of our written language system. The letters in written words are related to the phonemes, or sounds, in spoken words; and beginning readers must recognize the relationship between the two (Muter et al., 2004; McGee & Richgels, 2003).

Early reading failure can prove devastating to a child's school career, but a relative strength in oral language skill and phonological awareness can enable struggling learners to overcome initial reading difficulties and demonstrate improvement by fourth grade (Spira et al, 2005). The child who lacks both oral language and phonological awareness skills will be less likely to make significant progress in reading (Muter et al., 2004; Spira et al., 2005; Strickland & Shanahan, 2004). The impact of these oral language skills on later literacy achievement should be considered when designing intervention instruction for young children, incorporating specific strategies that focus on the development of phonological awareness and oral language in young children, in addition to the code-related skills associated with emergent literacy (Schwanenflugal et al., 2006; Spira et al., 2005; Yopp & Yopp, 2000).

Emergent literacy.

Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) define emergent literacy as a set of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that act as developmental precursors to conventional forms of reading and writing. Acquisition of literacy appears to occur along a developmental continuum beginning early in the life of a child, suggesting that reading and prereading behaviors comprise important and legitimate aspects of literacy development (International Reading Association & National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998; National Institute for Literacy, 2009; McGee & Richgels, 2003; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

The understanding of written texts requires both word recognition processes and comprehension processes (Collins & Dennis, 2009; Hoover & Gough, 1990; National Institute of

Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Perfetti, 1999; Tunmer & Hoover, 1992). The National Institute for Literacy (2009) defines a range of skills developed by emergent readers that create the foundation for later reading success. These interdependent sets of skills and processes are described as *outside-in* (semantic, syntactic, and conceptual knowledge; conventions of print) and *inside-out* (knowledge of graphemes and phoneme-grapheme correspondence; phonological awareness) processes (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Storch and Whitehurst (2002) describe a variety of code-related and oral language skills that act as precursors to literacy. These include the code-related skills of letter knowledge, grapheme-phoneme correspondence, phonological awareness and print conventions; and the semantic (word knowledge, expressive and receptive vocabulary), syntactic (word order and grammatical rules), and conceptual knowledge comprising oral language proficiency (Collins & Dennis, 2009; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). Each of these models of emergent literacy present a related distinction to the interactive simple view of reading, in which the development of reading comprehension is closely related to the development of word decoding and listening comprehension skills (Hoover & Gough, 1990; Schwanenflugel et al., 2006; Verhoeven & van Leeuwe, 2008). However, research has shown particular emergent literacy skills make the most significant contribution to reading achievement at different points along the developmental continuum (National Institute for Literacy, 2009; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Print Awareness.

As children take their first steps in literacy development, they become aware of written language through exposure to print in their environment and from their parents' reaction to and conversations around print (McGee & Richgels, 2003; Nichols, Rupley, Rickelman, &

Algozzine, 2004). According to McGee and Richgels (2003), exploring print through reading and writing allows children to develop concepts about print directly related to the characteristics, features and properties of the written code.

These conventions of reading hinge on understanding the terms that are used to talk about text, including the concept of a word or sentence; locating the top of the page; beginning to read the first sentence; turning the page; and locating the front of the book (McGee & Richgels, 2003; Nichols et al., 2004). Emergent readers also begin to internalize the arbitrary rules that govern the act of reading, including the understanding of reading from left to right, top to bottom and return sweep; the purpose of punctuation; and voice-to-print matching (Nichols et al., 2004). Another of these concepts is that the print, not the illustrations, is what carries the message; and that the words carry a specific message each time a book is read (International Reading Association & National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998; McGee & Richgels, 2003).

The concept of words, surrounded by spaces, representing speech in text, is another critical concept children begin to develop as they become aware of print (McGee & Richgels, 2003). Children with emerging concepts about the written word deliberately point to each word in printed text, gradually acquiring a few sight words (Cummings, Dewey, Latimer, & Good, 2011; McGee & Richgels, 2003). Sight words are words that children recognize without memorizing the text, still recognizing them in unfamiliar contexts (McGee & Richgels, 2003). As students become more proficient reading continuous text, a growing bank of sight words will enable them to read text with automaticity, contributing to fluency and comprehension (Cummings et al., 2011; Rasinski, Rikli, & Johnston, 2009).

The Alphabetic Principle.

Learning to recognize the letters of the alphabet by name and to write them is another crucial concept about print that plays a major role in children developing an understanding of the alphabetic principle (McGee & Richgels, 2003). Research has shown that children who acquire a strong knowledge of letter-sound relationships are more likely to become successful readers (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). According to McGee and Richgels (2003), understanding letter-sound relationships is directly related to the development of phonological awareness.

Phonological awareness involves the ability to pay attention to the sounds of spoken language (International Reading Association & National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998). The ability to segment words into syllables or generate rhyming words indicates a more conscious awareness of the sound units in spoken language (International Reading Association & National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998). Another phonological awareness skill is the awareness of alliteration, or words that have the same beginning phoneme (McGee & Richgels, 2003). Eventually children learn to associate alphabet letters with phonemes, the development of the alphabetic principle. The alphabetic principle evolves as a result of phonological awareness competence and learning the letter-sound relationships targeted in phonics instruction (McGee & Richgels, 2003; Muter et al., 2004; Nichols, Rupley, Rickelman, & Algozzine, 2004).

Language and Vocabulary Development

Although a variety of oral language skills have been shown to prevent reading problems, vocabulary knowledge is key to reading achievement and is a powerful predictor of reading comprehension (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Collins & Dennis, 2009; Vasilyeva & Waterfall,

2011). Children who have large vocabularies and can control complex sentence structures have a clear advantage in reading compared to those with poorer language proficiency (Vasilyeva & Waterfall, 2011). Traditionally, early reading instruction is based on the premise that children can build the vocabulary they need after learning to read (decode) fluently, therefore, little or no vocabulary instruction occurs during the primary grades (Biemiller & Boote, 2006). Biemiller and Boote (2006) contend this practice allows further widening of vocabulary gaps during the primary grades. Conversely, research suggests oral language deficits are more remediable than many other school learning problems, and that children who need additional support for emergent language and literacy development should receive it as early as possible (Biemiller, 2001; Snow et al., 1998).

According to McGee and Richgels (2003), the three categories of literacy knowledge – the print category, including concepts about print and alphabet letter knowledge; the alphabetic principle category, including phonological awareness concepts and knowledge of letter-sound relationships; and the language and meaning category, including vocabulary knowledge and an understanding of concepts in texts – are necessary to learn to read and write successfully. Therefore, a balanced design of a successful summer oral language and literacy intervention should support the development of these categories to positively effect the literacy acquisition of the participants.

Instruction to support literacy acquisition in at-risk emergent readers.

In their meta-analysis of research on early reading interventions, Hiebert and Taylor (2000) made several informed observations regarding instruction design that supports literacy acquisition. They contend that receiving well-designed and focused instruction during the primary grades will lead to higher levels of literacy proficiency for all children, including those

in the bottom quartile of their cohort (Hiebert & Taylor, 2000). Children's level of reading achievement is determined early in their school experience, reinforcing the importance of implementing change early in the learning continuum (Burke et al., 2009; Entwisle et al., 2005; Slavin et al., 1992; Spira et al., 2005). Hiebert and Taylor (2000) contend the evidence suggests that involving kindergarteners in rich literacy experiences has positive outcomes for an extended of time. However, by third grade, the level of reading ability children have attained is likely to remain unchanged (Entwisle et al., 2005; Spira et al., 2005). The further along the grade level continuum, the more difficult it becomes to escape a pattern of failure (Entwisle et al., 2005; Spira et al., 2005).

The simple view of literacy acquisition holds powerful implications for children from low-income backgrounds, as well as the role of early school experiences in their later reading achievement (Storch & Whitehurst, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Whitehurst, Epstein, et al. (1994) suggest that more formal interactions with print, such as teaching a child about letters, influence the code-related skills. Preschool code-related skills account for thirty-eight percent of the variance in kindergarten code-related skills, which are highly predictive of both grade one and grade two reading outcomes (Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). Therefore, it is necessary to include strategies that will support the development of code-related skills in intervention instruction for emergent readers (Cummings et al., 2011; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002).

However, research cautions teachers to be careful not to focus on decoding skills to the exclusion of language skills, even with those readers exhibiting decoding difficulties (Rasinski et al., 2009; Scwanenflugel et al., 2006; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). Clarke, Snowling, Truelove and Hulme (2010) evaluated three different approaches to address reading-comprehension difficulties. The first approach centered on developing strategies to support text comprehension.

The second approach focused on training strategies for understanding and producing oral language. The third approach made explicit links between written and spoken language, combining all components from the text comprehension and oral language approaches. The randomized controlled trial indicated that all three interventions produced statistically significant improvements in reading comprehension. Long-term gains were largest for children who received the oral language intervention rather than the text comprehension or combined approach. Their findings lend support to theories that view children's reading-comprehension problems as one facet of a broader oral-language comprehension problem (Clarke et al., 2010).

