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The Impact of Reading Workshop on Third Graders in a Summer Reading Camp

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The Impact of *Reading Workshop* on Third Graders in a Summer Reading Camp

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my wonderful family. Without their help, this work would not have been completed. To my husband, Demetri, I owe you so much. You are my rock, my encourager, and my biggest fan. To my children, Ari, Vera Anne, and Vivienne, from this undertaking, I hope you know and understand the value of hard work and perseverance. To my parents, you have always allowed me to pursue my education and set the best example. I am forever grateful.

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you for all your encouragement throughout this journey! Without your constant voice of

reason and helpfulness, this dissertation would not be finished. Thank you.

Abstract

This action research describes the influence of the research-based program, *Reading Workshop*, based on student reading achievement, specifically, in one third-grade South Carolina summer reading camp classroom. Guiding the research, the problem of practice arose from the passing of South Carolina's Act 284, which states that school districts should make provisions to support every child becoming a proficient reader by the end of the third grade (SCDE, 2015a), and the lack of literature regarding the use of *Reading Workshop* in summer camps or summer school. Thus, the overarching question that guided the research was: To what extent are summer reading camp students, based on student achievement scores, benefiting from the implementation of *Reading Workshop?* The research of this study was conducted using a mixed-methods design for action research. Data were collected during pre- and post-assessments, as well as classroom observations. The results of the study produced an increase in student achievement after the implementation of the *Reading Workshop* program. The research led to the creation of an action plan providing a course of action for other educators to implement *Reading Workshop* in summer reading camp and regular education classrooms.

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List of Abbreviations

ANAR .... A Nation at Risk

CCAAL ....Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy

DRA2 ....Developmental Reading Assessment K-8

ELA.. English language arts

ESEA.. Elementary and Secondary Education Act

ESSA.. Every Student Succeeds Act

NAEP .... National Assessment of Education

NCES ....National Center for Education Statistics

NCTE ....National Council of Teachers of English

NEA ....National Education Association

NASBE ....National Association of State Boards of Education

NCLB ....No Child Left Behind Act

PASS .... Palmetto Assessment of State Standards

R2S...Read to Succeed

SC READY .... South Carolina College and Career Ready Assessment

Chapter 1

Introduction

The necessity of being college, career, and citizenship ready when students leave

high school has ensured that teachers have to teach beyond the basic literacy skills.

"Students will need to develop a more extensive array of literacy skills, strategies, and

practices to be successful using the new texts and resources in the new millennium"

(Serafini, 2015, p. 3). Elementary students have to read longer and more complex texts

for a purpose and with fluency, build vocabulary, and comprehend texts read. The

Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best

Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) emphasize the importance of

this:

> To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society,
>
> students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report
>
> on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer
>
> questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and
>
> extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new. (p. 4)

Because strong literary skills are needed for today's children to be successful, Routman

(2014) questioned, "How do we create schools and classrooms where all students thrive

and become highly literate?" (p. 1). In order to answer this question, the target school

district's summer reading camps have brought about curricular changes to move towards the goal of strong literary skills in the form of *Reading Workshop* implementation. The students' identified needs would be an array of literary skills, strategies, and practices to be successful readers on or above grade level.

This study explores the impact the *Reading Workshop* has on summer reading camp student achievement. The setting for this study was in a third grade classroom in summer reading camp. Additionally, the third grade educator teaching English language arts implemented the *Reading Workshop* model for the four weeks of camp.

Given the aforementioned background, this action research project poses the following question: Is the *Reading Workshop* model being implemented in a third-grade South Carolina summer reading camp classroom effecting student achievement?

Statement of the Problem of Practice

In order to assist students not reading proficiently on a third-grade level and to offset the summer reading slide, South Carolina state-funded summer reading camps are one of the components of Act 284 (Read to Succeed). Also within the summer reading camp classrooms, the target school district has implemented an enhanced, comprehensive, and balanced literacy approach using *Reading Workshop*. One of the emerging needs for *Reading Workshop* in summer reading camp is participating students needing intervention to help gain skills and strategies to improve their reading.

This action research study addresses this problem of practice. Calkins (2001) argued the *Reading Workshop*'s focal point is reading to gain meaning and giving students the tools necessary to do so. She believed children need to be taught early in their education that reading is "thinking guided by print" (p. 13). Moreover, Serifini

(2006) posited "Ensuring that readers understand that reading is the process of constructing meaning in transaction with texts is the cornerstone of *Reading Workshop*" (p. 8). Summer reading camp students have difficulty reading to gain meaning and sometimes lack reading strategies needed to tackle unknown texts. During the school year, *Reading Workshop* is designed to present students with instructional strategies and is an organized framework for enacting the workings of the literacy portion of language arts instruction (Serafini & Serafini-Youngs, 2006). However, this research study attempts to discover if *Reading Workshop* will also improve reading achievement in a summer reading camp classroom. Thus, this study explores the use of *Reading Workshop* with third-grade students in a summer reading camp. Emerging from the study was better understanding of how to provide balanced literacy instruction through the workshop with daily opportunities to engage in various reading, writing and communication activities.

Research Question

The following research question has been advanced for this action research project: What impact will the *Reading Workshop* have on reading achievement in a South Carolina summer reading camp third-grade classroom?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this action research study is to examine the framework, the ability to support elementary-age children's achievement, and the summer school implementation of *Reading Workshop.* Through the use of *Reading Workshop,* educators can help students improve their ability to comprehend in the early grades, which will impact their reading success in upper grades (Calkins, 2001). *Reading Workshop* can be used for "students needing intervention from a teacher with particular expertise not only

in the reading process and in developing word recognition and automaticity in older readers but also in miscue analysis" (Beers, Probst, & Reif, 2007, p. xv). This study shows reading growth in non-proficient third-grade readers, which demonstrates the *Reading Workshop*'s ability to impact reading achievement in summer reading camp. This knowledge is important considering the Kids Count Data Center (2015) argued that

> Proficiency in reading by the end of third grade is a crucial marker in a child's educational development. In the early years, learning to read is a critical component of education. But beginning in fourth grade, children use reading to learn other subjects, and therefore, mastery of reading becomes a critical component in their ability to keep up academically. Children who reach fourth grade without being able to read proficiently are more likely to drop out of high school, reducing their earnings potential and chances for success. (Kids Count Data Center, 2015)

Moreover, "to succeed in school and life, children and young adults need ongoing opportunities to learn and practice essential skills, especially in the summer months" (National Center for Summer Learning, 2009).

Significance of the Study

The rise in students failing by third grade have led to many concerns among teachers about students not being able to read and comprehend. In 2016, the target school district had 251 third-grade students reading below grade-level expectations and eligible for summer reading camp (South Carolina Department of Education [SCDE], 2017a). Furthermore, in 2017 the district's test scores of *Does Not Meet* in English language arts on the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Assessment (SC READY) rose in all

elementary grade levels. The percentage of third graders scoring *Does Not Meet* rose

from 18.5% to 21.5% (South Carolina Department of Education, 2017b). Therefore,

because this study focuses on reading achievement, it can provide insight and solutions,

particularly regarding the benefits and importance of the use of *Reading Workshop*.

Numerous studies document summer learning potential (Alexander, Entwisle, &

Olson, 2007; McCombs, Augustine, Schwartz, Bodilly, McInnis, Lichter, Cross, 2011).

"A quality summer-school program can help struggling students improve their

performance significantly and, in many cases, avoid failure" (Denton, 2002, p. 8). Thus,

this study provides insight in the ways *Reading Workshop* can assist in addressing

summer reading loss. The results of the study are important and can help inform school

district stakeholders, the district's associate superintendent of instruction and

accountability, the district's superintendent, and the South Carolina Department of

Education's Office of Transformation when making decisions about summer reading

camp.

Positionality

In order to study and reflect upon my practices, I, the summer school classroom

teacher, positioned myself as an insider in this research. As noted by Herr and Anderson

(2015), action research is conducted by or with insiders to an organization. With

experience as both a teacher and reading coach, while conducting this action research, I

was interested in putting into practice the learning I had acquired in my time outside the

general education classroom. Components of the *Reading Workshop* played a part in my

classrooms over the years, but not all components were used as a whole or cohesively.

Through my work as a reading coach, and through coaching conversations with other

teachers, I have come to better understand the challenges of meeting all the needs of the readers in a classroom and in particular, students who struggle to make reading gains. Thus, I wanted to use my skills and began teaching in my school district's summer reading camps. Since the creation of summer reading camps in South Carolina, I have been working in them, and it has allowed me to better understand the needs of the population of students, the camp routines and procedures. While teaching, I became acquainted with the different third-grade students and gathered pertinent information in regards to the action research. Thus, I will be able to continue using it to inform summer reading camp instruction.

Rationale for the Study

Educators are constantly striving positively to impact student achievement in reading, and they seek out new and inventive ways to do this in the classroom. The Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) pointed out, "[t]o build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts" (p. 10). As a reading coach and summer reading camp educator, I am continuously looking for ways to build a foundation, and ultimately, the evolution of this study's research question began when I began merging the ideas of coach and educator. I began wondering, would implementing the *Reading Workshop* model be able to boost achievement while giving summer reading camp students the opportunity to read from many different texts in the different aspects of the model?

Ferrance (2000) noted, "many action research projects are started with a particular problem to solve, whose solution leads into other areas of study" (p. 2). When reviewing articles, books, and studies to help with students' growth in reading, I discovered many that dealt with *Reading Workshop.* However, not many gave actual results of the use of the program, and none of the studies had been conducted on the use of the program in summer school or camp. Therefore, there is a need for this study to determine if the *Reading Workshop* program is effective in increasing student achievement in a summer camp classroom. This study has the potential to serve as a catalyst for additional action research studies in the area of reading initiatives or summer reading camps.

Methodology

Action research is the guiding methodology for this study. In this section, I describe the steps in the proposed action research study and justify my proposed choice of methodology. Kurt Lewin first used the term "action research" when defining the research as a method to bring about social change (Helskog, 2014; Herr & Anderson, 2015; King & Lonnquist, 1992; Snyder, 2009). Providing a theory of research grounded in inquiry and problem solving (Herr & Anderson, 2015), action research deals with solving educator's immediate issues. It can be started at any time and offer instant results. Due to the research offering different views and approaches to educational problems and practices (Mertler, 2014), it is a method that will meet the needs of the researcher, me.

Action research represents the mutual benefit and blending of traditional and applied research (Snyder, 2009). It is normally described as participatory and cyclical. Seeking to gather information about their teaching and student learning, action research is done by teachers for teachers (Mertler, 2014). In this study, I conducted the study while

simultaneously participating in it, which leads to relevance. In addition, contrasting with traditional research, this type of research method is cyclical (Mertler, 2014). After a study, the next "action" or planning cycle should begin. The summer reading camp classroom setting and my role as both researcher and participant make action research the appropriate methodology for my study.

Following Mertler's (2014) multiple stage process, this research study was carried out in four stages: the planning stage, the acting stage, the developing stage, and the reflecting stage. In the beginning of what Mertler (2014) calls the *planning stage*, the I (as teacher-researcher) reviewed exit surveys completed by previous summer reading camp educators. Additionally, I spoke with other summer reading camp personnel and educators to gain a strong understanding of perceptions towards summer reading camp, Act 284, and curriculum models used. According to Mertler (2014), it is important to speak with others and collaborate because of differing insights that may assist the research. Ultimately, within this planning stage, the topic of the research was identified in order to investigate and examine. After establishing a foundation to begin the research, the next step was to review the related literature (see Chapter 2). During this phase, I discovered limited evidence of studies of the use of *Reading Workshop* with elementary-age students or summer camps or schools.

The acting or implementing stage of the research occurred during the four-week period of summer reading camp. Starting on the first day of summer reading camp, I began implementing *Reading Workshop*. I put into practice all parts of the program and carried out activities daily. Additionally, during the first and last weeks, I administered

the *Developmental Reading Assessment K-8* (DRA2) to all students. The next phase or developing stage included an analysis of data from the DRA2 scores, pre and post.

Lastly, to better understand the outcome of the research and the nature of action research being cyclical, I reflected upon the action research. While reflecting, I reviewed decisions about the efficacy of the program and thoughts about necessary modifications on how the *Reading Workshop* may be implemented moving forward in future summer reading camps. According to Mertler (2014), in order to connect research to application, researchers must share their results. Therefore, I shared the results of the research with other summer reading camp educators, the school district, and the South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Transformation.

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Limitations

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Limitations existed that impacted the study's results. This study was conducted in one classroom of a South Carolina summer reading camp for the entire four-week session, and thus its findings are limited to this particular context and the individuals participating in it. Due to the summer reading camp schedule, the intervention could only be for the four weeks camp was held. Also because of the short amount of time spent in camp and other demands placed on observers, feedback was minimal and no post observation conferences were held, which brought about limitations. In addition, the small class size of 11 students placed an unavoidable limitation due to the action research. Future research could use multiple summer reading camp classrooms with more students, and the possibility of lengthier camps. Furthermore, due to the fact that I was solely responsible for collecting and analyzing the data, potential bias could exist in the research being conducted.

Definition of Terms

Balanced literacy: The balanced literacy approach is defined as the shared use of reading, writing, listening, critical thinking, and communication, which unites learner interests and experiences through meaningful contexts (Morrow & Carnahan, 2010).

