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Using Family Literacy Training To Address Summer Reading Loss

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Janet Deck

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Walden University
2011

Abstract

Using Family Literacy Training To Address Summer Reading Loss

by

Janet Deck

M.Ed., University of Central Florida, 2005

B.A., Southeastern University, 1984

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education
Teacher Leadership

Walden University
February 2011

Abstract

Maintaining reading proficiency throughout summer months is problematic for struggling readers. Conceptually framed by sociocultural constructivism, the purpose of this study was to determine parents' knowledge and understanding of effective research-based literacy instruction and to establish the participants' perceived effect of their participation in family literacy training on their elementary children's reading achievement. In this qualitative case study, the influence of family literacy training on summer literacy practices of three families with elementary children was examined. Data were collected using individual interviews with three parents. Interview transcripts were analyzed using an inductive analytical approach. The results of this study demonstrated that all participants benefitted from their attendance at the family literacy workshop and subsequently implemented their new knowledge about literacy strategies within their families. The findings further show that fostering an attitude of enjoyment for reading in their children became a priority for each family. This study contributes to the body of knowledge needed to address summer reading loss by concentrating on training parents in effective family literacy practices in order to raise reading achievement scores in struggling readers. If left unmitigated, the reading loss compounds throughout the elementary grades, potentially resulting in 1 to 1 ½ years of reading loss by Grade 6. By empowering parents with effective family literacy tools, the potential for student reading achievement increases. When reading achievement increases, students are equipped with the opportunity to become lifelong learners, thus positively impacting social change by decreasing low school achievement and dropout rates, joblessness and welfare dependency, and home and community violence.

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Dedication

I humbly dedicate my doctoral study to my husband, Kevin, and my children, Kyle, Korey, Katelyn, and Kristen. Their belief in me never wavered.

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Section 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Most children anticipate their 3-month summer vacation, sleeping in on weekdays, watching long hours of television, and spending time with friends. They look forward to an academic respite. For children already struggling with academic skills, however, a summer sabbatical from instruction may have the harmful repercussion of summer reading loss (Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996). For children in high-risk circumstances, such as lower socioeconomic status, minority status, and English language learners, the loss is regressive and the consequences may be long-lasting (Cooper et al., 1996; Entwisle, Alexander & Olson, 2005; Heyns, 1978, 1987). This national phenomenon of summer reading loss has been problematic at a small private Christian school in the South, and therefore, they are searching for viable options to alleviate the potential regression.

During the traditional school year, resources that children need for learning are accessible; therefore, most groups of children are able to achieve. However, when school is not in session, particularly during the summer months, children in vulnerable circumstances stop gaining in their reading development, and many experience reading regression due to lack of to academic stimulus (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997, 2007). This seasonal phenomenon is referred to as the “faucet” theory (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997, 2007). When children are in school, academic resources are readily available; thus, children are learning. Subsequently, when children are not in school, educational resources are not easily accessible (Entwisle, Alexander & Olson,

1997). As a result, economically disadvantaged children continue to fall further and further behind their classmates of higher socioeconomic status due to the lack of academic materials in the home as well as the inability to attend summer educational enrichment opportunities due to cost considerations (Cooper et al., 1996; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2007; Kim, 2004).

Because summer reading loss affects many students (Cooper et al., 1996; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2007; Kim, 2004), the question arises as to how to keep the learning faucet flowing year-round for students at risk for reading failure. Several researchers have examined this issue and have proposed solutions such as summer school (Borman & Overman, 2005; Cooper, 2000; Schacter & Jo, 2005), year-round education (von Hippel, 2007; Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007), and summer reading programs (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2008; Kim, 2006, 2007; Kim & White, 2008). While these options have viable potential, the research shows that summer school, year-round education, and summer reading programs are not effective for all struggling readers (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007; Borman & Dowling, 2006; Borman & Overman, 2005; Cooper, 2000; von Hippel, 2007).

There is much research in support of parental inclusion in children's education, especially in the early years of school (Baily, 2006; Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006; Darling, 2005; Flouri & Buchanan, 2004; Morrow, 2009; Padak & Rasinski, 2006; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). Flouri and Buchanan (2004) reported that family literacy practices are a more powerful force than other family environmental variables, including social rank, family size, and level of parents' education. Senechal and LeFevre (2002), in

their 5-year longitudinal study, stated that students whose parents continue to be directly involved in their children's literacy development through elementary school sustain an elevated reading performance. The implementation of parent training in effective family literacy methods to address summer reading loss is discussed in the review of literature in section 2.

Problem Statement

Maintaining reading proficiency throughout summer months has been problematic for elementary students in a small Christian school in the South. According to Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsey, and Greathouse (1996) in their meta-analysis of 39 studies on summer reading loss, elementary students in general lose approximately 1-month of reading achievement over the summer; struggling K-6 readers may decline at the rate of 3-months each summer. Furthermore, many researchers claim that summer reading loss compounds, potentially reaching 1 ½ years' loss by grade 6 (Borman & Overman, 2005; Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996; Downey, von Hippel & Broh, 2004; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2007). Mraz and Rasinski (2007) posited that a lack of reading material in the home and inadequate family literacy practices are contributing factors to summer reading loss.

The problem of summer reading loss in struggling readers, in particular, affects students attending a small Christian school in the South, and the possibility of inadequate family literacy practices may contribute to this decline. This study contributes to the body of knowledge needed to address summer reading loss by concentrating on training

parents in effective family literacy practices in order to raise reading achievement scores in struggling readers.

Nature of the Study

This qualitative case study was designed to investigate the influence of family literacy training on summer reading achievement of elementary students at a small Southern Christian school. The school's administration noticed that their elementary students consistently scored lower on their August oral reading fluency and retell assessment data than they did on the previous May assessment data. The administration's concern for this reading decline led to their development of a family literacy training workshop. This workshop specifically instructs parents in reading strategies that they can easily implement throughout their daily summer routines. The nature of this study, therefore, was to understand the workshop participants' perceived effectiveness of their family literacy training.

The focus of this study was on contributing to the literature of family literacy training. I further focused on gaining knowledge and understanding of ways that parents support their children's literacy development throughout the summer months and understanding how family literacy training influences the implementation of research-based literacy strategies by parents during the summer months.

Parents of elementary students participated in the school's family literacy workshop and received the school's family literacy booklet that provided definition of key terms, how to implement strategies, and a variety of easily implemented engaging literacy practices along with practical activities. The data consisted of one-on-one parent

interviews with three of the parents that attended the school's family literacy workshop in June at the end of the traditional school year. After parents had ample opportunity to implement literacy strategies learned at the family literacy workshop, they were interviewed to determine if family literacy training influenced parents' implementation of learned reading strategies during the summer.

This study has the potential to diminish the effects of summer reading loss by educating parents in effective family literacy strategies. This study also has the potential to increase the reading achievement of elementary students by increasing parental involvement with the students' reading instruction. Section 3 addresses further research details.

Research Questions

The questions guiding this study were

1. What knowledge and understanding do parents have about research-based literacy practices to help their children become better readers?
2. In what ways do parents support their children's literacy development throughout the summer months?
3. How do parents feel about the effects of family literacy training and the implementation of research-based literacy strategies during the summer months on the students' reading?

Purpose of the Study

There were two purposes of this study. The first purpose of this study was to determine parents' knowledge and understanding of effective research-based literacy

instruction. The second purpose of this study was to establish the attendee's perceived effect of their family literacy training on their summer family literacy practices. The participants were parents of elementary students at a small Christian school in the South. These parents participated in a one-evening family literacy training workshop in which they learned ways to incorporate literacy into their daily routine.

Conceptual Framework

The study was framed within several theoretical perspectives. Foundationally, this study was guided by the sociocultural learning theories of Vygotsky (1987). Within the context of family literacy, parents and other extended family members support their children's literacy learning by helping their children to construct meaning and build comprehension skills through interaction with a variety of genres. Paramount to Vygotsky's theory is his conviction that biological and cultural developments transpire concurrently (Vygotsky, 1987). Vygotsky believed that these developments are a lifelong process dependent on social interaction that ultimately would lead to cognitive development.

This study was also built on the theory of constructivism: the foundation of active learning. The constructivist theory posits that students use what they already know to connect to what they are attempting to learn (Cooper et al., 2002). Dewey (1902) theorized that learning takes place by using prior experiences and knowledge in order to construct new knowledge. Dewey (1916) continued the constructivist theory by concluding that students build new knowledge based on their individual and collective experiences. Piaget furthered the constructivist theory by proposing that when students

gain new information or experiences, they attempt either to incorporate it into their existing knowledge or to adjust their knowledge in order to accommodate the new understanding, a continuous construction and reconstruction of knowledge (Inhelder & Piaget, 1969).

Lastly, Freire's (1997) pedagogical theory of critical literacy also influenced this research study. According to Freire, all learning is relational, and interaction produces knowledge. While Freire's theory develops the notion of collaboration and dialogue between teacher and student in the construction of knowledge, his theory translates to the parent-child relationship when the parent assumes the role of the educator.

Operational Definitions

Constructivism: Constructivism encompasses the educational philosophy that involves reflecting on one's own experiences in order to build knowledge (Lambert et al., 2002). Constructivism also emphasizes social learning (Lambert et al., 2002).

Critical literacy: A pedagogical concept that supports the instruction of critical perspectives toward text is critical literacy (Freire, 1997). Critical literacy encourages readers to interact with texts (Freire, 1997).

Family literacy: Literacy within the framework of the family is defined as the ways parents impact and assist their children with literacy education (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006). It also encompasses siblings and extended family members that have the potential to impact the literacy learning of children (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006).

Faucet theory: The premise that during the conventional school year, instruction and resources are readily available for all students. (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997). When school is not in session, the traditional flow of education is closed off for all students (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997).

Inductive analytical approach: A framework of exploring qualitative research in which analysis proceeds from the specific to the general in order to discover patterns, themes, and relationships among the data (Hatch, 2002).

Running record: A running record is a method of assessing a student's reading behaviors. It is coded, scored, and analyzed for reading miscues in order to look for error patterns (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Summer reading loss: Summer reading loss is the decline in students' reading achievement that typically occurs throughout the summer when children are away from an organized educational environment and are not participating in a prescribed literacy program (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003).

Assumptions, Delimitations, Limitations, and Scope

The participants of the study were parents of elementary students from a small private, Christian school in the South. All participants volunteered to be a part of the study. It is assumed that the participants in this study, both students and their parents, are representative of a broader population. It is further assumed that the results of the study are representative of a larger population. Since there was no monetary remuneration for parental attendance in the family literacy workshop or no negative consequences for students if parents did not attend the family literacy training, an additional assumption is

that all parents attending did so because of their intrinsic desire to enhance the literacy practices in their homes.

This study was confined to three families in the school who were chosen by purposeful sampling. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to choose participants and the site for the study so they can “purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2007, p.125). One limitation of the study was the purposive sampling procedure using only the parents of elementary students in one Christian school which decreases the transferability of findings. This limitation was addressed by using rich, thick descriptions of the context of the study.

The scope of this study encompassed willing volunteer participants consisting of parents of elementary students in a small southern private, Christian school. The parents consented to attend the school’s family literacy training and to participate in an interview. The duration of this study was 3 months or one summer.

Significance of the Study

This study affects the private Christian school from which this research emanates by showing the perceived effectiveness of the family literacy training. By conducting parent interviews after the school’s family literacy training, I attempted to show whether the training is affecting the literacy practices of parents who attended the workshop.

This research may also potentially impact social change by improving the summer reading decline, particularly among struggling readers. In addition to improving reading achievement, this study holds implications for further social change by implementing family literacy workshops in order to train parents to provide reading support at home.

Family literacy programs must keep parents abreast of current practices and research so they will become effective advocates for their children (International Reading Association, 2007). Lastly, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on summer reading loss and family literacy.

Summary

The success of family literacy programs is grounded in substantial research (Padak & Rasinski, 2006). In this study, I sought to determine if family literacy practices significantly affect reading achievement during the summer months when children do not receive formal literacy instruction. I proposed that parents should be trained in family literacy practices in order to effectively continue literacy instruction throughout the summer months. As noted previously, children and parents benefit significantly when parents are trained in research-based learning strategies (Senechal, 2002; Senechal & LeFevre, 2003). As parents engage in family literacy programs, their persistence leads to literacy achievement, which influences broader economic and social issues (Padak & Rasinski, 2006). More specifically, social problems such as low school achievement and dropout rates, joblessness and welfare dependency, and home and community violence may be positively affected as well (Padak & Rasinski, 2006).