Although improving code-related skills and print knowledge may be a necessary focus of intervention for those children who have not yet acquired sufficient skills in reading words, teachers must not wait until children have solved the decoding puzzle to begin vocabulary and oral language skill instruction (Muter et al., 2004; Schwanenflugel et al., 2006; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). These skills should be a central part of reading instruction beginning in preschool and throughout elementary school (Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). Snowling, Bishop, and Stothard (2000) contend that good decoding skills in isolation will not assure normal reading progress in children with a history of language difficulties; oral language skills make an equally important contribution to literacy development.

Instruction to Develop Print Awareness.

A primary goal of instruction to help children acquire print processing skills is to encourage children to pay close attention to these features of print (McGee & Richgels, 2003; Nichols et al., 2004). This is best accomplished through embedded instruction as children are involved in meaningful reading or writing, including reading a book aloud or writing a shared

message. During these activities, teachers can demonstrate attention to print and how children can use these print processing skills (McGee & Richgels, 2003; Nichols et al., 2004

Shared reading provides opportunities for the teacher to model book handling and to make explicit comments about the ways in which text operates (Mol, Bus & de Jong, 2009). Whitehurst, Arnold, et al. (1994) conducted a yearlong study targeting preschool age children in Head Start. The intervention included an interactive style of adult-child shared book reading called dialogic reading (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Dialogic reading involves several changes to the way adults typically read books to children, most importantly a shift in roles. In dialogic reading the child learns to become the storyteller ad the adult assumes the role of an active listener, asking questions, adding information, and prompting the child to discuss the book with increasingly more sophisticated descriptions (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The program featured small group (four children and one adult) reading, three to five times per week; and included one-on-one reading at home with the same books used in the classroom (Whitehurst et al, 1994). Analysis of the intervention effect indicated that children in the intervention condition performed at a significantly higher level than did children in the control condition in writing and print concepts factors (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006; Flynn, 2011; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

According to Clay (1975), writing is often the first indicator of a child's attention to print. Writing lays the foundation of reading for emergent literacy learners (Jones, Reutzel, & Fargo, 2010). Writing slows down the reading process, forcing the writer to act analytically on print, reinforcing the concepts of directionality, sequencing and spacing; and offering opportunities to experiment with words and forms (Clay, 2001; Jones et al., 2010). Interactive writing is a group writing experience that helps children develop awareness of print concepts in addition to phonemic awareness, phonics and high frequency words (Pinnell & Fountas, 1998). The

teachers and students agree upon a writing topic and co-construct a text as they share the pen to create a sentence or brief story (Jones et al., 2010). Similar to shared reading, the teacher guides the students to attend to text, including high-frequency word recognition, letter identification and rereading for each new word added to the story (Jones et al., 2010; Pinnell & Fountas, 1998).

Instruction to Develop the Alphabetic Principle.

Instructional strategies to support the development of the alphabetic principle will help children develop phonological awareness and an understanding of sound-letter relationships (McGee & Richgels, 2003; Muter et al., 2004; Nichols et al., 2004). Phonemic awareness, the highest level of phonological awareness, involves the ability to blend individual phonemes into words and to segment words into individual phonemes (National Institute for Literacy, 2009). Embedded phonemic awareness instruction begins with the books or poems selected for shared reading, drawing attention to rhyme and alliteration as part of the conversation about the text (McGee & Richgels, 2003; Muter et al., 2004; Nichols et al., 2004). Books appropriate to foster the development of phonemic awareness include patterned books with repetitive words and phrases (McGee & Richgels, 2003).

The interactive writing strategy useful for fostering print awareness also offers opportunities for teachers to demonstrate for children how to say words slowly emphasize particular phonemes, and match letters with phonemes (Jones et al., 2010; Pinnell & Fountas, 1998). Also, providing opportunities for children to apply the alphabetic principle to their own writing will foster their understanding of the relationships between phonemes and letters (McGee & Richgels, 2003). After repeated demonstrations through shared writing, independent writing will allow the teacher to observe if the students are applying these concepts to their own writing (McGee & Richgels, 2003).

Instruction to Develop Vocabulary Knowledge.

The focus of the vocabulary acquisition model proposed by Nagy and Scott (2004) is how children attain reading and writing vocabularies, and how they develop meanings for new words. The model assumes vocabulary knowledge directly impacts reading comprehension (Davis, 1944; Anderson & Freebody, 1979; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986) and presents a constructivist, top down approach towards vocabulary development, in direct opposition to the reductionist, bottom up approach to traditional vocabulary instruction found in many schools (Nagy & Scott, 2004; Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Graves, 2006; Beck & McKeown, 2007).

Nagy and Scott (2004) contend a simplistic approach toward vocabulary, with brief exposure and instructions, will not likely result in improved text comprehension (Baumann, 2009; Biemiller & Boote, 2006). The nature of vocabulary learning and acquisition is complex and involves several processes that can inform instruction (Nagy & Scott, 2004). Nagy and Scott (2004) describe five aspects illustrating the complexity of word knowledge. First, word learning is incremental, meaning we learn word meanings gradually and internalize deeper meanings through successive encounters in a variety of contexts and through active engagement with the words (Nagy & Scott, 2004). Another aspect of word knowledge noted by Nagy and Scott (2004) is the multiple dimensions of knowing a word. This multidimensionality includes the use of words in oral and written language, correct grammar usage of words or syntactical knowledge, semantic understandings and morphological understandings (Nagy & Scott, 2004). A third aspect of word knowledge described by Nagy and Scott (2004) is the polysemous nature, or potential for multiple meanings, of words. Many words have different meanings depending upon the context in which they are used, some more unrelated than others. Nagy and Scott (2004) also highlight the importance of linking new information to familiar words and concepts. Learning a

word meaning is inextricably related to knowledge of other words. The interrelated nature of word learning is indicative of the authors' constructivist view of vocabulary development (Nagy & Scott, 2004). And, finally, Nagy and Scott (2004) contend word knowledge differs according to the type of word. The heterogeneous nature of words means that the same word might require different types of learning from different types of students (Nagy & Scott, 2004).

The foundation for the instructional implications of Nagy and Scott's (2004) vocabulary acquisition model can be found in three studies conducted by Beck, McKeown, and colleagues demonstrating how vocabulary instruction in particular words can affect reading comprehension (Beck, Perfetti, & McKeown, 1982; McKeown, Beck, Omanson, & Perfetti, 1983; McKeown, Beck, Omanson, & Pople, 1985). The first study examined the relationship between knowledge of word meanings and comprehension in a long-term vocabulary instruction experiment (Beck et al., 1982). The study found children receiving explicit vocabulary instruction outperformed students who received instruction in the traditional language curriculum when given vocabulary measures; and, although the effect was not as conclusive in regard to reading comprehension, there were promising trends in enhancing students' comprehension of stories as well (Beck et al., 1982).

The second study, a replication of the first study, modified the comprehension measure to address issues of validity (McKeown et al., 1983). The results of the second study replicated those found in the first for the vocabulary measures – children in the instructed group outperformed those in the control group (McKeown et al., 1983). In addition, results for the revised comprehension component found the children in the experimental group also made greater gains in comprehension (McKeown et al., 1983).

The final study in this triad of seminal research conducted by McKeown et al. (1985) focused on how the nature of the instruction and the frequency of instructional encounters affect vocabulary learning and comprehension. Students participating in the study were divided into three groups, receiving either traditional instruction, meaning primarily definitions; rich instruction, similar to the two previous studies; or extended rich instruction, similar to the previous studies but with an out-of-school component. The results of the study indicated all three treatments resulted in gains on definitional knowledge. However, only the rich instruction and extended rich instruction treatments resulted in gains on text comprehension (McKeown et al., 1985).

Reading aloud and independent reading comprise two contexts for providing rich and varied language experiences. Although reading aloud has long been considered an effective way to promote early literacy development (Adams, 1990), research has identified the importance of reader-listener interactions to facilitate vocabulary acquisition during read aloud (Mol et al., 2009). Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) assert that instruction of word meanings in context is more effective than no-context instruction. Wasik and Bond (2001) demonstrated the impact of interactive book reading on the language and literacy development of preschool children from low-income families. The interactive nature of the literacy experience provided children with multiple opportunities to interact with vocabulary words in a variety of contexts, and resulted in greater gains in book-related vocabulary compared to children who were exposed to just the books (Wasik & Bond, 2001; Wasik, 2010). Similarly, Coyne, Simmons, Kame'enui and Stoolmiller (2004) contend explicit teaching of word meanings within shared book readings can help to narrow, or at least halt, the widening vocabulary gap among students. The goal of their

intervention was to intensify shared book readings through direct teaching of target vocabulary (Coyne et al., 2004).

Hadley, Simmerman, Long and Luna (2000) conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of a classroom-based model in enhancing the development of vocabulary and phonological skills for kindergarten and first-grade children in an inner-city school district. The randomly selected classrooms received collaborative support from a speech-language pathologist two and a half days per week. The speech specialist and classroom teachers engaged in joint curriculum planning that included vocabulary and phonological awareness instruction embedded into the core framework. Following the six-month intervention, gains were observed in both classroom conditions, and the children in the experimental classrooms demonstrated greater gains relative to children in the standard practice control classrooms.

There is little question regarding the long-established link between vocabulary and reading comprehension (Burke et al., 2009; Davis, 1944; Anderson & Freebody, 1979; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). The research base underlying Nagy and Scott's (2004) vocabulary acquisition model is extensive, and provides educators with a direction needed to make critical decisions to ensure all children acquire the vocabulary needed to understand text. Similarly, the study of emergent literacy is still evolving as research highlights evidence of a number of paths through which children's literacy acquisition can be understood (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Conclusion.