Conferring: Conferring is defined as a time when teachers meet individually with students during independent reading time to assess reading progress, comprehension of text, and reading strategies used (Fountas & Pinnell, 2007).

Guided reading: Guided reading is a time when students are participating in a teacher-led small group, reading selected texts with the teacher providing explicit teaching and support (Fountas & Pinnell, 2007).

Independent reading: Independent reading refers to student self-selecting books of choice that are on their reading level in order to practice reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006).

Mini-lesson: A mini-lesson refers to strategically short instruction from a teacher that has a focus on a specific skill, strategy, or procedure (Fountas & Pinnell, 2007).

Reading Workshop: Reading Workshop refers to the components of the literacy portion of language arts instruction that are enacted through a composition of instructional strategies and an organizational framework (Serafini & Serafini-Youngs, 2006).

South Carolina College-and-Career-Ready Assessment: "The South Carolina College-and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY) are statewide assessments in English language arts and mathematics that will meet all of the requirements of Acts 155 and 200, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, and the Assessments Peer Review guidance. All students in grades 3–8 are required to take the SC READY except those students with significant cognitive

disabilities who qualify for the South Carolina National Center and State Collaborative

alternate assessment" (SCDE, 2017c).

Shared reading: Shared reading is a method of teaching in which a teacher teaches

vocabulary, comprehension strategies, and pieces of literacy to a group of students

reading the same text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2007).

Sharing: Sharing refers to a specific time at the conclusion of independent reading where

students are allowed to share their gained knowledge and learning in regards to reading.

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2006).

Dissertation Overview

This research study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study and

reviews the statement of the problem being addressed. The chapter continues with a

discussion of the study's purpose, research question, significance, rationale, and

methodology utilized. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature and support for the study.

Additionally, it presents the research providing the theoretical framework for this study.

Chapter 3 introduces the methods of study, which consist of a description of the research

design, study participants, instruments, procedure, and data analysis. Chapter 4 presents

the results of the study. Chapter 5 provides discussion of the findings, conclusions, and

implications of the study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Mastery of reading is probably the most important scholarly activity, and every school-level subject requires students to read on the equivalent grade level (Henry, 2003). Since the introduction of adolescent literacy issues in the 1990s, improving reading skills in children has been a national mission. Schools have addressed early literacy issues; however, school systems are still grappling with the fact that reading achievement decreases as students move upward into higher grade levels (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy [CCAAL], 2010). The intention of this action research study is to determine the impact that the implementation of the *Reading Workshop* model had on student achievement in a summer reading camp classroom.

Chapter 2 contains a review of literature and research related to the problem of the study. To begin, the theoretical framework is provided. The literature review then covers three broad themes: literacy achievement, responses to literacy underachievement, and a review of research of *Reading Workshop* and summer reading programs.

After the theoretical framework, the next section of this review provides an overview of literacy achievement. Due to the focus of the research study, this investigation specifically looks to scholarship regarding troubling test scores, retention,

and high school graduation rates. Following, the next section of the review examines responses to literacy underachievement on both national and state levels. Specifically investigated are A Nation at Risk, No Child Left Behind, and Read to Succeed, or more pointedly, responses to literacy underachievement with the use of interventions like *Reading Workshop* and summer school programs. Both have claims of improving students' reading abilities and test scores (Borman & Dowling, 2006; Calkins, 2001; Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996; Fountas & Pinnel, 2007). However, claims of this sort necessitate a more research-based appraisal of the success potential of *Reading Workshop* and summer school.

In order to ground such outcomes in empirical data, it is necessary to review the overall judgment of the literature on the effectiveness of *Reading Workshop* and summer school for student outcomes and then examine specific studies in which *Reading Workshop* and summer school were implemented, resulting in positive or negative outcomes. With this in mind, this review concludes with a final section examining the literature in regards to research studies using *Reading Workshop* and research studies focused on summer reading programs.

Statement of the Problem

In accordance with language arts, a solid literacy curriculum is imperative to develop established readers and writers (Tompkins, 2013). For example, Serafini (2015) said, "Students will need to develop a more extensive array of literacy skills, strategies, and practices to be successful using the new texts and resources in the new millennium" (p. 3). However, even though they have been provided support with skills through instructional strategies, many elementary students have yet to master simple literacy. In

2017 by the state's summative assessment, the SC READY, South Carolina state reading

data showed only 42.1% of students met the third-grade reading standard (*Meets or*

Exceeds Expectations), while 31.8% were *Approaching Expectations* (SCDE, 2017b).

In an effort to ensure that students are achieving at proficient or higher levels in

reading, the faculty teaching in the target district's summer reading camp will be

implementing *Reading Workshop*. This study will ask the question, "Are summer reading

camp students, based on student achievement scores, benefiting from the implementation

of *Reading Workshop?*" In order to analyze its effectiveness, the collection of data and

feedback from educators will be needed to confirm that *Reading Workshop* is sufficient

in fulfilling the needs of the students.

Purpose Statement

In today's society, children must develop strong literary skills to be successful.

Read to Succeed states that school districts should make provisions to support every child

becoming a proficient reader by the end of the third grade (SCDE, 2015a). The target

school district has brought about changes to move toward the goal of these strong literacy

skills in the form of *Reading Workshop* implementation in the summer reading camp

classroom. The purpose of the research will be to identify the impact on student

achievement due to the implementation.

Research Question

How does the implementation of *Reading Workshop* affect reading achievement

in one South Carolina summer reading camp classrooms?

Theoretical Framework

Dewey (1897; 1938) believed that the best means for accomplishing the output of democratic citizens involved producing school environments that placed students at the center of the educational experience. Due to the summer reading camps' emphasis on student-centered learning, the target school district has implemented an enhanced, comprehensive, and balanced literacy approach using *Reading Workshop* in classrooms. In order to understand the intersection of the *Reading Workshop* and theory, it is necessary to address balanced literacy instruction.

Balanced Literacy Instruction

Reading wars over beliefs in skills-based instruction as opposed to a holistic view of instruction have led to a balanced literacy approach (Bingham & Hall-Kenyon, 2013). Balanced literacy is defined as the combined use of reading, writing, listening, critical thinking, and communication, which incorporates learner experiences through meaningful contexts (Morrow & Carnahan, 2010). Working together as a cohesive system is the combination of multiple approaches used by teachers to instruct literacy. The balance in instruction addresses the needs of all learners, allows for flexibility and views teachers as informed decision-makers. Lucy Calkins (2011a) states, "The term 'balanced literacy' comes, in part, from the recognition that readers need a variety of different opportunities to learn" (p. 11). This view is reflective of a classroom using *Reading Workshop* through mini-lessons, shared and guided reading, conferring, independent reading, and sharing. Furthermore, Frey, Lee, Tollefson, Pass, and Massengill (2005) argue, "Balanced literacy is often characterized in a comprehensive and complex way. It is a philosophical orientation that assumes that reading and writing

achievement are developed through instruction and support in multiple environments by using various approaches that differ by level of teacher support and child control" (p. 272). Seen as comprehensive literacy instruction, a balanced literacy approach provides students with daily opportunities to engage in various reading, writing and conversing activities to help meet the needs of all learners.

According to Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzoni (2011) the goal of comprehensive literacy instruction is to ensure that all students achieve their full literacy potential. This instruction should prepare our students to enter adulthood with the skills they will need to participate fully in a democratic society that is part of a global economy.

Comprehensive literacy instruction:

- Is a balanced approach that involves appropriate emphasis on meaning and skill instruction,

- Incorporates evidence-based best practices to suit the needs of all students in whole-group, small-group, and individualized instruction,

- Builds on the knowledge that students bring to school,

- Acknowledges reciprocity among reading processes (e.g., decoding, vocabulary, comprehension, motivation) and between reading and writing,

- Recognizes that comprehension is the ultimate goal of literacy instruction.

- Emphasizes meaning construction through open and collaborative literacy tasks and activities that require critical thinking. (p. 18-19)

Research has identified the benefits of a balanced approach in literacy instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). However in a balanced literacy approach, how an educator

teaches is as important as what is taught. In *Reading Workshop*, teachers act as

facilitators. While independently reading, students are encouraged by their teacher to

select their own books of interest to read (Tompkins, 2010). According to Buhrke and

Pittman (2008), instrumental to growing readers is freedom of choice in book selection.

Teachers allowing students to direct their learning through choice is a real- world

experience. Furthering the idea of student interest and choice, Fountas and Pinnell (2001)

describe *Reading Workshop* as "a laboratory in which individual students are busily

engaged in reading that reflects real-life; that is, they are reading in ways that match what

readers do all their lives" (p. 41).

Additionally within different components of *Reading Workshop,* teachers provide

scaffolded instruction through assisting and guiding students in completion of work and

by using the model of gradual release of responsibility (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983).

During reading instruction, scaffolding is seen as direct instruction, modeling, or

communicating (Rupley, Blair, & Nichols, 2009). Through this support by the facilitator

and peers during conferring, in conjunction with independent and partner reading,

students are able to expand and apply their knowledge (Calkins, 2001). Moreover, mini-

lessons can be used to scaffold learning as student learn strategies and skills to tackle

unknown text. Thus, through gradual release of responsibility, students build their

independence. Argued by Bingham and Hall-Kenyon (2013),

> Balanced literacy is a philosophical perspective that seeks to combine, or balance,
>
> skill-based and meaning based instruction in order to ensure positive reading and
>
> writing results in children. The balanced literacy framework is often
>
> conceptualized based on a view or scaffolded instruction, or gradual release of

responsibility (reading and writing-to, with and by students) where teachers

provide varying levels of support based on children's needs. Balanced literacy

instructional practices are often enacted through the use of specific instructional

routines such as guided reading, shared reading, interactive writing, literacy

centers and independent reading and writing. The use of these instructional

techniques is intended to allow for differentiated literacy instruction and is posited

as a way of helping children gain access to developmentally appropriate literacy

knowledge skills. (p. 16)

To conclude, readers need multiple and different opportunities to learn through

literacy instruction. Without the opportunity to use multiple approaches to facilitate

learning through individual, small and whole group learning, teachers would use one

strategy to teach a diverse group of students. However, differing of instruction through

balanced literacy instruction in *Reading Workshop* can be used by teachers to meet the

individual needs of their students and bring about achievement.

Reading Achievement

The foundations for literacy begin to develop at birth (National Early Literacy

Panel Report, 2008). Later literacy abilities are impacted by language and cognitive

development during the preschool years. In order for students to be successful readers

and writers, a wide range of language and literacy experiences at home and in school

settings need to be provided to students (South Carolina Department of Education,

2015a).

According to the Early Language and Literacy Development Zero to Three Policy

Brief (2011),

Positive early language and literacy development can give children a window to the world, helping to ensure that each child can seize his or her potential for future success. During the first 3 years of life, the brain undergoes its most dramatic development and children acquire the ability to think, speak, learn, and reason. When this early development is not nurtured, the brain's architecture is affected and young children begin to fall behind."(p. 1)

Providing children strong literacy education in the early years leads to better academic outcomes and reading success later on (Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling, & Miller-Johnson, 2002). Research now shows that children who do not learn the basic reading skills early are unlikely to learn them as they grow. Mastering skills and knowledge will not come easily to children who do not learn to read well and early, and it will be difficult for them to flourish (Moats, 1999). As pointed out by Henry (2003), mastery of reading is probably the most important scholarly activity of a person. In response, schools have pursued addressing early literacy issues; however, school systems are still grappling with the fact that reading achievement decreases as students move upward into higher grade levels (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy [CCAAL], 2010).

The crisis in adolescent literacy still continues from its introduction in the mid-1990 (Jacobs, 2008). High school dropout rates are increasing, and the number of struggling readers is rising as well. For struggling readers, a piece of the problem is the wide range of challenging text and difficulties that require a variety of interventions for students (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). In most cases, struggling readers can read words or word call. However, they struggle to comprehend the material they are reading. Stemming from a many different reasons, problems include engagement, motivation,

deficiencies in fluency and use of reading strategies. In some students, deficiencies in speaking English also add to the struggle to read (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

However, having high literacy skills is indispensable (National Association of State Boards of Education [NASBE], 2005). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released results in April 2007 of the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (Kutner, Greenburg, Jin, Boyle, Hsu, & Dunleavy, 2007). The study found that "adults with higher literacy levels were more likely to be employed full-time and less likely to be out of the labor force than adults with lower literacy levels. Adults with lower literacy levels also generally earned lower incomes" (Kutner et al., 2007, p. vi).

Opined by Biancarosa and Snow (2006) many high school dropouts or adults with low literacy skills have a difficult time or limited opportunities to gain jobs as compared to years previous. Educators must teach beyond basic skills and move to having students read for a purpose, self-select books, and learning to develop voacabulary and comprehension. In today's world, students need strong literacy backgrounds and skills to be successful in careers, society, and everyday life (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). However, adolescents are currently not well prepared for the challenges of college, career readiness, and being a 21st-century citizen (CCAAL, 2010).

"Learning to read is one of the most important skills in modern society. Not only does reading serve as the major foundational skill for school- based learning, but reading ability is strongly related to opportunities for academic and vocational success" (Lesnick, Goerge, Smithgall, & Gwynne, 2010, p. 1). Therefore, a focus on troubling test scores, retention and graduation rates relative to struggling readers is essential to the review of literature.

