Enhancing Intrinsic Motivation and Reading Achievement Among Elementary Students in an Early Literacy Program

Rachel High

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ENHANCING INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AND READING ACHIEVEMENT AMONG ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IN AN EARLY LITERACY PROGRAM

by

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DEDICATION

This Dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Heath, and my sons, Elan and Finn.

Without your love and support, my dream would not have been possible.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank first and foremost my husband, Dr. Heath High, who has listened to my vision and dream and supported me without question. Without your support, this dream would not have been possible. I would also like to thank my two children, Elan and Finn, who inspire me daily. I would like to thank my professors and former teachers who paved the way, helped me find my passion, and motivated me. I would especially like to thank all my professors at the University of South Carolina for providing me with instruction and challenging me to think in new ways, in particular Dr. Jenkins for helping me through this dissertation process. I would also like to extend my gratitude to undergraduate advisor, Dr. Stokley, who inspired a passion for social justice and research in me. Also, I am thankful for the love and support of my family and friends. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with so many role models in education, people who share my vision to improve the quality of education. To all my former and current students, I would like to state that my research and work is ultimately for you – thank you for letting me into your lives. I have taken it as my life’s goal to be your advocate and work to reform education to better meet the needs of all students. Finally, I want to thank God for giving me this vision and allowing my path to lead me to where I am today.
ABSTRACT

This action research study explores the enhancement of intrinsic motivation and reading achievement in an early literacy-tutoring program through the use of culturally relevant pedagogy. This program is an interventional method used in addition to the students’ reading curriculum. Students who have shown a reading deficit through low reading grades and consistently poor performance in benchmark tests qualify for the tutoring program. This paper contains a thorough review of the literature used to elucidate the theoretical framework. The historical background and importance of this research topic are also discussed. The methodology section of this study uses a mixed-methods design that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative measures. The results of this study will benefit the researcher and other educators in the school in better understanding the relationship of motivation and literacy achievement. It also allows the researcher to develop effective strategies for promoting literacy among struggling students with diverse needs.
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<tr>
<td>CCSS</td>
<td>Common Core State Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Culturally responsive care</td>
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<td>CRP</td>
<td>Culturally relevant pedagogy</td>
</tr>
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<td>CRT</td>
<td>Critical race theory</td>
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<td>CSP</td>
<td>Culturally sustaining pedagogy</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIBELS</td>
<td>Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOG</td>
<td>End-of-Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>Individual Educational Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>NWF</td>
<td>Nonsense Word Fluency</td>
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<td>PSF</td>
<td>Phoneme Segmentation Fluency</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Early literacy skills are essential for the development of life-long readers. Reading skills are important in all academic areas and can be a predictor for future outcomes in school (Ciampa, 2012). Students who do not master reading skills early in their school years may have negative feelings associated with reading and decline opportunities for practice, thus putting themselves further behind their peers (Ciampa, 2012). This research study explores the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) in a school-based tutoring program that teaches early literacy skills at Finland Elementary School (pseudonym). Action research was selected to help the educator-researcher develop solutions to an academic problem specific to a current academic setting (Mertler, 2014). Finland Elementary is a rural kindergarten to fifth grade school on the border between North and South Carolina. The tutors are certified teachers who aim to offer supplemental support to struggling learners in the areas of math and reading. This study focuses specifically on reading instruction in the area of early literacy.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) is characterized as student-led and individualized support based on the background, interests, and needs of the students. It allows teachers to better differentiate instruction using student-directed pedagogy (Gay, 2010). It is also recognized as humanizing pedagogy that respects and uses reality, history, and perspectives of students as an integral part of educational practice (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culture is a complex constellation of values, morals, norms, customs, and
ways of knowing passed down from generation to generation, and it serves as a method for interpreting the world around us (Howard, 2014. Some research shows a cultural disconnect between home and school to be one explanation for lower educational outcomes for students from diverse backgrounds. The degree to which we understand how these intangible aspects shape attitudes and behaviors has tremendous benefits and consequences for students in diverse schools (Howard, 2010).

**Problem of Practice**

The identified problem of practice (PoP) for this action research study stems from the end of the 2018 school year: teacher feedback and diagnostic testing showed that many of the first and second grade students were showing a deficit in the area of reading achievement and were becoming increasingly unmotivated. Teachers stated students were struggling to make connections with the current curriculum and instructional delivery, which hindered motivation and engagement in learning. It was also concerning that the majority of the students recommended for the tutoring program and identified as having a deficient in reading were predominately African American, although these students only made up 18.9% of the total student population.

When individuals identify as race neutral, deficiency is viewed as an individual phenomenon. Therefore instruction is conceived as a generic set of teaching skills that should work for all students and when they fail students are often blamed for not being motivated enough (Ladson-Billings, 1998). However, a proactive educator looks for solutions to enhance educational outcomes for all students. There are several factors that may hinder motivation in early literacy activities (Nolen, 2011). One reason students may be disconnected from reading is instructional delivery. Skills may be taught through
direct instruction or the mundane rote introduction of letters, spelling, and basic phonics skills. There is also a disconnection between the current curriculum and the needs of the students. These factors can have a negative effect on a student’s basic skills necessary for mastering reading, such as phonemic awareness and orthographic coding (Nolen, 2001). Often, activities that emphasize rote learning can elicit a work-avoidant orientation. Students may perceive little need to exert effort or use higher-order thinking skills such as planning, goal setting, and monitoring their progress (Miller & Meece, 1997). When lessons are teacher-centered, students may feel pressured to perform and act in a certain way. Less active involvement in literacy activities leads to disempowerment and ultimately disinterest in many students (Turner & Paris, 1995). Students may also be at risk of viewing schoolwork as detached from and irrelevant to their lives outside of school. When reading and writing are defined as schoolwork, students are less likely to seek opportunities to read and write outside of school (Nolen, 2011). Even when there are external rewards associated with schoolwork, the effects may not last in the long term. However, when students are intrinsically motivated to learn it promotes self-efficacy and future success in reading (Nolen, 2011).

The district currently uses Lucy Calkins’ *Reading Workshop* as the core reading material in all elementary classrooms. Although there are some positive benefits to the reading workshop style of instruction, the series is scripted. The basic components of the series are a mini lesson focusing on a specific skill, independent silent reading time, and conferencing with students about their reading. The *Reading Workshop* is discussed more in depth in chapter two. This program was initially developed for secondary students, but in recent years it has been utilized in the lower elementary grades. These first and second
grade students can choose the books for their individual reading level, but it is their responsibility to read during the thirty-minute time frame. This can be difficult for students lacking the necessary reading skills to stay on task for this length of time. The other complaint regarding the program is how scripted it is. The manual gives specific instructions for teachers to follow. Many of the reading facilitators in the district encourage teachers to use the wording as directed. For schools such as mine that are considered “low-performing”, it is expected that we implement the Lucy Calkins’ program with the utmost fidelity. This is ensured through the observations of reading facilitators to determine if the program is being implemented correctly. Some teachers complain that the program does not allow teachers the freedom to interpret and exploit the material for their individual classes and the unique needs of their student.

The school performance scores in reading at Finland Elementary have shown a decrease in the past three years. During the 2016–2017 school year, Finland Elementary School received the letter grade of a C (NCDPI, 2017). The letter grades each school receives are based on their school performance scores in the End-of-Grade (EOG) Tests. These tests are taken by third, fourth, and fifth grade students. According to the data, 44.9% of these students are below grade level in reading (2017). Therefore, it is important to begin reading intervention early for those students showing signs of a reading deficit. Also, according to the North Carolina Read to Achieve Program, if students are not reading on or above grade level by the end of third grade, they risk being retained (NC Read to Achieve, 2016).

Students who show a deficit in reading require supplemental instruction to gain these skills. As the students fall further behind, their motivation and positive attitude
towards reading may decrease. There are various literacy programs recommended for interventions. However, like many universal programs, one program may not be effective for all students. Therefore, these programs should be continuously evaluated to ensure students’ needs are being met (McDaniel, Yarbrough, & Beshoy, 2015). Ongoing evaluation enables programs to improve and grow.

Recently, there has been a shift in the culture of Finland Elementary. Once a predominately white school, there has been an influx of a more diverse population of students in the past few years. In the past, the surrounding area was a mill town. Many of the grandparents of the students were factory workers and made a decent living, albeit with very little education. Since many of the mills and factories have shut down, the families struggle to find adequate work with their limited qualifications. This area was once considered a popular suburban area, but as other areas have become more popular and businesses have moved, so the real estate market in the area has declined. Some of the properties have become rental properties, introducing a continual influx of students from different economic backgrounds from one year to the next.

Since I have worked at this school, the teacher turnover rate has increased significantly along with this change. Just in the past year, ten teachers transferred, resigned, or retired. Only 64% of the teaching staff transitioned from the 2017–2018 school year to the 2018–2019 school year. We also received new administrators for the 2018–2019 school year. This variation in staff has some implications for the current culture of the school; indeed, many of the teachers struggle with understanding the culture of the students and their background.

There are a significant number of students attending our school who also live in
poverty. It is important for teachers to understand the role poverty may play regarding students’ ability to relate to the curriculum. Although there are statistics associated with this relationship, poverty affects each individual differently. Poverty contributes greatly to student motivation and a student’s ability to concentrate on anything other than day-to-day survival (Wexler, 2014, p.54). Poverty affects emotional lives, attention spans, attendance, and academic performance (2014). With poverty come major risk factors that affect the lives of students. These risk factors may include unemployment, homelessness, substance abuse, dangerous neighborhoods, and poor health (Gassama, 2012). Parental support can also be a contributing factor to low student achievement. Many of these parents are away from home for several hours a day as they strive to provide for their families. Involvement may suffer if the parent does not have a method of communication or lacks transportation to attend school functions (Gassama, 2012). Therefore, it is essential to implement a program that takes account of the needs of the students and provides high expectations, instead of simply determining a student’s situation as a deficit (Wexler, 2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy aims to decrease the educational debt by providing students with relevant and genuine opportunities to learn (Gay, 2012).

**Theoretical Framework**

Many learning theories and educational models create a background for this action research study. They also contribute to the pedagogy selected and the instructional makeup used in this study. These theories have influenced this study and the researcher’s views on student learning and engagement. I discuss these briefly and elaborate more on the foundation of research and theory in the next chapter.

**Critical Race Theory.** Educational structures should be analyzed to determine
the role CRT plays on students and their achievement level. This theory analyzes the myths presumptions, and received knowledge that make up the common culture about race and invariably perceive people of color as below whites (Ladson-Billings, 1998). It begins with the notion that racism is “normal, not aberrant in American society” because it is so enmeshed in the structure of social order (Delgado, 1995, p. xiv). This theory argues that racism requires major advocacy and changes by deconstructing, reconstructing, and construction. The deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses is critical. Reconstruction of human agency and construction of equitable and social just relations of power are critical for change (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

**Pragmatism.** This theory supports the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy. Centering on student interests and their needs using practical learning that applies to the real world is known as pragmatism (Hill, 2006). Pragmatism does not find final solutions; rather, this method is ongoing and calls for more work as realities and theories change. It also views theories as instruments and not ultimate answers. The curriculum in a school should be based on students’ experiences, interests, and preparation needed for the real world into which they will enter. Practical learning that applies to the real world and introduces information students need to know is known as pragmatism (Hill, 2006). One of the contributors, William James, proposed that absolute truth changes as a result of human experiences (1909). This relates to students and the importance of teachers participating in a review of the hidden curriculum and current culture in the academic setting. Students in schools vary and it is important to understand the truths as related to their human experience.

John Dewey, one of the first scholars of democratic education, also believed each
student to be an individual entitled to equal opportunity in terms of the development of
his own capabilities (Dewey in Boydston, 1987). He also discussed the important need
for family and school to influence the development and dispositions of the child and
believed that this should be conducted through the use of democratic manners. Indeed, he
believed this was crucial for democratic life (1987). Social situations play an important
role in evaluating the education of the student. Group welfare is also a contributing factor
in how individuals make their decisions since humans are viewed as social creatures and
schools as social institutions. The social life of the child is seen as the basis of
concentration, upon which school subjects and activities should focus (Dewey, 1897, in
Reed & Johnson). It is, therefore, vital to relate to students’ lives, their communities, and
present social situations (1897). Dewey also focused on differences among students and
noting their different interests and educational needs, advocating for an individualized
curriculum.

The constructivist learning theory. This theory developed by Piaget and Bruner
also supports the importance of using culturally relevant pedagogy to promote
motivation. Learners actively construct new knowledge based on their prior knowledge
and experiences (Ciampa, 2012). Ciampa held that “children are inherently active, self-
regulating learners who construct knowledge in responses to interactions with
environmental stimuli” (2012, p.94). Accordingly, learning should be authentic and meet
real-life expectations; this allows students to make connections and increase the
relevance of learning certain tasks.

The Six C’s of Motivation. Multiple theories and research support this
methodology. The primary goal of these six categories is intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic
motivation is defined as initiating an activity for its own sake because it is interesting and satisfying in itself (Karatas & Erden, 2017). Malone and Lepper (1982) saw the taxonomy included all the important intrinsic motivation that can be used in designing the instructional environment. Although there are many motivators to learn, “the will to learn is an intrinsic motive” (Bruner in Malone & Lepper, p. 223).

The Six C’s of Motivation can be identified primarily through open-ended tasks. First, these tasks provide students with choice, allowing them the freedom to choose a variety of topics and media options (Turner & Paris, 1995). When choice is offered, students are rarely bored because they are able to select topics that interest them while taking ownership of their own learning. These tasks must also provide an appropriate challenge for the student based on their ability level monitored through progress goals and feedback. Based on Bandura’s construct of self-efficacy, students engage more readily in activities where they feel competent and capable (Ciampa, 2012). There must also be control that encourages self-evaluation and allows students to take ownership. Collaboration is also a foundation of the Six C’s of Motivation. Research in cooperative learning has shown that working with others promotes student engagement in work and group consciousness (Miller & Meece, 1997). Collaboration provides an opportunity for students to share ideas while receiving feedback about their work (1997). There must also be a way for students to construct meaning in open-ended activities. This allows students to make connections on why learning is important. If children do not have a purpose for reading a passage, other than to answer questions, they will skim through it. Therefore, “Any attempt to divorce a learning task from the known and purposeful world of the child diminishes the task’s pedagogical utility” (Dewey in Rasinski, 1988, p. 397).
Finally, *consequences* must be clear and completed tasks should be celebrated in a positive way. This method also supports a constructive approach to failure, where students can learn to adjust their strategies rather than giving up trying to achieve the desired result (Turner & Paris, 1995). Understanding this method can serve as a link to implementing CRP, as it follows this process.

**Positionality**

My personal and educational background has played a significant role in this study. I grew up in a white family in the South and encountered many people who were racist. This was evidenced by the comments they made about people of color, specifically African Americans. My parents do not consider themselves as racists and taught my siblings and me not to judge people based on the “color of their skin but the content of their character” (Martin Luther King Jr., 1963). Like many white individuals, my parents adopted a color-blind ideology and taught us to treat others as equal (Diangelo, 2018). My father is a college graduate and during the elementary phase of my life my family was considered lower middle class. I attended a public school that was culturally diverse and a church in a predominately African American neighborhood. I had friends of diverse backgrounds, races, and cultures. However, I received negative comments from my grandparents when I had any of these friends over to my house. As I got older, my family began to become more affluent and I was able to attend a predominately white private school. Robin Diangelo discusses this as “white flight” in her book, *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* (2018, p. 53). This term is defined as the upward mobility of white people to escape people of color. It was in this experience I learned some individuals are taught they are superior to other races because they are
white. I also learned many white people are not taught acceptance of other races and have little social interaction outside their own race. Therefore stereotypes and biases from others and the media play a role in how many white individuals view people of color.

As an undergraduate sociology major I studied poverty, racism, social stratification, and a variety of other social issues. I became a teacher because I wanted to help alleviate these issues in society and enhance social equality. In my first teaching job, I worked at a Title 1 school where 95% of the students were African American. After studying institutional racism for many years, I was able to see it first-hand. Our school lacked the basic resources needed for our students to be successful. The students were significantly below grade level, as evidenced by low scores on Eurocentric standardized benchmark tests such as DIBELS and the IOWA Test of Basic Skills. The IOWA test is a national test and my second grade students all scored below the tenth percentile rank. In addition, teachers also gave the students low expectations, which also contributed to the cycle of institutional racism. Since this experience, I have worked in Title 1 schools in Louisiana, South Carolina, and North Carolina in a variety of roles. I have heard many of the comments teachers make towards students from diverse backgrounds. Many believe these students to be unmotivated and have trouble relating the curriculum to them. I too, have been guilty of internalizing some of these stereotypical messages. Therefore, after analyzing the different school settings I have worked and myself, I found it important to determine why these messages continue to perpetuate inequality in schools.

In the spring of 2018, I helped organize my school’s tutoring program. I researched and collected data on effective programs and assisted teachers in the school in instruction and classroom management. I worked directly with students and used these
methods to conduct tutoring groups. I attended grade level meetings to collaborate with teachers on ideas and suggestions. After researching culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and observing the climate at my school, I predicted that implementing CRP would allow students to engage in learning more effectively. I believed they would be able to make connections, enhance their self-esteem, and find greater personal enjoyment in literacy and reading. According to previous research findings, this would also promote self-efficacy and long-term success in reading. My findings support this hypothesis that students who are intrinsically motivated to read are more likely to become successful readers and engage in reading practices (Karatas & Erden, 2017).

**Research Questions**

This action research study asked the following two questions:

1. *What are the effects of implementing culturally relevant pedagogy on students’ intrinsic motivation towards reading?*

   It examined how CRP affects each student’s motivation and attitude towards reading. Quantitative and qualitative were both used to answer this question. The qualitative measures used were observations from the researcher throughout the study to determine each student’s level of engagement, student feedback forms, and teacher feedback forms. The quantitative measurement tools used were the pretest and posttest surveys, DIBELS progress monitoring tools, and reading averages provided by each student’s classroom teacher.

2. *What are the effects of intrinsic motivation on reading improvement?*

   This was measured using quantitative methodology. Reading percentages were collected at the beginning and end of the program. Students also participated in DIBELS
Next (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) progress monitoring at the beginning and at the conclusion of the tutoring sessions. It is known as DIBELS Next because it is the revised edition that is currently implemented.

Table 1.1 Research Questions and Measurement Tools Used

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<td>Pre/Post Questionnaire (Quantitative)</td>
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<td>Student Feedback (Qualitative)</td>
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<td>Teacher Feedback (Qualitative)</td>
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<td>Pre/Post Reading Percentage (Quantitative)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre/Post DIBELS Next (Quantitative)</td>
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**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to use culturally relevant pedagogy to encourage students to take ownership of their learning to enhance their intrinsic motivation and reading achievement. The ultimate goal of the program was to improve outcomes of reading proficiency through an early literacy-tutoring program. Culturally relevant pedagogy was implemented to promote motivation. The study allowed teachers to learn more about the students’ culture and generate better outcomes by implementing their interests into their daily lessons. According to motivational theorists, highly motivated readers are self-determining and generate their own reading opportunities. According to the expectancy-value theory of motivation, motivation is strongly influenced by a person’s expectation of success or failure at a task as well as by the value or attractiveness the individual places on a task (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). Through the implementation of CRP, students were able to build self-esteem and pride while learning reading strategies through a personalized and positive environment. This led to increased motivation and participation. It also allowed the students to build
their confidence and become more proficient readers. Students who are more proficient in reading have increased educational outcomes.

**Methodology**

The methodology section discusses participant selection, research site, research question, and sources for data collection identified in this action research study. These variables serve as the background and basis for the study. Each area is specific to this action research study conducted in a single school setting.

**Participant Selection.** Participants were selected for the tutoring program based on continual low performance on diagnostic tests and teacher recommendations. The diagnostic tests utilized by the school were iReady and DIBELS. Teachers also made their own observations throughout the school year and recommended these students for the tutoring program. iReady is a computer-based assessment that is aligned with the common core state standards. DIBELS or Dynamic Indicators for Basic Early Literacy Skills is also another standardized diagnostic tests. Both of these tests are used in schools to allow teachers to identify students that are struggling with basic reading skills such as phonemic awareness and phonics. The iReady scores were used to determine a reading deficit for these students. This is a computer based diagnostic test that determines reading ability through a series of questions and activities. Students are tested at the beginning of the year, the middle of the year, and at the end of the year. The report includes specific areas where students are struggling, including phonemic awareness, phonics, high-frequency words, vocabulary, and comprehension. The students’ scores are points-based and indicate their grade level equivalence, national percentile rank, and current Lexile
level. The Lexile level is the level appropriate for the student and helps them in selecting books for comprehension and fluency.