According to Addy, Engelhardt, and Skinner (2013), twenty-two percent of the children in the United States are living in poverty, with the percentage for minority children and English-language learners being even higher. And, although there is an increased awareness of the high correlation between living in poverty and low reading achievement, too few children receive

preventative services before beginning school that could reduce the impact of growing up in poverty (Lee & Burkham, 2002; McGee & Richgels, 2003; Neuman, 2009). Only forty percent of eligible 3- and 4-year olds are enrolled in Head Start programs (Helburn, 1995). And, for the five million children attending child-care centers daily in the United States, only one in seven provides adequate language and learning opportunities (Helburn, 1995).

Students arriving at school from low socioeconomic homes without the opportunity for high-quality early childhood experiences, attending schools with low achievement levels, and/or have limited proficiency in spoken English, are the most likely to struggle with literacy acquisition (Burke, Hagan-Burke, Kwok & Parker, 2009; Entwisle et al., 2005; Snow et. al, 1998). The Brigance screening data (KDE, 2013) illustrates the high percentage of incoming kindergarteners, particularly from schools of poverty, in need of additional support to be successful in school. And the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data has documented persistent differences in the reading ability of children as a function of the economic level of their parents and their English language proficiency (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013; Rowan et al., 2010).

However, research has shown that improvement in reading ability is possible, despite the challenges these children face (Allington, 2013; Neuman, 2009; Slavin et al., 1992; Spria et. al, 2005; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Instruction to accelerate language and literacy learning can bridge the gap between what at-risk children know and what they need to know to be successful early readers, changing the trajectory for their lives in school and beyond (Allington, 2013; McGee & Richgels, 2003; Neuman, 2009). This study hopes to investigate the reciprocal relationship between the code-related and language comprehension

domains of literacy, particularly in the context of a summer oral language literacy intervention for at-risk emergent readers.

Research Questions

The objective of this study was to evaluate the effect of a summer oral language and literacy intervention on the literacy acquisition of at-risk incoming first grade students in a large urban school district. The research questions guiding the study are:

1. What is the effect of an oral language and literacy summer intervention on the participants' print awareness, understanding of the alphabetic principle, and successful reading of continuous text?
2. Is there a difference in the literacy skills between the participants in the summer program and the non-participants at the beginning of first grade?

It is hypothesized that an oral language and literacy summer intervention will positively effect literacy acquisition for the targeted at-risk students.

Chapter 3: Methodology

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It is hypothesized that an oral language and literacy summer intervention will positively effect literacy acquisition for the targeted at-risk students.

Analytic Design

The evaluation of the summer oral language and literacy intervention employed a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design with comparison group. This is a design in which the literacy skills of students attending the program (treatment group) and those not attending the program (comparison group) were tracked between the spring of their kindergarten year and the beginning of their first grade year. All students invited to attend the summer oral language and literacy intervention were assessed in the spring of their kindergarten year using the *Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2002, 2005), an assessment tool that provides teachers with detailed information about foundational literacy skills in emergent readers. For the purposes of this study and to ensure the fidelity of the assessment administration, all assessment was conducted by district Reading Recovery® professionals who have received extensive training in administering the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 2002, 2005) assessment. The posttest

was conducted at the beginning of the first grade school year, again using the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 2002, 2005) assessment administered by district trained Reading Recovery professionals. The resulting data allowed a comparison of the literacy development of the children whose families voluntarily chose to enroll them in the summer program and those who did not attend. The significance of this analysis provides evidence of the effect of the summer oral language and literacy intervention.

Study Context

Jefferson County Public School (JCPS) district is a large urban school system located in northern Kentucky in the city of Louisville. JCPS includes 89 elementary schools serving approximately 49,000 students Kindergarten through fifth grade. 57 of the district's elementary schools are designated as Title 1, meaning a minimum of 67% of their school enrollment qualify for free or reduced lunch status. A summer oral language and literacy intervention was designed to boost the literacy skills of at-risk emergent readers attending 54 Title 1 schools. The three remaining Title 1 elementary schools participated in a summer program with the YMCA. The participating schools were organized into four geographic clusters serving 13 to 14 schools each, with the students attending the intervention located at one of four district elementary schools.

500 rising first and second grade students attended the four-week summer program. All district kindergarten and first grade students are assessed in the spring with the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 2005, 2002) for kindergarten students and a running record of text level reading for first grade. Kindergarten and first grade students from participating Title 1 elementary schools were selected for the summer program based on this district assessment data and classroom teacher recommendation identifying the students in the lowest 20% of their class. The families of those students determined in need of a summer oral language and literacy

intervention received an invitation to enroll their child in the four-week program. Families voluntarily chose to enroll their child in the summer oral language and literacy intervention, or to decline enrollment.

Participants in the program attended for four hours daily beginning July 7 and concluding July 31 for 18 days of instruction. Bus transportation was provided, and breakfast and lunch were served each day. The approximately 125 to 135 students attending each cluster location were divided into nine teams with 13 to 18 students and three to four certified teachers per team. All participating teachers were required to attend six hours of professional development training prior to the start of the summer program to establish the expectations and instructional framework.

Participant Selection

All district kindergarten students are assessed in the spring with the *Observation Survey* (, 2002, 2005) tasks for alphabet identification, hearing and recording sounds in words and a running record of text level reading. Therefore students selected for the study were limited to rising first grade students as the required assessment was considered extant data. 38 of the 54 participating schools had a Reading Recovery teacher on staff. Reading Recovery teachers receive specialized training in emergent literacy, including the administration of the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 2002, 2005) assessment utilized in this study. To ensure the fidelity of the study outcome data, the assessment administration was limited to Reading Recovery trained professionals. Therefore, the option to participate in the study was offered to the 38 schools meeting this criterion. 25 of these schools agreed to voluntarily participate in this study.

The students voluntarily enrolled in the program from participating schools comprised the potential treatment group. Some of the registered students did not attend the program once it

began or attended a limited number of days. If students attended 57% of the 18 days of instruction, which was equivalent to a minimum of 10 days, they were included in the treatment group (n=95). The students whose families chose not to enroll them in the program comprised the comparison group (n=92).

Key Variables

Independent variable.

The grouping factor represents the independent variable of the study with two levels: the treatment group and comparison group. Students attending the summer oral language and literacy intervention comprise the treatment group; eligible students not attending the intervention comprise the comparison group. Students from the treatment group received daily instruction delivered by certified teachers implementing an instructional framework to support emergent literacy.

According to Noell, Connell and Duhon (2006), for students to become literate they must be able to generalize skills learned in one context (an intervention lesson) to another (the classroom). Likewise, Meichenbaum and Biemiller (1998) contend the value of instruction is determined by how the teacher and students use new learning to foster transfer skills, a central goal of successful intervention. Therefore, the focus of intervention instruction should not only be to establish new skills, but also to assure students can flexibly apply the skills and strategies they have learned to new tasks in novel settings (Meichenbaum & Biemiller, 1998; Noell et al., 2006). The instructional framework implemented in the summer program provided opportunities for whole group, small group and individual Reading Recovery lessons for the most struggling students. This tiered structure allowed for varying levels of teacher support and the gradual release of responsibility (Vygotsky, 1978), a trademark of environments influencing change

(Tharp, 2012). As students gained new skills in more supportive settings they were able to apply them more independently in another setting. Instruction occurred within a daily three-hour framework, and included strategies to develop the code-related skills typically provided for emergent readers (print knowledge concepts, sight word knowledge, alphabet and sound knowledge, and phonological awareness), as well as expand opportunities to develop language skills (conceptual knowledge, vocabulary and language structures) (see appendix A).

Experiences supporting the development of code-related skills included a shared reading of an alphabet chart and learning how to analyze the features of letters. Letter learning progressed through a continuum with the goal being the automatic, unconscious recognition of letters (Dorn & Soffos, 2001). Also, targeted word study was included to acquire a beginning sight word vocabulary, as well as the understanding of the concept of a word and the building letter by letter, left to right when constructing a word (Dorn & Jones, 2012). Phonological awareness was fostered through listening and joining in with shared reading, identifying rhymes, and segmenting multi-syllabic words into syllables (Dorn & Jones, 2012). Interactive and shared reading also supported the development of print concepts such as where to start, which way to move on a page of print, and one-to-one correspondence between print and speech the print knowledge (Dorn & Jones, 2012; Justice & Kadervek, 2002). Students had the opportunity to apply these developing concepts to their own reading in guided reading, including scaffolded teacher support through a text orientation and conferencing (Dorn & Jones, 2012; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Interactive writing is a collaborative writing technique that supports beginning readers and writers as they develop early reading and writing strategies (Dorn & Soffos, 2011; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; McGee & Richgels, 2003). In interactive writing, children write portions of a

shared message with the teacher's help, and the teacher models writing portions of the message. According to Dorn and Jones (2012), writing slows down the reading process and promotes reflective analysis and application of print knowledge concepts. Children also had daily opportunities to generate a message and write independently in a journal, applying their growing code-related skill knowledge with support from the teacher (Dorn & Jones, 2012).