When families engage in family literacy programs, they learn to value education and engage in more literate behaviors at home. They also build lifelong habits of learning (Padak & Rasinski, 2006). These habits of literacy transcend the classroom and diminish literacy losses when reading is prioritized during summer vacation.

In section 2, I examine the scholarly literature on summer reading loss, summer schools, year-round schools, family literacy, family literacy programs, effective family literacy practices, and parental training. In section 3, I describe the methodology of this case study, the research questions, context, and participants. I also discuss the rationale for the size and method of sampling. In this section, I further clarify my roles as researcher and discuss ethics and validity issues. Section 4 presents the findings of the study and an explanation of the interpretation of the results. In section 5, I summarize the research purpose and findings and present implications for social change along as recommendations for further study.

Section 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The first section of this literature review presents studies on summer reading loss and the major interventions in its prevention, including summer schools, year-round schooling, and summer reading programs. The second section includes studies on family literacy, family literacy programs, and effective family literacy practices. Finally, areas needed for future research are described. Although priority was given to peer-reviewed articles dated 2004 or later, some seminal studies published before 2004 were included due to their important contributions to the research.

A multitude of literature relevant to the research topic was established through electronic searches in multiple databases, including ProQuest, EBSCO, and Sage, in the Walden University library. Search terms relevant to the research topic included *summer reading loss*, *summer learning loss*, *summer slide*, *summer setback*, *summer reading gap*, *summer literacy*, *family literacy*, *family literacy training*, *family literacy models*, *family literacy programs*, *family involvement*, *family involvement training*, *parent involvement*, *parental involvement*, and *parent involvement training*. In addition to reviewing literature relevant to the research topic, literature related to the method was also reviewed, including textbooks by Creswell (2007, 2002), Hatch (2002), Merriam (2002), Rubin and Rubin (2005), and Yin (2009).

Summer Reading Loss

Many elementary students experience summer reading. As students return to the classroom in August, teachers may need to plan review lessons in order to recover the

reading skills that students have forgotten while enjoying their summer vacation from instruction.

Summer reading loss has been a topic of research since Brueckner and Distad's (1924) comparative analysis of 315 first graders' June and September reading scores. In a meta-analysis of 39 studies, Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, and Greathouse statistically analyzed research on summer learning loss in reading and math from 1906 to 1994, breaking down their research into two subsections: studies prior to 1975 and studies after 1975 (Cooper, et al, 1996). In the studies prior to 1975, Cooper, et al. found the studies to be of uneven quality, and therefore, of little relevance unless corroborated with more recent, better conducted research (Cooper, et al., 1996).

On the other hand, the quality of studies conducted after 1975 included more valid results. In all, 13 studies generated 66 independent samples (Cooper, et al., 1996). From these 66 samples, students in 28 samples came from low-income families (Cooper, et al., 1996). Students in 20 samples came from middle-income families (Cooper, et al., 1996). Ten samples used only European American students; whereas 6 samples were described as only African American (Cooper, et al., 1996). Thirty-one samples came from urban populations; 4 from suburban, and only 1 from a rural community (Cooper, et al., 1996). The results of Cooper, et al's. research on summer reading loss appears to be inconclusive. Some studies portray absolute summer reading loss (e.g. Hammond & Frechtling, 1979; Pelavin & David, 1977) while another study appears to show absolute reading gains over the summer (e.g. Wintre, 1986). However, the overall results of the meta-analysis appeared to mask the underlying effect of summer vacation (Cooper, et al.,

1996). Therefore, variables, including when the tests were administered and which students participated in summer instruction, must be considered. When measuring reading achievement, low-income students showed a significant loss; whereas, their middle-income counterparts demonstrated marginal gains, albeit insignificant (Cooper, et al., 1996). Regarding reading comprehension, while both low-income and middle-income students showed losses, low-income students displayed a loss of .7 months more than middle-income students (Cooper, et al., 1996). Concerning the reading components of word recognition and fluency, low-income students showed a significant loss in reading recognition of approximately 1.5 months; on the other hand, middle-income students showed a significant gain, approximately 2.3 months (Cooper, et al., 1996).

Cooper, et al.'s (1996) meta-analysis on summer learning loss also found dramatic differences in different skill areas. Summer regression was more prominent in math and spelling than in reading. To explain this discrepancy, Cooper, et al (1996) suggested that children's home environments provided more opportunities to engage in reading related activities than for practicing math or spelling common phonograms.

Another significant finding in Cooper, et al.'s (1996) research revealed that student intelligence had little impact on learning loss. Also, learning loss did not appear to be affected by a student's gender or ethnicity. When considering economics, all students lost approximately equal amounts of math skills over the summer. On the other hand, substantial differences in reading losses were found between low-income students and middle-income students.

Heyns's (1978) study of seasonal learning developed a conceptual framework for looking at seasonal differences in children's cultures of learning. Heyns compared children's academic growth from the traditional school year to academic growth during summer months. By doing so, Heyns was able to separate seasons when children were academically influenced by school and home (fall, winter, and spring) and the season when children were only influenced academically by the home (summer). In Heyns's Atlanta study of thousands of sixth and seventh grade students, she found that children's summer reading achievement was inversely related to socioeconomic status. While school is in session, the achievement gap between low-income and middle-income students is reduced; summer vacation serves to increase the achievement disparity (Heyns, 1978). Summer learning is considerably more dependent on the parents' involvement in literacy activities (Heyns, 1978).

Almost a reiteration of the Heyns (1978) study findings, Entwisle, Alexander, and Olson conducted a 5-year longitudinal study in Baltimore that incorporated 20 low-income schools and 20 high-income schools (based on the percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch) (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997). The students were assessed in reading and math scores in October and May using a standardized achievement test (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997). Entwisle, et al. (1997) found that both low- and high-income students made gains at approximately the same rates during the traditional school year. However, in the summer months over the course of the 5 years, low-income students accrued just .8 point in reading. Their high-income counterpart had accumulated a 46.6 point increase over the 5 summers leading Entwisle,

et al. to conclude “the generally higher level of test scores of the high socioeconomic status children thus accrues entirely from gains made in the summer” (p. 35).

More recently, Burkam, Ready, Lee, and LoGerfo (2004) conducted a 2-year longitudinal study of kindergarten students’ summer learning as it relates to social class differences. Their sample included approximately 3,500 students across the United States with a full range of social differences (Burkam, et al., 2004). Burkam, et al. (2004) studied the kindergartners’ participation in a wide range of summer learning activities including library and bookstore visits, parents reading to children, children reading independently, summer trips, optional summer school, time spent watching television, and time spent using a computer. Their findings provided only modest support for the hypothesis that summer learning loss more adversely affects students from low socioeconomic status environments (Burkham, et al., 2004). They found that the socioeconomic effect on gains over the summer could not be explained by social class divergences (Burkham, et al., 2004). However, the study revealed that children who participated in the above-cited literacy activities advanced their learning slightly more during the summer than children whose summers were devoid of literacy experiences (Burkham, et al., 2004).

Phillips and Chin (2004) conducted a study involving 1,141 first grade students to determine the factors that contribute to summer learning loss. Phillips and Chin (2004) discovered that in addition to family practices such as reading and library visits, children whose parents were well informed about their children’s mastery of schoolwork during the traditional school year made more gains over the summer (Phillips & Chin, 2004).

Additionally, students whose teachers assigned summer projects made academic gains in reading and math (Phillips & Chin, 2004). Phillips and Chin (2004) believed that the teacher's ability to show parents how to continue learning throughout the summer is crucial for improving student achievement.

The faucet theory, devised by Entwisle, Alexander, and Olson (1997), makes sense of the seasonal patterns in children's academic development. The faucet theory states that when school is in session, the learning faucet is turned on for all students, educational resources children need for learning are available, and therefore, all children make academic gains (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997). Conversely, when school is not in session, learning is truncated, particularly for children from low-income families, due to the instructional faucet being turned off (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997). For some children, the available resources in the summer are not sufficient to support learning gains.

Summer Schools

The history of summer school in America can be traced to 1916 with the passage of the first child labor law, the result of which meant that school children had little structure and much unoccupied time (Cooper et al, 2000). Education policymakers responded to the concerns of citizens by creating summer programs. The first programs were largely recreational in nature; however, over time summer programs evolved into systemized instruction as educators became aware of the summer learning potential (Cooper et al., 2000).

While summer schools today mostly revolve around instruction, Cooper et al. (2000) organizes these programs into four divisions. First, there are summer schools to assist students needing help achieving minimum competencies for graduation or grade promotion. Second, there are summer programs in place for students failing a course during the traditional academic calendar (Cooper et al., 2000). Third, some students with disabilities require summer programs in order to ensure receipt of free and appropriate education in accordance with the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ([IDEA]: Public Law 94-142) (Cooper et al., 2000). Lastly, in 1994 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act addressed the Title I emphasis on closing the achievement gap between socioeconomic classes. In order to accomplish this objective, Section 1001(c)(4) stated that Title I funds are best spent to ensure high quality instruction in traditional school settings and through extended time ventures. Title I funds are used to establish summer programs focusing on the prevention and remediation of learning problems for underprivileged children (Cooper et al., 2000).

Cooper et al. (1996) proposed two solutions to address the decline in summer learning. Cooper et al. argued for either adopting changes in the traditional school calendar to alleviate the large number of noninstructional days or for the implementation of summer remedial and enrichment programs. Cooper et al. suggested that all students would benefit from summer math instruction; however, if the programs desired to lessen disproportions across socioeconomic groups, then summer programs with a focus on reading instruction would be most beneficial for low-income children. Cooper, et al (1996) concluded that while summer school does not necessarily result in significant

reading gains for impoverished students, it does appear to be an effective intervention for preventing summer reading loss.

In an attempt to alleviate summer learning loss for low-income children, states and districts across the United States have implemented summer school as a form of intervention (Borman & Overman, 2005; Cooper, Charlton, Valentine, & Muhlenbruck, 2000; Lauer et al., 2006). In a study by Borman and Overman (2005), over 300 early elementary students at risk for summer learning loss from high-poverty schools in Baltimore participated in an academically intensive community-based summer school program called Teach Baltimore. The students voluntarily participated in the Teach Baltimore Summer Learning Academy for 6 weeks (Borman & Overman, 2005). Each day, the students received 3 hours of intensive reading and writing instruction in the morning followed by a series of afternoon activities that integrated read-aloud and math activities, art, drama, foreign language, and recreation (Borman & Overman, 2005). The authors concluded that the older children made greater gains than kindergarten students (Borman & Overman, 2005). The study also showed that students who attended more weeks of intervention had larger gains than students who attended less frequently. Borman and Overman also used a parent telephone survey that included questions regarding their academic expectations for their children, the summer reading habits of the children, summer family activities, summer church activities, and print availability in the home. The authors determined that when parents make it a priority to support their children's summer school attendance, summer reading loss can be averted (Borman & Overman, 2005).

Schacter and Jo (2005) examined the effect of a summer reading intervention program for low-income first grade students. The program was 7 weeks in length and incorporated reading instructional elements such as decoding, comprehension, vocabulary, and writing skills, as well as recreational elements such as exploration, creativity, discovery, and play (Schacter and Jo, 2005). One hundred and sixty-two participants were randomly assigned to two groups: 72 for intervention group and 90 for the control group (Schacter and Jo, 2005). During the course of the reading camp, students made significant gains in text comprehension and decoding skills, scoring approximately 33% higher than the control group in comprehension (Schacter and Jo, 2005). Attendance in summer school was also shown to be effective in the study by Schacter and Jo. Their findings revealed that instruction over several weeks was more effective than concentrated instruction in shorter duration (Schacter and Jo, 2005). For example, students receiving 60 hours of instruction over 7 weeks showed greater gains than students receiving 60 hours over 4 weeks. Schacter and Jo posited that stretching the program allows students ample amount of practice time, which reinforces the skill. Their analysis further emphasized instructional time spent on reading and writing interventions should be completed in the morning, leaving late morning and afternoon available for summer recreational activities.