Troubling National Test Scores in K–12 Schools

On a national level, literacy remains a serious concern, as national achievement data demonstrates many children and adolescents are not progressing. Trends of reading difficulties at the national level are noted in the literacy performance of adolescents monitored by National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The data has been stagnant for 37 years (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009). According to the NCES (2017a) the NAEP is administered to a randomly sampled group of students in Grades 4 and 8 every other year, and Grade 12 is assessed every four years. In 2017, the NAEP conducted an assessment to determine reading and math proficiency in fourth and eighth graders. The tests are generally consider rigorous and highly reliable, but the scores remain stationary. Math scores have flat lined since 2009 and reading scores since 1998, as once again just a third or so of students are performing at a level the NAEP defines as "proficient." According to the *Nation's Report Card* (2017a) for reading in 2017, the average reading score has not significantly changed, which suggests student performance at the national level has plateaued. Additionally, performance gaps between lower-income students and their more affluent peers, among other demographic discrepancies, have remained unyieldingly wide. Specifically, gaps in fourth-grade students' reading performance among ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status have not decreased from 2015 to 2017 (*Nations Report Card,* 2017b). Therefore, based on national reports, the current instructional practices used for teaching reading are not meeting all the needs of students.

South Carolina

Due to troubling reading test scores in 2014, South Carolina passed legislation requiring students at the end of third grade to read on grade level as measured by state approved summative reading assessment (SCDE, 2015a). On the SC READY ELA assessment, students scoring at the lowest achievement level (equating to Not Met 1) demonstrate not meeting the criteria for promotion (SCDE, 2015a). Beginning with the 2017–2018 school year, Read to Succeed requires that a student must be retained in the third grade or attend a summer reading camp if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency at the end of the third grade (SCDE, 2015a). These summer reading camps are educational programs offered in the summer by local school districts used as an intervention for non-proficient readers qualifying for mandatory retention.

Measured in 2017 by the state's summative assessment, the SC READY, South Carolina state reading data showed only 42.1% of students met the third-grade reading standard (*Meets or Exceeds Expectations*), while 31.8% were *Approaching Expectations* (SCDE, 2017b). In addition, the data indicated the percentage of students who meet the grade-level reading standard typically declines as students progress from elementary to middle school (SCDE, 2017b). Not meeting the standard seems to be a continued trend. For example in 2014, the targeted school district's test scores of Not Met in ELA on the PASS rose in all three targeted grade levels. This information explains the percentage of students that did not meet grade-level standards. The percentage of third graders scoring Not Met rose from 13.8% to 19.3%. The percentage of fourth graders rose from 16.4% to 20.1%, and the percentage of fifth graders scoring Not Met rose from 15.5% to 15.6% (South Carolina Department of Education, 2015b).

Moreover, Lesnick, Goerge, Smithgall, and Gwynne (2010) noted that early reading achievement impacted later academic success because the third-grade reading level was a predictor of eighth- and ninth-grade performance, high school graduation, and college attendance. Other researchers also noted that 75% of students with identified reading problems in the third grade struggled with reading in the ninth grade (Francis, 1996; Francis et al., 2005; Shaywitz, Escobar, Shaywitz, Fletcher, & Makuch, 1992) and that third-grade students with poor skills in word recognition were not likely to improve their reading skills with any significance by the end of eighth grade (Felton & Wood, 1992). In a similar study, researchers Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) asserted that academic success by high school graduation can be predicted by third grade; a student that is not a proficient reader is not likely to graduate (Strickland & Riley-Ayers, 2006).

Additionally, national achievement data demonstrates, as compared with students in other states, too many children from South Carolina are not progressing. At the state level, the *Nations Report Card* (2017c) released South Carolina's statistics for 2017, which indicated only 29% of fourth-grade students from South Carolina scored at or above *Proficient* in reading, below the national average of 35%. Ranking in the bottom 10 of all the states and jurisdictions, South Carolina had an average score of 213 compared to the national average score of 221 (*Nations Report Card,* 2017c). This average score is significantly lower than the previous 2015 score of 218. By the time students are in fourth grade and performing at the proficient level, they should be able to integrate, interpret texts and apply their understanding of the text to draw conclusions and make evaluations. Thus, statistically, two-thirds of students did not finish fourth grade with these essential reading skills. In addition, only 59% of the state's fourth graders

scored at or above the *Basic* level. Once again, this percentage is significantly smaller than the national level percentage of 67.

The troubling findings are put into perspective by Lesnick et al.'s (2010) qualitative study on a focus cohort of third-grade students. In the study, the scholars explored third-grade national percentiles on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) in Chicago Public Schools and found a relationship between third-grade reading levels and future educational outcomes: "In other words, for students who are below- or at- grade level in third grade, third- grade reading level influences eighth- grade reading level, eighth-grade reading level influences ninth-grade course selection, and ninth-grade course performance influences high school graduation rates and college attendance" (Lesnick et al., 2010, p. 4).

The South Carolina Department of Education (2015c) analyzed and examined the results of two statewide assessments, the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) and the High School Assessment Program (HSAP). To measure literacy, the PASS assessed reading and writing (along with research skills) while the HSAP assessed English language arts (ELA) proficiency.

Three consistent patterns emerged from the data:

1. Significant literacy achievement gaps exist between demographic subgroups.

2. A higher percentage of students in every demographic group failed to meet literacy standards from third grade to eighth grade.

3. Literacy achievement gaps widen from the third grade to the eighth grade. (p. 29–30)

For struggling readers, as school grades progress, being able to meet increased educational demands becomes more difficult. Retention, increased high school dropout rates, and low college admissions are realities for children who do not develop as readers at the same rate as their peers.

Retention

Since the inception of A Nation at Risk (ANAR) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), grade retention has been on the rise. Scholars believe grade retention is due to the ever-increasing demands to reform public education and raise student achievement (Hernandez, 2012). Retention is the answer for students who did not master grade-level criteria during the school year (Davoudzadeh, McTernan, & Grimm, 2015). During the 1994–2015 school years, approximately 2% of U.S. school age children were retained (National Center for Education, 2017). As Tingle, Schoeneberger, & Algozzine (2012) pointed out, states are using retention as an intervention for students who poorly perform on state assessments, specifically third graders who struggle in reading. Thus, the debate about retention has continued with educators, districts personnel, parents, and lawmakers. Should struggling students be held back to repeat a grade or move on with their same-age peers? Unfortunately, for some students, it is harder to develop and continue to sharpen their literacy skills as they move up in their academic careers than it is for others.

"Literacy is not a technical skill acquired once and for all in the primary grades" (National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2006, p. 5). In order to maintain reading proficiency, literacy involves acquiring new skills: evaluating, organizing, expressing ideas, decoding, fluency, and comprehension. Literacy is not just learning to read and write. "It is a serious mistake to think that we can stop teaching reading after

third grade—many students continue to need explicit and systematic instruction in increasingly complex skills in order to move to higher levels of reading proficiency" (Torgensen et al., 2007, p. 5). *Reading Workshop* is designed to present students with instructional strategies and an organized framework for enacting the workings of the literacy portion of language arts instruction (Serafini & Serafini-Youngs, 2006). The workshop is intended to teach students how to be effective readers. If this does not happen, retention is a serious concern and reality for many students. A number of reasons exist for retention, including lack of academic or social readiness to advance to the next grade level.

Grade retention is the educational practice of repeating an academic school year. According to the NCES (2017b) the practice of schools retaining students is an indicator of the condition of public education. Since 1996, approximately 10% of children in the United States repeated an academic year between the grades of kindergarten and eighth grade. With that said, public schools retain more than private schools (NCES, 2017a). In addition, African American students were more frequently retained compared to other ethnic groups. When observing trends in gender and retention, boys repeat more than girls (NCES, 2017b). Moreover, NCES (2017b) found correlations between retention and student living in poverty with mothers who have less than a high school diploma.

Supporting retention, some advocates argue students who lag behind, academically and socially, should not move to the next grade level. Accordingly, if students did not meet the grade-level criteria in the previous year, they could have difficulty mastering skills from the next grade level as well. This deficit would lead to students falling further and further behind peers. Theoretically, as pointed out by Chohan

and Qadir (2011), retention could give low-achieving students another year in the same grade level, allowing them extra time to improve their academic ability. Conducting a mixed-method study, the authors examined the effect of grade retention on fourth-grade students compared to their peers. The study found retention positively impacted the students, but no significant increase in academic performance over other students was discovered.

There is a great deal of research discouraging the retention of students (Jackson, 1975; Holmes & Matthews, 1984; Jimerson, 2001; Roderick & Nagaoka, 2005; Jacob & Lefgren, 2007). Critics advocate students who did not learn the information the first time in a grade level will not be likely to learn it if placed in that grade level for another year. Research by Roderick and Nagaoka (2003) investigated the effects of state and district retention policies in the Chicago Public Schools, in which promotion was based on standardized test scores in Grades 3, 6, and 8. Ultimately, the researchers' central focus was to decide if retention hindered or helped students' achievement growth. Comparing groups of students who just missed promotion to students who scored just above the test-score cutoff, the research for third graders found the following:

1. Retained students struggled the second time trying to meet the promotional standards.

2. Close to 20% of retained third and sixth graders were placed in special education within two years of the retention decision.

3. The January test resulted in many retained students rejoining their age-appropriate classmates. (p. 1–2)

These results lead to the question: Is retention really helping struggling students?

In the present educational climate, grade retention in many states is linked to standardize testing. An example is South Carolina's Act 284, known as *Read to Succeed* (R2S; SCDE, 2015). R2S required students who do not meet a proficient reading level by the end of third grade to be retained. In lieu of social promotion, the state of South Carolina and approximately 30 more have passed third-grade literacy laws and are using criterion-based standardized testing as a requirement for students to promote (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010).

Argued by Huddleston (2014), established test-based retention is used to try to raise student achievement and cut back on social promotion. However, researchers have found multiple examples of retention unfairly targeting the most vulnerable of student populations, causing no significant results in long-term student improvement and an increase in the potential for increase in high school drop-out rates (Chohan & Qadir, 2016; Eren, Depew, & Barnes, 2017; Huddleston, 2014; Tingle et al., 2012). There were several ideas that have been researched to attempt to prevent grade retention and help students graduate from high school. Some of the ideas included: early literacy, researched-based interventions, systematic explicit instruction, building teacher instructional capacity, and summer schools or camps.

Graduation Rates

Multiple decades of rising academic standards and sometimes lack of student achievement, literacy improvement has not been able to keep up with the ever increasing demands of the "global knowledge economy" (CCAAL, 2010, p. x).

According to the Kids Count Data Center (2015):

Proficiency in reading by the end of third grade is a crucial marker in a child's

educational development. In the early years, learning to read is a critical

component of education. But beginning in fourth grade, children use reading to

learn other subjects, and therefore, mastery of reading becomes a critical

component in their ability to keep up academically. Children who reach fourth

grade without being able to read proficiently are more likely to drop out of high

school, reducing their earnings potential and changes for success.

Additionally, students from families with low socioeconomic status are more likely to

have a gap in school readiness scores that will represent at least a six-month difference

between low- and middle-income students. Moats (1999) argued that mastery of skills

and knowledge will not come easily to children who do not learn to read early and well.

Describing the downward trajectory as the Matthew Effect, Keith Stanovich (1986) wrote

about an all-too-predictable pattern with children who struggle with reading and writing

and perform poorly on standardized measures of reading during elementary and middle

school. Often these students drop out before completing high school because they have

not been provided the instruction to meet their needs (National Education Goals Report,

1995). Furthermore, according to Cham, Hughes, West, and Im (2015), grade retention

places students at risk of dropping out of high school before graduation, due to lack of

desire or motivation. Dropping out of school becomes a solution for students who are no

longer academically motivated or with same age peers due to retention. A research study

in North Carolina examined 68,401 third-grade students at high risk of dropping out of

high school (Cratty, 2012). The author found 19.3% of students who did not meet grade-

level criteria and were retained twice or more dropped out of school.

In the 2012– 2013 school year, SCDE (2015c) data indicated that 5,537 South

Carolina high school students dropped out, which is a 2.6% drop-out rate. Although this

is a decreased rate from recent years, many South Carolina students are still not being

prepared to meet expectations in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate (SCDE,

2015c). Furthermore, nationally the drop-out rate is still an issue as well. In 2015, the

NCES (2017b) reported, "approximately 2.3 million 16-to24-year-olds were not enrolled

in high school and had not earned a high school diploma or an equivalency credit (p. 78)."

School drop-out rates coupled with troubling test scores and retention have led the nation,

as well as, South Carolina to respond.

Responses to Literacy Underachievement

The National Education Association (NEA) policy states that reading is the

"gateway" to learning and achievement. While helping students expand their knowledge

after third grade, reading is an important gateway; however, learning to read does not

abruptly stop at the end of second grade (Torgensen et al., 2007). According to the

statement by the NEA, reading instruction should be individualized in order to meet the

needs of students who range from emergent to established readers. Even though the NEA

does not promote a particular program or preferred method to teach reading, the

association does support systematic and deliberate reading instruction, like *Reading

Workshop*, and not one-size-fits-all teaching or a rigid progression teachers should follow.