The instructional framework also provided opportunities to develop language skills, including vocabulary, conceptual knowledge and control over language structures. McGee and Richgels (2003) describe three instructional activities included in the summer oral language and literacy intervention framework that are highly effective in fostering children's comprehension of the language of books and texts. These strategies strengthen children's awareness of how language and literacy are used, expand their vocabulary and syntax, and introduce them to new concepts and knowledge (McGee & Richgels, 2003). The most effective way to read to children is to intersperse conversation with the reading, also known as interactive reading (Whitehurst, Arnold, et al., 1994; Whitehurst, Epstein, et al., 1994). Interactive read alouds are an effective tool to expand vocabulary knowledge, concept knowledge and familiarity with the decontextualized language found in many books (McGee & Richgels, 2003; Whitehurst, Arnold, et al., 1994). The scaffolded retelling of the read aloud, as well as the accompanying discussion, also fostered oral language development as well as an understanding of text structure (McGee & Richgels, 2003). And although interactive, or shared, writing was included in the code-related strategy section for the instructional framework, this activity also provided many opportunities for children to extend their understandings of language and stretch their growing vocabulary and syntax (Dorn & Jones, 2012; McGee & Richgels, 2003).

Reading Recovery is a first-grade reading intervention program that features a yearlong intensive professional development component in which teachers learn how to support emergent readers struggling with reading acquisitions (Clay, 2005). The teacher designs individual lessons to meet the needs of the most struggling readers to accelerate their literacy development (Clay, 2005). Each team included a Reading Recovery professional who provided lessons for four students exhibiting the most need for support. All students received small group and whole group literacy instruction tailored to their strengths and needs as demonstrated in the initial assessment.

Lesson planners, materials and daily opportunities for collaboration and coaching ensured the fidelity of implementation of the instructional framework (See Appendices B – D for sample lesson planners for reading, writing, and phonemic awareness / phonics / print awareness). Walkthroughs at each program site were conducted to measure the level of implementation across clusters. Unannounced observations were completed during the second week of the four week program. The evaluators were district Reading Recovery teachers with advanced literacy training who were not currently working in the summer program. Each of the four clusters was assigned a different observer, provided with an observation rubric adapted from Dorn and Soffos' (2011) Environmental Scale for Assessing Implementation Levels (ESAIL), an instrument developed to assess the level of fidelity in which a literacy model is implemented (see Appendix E for a sample of the walkthrough rubric).

The observers ranked each of the eight criteria listed on the rubric along a continuum from "Meeting Expectations" to an average of "Approaching Expectations" to "Below Expectations." Observers spent a full instructional day at their assigned cluster, approximately 3.5 hours, spending an equal amount of time in each of the 13-14 teams comprising the cluster.

The following criteria were rated as 'Meeting Expectations" by 100% of the observers: Sufficient amount of materials to meet the instructional needs of all students; materials included a balance of fiction and non-fiction, easy and more challenging texts; tables, clusters of desks and/or areas were arranged to promote collaborative work; respectful talk and attitudes were promoted and used among all learners and the teacher; students were engaged in meaningful tasks, including reading, writing, and opportunities to promote oral language; students' and teachers' materials were organized and easily accessible; evidence of daily whole group, small group and individual reading and writing instruction to meet the needs of divers learners. The following criteria was rated as 'Meeting Expectations' by 75% of the observers and 'Approaching Expectations' by 25% of the observers: co-constructed anchor charts provided evidence of student learning. After tabulating the scores from the four observers, it was determined that the summer oral language and literacy intervention framework was being implemented with fidelity across the four clusters.

The oral language and literacy intervention framework allowed teachers to use language and scaffolding techniques within a meaningful context to engage children's thinking in noticing, acquiring, and consolidating new knowledge (Meichenbaum & Biemiller, 1998). This study demonstrates how teachers applied a theoretical model of teaching and learning to intervention practices with their students (Vygotsky, 1978; Tharp, 2012).

Dependent variable.

The dependent variables will include the code-related and language-related skills essential to literacy acquisition. The assessment used to gauge the change in the dependent variables was the *Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (OS) (Clay, 2002, 2005). *The Observation Survey* (Clay, 2002, 2005) received the highest possible ratings for scientific

rigor from the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) (*n.d.*). The ratings and descriptions are intended to inform and assist educators as they select screening tools that are valid, reliable, and evidence based (National Center for Response to Intervention, *n.d.*). Inherent in the construction of the OS are the essential characteristics of good measurement tools: standard tasks, standard ways of administering the tasks, and established reliabilities and validities (Gómez-Bellengé, Gibson, Tang, Doyle, & Kelly, 2007). The Observation Survey (Clay, 2002, 2005) is a tool for systematic observation that provides teachers with detailed information about literacy acquisition at the onset of instruction (Gómez-Bellengé et al., 2007). The OS (Clay, 2002, 2005) is an individually administered assessment designed for use by classroom teachers, as well as reading intervention teachers, administrators, and researchers (Denton, Ciancio, & Fletcher, 2006).

Clay (2002, 2005) describes the primary purposes of the OS as identifying students with reading difficulties; informing teachers as they plan instruction, particularly for students for whom reading acquisition is difficult; and monitoring student progress by providing evidence of learning on authentic tasks. The Observation Survey (Clay, 2002, 2005) is comprised of six systematic, standard observation tasks that yield a composite and comprehensive assessment of the literacy performance of young learners.

The first task, a *running record of text reading,* is a method of recording oral reading of connected text. The student is presented with a sample of text, and the teacher applies conventions to record correctly read words, miscues, repetitions, self-correction, appeals from the child for help, and words told by the tester. These records can be analyzed to identify patterns in the student's reading behaviors that provide clues to the teacher regarding the kinds of reading skills and strategies the student applies when reading connected text. The test is scored

according to the percentage of words read accurately, so the test is primarily an untimed assessment of oral reading accuracy with the potential of additional qualitative analysis (Denton et al., 2006). The running record task is typically applied to the reading of text leveled according to difficulty to determine an appropriate text level for the student's reading instruction. The reliability of the text reading level task was established using a Rasch rating scale analysis (Wright & Masters, 1982). Analyses showed that the Text Reading scale had reliabilities of .83 (Pearson *r*) and .98 (item *r*).

In the *letter identification* task, children are asked to identify all uppercase and lowercase letters, as well as the typeset 'g' and 'a,' the form of these letters typically found in print. The student may identify a letter by name, sound, or keyword. When the test is scored, credit is given for each letter in any of the three ways. Reliability of this measure was confirmed by a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .78 (Clay, 2002, 2005).

The *print concepts task* evaluates the child's understanding of concepts such as locating the front of the book; knowing the print, rather than the pictures, carries the message; directionality; one-to-one correspondence between the printed and spoken words; and the meaning of punctuation marks and terms such as "first letter," "capital letter," and "last word" (Clay, 2002, 2005). The teacher reads a specially designed book with the child and asks specific questions on each page. There are 24 items on the test, scored as correct or incorrect. Reliability was confirmed by calculation of Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .78 (Clay, 2002, 2005).

The *Ohio Word Test* was constructed from the Dolch word list, and is composed of three parallel lists of 20 high-frequency words. After reading a practice word, the student is instructed to read the word list. The word reading task has three forms that can be administered at different

times of the school year. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient for this test is .92 (Clay, 2002, 2005).

In the *writing vocabulary task* the student is asked to write all the words that they can within a 10-minute period. The student is given a blank piece of paper, and may continue to write words on his or her own but can also be prompted in various ways to write other words (Clay, 2002, 2005). Suggestions for prompts are offered, and include high-frequency words as well as other children's names, things people do, thinks in the home, as well as color and number words. The task is scored by assigning one point for every word that is correctly spelled. A test-retest assessment of reliability revealed a Pearson *r* of .62 (Clay, 2002, 2005).

In the *hearing and recording sounds in words task* the examiner reads a sentence to the student and then repeats each word in the sentence one at a time, instructing the student to say the words slowly and write them. The administrator may prompt the student if needed (Clay, 2002, 2005). In scoring the task, one point is awarded for each phoneme the student records in a way that is acceptable in English. The reliability coefficient for this measure, determined by calculating the Cronbach Alpha, was found to be .96 (Clay, 2002, 2005).