Nevertheless, when assessed 3 months later, the treatment group scored only 22 percent higher than the control group, and when examined at the end of the study, the treatment group and the control group scored equally. These findings led Schacter and Jo (2005) to conclude that summer reading intervention has the potential to be an effective

intervention. Nonetheless, three plausible explanations were offered for the diminishing gains in the treatment group (Schacter and Jo, 2005). As the beginning of the traditional school year resumes, teachers generally reteach skills previously learned and assumed forgotten. Since students receiving summer reading intervention did not need this review, they may have not been engaged during this teaching (Schacter and Jo, 2005). Another possible explanation was the disproportionate number of teachers with emergency certification, who may have been ill-prepared to teach classroom literacy, unfamiliar with differentiated instructional practices, or lacking the experience to be effective (Schacter and Jo, 2005). Lastly, a possible explanation for the declining scores may have been the school environment itself (Schacter & Jo, 2005).

Paris et al. (2004) studied Michigan summer school programs and reading interventions and identified several indicators of programs in which students made reading gains. These characteristics according to Paris et al., include:

- A minimum of 60 hours of reading instruction over the course of the summer.
- Opportunities to read texts of varying levels each day.
- Authentic daily opportunities to write.
- Direct instruction in the components of literacy, including phonological awareness, comprehension, and writing.
- Motivating literacy strategies that engage the students in authentic learning.

The most significant finding in the Paris et al. (2004) study was the demonstration that summer reading programs can provide significant effective reading intervention for children at risk for reading failure. In particular, Paris et al. stated that when summer

reading programs are remedial, focused, and organized with consistent instruction, children showed achievement. However, gains were even more apparent when programs had low teacher-student ratios and frequent parent involvement (Paris et al., 2004).

Year-Round Schools

Over the past 20 years, more than 3,000 schools across the United States have adopted a year-round school calendar in an effort, in part, to reduce summer learning loss (National Association for Year-Round Education [NAYRE], 2007). In a year-round school, students still receive approximately 180 days of instruction; however, those instructional days are redistributed to disallow a 3-month learning hiatus. While there are several year-round calendars in use, the most popular models incorporate a 9 or 12-week period of instruction followed by a 3 to 4-week intersession (NAYRE, 2007). NAYRE reported that year-round schools are most popular in urban areas, particularly those prone to overcrowding. The most popular states utilizing year-round schools include California, Hawaii, Arizona, Nevada, and Georgia; the predominant population attending the schools is moderately economically disadvantaged Hispanic children (NAYRE, 2007).

In a conference paper presented to the American Sociological Association, von Hippel (2007) tested the effect of year-round school calendars using longitudinal data. Von Hippel found that year-round schools do not increase children's instructional hours, and therefore, do not increase total learning. Moreover, von Hippel found that while children attending year-round schools do learn more quickly during summer months while they are in schools, they learn more slowly during traditional school months because they have fewer instructional days than students attending school on a traditional

9-month calendar. In effect, the days of learning and forgetting are merely redistributed across the calendar (von Hippel, 2007).

Although there are proponents for year-round calendars to address the issue of summer reading loss (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007), there is little evidence to support its implementation. The overwhelming research states that children's environment outside of school determines their potential for summer learning loss (Burkham, et al, 2004; Downey, von Hippel, & Broh, 2004; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997, 2005, 2007; Heyns, 1978, 1987; Kim, 2004; Mraz & Rasinski, 2007). Thus, year-round schools do not address children's non-instructional environment, nor do they increase the amount of time spent within an instructional environment over a traditional school (von Hippel, 2007).

Summer Reading Programs

Because Entwisle's, et al (1997) faucet theory is widely accepted among researchers (Borman & Overman, 2005; Downey, von Hippel, & Broh, 2004; Kim, 2004; Mraz & Rasinski, 2007), it is reasonable to think that offering low-income students easy access to print during the summer months will increase the amount of reading and, therefore, ameliorate reading loss. The National Reading Panel (2000) stated that teachers believe if students engaged in successful voluntary reading, the result would be greater reading achievement. Heyns (1978) stated that the number of books children read over the summer directly correlates to reading achievement.

In an effort to address summer reading loss, Kim (2006) designed and implemented a summertime voluntary reading intervention for students completing fourth

grade that consisted of teachers scaffolding a series of lessons on oral reading fluency and comprehension strategies at the end of the traditional school year. After teachers modeled fluent oral reading and silent reading comprehension strategies, students implemented paired reading in an effort to practice fluent oral reading. They also incorporated comprehension strategies during silent reading. In addition, parents were taught how to effectively listen to their children talk about books and read from books while giving encouraging feedback (Kim, 2006). The students' reading proficiency was assessed using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), and a Lexile level was determined for each child (Kim, 2006). Each student was given 8 books within his determined Lexile range for summer reading. The results of Kim's (2006) study were promising. The estimated treatment effects on the ITBS posttest showed significant gains, particularly for African American children (+.22) and Latino children (+.14) (Kim, 2006).

In an experimental study by Kim (2007), the effects of summertime voluntary reading on reading achievement in students in grades 1 to 5 were examined. At the end of the traditional school year, approximately 300 students were assessed in reading using the SAT-10, and the results were subsequently converted to a Lexile range (Kim, 2007). Students were also given the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey to determine their feelings about recreational reading. Children were then asked to indicate their preferred reading genres and topics. From data collected, 10 books were matched for each child from a collection of 520 Scholastic books (Kim, 2007). The treatment group received their books in June; the control group received their books in September (Kim, 2007). The main findings of the study reported that the children who received their books in

June read approximately 3 more books and engaged in more literacy activities than the control group (Kim, 2007). However, there were no significant differences in reading achievement between the treatment group and the control group on the SAT-10 posttest (Kim, 2007).

In a recent longitudinal study, Allington and McGill-Franzen (2008) conducted research similar to Kim (2006). However, the investigation by Allington and McGill-Franzen (2008) did not employ teacher or parental intervention. Over the course of three years, randomly selected low-income elementary students were provided 12 self-selected paperback books each summer (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2008). After three years of participation, reading achievement scores from the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) for the experimental group were compared with a control group. The students receiving summer books scored significantly higher on overall reading achievement than the control group (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2008).

While policy makers have proposed summer school and year-round schooling as options to remedy summer learning loss, the evidence in support of these efforts is thin at best and contradictory at worst (Borman & Overman, 2005; Cooper et al., 1996; 2000; Downey, von Hippel, & Broh, 2004; von Hippel, 2007). Conversely, there are many more positive research efforts in support of developing an increased print rich home environment in low-income students in an effort to improve summer reading loss (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2008; Bailly, 2006; Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006; Heyns, 1978, 1987; Kim, 2004, 2006, 2006, 2008; Kim & White, 2008). Further, increasing access to books coupled with parental support and intervention shows even

greater results for the cause of reducing summer reading loss (Kim, 2007, 2008; Kim & White, 2008)

Family Literacy

The term *family literacy* was first used by Denny Taylor (1983) in her ethnographic research to describe how parents in six families of various economies interacted and encouraged their children's reading and writing experiences. Since 1983, the term *family literacy* has evolved into many contrived usages. Family literacy may describe a program constructed for teaching parents to become more literate while also teaching them how to increase the literacy in their children (St. Pierre, Ricciuti, & Rindzius, 2005). The term may also be used to describe a program or curriculum to assist parents in teaching their children literacy skills (Pahl & Kelly, 2005; Paratore, 2005). Finally, the term *family literacy* can be a descriptive term to explain persistent time in which meaningful parent-child interaction essentially focuses on language and literacy development during which parents and children learn and play together (Grinder, Saenz, Askov, & Aldemir, 2007).

The International Reading Association ([IRA], 2007) established guidelines for family literacy programs that consist of four major components. First, according to the IRA (2007) in order for a family literacy program to be effective, it must be culturally responsive. Family involvement efforts should capitalize on families' cultural and linguistic knowledge and recognize the value of these diversities while building on their community of literacy practices (IRA, 2007). Secondly, family literacy endeavors need to operate from a strengths perspective realizing that all families possess genuine funds of

knowledge that are able to enrich their children's literacy education (IRA, 2007).

Therefore, throughout their children's education, families ought to be considered their children's first and most significant teacher (IRA, 2007). Next, the IRA stated that partnership between families and family literacy programs must focus on respect, communication, and commitment to the success of the program. Lastly, programs should give all families "insider information," meaning that family literacy programs should seek to keep parents informed of current reading practices and trends so that parents will actively support their children's literacy development (IRA, 2007).

Even Start Family Literacy Program

The term *family literacy* evolved to *family literacy program* with the start of a federally funded program, Even Start, in 1989. The premise of the Even Start Family Literacy Program was to provide family literacy services to low socioeconomic families in four sustainable areas: early childhood education, parenting education, parent-child literacy activities, and adult education (Judkins et al., 2008; U. S. Department of Education, 2009). The hope of this intervention was to minister literacy to the entire family (Judkins et al., 2008; U. S. Department of Education, 2009). Children in Even Start would have improved language and literacy directly through participation in preschool and indirectly through their parents' increase in literacy and parenting skills (Judkins et al., 2008; U. S. Department of Education, 2009). Adults would also have improved literacy through participation in adult education literacy training, parenting classes, and parent-child activities (Judkins et al., 2008; U. S. Department of Education, 2009). St. Pierre, Ricciuti, and Rimdzius (2005) described the anticipated results of the

Even Start parent intervention to produce better employment opportunities and increased household income due to increased literacy education for the parent. However, in impact reports of the Even Start Family Literacy program in 2003 and again in 2005 (St. Pierre, Ricciuti, & Rimdzius, 2005; St. Pierre et al., 2003), while Even Start children and parents did make gains on literacy assessments, the gains were not significant when compared to the children and parents in the participating control groups (Judkins, et al., 2008).

In a quasi-experimental study of family involvement training involving migrant families, the Migrant Even Start Family Literacy Program analyzed the effects of a parent involvement program on kindergarten students' English language skills (St. Clair & Jackson, 2006). The results of this study were much more promising than the studies cited above. The findings indicated that when parents participated in the parent involvement training, their children scored significantly higher on language skills than the children in a control group (St. Clair & Jackson, 2006).

Effective Family Literacy Practices

The case for parental involvement in the reading development of children is longstanding and overwhelming (Briggs, & Elkind, 1977; Darling, 2004; Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 2005; Durkin, 1966; Flouri & Buchanan, 2004; Hill, 2003; Livingston & Wirt, 2003; Morrow, 1983; Mraz & Rasinski, 2007; NRP, 2000; Padak & Rasinski, 2006; Senechal, 2003; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). However, the question that arises must address the factors that constitute effective family literacy practices. Parents need to become an integral part of their children's curriculum (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006), and they need tangible

recommendations and concrete support regarding how to interact with their children to affect reading proficiency (Mraz & Rasinski, 2007).

Reading aloud to children. When parents regularly read aloud to their children, they are stimulating children's interest in reading and creating positive attitudes toward literacy (Baily, 2006). Baily stated that students who develop a favorable outlook toward reading are more prone to establish good reading habits, and therefore, become more skilled readers.

McKool (2007) studied factors that attribute to reading avidness and reading reluctance among fifth grade students. The data from McKool's study indicated that students whose parents read out loud to their children for recreational purposes on a daily basis were more likely to have children that are avid readers (McKool, 2007). The fifth grade students in McKool's study who were designated as avid readers also reported that learning to read was easy, and they were reading independently in or before kindergarten. McKool's findings are consistent with the seminal research of Dolores Durkin (1966).

Parent-child interaction during read aloud. While reading aloud to children is an integral component of a child's reading success, when parents interact with their children while reading, children become more connected with the text and, therefore, have increased comprehension (Anderson, 2000). Also called dialogic reading, (Arnold, Lonigan, Whitehurst, & Epstein, 1994; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Whitehurst, et al., 1999), parent-child interaction during read alouds makes reading more effective and beneficial (Land & Wright, 2007). There are three basic premises for dialogic reading (DeTemple & Snow, 2003). The foundation of dialogic reading is that the child becomes

an active learner during the read aloud (DeTemple & Snow, 2003). The second principle incorporates feedback and interaction using more sophisticated language, and the third element consists of challenging the child's knowledge and understanding by elevating the complexity of the dialogue to a level slightly above his present ability (DeTemple & Snow, 2003).

In McKool's study on avid fifth grade readers, the findings suggest that children whose parents discuss read aloud books are more likely to read independently (McKool, 2007). The fifth grade students reported that when they took part in discourse with their parents, they were motivated to read. McKool also stated that social interaction between parent and child is a critical factor in the further literacy development (McKool, 2007).