Nation at Risk

In 1983, the National Committee of Excellence in Education released their report,

A Nation at Risk (ANAR). Immediately following publication, ANAR brought forth a

national desire to reform education and bring about a stronger economy and national

security. The report detailed how the United States economy and way of life was being threatened. Comparisons of students' global assessment scores, rates in literacy, and falling SAT scores were used as evidence of the decline of knowledge and skills of students. With this evidence, the report feared America's mediocre education could not keep up with growing technologies and world competitions of markets. Furthermore, the report's solution was for students and teachers to have educational standards (Borek, 208). Also, recommended was an increase in time spent in school with an increase in rigor to the curriculum.

In the 35 years following this biting report, drastic steps have been taken by many schools trying to meet the report's challenge to provide "more rigorous and measureable standards" (ANAR, 1983). According to Tyack and Cubin (1995), after the release of ANAR, states created more laws and regulations than they had in 20 years. All U.S. states have adopted state academic standards for learning with the goal of all students being college or career ready when leaving high school. Overall, however, ANAR did not produce many extensive changes. It did, however, put education in the forefront of the U.S. agenda leading into the era of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) or what is now the Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Every Child Succeeds Act

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), signed into law by President George W. Bush in January 2002, reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), a law that encompassed Title I and was first enacted in 1965 as federal aid for disadvantaged students. The amendment had bipartisan support and was designed to be a "landmark in education reform designed to improve student achievement and change

the culture of America's schools" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The goal of the act was academic proficiency for all students, standards set by individual states, all by the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The act was "built on four common-sense pillars: accountability for results, an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research, expanded parental options and expanded local control and flexibility" (p. 3). Each state defined Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for its districts and schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a) to assess growth over time. NCLB required annual testing, annual school report cards, and specific teacher qualifications, included funding to target poor children, and offered a competitive grant program to fund research-based reading programs for disadvantaged students. Within the NCLB mandates, states were required to bring all third-grade students up to a proficient reading level by 2013–2014 (U.S. Department of Education, 2004b). Districts and schools that met progress goals were rewarded; those that did not faced potential punishments that included withdrawal of funds and state takeover of underperforming schools. In addition to NCLB, the Every Student Succeeds Act was signed into law by President Obama on December 10, 2015 and also reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and built on key areas of progress in recent years (U.S. Department of Education, 2004c). The new ESSA law called for "state developed identification and intervention with support for the bottom 5% of schools" and "dedicated funding for lowest performing schools" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Due to the strong academic mandate of NCLB, all schools and personnel must clarify and define how they intend to attain academic proficiency by closing the achievement gap of all students. The U.S. Department of Education (2003) stated that all

students must achieve academic proficiency by the 2013–2014 school year, which means that all students must be on grade level and completing grade-level work. NCLB stresses to states and schools to meet standards set forth by each state; therefore, differentiated instruction is needed to meet all students' needs at all instructional levels.

If states fail to meet the required standards and reach reading achievement goals, NCLB (2002) makes suggestions for school reform. This includes removal of principals and school staffs, offering school choice to parents, and offering after-school supplemental services to students in need. Allington (2006) argued NCLB's solutions and programs offered have little evidence to support improving student achievement. Allington (2006) further supported this by stating, "No research indicates that school choice improves student reading achievement" (p. 21), even though policymakers continue to search for improvement of reading achievement through mandated programs and curriculum.

Additionally, Sharkey and Murnane (2003) found that teachers need to make professional decisions for their students and classrooms, an autonomy that has slowly been taken away by the authorization of NCLB. This is due in part to the increase of commercialized literacy programs based on the hasty push to increase literacy achievement (Sharkey & Murnane, 2003). No school wants to underperform, especially in this time of high accountability. With the commercially made programs, teachers and students lose creativity because of rigid instructions, schedules, materials, and suggested guidelines. Risk taking, productivity of students, critical thinking, and teacher effectiveness are hampered by these types of programs (Sharkey & Murnane, 2003).

Read to Succeed

Reading improvement has continued to be a common theme at the federal level, and South Carolina has followed its lead by imposing laws connected to literacy. Having analyzed data related to student achievement, Literacy Matters and the South Carolina Literacy Panel determined the state's primary literacy challenges and recommended actions necessary to improve the literacy achievement of all students. The four identified major literacy challenges that affect the reading achievement of South Carolina students are: (a) low student achievement in reading and writing, (b) literacy achievement gaps among demographic groups, (c) summer reading achievement loss, and (d) limited number of exemplary literacy classrooms (SCDE, 2015c). In June 2014, as a response to closing the state's achievement gap and increasing opportunities for all students, the South Carolina General Assembly and Governor Nikki Haley passed Act 284 (Read to Succeed):

> Read to Succeed legislation is ground-breaking for South Carolina because it is comprehensive, systematic, and affects every educator and student in the state through eight components: 1. State, district, and school reading plans 2. Focus on third grade progression 3. Summer reading camps 4. Provision of reading interventions 5. Requirements for in-service educator endorsements 6. Early learning and literacy development 7. Teacher preparation 8. Reading coaches. (SCDE, 2015c, p. 3–4)

In addition to the mandates of NCLB and the ESSA Act, coupled with Read to Succeed, expectations of newly implemented South Carolina Readiness curriculum have dictated that students must read on grade level by the end of third grade (SCDE, 2015a).

The state believes that as students progress through school, reading comprehension is vital to success.

Reading Workshop

Reading Workshop is an alternative to traditional classroom reading instruction with basal reading and questions at the end of the story. According to Serafini (2001), the *Reading Workshop* is a "single block of time dedicated to the exploration of literature and the development of children's reading processes" (p. 4). Moreover, *Reading Workshop* allows students the opportunity to become more involved with their reading through selected books on the student's independent reading level; therefore, student learning involvement is high (Allen, 2000). The workshop approach to reading combines many of the practices known to create better readers. The *Reading Workshop* framework consists of a teacher-led mini-lesson based on comprehension skills and strategies, intentional independent reading with students applying the skills and strategies, conferring with selected students, guided reading in a small group, and sharing (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Due to the *Reading Workshop's* makeup of predictable components and routines, it welcomes and embraces independent student learning through intentional reading, writing, communication and interactions. Through these activities, students are able to participate in discovery learning and the better understanding of content and skills (Bennet, 2007). The comprehension skills learned consist of monitoring comprehension, using background knowledge, asking questions, drawing inferences, determining importance, and synthesizing information (Keene & Zimmerman, 2007).

Mini-Lesson

The mini-lesson refers to strategically short instruction from a teacher that has a focus on a specific skill, strategy, or procedure (Fountas & Pinnell, 2007). Calkins (2011b) stated, "Most teachers use the strategy of demonstration and, more specifically, of thinking aloud, in reading mini-lessons" (p. 15). Explicit teaching through modeling was defined by Fountas and Pinnell (2007) as demonstrating cognitive activities and skills that take place in the head of an expert reader. Thus, the teacher models the voices of students in their heads or inner speech as the teacher reads aloud, so students can observe the reading processes that take place in the mind a good reader.

However, Calkins (2011b) continued, "Teaching of reading won't amount to much until students are choosing just-right books and reading them with stamina. Unless students are reading books they can read with at least 96% accuracy, fluency, and strong comprehension, it is superfluous to worry about mini-lessons that teach strategies for identifying with characters or developing theories" (p. 16). The goal for a *Reading Workshop* mini-lesson is "to help children think like readers and ultimately become independent readers for life" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p. 353). Teachers should design their lessons to be brief and provide opportunities for students to use the strategies or skills in their own reading. The students can then share to solidify or expand their learning. Stephanie Harvey (2014) argued, "We need to show students how to read and then let them read. Worksheets do not help. Reading, talking about what they have read, writing and things are what students need to be doing." (SCDE, 2015c, p.36)

According to Guthrie and Davis (2003), by fully engaging students in reading and writing text, teachers can help all students to reach high levels of reading achievement. Furthermore, Biancarosa (2012) found adolescent literacy requires differentiated

instruction. To meet this challenge, teachers must consider the types of grouping arrangements they use during their literacy instruction. Allington and Johnson (2000) reported that exemplary teachers were working with small groups while their other students were independently reading. While helping students master challenging reading skills, teachers also need to support students who need help mastering basic reading skills. Mini-lessons can be used for intense instruction with individuals and small groups of students.

Independent Reading

With independent reading, students self-select books from a wide range of materials that are easy enough for them to read for opportunities to practice reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). One of the most important things when teaching reading is that students progressing through books (Calkins, 2011b). For this to occur, students need to have access to a classroom library that is extensive. Research shows that vast reading expands children's comprehension, background knowledge, vocabulary, fluency, and writing (Krashen, 2004). Regrettably, in most schools the weakest readers read up to three times less than their peers (Allington, 2006). Reading alone, to a peer, or to an adult are all acceptable ways to read during this workshop time. Independent learners need uninterrupted peaceful time that can lead to sustained engagement and movement of learning (Routman, 2014). Independent reading is essential when instructing in reading and is supported and scaffolded by mini-lessons, direct instruction in strategies and skills of reading, read alouds, book talks, and sharing (Calkins, 2001).

According to Miller and Moss (2013), for students to achieve the skill levels teachers hope for, their independent reading needs to be supported be a collection of

effective practices. Student growth happens when the following practices exist together.

To grow as independent readers, students need:

- classroom time to read

- to choose what they read

- explicit instruction about what, why, and how readers read

- to read a lot: a large number of books and variety of texts

- access to texts

- teacher monitoring, assessment, and support during independent reading

- to talk about what they read (p. 16)

Independent reading exposes students to different genres and text complexity while giving them access to success. Miller (2009) argued, "by dedicating reading time, recommending books, exposing students to a variety of texts and authors and validating their reading choices, students' interests and motivation to read increases" (p. 92).

Conferring

During independent reading, teachers meet individually or in small groups with students to assess their reading progress, question their thinking, and discuss their comprehension. However, conferring is also used as an essential time to listen to students read aloud in order to assess for fluency. Miller and Moss (2013) declared, "Conferring is differentiation at its finest! When we confer with children one-on-one, we are working hard to personalize our instruction and support children as they apply what we've taught them in large and small group settings" (p. 60). During the conference, the teacher collects data through anecdotal notes and gets to know the reader to strengthen and support reading through conversation (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). The conference is the

time for the educator to probe the reader with questions that would allow the teacher to become an avid listener.

According to Porath (2014), "Listening to students sounds like a simple directive, but active listening requires that teachers are aware of how their own experiences intrude on their ability to focus on the words and experiences of the child" (p. 633). Finally, having daily conferences with students for instruction and assessment is vital for learning and knowing student strengths and needs (Routman, 2014). Conferring gives teachers valuable information on students' knowledge and ability. From this formative assessment, the teacher can plan mini-lessons, arrange group work, and plan for guided reading groups. Sitting and reading with the student, the teacher can know whether the student can read and comprehend the chosen text. Calkins (2011b) argued, "There is much evidence to suggest that comprehension skyrockets when students are given an opportunity to talk about books" (p.20).

Guided Reading

Guided reading is any learning context where the teacher guides one or more students through a portion of the reading process (Routman, 2014). The teacher selects and introduces the reading material to the students who have similar reading skills and behaviors. In addition, scaffolding is provided to students during guided reading and additional help when they are presented with text on their instructional level (Fountas & Pinnell, 2007). Guided reading or shared experiences is a time for students to learn from their teacher and peers and take risks without fear of failure. They can build on their strengths and quickly be corrected and collaborate with their classmates. Routman (2014) said, "Doing more shared experiences has the potential to change the classroom culture—

whether it be elementary, middle, or high school—to a more inclusive, risk-taking, and collaborative one" (p. 66).

Sharing

Sharing is when students share out their learning discovered during independent reading. Share time is usually conducted at the conclusion of independent reading time (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). During *Reading Workshop*, teachers can take time for students to reflect and share what they have learned with their peers during a reading or writing activity. Miller and Moss (2013) declared, "When children understand that they have the chance every day to come back together and reflect on what they've learned and how they've grown as readers that day, this also connects to purpose—children have a forum where they can discuss what they've learned and how they've gotten smarter as readers this day" (p. 48).

Research Studies on *Reading Workshop*

While a review of research studies on classrooms or schools using *Reading Workshop* was conducted, I discovered many spoke to implementation of *Reading Workshop* during the typical school year. However, the studies below did supply information and discernment about the program. A need exists for more research on the effects of using the *Reading Workshop* program and its use in a summer school or camp setting. The following paragraphs review previously conducted formal research studies on the *Reading Workshop*.

A joint study published by Taylor and Nesheim (2000) examined the effects of *Reading Workshop* with adolescent males at an alternative school. In order to tap into readers' interests, motivate readers, increase comprehension, and provide practice time,

the authors used the *Reading Workshop* as an innovative approach. The purpose of the research was to examine *Reading Workshop* and its efficacy for introducing new literary experiences and, through these experiences, nurture reading proficiency and life-long reading. This study examined at-risk male students who lived together in a residential treatment center and school. The student-participants were 60% European American, 30% Latino, and 10% African American (Taylor & Nesheim, 2000). They participated in mini-lessons, share time, and independent work. Furthermore, the combined use of targeted mini-lessons on reading strategies and the time to read independently from books on the students' reading levels resulted in positively effecting student achievement and reader motivation. The authors noted, "Building connections made between students' literacy experiences and their backgrounds, and connections shared among readers, this *Reading Workshop* fostered reading engagement and improved perceptions of reading for the student within this classroom community" (Taylor & Nesheim, 2000, p. 318).