Some of the students were also in the MTSS (Multi-tier System of Supports) program on a Tier 2 plan and were receiving weekly interventions from their classroom teacher. These interventions usually took place in small groups around three times a week and lasted for fifteen to twenty minutes. However, the students all participate in the general education program and do not receive any other special services. There have not been any learning disabilities identified in the students selected. A school administrator matched participants in the tutoring program with a tutor. There were multiple groups and sessions that met throughout the school year. Some teachers worked with students after school, and some worked with students during the school day depending on their schedule. The assigned tutors were to work with the students on their current lessons provided by their classroom teachers. My schedule allowed me to work with three tutoring groups. Each group contained 5 students; therefore, there were 15 students in total in the study between the ages of 6 and 7. Five of the students were in first grade and 10 of the students were in second grade. There were four African American males, four African American females, six white males, and one white female. Each group I worked with focused on the early literacy activities the classroom teacher provided. Most of the classroom teachers use resources from the Florida Center for Reading Research (www.fcrr.org) for their intervention groups. I provided supplemental resources for the students by selecting books from the appropriate Lexile level. The following table gives the exact information on the participants.
Parents were notified that their child would be participating in the tutoring program during school hours to help improve their reading through a letter or phone call. I also notified the parents of the students in my tutoring group and let them know their child would be a part of a research study, giving them the option to participate. All of the parents I contacted approved and a consent letter was then sent home for them to better understand the details of the study and provide their signature. All of the parents signed and returned the letter. The students were also given a letter along with verbal directions letting them know they would be part of a research study and that I would be taking notes on them during the program. All of the students agreed to this. Parents and students were also informed that participation was voluntary and there would not be a penalty if they chose not to participate. They were also informed they could still participate in the tutoring program even if they decided not to participate in the research study. The study was conducted over a six-week period. To ensure each participant’s information is kept anonymous, a pseudonym was assigned to each student.
**Research Site.** The research site where this action research study took place was a rural school located on the border between North and South Carolina. Finland Elementary School (pseudonym) is a Title 1 school located in a low socio-economic area. A school is classified as Title 1 if at least 40% of the student enrollment is made up of low-income families (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). At this particular school, 99.5% of the students receive free lunch (NCES, 2017). This type of school receives federal funding to help students experiencing poverty. The funding provided is facilitated in multiple ways based on need and supported by data. For example, money can be allotted to a tutoring program, supplies, or other areas. Although the school is made up of a diverse population (White 58.4%; African American 18.9%; Hispanic 15.6%; Asian 1.8%; two or more races 5.3%), the students continue to struggle and make connections specifically on multicultural themes in the curriculum (NCES, 2017). There is an observable division between many of the students based on their race. De facto segregation can be seen in the cafeteria, in the classroom, and at recess. There are ingrained biases and teachers struggle with making the curriculum relatable to the different needs of the students. There are differences between the student diversity and staff diversity. Only five out of the thirty-three teachers on staff are African American; the rest are white. The P.E. teacher and the Principal are the only males on the staff in the entire school. This lack of diversity in the teaching staff is not reflective of the diverse student body. Many of the teachers have adopted a color-blind ideology and have commented on discouraging racial discussions. This has contributed to the overall culture and climate of the students and staff in the school. It has also contributed to the formation of the hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum contributes to the culture and climate of
the school. How students perceive themselves and their peers is attributed to all these external factors.

**Sources of Data Collection.** A mixed-methods approach that uses both qualitative and quantitative methods was utilized over a six-week period. This mixed-methods approach allows triangulation to occur and ensures greater reliability (Mertler, 2016). The quantitative methods used were a pretest and posttest survey administered by the researcher, DIBELS Next progress monitoring probes (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), and the student’s current reading grade in the form of a percentage. The qualitative methods used were student feedback forms and teacher observational field notes with reflection. The qualitative methods were used throughout the whole study.

To determine the effect of implementing CRP on students’ motivation, students were given a pretest survey read aloud to determine their attitude towards reading. The researcher administered this survey to each tutoring student individually to increase confidentiality and accuracy. The ten-question survey used a Likert scale. Due to the varying reading levels of the students, a benchmark for each student was established using quantitative methods depending on the DIBELS Next probe level. Two DIBELS Next probes were used to obtain data: Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), and Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). These probes are described more in depth in Chapter 3. At the end of the six-week period, students received the same survey to determine the effect of CRP on their motivation towards reading. To determine the effect of motivation on reading improvement, data was collected at the end of the program on each student’s reading level. The teacher-researcher also recorded notes throughout the sessions. The
researcher used field notes to record observations and noted suggestions to add to planning materials for the following session. It was critical to utilize multiple methods to determine the effect on the students’ motivation. Many of the diagnostics are Eurocentric and can contain biases towards racially diverse students.

**Significance of the Study**

This study attempts to develop and apply pedagogical practices that can be beneficial to helping students achieve. Critical race theory recognizes that racism is ingrained in American society and analyzes the numerous obstacles that members of different racial groups experience due to their membership. Institutional racism is inherent in the social matrix of the dominant culture. A student's family, religion, culture, and neighborhood environment may also play a role in the views the student holds (Gould, 2011).

An important idea contributing to the current culture of students and teachers is the idea of individualism and individual social mobility. This idea focuses on the belief that individual success can be obtained regardless of any other contributing factors. It promotes the idea that an individual can go from “rags to riches” and that if an individual does not succeed, it is due to their own shortcomings (Banks & Banks, 2012). This has great significance on how students are being treated in the school setting. It also contributes to the hidden curriculum that is being taught through European American standards. It does not attribute any of an individual’s shortcomings to social-class stratification and how individuals are strongly influenced by the groups in which they belong (2012). Sociologists who specialize in the study of groups state that groups have a significant impact on individuals and their behavior patterns Attitudes and motivation are
shaped by group norms and customs, and “such factors as shared religion, nationality, age, sex, marital status, and education have proved to be important determinants of what people believe, feel, and do” (Goodman & Marx, 1982, p. 7). Although these factors provide important clues to expected performance, it is difficult to predict behavior based solely on group membership. One individual may subscribe to several groups. However, certain types of behavior are more probable. Therefore, the more educators understand groups and student identification within those groups, the more effective the influence they may have in building relationships with students (Banks & Banks, 2012).

Evidence suggests learning to be more effective when a teacher can make connections between the school environment and the community where a student lives. The importance of using an appropriate curriculum that incorporates students’ interests and experiences can serve as a motivator for engaging students in learning (Cramer & Bennett, 2015). While teachers referenced in the article “But Good Intentions Are Not Enough: Preparing Teachers to Center Race and Poverty” typically feel uncomfortable talking about race and reflecting on their own racial identities, they often adapt color-blind ideologies (Milner & Laughter, 2014). This ignores, negates, and dishonors the identities and realities of students. It is reported that eighty-four percent of teachers are white and from a middle-class background. These teachers bring with them their own cultural identities and expectations for their students. In a race-conscious society, the development of a positive sense of racial and ethnic identity that is not based on inferiority or superiority is vital (Milner & Laughter, 2014). This requires unlearning misinformation and stereotypes that have been internalized about others and us. This misinformation can be in regard to the expectations we have towards others from
different socioeconomic backgrounds, races, and cultures. It is a popular belief that students who do not meet the Eurocentric expectations or perform well on diagnostic tests need to be saved and transformed (Milner & Laughter, 2014). It is beneficial for teachers to gain a better understanding by learning how structural inequality manifests itself.

In order to create programs that benefit the oppressed, it is essential that the educator consider the view of the oppressed. Paulo Freire, author of Pedagogy of the Oppressed, claims programs have not been successful in the past because individuals failed to consider their viewpoint (Stauffer, 1970). For transformation to occur, both reflection and action are required. It is not our role to speak to others about our view of the world. We should not impose our view on them; instead, we should have an open discussion of their world-view. This will lead to a greater reflection that implements a positive change (Freire, 1970).

Social reconstructionism aims to teach the oppressed class, bring about social justice, and improve conditions (Freire, 1970). Through the use of education and its influence, it may be possible to create a better society and a more democratic system. Social reconstructionists are opposed to the transmission model of the curriculum because it oppresses the disadvantaged. Instead, they support an emancipatory curriculum (Friere, 1970). This type of curriculum evolves out of lived experiences and social circumstances. Also, it is essential for social reconstructionists to recognize the views of the people the programs are intended for. In the past, there was no dialogue between the teacher and students. However, this philosophical approach enforces the necessity of communication through the creation of the co-operative, in order to change and make
society better. Efforts to change teacher attitudes toward implementing a more inclusive curriculum can be effected through professional development and by reviewing policy. To be effective, the conversation must move away from myths, fears, and stereotypes and focus on the purpose of supporting all students (Dewitt, 2015).

**Limitations of the Study**

One of the main limitations of this study is the small sample size; another was the limited amount of time. Data was only collected over a six-week period of time. Therefore, the impact of the intervention may have had greater results if data had been collected over a longer time period. The selection of this time frame coincided with the end of the school year. This program allowed students to participate in an intensive program for two reasons: to collect data for the Read to Achieve program and determine those who needed to attend summer reading camp, and to try to increase overall reading achievement. Another limitation of the study is that it is unable to determine the effects of motivation on long-term reading achievement. Due to the nature and design of this study, there was no control group with which to compare the results of this intervention.

Another limitation of this study is the selection of diagnostic materials and the intervention program used in the tutoring sessions. Teachers utilize several Eurocentric materials in school without questioning the validity of these materials and their impact on the students they serve. This can impact the hidden curriculum and the covert messages students receive.

**Ethical Considerations**

The purpose of this study was to use culturally relevant pedagogy to encourage students to take ownership of their learning in order to enhance their intrinsic motivation
and reading achievement. Students were told they would be part of a research study aimed at improving the learning and teaching of reading skills for students and teachers, respectively. The students and their parents were told there would not be any penalty for not participating in the program and that they could still participate in the tutoring program if they decided they did not want to participate in this study. They were given the option to be part of the study, and the researcher received a written consent from all of the participants. Students along with the school were given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

**Dissertation Overview**

This dissertation explains the action research study conducted in a rural school setting working with students in a school-based tutoring program. Culturally relevant pedagogy was implemented into the program based on the individual needs of each student. The CRP strategies were inspired by the work of Geneva Gay’s *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (2010), the teachings of Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and a variety of theoretical and historical influences on reading instruction. The strategies selected for instructional delivery were interviews, explicit instruction, open dialogue, cooperative learning, and ongoing feedback. These methods coincided with the *Six C’s of Motivation* developed by Malone and Lepper (1985), namely choice, challenge, control, consequences, collaboration, and construct meaning.

The dissertation provides an explanation of the format of the study and the need for the study. A thorough review of the literature of other similar studies conducted helps explain how they contributed to this study. The methodology is explained for how data
was collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The results of the study are also outlined. There is also an explanation on how the researcher will reflect on the results and share these with tutors, teachers, administrators, and participants of the program.

Definition of Terms

_Cooperative learning_ indicates an activity in which students are working together to accomplish a given task.

_Culturally relevant pedagogy_ is a commitment to humanizing pedagogy by utilizing three components: “students must experience academic success, students must develop or maintain cultural competence, and students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 160).

_Culturally responsive caring_ the delivery of high-quality care and respect towards individuals in a personalized way respecting his or her diverse emotional and linguistic needs (Watson, Sealey-Ruiz & Jackson, 2016).

_Culturally responsive teaching_ is a teaching practice characterized by culturally relevant care, providing a strong sense of community, rigorous demands, integration of different cultures, and a general affirmation of one’s humanity (Watson, Sealy-Ruiz, & Jackson, 2016). It involves offering students options and meaningful rationales, acknowledging student feedback, and avoiding the use of controlling language when instructing students in activities (Guay, Roy, & Valois, 2017).

_Culturally sustaining pedagogy_ developed after the popularity of CRP, this pedagogy has an explicit goal in supporting multilingualism and multiculturalism in
practice and perspective of both teachers and students. It seeks to perpetuate and sustain linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the demographic and social change (Paris & Alim, 2014).

**Dialogic teaching** means using talk most effectively for carrying out teaching and learning. Dialogic teaching involves ongoing talk between teacher and students, not just one-way presentation by the teacher (Burbules & Bertram, 2001).

**Early literacy** refers to the beginning reading and writing skills that help students learn how to read and write as well as language spoken and written in texts (Turner & Paris, 1995).

**Explicit instruction** is defined as effective, meaningful, and direct instruction. It is student-centered and actively involves students in the learning process (Magilaro, Lockee, & Burton, 2005).

**Interviews** are one-on-one conversations where one individual asks questions and the participant responds.

**Intrinsic motivation** refers to internal factors that motivate an individual to engage in an activity based on his or her own interest and enjoyment (Katz, Kaplan, & Gueta, 2010).

**Ongoing feedback** is the technique of open communication between teacher and student.

**Orthographic coding** is the relationship that early readers are taught between sounds in speech and the letters that represent those sounds (NCBI, NHI, 2014).

**Pedagogy** is method of teaching based on subject matter knowledge and content knowledge (Shulman, 1987).
Phonemic awareness is the understanding that spoken words and syllables are composed of a specific sequence of individual speech sounds (NCBI, NHI, 2014).

Phonemic awareness is the ability to identify the differences and similarities among the sounds of spoken language (Peltzman, 2015). Phonics instruction is an important part of beginning reading because the student’s first accomplishment must be to figure out how our alphabetic language works (Young, 1990).
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The review of past studies and related literature has contributed to the development and explanation of this action research study. A variety of programs have been examined to promote an effective research study. The literature review helps broaden the understanding of the historical and philosophical background regarding the problem of practice. It examines approaches that have been used in the past as well as current research that contribute to this topic. The literature review also discusses the methodology selected. It discusses a variety of educational research studies that have contributed to the selection of this particular methodology. The literature review discusses a theoretical and philosophical base for this study and various contributions. In order to elaborate more on the topic of motivation, this paper discusses the contribution of many researchers and theorists to this topic. There is also a discussion of various case studies focusing on the implementation of intrinsic motivation strategies and the impact on student development, as well as the effect on implementing culturally relevant pedagogy. Finally, there is a conclusion to summarize the topic and the information provided in this chapter.

Background of Education and Reading Instruction

The following quote, sums of the relationship between culture and education in American society, “Educators have traditionally attempted to insert culture into education
instead of inserting education into culture” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 159). To better understand the background and need for this study, it was important to review the evolution of American education and strategies for teaching reading instruction. I studied several early contributors and the overarching theme was exclusion.

In many historical examples education exhibits the goals of the majority group in society. In the earliest stages of the American school, education had many restrictions. First and foremost, schools were only for white males. Students were not encouraged to think for themselves out of fear of the impact it would have on society. As school history progresses, knowledge is viewed more as an enhancement to the lives of the human race. The spread of knowledge creates a humanitarian appreciation for learning other cultures and understanding how man goes about explaining his world and making sense of it (Bruner, 2013).

The American school system was created to promote a common culture and allegiance to the concept of a nation, known as a “nation-state” (Spring, 2014, p. 47). Society believed the United States would not be able to survive as a multi-cultural society. Noah Webster was a key advocate for establishing patriotism in the American school (Spring, 2014). Not only did he want to establish a patriotic society, but he also wanted individuals to have similar morals. He believed moral and political values should be imposed on citizens to establish a republican society. Webster’s spelling book was key in the development of a dominant English-speaking society. Between 1758 and 1843, there was a desire to educate students while imposing a common language based on the belief it would ensure a unity among Americans that was needed for them to govern themselves and remain a peaceful nation (Rosenberg, 1967). Noah Webster stated, “The
worst misuse of the economy is not providing adequate funding for the education of children because the only way to reform society is to start with its children”(Peltzman, p. 7, 2015). He decided to do away with provincial dialects while teaching spelling and grammar with reading selections from the writings of American Patriots in order to teach all Americans to read, write, and speak in a uniform way. This was done through the use of spellers and the Alphabet Method. This method spelled words out into syllables as a method of pronunciation (1967). It can be traced back to 1588. The American Spelling Book grouped words according to the way they were pronounced, not spelled. The goal of reading was to inspire patriotism and develop a moral character based on the opinion of the English. All of the methodology and strategies helped reinforce this goal (Peltzman, 2015).

**Development of Reading Approaches**

Education is continuously evolving as seen throughout history. There is a deeper search for knowledge as individuals discover their lives are enriched through learning. Culture and education have an influential interrelationship. As culture is reflected in education, there is also a vital role that education plays in shaping society. Some of these contributors build on prior methodology and some make efforts to shift the cultural norm. It is important to understand how reading instruction has evolved and the strategies that can contribute to effective instruction.

During the twentieth century four major approaches to beginning reading instruction were identified. First, the *basal approach* emphasizes gradually increasing levels of difficulty and teacher-guided reading material. The second approach is known as the *phonics approach*, which teaches letter-sound relationships. The third approach is
known as the *literature approach* in which students choose to read what they want from a variety of books with teacher assistance when needed. The final approach is the *writing approach*. Students read their own work along with the work of their classmates as their first reading material (Cunningham, Hall, and Defee, 1991).

These approaches are discussed in depth through the paper to allow for a better understanding of the background of early reading instruction and how it has contributed to this research study as a foundational framework. There may be several contributors to each approach. These approaches are backed by research and theory in various ways, typically based upon the knowledge and information available at the time. Some were later considered to be ineffective and changes have subsequently been made. However, they all contribute to current reading instruction in some way.

**The Basal reading approach.** This approach, also known, as the *Core Reading Series* was the most widely used approach for many years. There was a series incorporated for each grade level, with preplanned, sequentially organized, and detailed materials to teach developmentally appropriate reading skills (Peltzman, 2015). Most of the series used “the whole word recognition approach to teacher word recognition skills” (p. 41, 2015). Before the mid 1960s, decoding skills were introduced very gradually to mainly upper elementary age readers. Since then, the trend has been toward an earlier emphasis on decoding skills. In this approach students are given a level number rather than a grade level. The materials include books and workbooks. Generally, there is a lesson prep or pre-reading presentation of new words, guided reading and interpretation, and follow-up activities.
Dick and Jane Basic Readers developed by Scott Foresman in the 1940’s to 1960’s became widely popular as a standardized basal reading series (Peltzman, 2015). These standard materials ensured students received similar instruction, which was beneficial to the large influx of school-aged children due to the population boom. According to Wiggins, “Basal reader programs provided teachers with help in organizing systematic teaching skills and strategies” (1994, p. 445). Teachers became manual dependent instead of meeting the individualized needs of their students and if solely used it failed to provide rich experiences to the students. Another criticism of this series was the lack of diversity. The settings and characters were typically familiar to white, middle-class, suburban, two-parent families. There were very few stories representing different racial groups. Male and female roles were also stereotyped throughout the series, (Peltzman, 2015).

**Phonics approach.** This is the earliest stage in developing reading ability, where students begin to associate printed words with their meaning. Students begin to realize that letters have sounds and that words are made up of letters (Peltzman, 2015). The Fernald technique is a multisensory approach used to assist students with reading difficulties to master decoding and comprehension. Phonics instruction was utilized to help students be successful. Developed in 1921 at The Clinic School at the University of California, Los Angeles it was used to help develop diagnostic, remedial, and preventative techniques. Students in the program had an intelligence level considered normal, and an extreme reading disability. According to Grace Fernald, “The first thing the child needs for satisfactory adjustment to life is successful achievement along those lines which fit him to meet the demands that will be made upon him” (p. 62, 1943). It
was important for remediation to be used before the student failed and emotional problems developed. After several observations it was noted that students would either withdraw from the group or compensate for their failure by becoming a disruption. Therefore the Fernald technique used an analytic method and reconditioning method to help struggling readers in their program. The analytic method uses factors that cause the students to have emotional problems and then focuses the student’s attention on these factors so they can verbalize and acknowledge them (Peltzman, 2015). The reconditioning method provides a substitute stimulus connected with a positive emotion. This process is repeated until the object causes a new emotion. This method, also known as the clinic school method, allows a student to begin with successful learning on the first day of instruction. No focus is placed on what the reader does not know, and students find they are capable of learning (2015).

**The literature approach.** This approach connects all of the language arts using the student’s life experiences as a foundation for reading material. Teachers have recognized the value of using students’ language and experiences as the basis for beginning reading instruction since the early part of the twentieth century. Research studies demonstrate that children have an innate capacity for acquiring and using language (Peltzman, 2015). Key contributor, Roach Van Allen, a key contributor, developed three components of experience that contribute most to reading (Goodman, 1973). These components are experiencing communication in a variety of situations, studying many types of communication, and relating communication of others to one’s self. Goodman explained, “The one big responsibility of a teacher at any level is to help students use and adopt as part of their behavior several ideas about themselves and
“language” (Goodman, 1973, p. 97). Students learn to express themselves in a variety of ways, it takes the most effective practices from many sources and using them in a functional way (Stauffer, 1970).