Meaningful dialogue. It is well established that children who are avid readers have family members who read to them (Lane & Wright, 2008; Morrow, 2009; Padak & Rasinski, 2006, 2009; Zambo & Hanson, 2007) Another indicator of highly literate children is a home environment where meaningful verbal interactions between adults and children take place (Morrow, 2009). These essential conversations may develop during story readings leading children to respond with questions or comments (Morrow, 2009). However, more often meaningful dialogue between family members and children happens naturally throughout the daily events of family routines (Morrow, 2009).

Environmental print, such as familiar labels, cookbooks, advertisements, and street signs, are a natural source of reading material and potentially provide literacy experiences for children (Clay, 2000). When families are aware of the importance of

environmental print, meaningful dialogue results giving children rich literacy experiences through oral language and positive social interaction (Morrow, 2009).

In highly literate families, meaningful dialogue takes place before, during, and after trips outside the house (Morrow, 2009). Families may visit libraries and bookstores together or take family vacations; however, family outings may also be simply to the grocery store or gas station (Morrow, 2009). Rich verbal interactions take place regardless of the destination and include providing the child with background information about the place to be visited, answering questions about the experience, and discussing the outing afterward in order to continue the development of new ideas (Morrow, 2009).

Writing. Reading and writing go hand in hand; children who read more become better writers, and thus, children who write more become better readers (Rasinski & Padak, 2009). Writing is also a daily, authentic part of family literacy and helping families incorporate this facet of literacy into their day-to-day routines can help their children attain higher levels of reading proficiency (Rasinski & Padak, 2009).

Because writing and reading are best-learned in an authentic environment families should also include writing as a genuine task (Rasinski & Padak, 2009). Many families use writing to make lists such as “to-do” lists, grocery lists, and birthday wish lists (Rasinski & Padak, 2009). Some families write notes to each other as reminders of tasks to be completed, as well-wishes a lunch box to have a nice day, or as a thank you for a gift received (Rasinski & Padak, 2009). Writing e-mails are ubiquitous in our society and are an easy way for families to incorporate literacy into their homes (Rasinski & Padak, 2009).

In families of early readers, literacy is embedded within daily routines that are meaningful, practical, and are a typical part of their lives (Morrow, 2009). Oral language, speaking and listening, is frequent and interactive (Morrow, 2009). In these homes, there is an abundance of print, and reading is natural, common, and expected (Morrow, 2009). In addition, writing is frequent and functional (Padak & Rasinski, 2009). There is joy and pleasure in reading and writing, and most oral language is centered on other functions primarily with social objectives such as teaching responsibilities and manners (Morrow, 2009).

Conceptual Framework

A case study design within a constructivist paradigm was used in order to explore the ways that parents support the literacy development of their children during summer months. The case study approach allowed for a rich description of each family's literacy practices both before and after the family literacy parent training and also showed the symbiotic relationship between the parent participation and strategies incorporated into family literacy practices.

A constructivist paradigm was chosen because the paradigmatic boundaries aligned with the case study philosophy (Hatch, 2002) in which there is a co-construction of knowledge between the interviewer and the researcher. The constructivist model also asserts that the researcher spend extended periods of time interviewing participants in an effort to reconstruct the expositions participants use to make sense of their worlds (Hatch, 2002).

Finally, Hatch (2002) affirmed that the constructivist paradigm is often presented as a case study that describes interpretations established during the research process. Case studies usually include sufficient contextual detail and illustration of participants' views so that readers are able to perceive themselves in the places of the participants at some level, thereby judging the quality of the findings (Hatch, 2002).

Potential Themes and Perceptions to be Explored

In the “systematic search for meaning” (Hatch, 2002) through the analysis of the interviews with the selected parents, I extracted “data units” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) in order to see patterns, identify themes, discern relationships and construct interpretations (Hatch, 2002). These patterns and themes included parent-child interaction, parent need for literacy training, student independent literacy activities, and family literacy activities.

Hatch (2002) recommended that the researcher reread the interview transcription numerous times in order to identify related phrases and topics and to eventually merge topics with similar concepts across the interviews (Merriam, 2002). When the process of data collection commenced, there were several interviews from which to gather data; therefore, there were revisions and additions of categories in the process of discovering significant “data units” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Furthermore, I looked for language related to my research question while considering additional themes that emerged (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Summary

For this case study, literature was reviewed that related to studies on summer reading loss and the major interventions in its prevention. Also reviewed were studies on

family literacy, family literacy programs, and effective family literacy practices. Section 3 presents elaboration of the research methodology used in this study.

Section 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to develop an understanding of the ways families use literacy to support reading development throughout the summer months when children lack formal educational opportunities. The problem addressed in this research endeavor was the lack of family literacy training for effective reading strategies which results in the lack of literacy opportunities for their children. When children do not continue reading through the summer, the result is summer reading loss (Borman & Dowling, 2006; Borman, Goetz, & Dowling, 2009; Borman & Overman, 2005; Cooper et al., 1996; Downey, von Hippel, & Broh, 2004; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2007).

The case study design was selected in order to describe the intervention of family literacy training over the summer. Yin (2009) posited that case study research is appropriate for describing an intervention and the real-life context in which it occurred.

Research Design

Creswell (2007) described five qualitative research approaches: narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. Narrative research focuses on events or happenings, configuring them into a story (Creswell, 2007, p. 54). The narrative design was not appropriate for this study since this research focus was not on lived experiences (Creswell, 2007). Phenomenology studies focus on a phenomenon or object of human experience (Creswell, 2007). Phenomenology was not considered since the focal point of this study is not a shared lived experience. Grounded theory

approach was not applicable because a theory is not being generated or discovered (Creswell, 2007). Finally, ethnography concentrates on a cultural group (Creswell, 2007). Consequently, this research is not congruous as an ethnographic study since the heart of the matter is not an analysis of a culture-sharing group.

The case study approach is bound in time and place, and a researcher may use a case study when he or she focuses on an issue or concern (Creswell, 2007). A case study is appropriate when the inquirer seeks to recognize an in-depth understanding of the case or cases (Yin, 2009). Since this study is bound in time and place and I was seeking in-depth understanding the perceived effectiveness of parents' participation in family literacy training, the case study design was the most applicable. This research study was bound by time, the length of one summer. It was also bound by place, one elementary school. Further, it focused on one central issue, using family literacy to address summer reading loss.

Research Questions

The questions guiding this study were

1. What knowledge and understanding do parents have about research-based literacy practices to help their children become better readers?
2. How do parents support their children's literacy development throughout the summer months?
3. How do parents feel about the effects of family literacy training and the implementation of research-based literacy strategies during the summer months on the students' reading?

Context of the Study

This research was conducted at a small private, Christian elementary school in the South. This research site was chosen due to my collegial relationship with the school's administration. According to the school's administrator, the elementary school serves 216 students, the majority of whom come from urban communities. The student population has a racial demographic of 53% Hispanic, 32% European American, 12% African American, and 3% Asian.

The school's administration developed a voluntary family literacy training workshop in order to address summer reading loss. The family literacy workshop consists of interactive teaching on the foundational elements of literacy and easily implemented strategies for instruction. These reading components, according to the National Institute for Literacy (2002), are phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and text comprehension. During the workshop, parents receive a family literacy guide that explains research-based literacy strategies that are easily implemented in the home. The school's e-mail address and phone number are provided so that literacy questions receive immediate feedback.

Measures for Ethical Protection

Merriam et al. (2002) stated that the validity and reliability of a study are largely dependent upon the ethics of the researcher. This research was conducted in accordance with the Walden University Institutional Review Board. In addition, each parent interviewee was provided with a consent form (Appendix B). All participants were assured that participation was voluntary, and there were no repercussions if they desired

to abandon participation for any reason. Furthermore, I was the only person to have access to the data, and all computer documents will be saved on a password-protected computer for 5 years.

Role of the Researcher

As a certified teacher in the State of Florida for 25 years in the areas of elementary education and reading education, I have served in the positions of classroom teacher and reading specialist in the school in which the data was collected. Even though I have not been employed by the school in 3 years, I still maintain professional relationships with the administration and faculty. At the request of the school's administration, I have on occasion served as an educational consultant.

Since I am not currently working at the school and have not been in close contact with parents or students at the school for several years, there is minimal threat of researcher bias. Working relationships with participants were established through introductions by the school's administrator.

Participants

The number of participants in case study research is usually small, not including more than four or five cases in a single study (Creswell, 2007). Random purposeful sampling was used in order to "purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem" (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). Ten families participated in the family literacy training at the above-referenced Christian school, and all participants were invited to be a part of this study (Appendix C). Three workshop participants volunteered to represent their families and were interviewed for this research study.

Data Collection

Merriam (2002) stated that interviews present the data needed in order to obtain an ample description of the findings. Interview questions provide the information needed to answer the research questions. Data was collected through one-on-one interviews with three workshop participants.

The participant interviews took place prior to the commencement of new school year using the interview guide (Appendix A) consisting of open-ended questions. These questions were designed to collect data describing family literacy practices during the summer as compelled by the research questions. Open-ended questions allow parent participants to express their knowledge and understanding of research-based literacy strategies and how they incorporate literacy in their family (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Patton's (1990) general interview guide approach was used as an interview outline, involving the preplanning of topics and questions while allowing the interview to be conversational (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Each interview was audio recorded using a digital recording device. Hand written notes were taken to supplement the voice recording. Interview sessions were transcribed into a Word document within 2 days of the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Data Analysis

Hatch (2002) described data analysis as a "systematic search for meaning" (p. 148), allowing the researcher to process data in order to see patterns and identify themes, discern relationships and construct interpretations. Rubin and Rubin (2005) described

data analysis as several stages that overlap one another, the first stage being the recognition of concepts and themes.

Hatch (2002) outlined steps in the inductive analysis of qualitative study as thinking from the specific to the general, looking for “frames of analysis” (p. 163). I used Hatch’s steps in inductive analysis in order to “look[ing] for patterns across individual observations, then argu[ing] for those patterns as having the status of general explanatory statements” (Potter, as cited in Hatch, 2002). These steps are (Hatch, 2002, p. 162):

1. Read the data and identify frames of analysis.
2. Create domains based on semantic relationships discovered within frames of analysis.
3. Identify salient domains, assign them a code, and put others aside.
4. Reread data, refining salient domains and keeping a record of where relationships are found in the data.
5. Decide if your domains are supported by the data and search data for examples that do not fit with or run counter to the relationships in your domains.
6. Complete an analysis within domains.
7. Search for themes across domains.
8. Create a master outline expressing relationships within and among domains.
9. Select data excerpts to support the elements of the outline.

Methods to Address Validity

Because validity is a well-documented concern of any research study (Merriam, et al, 2002), several validation strategies were incorporated to ensure the trustworthiness of this research endeavor.

Member checking involves “taking data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility” (Creswell, 2007, p. 208) of the findings. Each interview participant received an interview transcript in order to verify the accuracy of the document. Participants also received a summary of the interview analysis in order to determine if the interpretations were accurate and credible. Rich, thick descriptions were used throughout this study enabling the information to be transferred to other settings (Creswell, 2007, 2003). Providing the context and intentions of the family literacy training enabled other researchers to interpret the training for shared characteristics.

Summary

This section has provided a description of the case study methodology and a rationale for its design. It also included an overview of data collection and data analysis, and it clarified the context of the study, described the participants, and the researcher’s role. Measures for ethical protection and methods for validation of the study were addressed. Section 4 describes the process used to collect the data and the procedures for case study analysis.

Section 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine parents' knowledge and understanding of effective research-based literacy instruction and to establish the participants' perceived effect of their participation in the family literacy training. Findings were gathered from interviews conducted with three family literacy workshop participants.

The data analysis process included examining participants' interview transcripts, both individually and collectively. A hierarchical coding system was used to examine concepts and themes in order to find relationships among relevant patterns and emerging understandings.

The participants in this study had elementary children or grandchildren attending a private Christian school in the South. All interviewees attended the school's annual family literacy training at the end of the traditional school year in June. Written approval to gather data for this study was received from Walden's Institutional Review Board on August 16, 2010. The period of the study took place in August-September, 2010.

This section details the process by which the data were generated, gathered, and recorded. In this section, I describe a system for keeping track of data and emerging understandings. Discrepant cases and nonconforming data are presented as well as a discussion of the findings.

Methods Used to Store and Gather Data

To conduct this research study, I collected data to reveal the ways in which family literacy training participants incorporated literacy strategies into their families, both before and after the training. Data were collected from interviews (Appendices E-G) with three participants. Ten parents participated in the family literacy workshop, and all participants were invited to be interviewed as a part of this research study. Three parents responded and were interviewed accordingly using an interview guide (Appendix A).

The interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder and transcribed on a laptop computer using the Microsoft Word program within 2 days after each interview. I examined all the interview data, both individually and collectively. The raw data will be stored digitally for 5 years on my personal password protected computer, and after such time, the data will be destroyed.

Upon receiving approval from the Walden University Internal Review Board (IRB#: 08-16-10-0383867), I began the data collection process by e-mailing the workshop participants to invite them to be a part of this research study. I conducted face-to-face interviews with the three parents who responded and agreed to participate (Appendices E-G).

All interviews took place in an office on the school property using the interview guide (Appendix A). The interview format was semistructured and allowed for the participants to give additional input regarding their individual practices and ideas about literacy. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. After the recorded interviews were completed, I transcribed each interview verbatim and e-mailed each participant the

corresponding interview transcription to verify correctness. Subsequent to the transcripts being verified for accuracy, I summarized each participant's interview and sent the summary documents to the participants to determine whether I had accurately captured the essence of his or her true feelings, expressions, thoughts, and ideas (Creswell, 2002). This process of communication with the participants was an effort to establish accuracy, validity, and credibility of my interpretation of the data interview for member-checking purposes.

The purpose of the interviews was to understand the family literacy practices of the participants before and after the workshop and to establish the participants' perceived effect of their participation in the family literacy training. Rubin and Rubin (2005) described data analysis as several stages that overlap one another, the first stage being the recognition of concepts and themes. I examined each participant's responses to the questions about the ways in which they supported their children's literacy, systematically searching for meaning. Furthermore, I processed the data in order to see patterns, identify themes, discern relationships and construct interpretations (Hatch, 2002).

In accordance with Hatch's (2002) steps of inductive analysis, I identified salient domains, assigned them a code, and put others aside. The initial domains were Reading Aloud, Meaningful Dialogue, Creating a Love for Reading, Parent Training, and Other Interactive literacy Strategies. Other interactively literacy strategies included phonics flashcards, thinking aloud, and structured times of literacy instruction. Continuing through the steps of reexamining data, refining salient domains, and keeping a record of where relationships are found in the data, I focused on the more subtle categories by

reflecting on what the interviewees said (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In order to better sort the data, I developed still more categories, including Child Read Aloud, Child Independent Reading, Parent Read Aloud, Parent Assisting with Sight Words, Parent Assisting with Phonics, Parent-Student Conversation, and Other Parent-Student Activities. Other parent-student activities included library visits and structured literacy instruction.

After considering all of my categories, I decided to use the hierarchical arrangement of codes by making secondary codes for some of my labels. Hierarchical coding shows the relationship among codes in which some domains and themes are contained within others (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). My final master list of hierarchical codes was

Parent-Student Interaction

1. Parent read aloud
2. Parent assisting with sight words
3. Parent assisting with phonics
4. Meaningful dialogue
5. Other interactive literacy activities

Student Reading

1. Sharing books with friends
2. Library visits

Parent Training

1. Specific strategies learned
2. Influence on family literacy

Creating a Love for Reading

1. Child requesting purchase of books
2. Child sharing books with friends
3. Parent-child excitement

After coding the data, I searched for patterns and links among the concepts that would facilitate the evaluation of the broader implications of my findings (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). As I continued to review the interview transcripts, the recurring theme was that participants' interview responses provided data on the connectedness between their participation in the training and their implementation of research-based strategies with their children.

The Findings

Three participants from the family literacy training were interviewed. Two of the participants were parents of multiple elementary children, and one was a grandmother who was the primary caregiver for an elementary child during the summer. The interview transcript data from each participant in this case study were examined both individually and collectively. A pseudonym was assigned to each participant and to the names of any children mentioned in the interviews.

Research Question 1

What knowledge and understanding do parents have about research-based literacy practices to help their children become better readers?

Participant 1 was a mother of two elementary children, one fourth grade student, and one first grade student. Prior to coming to the family literacy training, she read aloud

each night to her youngest child. She did not, however, read to her older child because she did not think it was necessary saying, “I thought you should just focus on the younger ones...but I didn’t know that even when they are in high school you should be reading to them.”

After participating in the workshop, Participant 1 incorporated many research-based literacy strategies into her family. She indicated that she began reading aloud to both of her children and also started incorporating meaningful dialogue into book discussions with both children. She clarified by stating, “We’re actually sharing something together.”

When reading aloud to her children, Participant 1 often uses the strategy of buddy reading. According to Block and Dellamura (2001) buddy reading is a literacy strategy in which a proficient reader takes turns reading aloud with a less proficient reader. Participant 1 indicated that she incorporates buddy reading by alternating paragraphs with her children in order to build fluency as well as comprehension.

As a comprehension builder, Participant 1 and her children frequently make predictions and ask questions about the text. Participant 1 further indicated that her older child will take the initiative to ask the comprehension questions in order to establish whether or not the parent has also established meaning from the text.

Participant 2 was a father of a second grade student and a 4-year old child enrolled in pre-K. Prior to attending the workshop, he indicated that neither he nor his wife spent much time with their children in the area of literacy. He expressed that he would get upset with his second grade student if the child could not complete his reading

homework accurately. After the training, however, he and his wife incorporated many research-based literacy strategies. They read aloud nightly to their children using strategies comprised of picture walks, questioning, and retelling to build comprehension. They, too, used the buddy reading strategy for fluency building with both their children.

Incorporating literacy in the home has been a priority for Participant 3, a primary caregiver for her second grade grandchild. Prior to her attendance at the workshop, she read aloud each night to her grandchild, and she also had her grandchild read aloud. Participant 3 worked on blending sounds, using terms such as “sounding out” words. She indicated that she focused on oral reading fluency with her grandchild. After the training, she indicated that her read alouds were more interactive. She used meaningful dialogue and think alouds to create comprehension of text and also to try to build a love for reading in her grandchild. The reading strategy of thinking aloud is the method of orally verbalizing one’s thoughts while reading aloud in order to model how the mind makes sense of text (Lapp, Fisher, & Grant, 2008).

Research Question 2

In what ways do parents support their children’s literacy development throughout the summer months?

Because the family literacy workshop was at the beginning of summer, all of the interviewees indicated that they incorporated literacy strategies to support their students’ reading development throughout the subsequent summer.

Participant 1 integrated meaningful dialogue into interactive read alouds with both her children. She indicated that they took trips to the library and shared books in order to stimulate conversation.

Participant 2 also incorporated interactive read alouds, making use of illustrations and questioning in order to enhance comprehension with his children. In addition, he enrolled his second grade student into a summer reading program at a local university for further reading instruction.

Participant 3 set up her living room into a mock classroom, complete with desk and chalkboard/easel. Participant 3 and her grandchild had structured times of reading instruction that included sight words and blending. She and her granddaughter also participated in interactive read alouds, indicating that she did not just work exclusively on fluency, but incorporated the strategy of thinking aloud, saying “I ask her questions or even go off on little tangents where I might tell her something that I thought.”

Research Question 3

How do parents feel about the effects of family literacy training and the implementation of research-based literacy strategies during the summer months on the students' reading?

All interviewees felt that their attendance at the literacy workshop positively enhanced their families' literacy practices to some degree. Participant 1 felt that her attendance at the training gave her guidance in reading aloud with her fourth grade student. She saw an increased love for reading in her children, particularly the older child, and she cited the cause of this new-found love as her attendance at the training and

subsequent implementation of the literacy strategies. She said, “It’s not me driving them. They’re driving themselves because of their love for reading.”

The perceived effect of participation in the family literacy training by Participant 2 was significant. He described the overall change in his family’s literacy practices as “a complete 360 turnaround,” indicating that there was a considerable transformation in the literacy practices from before the training. Participant 2 explained that prior to attending the workshop, neither he nor his wife spent much time reading with their children. Rather, their parental role in literacy achievement focused on ensuring the completion of homework. While this role frustrated both parents and children, Participant 2 was unaware of ways to implement research-based strategies to assist his children in literacy activities. His family’s postworkshop literacy activities are compelling, and included daily interactive read alouds coupled with retells and summarizations. Participant 2 and his family also implemented comprehension strategies such as picture walks and predictions, and word recognition strategies, such as sight word flashcards and decoding. Participant 2 also incorporated the fluency strategy of buddy reading with his children. He indicated that not only do he and his wife buddy read with their older child, but the older child buddy reads with the younger child as well. Participant 2 responded, “We are using it to our advantage to help his brother.” He concluded his thoughts on the training impact by saying, “It [was] life-changing for my kids.”

Participant 3 described her perceived impact of the family literacy training as “not huge because I am already so committed to having her learn to read and already knowing how important it is for her to read.” However, she did describe the change of focus from

fluency to comprehension. Before the family literacy training, fluency and decoding were Participant 3's main priorities regarding her grandchild's reading. After the training, she "did try to incorporate some of the things we learned." For example, she described being more interactive with read alouds and less "sound it out." Participant 3 characterized her literacy times with her grandchild after the training as a change in attitude "to make reading more fun."

Discrepancies in the Study

During the interviews, all participants reported that since taking part in the family literacy training, they have incorporated increased times of meaningful dialogue with their children or grandchildren. Participant 1 recounted that since the training, she and her children "have been able to talk and share more." Participant 3 described discussion times with her grandchild as "ask[ing] her questions or even go[ing] off on little tangents."

From a different perspective, Participant 2, while incorporating dialogue into family literacy with activities such as retelling stories and asking questions for comprehension, also recounted the differences in his perception of regional word usage and dialect as it affected his children's reading achievement. He pointed out that his child's teacher "may be Southern" inferring that she spoke with a drawl, but he noted that the teacher "adjust[ed]" her speech in order to speak properly. He referred to himself as being "from a third world country" and also noted that when his family is together at home, "our dialogue is completely different than when [the children are] in school. What we figured out is that we actually were confusing him in the sense that when we try to read with him, we were speaking the way we usually would." His interpretation of the

dialect spoken at home was that it conflicted with what his children learned at school and, therefore, caused confusion, stating “I have realized it may be a hindrance to him because when the teacher is talking to him, he understands, but when he is at home, he gets a completely different message.” Participant 2 felt the need to adjust his dialect and vocabulary when speaking at home in order to help his children “do what [they are] supposed to do.” Although these statements are nonconfirming, the input from participant number two is valuable because it reveals the literacy aspect of meaningful dialogue from the perspective of a parent whose first language is not American English. These nonconfirming data statements are included in the findings because discussions on meaningful dialogue for family literacy training are relevant to the reading achievement of English language learners.

Patterns, Themes, and Relationships

After coding the data, I searched for patterns and relationships among the concepts that would facilitate the evaluation of the broader implications of my findings (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The results of my data analysis indicated two significant themes that represented an underlying concept (Merriam et al., 2002) for further examination. The first theme for discussion is influence of parent training, and the second theme to explore is creating a love for reading.

Theme 1

Throughout this study, a frequent response voiced from the interviews was the impression that each participant benefitted from their attendance at the family literacy

workshop and subsequently implemented their new knowledge about literacy strategies within their families.

Meaningful dialogue was significant to Participant 1. She described the way the training impacted her family's literacy practices over the summer, "I wanted to read so I could interact with them [her two children]." Prior to her workshop attendance, she relayed that she and her oldest child, a fourth grade student, did not connect much with books, describing her child's attitude as "huffy and puffy." After the training, she found a literary series that interested her oldest child. The two of them began reading the series together while incorporating comprehension strategies such as predictions and questioning. She pointed out that since implementing literacy strategies, "We're actually talking. We're actually sharing something together."

Participant 2 described his perceived impact of the family literacy workshop as "life changing for my kids." He expressed in detail how prior to the training, he and his wife would be frustrated with their oldest child when the child would not complete his reading assignments correctly. However, after the training, he explained how he and his wife now involve literacy in their home. He expounded on interactive read alouds in their home, saying, "we have him describe the pictures....He realizes the pictures and words work together." They also incorporated comprehension strategies such as retelling passages, asking questions, and making predictions. Further, Participant 2 spoke about the influence the training has had on his youngest child, a 4-year old. The participant clarified, "We are using it [the training] to our advantage to help his brother. He has

already been learning, like he knows the sounds of the vowels....We have been giving him a little push.”

While Participant 3 initially said that the training, “hasn’t made a huge impact because I am already so committed to having her learn to read,” she went on to describe the ways that she and her grandchild interacted with stories, using strategies learned at the workshop. Participant 3 admitted being focused solely on fluency and “sounding out” words prior to her workshop experience. However, she continued to be concerned about her grandchild’s lack of a love for reading. By incorporating her new knowledge on interactive read alouds learned at the parent training, participant three explained that her attitude has changed to “Hey, let’s have fun with this” in order to encourage a more positive affective attitude toward reading in her grandchild.

Theme 2

A second theme that became evident throughout my thematic analysis of the data was fostering an attitude of enjoyment of reading in their children. Many children have not had experiences that sparked an interest or connection with books, and for these children, it is important to link their curiosities to printed materials. By connecting children to text within their frame of interests, children are more likely to read, thus contributing to the association of pleasure with books (Blachowiz & Ogle, 2008).

Prior to attending the parent workshop, Participant 1 described her fourth grade child as one that would “read because the teacher tells her there is an assignment.” She was concerned about the disconnectedness between her child and reading. After the training, she realized the importance of connecting the child to books of interest to her

child in order to create positive experiences with reading and subsequently sought to find books on topics that were appealing to her child. She started interactively reading aloud *Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan (2005) and afterward watched the corresponding movie. Participant 2 described her child's reaction to the experience as, "She really got set on fire," signifying that her child developed a love for reading because of her connection with the *Percy Jackson* series. Participant 1 continued to describe her child's love for reading by revealing that her child takes books to the school's aftercare program to share with friends.

Participant 1 also expressed that her younger child possesses an excitement for reading, stating that he "listen[s] to his teacher reading, and he's so excited he wants me to read the same books at home." She concluded her discussion on her children's love for reading by explaining, "They're driving themselves because of their love for reading."

The interview data from Participant 2 is unique in that he referred to himself as being from a "third world country." He went on to describe his culture as one in which "mommy takes care of stuff and daddy provides." Now that he and his family are "living in the United States where everybody works," he realized that "I need to help." He further indicated that prior to the workshop, neither he nor his wife spent time reading to the children or engaging in other literacy activities due to their work schedules. Since the training, he noted that he and his wife "realize that the key is to get him to like reading." He also described their interactive read alouds and strategies as "drawing him into the interest of the story" further indicating the importance of connecting his child to the text in order to develop a love for reading.

Participant 3 described her grandchild as an “I’ve got to do this reader” as opposed to an “enthusiastic reader.” She also recognized in her grandchild that reading was not an activity that the grandchild viewed as “fun.” Prior to the training, Participant 3 bought several small gifts to use as rewards for her grandchild in an effort to promote successful reading. However, Participant 3 regarded the reward system as not as successful as she had hoped, “because a lot of it is she doesn’t want to be reading unfortunately.”

After the workshop training, Participant 3 explained that her focus shifted from ensuring phonic accuracy and oral fluency to a more “Let’s have fun with this” attitude. She describes their read alouds times as “more interactive now and less ‘sound it out.’” While Participant 3 still does not believe her grandchild has developed a genuine love for reading yet, she recognized that her grandchild loves to be read aloud to and is hopeful that her grandchild will cultivate an independent love for reading.

Evidence of Quality

In a qualitative study, Creswell (2003, 2007) stated that the researcher should use at least two strategies to validate the accuracy of the research in order to strengthen the research. To ensure quality and accuracy of the results of this case study, I utilized both member checking and rich, thick description.

Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Creswell, 2007) considered member checking to be “the most critical technique for establishing credibility.” Implementing member checking allowed the interviewees to check the research findings to determine whether or not they agreed with the analysis in order to assure trustworthiness of the findings. The

interview transcriptions were sent to the participants to review for accuracy within 2 days of the interviews. Summaries of interviews were also sent to the participants to ensure that the interpretation represented the participants' true feelings, expressions, thoughts, and ideas (Creswell, 2002).

Rich, thick description was also used to communicate the findings of the study. By descriptively discussing the shared experiences of the participants, the study may be transferred to other settings (Creswell, 2007).

Summary

The interview data showed that the participants incorporated research-based literacy strategies learned at the family literacy workshop into their individual families. The data further showed that the participants supported their children's literacy throughout the summer by implementing interactive read alouds, library visits, meaningful dialogue, and various other comprehension strategies, the most common of which was the strategy of retelling. All interviewees determined that their participation in the family literacy workshop positively influenced the way they integrate reading in their families. In section 5, I discuss recommendations for further research and implications for social change.

Section 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Overview

Summer reading loss has been a problem for elementary students at the data site, a small Christian school in the South, and inadequate family literacy support may have contributed to the problem. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the influence of the school's family literacy workshop that was specifically developed in an effort to teach easily implemented research-based reading strategies to parents.

Three research questions guided my study and focused on determining parents' knowledge and understanding of effective research-based literacy instruction and the participants' perceived effect of the family literacy training on their family literacy practices. Data in the form of semi-structured face-to-face interviews were collected from three parent participants.

After examining the way parents implemented their knowledge of literacy strategies learned at the workshop, themes unfolded through within-case and cross-case analysis. The findings supported that as a result of their learning at the family literacy workshop, all participants applied research-based literacy strategies within their families in order to support the reading development of their children and grandchildren. The results of the study further revealed that after attending the workshop, parents perceived the need to create an enjoyment for reading in their children.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this qualitative case study, I explored the knowledge and understanding parents had about research-based literacy practices and how they supported their children's

literacy throughout the summer months. In this study, I also examined the perceived effectiveness of the interviewees' participation in the family literacy workshop. Interview data was studied in order to formulate the findings in relationship to the literature. The conclusions of the findings are given below with references to section 4 outcomes, which covered all the data, and was bound by the collected evidence. A discussion of practical applications of the findings are also presented.

Research Question 1

In Research Question 1, I examined the knowledge and understanding parents have about research-based literacy practices to help their children become better readers. Prior to their attendance at the family literacy training, the three participants had a diverse range of knowledge and understanding of research-based literacy practices. All interviewees desired to support their children's reading achievement. Participants 1 and 3 read aloud to their children, and Participant 3 even worked on phonics strategies. Participant 2, however, did not know how to incorporate literacy into his home. Subsequent to their training, though, all attendees implemented their learning on research-based strategies into their families' daily lives. All participants relayed their implementation of interactive read alouds and meaningful dialogue, which were topics discussed at the workshop.

Research Question 2

In Research Question 2, I examined how parents supported their children's literacy development throughout the summer months. The interviews revealed that each participant used research-based strategies to support their children's literacy throughout

the summer. All participants used interactive read alouds each day throughout the summer, and further, all participants also used meaningful dialogue as a strategy of incorporating literacy in their homes. The strength of these results indicated that the interviewees were cognizant of reading strategies easily implemented in the home. These results further indicate that the participants did not hesitate to incorporate their knowledge of literacy strategies into their families.

Research Question 3

In Research Question 3, I examined how parents feel about the effects of family literacy training and the implementation of research-based literacy strategies during the summer months on the students' reading. Participants 1 and 2 felt that their workshop learning had a significant effect on the way their families used literacy. Both Participants 1 and 2 indicated that their children are reading considerably more than before the training. They also denoted that they are now interacting with their children during read alouds. Their perception of the effect of this interaction has caused considerable excitement about books and reading in their children.

As a result of his attendance at the training, Participant 2 expressed his belief that his child's reading achievement had increased, and he believed his child would score on grade level on subsequent reading assessments. Participant 2 also indicated that his learning from the training would help his pre-K child to start school on grade level.

Participant 3 felt that the training did not have a substantial impact on the way she incorporated literacy into her home due to the importance she already placed on the reading success of her grandchild. She did, however, perceive that because of her

workshop training, she became more interactive with her grandchild during their times of reading aloud.

References to Outcomes in Section 4

The specific research questions addressed by this study were designed to reveal how parents supported their children's literacy development throughout the summer and the perceived impact of the family literacy workshop on their family literacy practices. The findings suggested that all interviewees' family literacy practices were impacted by their participation in the training. Furthermore, because of the interviewees' participation in the workshop, the participants implemented several research-based reading strategies with their children throughout the summer. The conclusions drawn from this study are that the opportunities for family literacy training should continue to be offered to parents as a form of literacy support for their families.

After conducting a thematic analysis, two themes were found to be present across all three participants' interviews: influence of participation in the family literacy workshop, and creating a love for reading. Examining the data for themes allowed me to make sense of this research study (Creswell, 2003, p. 192). The findings of this study contribute to the body of knowledge needed to address the potential for using family literacy to address summer reading loss.

Relationship of Findings to Literature

This qualitative case study was grounded in several theories, including Vygotsky's (1987) sociocultural theory which states that biological and cultural maturation develop concurrently and are lifelong processes that depend on social

interactions leading to cognitive growth. When applied to the context of family literacy, family members support literacy in the home by interacting with their children through a variety of genres in order to help their children construct meaning and build comprehension skills. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is foundational to this study and subsequently to the findings due to the important nature of the family members' participation in the incorporation of literacy strategies.

Similarly, this study was also supported by Freire's (1997) pedagogical theory of critical literacy that states that all learning is relational and interaction produces knowledge. This study examined the interaction that took place among family members as they participated in literacy strategies learned at the family literacy workshop. The results of the research indicated that all interviewees perceived that by incorporating reading strategies into family literacy times, reading achievement and attitudes subsequently increased in their children and grandchildren.

The theory of constructivism was an important foundation for this research. Constructivism theory states that learning must be active and that students construct new knowledge by connecting what they are learning to what they already know (Cooper et al., 2002; Dewey, 1902, 1916; Inhelder & Piaget, 1969). In my study, both the workshop participants and their children constructed new knowledge. The workshop participants added to their literacy awareness by implementing new strategies into their already established reading routines as well as adjusting their family times in order to engage their children in research-based reading strategies.

Practical Application of the Findings

Summer reading loss has been a research focus for decades, and reliable findings of current literature reveal a variety of programs and research efforts to address this problem. This study strengthened the body of literature by those researchers cited in section 2. In particular, this research indicated that training parents and caregivers in easily implemented reading strategies is a viable method to address summer reading loss.

This research took place in a private Christian elementary school at which literacy instruction is a primary focus. Through the regular use of reading assessments, both formal and informal, the school's administration realized their students, their struggling readers in particular, were experiencing summer reading loss. The school's administration identified the lack of family literacy strategies practiced in the home as a potential reason for this deficiency. In an effort to address this recognized weakness, they developed a workshop to teach parents how to easily incorporate reading strategies into their daily routines. The findings of this study suggest that the workshop training resulted in consistent implementation of the literacy strategies learned by each participant.

In addition to the importance of the implementation of literacy strategies by the workshop attendees, this research further revealed that by incorporating their knowledge learned at the family literacy training, the participants perceived that it was important for their elementary students to develop an enjoyment for reading. Consistent with Morrow's (2009) research, in highly literate families, there is joy and pleasure in reading and writing.

Implications for Social Change

Summer reading loss occurs for many students, particularly struggling readers (Cooper et al., 1996; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2005; Heyns, 1978, 1987). Since there is significant research in support of including parents in their children's education (Baily, 2006; Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006; Darling, 2005; Flouri & Buchanan, 2004; Morrow, 2009; Padak & Rasinski, 2006; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002), it is logical to conclude that training parents on how to easily implement research-based reading strategies into their families will assist in alleviating the effects of summer reading loss. When students do not experience reading loss over the summer, they are ready to start a new school year without need of reading reviews or prescribed interventions. Training parents to support their children's reading instruction will make a significant contribution to social change by potentially increasing students' reading achievement. When students' reading achievement is increased, the likelihood of students becoming lifelong learners is also increased, resulting in increased opportunities for higher education (Guthrie, Coddington, & Wigfield, 2009).

Further, this study affects social change by establishing a positive relationship between school and parents. Providing parents with a positive means of becoming involved in the education of their children has the potential to increase parent involvement in the school. Duffy, Mattingly, and Randolph (2006) indicated that when schools establish the development of parents in effective educational strategies, a partnership is established resulting in higher student academic outcome.

Recommendations for Action

The results of this study will be disseminated to the administration of the data site school by means of a professional development presentation. Because of the successful nature of the family literacy workshop, it is further recommended to the school's administration to continue offering family literacy workshops. However, it is also advised to offer the training to parents in the community as well as those parents that have students attending the private school.

The findings of this study may also provide valuable information to administrators of other private schools accredited by the same Southern accrediting body. It is recommended that the same professional development presentation disseminating the results of this study be presented to those school administrators at the annual teachers and administrators conference.

Recommendations for Further Research

In this study, I established the importance of training parents in research-based literacy strategies that are easily implemented in a family environment. Further exploration of this topic may contribute to the understanding of the educational background of the parents as well as the cultural environment of the families.

This study was limited to one private, Christian elementary school in the South. This study could have broader and more diverse implications if it included schools, both private and public, in various regions of the United States in order to determine the influence of family literacy training on family literacy practices. A quantitative study should be conducted in order to obtain data pertaining to the reading achievement scores

of elementary students whose parents attend a family literacy workshop. The assessment data could include running records or informal reading inventories prior to the workshop and prior to the start of the subsequent school year in order to determine if children whose parents implemented research-based reading strategies over the summer still experienced summer reading loss. A longitudinal study could be conducted for the purpose of analyzing more than 2 years of post implementation family literacy data in order to explore the long-term benefits of effective research-based family literacy strategies by tracking the same families.

Reflection

The qualitative aspect of this research study was quite enjoyable. As I listened to the workshop participants describe their times of literacy interactions with their children, I appreciated the obvious concern each parent had for the reading achievement of their children. Further, I felt deep respect for the school's administration in acknowledging the need for parent training and resultantly designing and implementing a workshop that considered the needs of its students.

Because I have served as an educational consultant at the data site, I am familiar with the school's faculty and administration. However, I do not have interaction with the parents in my role as consultant, and, therefore, there was little concern for any personal biases as I conducted my research.

Prior to conducting my interviews, I spoke with the school's administrators and the faculty member in charge of conducting the workshop. Through these discussions I

became familiar with the format and content of the family literacy workshop which served to eliminate any preconceived ideas or values.

All of the interviewees indicated their desire to assist in my research study and were eager to share their family's literacy practices in that regard. The environment of each interview was pleasant, and a rapport of mutual respect was easily established with all participants. Therefore, any other effects of the researcher on the participants are unlikely.

At the beginning of this research study, I did not know if parents would consistently implement the strategies learned at the family literacy workshop. Nonetheless, I did believe that all attendees had good intentions of incorporating their literacy learning into their families' daily lives. I was pleasantly surprised that all three interviewees not only incorporated their workshop training almost daily, but that they also were focused on establishing an environment in their homes that fostered a love for reading.

Summary

Consistent and direct parental involvement in children's literacy development is correlated to elevated reading performance (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). Furthermore, family literacy practices are more influential than other family environmental factors (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004). Therefore, providing parents with training in research-based literacy strategies needed to support their children will provide the foundation for family literacy success.

This study has made contributions to the body of research on the importance of training parents in research-based reading strategies in order to support their children's reading achievement, particularly over the summer when children are not receiving traditional instruction. By partnering with parents to “keep the faucet of learning flowing” (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997, 2007) with family literacy practices, children will experience less summer academic respite and more summer literacy learning.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

1. Tell me about your family's literacy practices before you attended the parent workshop.
(The below sub-questions would be used as necessary.)
 - When and how did you spend time with your child in the area of reading (literacy)?
 - What were some reading activities you did with your child?
 - How often did you read with your child?
 - How did you help him when he came to a word he did not know?
 - How did you check to see if your child understood the meaning of what he read?
2. How did you help your child(ren) become a better reader?
3. What were some of your family's regular topics of conversations?
(The below sub-questions would be used as necessary.)
 - How did your child(ren) participate in these conversations?
 - How often did these meaningful conversations take place?
4. How did your family literacy practices change from the traditional school year to the summer?
5. Is there anything else you would like to tell me regarding your family's literacy practices prior to your attendance in the parent workshop?
6. How have your family's literacy practices changed since you attended the family literacy training?
(The below sub-questions would be used as necessary.)
 - When and how do you spend time with your child in the area of reading (literacy)? Is this different than before the training?
 - What are some reading activities you do with your child? How is this different than before the training?

- How often do you read with your child?
 - How do you help him when he comes to a word he does not know? How has this changed?
 - How do you check to see if your child understood the meaning of what he read?
7. How do you now help your child(ren) become a better reader?
 8. What are some of your family's regular topics of conversations?
(The below sub-questions would be used as necessary.)
 - How do(es) your child(ren) participate in these conversations?
 - How often do these meaningful conversations take place?
 9. How would you describe the impact the family literacy training had on your family's literacy practices?
 10. Is there anything else you would like to tell me regarding your family's current literacy practices?

Appendix B: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study of family literacy training to address summer reading loss in elementary students. You were chosen for the study because you are a parent of an elementary student at a private Southern Christian School and are voluntarily attending a private Southern Christian School's family literacy training. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Janet Deck, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to determine parents' knowledge and understanding of effective research-based literacy instruction, to establish what part family literacy training plays in families' summer reading routines, and to ascertain parents' feelings about the effect of family literacy training and the implementation of research-based literacy strategies during the summer months.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in an interview about how your family integrates literacy into your daily lives.
- Give permission to audiotape the interview for data collection purposes
- Sign an adult consent form

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. No one at the private Southern Christian School will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during the study. If you feel stressed during the study you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There is the minimal risk of psychological stress during the interviews or family literacy training. If you feel stressed at any time during your participation in this research study, you may stop without penalty. The benefit you will receive by participating in the workshop is the instruction in effective family literacy practices. There is no benefit to you by participating in the interviews. The researcher will benefit from your participation by collecting data necessary to complete her doctoral study.

Compensation:

You will receive a thank you for your participation in this research study.

Confidentiality:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher at janet.deck@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 08-16-10-0383867 and it expires on August 15, 2011.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant's Written or Electronic* Signature

Researcher's Written or Electronic* Signature

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

Appendix C: Parent Letter

Dear _____,

I am a student at Walden University working on my Doctor of Education (Ed.D.). One of my doctoral requirements is to conduct a research study, and I have chosen to research using family literacy training to address summer reading loss. The administrator and elementary principal have selected you as a potential participant for this study based on your recent attendance at the recent family literacy workshop.

For this study, I ask that you participate in an interview that will last approximately 20-30 minutes on the way that you incorporate literacy into your daily lives. Participation is voluntary, and there will be no penalties if you choose not to participate or choose to withdraw at a later date.

I am also required by Walden University to have you complete an adult consent form. I am the only person who will have access to the interview information and consent forms. They will remain confidential and locked in a safe place. I am asking that you be completely honest during the interview so that I will have accurate data for the study. I will not change my opinion of you based on your feedback. You may keep a copy of the consent form if you would like.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions. My doctoral chair at Walden is Dr. Teresa Dillard. She can be contacted at Teresa.Dillard@Waldenu.edu if you have any questions or concerns. I have attached the adult consent form that needs to be returned in order to participate in the study.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Janet Deck

Appendix D: Letter of Cooperation

June 18, 2010

Dear Ms. Deck,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Using Family Literacy to Address Summer Reading Loss within this private Southern Christian School. As part of this study, I authorize you to interview parents that have participated in our annual family literacy training. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Administrator

Appendix E: Interview Transcript #1

I: I really appreciate your coming in today to help me with my research.

P: It's my pleasure.

I: Today is August 30, 2010, and at anytime during this interview, if you would like to stop this interview for any reason, please let me know. I won't think anything bad about you, but will continue to have the utmost respect for you. As you know, you have been invited to be a part of this research because of your recent participation in the Family Literacy Workshop, so I am going to ask you some questions about your family's literacy practices before the workshop and after the workshop, ok?

P: OK.

I: First of all, I want you to tell me about your family's literacy practices before you attended the workshop. For instance, when and how did you spend time with your children in the area of reading, some activities you did.

P: I was more focused on reading to Johnny*, my younger child, out loud. I figured Susan*, my older child, has never really...Susan will read because the teacher tells her there is an assignment but she's not...or maybe she will read books that are younger so that she can read to Johnny but she really never would catch on fire until third grade. She did have a book report so that was like a positive thing for her, a memory. After we went to the workshop, I had heard from a friend about the Percy Jackson books and she loaned me a book. And then I started reading to Susan and I was reading to Johnny. Then Susan started reading the book on her own and now she has just everyday, reading the book. She takes the book to aftercare because they are supposed to read. And then we've been

reading it at home at night. She has checked out some books at the library. She has found books without me asking her that are about Greek mythology so she can figure out the book. She has 20 pages left and we will be on book 3 of the Percy Jackson series.

I: I know you're proud of her. So how do you check for understanding when you're doing a read aloud, or how did you check for understanding before the workshop?

P: We just didn't because it was like she was always, if I did read to her, she was huffy and puffy and she would have just rather read to Johnny. I think she took it like I was like at home being a teacher to her but when I said, "Let's read these books together," and she was reading it everyday for 15 minutes. She said, "Why don't you read part of it after I read my 15 minutes." Then she would read everyday by herself. So then that's how it started. Then we watched the movie and then she really got set on fire. When I started reading myself, I thought, "Now I know why she is taking so long to read. It's 15 minutes and she's only read 5 pages." Well, there is a lot of information in 5 pages. So after she read, this is on vacation actually, I started reading, and we started talking. Then I started asking her questions, and I realized she was picking up on things that maybe I didn't pick up on.

I: How do your family literacy practices change from the traditional school year to the summer?

P: We read more.

I: OK. Is there anything else you want to tell me regarding your family's literacy practices prior to the attendance at the workshop.

P: I just thought you should focus on the younger ones, and you should read to the younger ones, but I didn't know that even when they are in high school you should be reading to them.

I: Now we're going to talk about how things have changed since the workshop. You have already indicated that Susan, your older child, she's in 4th grade, how she is reading more since the workshop. You have found some things she has really connected with. So tell me, when and how do you spend time in reading with her and how is this different than before the training?

P: I do it before we go to bed because that is the time she likes. During the summer we did it in the middle of the day or, whenever, but now she likes it before she goes to bed. It's nice because she is telling me what she thinks is going to happen or she asks how many pages have we gotten to or I am asking her a question because I read. She will answer, "Didn't you get that?! It was on the page before." We've been able to talk and share more.

I: So, meaningful dialogue?

P: Yes, we're actually talking. She's not huffing and puffing. We're actually sharing something together.

I: Wonderful. So, would you say it's daily interaction or even more than just daily?

P: Right now it's not over the weekend since we've started back to school, but it's definitely Monday through Friday we've been reading. Sometimes it's Monday through Thursday and then Sunday night.

I: She's reading these more advanced texts. So how do you help her when she comes to a word she doesn't know?

P: I listen to her and she says the word, and I tell her what the word is and sometimes she still huffs and puffs. I guess I could use some tips on this one. Now I just let it go, and I just think, well at least she loves reading.

I: Does she use context clues to help her make sense of the text?

P: She just says the word, and even if it doesn't sound right she just keeps going. She doesn't want me to correct her.

I: How would you describe the impact of the family literacy workshop on your family's literacy practices?

P: I read a lot over the summer, even more than usual. When the children were reading their 15 minutes, I was also reading. I wanted to read so I could interact with them. They would want to know if I was reading, too, sort of checking up on me, like the spy.

I: Do they ask you questions about what you're reading?

P: Yes, they ask.

I: Does that instigate meaningful dialogue?

P: Yes, I was reading to be a leader for the summer training (at church), so that instigated spiritual conversations with the children.

I: So is there anything else you would like to tell me about your current family's literacy practices?

P: Johnny he is so excited he is reading comic books, he's reading a lot of things and now he is going to school, listening to his teacher reading, and he's so excited he wants me to read the same books at home. I told him *The Treasure Tree*, it's a series. Now he thinks he's really cool like his sister because she is also reading the Percy Jackson series and wanting me to buy the next books in her series. Now we have books 4 and 5. I don't know how to describe it. It's just they're really together with it. It's important I think. It's not me driving them. They're driving themselves because of their love for reading.

I: Thank you so much for helping me out.

Appendix F: Interview Transcript #2

I: I appreciate your helping me, Mr. Smith*. I'm just going to ask you some questions regarding your family's literacy practices. Today is August 30, 2010. I want you to tell me about your family's literacy practices before you came to the family literacy training. For example, how did you spend time with David* in reading and what were some of the kinds of activities you did together, those types of things.