In comparison to the previous study reviewed, Mitev (1994) studied *Reading Workshop* from the angle of teachers' perceptions of the program's efficacy and the program's effects on students' comprehension and vocabulary. The study was conducted over a two year time period from 1991–1993. During the 1991–1992 school year, a control group, consisting of 98 students, was taught using an integrated whole language reading approach. The approach was not differentiated to meet individual needs and utilized the following: whole group instruction, basal readers with no student choice in reading materials, and guided reading practice with a follow-up worksheet or activity. The following school year, 85 students in the experimental group were taught using the *Reading Workshop* program in conjunction with the integrated whole language reading

approach. Both groups were given a pre and post assessment, the Stanford Achievement Test, to measure and determine students' reading comprehension. Assessment data, as a whole, showed no statistically significant difference between the control and experimental group, but when analyzing individual data, a significance was noted. Just as the previous study suggested that the *Reading Workshop* program benefits struggling readers the most, quartile comparisons in comprehension scores in Mitey's (1994) study indicated the students in the experimental group in the bottom 25th quartile made the most comprehension gains. In addition, when analyzing the scores, the integrated whole language approach showed to benefit vocabulary in the control group. In conclusion, teacher interviews revealed the *Reading Workshop* program increased awareness and confidence in individual student needs, differentiation, and the perceived belief in the need for student choice and a plethora of classroom books for increased academic success (Mitev, 1994).

In an action research study conducted by Lausé (2004), she reported the use of *Reading Workshop* in order to increase fluency, comprehension, and motivation. In other words, Lausé used *Reading Workshop* to "enable student to become lifelong readers by combining the study of classic literature with free-choice reading that builds their reading skills" (Lausé, 2004, p. 25). The curriculum design was used with ninth- and tenth-grade English classes in New Orleans, and the author deemed it a success: "At the beginning of the year, 65% of the students don't see themselves as readers, and only 10% can articulate what makes a book enjoyable for them. At the end of the year, 95% of the students see themselves as readers, have a clear sense of their reading taste, and have a list of books that they want to read" (Lausé, 2004, p. 27). When looking at achievement

in reading speed and comprehension, Lausé (2004) noted 14% students decreased to only 2% who were reading less than 15 pages per workshop by the end of the study. In conclusion, the author is a firm believer in *Reading Workshop's* abilities to meet the needs of students through choice and challenge in independent reading time with conferring to help guide.

In a qualitative study conducted in 2011, Mounla, Bahous, and Nabhani (2011) examined the utilization of the *Reading Workshop* program within a Lebanese first-grade mixed-ability classroom. The school, located in Beirut, uses an American curriculum to teach reading and writing to approximately 900 Lebanese and international students. However, only one classroom of 18 students was chosen to be examined. Three students, one from each reading group, were then selected based at random.

Furthermore, a timeline of October to June was used to implement *Reading Workshop* and its traditional structures: mini-lesson, independent reading time, conferring, and sharing. Throughout the study, multiple data points were collected and reviewed to determine the program's efficacy. Notes and observations from teachers as well as a diverse set of assessments were used. At the beginning and end of the timeline, students were administered running record assessments to determine progress and growth. Moreover, all students were scored using the following criteria: reading level and comprehension skills (Mounla et. al, 2011). The researchers documented all students increased their reading growth and comprehension skills significantly. However due to the study using a small sample size, data was limited and results cannot be generalized to other circumstances and situations.

While not participating in the facilitating of *Reading Workshop* itself, Gulla (2012) conducted an ethnographic study of one ninth-grade literacy classroom located in a South Bronx vocational high school in New York City. The inclusion class had two team teachers who were using *Reading Workshop* to build independent reading stamina within 27 students: 23 male and 4 female. Even though the students were older and in a vocational high school, the workshop model allowed the secondary teacher to ignite a passionate interest in reading but still support emergent readers. The need to support struggling readers is a must at the vocational school because as the author stated, "students have said that they were encouraged by their school counselors to apply to Urban because they lack a strong academic record and might not be accepted by a more selective high school" (Gulla, 2012, p. 57). However, they are required to read and comprehend high levels of technical literacy in manuals and textbooks and could be setting themselves up for failure by attending a vocational, career, and technical school. Concluding the study, the author noted the findings were positive and success could be seen in the conferring of students, reading achievement and advancement of students. With this said, this study had overarching conclusions that were not matched with data represented.

Based on the review of research studies, several key points can be made. First, *Reading Workshop* is an effective approach when increasing comprehension and fluency, especially for struggling readers (Gulla, 2012; Lausé, 2004; Mitev, 1994). In addition, the workshop is effective when meeting the needs of the teacher and for differentiation (Gulla, 2012; Lausé, 2004; Mitev, 1994; Mounla et. al, 2011; Taylor & Nesheim, 2000). Furthermore, *Reading Workshop* can be utilized in a variety of diverse populations to

produce student achievement and positive reader attitudes (Gulla, 2012; Lausé, 2004; Mitev, 1994; Mounla et. al, 2011; Taylor & Nesheim, 2000).

However, justification for the need for this study is evident in the gap of literature. To date, no rigorous research has been conducted on the *Reading Workshop* program's effects on elementary school age students' reading achievement. One study examined first graders, but the study was limited with a small sampling (Mounla et. al, 2011). In other studies, focus was on positive reading attitudes and motivation as the outcome (Gulla, 2012; Lausé, 2004; Taylor & Nesheim, 2000). By examining the *Reading Workshop* program's effects on reading achievement with third grade readers of diverse backgrounds, the current study helped fill the gaps in the research.

Research Studies on Summer School Programs

Nationally, school districts continue to struggle with the question of how to best support low-achieving students to meet rigorous standards and perform on high stakes testing. As a result of research on summer learning, it has become increasingly apparent that the time period over the summer, when students are typically out of school, has important implications for understanding achievement gaps (Borman, 2000). This raises the question of the programs schools need to offer over the summer for student to help diminish learning regression. Researchers suggested summer learning regression may be improved by continuing schooling over the summer months (Borman & Dowling, 2006; Cooper et al., 1996). In addition, Cooper et al. (1996) made the suggestion to focus on reading if the intent of the summer program is to lesson inequalities across income groups.

In 2000, Cooper, Charlton, Valentine and Muhlenbruck (2000) reviewed 93 studies of summer school and found they benefit all children, regardless of income,

although the findings suggested at least three problems: (a) summer school for disadvantaged students is often mandatory, (b) enrichment summer programs attended by middle-class children are often voluntary, and (c) programs lack structure as compared to typical school-year programs. Additional reviews by Ascher (1988) and Austin, Roger, and Walbesser (1972) showed failed summer school program shared the following characteristics: (a) short programs, (b) weak organization, (c) sparse planning, (d) decrease in academic expectations, (e) no progression from school to summer curriculum, (f) teacher fatigue, and (g) limited focus on academics. Conclusive evidence of summer schooling or programs being effective has not been found: "Summer school programs may generally be ineffective because they are timed too late in students' academic careers, often occurring during late elementary school and middle school, long after ability shortcomings have limited further learning" (Borman & Dowling, 2006, p. 27).

Similarly, Borman and Dowling (2006) conducted research on the Teach Baltimore Academy, and their findings suggested "that a voluntary summer school program developed specifically to avert the summer achievement slide can help prevent students from falling behind and can have a positive impact on students' longitudinal learning outcomes" (p. 30). The Teach Baltimore program began in 1992 as a tutoring organization of volunteers from Johns Hopkins University and has grown to now provide summer instruction to Baltimore City public school students (Borman & Dowling, 2006). Even though it was held in the summer, the Teach Baltimore program used the *KidzLit* curriculum, designed for afterschool, to help support reading instruction (Borman & Dowling, 2006).

According to *KidzLit* (2016), the goal of the curriculum is to develop positive attitudes toward reading while building skills in comprehension and vocabulary. *The Afterschool Kidzbooks Handbook* (2014) explained the structure of the curriculum is recommended for 30–90 minutes and includes an introduction, read-aloud, talk or discussion time, connection activity, and closing. However, the reading curriculum is not recommended to solve serious struggles with reading abilities (*KidzLit*, 2016). Even though the reading program was valuable, the researchers' findings leaned toward the sustained participation and extracurricular activities in the Teach Baltimore Summer Academy as being most essential for improved achievement outcomes (Borman & Dowling, 2006).

Likewise, Roderick, Engel, and Nagaoka (2003) conducted research on ending social promotion through the results of Chicago's Summer Bridge program. According to Chicago Public Schools (2017), the Summer Bridge program is designed for students in Grades 3, 6, and 8 who do not meet the grade-level requirements by the end of the regular school year. The students are mandated to go to the Summer Bridge program, where they received remedial reading and math instruction while utilizing an online curriculum (Roderick et al., 2003). According to the authors, students are taught by a Chicago public school teacher using a prescribed curriculum that is aligned to the Iowa Tests Basic Skills (ITBS). Due to the nature of the curriculum, critics of the program have claimed it develops test-taking skills and is not focused on direct instruction (Roderick et al., 2003). No research has been conducted to show student achievement on other assessments; however, results of Roderick et al.'s (2003) research found that students attending

Chicago's Summer Bridge program did demonstrate a rise in the second score on the ITBS when retested at the end of the summer program.

In conclusion, no research of any type has been conducted on the use of *Reading Workshop* within the summer school or camp setting. Borman and Dowling (2006) and Roderick et al.'s (2003) research examined summer school as a deterrent from the summer learning slide. However, the research indicated each program in Baltimore and Chicago leaned towards other factors besides curriculum leading to increased achievement or reading growth.

Summary

In this literature review, I researched and reviewed literacy issues and student support. I presented ideas related to elementary literacy, including the concept that literacy is more than reading and writing. Literacy is life-long and learned throughout students' educational career (NCTE, 2007). In addition, I also discussed reading achievement. Based on NCLB now found as ESSA (2002), educators must outline their plan on how all students will reach academic proficiency and close the achievement gap by third grade. Read to Succeed set forth a plan for school districts to improve reading achievement in the state, in order for all South Carolina students to be college and career ready (SCDE, 2015c, p. 3–4).

This literature review presented the topic of *Reading Workshop*, its components, and benefits. Included in the review of the relevant literature were research studies of the use of *Reading Workshop* and summer school programs and their use of literacy programs was discussed. Much of the research suggests *Reading Workshop* has the potential to positively impact student achievement. Gaps were found in the literature and

demonstrate a need for more rigorous research on *Reading Workshop* as it correlates to student achievement in the summer camp setting. Therefore, this study's emphasis on the use of the *Reading Workshop* approach as it impacts student achievement in summer camp is warranted. The following chapter, Methodology, continues the action research cycle and addresses the research question.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used in this research study. I discuss the research design, description of setting and participants, instruments and procedures. I also present the timeline and data analysis I used.

Problem of Practice

In accordance with language arts, a solid literacy curriculum is imperative to develop established readers and writers (Tompkins, 2013). For example, Serafini (2015) said, "Students will need to develop a more extensive array of literacy skills, strategies, and practices to be successful using the new texts and resources in the new millennium" (p. 3). However, even though they have been provided support with skills through instructional strategies, many elementary students have yet to master simple literacy.

In today's society, children must develop strong literary skills to be successful. R2S states that school districts should make provisions to support every child becoming a proficient reader by the end of the third grade (SCDE, 2015a). The target school district has brought about changes to move toward the goal of these strong literacy skills in the form of *Reading Workshop* implementation in the summer reading camp classroom. In an effort to ensure that students are achieving at proficient or higher levels in reading, I, the researcher, implemented *Reading Workshop* in a summer reading camp classroom. The

purpose of the research is to identify the impact on student achievement due to this implementation. The overarching question that guided the research was: To what extent are summer reading camp students, based on student achievement scores, benefiting from the implementation of *Reading Workshop?* In order to analyze its effectiveness, the collection of data will be needed to confirm that *Reading Workshop* is sufficient in fulfilling the needs of the students.

Research Design

Argyris and Schon (1991) articulated the goals and methods of the action research tradition.

> Action Research takes its cues—its questions, puzzles, and problems—from the perceptions of practitioners within particular, local practice contexts. It bounds episodes of research according to the boundaries of the local context. It builds descriptions and theories within the practice context itself, and tests them there through intervention experiments—that is, through experiments that bear the double burden of testing hypotheses and effecting some (putatively) desired change in the situation. (p. 86)

According to Sager (2000), action research can be undertaken by one person, a group of people collaborating to solve a common issue, or an entire school. Differing in organization, these approaches to action research serve three similar yet distinct purposes: (a) creating a more reflective practitioner, (b) making progress on school initiatives, and (c) building professional learning communities. Also, emphasizing the importance of action research, Mertler (2014) wrote:

[First,] action research deals with your problems, not someone else's. Second,

action research is very timely; it can start now–or whenever you are ready–and

provides immediate results. Third, action research provides educators with

opportunities to better understand, and therefore, improve their educational

practices. Fourth, as a process, action research can also promote the building of

stronger relationships among colleagues with whom we work. Finally, and

possibly most importantly, action research provides educators with alternative

ways of viewing and approaching educational practices and problems and with

new ways of examining our own educational practices (p. 21).