Literature Circles encourage students to discuss what they read in small groups and decide how to share their reading in a variety of ways. The Literature-Based Reading Approach allows students to use fiction and nonfiction selections to motivate them by using their own personal experiences to better understand what they read. The teacher connects stories to students’ personal backgrounds, teaches them to analyze the text for specific story elements, and monitors student understanding. This shift from basal readers to trade books as the basis of reading began in the 1980s as a result of more quality children’s literature becoming available. This was also influenced by the widespread adoption of whole language theory and the spread of reading-response theory. These theories support the belief that necessary skills can be taught within the context while students are actively reading (Roe, Smith, & Burns, 2005).

**The writing approach.** Grace Fernald also developed this method combining some techniques with Maria Montessori. In this method the child first begins reading instruction by tracing a word. This direct finger contact allows the child to use their kinesthetic abilities while committing the word to memory. After this stage is complete, the next stage ensues and is very similar, although tracing is no longer necessary: the student says the word and then writes it from memory. In the next phase the child is able to look at the printed word and say it before writing it. Finally, in the last phase the student has the ability to recognize new words from their similarity to other words or parts of words already learned (Peltzman, 2015).
More Recent Reading Programs

Reading recovery program. This intensive early intervention program for students requires a highly trained specialist who can accelerate a child’s rate of learning so they succeed when they return to the regular classroom. Marie Clay developed it during the 1970s in New Zealand (Harris & Hodges, 1995). This program consists of thirty minutes’ tuition per day for approximately twelve to fifteen weeks. Clay observed children and teachers for two years and then field-tested her procedures with students for one year. She observed that low progress readers only use a limited range of strategies and often rely on what they retrieve from memory instead of paying attention to the visual details of the text. She also noted that high-progress readers use a variety of strategies and shift between them as needed while also self-monitoring and integrating prior knowledge (Harris & Hodges, 1995). Clay believed the reading process to be based on strategies plus reading and writing work combined in order to strengthen a basic knowledge of both processes. She advocated that in order to become a skilled reader, students must read actively and needed to experience activities that integrated reader-based and text-based practices. She found it very important to help students with problems as soon as possible and found them to progress with their reading when they developed more strategies. According to Clay, “A child having problems with reading at the end of first grade will continue to have problems by the end of fourth grade” (Harris & Hodges, 1985, p. 177). Admission to her program was based on six measures: letter identification, a word test of high-frequency words, concepts about print, written high-frequency words, a dictation test, and running records. Students made significant progress in reading in the first year, through one-on-one tutoring (Harris & Hodges, 1995).
**The whole language approach.** This approach is a child-centered and collaborative method introducing everyone in the class as part of a community of learners. It is more of a belief system than a method. Everyone learns to read and write together using everyday materials, such as menus, magazines, and newspapers (Burns, Roe, & Smith, 2002). Learning is viewed as a personal commitment for which students take responsibility and engage in self-evaluation. Although there are some positive aspects of this strategy, it has been criticized for lacking a systematic plan and not having enough direct teaching (2002).

**Reading and writing workshop** The Reading and writing workshop is currently being utilized at Finland Elementary as the core reading program aligned with the Common Core State Standards. The format provides opportunities for students to spend more time reading and writing independently. Strategies are taught as needed through mini lessons. Initially organized as a strategy for middle-school students, it has now been adopted by elementary grades (Lensmire, 1994). It begins by the teacher modeling a whole group strategy lesson and then giving the students time to practice the strategy in small groups, pairs, or independently. The teacher continually confers with students about their reading and how they use the strategy to comprehend the text. The workshop follows four procedures: mini lesson, status of the class report, workshop, and group share time. There have been some criticisms of this format. Since students’ written work is a result of their own particular concept of the world, students were not challenged to think about their work or view of the world (Lensmire, 1994). It was also found that some students from diverse cultures and social backgrounds were implicitly and explicitly told their writing and word choices were not as good as other students. However, material in
the workshop could be modified to challenge oppression and marginalization with instruction (Peltzman, 2015).

As society transforms and evolves, the school system continues to reflect these changes. One benefit of the evolution of society and its reflection in education is the development of more specialized fields and rigorous curriculums to help individuals maximize their potential. Many years after the common school was developed, a variety of curriculum theorists established ideas that still resonate in the public school system today.

**Read to Achieve.** Currently, North Carolina public schools have adopted the Read to Achieve program. According to this program, every student should be reading at or above grade level by the end of the third grade. The purpose of the program is the early identification of students with reading difficulties (NC Read to Achieve, 2016). Difficulty in reading development is defined by not demonstrating appropriate developmental abilities in any of the major reading areas – namely oral language, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension - according to diagnostic and formative assessments. A reading camp is provided to first and second grade students to help them meet reading goals by the end of third grade. Teachers in grades kindergarten through third should provide data that can be used with the Education Value Added Assessment System (EVAAS). This will allow teachers to analyze students and identify root causes of difficulty with reading development, as well as, determine actions to address them. Formative and diagnostic assessments and the resultant instructional support and services should address oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. If students are not successful in the Read to
Achieve Program, they should be retained in the third grade (2016). Finland Elementary School utilizes this program to help analyze students’ reading achievement. The programs selected for interventions and assessments are all research-based and meet the criteria for this program.

**Curriculum Development**

Connection between law and education are simple, states generate legislation and enact laws designated to control the contours of education (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Understanding curriculum development can reinforce the responsibility educators have for creating and inclusive program. This section discusses the development of recent curriculum and some implications on not utilizing student led initiatives. During the 1950’s and 1960’s Americans struggled to be the dominant world force and it was rumored that the Soviet Union educational programs were more rigorous. Therefore, it was necessary for America to push a more demanding and specified curriculum to cater for growing needs of a shifting society (Flinders & Thornton, 2013). According to Ralph Tyler, a comprehensive philosophy is necessary for making judgments. Knowledge is also needed as an intelligent basis for applying philosophy and making decisions about objectives (2013). As a guide for curriculum development, Tyler used questions to determine purpose, the experiences needed for the purpose, the beginning of the program, and evaluation of the program. The means-ends perspective requires developers to state clearly the objectives of a program prior to deciding its content. This is vital, because without objectives educators do not know the outcomes they seek or the criteria for determining a program’s effectiveness (Flinders & Thornton, 2013). If an educational
program is to be prepared with efforts for continual improvement in mind, there must be a conception of the goals (Tyler, 2013).

Although there is an influence of contemporary life in curriculum planning the basis for it has been argued. This can allow for practice and seeking examples among students outside of school. However, teaching students to solve the current problems they face may not be beneficial since students live in a changing society. Subject specialists are responsible for the development of objectives in the curriculum and for establishing a connection to content regarding what knowledge is of most worth (Tyler, 2013). The prediction about what one will need in the future becomes the origin of curriculum planning (2013). However, one criticism is that this magnifies the belief that education is for adult life and removes the child as a social member of society. The institution also has an impact on students. Curriculum developers must keep this in mind and analyze what is most important to know as well as what schools can accomplish (Kliebard, 2013).

The curriculum the school follows is part of the North Carolina Common Core State Standards. These standards are implemented statewide and guide the statewide assessments the students take each year. Many states have adopted these standards to fit the needs of their specific states. The curriculum claims that through “the rigorous pedagogy it will allow students to be college and career ready when they exit high school” (CCS, 2017). The writers of the Common Core Standards overlook the disparity between the prosperous schools and the underfunded schools that exist in the poorest neighborhoods (Wexler, 2014). The curriculum overtly teaches that students should be able to review literature and apply it to “real-world” situations. Covertly, the “real-world” situations are those best identified through the eyes of white middle-class students.
The “real-world” can be quite different for students based on their background and culture (Wexler, 2014, p. 54). The standards of the curriculum encourage “multicultural topics and student discussion with diverse partners” (CCS, 2015, SL 2.1). This may be quite difficult to achieve when the class participants lack the background knowledge to relate to the information. The curriculum gives recommendations for various stories the students should review based on grade level. Lucy Calkins and iReady are the reading programs primarily used at Finland Elementary. Both of these programs are aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

**Current Curriculum**

Teachers’ attitudes towards cultural pluralism is problematic in schools because of an ethnocentric view that any other culture other than the mainstream culture is inferior and should be discriminated against. This is largely due to the fear felt by some who believe if there is acceptance of other religions and cultures, they may become accepted nation wide. This was a major issue and the reason the Common Schools were formed “to halt a drift towards a multicultural society” (Spring, 2014, p. 106). This type of schooling used more of a traditional essentialist view in the development of a “factory model” school where conformity is essential from all students. The Common Core Standards encourage teachers to promote “higher-order thinking skills” to solve “real-world” problems (CCSS Initiative, 2015). Although there is some variation by state, the goals are all predominately the same. The main goal is for students to be college and career ready by the completion of high school.

Public schools should be open and accessible to all students and promote a positive learning environment (Wexler, 2014). Although all schools have the same
educational goal, i.e., to prepare students to be college and career ready and support the society where they live the disparity remains among low-income schools and schools belonging to a higher socio-economic neighborhoods (Wexler, 2014). Schools with more funding and community support typically receive greater opportunities and consecutively achieve a higher rating. This phenomenon is not solely a result of the Common Core Standards, but has been a problem for years. Furthermore, there is no quick fix for this issue and parents, teachers, and the government should work together to solve this problem (Wexler, 2014).

It is important for a curriculum to be adjusted regularly to ensure it is meeting the needs of students. Most students do not need a diluted version of Common Core in order to be successful. The foundation of the CCSS supports the ideas of student learning and wishes to challenge students to reach new heights of academic achievement. Students should be held to high standards that are appropriate to their abilities. Like any type of educational system, the Common Core Standards are not one-size fits all (Wexler, 2014). Some students will succeed under this curriculum and some may need alternatives to promote their success. Individuals on both sides of the CCSS argument should keep an open mind and offer ideas for support in areas needed. The goal for educators and society is to collaborate and open the door for communication between different fields on how to improve and ensure students are receiving the best support possible (2014). In most schools there is an overt and a covert curriculum that is taught. This covert curriculum, otherwise known as the “hidden curriculum,” is just as vital to master (Jackson, 2013, p. 123). The purpose of the hidden curriculum is conformity to the school’s rules and traditions.
In order to implement high-stakes testing, there must be a standard curriculum that is tested. When dealing with a multicultural society, it can be difficult to understand how a diverse society of learners is affected by a standard curriculum. Raising standards has become synonymous with standardizing the curriculum. Codes of power can be uncovered by examining how a curriculum is classified and framed. There are two codes that describe this. The collection code is a strong classification of knowledge with greater status given to academic knowledge over everyday knowledge. The *integrated code* is weakly classified, with blurred boundaries and a lesser view of hierarchal knowledge (Sleeter & Stillman, 2013). Not only is curriculum implemented through standardized testing, but textbook selection also plays a key role. This also creates issues when textbooks are culturally swayed towards students of Eurocentric culture. Many arguments exist that claim multicultural curriculum is weak and follows the integrated code that depends on teacher experience and knowledge. However, teacher experience and knowledge varies and is unable to be standardized (2013).

**Racism in Society**

Race has become metaphorical in a way of referring to different forces, events, classes, and expressions of social decay and economic division (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Through this process individuals develop notions of “conceptual whiteness” and “conceptual blackness”. The creation of these conceptual categorizes aims to legitimize binary structures in a racist society where “whiteness” is considered normative (1998, p. 10). The United States is considered a melting pot of a variety of cultures. It is believed that there is one shared core culture, known as the macroculture. However, there are also other cultures to which people belong, known collectively as the microculture (Banks &
Banks, 2012). The differences between the microculture and the macroculture often lead to many cultural misunderstandings, conflicts, and institutional discrimination (Banks & Banks, 2012). Students who are members of a certain cultures or ethnic groups are often socialized to act and think in different ways at home and school. This has a major influence on a student’s intrinsic motivation. In some cases, students are asked to compromise their culture and identity to attain academic achievement (Gay, 2010). These students may also experience “double consciousness”, the sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others (DuBois, 1903). One of the challenges a CRP aims to achieve is how to support students from diverse groups and help them manage cultural messages between their homes and schools. It is important for students to acquire the knowledge necessary to function effectively in a variety of cultural settings in order to be successful (Banks & Banks, 2012). Culture is defined as a group’s description for the survival and adjustment to its environment. It consists of knowledge, ethics, and values that are shared by the group members. How each group interprets these values is how a variety of cultures are typically distinguished from one another (Banks & Banks, 2012).

Many individuals internalize the stereotypes and images portrayed of them in mainstream culture and the media (Roppolo, 2003). Internal strife results in insecurity and restlessness. La mestizo refers to the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another (Anzaldúa, 2013, p. 93). An issue that occurs with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds is when the beliefs of one culture attack the other, creating divided loyalties and feelings of loneliness. Multiracial children face discrimination and demands to comply with racial rules enforced by those around them (Dalmage, 2003). There are also varieties of language individuals must learn to communicate and be
accepted into social groups (Aviles, 2007). Individuals must also look a certain way to obtain a certain perceived beauty (Chung, 2001). Many Asian Americans must comply with the beauty standards set by those of their own race and those outside in mainstream America. This gives the individual, particularly a female, a standard to follow and a look to obtain to be seen as beautiful (2001). Fayad rails against this enforced identity by stating; “Each Arabic woman must represent herself with a range of identities and not an object to be crushed together for Western consumption” (1994, p. 342). Each individual has multiple social identities (Agyazian & Tatum, 2004). Descriptors or Southern metaphors such as “Southern belle” and “white trash” reflect the psycho-historical basis for identities in many Southern communities. These metaphors maintain and shape self-image while limiting possibilities through socially created identities (Sears, 1991).

Many circumstances of oppression are not explicit. Many unjust circumstances are also the outcomes of the normal and acceptable actions of millions of individuals (Young, 1990). As educators we must be careful not to trivialize the effects of oppression through the language we use and the stories in which we describe those oppressed (Hardiman, Jackson, & Griffin, 2007). Confronting oppression benefits everyone, but those in the privileged group fear the loss of power, however, the outcome can be equitable through the redistribution of power (2007). Change movements are filled with people who made decisions to interrupt the cycle of socialization and systems of oppression (Harro, 2008). If we understand how these inequalities have given rise to privilege, then we can change them (Adams, 2013). The voice component of CRP provides a way to communicate the experiences and realities of oppressed groups. This is
the first step in understanding the complexities of racisms and beginning the process of social justice (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

**The Need for Social Justice**

Often in education we hear the term, “achievement gap”, however, this moves us towards a short-term solution that does not address the underlying problem (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Education debt is the historical, economical, sociopolitical, and moral decisions that have created many of the disparities in educational outcomes. The American Dream, the belief that everyone in the United States has an equal opportunity to succeed with hard work, denies the obstacles so many individuals face in order to make an adequate living (Mantsios, 2007). According to research and societal beliefs, socioeconomic status plays a significant role in an individual’s chances for educational achievement and future outcomes. Wealth inequality has been structured over many generations through the same barriers that have hindered so many, specifically African Americans (Oliver, Melvin, & Shapiro, 2006). Reviewing history and various political practices of the past, it becomes apparent how certain neighborhoods and educational institutions have become increasingly impoverished, while others have flourished. Unfortunately, many of those affected have been people of color because of Jim Crow de jure segregation and institutionalized racism (2006). Since wealth accumulates over generations, discrimination has taken its toll on providing opportunities for African Americans to acquire wealth (Yeskel, 2005). In the past, as stated under the Federal Housing Act, “If a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same race and social class” (Oliver & Shapiro, 2006, p. 166). When neighborhoods are cut off from resources such as stores, restaurants, and
quality schools homes begin to lose their value. During the 1930’s, it was believed by all races that “blacks were an inferior race” (Powell, 2008, p. 9). This influenced the Jim Crow laws during this time that prevailed in society at this time. Many African Americans did not have access to books and their schools lacked materials. It was not uncommon for the class to only have one copy of a book for the students to follow while the teacher read aloud.

Institutional racism can be both indirect and unconscious and keeps people in an inferior status on the basis of color within institutional structures (Estes, 1978). This can be seen in the cultural biases in curriculums and in the materials selected for instruction. Many of the materials are designed through the scope of white, middle-class students putting students from other backgrounds and cultures at a disadvantage (Hanssen, 1998). Significant data show African American and Hispanic students perform lower with regard to high school completion, college enrollment, and standardized tests. It is not because the students have a low IQ; it is because they have been presented with a Eurocentric curriculum that benefits predominately white students and their culture. This is a significant cause for institutional racism and a major concern for society. According to Castañeda & Zúñiga, “Racism impacts the quality of all of our lives because it resides with in all significant structures of society” (2013, p. 61). Institutional racism occurs when racial prejudice and biases are combined with social power (Tatum, 2013a). The ultimate goal for our society should be to make changes in curriculums that allow material to be relatable and accessible to all students. Our schools should be determined to eliminate institutional racism by making privilege available to everyone (Smith, 2013).
Making communities and individuals in leadership roles aware of these issues is the first step and is critical for change (Smith, 2013).

In many schools and residential areas, there is disproportion between European Americans and African Americans. Wealth and class have played a major role in the gains of one race over the other. The inequality between whites and people of color is not due to random events however; it has been examined throughout events in American history. Jim Crow de jure discrimination or segregation laws, politics, schools, and society have played a major role in this disparity (Oliver & Shapiro, 2013). Even though these laws were abolished over fifty years ago, there is even more segregation in schools today. Their negative effects have left a major imprint on American society that continues today. These laws called for separation between two groups of people based strictly on the color of their skin. Schools, neighborhoods, transportation, and public places were all forced to follow these laws, encouraging discrimination.

Discrimination is a method that can be used by privileged individuals to create and secure a better future for themselves and their offspring (Oliver & Shapiro, 2013). When government incentive programs were created to further expansion through housing opportunities, African Americans were less likely to be approved for these programs. Many African Americans were restricted to living in inner-city areas instead of suburban housing in more rural areas (Tatum, 2013b). The result of limiting housing to African Americans resulted in restraints in education and society. Purchasing a home provides a great investment for a family. When the value of housing in a neighborhood increases, the family is able to use this investment to their advantage to gain wealth. Housing in undesirable neighborhoods typically has a poor resale value. By segregating African
Americans to these poorer areas, it decreased the opportunities for them to make investments and create wealth for themselves (Oliver & Shapiro, 2013). Even long after the Jim Crow laws were abolished, a Federal Reserve study showed that whites were three times more likely than African Americans to be approved for a housing loan, creating a greater restriction on being able to live in a more desirable neighborhood (Oliver & Shapiro, 2013).

Institutional racism continues to be a problem in the United States and can be seen through voter suppression, school zoning, healthcare access, gifted and special education referral as well as many other social and political areas. There are several examples of the United States aiding and creating segregated neighborhoods and thus limiting educational opportunities for people of color (Lipstiz, 1998). For example, the Federal Housing Act of 1934 brought homeownership within reach for many, but the racist clauses effectively channeled almost all of the money to white neighborhoods. In the 1970’s the Department of Housing and Urban Development red-lined inner cities making them ineligible for many loans and there-by destroying inner-city housing for generations to come (Lipstiz, 1998).

Often, many Americans deal with racism by claiming that it does not exist. By adopting a color-blind ideology, individuals fail to acknowledge that others have been hurt by the racism that exists throughout American culture (Roppolo, 2003). The idea that color-blindness exists establishes a degree of confusion and denial. It allows many to indulge in a sense of false community and a lack of responsibility (Williams, 2001). Although most racism is not deliberate, when policies give racial identities a social meaning and allow different opportunities and life chances for some, it is harmful to all
of society (Lipstiz, 1998). Those who participate in deliberate racism make justifications by claiming non-white racial groups act in such a way that explains negative stereotypes (Roppolo, 2003). In the past, significantly less money has been spent on education for African American students, specifically in the South (Schramm-Pate, 2008).

Desegregation represents not just a policy or set of political choices, but an aspiration and a vision of a cohesive and just society. Desegregation may, as Martin Luther King, Jr. said, create a society, “where men are physically desegregated and spiritually segregated, where elbows are together and hearts are apart [giving] us social togetherness and spiritual apartness [which] can leave people of color with a stagnant equality of sameness rather than a constructive equally of oneness” (Eaton, 2009, p. 344). Integration greatly exceeding “assimilation” is a richer way of coming together (2009, p. 345). It takes more than political action: it takes open hearts, open minds, and open attitudes to promote change.

The Influence of Paulo Freire

The Pedagogy of the Oppressed has two stages. First, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and commit to its transformation. In the second stage, the reality of the oppression has already been transformed and the pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed. It becomes pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation (Freire, 1970). In both of these stages it is always through in-depth action that the culture of domination is confronted.

Freire also discusses “banking education” or traditional educational practices. He argues this practice maintains and creates contradiction through the following attitudes and practices, which mirror the oppressive society. These practices are as follows: the
teacher teaches the students; the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing; the teacher thinks and the students are thought about; the teacher talks and students listen quietly; the teacher disciplines; the teacher enforces his or her choice and students comply; and the teacher is subject of the learning process, while the students are objects (1970). In order for dialogue to exist, humility must exist. Often educators speak and are not understood because their language is not attuned to the situation of the people in which they communicate. In order to communicate effectively, educators must understand the structural conditions in a similar way of thinking and language as of the people. The anthropological concept of culture is one of the major themes that clarify the role of the people in the world with the world as transforming rather than adapting (1970). According to Freire, oppression of all types has four dimensions: conquest, divide and conquer, manipulation, and cultural invasion. Cultural invasion is the fundamental characteristic of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed. When one imposes one’s own views on others, they lose originality. It is creative human beings that in their relations not only produce tangible objects, but social institutions, ideas, and concepts (Freire, 1970).

Studies Implementing CRC and CRP

Many of the research studies utilizing CRP were at the secondary or higher education level, but they still had a major impact on my research. I utilized the information and data from these studies in order to develop a plan for implementing CRP at the elementary level. The studies discussing culturally relevant care have impacted this study by providing a framework. One of the leading studies that has impacted this experience, Daring to Care: The Role of Culturally Relevant Care in Mentoring Black and Latino Male High School Students, provides examples and research on building
Esteem through focus groups (Watson, Sealey-Ruiz & Jackson, 2016). This phenomenological qualitative study investigated the experiences of African American and Hispanic males in a mentoring program. Data was collected over a two-year period from participant observations during the sessions, one-on-one interviews, and focus group interviews. It was analyzed through constructivist grounded theory, and the interviews were transcribed, and coded line by line to identify elements of CRC (Sealey-Ruiz & Jackson, 2016). The researcher also engaged in reflexive subjectivity, in which he considered how he influenced and is influenced by the data and participants.

Many interventional programs involving male youths of color are often driven by adults who want to “fix them” by teaching the basics and equipping the students with white middle-class norms. This program utilized CRC and was characterized by a strong sense of community, rigorous demands, integration of different cultures, and a general affirmation of one’s humanity (Sealey-Ruiz & Jackson, 2016). The program strived to build high self-esteem and academic achievement among the participants rather than focusing on changing the individual. The capacity-oriented and social justice approach allowed a shift in the social dynamics based on the youths’ perceived status, built on their experiences, and emphasized transformation as an important area of growth. The CRC of this program committed to both individual and collective empowerment. A capacity-oriented and social justice stance included students’ home and community knowledge into the learning space. Culturally connected care was also implemented, which entailed creating a community with rituals and practices similar to those in the students’ home lives (Sealey-Ruiz & Jackson, 2016). Behavioral expectations, nurturing patterns, and forms of affection took place in a manner that did not require students to abandon their
cultural identities. Mutual trust allowed the individuals to open up to each other in ways that prompted sharing their knowledge, cultures, and experiences with understanding and authentic care.

The findings from this program revealed the young men deepened their trust, as they were able to build a community and share their knowledge and experiences. High expectations were maintained and mutual trust helped develop an openness to share experiences. CRC requires group members to bring their background, culture, and experiences into the group. At the beginning of the focus group sessions, many of the participants viewed the adults in their lives as “people who were trying to control them, get them into trouble, or take them away from their families” (Sealey-Ruiz & Jackson, 2016, p. 990). The program allowed the students opportunities to reimagine relationships with adults in general. The participants felt “heard and respected” a humanizing experience that they said was often missing from their experience in traditional schools” (Sealey-Ruiz & Jackson, 2016, p. 991).

The group session allowed the participants to bond with their peers and helped develop future relationships of mutual trust. An important element of this study and CRC in general, is that adults get to know youth before setting expectations and asking for commitment (Sealey-Ruiz & Jackson, 2016). Educators should not simply impart their own agenda rather plan learning based on the interests of community members (Friere, 1970). This example of CRC has impacted this research study and is beneficial to all educators. Building mutual trust, high demands, and care are significant factors in creating successful outcomes for all students, particularly those from diverse cultural backgrounds. This study proves that educators can no longer continue to view students
through the deficit lens if they are to dictate high expectations. There must also be space provided for students to act as agents of their own success (2016).

Educators play a critical role in managing issues of race and ethnicity not only in the educational setting but in society as well. Community activists and teachers are both important change agents with a direct connection to providing quality education for African American and Hispanic children (D’Amico, 2016). Typically, school has been a reflection of society and the academic gaps that are most prevalent are merely a by-product of gaps that exist in society at large (Howard, 2010). Often, change starts from the top-down (Griffin, 2015). Educational leaders must make these issues a priority through enacting standard policy and practice that can be individualized to meet the needs of schools and classrooms. Although, policy makers can enforce policies of practice and set guidelines for educators, it is still ultimately the teachers who facilitate the changes. Districts and administrators are responsible for ensuring teachers are supported and provided with accurate resources and data to guide these practices. One of the main issues associated with racism in the school setting, is the unequal access to education. Therefore, it is critical that teachers ensure that all children regardless of race, ethnicity, income level, and ability level, are able to access the curriculum and achieve a quality education (D’Amico, 2016).

There are a variety of reasons teachers avoid issues of race in the school setting. They may be fearful of creating conflict or upsetting parents and colleagues. This is specifically true at the elementary level, although it is just as important to encourage inclusiveness at this age level. Teachers may also feel it is not relevant to their subject area. Teachers may adopt a “color-blind” ideology and deny negative race relations in the
school setting (Griffin, 2015). This allows them to ignore racial discrimination and minimize hyper-racial exchanges between students. Even when there is an understanding that racial discrimination and racism occur in the school, many teachers will remain silent. This reaction is known as “abstract liberalism,” supporting equality and diversity, but not enacting any policies or practices to make necessary changes (Griffin, 2015, p. 135). When teachers ignore race they unknowingly contribute to a system where racial disparities and discrimination are not addressed and diversity is not celebrated. Many teachers pass their racism off through the lenses of cultural racism, blaming the “culture” and “behavioral deficiencies” of students of color (Griffin, 2015, p. 136). Educators cannot reasonably approach the role institutional racism plays without enhancing their own awareness and effectiveness in cross-racial and cross-cultural interactions.

In order to successfully educate all students, the topic of race is unavoidable in schools. Professional development and teacher education programs that provide teachers with opportunities to collaboratively and productively discuss these issues are most beneficial to creating solutions. In too many instances traditional approaches to diversity education and training have demonstrated to students they are living in a post-racial society and reinforced teachers’ denial about the significance of race relations in the academic environment. In the book Those Kids, Our Schools: Race and Reform in an American High School, Shayla Griffin discusses her research training teachers regarding issues of race, ethnicity, and culture (2015). Although there are also many examples of teachers’ avoidance of race and being translated throughout the school, the productive training sessions demonstrate the effect on teachers to become more aware and discuss issues in a collaborative way and gain a better understanding of how race specifically
affects their school. The *Race in the Classroom Series* is the professional development practice used in this research. It was a voluntary training comprising five sessions where teachers met for a total of ten hours. The focus was to address issues of race in their classrooms (Griffin, 2015). The approach used was a Freireian style where the facilitator asked questions until participants began asking questions of themselves and others to generate critical thinking. The leaders of the discussion group also acted as participants as well, so the teachers felt more comfortable exploring ideas and learning as a group. The questions were open-ended with no right or wrong answer. Some examples of these questions were: “How do students from different racial groups get along at school?” and “How does race influence how students get along with teachers?” (Griffin, 2015, p. 202).

Griffin’s findings were based on observations and post interviews conducted. Her findings support the idea “that open dialogue, small group, face-to-face conversation across differences have the potential to provide students and their teachers opportunities to think critically about the maintenance of hierarchical relations in school and to plan how to interpret these inequalities” (Griffin, 2015, p. 205). This type of result does not happen through a ready-made program. The reason these pre-planned programs are not successful is because they are not created with the specific needs of a particular school in mind. Although the challenges may be universal, the contexts are all unique. The program Griffin imposed was successful because it was designed after a systematic and authentic examination of the school through the review of data and observations (2015).

It is critical for teachers to gain an understanding of race and ethnicity in their schools in order to pass this knowledge on to their students. By undergoing effective professional development, teachers will be able to examine their own motivations and
actions while designing a practical plan for their students to engage in discussion on race with their peers. Not only can teachers then actively engage students, but they can also examine the curriculum and request policy changes in areas where the hidden curriculum sends messages of racism. It will also allow for more confidence in discussing issues with students in various settings throughout the school (Griffin, 2015). Not only is this beneficial for the student population and school climate, but it is also beneficial for the community. The goal of education is to create productive and successful members of society. There are so many racial issues that have a negative impact on society. By organizing groups and discussions with students, their knowledge can be further distributed throughout their families and communities to challenge the status quo.

Most importantly, teacher training on race and racism should prompt teachers to recognize when racial disparities exist among their students. Schools and districts should allow teachers to become familiar with the data that exposes these truths. There have been several adjustments made on a national level to inform teachers of and attempt to eliminate the disproportionate access to educational opportunities. One example of a policy put into practice is the reorganization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA in 2004 (Cramer & Bennett, 2015). Across America, the data has continued to show a disproportionate representation of African American and Hispanic students being identified as needing special education services. A major intervention changed the way students are referred for services have changed. Response to Intervention (RTI) or Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) is used with all students showing an educational deficit to provide intervention and data collection in a tiered level fashion. Although special education services are beneficial to students who need them,
they should not be implemented for every student just because he or she may appear to be below grade level. If implemented correctly it should allow teachers and diagnosticians to determine if a student has a disability and needs further evaluation for services or if they are just at a deficit due to environmental factors that can be corrected through interventional support. Although most teachers are aware of the practices of RTI and the overrepresentation of African American students receiving services, some may not be aware how this specifically relates to their school and their students. This is why it is important for data to be collected, discussed, and distributed to teachers to allow for a better understanding of the importance of these practices in managing issues of race and racism in schools (Griffin, 2015).

When teachers understand and are able to apply critical race theory, it can be beneficial to being prepared to deal with these issues. Critical race theory (CRT) recognizes that racism is ingrained in American society. Institutional racism is prevalent in the dominant culture based on white privilege, which perpetuates the marginalization of people of color. Understanding that these concepts exist and seeing them played out can help educators on all levels to adequately prepare for parent opposition (Bell, 2013). Information can be given to parents informing them of the benefits of providing and emphasizing a more diverse and multicultural curriculum.

Using a variety of frameworks to understand multiculturalism can allow individuals to broaden their understanding of diversity to promote social justice and equality for all. Social justice is both a process and a goal championed by those who feel a sense of social responsibility (Bell, 2013). The purpose of this form of pedagogy is to enable students to not only to become concerned citizens but also to actively pursue
social and political justice (Schramm-Pate & Jeffries, 2008). As teachers and students collaborate to better understand an increasingly diverse and interconnected world, there are levels of depth and enlightenment that eventually foster change (Carlson, 2008). An assumption many individuals make is “if we just began to appreciate differences and treat others with respect… there would be no oppression” (Harro, 2008, p. 45).

Teachers can also find ways to relate the topics and incorporate them in areas of the curriculum. For example, teachers can incorporate more literature for students, thus exposing them to different cultures. It can be beneficial for students to see people of color as main characters and make information more relatable. Implementation of a multicultural curriculum is a beneficial practice for teachers to implement into their pedagogy as a method of not only managing issues of race in the school setting, but also informing students and enhancing their educational experience. In order to make education equal, all cultures must be embraced and celebrated in the curriculum. Race can seem like such a simple concept. In most cases it is defined by skin color and therefore culture must also be taken into consideration. Although race and culture are two separate entities, culture plays a role in understanding race and ethnicity. Culture matters because it shapes all aspects of daily living. Culture is a complex constellation of values, morals, norms, customs, and ways of knowing passed down from generation to generation and it serves as a method of interpreting the world around us (Howard, 2010). The degree to which we understand how these intangible aspects shape attitudes and behaviors has tremendous benefits and consequences for teachers and students in diverse schools. The “culture-ethnicity learning link” is an effective means for increasing student performance, in particular for students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Howard, 2010,
p. 53). Some research shows the cultural disconnect between home and school to be one explanation for lower educational outcomes for students from culturally diverse backgrounds. For example, this indicates that African American students often feel they have to suppress their racial identities and surrender their own cultural knowledge to achieve academic success. A multicultural curriculum can be beneficial to all students in regards to managing racial issues. It can allow for all students to feel accepted and makes the curriculum more relatable. It allows students to see different cultures in a positive manner and gain a better understanding of the world around them. It reiterates the importance of acceptance and appreciation of others.

One way a multicultural curriculum can be implemented is through the use of cultural historical activity theory. This process of learning uses signs, symbols, artifacts, and other cultural tools to enhance language, skills, knowledge, and beliefs (Howard, 2010). Reading material and various media examples can serve as a great way to implement a multicultural curriculum. Using examples of people and characters the students can relate to can allow for a more engaging educational experience where information is better retained. This also helps to normalize culture in everyday practice (Howard, 2010). Activities and group projects that are relatable can also be beneficial. However, these activities cannot be successfully carried out without an accurate knowledge that is personalized. A culturally responsive curriculum also incorporates multiculturalism into the scope of practice and personalizes learning to the needs of one’s specific class. Although the standards in the curriculum may be set by the state, it can be implemented differently through a variety of resources. Differentiation of the curriculum is encouraged by most schools and is done through the use of knowledge and creativity.
Teachers have the ability and the right to personalize the curriculum to fit the needs of their students. When social experiences are incorporated into the curriculum and instruction through the use of cultural and linguistic resources academic problems can be solved. Students become physically energized, intellectually engaged, and verbally fluent in the classroom (Gay, 2010). So often, learning experiences and achievement are based on standardized test scores. While all students should be given the knowledge and skills to display achievement on these tests and compete on a national level, it is important to ensure moral, social, cultural, and personal development is also achieved. Teachers must learn how to recognize, honor, and incorporate the personal abilities of students into their teaching strategies. This helps to educate the whole child. It can be achieved by simply getting to know each child as an individual and not a stereotype, understanding the impact their specific culture and race has on the individual and creating ways of implementing things that are important and relatable to the student in their teaching practices. Getting to know students on a personal level will simultaneously build the student-teacher relationship and have a positive impact on classroom management and environment, allowing for enhanced learning to occur. This will allow for an even greater access to educational attainment and achievement for all students.

Failure to engage in critical discussions about race will further polarize a nation with increasingly rich racial diversity. Our society is constantly changing and becoming even more diverse. It is evident that racism exists in all parts of society, not just the school setting, so schools must set the example and adequately prepare students to become productive and contributing members of society. Therefore, while theories and policies are important, the changes needed are made through practice. It is essential for
teachers to actively manage these issues in their classrooms by first gaining an understanding of the issues specific to their students and schools. This can be achieved through actively collecting and examining data to ensure achievement across all racial backgrounds. Data is critical and should guide all practices; in this way no one can make the claim that race is insignificant. This data should be made available and to all (administrators, teachers, parents, and students) and discussed frequently. Also, through the support of administration, teachers should be trained to make racial issues a priority. They must openly discuss these issues and prepare for resistance. Gaining the support of colleagues can play a huge role in the effectiveness of these practices. Collaborating and sharing creative ideas with each grade level and subject area can have a positive impact on implementation. If these issues are difficult for adults and professionals to discuss, they are even more difficult for students aiming for acceptance among their peers to discuss. This is why diversity must be not only be accepted, but also celebrated among both teachers and students. Implementing culturally relevant pedagogy in classrooms must become the norm in the education setting. This will further normalize diversity and create a greater appreciation for all races and cultures. When these practices are put into place and lived out daily by the examples teachers set in their individual classrooms, it will not only have a positive impact in managing racial issues at the school level, but will also contribute to eliminating racism, stereotypes, and biases in all areas of society. It cannot simply be stated with good intentions, there must be a plan of practice in order for a change to be made.

In another research study, *Transforming the Classroom at Traditionally White Institutions to make Black Lives Matter*, seven principles of inclusive pedagogies were
examined. These pedagogies have the potential to create racially inclusive, affirming and equitable learning environments for all students (Tuit, Haynes, & Stewart, 2018). These principles are intentional praxis, voice and lived experience, interdisciplinary and diverse content, anti-racist equity mindset, identity affirming and socially just learning environment, courage transparency, resilient emotional labor of love (2018). Black Lives Matter is a movement created after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the murder of Trayvon Martin. It aims to center and affirm ways African Americans engage in resilience and meaningfully contribute to society even as policies and practices in the United States “systematically target them (Garza, 2014, p. 1). In the research study, racism was defined as permeating the sum of experiences on campus and in communities. The study discussed how traditionally white institutions have failed to create educational opportunities both in and out of the classroom where racially diverse students can engage in learning that suggests their lives and lived experiences matter.

On these campuses there is a consistent request for faculty development that would enhance their ability to create an inclusive learning environment (Tuitt, 2003). Two specific requests would help create this environment. The first, revisions in the curriculum where topics related to race, ethnic studies, and social justice are featured more. The second would include diversity and inclusion training for faculty and instructors would inquire the skills to teach in racially diverse environments. It is critical to have an intentional approach in place. These forms of pedagogy may also be described at reality pedagogy, meeting each student in their own cultural territory and humanizing pedagogy, where intentional praxis is designed to build trust and caring relationships with students (Edmin, 2016; Tuitt, 2003). These instructional practices can lead to new ways
of thinking. Educators must ensure they have well thought out theoretical and conceptual approach to bringing the voice and lived experiences of their students to the center of the learning environment. This will encourage personalized subject matter with examples from their own lived experiences. When students feel empowered to make connections between ideas and the world, as they understand it, learning becomes liberating (Tuitt, Haynes, & Stewart, 2018). Activating student voices and leveraging their lived experiences are two ways in which educators can engage learners while challenging and extending their understanding of the individual and group sense of self. Engaging students with diverse perspectives challenges them to stretch their intellectual comfort zones and exposes them to the existence of alternative experiences. It is important for educators to avoid the tendency to compare people’s lived experiences, where one racial group’s experience is considered to be representative of all others (2018). When educators tokenize a person or population, efforts to capture the complex, constantly changing reality of racial discrimination are diminished. It is important to keep in mind that teachers and students come to the classroom with multiple and interlocking aspects of identity that shape how they experience the classroom (Tuitt, 2003). It is possible to create optimal teaching and learning environments if educators build relationships with students outside the classroom, design instruction that positions students at the center of the learning process, and enter the learning environment transparently (Tuitt, Haynes, & Stewart, 2018).

**Studies on Motivation**

Many studies base motivation on self determination theory (SDT). SDT is a macro theory of human motivation concerned with the development and functioning of
personality within a social context (Katz, Kaplan, & Gueta, 2010). The belief underpinning this theory is that the more self-sufficient the motivation or control of action the higher the quality of engagement and the overall esteem of the student. In other words, the theory is based on three basic psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. (2010). Cognitive evaluation theory within SDT suggests “social contexts that produce a sense of autonomy and feelings of competence foster one’s inherent tendency toward intrinsic motivation (Crow & Kastello, 2017, p. 157).

In a national survey, teachers revealed that creating interest in reading was rated as the most important area of future research. Highly motivated readers are self-determining and generate their own reading opportunities. According to motivational theorists, the expectancy value theory of motivation is strongly influenced by one’s expectation of success or failure at a task as well as the “value or relative attractiveness the individual places on the task” (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, Mazzoni, 1996, p. 518). Therefore, high motivation to read is associated with positive self-concept and high self-esteem.

The two case studies listed below summarize research studies that use a variety of activities to provide students with intrinsic motivation. These studies focus on literacy activities with elementary students. Since my study mainly focuses on implementing CRP to enhance motivation I compared these studies with the research on CRP to determine pedagogical similarities. I did not select a wide variety of motivational studies, because I wanted to use mainly CRP as my main focus. These studies helped me develop strategies related to CRP in my tutoring groups.
Enhancing Elementary Students Motivation to Read and Write: A Classroom Intervention Study. In the study conducted by Miller and Meece (1997), 187 third grade students were examined to determine how different reading and language arts assignments influenced their motivational goals, strategy use, and achievement affect: anxiety and self-concept. In the assignments the students had to write multiple paragraphs, collaborate with peers, and monitor their progress over an extended period of time. Student input and choice regarding the design of the assignments were encouraged (1997). The study used both qualitative and quantitative interviews and surveys.

The results showed that it was beneficial for the students when the teachers implemented the three tasks into their literacy activities were beneficial for students. Students were less focused on teacher approval and more focused on long-term self-regulated goals (1997). Students were able to master skills with in the time frame because of the focus on the activities. Mastery-oriented students generally hold high perceptions of their abilities. This was reflected positively in the surveys regarding self-concept. However, when it came to the students’ anxiety, there was minimal benefit.

Constructing Literacy in Kindergarten: Task Structure, Collaboration, and Motivation. The purpose of this study was to exam children’s emergent motivation to read and write. The research question was “How does the nature of literacy as constructed by kindergarten students and teachers relate to students’ motivation to read and write?” (Nolen, 2001, p. 99). Research suggests that children enter school with a need to form positive relationships with their teachers and peers. These needs prompt children to adopt goals that reflect what their teachers and peers communicate to be important to success. This ethnographic study used field notes, teacher interviews, and
student interviews. The methodological framework used was “Contextual inquires of children’s discursive activity” (Nolen, 2001, p. 99). Researchers found that in classrooms where reading and writing were used for multiple purposes including: communication, self-expression, and pleasure supported by teacher and student collaboration, students were able to make connections between the real world and reading and writing. This also strengthened connections between school life and home life. Throughout the year the study was conducted, the students continued to show interest (2001).

Both of these studies discussed strategies that could be utilized with younger elementary students. Although these were not CRP strategies, they helped provide a structure for developing ideas to help students become motivated. It was essential to have a directive in both of these studies and allow students to become self-motivated. Choice and making connections were also themes in these two studies. These studies help reiterate the goal of CRP and the strategies provided to improve motivation.

**Recommendations**

It is important for educators to bring about awareness about stereotypes and biases to others to eliminate social injustice (Powell, 2007). Educators have great influence over many generations to come. Public schools are some of the few remaining public places where people gather to make meaning (Henke, 2008). Building communities where anyone can discuss complaints and hopes in an atmosphere of mutual support is critical in allowing individuals to regain power and promote change (van Gelder, 2012). The goal is to become more trustworthy, work together for economic and social justice, and understand how privilege may be embedded in our lives (Pittleman & Resource Generation, 2005). According to Robin DiAngelo’s book *White Fragility*, it is important
for individuals to engage in on-going self-awareness, continuing education, relationship building, and actual antiracist practice (2018). The lack of understanding and implicit bias can lead to aversive racism. While implicit bias is inherent in mankind inequality can occur simply through homogeneity. Individuals must be made aware of racial barriers in order to be motivated to remove them (DiAngelo, 2018).

The following strategies are recommendations for implementing CRP to enhance motivation. This approach works best with open-ended activities and multi-day assignments. Multi-day assignments are needed if students are to develop self-regulatory learning behaviors (Miller & Meece, 1997). The structure allows students to develop perceived competence in different school subject areas, including reading and writing. This helps to facilitate the development of autonomous motivation and limits the development of controlled motivation (Guay, Roy, & Valois, 2017).

Another way to incorporate CRP is to use differentiated instruction. This approach varies teaching based on individual student needs and abilities, using methodical procedures for academic progress monitoring and data-based decisions (2017). According to Guay, Roy, and Valois’s study (2017) on teacher structure, the more differentiated the instruction was used, the higher the students’ autonomous motivation. Reading instructors should carefully consider how they introduce and contextualize tasks when giving assignments in their classrooms. One of the primary ways teachers communicate what is important is through their selection of academic tasks (Nolen, 2001). Another method, the engagement model, can be beneficial in implementing these skills. According to the engagement model, concept-oriented reading instruction, a long-term reading comprehension approach where students collaboratively
read and discuss interesting self-selected texts that are introduced through hands-on activities, can have a positive effect on readers (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). The daily tasks that teachers follow are the best indicator for providing motivation in early literacy (Turner & Paris, 1995).

**Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter, key background and theoretical contributions were discussed to develop an action plan for my study. At the beginning of American Education, schools were exclusive entities meant only for the elite and, more specifically, white males. Reading approaches were developed with the majority population in mind to encourage patriotism and a Eurocentric educational norm (Tuitt, 2003). Societal challenges to create more just and equal educational opportunities require more comprehensive techniques. Researchers have observed the implications of institutional racism that perpetuates in our society. A multicultural perspective has emerged in curriculum studies based on these findings. One major contributor, Paulo Freire, is credited with advocating for the oppressed and creating a humanizing pedagogy. Throughout the research, the roles of race on culture were discussed. This plays a significant role in the lives of students. It matters in terms of perception students bring to the learning environment and their interactions (Tuitt, Haynes, & Stewart, 2018).

After examining studies related to CRC, which focused mainly on secondary and higher education students, it was beneficial to look at studies involving motivational techniques with early elementary students. These studies shared the same basic structure and many of the same concepts. However, the review of CRP found it not only encompasses these strategies (i.e., choice, individualization, and opportunities for self-
direction), but it also implements a more intentional approach to enhance motivation. Therefore it is important to identify conditions that can improve the potential of this pedagogical practice (Guay, Roy, & Valois, 2017). This involves offering students options and meaningful rationales, acknowledging student feedback, and avoiding the use of controlling language when instructing students in literacy activities (2017).

Students who experience early and repeated difficulties with reading may develop a self-concept as a “bad reader.” When students with performance-avoidance orientations experience failure, they attribute their failures to lack of ability rather than lack of effort. These students are in danger of forming maladaptive forms of behavior, such as learned helplessness, or low level of persistence, and they can even begin to engage in off-task behavior (Ciampa, 2012). This is why it becomes essential to build student confidence through CRP in order to initiate motivation early. It is important to reduce negative language and place students’ lived experiences at the center of instructional delivery (Turner & Paris, 1995). Self-determination theory assigns a primary role to significant people in an individual’s life (teachers, parents, peers) in providing support for a child’s basic psychological needs that contribute to the internalization of their motivation for activities. According to the research it is essential for students to be in a structured environment with a variety of opportunities to learn (Katz, Kaplan, & Gueta, 2010). Studies show that when teachers are more supportive of students’ psychological needs, the students are more engaged and motivated. CRP is a valuable when planning activities for students. It allows the teacher to structure open-ended activities that support a student’s psychological needs (Gillen-O’Neal, Ruble, & Fuligni, 2011).
CHAPTER THREE
ACTION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The plan for this action research study was developed based on my own personal experience, previous research studies, and a theoretical and historical framework. Social justice was also a primary contributor to the development of this study. Before determining the methodology, extensive research was conducted on the implementation of culturally relevant care and culturally relevant pedagogy. This plan was developed on the back of the success of previous studies.

Problem of Practice

The identified problem of practice (PoP) for this action research study stems from the end of the 2018 school year: teacher observations and diagnostic testing indicated many of the first and second grade students were showing a deficit in the area of reading achievement and becoming increasingly unmotivated. Students were also struggling to make connections with the current curriculum and instructional delivery, which also hindered motivation and engagement in learning. Students at Finland Elementary School (pseudonym) have continued to show the need for reading intervention and support. Based on the results of diagnostic iReady test scores and DIBELS Next scores some students lack the basic literacy skills to meet grade level requirements. Teachers claim current programs utilized such as the Lucy Calkins’ Reading Workshop and basic phonics methods have been ineffective in engaging students and promoting motivation.
Based on the researcher’s feedback from teachers, the students were having difficulty identifying with elements of the programs and have an overall negative attitude towards reading based on the researcher’s feedback from the students and their teachers. The programs lack choice and many of the practices are based on rote memorization. The problem is twofold for the students. They become bored with these practices and lose interest and remedial students feel these exercises to be insulting and below their age level. Teachers have had difficulty in finding ways to engage students and get them motivated to read. It is also difficult for the teachers to relate to some of the students as there is a very diverse population and the culture has shifted in recent years because of the changing demographic of the surrounding neighborhood.

Research Questions

This action research study asked the following two questions:

1. *What are the effects of implementing culturally relevant pedagogy on students’ intrinsic motivation towards reading?*

   This question was determined by identifying students’ attitudes towards reading. A pretest and posttest were conducted where students could provide their confidential feedback and opinions in regards to reading. There was also an opportunity for the students to provide feedback after each session by answering a few questions. This allowed the observer-researcher and teacher to differentiate each lesson.

2. *What are the effects of intrinsic motivation on reading improvement?*

   These effects were determined through student achievement results and progress monitoring. Observational notes were also beneficial to ensure reliability. The effects
were determined through a mixed methods approach using both the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to use culturally relevant pedagogy to encourage students to take ownership in order to enhance their intrinsic motivation and reading achievement. This study examined the effect on motivation of implementing culturally relevant pedagogy within an early literacy-tutoring program at a rural elementary school. The ultimate goal of the program was to improve motivation towards reading and reading achievement. Encouraging students to become intrinsically motivated based on their own enjoyment through the implementation of CRP teaching strategies achieved this. As CRP was incorporated students were able to build self-esteem and pride while learning reading strategies. It also allowed the students to build confidence and become proficient readers. By selecting CRP, I wanted to encourage teachers to learn more about the students’ cultures and increase better outcomes by incorporating their interests into their daily lessons.

**Action Research Method**

The action research method was selected for this study based on the need to provide information specific to the problem of practice. In order for this program to be successful, it was vital for self-examination of the teacher’s own culture and educational experiences. Not only is this a guide for personal teaching style and classroom expectations, but it can also cause prejudices and stereotypes to exist (Cramer & Bennett, 2015). In the past, some theorists have identified this as cultural deprivation and believe that those belonging to the lower socioeconomic classes cannot easily acquire cultural
capital and upward mobility simply because of the differences in culture (2015).
However, later work of cultural theorists acknowledge there are differences in home
culture, but this is not seen as a deficit. To change this mindset requires the
implementation of a culturally responsive pedagogy (Smith, 2012). Students are more
likely to become engaged in learning when they see their teachers as supportive,
responsive, and having a vested interest in them. Evidence suggests learning to be more
effective when a teacher can make connections between the school environment and the
community where a student lives (2012). After first examining personal, school, and
student culture, an action research design was used to implement the intervention as well
as collect and analyze data. Therefore, the action research method of this study allowed
the researcher-teacher to discuss culture openly with students. A place of reflection was
included in the observational notes page to allow for personal growth and development. It
also provided help with lesson planning and learning about students’ backgrounds.

**Setting and Time Frame of Study.** This study took place at a rural elementary
school during the spring before the End-of-Grade (EOG) tests were administered. The
EOG tests are administered to students in grades three to five at the elementary school.
None of the participants in the program participated in these tests. However, tutoring
groups were suspended during the week of testing. The study was conducted over a six-
week period. Students met with the tutor-researcher on a daily basis during the
instructional day. Typically, the students met in their small groups during independent
reading time or response-to-intervention reading time.
Participants in the Study

The participants in the study were elementary students in the first and second grade. Three groups of five were observed in this study. There were 15 participants in the study, four African American males, four African American females, four white males, and one white female. Administrators and teachers met prior to the study and determined the students who would be involved in the tutoring program. A quasi-experimental design was used to select the participants indicating the selection would be intact groups instead of randomized groups. They were selected for me by the administration after teacher referral. The parents and students in all my groups agreed to the informed consent and allowed their participation. All participants were assured this study was voluntary, ethical, and completely confidential. Therefore, when the results are presented in Chapter 4, pseudonyms will be used to disguise the students’ actual names.

The age of the students range from six to eight years old. The students were enrolled in the tutoring program on a needs basis, i.e. if they had exhibited a weakness in early literacy skills. The students are not identified as having cognitive or intellectual disabilities. All of the students speak English as their first language. Below is a table listing the participants of this study in detail.

Table 3.1 Participant Demographics and Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIBELS Next Test Administered</td>
<td>PSF</td>
<td>NWF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Males</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Females</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of African American Students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of White Students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Methods

The research design for this action research study uses both a quantitative and qualitative approach, known as a mixed-methods design. There is value in authenticity when combining both qualitative and quantitative methods and using a “mixed methods” approach (Trochim, 2006). The qualitative methods used are feedback forms and teacher observation notes that include a section for reflection and additional comments. The quantitative methods used are student pre/posttest surveys using a Likert scale, DIBELS Next scores, and current reading grades in the form of a percentage. This approach creates triangulation among data collected and ensures data is accurate (Mertler, 2014). It also allows for greater reliability, helps eliminate bias, and enhances the study. The ideas for the data collection in this study were taken from analyzing other studies and combining efforts to make this study as effective as possible.

Qualitative Methods Design

The qualitative methods used to collect data were student feedback forms, teacher observational field notes and reflection notes. These forms were kept in organized folders. The dates, times, and student identification number are indicated on each form to keep track of each session and student.

Student feedback forms were used to determine student engagement throughout the program. These forms asked the students the same three questions each week of the six-week program. These were completed at the end of the session each Friday. One sheet was used to record each student’s feedback from the group and it took approximately three minutes to complete. The feedback forms helped the teacher individualize tutoring based on each student’s responses. It also ensured CRP is implemented into the lesson.
plan and allowed instruction to be differentiated based on each student’s needs and interests. To ensure consistency, each student in the three groups was asked the same three questions:

1. What did you find interesting in the lesson today?
2. How could you use this information outside of school?
3. What would you like to learn more about?

The teacher reflection journals allowed the teacher to plan for each session and make changes to lesson plans. Before the sessions began the teacher and the coordinator looked at the quantitative data and pre-test survey for each student. Notes from an initial introduction session were recorded. This allowed the teacher-researcher to determine a plan for the student. Any changes the teacher made to the lesson plans and format were noted. Field notes were used for my own personal reflection. These notes also provide suggestions for changes needed throughout the study. Qualitative data were compared to quantitative methods to ensure information was accurate.

**Quantitative Methods Design**

The quantitative data used for this study were the students’ grades from their classroom teacher, a pretest/posttest survey that was read aloud to each individual student, and the DIBELS Next pre/posttest.

**Pretest/Posttest Survey.** This survey examined the students’ attitudes towards reading and literacy. I created this measurement tool using multiple sources. The main source I used was the Motivation to Read Profile created by Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996). The questions focused on motivation and how important the student felt literacy skills were in relation to reading enjoyment and comprehension. A Likert
scale was utilized for scoring and students were able to choose their answers based on the
following categories: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.
Emojis were utilized to allow the students to understand these concepts. Emojis are small
digital icons used to express an idea or an emotion in electronic communication. The
emojis were used as follows: Strongly Agree 😊, Agree 😊, Neutral 😐, Disagree 😞,
and Strongly Disagree. This was particularly beneficial for students with limited
vocabulary and reading capabilities.

**DIBELS Next Measurement.** The DIBELS Next measurement is a tool
commonly used in elementary schools in the United States for benchmark testing and
progress monitoring. The acronym stands for Dynamic Indictors of Basic Early Literacy
Skills. It is known as DIBELS Next because it has been revised from its original version.
Several studies have been conducted on the reliability and validity of this instrument.
Studies have determined DIBELS Next is a valid indicator for students’ early literacy
skills, reading skills, and future success in reading (Smolkowski & Cummings, 2016).

Some have questioned the reliability of eliminating cultural bias when
administering DIBELS Next to students from diverse cultural backgrounds. To further
ensure DIBELS Next attempts to eliminate cultural bias, the administration and scoring
guidelines indicate the following under item #7:

Articulation and dialect: The student is not penalized for imperfect pronunciation
due to dialect, articulation, or second language interference. For example, if the
student consistently says /th/ for /s/ and pronounces “thee” for “see” when naming
the letter “C”, he/she should be given credit for naming letter correctly. This is a
professional judgment and should be based on the student’s responses and any
prior knowledge of his/her speech patterns. (Good & Kaminski, 2002, p. 8)
There have been multiple studies that have contributed to the validation of DIBELS Next as a successful indicator of future reading success and an accurate measurement of a student’s ability level. For kindergartners and first graders, all DIBELS measures display adequate reliability. When 3 or 4 probes are used together, all DIBELS measures have estimated reliability in the .90s. DIBELS probes with the Woodcock and Johnson Broad Reading Cluster were .56 for PSF and .51 for NWF (Good & Kaminski, 2002). The students were administered an appropriate DIBELS Next probe based on their level given by their teacher. The two probes used were Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) and Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). The students completed a DIBELS Next probe at the beginning to establish a beginning benchmark score. The students were administered a final DIBELS Next probe at the end of the study to determine growth. There are different benchmarks associated with each DIBELS Next probe. DIBELS Next is administered to all students school-wide to determine reading achievement. It is aligned with the Common Core State Standards for reading and is therefore an important tool to recognize reading skill level and growth according to the developers of the program.

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) was one of the measurement tools used for students in one of the groups. This probe typically measures students in the winter of their kindergarten year. It may also be used to progress monitor students with low skills of phonological awareness. It measures a student’s ability to segment three and four phoneme words into their individual phonemes fluently. It is a good predictor of later reading achievement (Good & Kaminski, 2002). To conduct this probe, the teacher presents a word orally and the student has to segment it into the individual sounds. For example, for the word “sat”, the student would respond “/s/a/t/”. The desirable score for a
student in the middle of their kindergarten year is to be 51 or above, with 41 the cutoff score (0-41 = Intensive; 42-50 = strategic; 51 and above = Core) (Center on Teaching and Learning, 2012). This means the student should be able to segment more than 51 phonemes or sounds in one minute by the middle of kindergarten.

The probe used for Groups 2 and 3 was the Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) test. This test is primarily used for students in kindergarten to second grade (2012). It is also good for older children with low skills in letter–sound correspondence. It measures a student’s ability to blend letters using either (vowel-consonant) VC or CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) nonsense words. For example, a student may be presented with the word “baj.” He or she would have to either read the word by blending all the sounds as “baj” or could give the sounds of the letters individually as “/b/a/j/” (Good & Kaminski, 2002). Students receive a point for Whole Word Recognition (WWR) if they are able to look at the word and successfully blend it without sounding out each phoneme. For example if the student says “baj” instead of “/b/a/j/,” he or she will receive a score of 3 for NWF and 1 for WWR. The following chart lists the recommended benchmarks associated with each timeframe and their tiers for students in first and second grade (Center on Teaching and Learning, 2012).

*Table 3.2 Recommended Benchmarks for NWF and WWR*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 1 (Beginning) Months 1-3</th>
<th>Grade 1 (Middle) Months 4-6</th>
<th>Grade 1 (End) Months 7-10</th>
<th>Grade 2 (Beginning) Months 1-3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NWF</td>
<td>NWF</td>
<td>NWF</td>
<td>NWF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-30 Intensive</td>
<td>0-49 Intensive</td>
<td>0-62 Intensive</td>
<td>0-56 Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-41 Strategic</td>
<td>50-69 Strategic</td>
<td>50 – 69 Strategic</td>
<td>57 – 73 Strategic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 42 Core</td>
<td>&gt; 70 Core</td>
<td>&gt; 96 Core</td>
<td>&gt; 74 Core</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to this chart, students at the beginning of second grade taking the NWF assessment should score above 74 on correct letter sounds and read more than 22 whole nonsense words. Each of these measurements has a high reliability. As an educator, I have attended several training sessions on scoring these probes and listening for the correct sound usage. Therefore, I am trained to administer these tests to students and achieve a high level of accuracy.

**Student Percentages.** I collected the student percentages electronically using the Power Schools system. This electronic system allowed me to easily collect grades easily and see what standards were being taught and measured in their classes.

**Procedure**

I began this study by first collecting all of the preemptive data. I collected each student’s reading grade and current DIBELS Next level and scores. I put this information in a file and labeled them by numbers. I also made a list of the student groups. I administered all of the consent forms to the students and parents that participated in my study. I began by contacting each student individually that was involved in the study and having them fill out a pretest survey. As part of CRP a specific plan was not determined for the students until beginning the program and collecting feedback from the students in regard to their background. The data was recorded in the form of observational notes. Quantitative and Qualitative Data was collected throughout the program. Finally, at the conclusion of the program the researcher administered a post-test survey to the student
and collected the DIBELS Next scores and final grade percentages from their classroom teacher.

**Data Analysis**

Qualitative data was analyzed through coding answers on feedback forms, in reflection journals, and in observational field notes in order to identify trends. Time-on-task behaviors were noted as well as each student’s engagement in the learning material. The quantitative data was collected using the pretest/posttest survey. It was scored using a Likert scale. Each answer was given a point and the points were added. The scores were as follows: Strongly Agree – 4, Agree – 3, Neutral – 2, Disagree – 1, and Strongly Disagree – 0. The statements were the same on both tests and only positive statements were given. Forty points was the maximum number of points for the survey. This would indicate a high attitude towards reading and show that the student felt motivated towards reading. Each of the DIBELS Next probes were scored based on the type of test. The students’ percentage grades were also analyzed. This was used to determine if CRP had influenced the students’ motivation towards reading. This data was used to determine each student’s reading achievement at the end of the program. The two variables were then compared to determine if CRP had influenced motivation and reading achievement.

*Table 3.3 Timeline for Collecting and Analyzing Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest Questionnaire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>March 2018 (Preemptive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Reading Percentage</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>March 2018 (Preemptive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIBELS Next Pretest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>March 2018 (Preemptive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Feedback</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>March – May 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Feedback</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>March – May 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest Questionnaire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>May 2018 (Post)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Reading Percentage</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>May 2018 (Post)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIBELS Next Posttest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>May 2018 (Post)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plan for Reflection

The researcher used the field notes and observations to reflect after each session. The information was used to make any necessary changes. The researcher was able to reflect collaboratively throughout the program. The researcher reflected on the overall results of the study by analyzing all of the data obtained. These results were shared with the other teachers and staff members. The group discussed ways to improve the tutoring program and the benefits of using CRP on motivation and overall reading achievement.

Plan for Devising an Action Plan

The researcher developed a program on ways to implement culturally relevant pedagogy in the lessons each week. Although the classroom teacher provided the interventions to be used, it was important for the researcher to make adjustments and develop ways to implement CRP. The following plan included the aspects of CRP and also coincided with the 6 C’s of Motivation. Each week the researcher focused on one of the areas presented in Geneva Gay’s *Culturally Responsive Teaching*. It was assumed by the researcher to be the best way of providing culturally relevant pedagogy. Adjustments and ideas for future research are presented in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

The table below (Table 3.4) was used to help the researcher identify strategies and a plan to implement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Teacher Action</th>
<th>Pedagogical Strategy</th>
<th>Six C’s Motivational Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognition and validation of student’s culture</td>
<td>Learn about the students</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe all students can be successful</td>
<td>High expectations</td>
<td>Explicit instruction</td>
<td>Challenge Consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation for the cultures represented</td>
<td>Present new concepts using student vocabulary</td>
<td>Dialogic teaching</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of teaching methods</td>
<td>Demonstrate a personal connection with students</td>
<td>Cooperative learning</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to relate to literacy</td>
<td>Allow students control of their learning</td>
<td>Ongoing feedback</td>
<td>Choice Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consequences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS FROM THE DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This section discusses the findings and results from the six-week action research study. As the researcher, I was actively involved in working with students in tutoring groups focusing on early literacy skills. Students were divided into three groups of five. In total there were 15 participants in the study. Each group contained a single grade level. Scheduling allowed for students in the tutoring groups to meet during their independent reading time. The school has currently adapted the Reading Workshop model. This model consists of the teacher presenting whole group instruction on a special skill and then allowing students to practice this skill independently and in small groups. There is also time allocated for the students to read books on their identified reading level independently. The sessions were held for approximately thirty minutes every day, five days a week. Students met with the teacher-researcher for a total of 30 sessions (approximately 900 minutes).

The parents and students all gave their written consent before the program began using the consent form that was sent to each student’s home. The researcher was provided pre-planned lessons to introduce students to a variety of early literacy skills. These lessons were additional instruction from each student’s classroom teacher and went with the lesson and strategy the students were learning in their classrooms. The teachers currently use resources from the Florida Center for Reading Research (www.fcrr.org) to
teach phoneme segmentation and phonemic awareness. These areas were the primary focus of instruction and their teachers provided the resources. The CRP was first introduced by getting to know the students through interviews. The use of questionnaires and feedback forms was helpful in allowing the researcher to take notes and individualize the groups’ learning plans and structure. This also helped in resource selection. The previous research helped me develop strategies to use that coincided with CRP. The following strategies were utilized: interviews, explicit instruction, open dialogue, cooperative learning, and ongoing feedback.

Research Questions

This action research study asked the following two questions:

1. *What are the effects of implementing culturally relevant pedagogy on student’s intrinsic motivation towards reading?*

It examined how CRP affected each student’s motivation towards reading. Quantitative and qualitative data were both used to answer this question. This was measured through observations from the teacher-participant to determine each student’s level of engagement. It was also measured through a pretest and posttest survey, student feedback forms, and teacher feedback.

2. *What are the effects of intrinsic motivation on reading improvement?*

This was measured using quantitative methodology. Reading percentages were collected at the beginning and end of the program. Students also participated in DIBELS Next progress monitoring at the beginning of the program and at the conclusion of the program.
**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to use CRP to encourage students to take ownership in order to enhance their intrinsic motivation and reading achievement. This study examined the effect on motivation of implementing CRP within an early literacy-tutoring program at a rural elementary school located on the border between North and South Carolina. The goal of this study was to enhance my understanding of CRP and how it can enhance the learning outcomes of my students. As this strategy was incorporated through a variety of stages, students were able to build self-esteem and pride while learning reading strategies. It also allowed the students to build confidence as proficient readers. This study allowed the researcher to learn more about the students’ cultures and increase better outcomes by implementing their interests and background into their daily lessons.

**Findings of the Study**

Data was collected throughout this six-week study using a mixed methods approach. Once the students were selected and the consent forms were returned, the researcher collected all of the preemptive data using quantitative methods (pretest questionnaire, current reading grade in percentage, and pretest DIBELS Next scores). All of the students were already a part of the MTSS program and receiving interventions in their current classroom on a Tier 2 plan. Each student’s current reading percentage scores were collected using the Power Schools program. This program allows teachers and parents to access each student’s grades electronically. The groups were then organized based on the students’ schedules. After reviewing each grade level’s schedule of activities it was determined which thirty-minute time slots would be best for the students. Collaboration during teacher planning committees also helped determine an effective
time for the students. The researcher also discussed the program and action plan with the students’ teachers. This information was recorded in the researcher’s journal. It was requested that each teacher not provide any background knowledge on the students in the program. This was to reduce bias and allow the researcher to gather this information independently and direct from the student. Although I was familiar with some of the students before beginning the program, I made it my goal not to use any of my prior knowledge within the study.

Qualitative methods were utilized throughout the program. These methods included student feedback and teacher feedback throughout the program. These methods helped the researcher analyze and achieve a greater understanding of the quantitative data. Observations were also included as part of the qualitative methodology in this program. My personal observations were recorded in a journal at the end of each day. It helped me to organize and evaluate myself for the upcoming sessions.

**Quantitative Data Findings**

There were three quantitative measurements used to answer the research questions. The Pretest/Posttest DIBELS Next scores and the students’ pre- and post-reading percentages helped answer the Research Question 2, to determine the effect on student achievement. The third quantitative measurement tool was the pretest/posttest questionnaire. This helped understand the first question and gather information regarding student motivation and attitude towards reading and activities associated with reading.

**Pretest/Posttest DIBELS Next Results.** Before beginning the tutoring sessions, each student participated in a DIBELS Next pretest. Ten students were administered the NWF test and five students the PSF test. To eliminate the practice effect and strengthen
test-retest reliability, students were given a different pretest and posttest probe. The probes among the students were the same to ensure accuracy. The students were administered these probes individually and were given one minute to complete the task. The researcher-participant then scored the probe later. The scores were recorded along with the researcher-participant’s observations. The students who were assessed with the PSF test were in Grade 1 and part of Group 1, as this assessment is specifically for students building their phoneme segmentation fluency. For these two assessments simple statistics were calculated (mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and range). Gains were also calculated by using simple subtraction of the pretest and posttest score for each student and the overall average. The students assessed using the NWF were a part of Groups 2 and 3.

The following table details the results for the students who participated in the PSF assessment. Individual gain is calculated for each student and overall gain is calculated for the total group.

*Table 4.1 DIBELS Next PSF Results for Group 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Ty</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Shona</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Violet</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Harry</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Ben</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The range of the beginning scores is 16. The students in this group showed a mean score of 32.2 and a median score of 30. There is no mode for the scores, as the scores all vary. The standard deviation (σ) for the beginning scores is 5.83. All of their beginning scores fall under the intensive tier according to the recommendation for benchmark scores during the middle of kindergarten (Center on Teaching and Learning,
Although the students are currently in first grade, this measurement is used because they have continued to show a deficit. Students in first grade normally do not participate in the PSF test, and therefore there is no recommended benchmark for first grade students. Students in the middle of kindergarten should score between 41 and 51. Therefore, first grade students should be able to segment more than 51 letter sounds in CVC words in under one minute. For example if the teacher would say the word “trick” the student should respond with “/t/ /r/ /i/ /k/”. This would give 4 points for the student for correctly segmenting the word. The scores assigned to these students are at the end of first grade. This indicates these students have significant trouble understanding how to segment the phonemes and need more instruction on how to recognize phonemes and determine how to separate them.

At the conclusion of the six-week program, the mean of the students’ scores is 36.8 with a standard deviation (σ) of 8.1. The median score is 33 and there is not a mode score calculated as each score varied. Using simple subtraction between the average pretest and posttest score, the students showed an average gain of 4.6 points. Although the students showed some improvement, all but two students (Ty and Ben) still showed a need for intensive support. This indicates that these students need an alternative assessment to determine the specific areas of support. In this test students had to discriminate between the sounds they heard after the teacher-researcher said the word.

The students who participated in the NWF probe are identified in the table below. These students were all in the second grade and a part of either Group 2 or 3. The information provided is a list of their beginning scores in NWF and the number of WWR. Their individual gain or loss is calculated using simple subtraction. The mean, median,
mode, standard deviation ($\sigma$), and range are also calculated. The overall gain is calculated using simple subtraction of the pretest and posttest scores. This allowed the researcher-participant to understand the overall gain the students made in the program.

Table 4.2 DIBELS Next NWF Results for Groups 2 & 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>Gain/Loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Kallie</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Edward</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Fred</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Jacob</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Kate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 John</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Tierra</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Henry</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Matt</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Luke</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The beginning mean for the pretest NWF probe was 37.6, the median was 43.5 and the range was 50. The standard deviation ($\sigma$) is 16.72. There is no mode because all the scores are unique. Henry is the only student that falls into the strategic range according to the recommended benchmark at the beginning of second grade. The results are categorized as follows: 0–56 = intensive, 57–73 = strategic, and 74 and above is considered core (Center on Teaching and Learning, 2012). All of the other participants fell in the category of needing intensive support in this area of literacy skills improvement.
At the conclusion of the six-week study, the mean score improved by a total of 8 points to 45.6 and the median to 52.5. The overall range is 55 for the participants’ posttest scores and the standard deviation (σ) is 19.75 for these scores. Five of the participants, (Fred, Jacob, Henry, Matt, and Luke) all made progress and moved into the strategic tier at the end of the study. However, the other five participants remained on the intensive tier and will need continual remedial support.

The beginning mean for the Whole Words Read (WWR) was 4.2. The median and mode were both 3. The range was 13 and the standard deviation (σ) was 3.4. Students were fairly similar in their ability to pronounce all of the phonemes together and create a word. Henry was the only participant that fell into the strategic tier, with all of the other participants falling into the intensive category (Center for Teaching and Learning, 2012). This showed me that the students not only needed support in the area of being able to identifying and pronouncing the letters, but also in blending them and pronouncing the nonsense words.

At the end of the six-week study, the mean score of the WWR increased 1.2 to a total average of 5.4, indicating a gain of 4.2. The range remained 13 and the median was found to be 4.5, and the mode 4. The standard deviation (σ) of the scores stayed around the same at 3.71. Overall, the students showed little improvement in this area. Henry remained the only student in the strategic tier although he did not show much improvement between the pretest and posttest with (only the reading one more word). This instrument showed the students were able to identify more sounds and increase their scores on the NWF. However, students will need more support in blending and recognizing whole words.
**Reading Percentages.** I included the students’ reading percentages and calculated the simple statistics for each student and group. I also calculated the normalized gain to get a better understanding of the students’ scores. Their teacher based the scores on various grade level assessments that were utilized in the classroom. All of the assessment and activities were aligned with the Common Core State Standards. I also decided to analyze the normalized gain for the students with this measurement tool. This helped better understand the change that was made in the classroom in reading achievement through the intervention of the tutoring group. The following equation was used to calculate normalized gain: \[ g = \frac{\text{post} - \text{pre}}{100 - \text{pre}}. \] According to Hake (1997), the normalized gain is beneficial for measuring the effectiveness of a course and promoting understanding (McKagan, Sayre, & Madsen, 2017). The school uses a 10-point grading scale: 90–100% = A, 80–89% = B, 70–79% = C, 60–69% = D, and <59% = F. Most of the students fell in the D–C range according to this letter grade scale.

*Table 4.3 Pre/Post Reading Percentages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Beg. Reading %</th>
<th>End Reading %</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ty</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shona</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violet</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kallie</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eddie</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tierra</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The beginning reading scores indicated that Kallie fell in the F letter grade range. Shona, Violet, Harry, Ben, Eddie, Fred, Jacob, Kate, John, Tierra, Henry and Matt all fell in the “D” Range. Ty and Luke were both in the C range. The beginning mean of the percentages was 64.7. The median was 65 and the mode was 68. The range was calculated as 28. The standard deviation (σ) was 3.51.

I chose not to discuss the students’ grades with them in the course since, many of them associated letter grades as A and B = Good and C, D, F = Bad. I wanted to begin the sessions without discussing the student’s past performance or classroom performance in order to decrease any variable that could contribute to the study. This can contribute to the negative language and it was important to start building student esteem from the very beginning of the program. The letter grades were for my own personal information.

The average of the percentages collected at the end of the six-week study was 66.3. The median was 68, the mode was 70, and the range was 21. The standard deviation (σ) for these scores was 5.6. The reading percentages had a gain of 1.7 at the end of the study for all three groups. The normalized gain was calculated as .04. This small number indicates a very small gain (McKagan, Sayre, & Madsen, 2017). However, my small sample size and the limited time frame of this study should be taken into consideration.

With regard to letter grades, Luke, John, Kate, Jacob, Ben and Ty all moved to the C letter grade. The students were still given adequate time to bring their grades up by the end of the reporting period because of the timeline of this study. However, the data was not collected at the end of the nine weeks reporting period for the students in this study.

Pretest/Posttest Questionnaire. This measurement tool was used in multiple ways. I analyzed the students’ pretest and posttest scores. I used simple statistics and
found the mean, median, mode and standard deviation. I also recorded the gain and the
gain average. Finally, to better understand the students’ responses and recognize any
trends that may need further explanation, I analyzed each of the questions and calculated
the results. The scaling process utilized for this measurement tool was a Likert scale. I
converted each response to a number and the added the responses to get a numerical tool.
The responses were as follows: Strongly Agree=4, Agree=3, Neutral=2, Disagree=1, and
Strongly Disagree =0. Due to the limited vocabulary of my students, I decided to use
emojis as representations of these choices. A sample of the questionnaire can be found in
the Appendix A. The students were given the questionnaire individually to protect
confidentiality. The students were asked to answer each statement to the best of their
ability and were told there were no right or wrong answers. Each student’s individual
responses can be found in the Appendix K.

*Table 4.4 Pretest/Posttest Questionnaire Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student #</th>
<th>Pretest Score</th>
<th>Posttest Score</th>
<th>Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ty</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shona</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violet</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kallie</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eddie</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tierra</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The overall measures of the pretest and posttest questionnaires were used to
determine each student’s attitude towards reading using familiar vocabulary and emojis.
The mean of the pretest responses was 23, the median was 18, the mode was 40, the
range was 40 and the standard deviation ($\sigma$) was 12.6. The mean of the posttest responses
was 28.8. This was an overall gain of 5.8. The median for the posttest was 30, mode 40,
and range 25. The standard deviation ($\sigma$) for the posttest was 9.7. In comparison between
the pretest and posttest, the standard deviation indicates the students’ responses to be
more similar at the conclusion of the study.

To increase understanding of the responses to each question and the answer
responses selected, I looked at each question to determine trends in the students’
responses. This questionnaire also helped with my beginning pedagogy and instructional
strategies: getting to know my students. Below are the analyses of each response in the
pretest and posttest questionnaire.

*Table 4.5 Pretest/Posttest Question Analyses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement 1: Reading is fun.</th>
<th>33.3%</th>
<th>13.3%</th>
<th>33.3%</th>
<th>6.7%</th>
<th>13.3%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+20</td>
<td>+26.7</td>
<td>-26.6</td>
<td>-6.7</td>
<td>-6.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement 2: I like to do activities that involve reading.</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>+33.3</td>
<td>-33.3</td>
<td>+6.6</td>
<td>-13.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement 3: I want to learn to read.</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
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**Statement 5:** I will need to know how to read for the job I want when I am older.

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**Statement 6:** Reading is interesting.

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**Statement 7:** I am a good reader.

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**Student 9:** I enjoy going to the library.

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**Student 10:** I have a favorite book.

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The following bar graphs provide a visual aid to better understand the differences between the responses in the pretest/posttest questionnaires.

The purpose illustrated in Statement 1 was to better understand students’ attitude towards reading instruction. After the conclusion of the six-week study, all of the students selected Strongly Agree, Agree, or Neutral as their response. This indicated that
students’ developed a more positive attitude towards reading throughout the experience of the study.

*Table 4.6 Bar Graph of Statement 1: Reading instruction is fun*

![Bar Graph 1](image1.png)

*Table 4.7 Bar Graph of Statement 2: I like to do activities that involve reading*

![Bar Graph 2](image2.png)

The statement “I like to do activities that involve reading” allowed the researcher to better understand how relevant reading was in the students’ lives. It also allowed the students to indicate their feelings associated with reading activities. Some students needed more clarification. It was important to show students the relevance of reading by allowing them to bring their own experiences and ideas to the learning environment.
Instead of me giving the students options, I asked them to think of activities that involve reading and then asked them to determine how they feel about those activities. I also told the students it was OK to not know. We brainstormed some activities that involved reading together. The students came up with “comic books,” “classwork,” and “reading games in the classroom.” Most of their answers were associated with positive activities they enjoyed that required reading. I let the students brainstorm their own ideas to ensure I did not sway their opinion in either direction. Through prior conversations with the students, I knew they were not very fond of silent reading time in their classrooms. Their answers indicate a more positive attitude towards reading.

*Table 4.8 Bar Graph of Statement 3: I want to learn to read*

Statement 3 was key in understanding each student’s motivation in wanting to learn to read. Although there was an increase in Strongly Agree and Agree, there was also an increase in Disagree. However there was a decrease in Neutral and Strongly Disagree.

Statement 4, “I think reading is important” seeks to understand the value the students placed on reading. The responses were mixed; however, the response of Neutral
decreased by 33.3%. This indicated that after the six-week study students either felt negatively or positively towards reading.

Table 4.9 Bar Graph of Statement 4: I think reading is important

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Table 4.10 Bar Graph of Statement 5: I will need to learn to read for the job I want when I am older

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I used this statement to better understand how students related reading skills to their projected future. The responses to this statement were relatively similar compared to some of the other questions. Students either saw reading as important (and were able to make a home–school connection), or they did not. Some of the students said they wanted
to “play football” or “work outside” and therefore did not see the relevance of reading skills in these choices.

Table 4.11 Bar Graph of Statement 6: Reading is interesting

I choose this statement to gain a better understanding of students’ intrinsic motivation towards reading. There was no change in Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree. However, both agree and disagree increased. Neutral decreased from 26.7% to 0, indicating none of the respondents selected this choice on the posttest. Students either felt strongly one way or the other. Upon reflection and after working with the students on their answers to this statement, I felt this particular statement could have different interpretations. Reading may be interesting in different situations and it would depend more on the book or activity. Therefore, in the future I would leave this statement out. If I decided to conduct an interest survey in the future this statement could be included combined with more specific details. For example, “Reading comic books is interesting to me”. Another way to clarify this statement would be to incorporate a compare and contrast and ask students to determine which activities he or she finds more interesting.
Statement 7 indicates how students feel personally about themselves and their ability to read. This measures the students’ esteem and attitude towards reading, both supporting factors in enhancing motivation. In the above chart most of the students had a negative attitude towards their reading ability. However, at the end of the study none of the students selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, indicating a total decrease of 26%.

Table 4.12 Bar Graph of Statement 7: I am a good reader

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Table 4.13 Bar Graph of Statement 8: I enjoy learning to read

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Statement 8 asked students to determine their enjoyment associated with learning to read. This is similar to Statement 1. I used a similar statement so I could determine any
trends in the students’ responses. Students responded similarly in both of these statements.

*Table 4.14 Bar Graph of Statement 9: I enjoy going to the library*

Statement 9 was utilized to determine students’ exposure to literary activities outside of school. When giving this statement to the students, I asked them if they had ever been to a library outside of school. Some of the students responded they had not been to the library in their community. Throughout the program we discussed resources in our communities and programs at the library. Many of the students told me they were interested in asking their parents to take them to the library this summer.

*Table 4.15 Bar Graph of Statement 10: I have a favorite book*
A part of being motivated to read is making personal connections. The responses to this statement allowed me to better understand student interest and what materials could help motivate them. At the beginning of the program more students indicated Strongly Disagree (33.3%) when they were read this statement than Strongly Agree (26.7%) when they were read this statement. However, at the end of the program many of the students responded they had a favorite book they enjoyed reading.

**Qualitative Data Findings**

The following qualitative measurements were used throughout the six-week program. The tools used were observational field notes throughout the study. Student feedback was used on a weekly basis by the researcher. This was critical in planning lessons and determining materials and conversations topics for the lessons. Teacher feedback was also used and helped the researcher to determine the impact the tutoring groups had on students’ classroom engagement and participation in reading activities.

**Observations.** The observations discussed are from my personal field notes of events that occurred in the program. I discuss implementing the CRP through a variety of strategies. To meet my goals, I focused on a different strategy each week, namely interviews, explicit instruction, dialogic teaching, cooperative learning, and on ongoing feedback. These strategies were inspired by Geneva Gay’s *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Each strategy also coincides with the Six C’s of Motivation: collaboration, choice, control, consequences, constructing meaning and challenge.

The observations were gleaned directly from working with the students. At first the majority of the students had a negative attitude towards reading instruction. On the
first day the students enjoyed the extra attention of being pulled out of class. However, once they were told it was for reading instruction and they had to take their reading assignments with them from their class, many of them began to shut down. Some of the activities that were a challenge produced work-avoidant behavior at times. However, I worked to build their confidence and they began to put forth effort in the activities.

**Group 1: Week 1: Interviews.** I pulled Group 1 first in the morning after they received their whole group instruction on story elements. The teacher started the day with a mini-lesson at 8:00. The lesson took approximately fifteen minutes and the students were ready for their tutoring session at 8:15. The students in this group were: Ty, Shona, Violet, Harry, and Ben. I pulled the students from two classrooms. Ty and Shona were in the same class; Violet, Harry, and Ben were in a different class. The students, Ty, Shona, and Violet are African American and Harry and Ben are white. I immediately noticed the students sat with other students of the same race. One of their teachers gave me a book to read aloud to the students and then discuss story elements (characters, setting, plot, conflict, and resolution) with them. The book the teacher selected was: *The Day the Crayons Quit.* This laid back activity allowed me to enter into open dialogue with the students. I began the first session by using the initial strategy of CRP, getting to know the students through interviewing. We discussed reading and the type of books we found interesting. We discussed the book the teacher had provided for us. I asked the students if they enjoyed the book and would like to read something similar. All of them said they did not like it.

Harry did not like to participate in the group conversations at the beginning of the program. When he told me he did not like reading, I asked him why and he responded,
“he did not really have a reason to learn and he did not care if the other students thought he was stupid”. As the week continued I began to form a relationship with the students and made a point of specifically asking them questions about reading at home. Ty was able to identify the sounds he heard but struggled to match the phoneme to the correct letter. Upon further analysis, it became clear he should have been entered into the tutoring program sooner as he had fallen behind. Indeed, he will continue to need intensive support. Fortunately he did have a positive attitude towards reading and stated he enjoyed reading with his mom at home. He liked the book *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss. He brought the book to tutoring one day during the first week to share with the group. He enjoyed being able to listen to the book being read aloud. As we read the book, we discussed the rhymes in it book and how understanding rhymes could help us discriminate between sounds. After Ty brought this book, the other students asked if they could share their books with the group. Some of them selected books from their class library. This was when I decided to use book selections as a component of CRP. I began researching and selecting books from different cultures and backgrounds. I first looked in the classrooms to see if there were any multicultural books with diverse characters within the classroom libraries. Out of the three classes, I did not find any books that fell into this category. Most of the books either contained white individuals as the main characters or non-humans such as animals or fictional objects. I then searched the library and had some success, but most of the books I collected containing African Americans as the main characters I purchased on my own. I wanted the students to think more critically about what they were reading and how it applied to them to build a stronger connection.
**Group 1: Week 2: Explicit Instruction.** Each week I decided to allow the students to share a book of their choice. As there were five students in the group, it meant they could take turns bringing a book of their choice. If the students did not bring a book, which happened often I had a couple on hand and let them select one of mine. I discovered many of the students did not want to share the book they were reading because they felt they were on a lower level than their class peers, although all of the students in the tutoring group were in fact close to the same level.

I ensured my books were from various cultures and backgrounds and I wanted to observe which books they selected so I could discuss them through explicit instruction. I allowed the students to bring their own books in order to ensure the selection process was student-directed. With my books, I wanted to present them and let the students make their selections. It was interesting to observe the students making their selections based on the choices they were given. These books all had a positive and inclusive message that helped me implement CRP and boost the students’ confidence in terms of how their background related to the different books. The books I selected were *Celebrating Families, I Love My Hair!, The Name Jar, Doctor Like my Mommy, It’s Okay to Be Different, A Bad Case of the Stripes,* and *Rainbow Fish.* This allowed for conversation between the students as they selected books in which they were interested. Students were able to relate how they identified with the books. Ben put in a lot of effort and wanted to learn. He enjoyed being a part of the group, but struggled to make connections. Whenever I read aloud in the group, Ben stared into space and did not seem to comprehend the information. He seemed to struggle concentrating and told me he was not used to having anyone read to him.
Group 1: Week 3: Dialogic Teaching. The books set the perfect tone to open each lesson, especially during this particular week when I focused on dialogic teaching. We began each lesson by reading the book the student selected and I would prompt them with questions. This took approximately fifteen minutes of our lesson. I prompted the students to continue to converse in a dialogic style. Students became excited and needed to be reminded to take turns talking and listening to their peers. After we engaged in dialog about the books that had been selected, we spent ten minutes working on phonemic awareness activities provided by the Florida Center for Reading Research (www.fcrr.org). In the last five minutes we wrapped up the lesson and I offered students a chance to give their feedback and answer the three follow-up questions:

- *What did you find interesting in the lesson?*
- *How could you use this information outside of school?*
- *What would you like to learn more about?*

We did not get to answer each question everyday, but we discussed at least one of the questions as a group. The feedback received from these questions is located in another section of this chapter.

Shona selected *Doctor Like Mommy* when it was her day to select a book this week. She said she liked it because of the bright colors and because the little girl in the picture looked like her. I asked the students if they went to any doctors that looked like them. One of the boys, Ty, one of the boys said: “My mommy had a doctor who was a black lady.” I proceeded to open the discussion with all of the students about how we may all be different and may look different, but we can all be and do exceptional things. I asked
them if they had ever thought about becoming a doctor one day. I also told them there are different kinds of doctors. Shona said: “I have never thought of being a doctor, but I do want to help people someday.”

**Group 1: Week 4: Cooperative Learning.** One of the most effective strategies I used to implement CRP was cooperative learning. I told students they were a community of learners and that the more we discuss and learn about one another, the more we are able to engage respectfully in conversation. The students also became supportive and encouraged each other in their learning. After each session reading aloud, I asked the students questions about how they related to the book, the characters, and the story. We talked about how “relate” means to make a connection and see something at home or anywhere outside of school. I noticed the students helping one another in their phonemic awareness exercises. During this week, I noticed the boys sat together and the girls sat together in the group.

**Group 1: Week 5: Ongoing Feedback.** This week we discussed the skills we had learned, how we had learned about the other students in our group, and the different stories. I continued with the same format of my lessons, but I wanted to make sure the students received feedback from myself and the other students. I asked them questions and to ensure the other students were listening, I asked them to respond to their friend’s answer. This allowed the students to receive feedback from one another.

Me: What have you learned about yourself as a reader?

Ty: I know that I enjoy reading, but I can’t always find a book that is interesting.

Me: What do you think about what Ty said, Violet?
Violet: I agree with Ty, I feel like it is hard to find books with characters like me and sometimes I don’t understand what the book says.

**Group 1: Week 6: Wrap-up.** At the conclusion of the program, I had the chance to speak to Ben’s mom. She revealed to me she was “not a very good reader” herself adding, “so that may be where he gets it from.” He will need to continue a small group program to gain the skills he needs to be a sufficient reader. At the end of this six-week session, I noticed that as the students became more comfortable being around one another and discussing various topics, they also became more comfortable in selecting books. I challenged the students to select books they enjoyed based on the characters they could relate to and the type of stories they found fun.

**Groups 2 and 3: Week 1: Interviews.** In Groups 2 and 3, the students came at separate times. All of these students were in the second grade and came from four different classes. The classes were all working on the same materials and the theme was focused on fairytales. In the first sessions the teacher sent a fairytale book with the students to read. I read the book and we discussed the story elements. We also discussed how we each related to the book. We did this in both of the group sessions. Overall, the second grade students had a better attitude towards reading. I interviewed the students in the groups so we could learn more about one another. When I observed the first group sitting according to race, I intentionally decided to allow students in Groups 2 and 3 to select their seats around the table. These students again chose to sit based on their race. Group 2 was made up of three African American students and two white students. Group 3 was made up of two African American students and three white students. I made a note
of this because I wanted to know if the seating arrangement would change as the program progressed.

I allowed the students to bring a book the rest of the week. Each teacher asked that we include at least one fairy tale a week so the students took turns selecting a book. The outcome was very similar to Group 1 in that many of the students did not want to bring a book from class because they were embarrassed the other students would think they were reading a “baby book.” I brought the same books to these sessions to use for reading aloud, namely: Celebrating Families, I Love My Hair, The Name Jar, Doctor Like my Mommy, It’s Okay to Be Different, A Bad Case of the Stripes, and Rainbow Fish.

**Groups 2 and 3: Week 2: Explicit Instruction.** For my explicit instruction session, I introduced the students to the book, It’s Okay to Be Different. The format for both groups followed the same format for Group 1. We spent the first fifteen minutes of the lesson reading the book and discussing it. The next ten minutes we focused on phonics instruction using the resources from the Florida Center for Reading Research (www.fcrr.org). We spent the final five minutes we spent on answering the feedback questions. Sometimes, we did not have enough time to answer all the questions, so I focused on ensuring the questions were all answered by the end of the week. I did this to maximize time spent on instruction. During this first week I decided to introduce the book, It’s Okay to Be Different. This allowed me to give explicit instruction and discuss the term *culture* and *background* with the students.

Me: What is culture?

Edward: Your traditions.

Me: What is a tradition?
Edward: Something your family does.

Me: Does everyone have different traditions or culture?

Kallie: Yes, everyone is different and that is OK.

Kallie was very interested in reading. She enjoyed listening to stories in the whole group on a variety of topics. She had a positive attitude towards reading and school. However, she struggled to blend: she recognized her letters but struggled to remember the sounds associated with the letters. She will need more intensive tutoring to work specifically on these skills. This week gave me the opportunity to recognize the individuality of the students while providing them with explicit instruction on what culture means. I also verbally told each one of them they could be successful in the school setting, but we needed to understand what that meant. I continued to give the students verbal praise for exhibiting participation in their groups.

Groups 2 and 3: Week 3: Dialogic Teaching. During this week, I began to have the students provide more in discussion as we read through the books. The students enjoyed hearing stories about each other. Since Edward had brought up the word “traditions,” I asked the students to share some of their traditions. Most of them found they had a lot in common. Once they found they all had things in common they began to build on those relationships and select books that interested them and the other members of the group.

For example, Fred had no interest in reading at all. When asked why it is important to know how to read, he responded, “To get good grades.” This indicated he felt reading was directly associated with school achievement. However, once I started letting the students select their own materials and books during the sessions, he began to
find reading enjoyable. I found out he was very passionate about football - he liked the Carolina Panthers. I found some articles online and some books to bring to tutoring. This was enjoyable and he was able to see how reading could be fun. However, he did not like it when other students selected the book to read. He had to be reminded that he would also have a turn. If I printed an article out, I would let him take it home. He liked being able to share it with his older brother, who was in middle school. This helped build trust and he began to look forward to coming to tutoring. Some of the other boys also shared their interest in football and different teams they liked. Edward and Jacob enjoyed sharing this material with Fred. Jacob told me: “I finally found something I like to read.”

**Groups 2 and 3: Week 4: Cooperative Learning.** Discovering the students’ interests helped build cooperative learning groups. I told the students they could work together in their classes by finding others with the same interests. We also discussed when others have a different interest from you and how to be respectful about this.

Kate really wanted to read; she had a positive attitude towards reading but said no one at her home could read; indeed they did not have any books. I encouraged her to go to the school library and check some books out. However, I later found out she was not allowed to check books out at the school library anymore and take them home because she had never returned the one she took home last year. We also talked about ways you could make books and write your own stories. We used pictures first and then she told me what she wanted the book to say. We made two books for her to take home and practice reading. I am hoping she will improve over the summer. She could not blend the non-sense words when she was administered the DIBELS Next NWF. In fact, she struggled to make sense of what she was supposed to do.
Groups 2 and 3: Week 5: On going Feedback. I provided immediate feedback to the students as we worked on our phonics lessons. I encouraged them to continue to work at learning how to read whole words. Throughout the program, I used vocabulary and encouraged higher-order thinking skills by asking students to think more deeply and provide more explanation. Setting high expectations for students is an important component of CRP and motivation. This also encourages self-efficacy allowing students to aim high and set goals for themselves.

Henry scored the highest on the NWF DIBELS Next probe: he had the ability to read and caught on to the reading activities fairly quickly. Nevertheless, he did not have the most positive attitude towards reading. I worry that if he does not continue tutoring he will be overlooked and fall behind. I observed that he enjoyed selecting books. He particularly enjoyed the Dr Seuss books; he said they reminded him of his mom whom, he does not get to see often.

Groups 2 and 3: Week 6: Wrapping up. In the final week we discussed what we had learned. The students remembered the word “culture” because we discussed it after every book we read. I asked the students what they had learned about their friends. Luke: I learned that I have a lot of different friends who like different books. Sometimes we like the same books and sometimes we don’t.

Luke was another student who showed great potential. However, he easily became distracted and did not always exhibit the best attitude towards reading. He would sometimes make comments such as, “I don’t feel like reading today.” I worked hard to make reading relatable for him by asking him questions and showing him a variety of books. However, he said he did not like any of the books I picked out.
We concluded the final session by reading *Rainbow Fish*. We discussed how the fish shares pieces of himself with those around him. I asked the students to name something they could share.

Kallie: I could share my drawing skills with my friends.

Edward: I could share my football skills.

Tierra: I could be someone’s friend.

I told the students we all have something about us that makes us special - our culture, our traditions, and our abilities. It is important to share with others and to learn from others, too.

**Student Feedback.** Because of the difficulties the students had reading and writing, the student feedback forms had to be completed by the researcher. The feedback form was therefore given in a group setting at the end of each session to maximize the responses received. The following questions were presented everyday:

1. What did you find interesting in the lesson today?
2. How could you use this information outside of school?
3. What would you like to learn more about?

One of the benefits to asking the same questions each day was that the students knew what to expect. They could go ahead and think about these questions throughout the lesson. As the weeks continued, the students were prepared and became more open with their answers and to the idea of engaging in conversation with each other. The students enjoyed being able to talk about themselves. It was often difficult to get the students to take turns when communicating with each other because they would get so excited. This continued to develop as the students became more familiar with one another.
The predominant response to the first question, “What did you find interesting in the lesson today?” was usually “The story we read”. The day we read *Doctor Like Mommy*. The students responded as follows to the first question:

Shona: I found it interesting that the little girl helped people.

Ty: I found it interesting that the little girl grew up.

Violet: I found it interesting the little girl was pretty.

These types of responses were common among the students. The stories made the greatest impression and they responded with some of the elements they liked best about the story.

Most students enjoyed having a book read aloud to them, even if they did not select it. Some of the students would respond they did not like the book, but this was rare. Students struggled with making connections. Although we talked about how the information could be used outside of school, I did not want to guide them in any particular direction. Therefore, I let the students develop their own responses. Some examples of the students’ responses to where the information could be used included: “at church” or “at the grocery store”. As the weeks went by however, they did begin to see more relevance to reading and how being able to relate to the characters made books become more interesting.

Students gave different responses regarding “what they wanted to learn more about.” Most of the time it was in response to what we read aloud that day. The stories played an important role in motivating the students, even if they did not teach a specific literacy skill. The stories helped the student select materials and engage in reading in a way that was fun and enjoyable.
**Teacher Feedback.** Most of the teachers gave positive feedback throughout the six-week study. I spoke to the teachers on a weekly basis in order to follow up on the progress the students were making in the classroom. I asked the following two questions:

1. Have you observed any changes in terms of participation from the students involved in the tutoring program?
2. Does the student appear to be more interested in reading activities?

My goal was to ask teachers with participants once a week throughout the study to determine any ongoing changes in classroom participation and engagement. The teachers were supportive and said the tutoring had a positive impact on the students.

Shona’s teacher: I have noticed Shona is more engaged in reading, she told me she likes reading books more with pictures of people that look like her.

Kate’s teacher: Kate enjoys reading books more during her silent reading time since being in the program. She tries to help other students and wants the other students to think she is smart.

Fred’s teacher: Fred has shown an interest in books about football lately, which is great because before he would sleep during silent reading time.

John’s teacher: John is no longer having meltdowns during independent reading time, which is huge. John has always needed to sit next to me during reading instruction, but now he is able to select some books and at least skim the pages without always needing my assistance.

It is hard to determine if the students’ attitude and participation changed in the classroom because of the content of the program or the program itself. Therefore I decided not to make this my main focus. I confirmed this after reviewing the grade percentages and not
seeing much of a change. This indicated that although students may have had a positive experience, it did not impact their achievement level as measured by the current reading percentages.

**Observational Themes.** One of the benefits of action research is that it allows the researcher to make adjustments to meet the needs and goals of the research. There were some adjustments made throughout the program to enhance the outcomes that should be noted. Before beginning my research, I projected that I would include progress-monitoring bi-weekly. However, this was not a realistic goal due to the time restraints. I wanted the students to be able to receive the maximum instructional time possible. If I had followed the plan to test each student bi-weekly, I would have had to use one day every two weeks for testing. Therefore, I decided it would be best if I only tested by students at the beginning and at the end of the six-week session. This also allowed me to compare true pretest and posttest scores and helped in the analyzing process.

**Student behavior.** This was a major concern the first week of the program. It appeared some of the students had developed a task avoidant attitude towards instruction as a result of prior negative feedback received associated with their reading ability. I wanted the students to all understand that they each possessed great potential. I also wanted them to feel comfortable with the other group members. I worked hard to use verbal praise as positive reinforcement. I also communicated positively with the students by asking questions and showing an interest. I incorporated the details they shared with me into the daily lessons. This helped to build a relationship with the students. I asked the students what they liked to do outside of school. We also discussed what activities were taking place in their classrooms. Some of the negative behavior that I experienced with
the students was talking out of turn, laughing at others, avoiding work, and not following directions. However, as we built relationship through the use of genuine care and concern, the student began to enjoy coming to tutoring.

**Embarrassment.** Students felt embarrassed to reveal their reading level; this was confirmed through a conversation I had with one of my students.  

Ty: I would rather be considered a bad kid than have the other students in the class think I was stupid.

I continued to work hard to change these students’ attitudes and negative perspectives of themselves but it was difficult.

**Positive Behavior In Schools (PBIS).** was another contributor to the students’ behaviors. I have had conflicting experiences with PBIS. Students are given the white, middle-class expectations to determine what is appropriate behavior. Currently students receive extrinsic motivation daily for their “good” behavior. The school uses a ticket system so the students can attend a quarterly celebration or buy treats from the school store. This was an issue because the students were conditioned to receive some kind of token if they felt their behavior warranted it. When beginning the lesson, I was asked by one of the students “what kind of treat will you give us if we are good?” “The pride in accomplishment,” I replied. I did not want to use any form of extrinsic motivation other than verbal praise because I did not want this to interfere with the results of my study. I mention this because I believe it is important to analyze these programs and how they contribute to the success of the students.
Conclusion

The quantitative data was an important factor in understanding the improvement made by behalf of the students in the area of motivation and reading achievement. All of these scores increased at the end of the study. In the Group 1 the overall PSF average improved 4.6 points. In Group 2, the average for WWR increased to 1.2 and NWF increased to 8. The overall reading percentages for all the participants increased 1.7% and the average of the pretest/posttest questionnaire improved to 5.8. Although these improvements were small, they should be considered within the context of the limited time frame and small sample size.

The qualitative data played a role in enhancing the study and allowing the participant-researcher to further elaborate on the specific instructional methods and the student responses. The qualitative data examined student feedback and teacher feedback. All of their responses were indicated as positive throughout the course of the study. I found it most interesting that many of the students had never been exposed to books featuring African Americans as main characters or books containing multicultural themes. I observed a change in engagement, in both African American students and white students. This allowed free and open discussion to flow in both of the groups. It helped the students work more collaboratively and in a positive manner.

I was able to relate this information to my previous research findings. It is understandable why there is not as much research utilizing CRP with lower elementary students. At my school I noticed these topics were rarely discussed and material was not being adequately provided to students. Many teachers felt it easier to adapt to a color-blind ideology through fear of parental repercussions (Banks & Banks, 2012). Educators
should work to change this. According to DiAngelo’s book, *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard For White People to Talk About Racism*, racism has been among the most complex social dilemmas since the founding of this country. Race as a social construct has profound significance and shapes every aspect of our lives (2018). It is specifically important with elementary students as young children are discovering who they are. They are building their esteem based on what is being presented to them. It was observable throughout the interactions of the students in this study; they had begun to align themselves with similar races even in a small group setting. Once the study began to progress, students felt much more comfortable contributing to the open dialogue. This played a role in how they viewed themselves and their peers.

Several data measurements were utilized throughout the course of this study and my action research plan evolved over the same time period. I made adjustments as I planned, implemented my program, and analyzed my data. I found some of the tools to be more beneficial than others in identifying patterns and results. Overall, the students were engaged in the program and showed an increase in their motivation and their reading achievement.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

Implementing culturally relevant pedagogy involves awareness not only in the classroom, but also in society. The educator must be aware of his or her own background, experiences, and attitude towards other cultures and racism. They must become aware of their students and how all of these factors play a role in their lives and their ability to receive an adequate education. Throughout this study I reflected on the implicit messages of racism I have heard and seen in society and in schools. I analyzed in what ways schools and myself contribute to adverse racism by not making an effort to understand the culture of all students.

In a sense, everything in education relates to culture, to its acquisition, its transmission, and its invention. Just as the air we breathe culture is in us and around us. In its scope and distribution it is personal, familial, communal, institutional, societal, and global. Yet culture, as a notion is often difficult to grasp. As we learn and use culture in daily life, it becomes habitual (Gay, 2010) Change can be enforced after awareness is established and educators begin to analyze programs that perpetuate racism with deficit language and practices. This can also promote collaboration and discussion with other educators as well. It is critical that the culture of the school and students is also discussed. Teachers can do this by learning about their students and working to meet the individual needs of the students.
Methodology and programs can be examined to determine how effective they are for the students in each setting. Educators can also use resources and student feedback in their lesson planning to ensure CRP is being utilized daily. After time and practice the teacher will be able to become more reflective in practice and in promoting greater opportunities for all students.

**Focus of the Study**

This action research study focused on better understanding how implementing CRP could benefit students in the areas of motivation and enhancing academic achievement in the area of early literacy skills. As first and second grade students, many of the participants of this study already had a negative attitude towards reading instruction. The students had already received poor feedback on their efforts and this therefore affected their motivation to learn. Many of the students have become disruptive in class as a work-avoidant behavior. The teachers gave feedback throughout the program and noted that before the program began some of the participants exhibited negative behavior anytime they were asked to participate in a task associated with reading. Therefore, it was important to use a strategy in the tutoring groups that allowed students to gain self-esteem and become motivated towards reading. CRP was selected due to the research and its ability to build confidence among students. It allowed the students to feel more valued and make deeper connections with the material and the goal of early literacy instruction.

**Overview of the Study**

The study took place over a six week time period. First, the researcher developed a plan to help students achieve greater success in a school based tutoring program. This
was completed through the research of several techniques and previous studies. CRP was selected for use in this action research study. The next phase was determining the tutoring groups. After collaborating with other educators and developing a schedule, I selected three tutoring groups in grades 1 and 2 that I would work with in the spring of 2018. It was concerning that the tutoring groups were predominately made up of African American students, although these students only made up 18.9% of the total school population. This led me to believe there was a possible disconnection between the teachers and their views on reading achievement.

I began researching a variety of different literacy strategies, pedagogy and data collection techniques. After detailed research I confirmed I would implement five CRP strategies discussed in Geneva Gay’s book, “Culturally Responsive Teaching”. These strategies also fell in line with the goals presented by the Six C’s of motivation. Therefore, I believed that this implementation would be most effective in enhancing motivation in my students. These five CRP strategies were: interviews, feedback, explicit instruction, open dialogue, and cooperative learning. Some of these strategies overlapped throughout the instruction. The tutoring groups focused on early literacy. One group focused mainly on phonemic awareness as the primary area of concern. The other two groups focused on phonics. There were 15 participants in the study, which made up three groups of five. After the students were selected, preliminary data was collected before beginning the study. The preliminary data included DIBELS Next scores, a pretest questionnaire, and current reading percentage grades. Throughout the program data was collected through field notes and observations. I also used student and teacher feedback forms to collect data and compare with my own notes. The data for this study was
collected over a six-week time frame. Students met with the researcher every day for a total of 30 days. Each session lasted approximately 30 minutes. At the end of six weeks, post data was collected. A posttest questionnaire was given, along with post DIBELS Next scores, and the students’ current reading percentages were also collected. The researcher then analyzed all of the data to determine how effective CRP had been on promoting motivation and reading achievement. Motivation was measured through the pretest/posttest questionnaire along with student feedback and the researcher’s notes. Student achievement was examined through the DIBELS Next pretest/posttest scores and the student’s percentage grade at the beginning and end of the program. The teacher feedback and research field notes also helped confirm and achieve a better understanding of both effects. The mixed methodology approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods helped establish a thorough review and create triangulation for this action research study.

**Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this six-week study was to answer the following questions:

1. *What are the effects of implementing culturally relevant pedagogy on students’ motivation towards reading?*

   It examined how CRP effects each student’s motivation and attitude towards reading. Both quantitative and qualitative were both used to answer this question. This was measured through observations from the teacher-participant to determine each student’s level of engagement. It was also measured through a pre-test and post-test survey, student feedback forms, and teacher feedback.

2. *What are the effects of motivation on reading improvement?*
This was measured using quantitative methodology. Reading percentages were collected at the beginning and end of the program. Students also participated in DIBELS Next progress monitoring at the beginning and at the conclusion of the tutoring sessions.

I implemented CRP in three early literacy-tutoring groups. I wanted to work with young students in particular, because I discovered students as young as four years old are already recognizing race and differences among their peers (Diangelo, 2018). These three groups of five consisted of 15 students in first and second grade. All of these students were labeled as behind their peers in achieving beginning reading skills. At the conclusion of the study quantitative and qualitative data were important factors in understanding the improvement made by the students in the area of motivation and reading achievement through the use of CRP. All of these scores increased at the end of the study. In Group 1, the overall PSF average improved 4.6 points. In Group 2, the average for WWR increased to 1.2 and NWF increased to 8. The overall reading percentages for all the participants increased 1.7% and the average of the pretest/posttest questionnaire improved to 5.8. Although these improvements are small, they should be considered within the context of the limited time frame and small sample size. Also, it should be considered these diagnostic tests are implemented district wide to determine student success. However, based on the knowledge I have gained from this study, alternative forms of assessment should be utilized in the future to better understand the needs of the students.

The qualitative data played a role in enhancing the study and allowing the participant-researcher to further elaborate on the specific instructional methods and the
student responses. The qualitative data examined student feedback and teacher feedback. All of their responses were indicated as positive throughout the course of the study.

**Action Plan: Implications of the Findings**

This study exposed me not only to the biases that exist in my school through the hidden curriculum but my own internalized biases as well. I found that I made assumptions through my observations. For example, I assumed students sat segregated based on their racial preference. However, this was not true. There were additional factors that contributed to how the students sat. Some of the reasons the students sat next to one another were because they were in the same class, rode the same bus, or lived in the same neighborhood.

In the future I would like to conduct a study utilizing culturally sustaining pedagogy. In recent literature, this pedagogy enhances CRP by promoting long term goals of maintaining heritage and encouraging students to critique the dominant structures (Paris & Alim, 2014). Culturally sustaining pedagogy also incorporates the multiple ways that pedagogy shifts, changes, adapts, and recreates instructional spaces to ensure students that are marginalized are repositioned in a place of normativity (Ladson-Billings, 2014). This approach is not only responsive, but values and maintains the multiplicity of students’ cultural and linguistic identities (Wynter-Hoyte, Braden, Rodriguez, & Thornton, 2017). My current study utilizing CRP only utilized surface level strategies. For continual growth, it is important to resist static unidirectional notions of culture and race that reinforce traditional versions of difference and inequality (Paris & Alim, 2014). Pedagogies should teach students to be linguistically and culturally flexible across multiple language varieties and cultural ways of interacting.
The most important point concerning this action plan is to discuss it with others in my school. I plan to discuss the study and the results more in more depth with administration and meet with various grade levels in the school to discuss how it can be implemented into their classes and planning. I also would like to present the information and a Power Point at a staff meeting during the school year. I plan to make myself available to model CSP in my classroom, as collaboration is essential for implementing change and spreading information.

Table 5.1 Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Analyze & Collaborate     | • Open dialogue with other educators regarding curriculum and materials  
                           | • Utilize PLC time to discuss the materials and their relevance to the diverse needs of students in our school  
                           | • Discuss with School Improvement Team | 2018 – 2019 School Year |
| Inclusive Classroom       | • Interview and discuss materials that are student-centered and enhance the learning environment | 2018 – 2019 School Year    |
| Professional Development  | • Model and discuss changes that can be made on the school level     | 2018 – 2019 School Year    |
Suggestions for Future Research

I would like to build on practical ways to enhance CRP and include more CSP in my daily practice. One way to do this is through cultural competence and the ability to help students appreciate and celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of other cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2014). I would also like to encourage my students to have a sociopolitical consciousness and an understanding that takes learning beyond the confines of the classroom and allows them to analyze and solve real-world problems (2014). I would like to extend this research to other educators in my school. Teachers without a knowledge base in critical pedagogy and corresponding strategies for addressing issues of oppression and discrimination can become overwhelmed by rapidly changing demographics, as seen in my current school setting (Boutte, 2008).

Another important aspect of understanding students’ culture and background is acknowledging African American language. This is often referred to dialect and a non-substantive language even though the Language Society of America has affirmed it. However, the acceptance on AAL as a language has more to do with a larger sociopolitical belief about the group than the language itself (Boutte, 2008). Learning to respect AAL and other aspects of African American culture in general requires the deconstruction of the dominant ideology on white supremacy. A dominant view among educators is that differences between AAL and Standard English are major obstacles to the educational achievement of African American students. This is not due to linguistic inadequacies in AAL but teacher attitudes. There are three language patterns of students who speak AAL. A student who resists Standard English and becomes regarded as “uneducable” is the first pattern. The second pattern occurs when children comply with
demands and abandon AAL in all settings. Although these students may be deemed successful in the academic setting they may encounter anxiety from their communities. Finally the second pattern is observed in bi-dialectal children who operate in both settings (Boutte, 2008). The goal is not to correct these speakers, but add to their repertories (Boutte, 2015). It is not uncommon for AAL speakers who show high levels of competence and intelligence in their homes and communities to be viewed from a deficit perspective in the school setting.

Most assessments that survey children’s language and vocabulary emphasize words that children do not know, instead of discovering words they do know (2015). Therefore the next stage in my research will be to analyze Eurocentric materials and determine if they provide authentic assessment for understanding students’ needs. I also would like to utilize books that not only include people of color, but utilize AAL in them as well. These strategies can help better understand the needs and how students are relating to the instructional setting. Another reason it is important to understand AAL, is to reduce biases among teachers who consider AAL speakers to be “low achieving” because they do not speak Standard American language.

I also plan to research various forms of alternative assessment that provide more authentic results. One of the disappointments of the NWF DIBELS measurement tool was the difficulty in allowing students to make real life connections. The words the students are asked to identify are “made up words”, therefore it can be difficult for some students to see the relevance. I noticed that students preformed better and showed more growth on naming the letter sounds, but struggled with blending the letters to make
words. I would recommend in the next study to use either a sight word list or short story to allow students an opportunity for authentic assessment.

**Conclusion**

I began the planning phase for this study in the fall of 2015. After working with students in the past I saw disconnect between the students’ background and the current curriculum and materials. I witnessed students failing each year to make adequate progress according to the current standards. I wanted to first delve deeper into understanding why this disconnection exists and what I could do to fix it. In the initial planning of this project, I began by trying to develop a system that taught students the background knowledge and the school norms. However, after further review and analysis I realized that was not an effective practice. This practice goes against CRP, because it is still teacher-centered. It continues to send the message to students that they are lacking knowledge and sends the message they come from a deficient background.

In the next phase, I studied multicultural education and thought of ways it could be implemented more in the classroom. It transpired that I had a misconception of what multicultural education was. I thought that if I just introduced an aspect of someone’s cultural background every now and then, it would be enough for students to make connections. It would make them feel included and promote all the positivity needed. An article on Rosa Parks in the book by Shramm-Pate and Jeffries, *Grappling With Diversity: Readings in Civil Rights Pedagogy and Critical Multiculturalism* changed my perspective about how I teach multiculturalism. The article discusses how our society has a skewed view on African American heroes. As educators, we romanticize these stories in an attempt to build sympathy for the “other”, thus keeping the dominant group secure (2008).
As I began to study more deeply and learn more about my own biases and understanding, I began to analyze and seek strategies that would be more effective in engaging students. Throughout my doctoral program I began to learn more about diversity, racism, and injustices in the current public school system and society. This knowledge was critical to the development of this program and enhancing the perspective of my students and their needs. Acknowledging and understanding that certain groups have been marginalized in society for various reasons should not evoke pity but a more thorough understanding on how change can be implemented.

This understanding has allowed me to look critically at the material being taught and used. It has prompted me to be more analytic regarding how information is presented and which vocabulary is selected on a daily basis. These are all important concepts when communicating with students. It therefore becomes more than just an additive to the curriculum: it becomes necessary for bringing about social justice.
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http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html


APPENDIX A: PREREST/POSTTEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Circle: Pre-test or Post-test

Date: __________________

The purpose of this Survey is to determine Student’s Intrinsic Motivation and Internal Attitudes towards reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reading learning is fun</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I like to do activities that involve reading</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I want to learn to read</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I think reading is important</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I will need to learn to read for the job I want when I am older</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reading is interesting</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am a good reader</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I enjoy learning to read</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I enjoy going to the library</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I have a favorite book</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😊</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Score:
APPENDIX B: NWF SCORE SHEET

Student: _________________________

Beginning Score:
Total Correct Letter Sounds: ______________
Total Whole Words Read: ________________

Week 2 Score:
Total Correct Letter Sounds: ______________
Total Whole Words Read: ________________

Week 4 Score:
Total Correct Letter Sounds: ______________
Total Whole Words Read: ________________

End Score:
Total Correct Letter Sounds: ______________
Total Whole Words Read: ________________

Improvement? Yes No

How many CLS improved? ________________
How many WWR improved? ________________

NWF Response Patterns:
Says correct sounds out of order: ______
Makes random errors: ______
Says correct sounds, does not recode: ______
Says correct sounds, recodes with incorrect sounds ______
Says correct sounds and correctly recodes_______
Doesn’t track correctly ____
Tries to turn nonsense words into real words ______
Makes consistent errors on specific letter sounds ______
Other______
APPENDIX C: PSF SCORE SHEET

Student: _________________________
Beginning Score: _____________
Week 2 Score: ________________
Week 4 Score: ________________
End Score: ____________________
Improvement? Yes No
How many points?_______________
Indicate Response Patterns:
Repeats word ______
Makes Random Errors _____
Says Initial Sound Only_____ 
Says onset rhyme _______
Does not segment blends _____
Adds sounds ______
Makes consistent errors on specific sound(s) ______
Other: _________________________
APPENDIX D: SCORES FOR THE PRETEST AND POSTTEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student #</th>
<th>Pre-test Score</th>
<th>Post-Test Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
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Mean: 23  
Median: 18  
Mode: 40  
SD:
**APPENDIX E: STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student #</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What did you find interesting in the lesson today? ________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How could you use this information outside of school? ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What would you like to learn more about? _______________________________________</td>
</tr>
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Notes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student #</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What did you find interesting in the lesson today? ________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. How could you use this information outside of school? ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. What would you like to learn more about? _______________________________________</td>
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Notes:

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<tr>
<th>Student #</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What did you find interesting in the lesson today? ________________________________</td>
</tr>
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<td>2. How could you use this information outside of school? ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. What would you like to learn more about? _______________________________________</td>
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Notes:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student #</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What did you find interesting in the lesson today? ________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How could you use this information outside of school? ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What would you like to learn more about? _______________________________________</td>
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Notes:
## APPENDIX F: TEACHER FEEDBACK FORM

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Does the student appear to be more interested in reading activities?</td>
</tr>
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<td>2. Does the student appear to be more interested in reading activities?</td>
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<td>2. Does the student appear to be more interested in reading activities?</td>
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>2. Does the student appear to be more interested in reading activities?</td>
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<td>Notes:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>1. Have you observed any changes in participation from this student?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Does the student appear to be more interested in reading activities?</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
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APPENDIX G: READING PERCENTAGES

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<th>End Reading %</th>
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<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shona</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violet</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kallie</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eddie</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>Jacob</td>
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<td>Kate</td>
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<td>John</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Beginning
Mean: 64.6
Median: 65
Mode: 68
SD: 

Ending
Mean: 66.3
Median:
Mode:
SD:

Change: 1.7
APPENDIX H: OBSERVATION TEMPLATE

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<th>Observations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Reflection:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX I: PARENT CONSENT FORM

Date: 03/26/18

Dear Parent(s):

My name is Rachel High (Mrs. High). I am a doctoral student at the University of South Carolina. I am conducting a research study to examine the effectiveness of using Culturally Relevant Care to promote intrinsic motivation in early literacy. I will be working with your child each week during their tutoring time. Activities will be planned using your child’s interests and research. These activities will help promote self-esteem and encourage a positive attitude and motivation towards reading.

Your child’s participation will involve tutoring sessions with me and a small group focusing on early literacy methods. It will also involve a brief 10-question survey regarding his or her attitudes and motivation for reading. Your child will answer the survey prior to the sessions and at the end of the 6-week period. The survey will be read aloud and only take approximately ten to fifteen minutes to answer.

This survey along with feedback from your child’s teacher will help me understand the success of using Culturally relevant pedagogy in early literacy instruction to enhance intrinsic motivation towards reading.

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary and confidential. The results of this study maybe published, however your child’s name will remain anonymous. The school and district will also remain anonymous in this study as well. There is no penalty for choosing not to participate. It will not affect your child’s grades or how they are treated at school.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study or your child’s participation in this study please feel free to contact me at rhigh@email.sc.edu

Sincerely,

Rachel E. High
Doctoral Student
University of South Carolina
By signing below, I give my consent for my child to participate in the above-referenced study.

Child’s name: ___________________________________

Parent’s name: ___________________________________

Parent’s signature: ______________________________
Dear Student:

My name is Mrs. High. I am a student at the University of South Carolina. I am working on a study to better understand how the tutoring program can better help students learn to read. I will be working with you during your tutoring period. We will work on some fun activities during this time.

At the beginning I will ask you to complete a 10-question survey to help me understand how you feel about reading. I will give you this same survey at the end of the six-week period. It will be read aloud and will only take a few minutes to answer.

This survey along with feedback from your teacher will help me understand the success of the tutoring program and the benefits it has on helping students read.

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary and confidential. The results of this study may be published, however I will not use your real name. The school and district will also remain anonymous in this study as well. There is no penalty for choosing not to participate. It will not affect your grade or how you are treated at school.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study please feel free to contact me at rhigh@email.sc.edu

Sincerely,

Rachel E. High  
Doctoral Student  
University of South Carolina

By signing below, I give my permission to be involved in this study.

Name: ___________________________________

Signature: ________________________________
APPENDIX K: PRETEST QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

PRETEST
SA=4; A=3; N=2; D=1; SD=0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ty</td>
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<td>Shona</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violet</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>SD SD SD SD SD SD SD SD SD 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>SA SA SA SA SA SA SA SA SA 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kallie</td>
<td>SA SA SA SA SA SA SA SA SA 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>N N N N N N N N N 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>SD N SD N N D N D SD SD 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
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<tr>
<td>John</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>N D SD D SD A D SD D D 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX L: POSTTEST QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

POSTTEST
SA=4; A=3; N=2; D=1; SD= 0

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<td>Violet</td>
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<td>Kallie</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>A A A A A A A A A 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>N A N SD D D A N D SD 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
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<td>Luke</td>
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Pretest
Mean: 23

Posttest
28.8

Increase
5.8