Data Analysis

The first step in data analysis was an examination of the sample size and equivalency of pretest scores between the treatment and comparison groups to ensure the design is balanced. If sample sizes are equivalent, robustness of the significance tests can be expected (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). In conditions where participants cannot be randomly assigned to treatment and control groups the use of non-randomized control groups is recommended (Mathison, 2005). An aggregate matching procedure refers to selection of a comparison group based on specific criteria of similarity (Mathison, 2005). The goal of matching is to achieve comparable groups that are

similar in the same way that randomly assigned groups are similar (Mathison, 2005). The primary pool of study participants was comprised of students recommended for participation in the summer oral language and literacy intervention. The designation of treatment or comparison group was determined by each family's decision whether or not to enroll their student in the intervention. The testing of the homogeneity of covariance matrices was conducted using Levene's Test of Equality of Variance to test the null hypotheses that the six dependent variable pretest means are equivalent across groups (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Chi-Square Test analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) was used to determine significant differences between male and female students in the pretest. The statistical power of the design was determined using a minimum power level of .80 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

To assess the effect of the summer oral language and literacy intervention, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The MANOVA is an appropriate statistical procedure to employ when there are more than two dependent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The between-subjects factor was group (treatment vs. comparison) on six dependent variables (six assessment tasks). Multivariate tests were conducted to determine the overall effect of the summer intervention; and between-subjects effects were analyzed to determine the significance and effect size on each of the dependent variables. All data analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The persistent achievement gap by family socioeconomic status is linked directly to unequal learning opportunities in children's home and community environments (Alexander et al., 2007; Downey et al., 2004; Schacter, 2003). Research demonstrates time and again that children of poverty begin school with foundational literacy skills significantly below their peers from mid- to upper-income households (Hart & Risley, 2003; Honig, 2007; Locke et al., 2002; Nation & Snowling, 2004; Reardon et al, 2012). There are particular consequences of summer learning differences in the primary grades as they can have a cumulative effect over time (Alexander et al., 2007). Reading interventions during the summers between the first two years of schooling may impact achievement in subsequent grades, ultimately narrowing the achievement gap and improving student outcomes (Alexander et al., 2007; Downey et al., 2004; Schacter, 2003)

The primary objective of this research study was to evaluate the effect of a summer intervention on the foundational literacy skills of at-risk first grade students from twenty-five Title 1 elementary schools located in Louisville, Kentucky. The research questions guiding the study were:

1. What is the effect of an oral language and literacy summer intervention on the participants' print awareness, understanding of the alphabetic principle, and successful reading of continuous text?
2. Is there a difference in the literacy skills between the participants in the summer program and the non-participants at the beginning of first grade?

It was hypothesized that an oral language and literacy summer intervention would positively impact literacy acquisition for the targeted at-risk students. The decision to accept or reject the null hypothesis of no difference between the treatment and comparison groups at posttest was based on the statistical analyses of the assessment data.

The four-week summer oral language and literacy intervention took place in four elementary schools. Students in the treatment group (n = 95) were identified as at-risk for literacy failure in the spring of their kindergarten year. Their families voluntarily enrolled them in the summer intervention. 46 students in the treatment group were female and 49 were male. Students in the comparison group (n = 92) were also identified as at-risk for literacy failure, but their families chose not to enroll them in the summer intervention. 40 students in the comparison group were female and 52 were male.

Tests and Data Collection Methods

Both groups of students were assessed using the six tasks of the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 2002, 2005) in May of their kindergarten year. The treatment and comparison group were assessed using an aggregate matching procedure (Mathison, 2005). The results indicate there were no significant differences between the treatment and comparison groups in any of the six pretest measures: letter identification ($F[1, 185] = .138$, $p > .05$), Ohio word test ($F[1, 185] = 1.059$, $p > .05$), concepts about print ($F[1, 185] = 1.105$, $p > .05$), writing vocabulary ($F[1, 185] = .201$, $p > .05$), hearing and recording sounds in words ($F[1, 185] = 1.055$, $p > .05$) and text level reading ($F[1, 185] = 2.260$ $p > .05$). According to the non-significant findings for each of the assessment tasks the two groups were comparable at pretest, indicating a successful matching procedure before the onset of the study (See Table 1).

Table 1

ANOVA Tests of Between-Subjects Effects at Pretest

		SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
LID	Between Groups	5.880	1	5.880	.138	.711
	Within Groups	7906.398	185	42.737		
	Total	7912.278	186			
OWT	Between Groups	13.037	1	13.037	1.059	.305
	Within Groups	2277.134	185	12.309		
	Total	2290.171	186			
CAP	Between Groups	12.550	1	12.550	1.105	.295
	Within Groups	2101.899	185	11.362		
	Total	2114.449	186			
WV	Between Groups	21.844	1	21.844	.201	.654
	Within Groups	20065.964	185	108.465		
	Total	20087.807	186			
HRSIW	Between Groups	90.606	1	90.606	1.055	.306
	Within Groups	15891.373	185	85.899		
	Total	15981.979	186			
TL	Between Groups	6.040	1	6.040	2.260	.134
	Within Groups	494.484	185	2.673		
	Total	500.524	186			

Note. Significance computed using alpha = .05. Observation Survey assessment tasks: letter identification (LID), Ohio word test (OWT), concepts about print (CAP), writing vocabulary (WV), hearing and recording sounds in words (HRSIW), and text level reading (TL).

Levene's Test of Equality of Variance was used to check the equality of variance assumption. Levene's Test demonstrates the equality of variance assumption was met . The analysis of Chi-Square tests indicates the differences between male and female students were also non-significant. The power analysis ranged between .90 and .99, exceeding the minimum of .80 indicating adequate statistical power for the analysis of data.

At the conclusion of the summer intervention, some adjustments were made to the treatment and comparison groups based on student attendance and enrollment. Overall attendance for the summer program participants was 70%. If a student attended 57% of the eighteen days of instruction, which was equivalent to ten days, they were included in the treatment group. If they did not attend any days of the program, they were moved to the comparison group. Students who moved out of district or who attended one to nine days of the program were discontinued from the study. The numbers stated for the treatment (n = 95) and comparison (n = 92) groups reflect these adjustments.

The posttest assessment was conducted the first week of the participants' first grade school year using the six tasks of the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 2002, 2005) administered by trained Reading Recovery professionals. The following table displays the pre- and posttest data for each of the assessment tasks: letter identification (LID), Ohio word test (OWT), concepts about print (CAP), writing vocabulary (WV), hearing and recording sounds in words (HRSIW) and text reading level (TL).

Table 2

Observation Survey Pre- Post Comparison

	LID Pre	LID Post	OWT Pre	OWT Post	CAP Pre	CAP Post	WV Pre	WV Post	HRSIW Pre	HRSIW Post	TL Pre	TL Post
Treat	48.8	50.4	4.1	5.3	11.6	14.1	15.6	18.8	20.0	24.4	1.4	2.9
Comp	48.4	47.6	3.6	2.7	12.1	12.3	16.3	10.6	21.4	18.7	1.7	1.3

Note. Pre- and post group (Treat = treatment, Comp = comparison) mean for each task of the Observation Survey is provided: letter identification (LID), Ohio word test (OWT), concepts about print (CAP), writing vocabulary (WV), hearing and record sounds in words (HRSIW), and text level reading (TL)

Data Analysis

The research questions guiding the study focused on the effect of the summer oral language and literacy intervention on the students attending the program, and the difference between the participants and non-participants in literacy skills at the beginning of first grade. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) analysis was conducted with the posttest data to determine the effect of the summer intervention on the participating students' emerging literacy skills. The MANOVA was an appropriate choice since the study included six dependent variables (six assessment tasks), and having the between-subjects factor of group (treatment versus comparison) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). An alpha value of .05 was used to determine significance. The partial eta squared statistic determined the practical significance, or effect size, of any differences (see Table 3).

Table 3

MANOVA Table

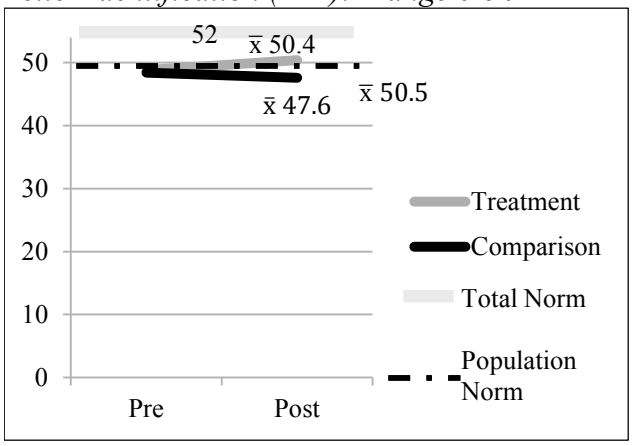
Dependent Variable	SS	*df*	*F*	η_p^2	*p*
LID	368.982	1	10.741	.055	.001
OWT	346.551	1	33.157	.153	.000
CAP	141.518	1	16.842	.084	.000
WV	3171.942	1	39.679	.177	.000
HRSIW	1560.171	1	20.385	.100	.000
TL	115.450	1	38.999	.175	.000

Note. Significance computed using alpha = .05. Partial eta squared (η_p^2) determined effect size > .01 = small, > .06 = medium, > .14 = large. Observation Survey assessment tasks: letter identification (LID), Ohio word test (OWT), concepts about print (CAP), writing vocabulary (WV), hearing and recording sounds in words (HRSIW), and text level reading (TL).