Varying models have been used when designing action research studies. Typically, action

research follows a cycle of plan, act, observe, and reflect (Lewin, 1948). However,

Mertler's (2014) similar four phases in the action research process—the *planning, acting,*

developing, and *reflecting* stages—were utilized to design the study. As the researcher, I

facilitated the learning in my classroom, and used the research to better guide my

instruction and inform literacy instruction for summer reading camp. As I attempted to

solve the problem of practice in my summer reading camp classroom, action research was

relevant because it better determined how best to move forward (Mertler, 2014).

The research of this study was conducted using a mixed-methods design for

action research. Due to both qualitative and quantitative data collection being valuable in

research, it was my intent to utilize several sources to collect information for this action

research. The benefits of considering both types of data were to provide a better

understanding of the research problem than using one method alone (Creswell, 2015).

Only using one method to collect data could lead to unreliable or invalid data. Dana and

Yendol-Hoppey (2014) stated: "By employing multiple strategies, you are able to build a strong case for your findings by pointing out the ways different data sources led you to the same conclusions" (p. 134). In this study, I used two sources: my own questions from creating *Reading Workshop* observation tool, and pre- and post-assessment data. In order to discover if the *Reading Workshop* will impact student achievement, I reviewed and analyzed all data.

Timeline

Mertler (2014) stated, "Making sure that … research adheres to ethical standards is a primary responsibility of the educator-researcher" (p. 106). With this said, much has to be considered ethically before, during, and after research. Before beginning the research project, I sought district-level approval from the ELA and reading coordinators who received approval from their supervisor, the associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction. The duration of this study was 10 months and is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Time Table

May 2017	Obtained permission from school district to conduct study
June 2017	Implemented *Reading Workshop* in summer reading camp
First week of June 2017	Administered pretest DRA
June 2017	Observation checklist was used by summer reading camp site adminstrator and reading coordinator
Last week of June 2017	Administered posttest DRA

Setting

　　The setting for the study is an elementary school housing a summer reading camp

located in coastal South Carolina. Based on school enrollment on the 135-day count of

the 2016–2017 school year, the targeted school district enrollment was 31,401 students in

prekindergarten through Grade 12. The student population at the summer reading camp

was representative of five different elementary schools in the target school district. Four

schools are Title 1 schools with a population of 62% to 97% of students who receive free

and reduced lunch in 2017. The remaining school is an art magnet school with a

population of 24% of students who receive free and reduced lunch in 2017. Due to

districts having flexibility as to how the days are structured, the target school district had

students attend camp for 96 instructional hours, which amounts to six hours a day, four

days a week for four weeks. To protect the identity of the participants and setting,

pseudonyms were used throughout the study.

Table 3.2

Summer Reading Camp Students

District	Total Number of Students Served in Third Grade—Eligible	Total Number of Students Served in Third Grade—Attended	Statewide Total Number of Students Promoted in Third Grade for Summer Reading Camp
Park County School District	251	104	101

Participants

Identified by each South Carolina school district using a universal screener, third-grade students who are not reading proficiently on grade level were offered enrollment in a non-mandatory summer reading camp. Table 3.2 represents these students in the target school district in 2017.

Students and one teacher all participated in this research study. I obtained permission for this study from the district ELA and reading coordinators and the associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction. I analyzed test data. However, I de-identified all test data, and thus student participation was not required in the research. A reading coach and summer camp educator, I have been in my position for five years in the targeted school district and am familiar with the research site. As of the 2016–2017 school year, I had a total of 13 years of experience teaching ELA.

The participants of the research study were the target population. The summer camp student enrollment in my classroom was 11 students. As shown in Table 3.3, the demographics of the population were as follows: 36.4% African American males (4), 18.2% African American females (2), 18.2% Caucasian males (2), and 27.2% Caucasian females (3). Four students had individual education plans (IEPs). As previously stated, to protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms are used throughout the study.

Table 3.3

Student Demographics

Student Name	School	Gender	Ethnicity	Free and Reduced Lunch	IEP	Retained Previously	Qualifying DRA2 score
Atalie	Hunt Elementary	F	W	N	N	N	24
Susy	Bee Town Elementary	F	W	Y	Y	Y	24
Solange	Wilkerson Elementary	F	W	Y	N	N	24
Ike	Barn Elementary	M	W	Y	N	N	24
Chris	Barn Elementary	M	AA	Y	Y	N	24
Opal	Barn Elementary	F	AA	Y	N	N	24
Anna	Wilkerson Elementary	F	AA	Y	N	Y	24
Brandon	Barn Elementary	M	W	Y	Y	N	24
Ricky	Wilkerson Elementary	M	AA	Y	Y	N	24
Mark	Barn Elementary	M	AA	Y	N	N	24
Eli	Wilkerson Elementary	M	AA	Y	N	N	24

Research Instruments

To determine the impact of the program and determine the events that occurred during implementation, the tools used for the research study were DRA2 and an observation tool. I used these instruments to support and inform the research.

DRA2. Summer reading camp participants in the target school district were identified for enrollment in camp using the Summer Reading Camp Student Identification Flowchart (Appendix A). After students arrived at camp, they were administered the DRA2 again to determine any change in their independent reading levels. They were tested by a trained representative from the district. This assessment was used due to Pearson Education Inc.'s use of two methods to examine reliability and also their findings presented to provide support for the validity of the test (Beaver & Carter, 2011).

The DRA2 is a formative reading assessment administered to individual students to determine their independent reading level, which equates to a grade-level text. Student independent reading levels are determined based on specific criteria related to accuracy, comprehension, and fluency. The DRA2 includes leveled texts, fiction and non-fiction, ranging in Levels A through 40. Level A is the easiest and would be a reading level for an emergent reader. In contrast, Level 40 is the most difficult and would assess a more established reader. During the assessment, students are asked to read a portion of the text or an entire text aloud. The role of the individual administering the assessment is to complete a running record of the student miscues. In order to determine where to begin assessing the student, the student's previous school DRA2 scores were used.
A student's independent reading level is that at which the student is able to successfully read a book with little or no difficulty. To determine a student's independent reading level, a rubric is used for reading engagement, accuracy, and comprehension. Students

have to score between a 6 and 8 in reading engagement to be considered independent. Moreover, a student has to read with 97% accuracy or higher with 100 words or higher read per minute to score as an independent reader. This would be considered a score of 11–16 on the rubric. In addition, the DRA2 measures student comprehension on how students respond to questions that require them to predict, summarize, interpret, and reflect, while showing metacognitive awareness. To be independent, students would have to score within the range of 17–22 on the rubric (Beaver & Carter, 2011). Important to note, level 28 is when the student is required to write their answers. At this level and beyond, students are analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information read. Allowing students to organize their thoughts in writing in a meaningful, logical order enables the student to clarify their understanding of what they have read.

For the purpose of this study, I collected DRA2 scores as a pre- and post-assessment, and the text levels were used as a measure of growth over time. Analyzing the summer reading camp 2017 DRA2 data, I used inferential statistics. A sample t-test was used to determine if statistically significant differences in the means were evident. The pre-assessment was given between June 1, 2017 (before implementation of the *Reading Workshop* program), and the post-assessment was given before July 1, 2017 (after implementation).

Observations. The observation tool (see Appendix B) created by the target school district to use during summer reading camp classroom observations was used by the site administrator and reading coordinator during the implementation of *Reading Workshop*. The tool is a 12-item list with response options of "Very Evident," "Evident," "Somewhat Evident," "Not Evident," and "Not Observed." Included after each item is a

note taking section for observers to write out what they saw or heard during the observation. Moreover, the tool provided observational data of the implementation of the *Reading Workshop* program in summer reading camp. Using descriptive data to summarize and to review for frequency, I collected and analyzed the data to determine if the classroom implemented the *Reading Workshop* format as originally designed and with impact to achievement. Utilizing the results from the DRA scores and observations, I answer the research question.

Procedures

Students attended camp four days a week for a total of four weeks. They received 96 instructional hours with the addition of being offered breakfast, lunch, recess, and library time. At the beginning of the four-weeks of camp, I created a daily schedule (Appendix C) to ensure time was allotted for all the components of *Reading Workshop* and various other requirements of camp. In addition, for the first week of camp, due to all students receiving the same DRA2-qualifying summer reading camp score of a 24 (refer to Table 3), students were placed into small groups. As previously discussed, the target school district determined that data were in the form of a pre-test and post-test using DRA2 the first and last weeks of camp. It is important to note, small groups were fluid and did change due to formative assessments. Due to the nature of summer reading camp and time limits, the schedule was strictly adhered to daily.

When constructing the daily schedule, I started the day with time for students to receive breakfast, provided to them at no cost. Then, they moved into the classroom where a balanced literacy approach could be seen with all the components of the *Reading Workshop*. Every day at 8:15 a.m., students would start class with a morning meeting, in

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which they would set their reading goals for the day and possibly discuss their previous ones. Moving into and participating in a shared reading, I shared a book or passage with the students, each holding a copy of the text. The students read the text independently the first time, while annotating. The second reading was done by me and used as an opportunity to point out vocabulary, connections, or as a think-pair-share time. Last, the third reading of the text was ever changing: I read sometimes while encouraging the students to read along, and other times students would read selected parts in a jigsaw fashion. The shared read led into a writing workshop or text-dependent response time. Next in the schedule was the interactive read aloud component. Interactive read alouds, designed to encourage students to try to think deeper while reading, are when the teacher modeled his or her thinking aloud. During this time, students were also turning and talking to their partners to share their thinking of the reading. To close, the teacher encouraged the students to use the thinking strategies modeled when reading independently.

Furthermore, students were allowed to choose from a mixture of books on their reading levels, high interest, and popular magazines to read during their independent reading time. In addition to the classroom library, they had access to a large selection of books in the school library, as well as, eBooks and web sources. While students were independently reading, I used the time to confer with students. Depending on the day, conferring happened individually or as a small group. Questioning of thinking, comprehension, and informal assessments of students reading progress were the basis of the conferences. Due to this formative assessment, I was able to plan mini-lessons, arrange group work, and plan for guided reading groups.

In addition, a mini-lesson occurred daily, in between recess and lunch. I explicitly taught a skill using the following resource: *The Intermediate Comprehension Toolkit* (Harvey & Goudvis, 2016). Modeling of the skill or strategy was important due to the fact the students were then using the skill in small groups and in a research workshop later in the day. Fountas and Pinnell (2007) argued modeling of a skill is the demonstration of cognitive skills that take place in the head of an expert reader. Students need this to fully understand what to do as readers. The goal for a *Reading Workshop* mini-lesson is "to help children think like readers and ultimately become independent readers for life" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p. 353).

After lunch, the students flowed into time allotted for small group instruction. In order to practice the skill or strategy modeled during the mini-lesson, I selected and introduced reading material to the students on an instructional level. The group of students in each small group had similar reading processes or behaviors, and guided reading provided them scaffolding and help when they were presented with a more difficult text to read (Fountas & Pinnell, 2007). Every day after this small group time and after the research workshop time, students were able to share their knowledge, learning, or insights on their readings for the day as a closing activity to *Reading Workshop*.

Throughout the weeks of camp, the site administrator and the reading coordinator used the observation tool (see Appendix B). Both observers made weekly trips into the classroom to collect data. Data was sent not only to me for review and reflection purposes, but it was also used to evaluate the summer reading program.

Data Analysis

As previously stated, this research was conducted using a mixed-methods research design. Data was collected and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively in two areas throughout the research: growth over time on the DRA2 reading assessments (see Tables 6 and 7) and observations of implementation of the *Reading Workshop* model. Observations of implementation took place two times a week by both observers throughout the intervention.

At the conclusion of the data collection timeframe, all data were analyzed. Moreover, I used results from summer reading classroom observations and the DRA2 pre- and post-assessment data to answer the research question: What impact will the *Reading Workshop* program have on reading achievement in one South Carolina summer reading camp classroom? To date, not all the components of *Reading Workshop* have been incorporated into other summer reading camp classrooms. Also, summer reading camp teachers have not been consistent in implementation. Therefore, I was looking for trends or patterns embedded in the data to show increase in achievement due to the inclusion and consistent use of all of these. When analyzing the data, the process gave way to reflection and possible further investigation.

Summary

This chapter has described the research paradigm in terms of the research question, the methodology, data collection methods, the type of analysis used, and reflection. The following chapter will present the results of the investigation.

Chapter 4

Findings and Interpretation of Results

The purpose of this study is to examine the potential benefits of the *Reading Workshop* in a summer reading camp classroom. Supported and paid for by the state of South Carolina, summer reading camps provide assistance to third-grade students not reading proficiently on grade level. Thus, the use of *Reading Workshop* throughout one district's summer reading camp aims to enhance student learning and positively affect achievement. Accordingly, the following research question was explored:

What impact will the Reading Workshop program have on reading achievement in a South Carolina summer reading camp classroom?