P: Well, before we came to the training, we never really spent much time with David. It was an eye-opener so to speak. We most of the time said, "David, you need to read this or you need to read that." And then we would call him back and say, "Now, you finished?" And we would have him read it to us. When he could not do it, I would get upset. And as a result of getting upset with him, I realize I was making him uncomfortable and as a result, he would be afraid to express himself. If he was unsure about his reading, he may feel that I would respond in anger because I expected him to know what is going on. After we had the training, I realize the key is to get him to like reading. It is important to get him to like reading and getting us involved. We have him describe the pictures; it draws him into the interest of the story. He realizes he is not only reading but he is learning something through the pictures and the words. He realizes the pictures and the words work together. What we have been doing with him is having him read one paragraph aloud and he explains to us what is going on and then we read one paragraph. Then we might have him read one silently and tell us what is going on. It has been quite an eye-opener. As a matter of fact since we attended the workshop, we have been sending him to another program. There is a program at the university that we have

enrolled David in, and the teacher said she has seen a tremendous improvement. As a result we have been having him read 15 minutes every night, loud and quiet. Then we go back and have him retell what he has read. So it has been very, very productive.

I: That's wonderful. Can you tell me how your family literacy practices change from the traditional school year to the summer?

P: Well we did exactly what we learned at the workshop. Prior to the summer, last summer, we never had him spending time in reading or in a book. I remember clearly at the workshop, we learned that some kids drop back as much as 3 months, and if you look at it, it adds up, so that is why we get into that program and had him started reading the way that we learned at the workshop because we realized that if he doesn't do anything, he actually shuts his mind off. So we started implementing the format whereby everyday we leave something to do during the day and we also review at night. Then at the same time we keep going. For example, we had him reading second grade sight words even before he gets to second grade. We would not have done this if we hadn't learned it at the training. See, we are from a third world country, and as a result of that, the way we were brought up is mommy doesn't work. So she takes care of all the stuff and the daddy provides. But now we live in the United States where everybody works. 90 percent of the time I still looked to the wife to do all of the stuff. But I realize I need to help. The class really helped me to change to help my family with literacy.

I: Now you've told me some of the things that have changed from before you attended the workshop. How often do you read with David now?

P: Well we have been reading him every night. Every night we spend approximately 15 minutes with him reading. Just let me rephrase that. Not actually every night. Every school night. On Saturday he gets a break. But we read to him on Sunday.

I: OK. When David comes to a word he doesn't understand, how do you help him to understand the context of what's being said?

P: Well sometimes we use the picture of the story. Like for example he was reading a book the other day about a boy that was with an elephant and there was an elephant footprint, and when the boy was trying to figure out what made the huge footprint, David could not pronounce the word "elephant." So when we were looking at the book, we asked him, "What is that picture?" And then he said, "That is an elephant." Then we showed him the footprint. And we said, "What is the footprint connected to?" And he said, "It is the footprint of the elephant." So then he put two and two together to come up with the word "elephant."

I: How do you check to understand he has understood the meaning of what he has read?

P: Well most of the times what we do is make him explain to us what he has read, what was going on. Then we let him revise what he said. Also, we may randomly pick out a paragraph, not necessarily a whole page, and we ask him questions and determine, yes, he has grasped what he has read.

I: How would you describe the impact of the family literacy training on your family's literacy practices?

P: I would say it is a complete 360 turnaround. It was awesome because we also

have a 4-year old. And what we realize is that if we can get David to understand the concept of the lesson and understand the sounds and the vowels and so forth, then also understand what he is reading, then he can basically impart and able to teach his brother. We are using it to our advantage to help his brother when he is also able to go to school. He has already been learning, like he knows the sounds of the vowels, and we always tell him if a word has 2 vowels, the first one is the one that says the sound and now figure it out. We have been giving him a little push.

I: Is there anything else you want to tell me regarding your family's literacy practices.?

P: One of the thing that we had difficulty with concerning David was the fact that when we talk, our dialogue is completely different than when is in school. What we figured out is that we actually were confusing him in the sense that when we try to read with him, we were speaking the way we usually would. It helped us to come to the understanding that if we want David to come to the proper way to read and speak, we must read to him properly so that when he goes to school he can also read. That was one of the things that we learned that was confusing him. All in all it gave us a new perspective. When we are at work, we speak properly, but when we are at home, we completely drop it and talk the way we were brought up back home. I have realized it may be a hindrance to him because when the teacher is talking him, he understands, but when he is at home, he gets a completely different message. That is one of the things that was very eye opening to us. We live in a country but we come from another culture, but we all have the same common goal, to get an education. But sometimes the teacher may

be Southern and I may be from a third world country, but we come to a point where we realized that the kid is born in America but he is not an American. I see that the teacher is adjusting and doing her job, but it is my responsibility as well. We come here and we need to practice so the kid can do what he is supposed to do. The training shined the light for us and it was very important to us.

I: Thank you, Mr. Smith. I really appreciate your helping me out.

P: Oh, you helped us out. Because I mean the trainer drew out such light. In that simple hour, it was mind-blowing. We were kind've puzzled. David was doing awesome at home when we explain to him but when he comes to school he has a problem. I should have recognize that we need to step up to the plate. It helped him for us to speak the word properly, for him listen to what we are saying, and impart the word to him. One other thing. We didn't even realize that David needed glasses until the teacher said to us 2 weeks ago, the teacher said he could not see the board. So when she brought him up closer, he could see perfect. Then the teacher said that we needed to have his eyes tested. As a result, we have taken him and we found out that he needed glasses. One of the things I learned from the program is the bottom line is the teacher is basically the informer, but the parents are the ones responsible for the children. All the information they receive at school, they do not have time to recycle it and take it down. It is our responsibility at home to make sure that we revise with him and go the extra mile. It was very, very productive. I want to thank you (the school) for making it so easy for us. And we didn't even have to pay to get all that information. Thank you very much. It is life changing for my kids.

Appendix G: Interview Transcript #3

I: I really appreciate your helping me with my research.

P: It's my pleasure.

I: I am going to ask you some questions about your family's literacy practices before and after you attended the family literacy training.

P: OK.

I: Before the workshop, please tell me some of your family's literacy practices, you and your granddaughter. Tell me some of the literacy activities you did together.

P: Well, I have Janie* a lot of the times on the weekends and through the summer I had her more often since I wasn't working through the summer. We already were trying to work through some of the ABeka reading program, the summer program that ABeka has for kindergarten and first grade students. She was reading some of those to me, and we were reading at night. At night I tended to read to her, and then I would have her read. Well, first she had to read to me and then she would be rewarded with me reading her a book.

I: What were some of the activities you did together?

P: Reading-type activities?

I: Yes, reading activities or other activities that required dialogue or interaction.

P: Well, the previous the summer I tutored her because she was going into a public school and I knew she wouldn't get the strong phonetic base that we have at our school. So one thing we did was, her dad went out with me and we bought a whole bunch of items at dollar prices at the Dollar Store. Then we gift-wrapped them so she didn't know

what she was getting, but if she worked hard to do her reading tutoring, we called it her school, if she worked hard for us for school, then she would get to pick a prize.

I: Now when you say you did school or tutoring the summer before last, can you clarify for me what that consisted of? Was it a structured time of instruction?

P: As much as I could have a structured time because I don't always get her on a regular basis, but when I would have her, which was several mornings a week, we would, after breakfast, go into the living room. I had a desk set up for her. She has a little chalkboard/dry erase board easel. I brought ABeka materials and we would use those. She already knew each letter and the sound. We would work with blending and making short vowel words. We did not get to long vowel words, but we worked on long vowel words through her kindergarten year when I would get to work with her. Then someone gave me a *Dora the Explorer* phonetic set. Those were what she would read to me at night this summer when she would read me one of those books. I would let her pick something for me to read to her. Very often they were the *Winnie the Pooh* series. Then, of course, we do Bible stories as well.

I: So when she came to a word she didn't know, how would you help her?

P: I would generally encourage her to sound it out. During this summer between the kindergarten and first grade year, I worked with her a good bit on the familiar words that they call sight words. I don't call them sight words because many of them can be sounded out. They are frequently used words, and we call them her 100 word list. Sometimes she would come to a word and I would know it was on the 100 word list and I would say, "Janie, you know this one because it's on the 100 word list." And other times I would

encourage her to sound it out. If there were words that were beyond what she has learned to sound out, then very often I would tell her “You haven’t gotten to this special sound yet but this special sound says ___” and I would tell her what it says. Maybe “c” would say /s/ when it comes before e, i, or y, and I would explain that to her and tell her what the word was so she wouldn’t stress over trying to do something too difficult for herself.

I: How would you check to see if she understood what she read?

P: We talked about what she read. We did that more after I attended the workshop. We did more of the talking about the stories. She is not an enthusiastic reader. She’s more an “I’ve got to do this” reader which is why we did the big reward thing before and why I read so much to her this summer after she would read me a story. Because a lot of it is she doesn’t want to be reading unfortunately. It’s not something that she thinks is fun.

I: How do your family’s literacy practices change from the traditional school year to the summer?

P: Well during the traditional school year when I have her during the week, she has homework. She had a good bit of homework, not all of it reading oriented, and the way they would give the homework is they would staple together a whole week’s worth of homework, and she would get it on Monday night and it would be due either Thursday or Friday. I think Friday is when it was due. Sometimes her mom wasn’t working with her, and I would just have her on Thursday, so we had to do a whole week’s worth of homework with her. Other times there were things that her mom had done. She almost always left the reading part for me to do with her except she had a reading book that she was supposed to read and they would actually send the book home from her school, just

small readers. So, she would be doing a lot of that every night even when she wasn't with me. When she was with me, I had to plow away at the homework. Then there wasn't a lot of time to do fun reading except if we were over the weekend. Like I said, though, she didn't think reading was fun then. She likes to hear stories.

I: How have your family's literacy practices changed since you attended the training?

P: I have tried to do more of asking her about what she is reading instead of just plowing through. I try not to work exclusively on fluency, but I ask her questions or even go off on little tangent where I might tell her something that I thought of when the crab was coming out of the sand in the story or something. We would do this over the summer and I had more time with her. If she was going to bed and we didn't make the exact bedtime that was OK. We could read longer and so forth.

I: How would you describe the impact the training had on your family's literacy practices.

P: Well, that's kind've hard because it hasn't made a huge impact because I am already so committed to having her learn to read and already knowing how important it is for her to read. I did try to incorporate some of the things we learned. One thing I learned at the training was when the teacher had the students echo some of the words and the children interacted with the story. Janie had fun. I think I am more interactive now and less "sound it out". I am more "Hey, let's have fun with this" now, so, I think it encouraged me to make reading more fun for her.

I: Is there anything else you would like to tell me regarding your family's current literacy practices?

P: Well, school's starting and she hasn't been assigned homework yet. So, I'm just kind've waiting. She's going to be here on Thursdays. She will take the bus from her school to my house and she will actually go to bed here and her mom will pick her up on Fridays and take her to school. So that means that Thursday nights I will have an opportunity to work with her. I also know I will be doing homework with her, so I don't know how much pleasurable reading we will have. Because we finished that whole *Dora* series over the summer, I've been just recently reading to her and not making her read to me because I bought the *Treasure Tree*, We're reading that right now.

I: Would you say that she is starting to develop that love for reading?

P: I wish I could say yes, but she's not. She loves to have someone else read to her. She does not want to go through the work of reading herself.

I: Thank you so much

P: You're welcome.

Curriculum Vitae

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EDUCATION

October 2010	Walden University <i>Doctorate of Education</i> Specialization in Teacher Leadership	Minneapolis, MN
December 2005	University of Central Florida <i>Master of Education</i> Reading Education	Orlando, FL
April 1984	Southeastern University <i>Bachelor of Arts</i> Elementary Education	Lakeland, FL

EXPERIENCE

2008 – present	Southeastern University Assistant Professor of Reading Education	Lakeland, FL
2002-2007	Southern Christian School Fifth Grade Teacher, 2002-2005 Middle School/High School Latin Teacher, 2005-2007	
1998-2002	Assemblies of God World Missions Missionary in Johannesburg, South Africa	Springfield, MO

CERTIFICATION

1985 – present	Florida Department of Education Professional Certificate Elementary Education, 1-6 Reading K-12	
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