The main analysis for the multivariate effect of all dependent variables using Pillai's Trace (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) indicated a significant result ($F[6, 179] = 8.09$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .213$) with a large effect size for the summer intervention. The effect size thresholds used to interpret the partial eta squared statistic were as follows: > .01 = small, > .06 = medium, >.14 = large (Cohen, 1988). Analysis of the partial eta squared statistic indicated a large effect size on the Ohio word test, writing vocabulary and text level reading; a medium effect size on concepts about print and hearing and recording sounds in words; and a small effect size on letter identification. Borman, Hewes, Overman, and Brown (2003) and Muñoz, Ross, and McDonald (2007) highlight the importance of following a comprehensive approach to effect size interpretation that utilizes multiple criteria, including the methodological, contextual,

Figure 1

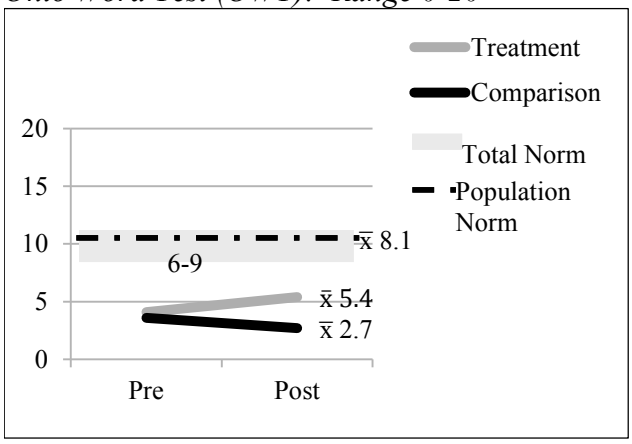
Letter Identification (LID): Range 0-54



Notes. $p = .001$; $\eta_p^2 = .055$; total norm = LID first grade fall stanine 5; population norm = title 1 mean LID first grade fall.

Figure 2

Ohio Word Test (OWT): Range 0-20



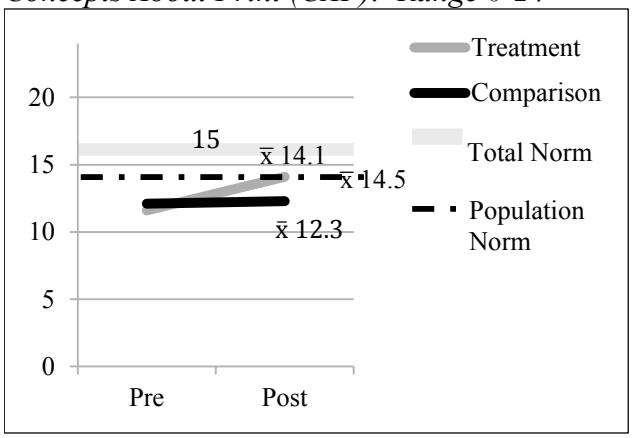
Notes. $p = .000$; $\eta_p^2 = .153$; total norm = OWT first grade fall stanine 5; population norm = title 1 mean WV first grade fall.

and programmatic factors as predictors of effect size. When these factors are taken into account in the analysis of effect size, seemingly trivial effects may actually be larger in educational research.

The MANOVA analysis of the between effect found significant differences between the treatment and comparison groups for each of the six assessment tasks. The treatment and comparison groups were compared to the norms of the following groups at posttest: The total norm represents the national average first grade fall stanine (North American Trainers' Group, 2005) for each assessment task; the population norm represents the national mean fall score for each assessment task for first grade students receiving free or reduced lunch, a qualification for Title 1 services.

Figure 3

Concepts About Print (CAP): Range 0-24

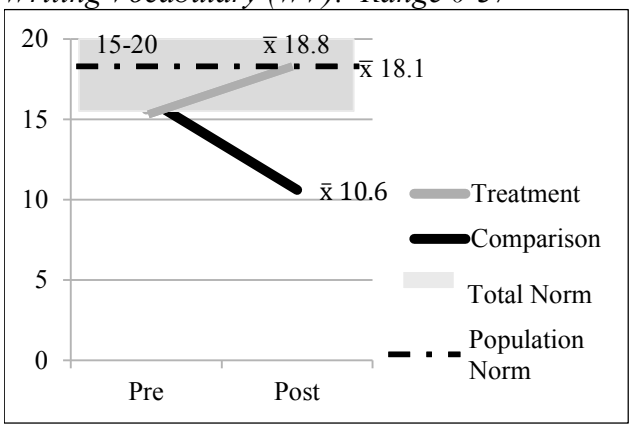


Notes. $p = .000$; $\eta_p^2 = .084$ total norm = CAP first grade fall stanine 5; population norm = title 1 mean CAP first grade fall.

A small effect size (.055 > .01) was indicated for the letter identification task ($F[1, 184] = 10.74$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .055$) with a difference of 1.6 between the treatment group and total norm; and a .1 difference between the treatment group and population norm at posttest (see Figure 1). A large effect size (.153 > .14) as indicated for the Ohio word test

Figure 4

Writing Vocabulary (WV): Range 0-37+

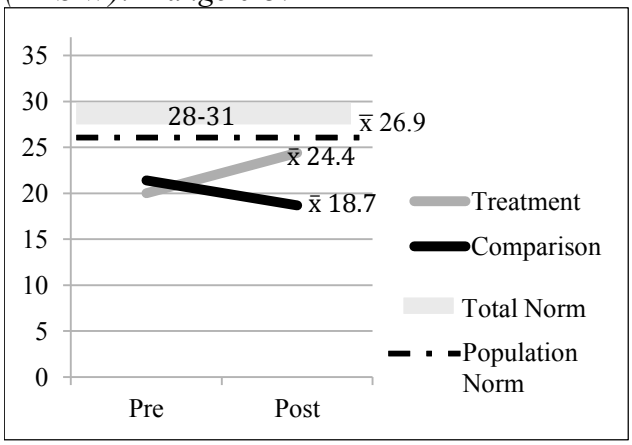


Notes. $p = .000$; $\eta_p^2 = .177$; total norm = WV first grade fall stanine 5; population norm = title 1 mean WV first grade fall.

($F[1, 184] = 33.16$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .153$) with a difference of .6 between the treatment group and total norm; and a 2.7 difference between the treatment group and population norm at posttest (see Figure 2). A medium effect size (.084 > .06) was indicated for concepts about print ($F[1, 184] = 16.84$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .084$) with a difference of .9 between the treatment group and total norm; and a .4 difference between the treatment group and population norm at posttest (see Figure 3). A large effect size (.177 > .14) was indicated for writing vocabulary ($F[1, 184] = 39.68$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .177$) with the treatment group reaching the same level as the total norm and a .7 difference between the treatment group and population norm at posttest (see Figure 4). A medium effect size (.100 > .06) was indicated for hearing and recording sounds in words ($F[1, 184] = 20.39$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .100$) with a difference of 3.6 between the treatment group and the total norm; NS 2.5 difference between the treatment group and population norm at posttest (see Figure 5). A large effect size (.175 > .14) was indicated for text level reading ($F[1,$

Figure 5

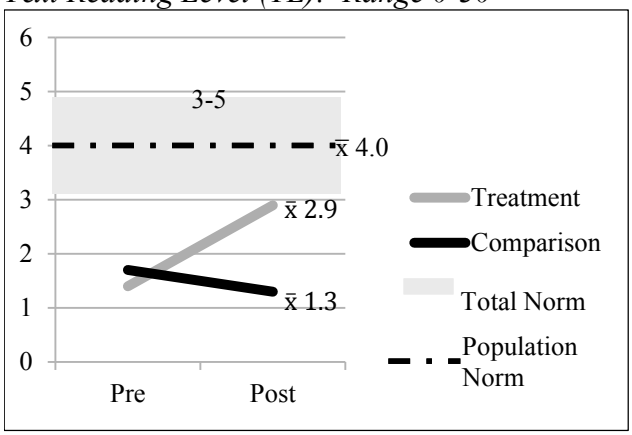
Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words (HRSIW): Range 0-37



Notes. $p = .000$; $\eta_p^2 = .100$; total norm = HRSIW first grade fall stanine 5;population norm=title 1 mean HRSIW first grade fall

Figure 6

Text Reading Level (TL): Range 0-30



Notes. $p = .000$; $\eta_p^2 = .175$; total norm = TL first grade fall stanine 5; population norm = title 1 mean TL first grade fall.

184] = 39.0, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .175$) with a difference of .1 between the treatment group and total norm; and a 1.1 difference between the treatment group and population norm at posttest (see Figure 6). The treatment group's gain and the comparison group's loss in the six assessment tasks created a significant gap relative to the comparison group across time.

Summary and Conclusion

The research study demonstrated a significant difference between the treatment and comparison groups and overall large effect of the treatment, supporting the hypothesis that the summer oral language and literacy intervention would have a positive effect on the literacy acquisition of the participants. The analysis demonstrated a range of small to large effects on the individual assessment tasks of letter identification, Ohio word test, concepts about print, writing vocabulary, hearing and recording sounds in words and text level reading. Tests for group equivalence indicated there were no significant differences between the treatment and control groups before the onset of the summer intervention. And threats to validity and reliability were controlled through the study design and data analysis. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected as all statistical analyses indicate there was a significant difference between the treatment and control groups at the beginning of the first grade school year following the conclusion of the summer oral language and literacy intervention.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Interpretations and Recommendations

Summary

Although children from diverse backgrounds make similar progress during the school year, the unequal out of school opportunities afforded children from mid- and upper-socioeconomic homes compared to their peers living in poverty continues to contribute to the stubborn achievement gap central to discussions of education reform, accountability and policy (Alexander et al., 2007; Schacter, 2003). The primary objective of this research study was to evaluate the effect of a summer intervention on the foundational literacy skills of at-risk first grade students from twenty-five Title 1 elementary schools located in Louisville, Kentucky. The research questions guiding the study were:

1. What is the effect of an oral language and literacy summer intervention on the participants' print awareness, understanding of the alphabetic principle, and successful reading of continuous text?
2. Is there a difference in the literacy skills between the participants in the summer program and the non-participants at the beginning of first grade?

It was hypothesized that an oral language and literacy summer intervention would positively impact literacy acquisition for the targeted at-risk students. The decision to accept or reject the null hypothesis of no difference between the treatment and comparison groups at posttest was based on the statistical analyses of the assessment data.

Students from both the treatment (n = 95) and comparison (n = 92) groups were assessed in May of their kindergarten year with the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 2002, 2005). The two groups were assessed again with the same instrument in August of their first-grade year after students in the treatment group attended at least 10 days of the 18-day summer literacy

intervention. The data analysis demonstrated a significant difference between the treatment and comparison groups in the six tasks of the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 2002, 2005), including letter identification, the Ohio word test, concepts about print, writing vocabulary, hearing and recording sounds in words and text level reading. The effect sizes ranged from small (letter identification) to medium (concepts about print, hearing and recording sounds in words) to large (Ohio word test, writing vocabulary and text level reading). These outcomes support the decision to reject the null hypotheses as they indicated a significant difference between the treatment and comparison group by the beginning of first grade. The data also strongly suggest the summer oral language and literacy intervention had a significant effect on the participants' print awareness, understanding of the alphabetic principle, and successful reading of continuous text.

Conclusions

Although the summer months offer an opportunity to intervene and halt the annual learning loss preventing at-risk students from reaching their academic potential (Alexander et al., 2007), simple maintenance of literacy learning is not enough. If the goal is to close the gap between socioeconomic groups, then a summer intervention program must also promote accelerated gains in literacy development. However, Schacter (2003) contends the research supporting the positive effects of summer school on the literacy development of children from poverty circumstances are difficult to find. For example, several school districts conducted summer programs with largely insignificant outcomes. These include Montgomery County, Maryland (Zia, Larson, & Mostow, 1999), Seattle's 1998 academic summer boot camp (Pipho, 1999), New York City (White & Johnson, 1999) and Boston (Harrington-Lueker, 2000). Schacter (2003) and Harrington-Lueker (2000) contend the causes for minimal summer school

gains for disadvantaged students include poor attendance, the timing of the summer intervention, the punitive nature of many summer school programs, the duration of the program and the quality of instruction. It may be helpful to examine each of these factors in relation to the implementation of future summer interventions, allowing district staff to determine what elements contributed to this intervention's success, and what improvements might be made to increase the positive effect in the future.

Student attendance was a constant challenge during the duration of the four-week intervention. Students with adequate attendance, defined as a minimum of ten days for the 18-day program, were included in the study and, as the data demonstrates, benefitted from participation. Overall, approximately 70% of the students registered for the intervention in the spring actually attended in the summer. So, although 95 students received the treatment, an additional 41 students did not benefit from the intervention because of attendance.

The reasons for poor attendance were varied, and some were beyond the directors' control, such as families relocating or changing their mind about their children attending. However, some changes in implementation could have a positive impact on attendance in the future. There was a four-week gap between the end of the school year and the beginning of the summer oral language and literacy intervention. Bus transportation was provided and information was sent home with students the last week of school, but there was no further communication during the one-month break. Also, there was no plan for fielding phone calls from families, so many of them remained unresolved. A plan for weekly communication, including post cards, phone calls and other electronic media, would potentially keep participating families connected to the approaching summer program. Designating a call center to field

questions and concerns could help alleviate some of the frustration families experienced trying to make contact with district personnel.

Many summer school programs are not offered until the summer after third grade, by which time the deficits have become seemingly insurmountable for a short summer intervention program to be able to remediate (Bryk, Jacob, Easton & Allensworth, 1999). Further, the requirement for attendance seems to be presented almost as a punitive rather than a remedial or enrichment opportunity that may discourage poor attendance (Karweit, 1993). Reading interventions during the summers between the first two years in school have been found to be more successful, and the gains more sustainable, than those occurring in later grades (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 1997; Entwisle & Alexander, 1994). The children attending the summer oral language and literacy intervention were incoming first and second grade students, and the program directors were able to present their participation as an opportunity to make gains rather than a punishment for poor progress during the school year. Students were recruited through school-based meetings beginning in March with common parent recruitment materials and attendance was voluntary. Even the intervention's title, Summer Literacy Boost, carried a positive message.

Heyns (1987), Karweit (1993), Harrington-Lueker (2000), Schacter (2003) and Schacter and Jo (2005) recommend a summer intervention program lasting four weeks is too short, suggesting an six- to eight-week timeframe would offer more time to elicit lasting change in the students' literacy skills. However, cost and time present obstacles to extending the summer program to eight weeks. Any suggestion of shortening the summer program should be considered carefully in light of the strong research base supporting the benefits of a longer time spent in instruction (McCombs et al., 2012).

Finally, researchers contend that the majority of summer school instruction fails to reflect a strong pedagogical research base (Heyns, 1987; Karweit, 1993; McCombs et al., 2012; Pipho, 1999; Roderick, Bryk, Jacob, Easton, & Allensworth, 1999). According to Allington (2013), the knowledge exists to teach most children to read by the end of first grade. The design of this oral language and literacy summer literacy intervention instructional framework was based on research supporting emergent literacy skills, including oral language and vocabulary development, print awareness, phonemic awareness, development of the alphabetic principle, comprehension and successful reading of continuous text (McGee & Richgels, 2003). The goal of the summer program was to actively engage students in talking, reading, and writing with knowledgeable teachers from the time they stepped off the bus until they left to go home. The combination of the instructional framework (McCombs et al., 2012), appropriate materials (Jesson, McNaughton & Kolose, 2014) and expert teachers (McComb et al., 2012) created an environment in which struggling literacy learners began to develop skills and strategies within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), much as the Delta theory framework informing this study enhances influence and change (Tharp, 2012).

As significant as the research-based pedagogy driving the instructional framework was the expertise of the teachers delivering instruction (McCombs et al., 2012). Each team of four teachers included a range of experience and previous training, including one highly trained Reading Recovery teacher per team. Each team member was responsible for a particular role in the instructional framework, and all teachers were required to attend six hours of professional development before the start of the summer intervention. The professional development session was designed to provide teachers with the bigger picture of the entire framework, and specific strategies to implement in support of their defined role in the design. Thematic materials,

including leveled texts from a variety of publishers, were also provided to support teachers in their delivery of instruction; and teachers were encouraged to supplement these resources with their own ideas.

Although the instructional design and teachers' level of expertise influenced the overall success of the summer oral language and literacy intervention, the effect sizes for each of the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 2002, 2005) assessment tasks reflect strengths and possible areas for improvement in the future. The small effect size for the alphabet identification task may be attributed to the relatively high pretest mean score for both the treatment and comparison groups. The ceiling for the task is 54, and the mean pretest scores of 48.8 and 48.4 for the treatment and comparison groups respectively did not leave much room for a medium to large effect size.

The medium effect sizes for the hearing and recording sounds in words and concepts about print assessment tasks, although significant, offer possible areas for future improvement. Both assessment tasks are directly linked to the writing portion of the instructional framework. One possible cause for a relative weakness in this portion of the framework may be the expertise of the teacher delivering the writing instruction. Although writing was included in the professional development session, classroom teachers may need additional training in the procedures for interactive and independent writing to better support student learning in this area. The design of the professional development session might better prepare teachers if they could spend more time developing a knowledge base directly related to their role in the framework. According to Allington (2013) and McCombs et al. (2012), teacher expertise in reading matters when working with children struggling to be literate.

The large effect sizes for the Ohio word test, writing vocabulary and text reading level indicate possible strengths of the framework and teachers in developing word knowledge, the

reciprocity of reading and writing, and the strategic application of developing literacy skills and knowledge to the meaningful reading of continuous text. The improvement observed in text level reading in the treatment group is particularly significant as the reading of text is the end goal of literacy instruction. The change in the treatment group's mean score from a text level one to a text level three (rounded to the nearest whole number) represents a shift from a pre-emergent to an emergent reader. And the decline in text level for the comparison group, from a text level two to a text level one (rounded to the nearest whole number) is a concrete representation of the summer loss described in the research literature (Alexander et al., 1997, 2007; Schacter, 2003). Conversely, the participants began first grade poised for continued accelerated progress attributable to the momentum gained through the summer oral language and literacy intervention.

Recommendations and Limitations

The statistical design and analysis reported a significant difference between the treatment and comparison groups at posttest as the between effect of the independent variable, the summer program instructional framework. The difference between the treatment and comparison groups at posttest was a function of two effects: the gains made by the participants in the summer intervention and the loss in learning during the summer months by the comparison group. The study would be strengthened by conducting ad hoc analysis to determine the within, or repeated measures (pre-post) effect on the treatment group; and the interaction effect of the within and between factors. Estimating the different effects may allow for a comparative analysis of the effect of this specific program versus the effect of any summer program.

Although the outcomes of this particular implementation were positive, the generalizability of these results merits further investigation. A plan for sustainability in Jefferson

County, as well as systems for implementation in other school districts, is warranted. The current implementation and design relied largely on the expertise of a small number of district staff, which poses a threat to sustainability in the future. It is suggested that the district develop a team of personnel to implement the summer initiative, thereby ensuring the quality of future implementation and continued success. A systematic approach to the instructional design will support the fidelity of implementation and likelihood of success in other locations as well.

The results of the current study provide evidence that a summer oral language and literacy intervention can promote literacy gains during the summer for at-risk rising first-grade students. However, a four-week summer intervention cannot act in isolation as a one-time solution to a complex problem. Although the program participants made gains, those changes are only sustainable with continued teacher scaffolding and highly effective reading instruction during the school year. An effective summer program must be preceded and followed by kindergarten and first-grade classroom instruction based in a similar research-based pedagogy if we are to permanently close the gap between at-risk children and their more advantaged peers. Professional development strands and coaching aimed at building classroom teachers' understanding of the reading process, and strategies to support struggling students, can provide the tools necessary to build on the progress made in a summer intervention.

One possible threat to the integrity of future implementations of the summer oral language and literacy intervention could be changes made in the instructional framework and delivery design that would impact the program's effectiveness (McCombs et al., 2012). If cost-saving measures, such as hiring fewer teachers or shortening the length of the program, were put into place, there could be a risk of negating the positive outcomes seen in this study. Following are some recommendations key to the success of this implementation:

1. Begin planning early. Communicating with parents, recruiting and training teachers, ordering materials, and arranging for transportation all take time and are essential to successful implementation. Planning for the following summer can begin early in the school year.
2. Keep class sizes small. Small class sizes will allow teachers to provide the differentiated instruction necessary for successful outcomes. A variety of instructional contexts, including whole class, small group and individual instruction will better meet the needs of at-risk emergent readers.
3. Hire the most qualified teachers. Our neediest students require high-quality reading instruction delivered by knowledgeable, certified teachers trained in the instructional framework.
4. Conduct assessment, both summative and formative, allowing teachers to design instruction to meet the needs of individual learners.
5. Limit computerized instruction. Oral language flourishes through interaction with an adult.
6. Provide quality materials and training in a research-based instructional framework. Students should spend the majority of their time actively engaged in talking, reading of texts and writing.
7. Connect with parents. Communicate throughout the spring recruitment and have a plan for continued contact during the weeks away from school before the beginning of the summer intervention. Maintain the perception of the oral language and literacy intervention as a time for a boost before the next school year rather than a punishment.

As is evidenced in the research base (Harrington-Lueker, 2000; Jesson, McNaughton & Kolose, 2014; Pipho, 1999; McCombs et al., 2012; White & Johnson, 1999; Zia et al., 1999), the challenge of implementing effective summer interventions in large urban school districts can be daunting. However, these same school districts have large numbers of children struggling to learn to read and write at adequate levels. So, changes in the program's implementation must be considered carefully, and only put into place if they will improve the outcome for the participants. Any money saved is negligible if students no longer benefit from participation.

Additional research is needed to track the trajectory of the participants' literacy development through first and second grades. Children living in poverty circumstances are fragile and easily thrown by their life circumstances, including high mobility, food and housing insecurity, and limited out-of-school experiences. If school leaders and policymakers are to begin to answer the challenges posed for decades - the Carnegie Foundation's *Ready to Learn: A Mandate for the Nation* (1991); the National Research Council's *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (1998); the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* (2000) – it is time to seriously consider that large numbers of struggling readers are still sitting in classrooms every day because educators have failed to embrace and implement instructional practices verified by research. The study outcomes of this summer oral language and literacy intervention for at-risk rising first-grade students in a large urban school district offer an example of the positive educators can have on the literacy development of the participants, one piece of a system of influence and sustainable change for all children.

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Appendix A. Instructional Framework

Instructional Blocks	Student Groups – Rotate Through 4 Stations			
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
8:30 – 9:00	Breakfast / Table Talk			
9:00 – 9:20	Whole Group Read Aloud (***on or above grade level***) Related to Weekly Theme			
9:25 – 9:55	Reading Recovery® (Grade 1) or small group ***Instructional Level***	Guided and/or interactive reading ***Instructional*** Level / ***independent*** reading	Revisit ***on or above grade level*** reading/vocabulary & concept development	Interactive or Writing Aloud /Independent Writing
10:00 – 10:30	Revisit ***on or above grade level*** reading/vocabulary & concept development / word work / phonemic awareness	Reading Recovery (Grade 1) or small group ***Instructional Level***	Interactive or Writing Aloud /Independent Writing	Guided and/or interactive reading ***Instructional Level*** / independent reading
10:35 – 11:05	Guided and/or interactive reading ***Instructional Level*** / ***independent*** reading	Interactive or Writing Aloud /Independent Writing	Reading Recovery (Grade 1) or small group ***Instructional Level***	Revisit ***on or above grade level reading***/vocabulary & concept development
11:10 – 11:40	Interactive or Writing Aloud /Independent Writing	Revisit ***on or above grade level*** reading/vocabulary & concept development	Guided and/or interactive reading ***Instructional Level*** / independent reading	Reading Recovery (Grade 1) or small group ***Instructional Level***
11:45 – 12:00	Whole Group – Oral Language / Movement Activity Related to Weekly Theme			
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch Bunch – Table Talk			

Appendix B. Reading Lesson Planner

	Lesson Format	**Lesson Plans**
10 minutes **Indepen-dent Reading / Assessment**	Teacher conducts assessment with two students reading the new book from the previous day. Other students read independently from reading baskets: Familiar and Easy/Unseen books Expectations for independent reading must be established and reviewed on an ongoing basis.	**Title of running record book:** **Student_____** **Accuracy:_____ SC** **Rate:_____** **Student_____** **Accuracy:_____ SC** **Rate:_____**
5 minutes **Interactive Reading**	**Interactive Reading** Retell Shared Reading Text, focusing on targeted vocabulary	Targeted Tier Two Vocabulary:
15 minutes **Guided Reading**	**Guided Reading** • Text Orientation Before Reading Teacher sets two purposes before reading: 1. Related to word solving 2. A comprehension prompt to read for a particular purpose • Students read independently, teacher holds one-on-one conferences with every student. • After Reading: Discuss the book, revisiting the two purposes set before reading	**Title:_____** **Level:_____** **High Frequency Words / Vocabulary:**

Appendix C. Writing Lesson Planner

	Lesson Format	**Lesson Plans**
10 minutes **Re-read and Retell Shared Reading Text**	**Shared Reading:** poem, big book, nursery rhymes, Title/message: • Establish that the explicit purpose for today's activity is to retell the story together. • Start the story and ask children to talk about each page. • Scaffold the retelling by adding language or details and clarifying the flow of the narrative. • Review meaning of targeted vocabulary	**Focus of Shared Read:** Targeted Tier Two Vocabulary:
10 minutes **Interactive Writing**	**Interactive Writing** • After the rich conversation around a particular element to be described or explained, jointly compose text (oral) • Rehearse the text • Transcribe the text on a chart. See page 60, ITW	Use resources to help with letter-sound match and print conventions: • abc chart • whiteboards • writing checklist (p. 160 ITW) • Vocabulary list
10 minutes **Indepen-dent Writing**	**Independent Writing** • Provide students with a prompt related to the shared reading. • Students write their message in a journal, practicing problem solving strategies on the blank practice page • Teacher conferences with individual students • Debrief at the end to highlight student work and share writing	**Writing Prompt:** Provide resources: • Writing Checklist • Writing Journal • ABC Chart • Vocabulary list See p. 69 ITW

Appendix D. Phonemic Awareness / Phonics / Print Concepts Lesson Planner

	Lesson Format	**Lesson Plans**
10 minutes	**Shared Reading:** poem, big book, nursery rhymes, familiar interactive writing sentence Title/message: **Shared Reading of ABC Chart**	**Focus of Shared Read:** ↑ vocabulary_____ ↑ repeating sentences **Phonemic awareness skills:_____** ↑ initial sound/final sound □ sound segmenting □ sound blending **Letter/word work** ↑ Letter _____ ↑ pattern chart_____ ↑ Word _____
10 minutes	**Leveled text:** □ Before Reading (Activate background knowledge/ set a purpose/ vocab review) □ During Reading (stopping places to support comprehension □ Discussion after Reading (Language prompts to promote deeper comprehension	**Title:** **_____** **Level: _____** **Concepts about Print** Target skill_____ Targeted Language Strucuture:_____ _____ **Word/Letter Study**
10 minutes	**Read Aloud Text (new text)** Title:_____ ↑ fiction ↑ non-fiction **Before Reading:** (Activate background knowledge and set a purpose for reading and/or listening comprehension)	Teacher –Read Story ↑ comprehension question prompts: ↑ story grammar target: ↑ vocabulary:

Appendix E. Walkthrough Observation Rubric

Place an 'x' on the continuum for each standard as it is observed for each team.

Meeting		**Approaching**		**Below**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

The classroom contains a sufficient amount of materials to meet the instructional needs of all students.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Classroom materials include a balance of both fiction and non-fiction reading material, easy and more challenging texts.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Co-constructed charts are evidence of student learning.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Tables, clusters of desks and/or areas are arranged to promote collaborative work.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Respectful talk and attitudes are promoted and used among all learners and the teachers.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Students are engaged in meaningful tasks, including reading, writing and oral language.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Students' materials and the teachers' materials are organized and easily accessible.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

There is evidence of daily whole group, small group and individual reading and writing instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Adapted from Dorn & Soffos (2011) ESAIL Document