Quantitative and quantitative data collection was used in this study. The DRA2 testing data was analyzed to discover if achievement was improved by the implementation of the *Reading Workshop* program. In addition, an observation checklist completed multiple times by the site administrator and reading coordinator was used to determine whether the teacher-researcher's classroom was implementing the *Reading Workshop* format as originally designed. Furthermore, in order to better interpret and validate the research study's findings, I collected data in the form of field notes. The following section provides the findings and results from the study.

Findings of the Study

DRA Results

I used the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) to examine the effects of the *Reading Workshop* program on summer reading camp students' DRA scores. In order to assist me in answering the research question, I ran a paired sample t-test for the summer reading camp classroom. Used to compare the beginning of summer reading camp (BOS) and end of summer reading camp (EOS) DRA2 levels, the sample t-test indicates an increase of difference existed between the pre- and post-test scores. As I wanted to have a 95% confidence level, I set the alpha level to $p > 0.05$. Table 4.1 shows the actual summer camp students' scores. Table 4.2 displays the statistics obtained from the paired samples t-test for the summer reading camp classroom.

Summary of DRA Results

The analysis of existing third-grade summer reading camp data, pre-, and post-summer reading camp DRA reading levels showed an increase in achievement among the students. When examining the average DRA level at the beginning of the summer (M = 25.1, SD = 3.14) compared to the end of the summer (M = 28.7, SD = 4.32), a statistically significant difference can be seen, $t(11) = -16$, $p < 0.05$. Moreover, the average increase from the beginning of the summer to the end was one reading level. Due to the levels of complexity of text rising as the DRA levels rise, advancement through the higher levels of 20 to 40 is slower. Evidently, some students had a marked improvement from the pre- and post- DRA assessment, with some students scaling up two reading levels. However, for two students, no improvement was shown. When one looks at the

increase in levels as compared to the number of days of camp, the data does suggests there was an increase from pre- to post-assessment.

Table 4.1

Students' Scores on DRA in June 2017

Student Name	DRA score—1st week of camp	DRA score—Final week of camp	Pre-Post Change in Levels
Atalie	28	34	3
Suzy	28	34	3
Solonge	28	34	3
Ike	28	30	1
Chris	28	28	0
Opal	24	28	1
Anna	24	28	1
Brandon	20	24	1
Ricky	20	20	0
Mark	24	28	1
Eli	24	30	2

Table 4.2

Breakdown of Students' Scores on DRA in June 2017

Summer Reading Camp June 2017	No. Students tested	Mean	Standard Deviation
DRA level at BOS	10	25.1	3.14
DRA level at EOS	11	28.7	4.32

BOS (Beginning of Summer Camp); EOS (End of Summer Camp)

Although gains were made by most students, two students' DRA2 scores remained stagnant. When reflecting on why this might have occurred, I examined attendance reports and their DRA2 assessments. In addition, I reviewed their returned weekly parent reports (example available in Appendix D) and my classroom field notes. Both students had only missed one day of camp total. Careful review of their DRA2 assessments revealed both students failed to read fluently and could not sequence the story correctly, which led to no increase in their scores. However, when analyzing their weekly parent reports' student progress sections, I had written both needed to increase their use of the learned reading strategy during independent reading time. My field notes supported this conclusion as well. I noted both students "did not demonstrate use of the monitoring comprehension strategies" when conferring with them during independent reading time. For example, during the second week of summer reading camp, Ricky was independently reading his self-selected book, *Postcards from Pluto*. When conferring with him, it was apparent he had some background knowledge on the dwarf planet, Pluto, based on comments like "It isn't a planet anymore, Mrs. D." and "It is really cold there." However when I asked him to retell what he had been reading, he said, "This book is just

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about Pluto." Trying to dig deeper, I asked him to tell me more. He said, "I just like it. I don't have any questions about it. Pluto is not a planet." Similar notes about Chris were also found in my field notes. When asked about his self-selected book, his comments, "It's a good book" and "The story is just about a boy who is a dork" were all surface answers. Neither student ever communicated they were using reading strategies to help comprehend. In contrast, my field notes revealed other students who made gains said comments like "I reread because I didn't get what she said" or "Mrs. D, I thought about a question I had when I was reading and put it on a post-it note for later." Thus, based on their DRA2 assessments and findings in my field notes, the data implied the possibility of failure to increase their DRA2 scores was due to this lack of using reading strategies.

Observations

Throughout summer reading camp, I, as teacher-researcher, was observed a total of six times. The observation tool (see Appendix B) was used by the site administrator and reading coordinator to determine if I was implementing the *Reading Workshop* program as originally designed in order to impact achievement. Additionally, both were observing for signs of a balanced literacy approach. The tool is a 12-item list with response options of "Very Evident," "Evident," "Somewhat Evident," "Not Evident," and "Not Observed." Each item has a section for notes to be written as well. Table 4.3 represents the frequency of item choices made by the observer in the summer reading camp third-grade classroom, and Table 4.4 represents the total frequency of items. The observations were taken during the 16 days of camp. The site administrator filled out four, and the reading coordinator filled out two.

Table 4.3

Observation Tool Choice Frequency

Observed in Classroom	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Not Observed
Mini-lesson has clear focus on weekly comprehension strategy	6	0	0	0	0
Uses anchor charts to model, track thinking, and deepen understanding	5	1	0	0	0
Teacher models and/or confers with students	5	1	0	0	0
Teacher encourages collaboration, student questioning, and inquiry	4	1	0	0	1
Teacher delivers learning sequence with a gradual release of responsibility (model/ guide/ independent practice)	5	0	0	0	1
Students demonstrate interest and are on-task	5	1	0	0	0
Students actively participate in discussions and group	4	0	0	0	2

work through sharing				
Students are actively engaged with eyes on text, text in hand, or text-based discussions	5	1	0	0	0
Environment is comfortable and flexible	5	1	0	0	0
Environment promotes learning	4	0	0	0	2
Environment is positive and student-centered	6	0	0	0	0
Supplies and resources are organized and easily accessible	6	0	0	0	0

Table 4.4

Observation Tool Choice Totals

Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Not Observed
60	6	0	0	6

Summary of Observations Data

Overall findings were similar in all areas on the observation tool. The main items chosen, "Very Evident" and "Evident," support that the *Reading Workshop* framework was implemented as originally designed and described by Fountas and Pinnell (2001),

consisting of a teacher-led mini-lesson based on comprehension skills and strategies, intentional independent reading with students applying the skills and strategies, conferring with selected students, guided reading in a small group, and sharing. Noteworthy is that the observers did not choose the items "Somewhat Evident" and "Not Evident" at all.

In addition to the 12-item list, the observers had to write down notes under their selections. The data implied the *Reading Workshop* was being implemented as originally designed, which was evident in the use of mini-lessons, independent and guided reading, conferring, and sharing time. Also noted was the use of strategies, modeling "think alouds," active participation, and collaboration of students.

Although observations were made, and the completed observation checklists were returned to me, no post observation conferences took place between me and my observers. When summarizing my findings, I discovered strengths and weaknesses to this practice. Strengths to the checklist include written expectations, some feedback to the implementation of *Reading Workshop* in the form of phrases or sentences in the notes section, and no negative comments. In contrast, a weakness to the checklist would include no thoughtful feedback tailored to me, my students or my classroom. Through the checklist, I knew I met the written expectations. However, without a post conference, the observer and I were not able to verbally share in-depth what our perceptions were of my teaching, my students learning or the classroom structure or routines. Additional weaknesses include no validation of the intervention being successful except through post-scores and no real conversation or connection for future steps. Nevertheless, the data in this study showed *Reading Workshop* was implemented, and it did not negatively

impact student achievement.

Summary

Previous chapters, as well as this one, have demonstrated the planning, acting, and developing of the research that took place throughout this study. Data from the research supports the summer reading camp classroom implemented the *Reading Workshop* program as designed. Thus, the results of the implementation of *Reading Workshops* supports the possibility it positively impacting achievement. This can be seen in the increase in reading levels of the summer reading camp students. In the following and final chapter, I will continue the action research process through reflection on next steps for improvement.

Chapter 5:

Reflection and Action Plan

Reflection

Beginning with the 2017–2018 school year, R2S requires that a student must be retained in the third grade or attend a summer reading camp if that student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency at the end of the third grade (SCDE, 2015a). For non-proficient readers qualifying for mandatory retention in third grade, intervention is attendance in a state summer reading camp, educational programs offered in the summer months by local school districts. The target school district's summer reading camp is a camp for reading instruction with a minimum of 96 hours of instruction and practice for all students who score at the lowest achievement level that equates to Not Met 1, a demonstration of not meeting the criteria for promotion (SCDE, 2015a). To accomplish this, all students in the target school district who qualify are recommended to attend the summer reading camp for four weeks in June. Providing summer reading camp as an intervention fulfills the requirements of summer reading camps as stated in South Carolina's Act 284 (SCDE, 2015a).

In order to assist struggling readers, *Reading Workshop* implemented in a summer reading camp was used to intervene for non-proficient readers not reading at grade level. This action research study was conducted to determine the *Reading Workshop* model's

effectiveness in improving student achievement. Additionally, a literature review was conducted on the following topics: literacy achievement, responses to literacy underachievement, and a review of research of *Reading Workshop*, and summer reading programs. Specifically, the following research questions was investigated: Is the *Reading Workshop* model being implemented in a third-grade South Carolina summer reading camp classroom effecting student achievement? In order to determine the effectiveness of the *Reading Workshop* model in a summer reading camp classroom, two research instruments were used: DRA2 and an observation checklist. Both were given or used during the summer reading camp session in June 2017.

As demonstrated in the review of the results and discussion in Chapter 4, I noted the full implementation of the *Reading Workshop* model and the sample t-test, in which an increase was indicated of difference existed between the pre- and post- DRA2 test scores. In this chapter, I follow the analysis of the research action study with a reflection. Following Mertler's (2014) multiple stage process, I carried out this research study in four stages: the planning stage, the acting stage, the developing stage, and the reflecting stage. With this chapter of reflection and future planning, this cycle of action research is complete. I have learned the research problem was complex, and even though I gleaned much learning during the research, I am still not an expert. Implementation of the *Reading Workshop* were not ideal being in summer reading camp; however, gains in reading achievement did occur. With improvements and adjustments, this information can be used to further improve reading instruction and other summer reading camps.

Reading Workshop

To meet the needs of the non-proficient readers in my summer reading camp classroom, I implemented *Reading Workshop*. According to Serafini (2001), the *Reading Workshop* is a "single block of time dedicated to the exploration of literature and the development of children's reading processes" (p. 4). *Reading Workshop* allowed my students the opportunity to become more involved with their reading through selecting books on their independent reading level; therefore, student learning involvement was abundant. The workshop approach to reading combined many of the practices known to create better readers. For the purpose of this study, the *Reading Workshop* framework consisted of me leading mini-lessons based on comprehension skills and strategies, intentional independent reading with my students applying the skills and strategies, conferring with selected students, guided reading in small groups, and students sharing. Students responded well to the framework and learning was evident.

Due to the *Reading Workshop's* composition of predictable structures and routines, it allowed for independent student learning based on meaningful reading, intense writing, and powerful conversations and interactions. These actions led to student discovery learning and the better understanding of reading content and skills. The comprehension skills learned consisted of monitoring meaning and comprehension, using prior knowledge, asking questions, drawing inferences, using sensory and emotional images, determining importance, and synthesizing information.

Data Review and Patterns

As discussed in Chapter 4, positive trends did occur. When compared to the pre-assessment, the post-assessment of the DRA2 scores improved as a whole for the four

weeks of summer reading camp instruction. Observations of *Reading Workshop* showed

that I used and supported all aspects of the model. Leading up to possible implications for

future study, questions arose from this data review.

Implications for Future Steps

Reflecting on the course of the action research study, I was aware of the

limitations. It is hard to fully know which component of the *Reading Workshop* had the

greatest impact on student achievement. When critiquing *Reading Workshop* in the

summer reading camp classroom, some components worked better than others. During

independent reading, I found conferring with my students to be a great formative

assessment. Students were able to explain strategies being used and communicated

interests and learning to me. However, share time with their peers was not as meaningful

or in-depth. Coming into summer reading camp from different schools and not knowing

other students, I think students did not have enough time to build trust with each other.

Therefore, sometimes they did not share as easily with peers as they did with me. In

addition, other factors might have contributed to student success, such as smaller class

sizes, full day immersion in ELA instruction, and a longer school year.

As I have reflected on the action research, I am also aware of my limited

preparation through professional development. Before summer reading camp started in

June, two days of professional development was required by summer camp teachers. The

district ELA and reading trained teachers on the different components of *Reading

Workshop* through lecture, modeling, and participatory activities. Each summer reading

camp teacher was given a resource binder and curriculum to reference for support. Due to

this hasty and limited professional development, I am unable to say definitively that my professional development led to student reading achievement.

Nevertheless, I am pleased in the knowledge of the use of the *Reading Workshop* model and the positive change in achievement, and these successes are more than enough to meet my needs to develop an action plan based on my study's results. I know that action research is ongoing and continuous (Mertler, 2014). As I carry on teaching in summer reading camps, I will monitor and make adjustments to best meet the needs of my students. Having a willingness to adjust demonstrates I know data can be flawed. Definitively, I cannot say positive achievement was a direct result of the implementation of *Reading Workshop*, but I observed no negative side effects as a result of the intervention in the study. Due to the success found in students' reading achievement over the intervention's four-week duration, the following action plan is an attempt to implement the *Reading Workshop* model to impact positively on student achievement in all districts' summer reading camp classrooms.

Action Plan

Development

Developing an action plan requires time, thoughtfulness, and reflection on the previous study. To accomplish creating an action plan, a researcher must go back once again to review the problem of practice, the research design strategies, and data collection and analysis (Mertler, 2014). Through much thought on my initial problem of practice and summer reading camp students' achievement through the use of the *Reading Workshop* model, I have developed an action plan based on the following: understanding

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of educational programs, knowledge of students who attend summer reading camp, and the action study results.

Action Plan

       Purpose. The purpose of this research study was to increase reading achievement in summer reading camp participants. This will remain the purpose of this action plan. Found and indicated in this action research study, *Reading Workshop* may have a positive influence on the reading achievement of students attending summer reading camp. Implementing the *Reading Workshop* model may have led to student discovery learning and a better understanding of reading content and skills, which could possibly amount to academic success.

       Objective. The desired outcome is as follows:

1. Students will continue to show increased student achievement in reading through the implementation of the *Reading Workshop* model in a summer reading camp.

2. I will implement the *Reading Workshop* model in my regular education ELA classroom during the school year.

       Suggested strategies. The action research results point to no harmful effects of *Reading Workshop* in a summer reading camp classroom. Furthermore, the *Reading Workshop* framework consisted of me leading mini-lessons based on comprehension skills and strategies, intentional independent reading with my students applying the skills and strategies, conferring with selected students, guided reading in small groups, and students sharing. I will meet the first objective through continued implementation of the full *Reading Workshop* model. My suggestion for summer reading camp classrooms is for students to continue to receive all aspects of the framework.

The goal for a *Reading Workshop* mini-lesson is "to help children think like readers and ultimately become independent readers for life" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p. 353). I designed lessons to be brief and provide opportunities for students to use the strategies or skills in their own reading. To solidify or expand their learning, students had time to share. A response was found in the use of mini-lessons. Students used the strategies and skills taught in mini-lessons, as was evident in their increased post-assessment scores.

As pointed out by Calkins (2001), independent reading is essential when instructing in reading and is supported and scaffolded by mini-lessons, direct instruction in strategies and skills of reading, read alouds, book talks, and sharing. *Reading Workshop* allowed my students to become more involved with their reading through selecting books on their independent reading level. As suggested by Fountas and Pinnell (2006), within their independent reading time, students enjoyed and were able to self-select books from a wide range of materials that are easy enough for them to read for opportunities to practice skills learned. For this to occur, students had access to our classroom library. Research shows that vast reading expands children's comprehension, background knowledge, vocabulary, fluency, and writing (Krashen, 2004). Students were able to read alone, to a peer, or to an adult during an uninterrupted peaceful time, which led to sustained engagement and movement of learning.

During independent reading time, I was able to have daily conferences with students for instruction and assessment, which was extremely important for students' reading growth and knowing student strengths and needs. Conferring gave me valuable information on students' knowledge and ability. From this formative assessment, I was

able to plan mini-lessons, arrange group work, and plan for guided reading groups. Additionally, Calkins (2011b) argued, "There is much evidence to suggest that comprehension skyrockets when students are given an opportunity to talk about books" (p. 20). Overall being able to sit and read with my students gave me a greater understanding of whether each student could read and comprehend the chosen text.

Guided reading was a learning context where I was able to guide my small groups of students through a portion of the reading process. Selecting and introducing the reading material to my small groups with similar reading processes and behaviors, I was able to provide my students scaffolding and help when they were presented with a more difficult text to read. Being able to work through somewhat harder texts with others led to students gaining confidence and a willingness to share. Being aware of this during *Reading Workshop*, I took time for students to reflect and share what they have learned with their peers during a reading or writing activity.

The second objective will be met when I implement the *Reading Workshop* model in my regular education ELA classroom during the school year. I found tremendous value in the use of the *Reading Workshop* model in my summer reading camp classroom. Valuing the structure and fluidity of the model, I see it as a way to improve reading instruction all year long. In using *Reading Workshop*, I will be able to provide mini-lessons based on comprehension skills and strategies in order to monitor and grow comprehension. Student will be able to have intentional independent reading so they can apply the skills and strategies I teach them. Conferring with selected students and facilitating guided reading small groups will give me a greater understanding of students'

reading abilities and comprehension levels. As I implement the *Reading Workshop* model, more students will receive the support in reading they need.

Implications for Future Practice

The action research brought forth many implications for future practice. To begin, one could conduct a similar study. However, it would be suggested the study be for a more extended time and with a greater population of students. The findings in the study indicated summer reading camp students responded positively to the use of the *Reading Workshop* framework. However, the data did not show significant growth. If the study was to be repeated with multiple summer reading camp classrooms with attendance in June and July, it may be possible to then show statistically significant results.

Additionally, an added implication for future practice is to investigate the implementation of *Reading Workshop* in a regular education classroom or multiple classrooms for an entire school year. During the summer reading camp, students were engaged with texts and moved well throughout the structure of the workshop. Students did make gains from their pre- to post-DRA2 assessments. Future research could explore how advanced, proficient, and non-proficient readers all achieve within the extended time of the entire school year. This suggestion could be investigated through the mixed-method research design used in this study, but it could have more data throughout the school year.

Furthermore, another implication for future practice is to explore the impact of one aspect of the *Reading Workshop* model and target its role in positively effecting student achievement. Though unintentional, a valuable insight I gained in this study was the realization of what a reading conference could do in helping grow my readers. As I

became more intentional and timely in conferring with my students, the quality of our conversations and growth in their reading increased. Another research study could examine how conferring in *Reading Workshop* influences student achievement. This could be studied more in depth with a qualitative approach with multiple collection methods from which to choose.

Conclusion

In an effort to ensure that students are achieving at proficient or higher levels in reading, I, the researcher, implemented *Reading Workshop* in a summer reading camp classroom. The purpose of the research was to identify the impact on student achievement due to the implementation. The overarching question that guided the research was: To what extent are summer reading camp students, based on student achievement scores, benefiting from the implementation of *Reading Workshop*? In order to analyze its effectiveness, a mixed-methods research design to collect the data to examine the implementation (Appendix B) and confirm (Table 7) that *Reading Workshop* is sufficient in fulfilling the needs of the students.

Throughout the study, the *Reading Workshop* model was fully implemented and data was collected to garner insight into the influence of the framework. Altogether, I received data from all 11 students in the summer reading camp classroom. As shown in Table 3, the demographics of the population were as follows: 36.4% African American males (4), 18.2% African American females (2), 18.2% Caucasian males (2), and 27.2% Caucasian females (3). Four students had Individual Education Plans (IEPs). When I examined the collection of data, overall, I found that it revealed students responded with

an increase in achievement when the *Reading Workshop* framework was implemented in summer reading camp.

When personally reflecting on this action research study, I feel I have been given the opportunity to take a problem, like teaching third graders not reading proficiently and attending a summer reading camp, and try my best to find a solution. During this process, I have been led to a greater understanding of different needs of students and how to better facilitate learning. The *Reading Workshop* model was a transformative framework that enhanced best practices already in place in my classroom. Looking to continue my growth as an educator and researcher, I want to continue moving the *Reading Workshop* model into possibly more summer reading camp classrooms and my general education classroom.

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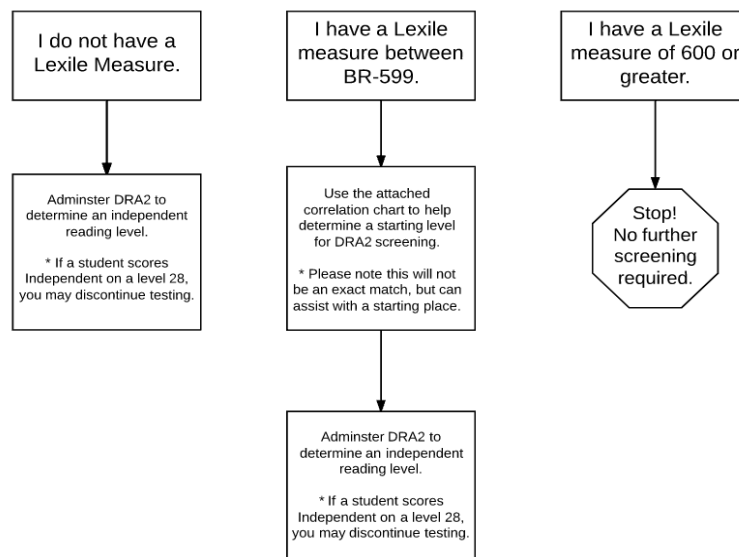
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Appendix A

Summer Reading Camp Student Identification Flowchart

Summer Reading Camp: Third-Grade Screening for Student Identification

Use the following flow chart to determine the appropriate screening process for each

student.

I do not have a Lexile Measure.	I have a Lexile measure between BR-599.	I have a Lexile measure of 600 or greater.
Adminster DRA2 to determine an independent reading level. * If a student scores Independent on a level 28, you may discontinue testing.	Use the attached correlation chart to help determine a starting level for DRA2 screening. * Please note this will not be an exact match, but can assist with a starting place.	Stop! No further screening required.
	Adminster DRA2 to determine an independent reading level. * If a student scores Independent on a level 28, you may discontinue testing.	

Points for Clarification:

- Teachers <u>must</u> submit a copy of completed running records for students who required screening.
- Screening data must be entered on the spreadsheet provided by the Office of Instruction & Accountability. Data is due on or before March 29, 2017.
- You are only required to screen students as indicated above, but you may choose to screen others/all.
- Although testing can be discontinued at an independent level 28, teachers may choose to continue testing beyond level 28 to obtain an accurate level.

Appendix B

Observation Tool

Summer Reading Camp Observation Tool

Teacher: _____   Observer: _____

Date: _____   Number of Students: _____

*Directions: Circle only one answer.

Instructional Delivery –

1. Mini-lesson has clear focus on weekly coprehension strategy

Very evident   Evident   Somewhat evident   Not Evident   Not observed

   Notes: _____

2. Uses anchor charts to model, track thinking, and deepen understanding

Very evident   Evident   Somewhat evident   Not Evident   Not observed

   Notes: _____

Teacher Behaviors –

1. Teacher models and/or confers with students

Very evident   Evident   Somewhat evident   Not Evident   Not observed

   Notes: _____

2. Teacher encourages collaboration, student questioning, and inquiry

Very evident   Evident   Somewhat evident   Not Evident   Not observed

Notes: _____

3. Teacher delivers learning sequence with a gradual release of responsibility

(model/ guide/ independent practice)

Very evident   Evident   Somewhat evident   Not Evident   Not observed

Notes: _____

Student Behaviors –

1. Students demonstrate interest and are on-task

Very evident   Evident   Somewhat evident   Not Evident   Not observed

Notes: _____

2. Students actively participate in discussions and group work through sharing

Very evident   Evident   Somewhat evident   Not Evident   Not observed

Notes: _____

3. Students are actively engaged with eyes on text, text in hand, or text-based

discussions

Very evident   Evident   Somewhat evident   Not Evident   Not observed

Notes: _____

Learning Environment –

1. Environment is comfortable and flexible

Very evident   Evident   Somewhat evident   Not Evident   Not observed

Notes: _____

2. Environment promotes learning

Very evident   Evident   Somewhat evident   Not Evident   Not observed

Notes: _____

3. Environment is positive and student-centered

Very evident   Evident   Somewhat evident   Not Evident   Not observed

Notes: _____

4. Supplies and resources are organized and easily accessible

Very evident   Evident   Somewhat evident   Not Evident   Not observed

Notes: _____

Appendix C

Summer Reading Camp Daily Class Schedule

Times	Activity
8:00–8:15	Breakfast
8:15–8:30	Morning Meeting
8:30–9:30	Shared Reading Writing Workshop & Text-Dependent Response*
9:30–10:00	Interactive Read Aloud
10:00–10:30	Independent Reading
10:30–11:00	Recess
11:00–11:30	Mini- Lesson/ Close Read
11:30–12:00	Lunch
12:00–1:00	Small Group Instruction (4 groups)
1:00–1:15	Share Time*
1:15–2:00	Library
2:00–2:45	Research Workshop
2:45–3:00	Pack-up, Celebrations, "Aha" Moments, and Exit Slips

*indicates action-based break to follow

Appendix D

Summer Reading Camp Weekly Parent Letter

Week 2 Parent Letter

June 15, 2017

What an amazing second week of Summer Reading Camp!

_____has been putting forth awesome effort, learning about perseverance, and activating and connecting to build his/ her comprehension. We have had a blast researching and creating Telestories with our planet facts! We look forward to seeing your child on Monday, June 19, 2017 as we begin a week learning about the importance of being confident and continuing to learn even more about how to monitor comprehension.

Your child has persevered the most in the following circled area:

Respect   Perseverance   Participation
Outstanding Effort   Generosity   Other:

Your Summer Camp Reading Teacher,
Mrs. Davakos

Student Progress:

Parent Signature and Feedback: