The Florida Reading Journal

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The Florida Reading Journal

Theme: Preparing Early Readers for Success
Volume 52, No. 1, Winter 2017

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The Florida Reading Journal is published for members of the Florida Reading Association and all others concerned with reading. Because *The Florida Reading Journal* serves as an open forum, its contents do not necessarily reflect or imply endorsement of the FRA, its officers, or its members.

The Florida Reading Journal

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Letter from the Editors

Maryann Tobin, Ph.D.
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Lina Chiappone, Ph.D.
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Dear Readers,

Happy new year! We are excited to bring this edition to you, the theme of which is *Preparing Early Readers for Success.*

We are all familiar with the Igbo and Yoruba proverb "It takes a village to raise a child", reflecting the emphasis African cultures place on family and community. With schools functioning as an extension of the home, teachers routinely serve as that village of support. The youngest of these children, those from birth through age eight, experience the most important period for literacy development. In a joint statement from the International Reading Association (now the International Literacy Association) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the two organizations in the late 1990s underscored the undisputed connection between school success and a child's potential to contribute effectively in today's highly literate society. The recommendations found in this position statement are important to all stakeholders, including not only teachers and parents, but also school principals and program administrators who play key roles in supporting literacy initiatives and also the teachers and caregivers who provide high-quality early childhood education. Unfortunately, the village must also address the children who arrive at school ill-prepared to grow their literacy. The U.S. Department of Education in *A Matter of Equity: Preschool in America* reported that many children enter kindergarten a year or more behind their classmates in academic and social-emotional skills. Further, starting out school from behind can "trap children in a cycle of continuous catch-up in their learning".

In this issue we present three articles that specifically address this theme. The first, by Amanda Butler, is a very unique case study of rural, low-SES students' development of oral language skills and a discussion on the importance of fostering expressive vocabulary to improve early literacy. The second article by Rivera and Molina is an innovative approach to teaching basic STEM concepts to English language learners in a pre-school classroom. The third piece is a semi-longitudinal study on

the outcome of direct phonics instruction with kindergarteners by Alemany and Cromwell. As we know, the role of the literacy coach is broad and encompasses planning and assessment across all grades, so we present Tina Selvaggi's article on the importance of communication and collaboration for those in a coaching role. Lastly, we have Oslick's article highlighting the importance of critical reading and responding through the Jane Addams Book Award. We are continuing to include reviews of academic texts related to our theme, and since this issue's secondary focus is on the needs of diverse learners, we have included a review of Freire's classic *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.*

We continue to be impressed and humbled by the quality pieces being sent to us for consideration. Keep them coming! We are excited by our 2017 themes and hope you are, too. As we move forward into this new year, let us keep the important work we all do as educators at the forefront of our lives. We matter to the children whose lives we affect. If learning is the door, then reading is the key. Turn the lock. Change the world.

Never stop reading,

Maryann & Lína

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From the President…

Kathleen Fontaine
Florida Reading Association President

Greetings to FRA Colleagues,

Florida Reading Association is leading the way to literacy! The FRA publications provide current research and information to educators from Pre-K-12 and beyond. The FRA Board of Directors is very proud of the material disseminated via Florida Reading Journal, Teachers on the Cutting Edge, and the FRA Newsletter. Each publication is available electronically to FRA members—please visit www.flreads.org for more information.

The 2017 Conference Committee, led by Vice President, Enrique Puig, is currently planning, organizing, and developing a remarkable program with the theme, Get Up and Make It Happen! Mark your calendar for November 4-6, 2017, in Tampa, Florida at the Renaissance Tampa International Plaza Hotel.

Florida Reading Association has an outstanding Board of Directors who represent individuals from all facets of Education. The caliber of our board members is exceptional—several of whom will be session presenters at the 2016 FRA Conference. There are several tasks the FRA Board has been charged with during 2016-2017—one of which is the ILA transformation. Local Florida councils will be kept up-to-date by their District Directors regarding information received from ILA.

FRA Vision: The Florida Reading Association is a group of professionals whose focus and energy center on reading issues and other literacy concerns; By coming together to promote our common interests, we create a dynamic presence and a collective voice that can be heard throughout Florida. We invite all who share our common vision to join in our effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as President of FRA—and leading the way to literacy!

Kathleen Fontaine, Ed.D.
FRA President

Publication Themes for 2017

The editors invite submissions of manuscripts for *The Florida Reading Journal*, the refereed journal of the Florida Reading Association. We invite submissions geared toward improving literacy instruction and innovation at all levels with a firm grounding in current theory and research. Suggested topics include literacy project descriptions, research or theoretical pieces with pedagogical implications, or issue-centered pieces addressing timely literacy topics of local, state or national interest. Preference is given to articles that most directly impact Florida learners. While theoretical and research articles are invited, please keep in mind that this is a journal primarily for FRA members, who are predominantly practicing teachers and literacy specialists. We encourage articles from PK-12 and adult-level practitioners, literacy researchers and doctoral students, as well as articles written by other experts in the field.

The Florida Reading Journal's audience is largely composed of PK-12 practitioners in the state of Florida. The *FRJ* editors are interested in exploring topics of interest to Florida educators and valuable in their daily literacy practices. We welcome submissions from researchers as well as PK-12 teachers. The thematic calls listed below are not intended to be exhaustive, but merely meant to be helpful to authors as they consider topics for publication. Please review the submission guidelines before submitting a manuscript.

Submission Guidelines are online at: http://www.flreads.org/Publications/quarterly/call.htm

Ongoing Annual Theme: Florida Standards in Action

FRJ has an ongoing interest in submissions related to the implementation of the Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS) across K-12 classrooms. Manuscripts that highlight how individual teachers have adapted their instruction to integrate the arts, technology, and the content areas are of particular interest. We also have interest in articles that discuss how districts have addressed the challenges and lessons learned related to the implementation of LAFS and the Florida Standards Assessment.

Ongoing Call for Book Reviews

FRJ has an ongoing interest in reviews of professional texts related to teaching and the themed calls for 201516. Reviews should be between 750-1000 words and should offer an overview of the book, not a detailed synopsis or an in-depth essay. Examples of published book reviews can be found in previous editions of FRJ

Volume 52, Issue 2: Navigating the World of Disciplinary Literacy

April 2017

The rising influence of STEM in education has brought to focus the need for those of us in the field of literacy to embrace and develop strategies for addressing reading and writing across the content areas. To that end, this issue seeks manuscripts that address disciplinary literacy and the specific set of transferable skills and strategies needed to for students to be successful in all subjects, including science, math, and the social sciences. What are the challenges teachers must be able to address to be both masters of content and process? We are most interested in submissions that address disciplinary literacy challenges for diverse learners.

Submission deadline: February 1, 2017

Volume 52, Issue 3: The Flipped Classroom

September 2017

Flipped learning has emerged as a unique approach for improving student transfer by moving didactic instruction to the online environment and planning for active learning in the classroom. Thus, the teacher serves in many roles, including subject matter expert, media specialist, and instructional designer. How does this affect reading time in the classroom and the monitoring of student reading progress? We are interested in submissions that explore how flipped learning is accomplished in a literacy classroom. What are the challenges presented to struggling readers in this curricular design and how are those challenges met? Submissions concerning innovations and critiques of the flipped model are also welcomed.

Submission deadline: July 1, 2017

A TALE OF TWO INTERVENTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF ORAL LANGUAGE STRATEGIES

Amanda Butler
Bartow County School District

Abstract: This article examines the teacher perceptions of two shared storybook approaches on the oral language skills of low-SES five and six-year-old kindergarten students. Two types of shared read-alouds, interactive and side-by-side read-alouds, were compared to determine which was most effective, according to teacher observations and perceptions. Eighteen students were randomly selected to receive one of two different shared read-aloud interventions based on specific criteria. Books were chosen based on the sophistication of the vocabulary and their appropriateness for the level of the children. Scripted lesson plans were given to teachers to follow in order to control for delivery among the teachers who participated in this intervention. At the conclusion of the study, participant teachers discussed their observations, notes, and perceptions in a round table discussion. This intervention sought to determine if these strategies supported the development of students' expressive vocabulary skills. One particular case study demonstrated a marked difference in one student who received the side-by-side treatment, which encourages further research on the effectiveness of these strategies on this student population.

Decades ago, the robust relationship between oral language and literacy was discovered and continues to be a nexus in reading research (Chall & Snow, 1988; Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Hargrave & Senechal, 2000; Wasik & Bond, 2001; Whitehurst et al., 1994). Researchers have sought to understand how various oral language skills connect to and directly affect various reading skills over time. Results of an earlier study discussed by Griffin and colleagues (2004) showed that the narrative skills of children in preschool at age 5 were greatly predictive of the overall reading comprehension skills of students by age 8. These results spurred researchers to continue studying the relationships between oral language and literacy achievement to further pinpoint how crucial oral language development is, particularly on the literacy skills of low-SES, rural students (Dickinson, Golinkoff, & Hirsh-Pasek, 2010; Reese, Suggate, Long, & Schaughency, 2009).

A Local Problem

This study took place in a rural, predominately migrant community in northwestern Georgia which, according to the United States Census Bureau (2015), has a poverty rate of 17.1%. As a state, Georgia is one of the most poverty-stricken in the country with 18.2% of the population living below the poverty line. Children who come from these low-SES backgrounds can often lack sufficient home literacy development and caregiver interaction (Levin & Aram, 2012; Skibbe et al., 2010.) Subsequently, students who do not possess large vocabularies continue to struggle as readers, based in part on their lack of book and print awareness on the outset of entering school, and are at risk of continuing to fall farther behind their peers.

All of the schools located within the Georgia county where the study took place are classified as Title I schools. There is tremendous need to bolster the language development of early readers since research has shown that students from families with low-SES families typically enter school with deficient vocabulary skills and are at-risk of failing to achieve appropriate language skills by the third grade testing year (Dickinson, McCabe, Anastasopoulos, Peisner-Feinberg, & Poe, 2003; Jalongo & Sobolak, 2011). The link between a lack of language skills upon entering school, coupled with failure to develop language skills whilst in school, is one of the factors that has led to Georgia's rank of 35th among the states in the percentage of proficient 4th grade readers (NAEP, 2013).

If oral language skills are not properly developed within the first years of a child's life, the acquisition of reading skills will be sharply affected, though it may not be recognized until the later grades (typically third and fourth grade) when readers are called upon to use those oral language skills in their vocabulary instruction (Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). Honig (2007) explains that children between the ages of 14 months and two-and-a-half-years-old are likely to experience a vocabulary spurt, which results in the length of children's utterances increasing dramatically. Around 19 months of age, children begin understanding social phrases and increase their noun usage. It is during this time, and up to the age of three, that a child's cumulative language and experiences are developed, thereby making the first three years among the most important in language and learning (Hart & Risley, 1995). Additionally, during the first three years of life, most children use language exclusively for instrumental and regulatory functions (Halliday, 1975). Oral language is developed in social settings through interactions with others. Those interactions, at least for young children, are mostly based on needs and wants. Therefore, continual development of those oral language skills in the classroom should be centered on children's' language development of higher order language functions, e.g. – interactional, personal, and informative functions (see Table 1). This is critical for these young migrant children who, due to their socioeconomic status, may have limited social interaction with adults or peers in the home.

Two Interventions

In order to determine the most effective strategy to encourage the development of the oral language skills of these low-SES migrant children, we established a study to examine two methods: Shared Read-Alouds and Side-by-side Reading. Both have been proven to support and elicit oral participation and teacher-student dialogue in previous studies.

Shared read-alouds are described as the act of an adult reading to a child in an individual or small group setting with the intentions of enhancing children's oral language and literacy skills (What Works Clearinghouse [WWC], 2007b). Within the literature, the most commonly supported approach for developing oral language is the interactive read aloud. Also known as "dialogic reading" in older literature, interactive read-alouds elicit participation from the child, such as answering questions during the story, receiving feedback from the adult reader, and contributing in telling the story (Mol, Bus, De Jong, & Smeets, 2008; What Works Clearinghouse [WWC], 2007a).

The second strategy we examined was Side-by-side reading, also called "lap reading" in some of the literature (Pollard-Durodola et al., 2011). Side-by-side reading is a type of

Table 1. *Halliday's Functions of Language (1975)*

Function of Language		Definition	Example
Instrumental	Lower order language functions	Language used to satisfy needs	*"I Want"*
Regulatory		Language used to control the behavior of others	*"Do this"*
Interactional		Language used to form social relationships	*"Me and you"*
Personal		Language used to express oneself	*"Watch me"*
Imaginative	Higher order language functions	Language used to tell a story	*"Let's pretend"*
Heuristic		Language used to seek knowledge	*"What's that?"*
Informational		Language used to convey information	*"I've got something to tell you."*

shared read-aloud activity in which the listener is sitting in the lap or next to the reader. This close proximity to the teacher provides for a socio-emotional connect that is sometimes lacking in the lives of the children from low-SES households. Interactive behaviors from caregivers and teachers during shared read-alouds have consistently resulted in a rise in children's cognitive, linguistic, social, and behavioral achievements, resulting in an increase in the child's feelings of security, and thus, higher levels of engagement and linguistic participation in class (Levin & Aram, 2012; Skibbe et al., 2010).

Methods

Participants in this study were kindergarten students and their teachers. Each participant must have met the following criteria: (a) was 5 or 6 years old; (b) had no history of retention; (c) resided in an English-only speaking home with no previous exposure to another language; (d) family was believed to be in need of supplemental assistance programs offered through the school; and (e) did not receive special education services. It was important not to include English-language learners because their low language skills could be explained by a lack of exposure to the English language. It was also important to not include students with special needs because the results may have been inaccurate if a student had a language impairment and required more intensive intervention than this proposed study had to offer.

Six students from each of the three classes were randomly selected, based on the above parameters, to participate in one of two interventions. The participants were randomly distributed into the two intervention groups. Four students participated in the storybook read-aloud, while two students were chosen to participate in the side-by-side reading. A total of 18 students from three classrooms received the intervention. Three kindergarten teachers agreed to implement both a storybook read-aloud and a side-by-side reading intervention. The teachers chosen for this study were known for their caring, maternal dispositions.

The storybooks used in this study were considered complex or sophisticated based on a combination of characteristics: (a) the characters had specific traits; (b) the main idea and problem in the story had to have been inferred; (c) themes included overcoming fears or developing friendships; (d) targeted vocabulary were Tier 2 words (definition below); (e) illustrations were not always aligned with text; and (f) the reader had to connect the events to help the student understand the story. Tier 2 words were defined as words found in a variety of texts or used in language of mature learners (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan, 2002). Teachers followed a scripted lesson plan each week. These lesson plans included the targeted Tier 2 vocabulary words, the think-alouds they demonstrated, the purpose for reading, and the open-ended questions at the end of the stories. Table 2 displays the highlights of each week.

The format of these read-alouds was adapted from a research-based approach developed to improve preschool and kindergarten vocabulary and comprehension, especially in students who have had few experiences at home (McGee & Schidkendanz, 2007). Vocabulary was introduced and discussed in push-in and pull-out formats. The term push-in refers to the teacher providing and discussing the vocabulary with the students throughout the interactive read-aloud. The term pull-out refers to the students using the same vocabulary during their retelling of the story. The first read included specific Tier 2-vocabulary pushed-in. Events of the story were discussed. The second reading also pushed in Tier 2 vocabulary; however, the characters' thoughts and feelings related to the events were discussed. The third reading required students to pull-out the vocabulary. Essentially, the students were reconstructing the story with guidance from the teacher. The same Tier 2 vocabulary was targeted in all three readings. The meanings for the Tier 2 words were

Table 2. *Weekly Sequence of Storybooks and Targeted Vocabulary*

Storybook Selection	Storybook Title	Author	Targeted Vocabulary	Open-Ended Questions
Week 1	Owl Babies	Martin Waddell	nocturnal, huddled, worried, predator, dependent	Why were the owlets afraid when they woke up and saw that their mother was gone? (first read) Why did Sarah believe that the mother owl would bring back "mice and other things nice"? (second read) Why was the mother surprised to see her babies so excited when she returned? (third read)
Week 2	Swimmy	Leo Lionni	school, sea, swift, fierce, devoured, escaped, lovely, marvel	Why were the big fish scared of the school of little fish? (first read) Why weren't Swimmy and the little red fish afraid of the big fish anymore? (second read) Why did Swimmy want to make a plan with his new family? (third read)
Week 3	Ellison the Elephant	Eric Drachman	ordinary, extraordinary, unusual, tease despair, apologized, herd	Why was Ellison sad and alone? (first read) Why did Ellison feel like he was unusual? (second read) Why is it okay to be unusual from everyone else? (third read)
Week 4	Tacky the Penguin	Helen Lester	companions, tacky, odd greeted, graceful, fright, puzzled clasped	Why did the bear and the two wolves come for the penguins? (first read) Why did Tacky ask questions to the hunters and then act like himself instead of his companions? (second read) Why did Tacky decide not to hide with the rest of the penguins? (third read)
Week 5	Cornelius	Leo Lionni	upright, river, beach, rarely, annoyed, angrily, proudly, disappointed	Why were the other alligators annoyed with Cornelius? (first read) Why were the alligators trying to stand on their heads and hang from their tales? (second read) Why did Cornelius smile when he saw the alligators trying to stand on their heads and hang from their tales? (third read)
Week 6	The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck	Emily Thornton Calvo. Barbara Armstrong Schwartz, Cathy Ann Tell, & Sylvia Root Tester	hatch, nesting place, clearing, concerned, gloomy, assured herbs, wise, nerves	Why was the fox polite to Jemima Puddle-Duck until the end of the story? (first read) Why was Jemima Puddle-Duck in tears when the door to the woodshed was unlocked? (second read) Why would Jemima Puddle-Duck go to so much trouble to hatch her eggs? (third read)
Week 7	The Wolf's Chicken Stew	Keiko Kasza	craving, prey, stew, critter, scrumptious, joyfully,	Why did the wolf make all of that scrumptious food? (first read) Why was the wolf surprised when the chicken opened the door? (second read) Why did the wolf decide not to make chicken stew? (third read)
Week 8	The Kissing Hand	Audrey Penn	edge, nuzzled, interested, palm, scamper, limb, nocturnal	Why did Mrs. Raccoon kiss Chester's hand before he went to school? (first read) Why did Chester give his mother a kissing hand? (second read) Why did the kiss from Chester's mother help him to have the courage to go to school? (third read)

interjected as needed. At the end of each read-aloud, students answered an open-ended question that required an explanation of the events or the characters' thoughts and feelings. The reader spoke in an expressive tone, their pace in reading was varied, and gestures were used as needed. A sample lesson is located in Appendix A.

Upon completion of the 8-week intervention, a round-table discussion with the teacher participants took place. This information provided different perspectives from veteran teachers regarding the use of the two read-alouds as oral language interventions. During the round-table discussion, the teachers shared their individual thoughts and opinions of the read-aloud interventions, as well as their observations. Teachers were asked to keep a daily journal of comments, questions, or any other noteworthy occurrences so that these could be discussed. Specific questions were used to guide the conversation. The round-table discussion was recorded, with prior consent from the teachers, and then coded to identify dominant themes.

Procedures

Eight storybooks were used in this study. Each week, a new storybook was introduced and read three times. The read-alouds took place on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of each week during a time that was convenient for the classroom teachers. These three days were specifically chosen to eliminate a disturbance in schedule due to holiday weekends. Each side-by-side read-alouds lasted for 10-12 minutes. The interactive read-alouds took place for 13-15 minutes. Teachers were allotted less time during the side-by-side read-aloud because there were fewer children than in the group receiving the interactive read-aloud.

Teachers followed a daily scripted lesson plan. Three lessons for each book were created and placed in a binder for the teachers. These lesson plans included the targeted Tier 2 vocabulary words, the think-alouds they demonstrated, the purpose for reading, and the open-ended questions at the end of the stories. When children responded to the story, the teachers should have responded to students' answers by restating their answers and modeling a more complex sentence structure, correct syntax, rich vocabulary, and built on students' statements and ideas.

Again, six students from each of the three classes were randomly selected, based on the above parameters, to participate in one of two interventions. The participants were randomly distributed into the two intervention groups. Four students participated in the storybook read-aloud, while two students participated in the side-by-side reading. A total of 18 students from three classrooms received the intervention.

Characteristics of Read-Alouds that Supported Expressive Vocabulary

During the focus group discussions with the participating teachers, several themes emerged that support the use of real-alouds to improve expressive vocabulary with low-SES Kindergarten readers. The following themes emerged that support read-alouds with a low-SES student population: (a) student-engagement during small groups; (b) repeated readings; and (c) improved retell and comprehension.

Theme #1: Student-Engagement During Small Groups

One of the most striking themes communicated by all three teachers was the increase in student participation during the read-alouds. This was discussed repeatedly throughout the round-table discussion. Students who were otherwise quiet, withdrawn, and uninterested during story time for nearly the entire year became expressive, highly engaged, and enthusiastic. All three teachers discovered that students' newfound confidence transferred into whole-group activities, resulting in an increased participation.

Teacher A was pleased by the response she received from one of her students in the side-

by-side read-aloud group. This student displays behavior that is impulsive and aggressive on a regular basis, possibly due to an unstable home environment that is currently under investigation by the Department of Child and Family Services. The teacher reported, "The biggest thing with him is relaxing when someone gets physically close to him." During the side-by-side read-aloud, the boy's demeanor transformed into one of calmness and contentedness, and eventually came to affectionately lean in to the teacher's side and rest his hand in her lap. It was in these moments that teacher felt he thrived from this environment because she was able to build a better relationship with him in the classroom.

Teacher B found that her two side-by-side read-aloud students did become more vocal; however, they only wanted to have random conversations with her. She explained that during one of the stories in which a mother owl has owlets, one of the students interrupted and disclosed that her cat had kittens. Then the other student stated she also had a cat, but it had been hit by a car. As much as the teacher would try to get the students back on topic, they would diverge in different directions and discuss their individual lives. Teacher B believed that the students simply wanted to have a conversation with someone who would listen to them. She also suggested that, given her extensive experience with these two families from teaching these students' older siblings, the students may not be used to receiving this type of attention at home and, subsequently, may not be completely aware of the dynamics of carrying on a conversation.

Teacher C was particularly surprised by one student in the interactive read-aloud group. She described the student as withdrawn and disengaged during whole-group read-alouds with big books, and was surprised to hear a comment from a student participant's mother earlier in the year about the child's enjoyment of reading books at home. Once the read-aloud intervention began, Teacher C immediately understood the parent's comment, as she was unable to keep the student in her seat. The student crept closer to the book each time, even after she was directed back to her seat. Teacher C reported, "Even though she wasn't a lap child, she became a lap child… She stood up, she pointed to the pictures, she would get all excited, her voice would raise, and I kept saying 'you've gotta sit down' but I couldn't get her to sit down. She really really loved it." The once quiet and seemingly disinterested participant immediately dominated the small-group read-aloud discussions, and became an active participant in whole-class discussions.

Theme #2: Repeated Readings

Prior to the study, teachers were asked not to read any stories to the students that would be included in the book selection; however, by the time teachers received the list of storybooks, they had already read Swimmy (Lionni, 1963) to their students in a whole-group setting. This sparked the emergence of another theme. Teacher C reported a remarkable difference between the stories she read that were initially new to students compared to the storybook Swimmy, which students had heard prior to the intervention. The teacher explained that students were immediately attentive to the story and enjoyed hearing it again because they were familiar with it. The other teachers stated that their students also responded positively to hearing the story more than once. The familiarity of the story improved their ability to sit still and actively listen to the story, engage with their teacher during discussions, and overall, appeared to enjoy it more then hearing a story whole-group only once.

Theme #3: Improved Retell and Comprehension

All three teachers witnessed improvements in retell and comprehension amongst students in both interactive and side-by-side read-aloud groups. Students were typically not interested in discussing stories read prior to the study. Teacher C explained that students were able to retell the story verbatim by the third read.

Teachers A and B agreed, stating that students quickly learned the patterns of the read-alouds and they were eager to retell the story by the third read. The teachers explained that students were actively looking at the pictures, they were engaged, and their retell was accurate, which was a stark contrast to how the students typically behaved during previous read-alouds. Teacher C noted that, because the scripted lessons and questions built upon each other, it was easier for students to comprehend the text, and the consistent format of the lessons helped students understand their roles and what was expected of them. Teacher B and Teacher C reported that their students spoke out in class and responded to stories read to the entire class more than they responded prior to the intervention.

One student in particular showed incredible improvements in his ability to transfer what he learned during the side-by-side read-alouds and apply it to his own comprehension monitoring. In one instance involving the previously mentioned, poorly behaved student of Teacher A, the teacher reported that the child would study the illustrations after reading each page during the Rigby Guided Reading Benchmark Assessment. When he was asked the comprehension questions that accompanied the stories, his comprehension was considerably higher than the other students. Not only were his answers detailed and accurate, but he was able to infer meaning. The teacher explained that most students give one-word answers; however, he elaborated on each answer. This student's year-end benchmark score was Level 13, which is a first grade reading level. Considering this was a student who did not have strong pre-literacy skills upon entering kindergarten and was below the benchmark score on his winter reading benchmark assessment, the teacher believed the side-by-side read-aloud made a significant contribution toward his academic progress.

Implications

The research from this study does support the research from Skibbe et al. (2010), which found that repeated readings are important. All three teacher participants explained that students enjoyed the familiarity of the stories through the repeated readings. Teacher C reported that students had heard one of the stories previously before they were given the list of books and instructed not to introduce the books prior to the study. When the teacher began the story, students were immediately engaged and excited to hear the story again. The students remembered it from several weeks earlier and were especially engaged during each of the three repeated readings.

Early studies (Senechal & Cornell, 1993; Whitehurst et al., 1998) are also supported with this study, as it shows the positive impact shared storybook reading can have on young children's oral language and vocabulary acquisition. While teachers did not report witnessing an improvement in vocabulary, they noticed a remarkable difference in students' willingness to participate in class by sharing during discussions and answering questions. Since the treatments lasted only eight weeks, students were only beginning to build confidence and learn how to respond during read-alouds. If the duration of the study lasted more than eight weeks and occurred at the beginning of the school year, students' skills may have shown more noticeable improvements.

Lastly, it was believed that students in the side-by-side read-aloud would display a greater improvement in expressive language over their peers in the interactive read-aloud based upon the findings of previous research. A study by Hamre and Pianta (2005) concentrated on students who were at risk and came from low-SES households. The amount of both emotional and instructional support for students from their classroom teachers was attributed to the success of the students. At-risk students who received higher levels of emotional and instructional support academically

outperformed students who received high levels of instructional support only. Researchers concluded that it is more critical for teachers to attend to the emotional needs of their students. In a later study, children who experience sensitive, maternal behaviors from their caregivers during side-by-side reading had an increase in attention, questioning, oral language, and attitudes (Knopf & Mac Brown, 2009; Skibbe et al., 2010). In this study, all three teachers still believe students who receive the nurturing component in side-by-side reading will flourish more than students who are not nurtured, even though it was not evident with all student participants.

Future Research

Future research could be extended to study side-by-side reading and interactive read-alouds with students who have been physically or emotionally abused. In the instance described previously, the success of the student clearly stemmed from the relationship formed with Teacher A. Shared read-alouds could also be used in a study to attempt to bolster students' self-confidence. Although students' self-confidence was not a focus of this study, it became the most obvious theme of the study. Results of this study may be more dramatic with younger children, as well. Researchers agree that the most critical stages in language development occur before they begin kindergarten (Hart & Risely, 1995; Honig, 2007); therefore, greater gains may be achieved if the children are younger. Nevertheless, establishing teacher development protocols for including oral language strategies into their lessons proved critical for this population.

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Appendix A
Lesson Plans
Owl Babies
Martin Waddell

Read 1
Introduce the title and author: "The title of this book is Owl Babies and the author is Martin Waddell. The person who wrote the story is the author."

Set a purpose: "On the cover of our book, we see three baby owls without their mother. I wonder where she is. Did she get lost? Did an animal get her? Will she return to her babies? Let's read to find out."

Push-In Vocabulary/Key Events: Page 1-2: "The owl family lived in the hole in the trunk of a tree. This was their *shelter."*

Page 3-4: "The baby owls, or owlets, woke up and realized their mother was not with them inside the hole of the tree." Point to the hole in the tree. Discuss *nocturnal – they sleep all day and are up all night.* Refer to Cover Page. "Here, their mother is with them. I bet she stays with them a lot because they are young owlets and they are not old enough to leave their home."

Page 5-6: "Sarah thinks their mother is hunting for food. Percy knows she will bring it back for them to eat."

Page 7-8: "The owlets have come outside of their shelter, so now other animals can see them. That means predators can see them, too." Discuss *predators – animals that hunt other animals.*

Page 9-10: "The owlets must be brave while they wait for their mother." Discuss *brave – they cannot be afraid.*

Page 11-12: "Sarah said the mother brings them mice to eat. I bet that means owls are predators of mice and other small animals."

Page 13 - 14: "Here they are sitting next to each other *huddled* on the same branch. Earlier they sat on separate branches." Discuss *huddled – sitting close together.* Refer to page 12 where owlets are sitting separately.

Page 24: "They knew that their mother would return for them." Refer to Sarah's comments on pages 6, 10, and 12.

Open-Ended Question: Why were the owlets afraid when they woke up and saw that their mother was gone?

Summarize: When the ones we love are gone, we can miss them so much, even if it is for a short while.

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- **Consider how each part of a lesson — content introduction, learning from text, discussing the text, and word recognition work — presents opportunities for learning and teaching**
- **Learn how to group students for guiding instruction based on dynamic and static assessment data**
- **Identify characteristics of narrative and non-narrative text to support students effectively as they learn in a variety of genres**
- **Learn how the studio approach provides a structure and management system that allows for whole-group, small-group, and individual teaching**

BUILDING LITERACY SKILLS WITH EARLY READERS THROUGH STEM ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: This article presents an approach to introducing science and mathematics skills to pre-school learners by embedding dynamic and artistic literacy-building activities into Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) units. Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) was used to modify an existing Pre-K curriculum to include the Jamerson Design Cycle to promote STEM learning, promoting vocabulary development and pre-literacy skills in second-language learners. Examples of these activities are provided.

Language and literacy skills are integral parts of a child's ability to succeed academically. Equally important is the need to develop children's knowledge of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) in order to be successful in college and beyond. Today's educational system has placed exponentially increased demands on young readers to navigate complex informational texts to obtain content knowledge. However, there is a lack of research on how early readers benefit from early exposure to content area reading strategies, specifically in the areas of STEM. Toward that end, based on findings from a research project that sought to investigate the impact of STEM activities on the development of the early literacy skills of preschool students, this article will present a model for infusing literacy into STEM activities.

Guiding Frameworks for STEM Activities

To guide the development of literacy-based STEM activities for early readers, Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (Thomas, 1985), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards for Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP), and the Jamerson Design Process (Barger, Gilbert, Douglas, & Douglas, 2005), were considered. According to Vygotsky (1978), development is primarily influenced by socio-cultural interactions between children and adults where language is the main tool for learning, communication and interactions (Schunk, 2011). The mechanism that mediates this development is called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is the developmental area between the child's independent performances of a task and those tasks performed with a more skilled peer or adult's assistance (Thomas, 1985). In the ZPD, participants move from an inability to accomplish a task independently to the ability to perform it with the social support provided by more proficient peers.

A second dimension considered when creating the STEM activities was developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). DAP is an approach to teaching, grounded in research on how young children develop and learn. Its framework (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) is designed to promote young children's optimal learning and development and consists of three core considerations for DAP: (1) knowing about child development and learning; (2) knowing what is individually appropriate; (3) knowing what is culturally important.

The Jamerson Design Process (Barger, Gilbert, Douglas, & Douglas, 2005) was selected as a framework to guide the development of STEM lessons that included the engineering design cycle. The Jamerson Design Process describes a version of the engineering design cycle modified for use with

Table 1: Engineering & Literacy Activities

Engineering Design Process Phase	Literacy Activity
Phase 1: PLAN	• Reviewing/Reading Print and Digital Texts • Drawing/Writing in STEM Journal • Building academic vocabulary • Practicing Oral Language with teachers and group members by discussing research findings
Phase 2: DESIGN	• Drawing/Writing in STEM Journal • Practicing academic vocabulary • Practicing Oral Language with teachers and group members by discussing research findings
Phase 3: CHECK	• Drawing/Writing in STEM Journal • Practicing academic vocabulary • Practicing Oral Language with teachers and group members by discussing research findings
Phase 4: SHARE	• Drawing/Writing in STEM Journal • Practicing Academic Vocabulary • Practicing Oral Language with teachers and group members by discussing research findings

elementary students in grades K to 5 and includes four phases: (1) Plan, (2) Design, (3) Check, and (4) Share. Although, the process was intended for students in grades K-5, we felt that the simplicity of the four phases might translate effectively with children in Pre-K. Our research supported this hypothesis as we found children demonstrated clear understanding of the four cycles.

Developing Literacy-based STEM Activities

At the center of our model for developing literacy-based STEM activities is the Jamerson Design Process of Plan, Design, Check, and Share. Within each of these phases, we infused literacy activities intended to simultaneously address the development of both STEM and literacy content into STEM activities. For example, as a culminating activity to a lesson on connecting communities, students were challenged to build a bridge using toothpicks and marshmallows that would hold a one-pound weight. As another example, students were challenged to build a garden given specific restrictions and materials. As part of both these challenges, students researched and engaged in tasks that developed their literacy skills. To highlight the literacy embedded in our STEM activities, we will describe the ways literacy was infused into each of the phases below, see Table 1.

Phase One: Plan. During the Plan phase, children, with teacher assistance, clarify the design challenge as well design limitations and requirements. This discussion can take place as a whole group or in a smaller group depending on the needs of the children. For example, during one STEM activity, children were challenged to create a community. This activity aligned with a unit intended to develop the children's understanding of their neighborhood and local community. The design challenge was to create a structure within a specified amount of space in the class neighborhood. To determine the structure each team would build as well as its design, children engaged in research. As part of this research, children investigate the design problem via multiple resources, which could include bookmarked websites on a computer or iPad, print or e-texts, exploration with computer or iPad apps, games, or manipulatives. For the community activity, children researched with their team and some teacher assistance using a computer the different structures that are part of

a community by visiting sites that were bookmarked by the teacher.

Also as part of the research phase, children read level readers that were related to the community. As the students prepared to read, they were led through standard pre-reading practices, such as prediction and schema activation. Then, children record their notes and findings in a STEM journal, which for early childhood could include drawings or print depending on their level of development. (Burke, 1969). These explorations provide children the valuable opportunity to develop both their literacy and technological skills early (Bers, Seddighin, & Sullivan, 2013). Additionally, during this phase, a guest speaker or fieldtrip related to the theme or engineering design challenge can be planned. These experiences provide students the opportunity to engage with STEM experts, practice academic vocabulary and oral language (Bybee, 2010). Lastly, although the children are working on teams, it is important for each child to develop their own individual design and record it in their individual STEM journals.

Phase Two: Design. During this phase, children can decide which design to build as a prototype or whether to create a blended design based on components of their individual designs. As part of this decision, children engage in discourse while developing their ability to negotiate and collaborate with others, a valuable part of their social development that also promotes oral language skills (NAEYC, 2002; Lindeman, 2013). For the community activity, each group created their own structure to add to the class neighborhood. Then, the children collaboratively build a prototype based on the design selected as a group.

Phase Three: Check. During the Check phase, students test whether their prototypes meet the respective design challenge. For the community activity, each group was allocated a space in the class neighborhood and was tasked with creating a structure that would fit in that area. Groups whose prototypes do not meet the design challenge parameters may need to return to phase one or two of the design cycle to problem solve, thus developing their ability to think critically and continue using vocabulary to negotiate and collaborate (Molina & Rivera, 2015). Further, this cycle of negotiation and revision provides children the opportunity to develop the skills needed to solve problems to which immediate answers are not found. These experiences build their problem solving confidence and help to equip them with the skills needed to solve problems of the 21st century.

Phase Four: Share. In the Share phase, groups present their final design, including an accounting of their design process, and a discussion of lessons learned from the experience. This sharing requires them to practice their vocabulary, convey challenges they encountered, and make recommendations and for the next time they would attempt this project. Further, during this phase, facilitators can ask content-specific predicting and clarifying questions to help solidify student knowledge and assess their overall understanding (Burke, 1989). For the community activity, each group presented their structure and explained how it connected to the community.

Advantages of Infusing Literacy into STEM

Literacy infused STEM activities centered around the engineering design process provide multiple opportunities for children to develop both their STEM and literacy content (Molina & Tobin, 2016, April). Throughout each of the phases of the engineering design process, children engage in discussion with their peers during each of its phases providing time for participants to refine their ideas related to the STEM and literacy content. This is in alignment with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (1978) which states that children learn through interaction and discussion with their peers.

During the Plan phase, children review and read print and digital texts, draw and write in their STEM journals, build academic vocabulary, and practice oral language skills with group members, teachers, and STEM experts. During the Design, Check, and Share phases, children draw and write in their STEM journals, build academic vocabulary, and practice oral language skills with group members, teachers, and STEM experts.

While there are multiple ways to integrate STEM into the early childhood curriculum, the inclusion of the engineering design cycle provides a vehicle synthesizing STEM content with developmentally appropriate practices (McDowell & Howell 2012). Further, given the value of high quality learning experiences in the early childhood curriculum, the integration of STEM as early as preschool provides children an opportunity to develop the 21st century skills needed to be successful in the future (Galloway, 2008). Children develop these 21st century skills by engaging in critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity throughout each phase of the engineering design cycle, preparing them to be successful not only academically, but also to be STEM literate in the future careers (Wertsch, 1998).

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Table 2. Other STREAM activities that teachers can do in their classroom:

Design Challenge	Plan	Design	Check	Share
Build a Bridge that will hold a set amount of weight	Students will review the engineering design process. Then, they will work in pairs to research a design for their bridge using the computer, iPads, or books. After researching different designs, students will investigate the effectiveness of the designs using various bridge building apps.	Students will work with their partner to decide on a design for their bridge. Students should draw their design and make notes as needed in their STEM journals.	Students will use the selected materials to work with their partner to build and test their bridge. If needed the students will revise their design and build additional prototypes.	Students will share their bridges along with their building experiences with the class.
Build a Boat that floats	Students will review the engineering design process. Then, they will investigate the concept of sink or float using pre-selected objects. Once the investigation is complete, they will work in pairs to research a design for their boat using the computer, iPads, or books.	Students will work with their partner to decide on a design for their boat. Students should draw their design and make notes as needed in their STEM journals.	Students will use the selected materials to work with their partner to build and test their boat. If needed the students will revise their design and build additional prototypes.	Students will share their boats along with their building experiences with the class.
Create a parachute for an egg drop	Students will engage in the plan phase of the Engineering Design Cycle by reviewing books and/or internet sites related to parachutes with a partner. Then, students will investigate the concept of gravity by dropping various pre-selected objects from at least two feet.	Then, students will draw a design of the parachute they will build.	Students will engage in the design phase of the Engineering Design Cycle. With their partner, students will decide on a design (they will choose from the ones created during the plan phase) and then, build a prototype of the parachute.	Students will engage in the Check and Share phases of the Engineering Design Cycle by testing if their parachute protects the egg when it is dropped from a height of at least 5 feet. Then, students will engage in a discussion related to any issues they encountered throughout the cycle.
Create a roller coaster using with at least two turns	Students will review the Engineering Design cycle. Then, they will begin the research phase by engaging in the interactive roller coaster designer available at the following link: http://www.learner.org/interactives/parkphysics/coaster/ Students will continue the research phase of the Engineering Design Cycle by reviewing books with a partner related to roller coasters.	Then, students will draw a design of the roller coaster they will build.	Students will engage in the Check phase of the Engineering Design Cycle by testing their roller coaster using an object such as a car.	Students will share their roller coasters with the class and engage in a discussion related to any challenges they experienced/lessons learned.
Create a community structure that fits in a designate area in a class neighborhood	The result of this project will be to complete the class neighborhood. Students will draw from a bowl a picture of a community building needed in the class neighborhood. The community buildings will include hospital, school, police station, firehouse, library, shopping mall, grocery store, pharmacy, gym, playground, and restaurant. Then, students will work in pairs to research their selected building using the computer, iPads, or books.	Students will draw and write about their "building" in their STEM journals.	Students will begin to build with their partner their part of the neighborhood. Students will use a variety of provided materials.	Students will share their community building with the class and then, place it on the class neighborhood.

A THREE-YEAR STUDY OF PHONICS INSTRUCTION OUTCOMES ON THE READING SKILLS OF KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

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Abstract: The problem addressed in a study completed at a Title I urban school in Florida was the need for a reading intervention with kindergarten students to improve reading skills and literacy. A quantitative ex post facto study was conducted using a time series design. Analysis and comparison of pre- and posttest data results indicated that the intervention was effective in the areas of phonemic blending, phonemic segmenting, and recognition of high-frequency words but not effective in the skill area of letter recognition and letter sounds. Recommendations based on the outcomes of this study suggest continued use of the phonics program for developing reading skills in the areas of phonemic blending, phonemic segmenting, and recognition of high-frequency words, and to identify an alternative instructional intervention for letter recognition and sounds.

Introduction

A quantitative study was designed to investigate the outcomes of Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) on the reading skills of kindergarten students in an urban, Title I elementary school located in Florida. Fundations was implemented in the beginning of the 2012-2013 academic year and continued to the end of the 2015 school year. Prior to this study, no systematic investigation of student performance had occurred. The audience expected to benefit from the study includes students, parents, teachers, school administrators, members of the school board of trustees, and community members within the local urban area and surrounding suburban area.

The purpose of this study was to examine the outcomes of Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) as an intervention for reading skills of kindergarten students at the target school over time. Published by Wilson Language Training (2007), Fundations is a supplemental, research-based reading intervention for students in kindergarten through Grade 3. Prior to the start of this study, participating kindergarten teachers were extensively trained in Fundations and the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) (Fountas, & Pinnell, 2012). Kindergarten teachers incorporated Fundations daily for 30 minutes, in addition to providing the core literacy curriculum, for the purpose of improving student skills in (a) phonemic awareness, (b) phonics, (c) fluency, (d) vocabulary, and (e) comprehension. This intervention was designed for use in the general education setting which included regular education and English language learners to prevent and reduce reading failure for at-risk students by providing a foundation of critical reading and spelling skills (Wilson Language Training, 2016).

Since Fundations was adopted at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, 3 years of pre- and posttest Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) (Fountas & Pinnell, 2014) reading data existed to reflect student performance after implementing the intervention. The data had not been previously analyzed. The researcher examined and compared changes in pre- and posttest performance data of 179 kindergarten students during School Years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015. Both the pre- and posttest data consisted of BAS reading subtest scores in the four skills areas of (a) letter recognition and

letter sounds, (b) phonemic blending, (c) phonemic segmenting, and (d) recognition of high-frequency words.

*The research problem***.** The problem addressed through the study was that educators and administrators at the target school noted a need for a reading intervention with the kindergarten students. At the onset of this study, related concerns were verified through a performance analysis of students in kindergarten through Grade 2. Summative data involving reading skills were acquired using the BAS (Fountas & Pinnell, 2014). Mean data collected by classroom teachers at the conclusion of the 2011-2012 school year indicated that students were underachieving in the four areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension (Florida Department of Education, 2012).

After reviewing performance data, members of the school improvement team recommended the implementation of a supplemental reading intervention within kindergarten to improve student performance in an effort to prevent reading failure among students at the target school. Soon thereafter, school administrators adopted Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007), a supplemental, research-based reading intervention for students in kindergarten through Grade 3 for the 2012 – 2013 school year. Kindergarten teachers incorporated Fundations daily for 30 minutes in addition to providing the core reading curriculum. The decision to adopt Fundations was supported in the literature, as representatives of the National Institute for Literacy (2008) found that instructional strategies promoted through Fundations had a statistically significant effect on improving the literacy skills of students within the primary grades.

Background and Justification

Scholars have agreed that reading is a complex skill that students should master during the developmental stage of literacy acquisition that typically begins in kindergarten and continues through Grade 3 (Fiester & Smith, 2010; Gregory & Cahill, 2010; National Institute for Literacy, 2008). The traditional kindergarten experience has been designed to provide the foundation for the ongoing development of related skills during Grades 1 through 3 (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Gregory & Cahill, 2010; National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). Over the past two decades, educational researchers have concluded that the major problem for underachieving readers of all ages is the failure to master developmental reading skills typically introduced within the kindergarten curriculum (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; National Research Council, 1998; Xiao-hui, Jun, & Wei-hua, 2007). This conclusion underscores the importance of the kindergarten curriculum and its impact on the future academic achievement and life success of students (Edwards, Thornton, & Holiday-Driver, 2010; Gregory & Cahill, 2010; National Center for Education Statistics, 2004).

Reading is also an essential skill that students must acquire to be academically successful as they advance toward high school graduation (Edwards et al., 2010; National Center for Education Statistics, 2004; Prado & Plourde, 2011). Throughout their secondary school years, students who are underachieving in reading typically (a) require additional reading support, (b) access the general education curriculum at a lower rate than their grade-level peers who are skillful readers, and (c) fall further behind in academic achievement than their peers each year (Rice, 2009; Sloat, Beswick, & Willms, 2007). Proficiency in reading, which includes the ability to synthesize information, evaluate arguments, and learn new material, is also a determining factor as students consider postsecondary studies and thus affects the quality of life throughout the career and retirement stages (Bråten, Britt, Strømøs, & Rouet, 2011; Murnane, Sawhill, & Snow, 2012; Prado & Plourde, 2011). Children who are not reading at grade level by the conclusion of Grade 3, however, often never acquire the skills to adeptly comprehend written text and experience success as they mature (Brinda,

2011; Fiester & Smith, 2010; Sloat et al., 2007).

Concerns involving the failure to develop proficiency in reading are further exacerbated among students from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, those with limited personal experiences, and those of low socioeconomic status (MacDonald & Figueredo, 2010; Musti-Rao & Cartledge, 2007a). Students from diverse backgrounds often have disparities in access to research-based curriculum while also having limited background experiences and prior knowledge; these collective factors make it difficult for educators to meet the unique educational needs of students (King, Williams, & Warren, 2011; Musti-Rao & Cartledge, 2007a). Additionally, children reared in lower socioeconomic conditions, in comparison with their grade-level peers of higher socioeconomic status, often experience delays in the development of literacy skills (Massetti, 2009).

When underachieving students are identified early and provided the appropriate intervention during the beginning years of elementary school, grade-level reading skills often can be developed within one school year (Gregory & Cahill, 2010; Torgesen et al., 2001). A study conducted by Cooke, Kretlow, and Helf (2009), reflected that underachieving kindergarten students who received supplementary reading instruction in phonemic awareness and decoding skills for a full school year outperformed their underachieving grade-level peers who received only one semester of supplementary instruction in the same skills. Results of the study indicated that an advantage exists to implementing a supplemental reading intervention in kindergarten and maintaining the intervention throughout the academic year to strengthen early literacy skills of students prior to entering first grade (2009).

The primary years of kindergarten through Grade 3 comprise a critical period for the development of reading skills, and the kindergarten year should provide the foundational skills for students as they continue in the development of more advanced skills (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Gregory & Cahill, 2010; National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). Annual academic performance of students at the target Title I elementary school on standardized tests, however, indicated that students had failed to demonstrate grade-level reading skills at the conclusion of Grade 3. This performance caused question as to whether the kindergarten experience was effective in the development of the essential foundational skills. Moreover, students at the target school did not demonstrate grade-level reading skills at the conclusion of Grades 4 and 5. This data collectively established a crucial need to provide early reading intervention to promote reading proficiency among students at the elementary school level.

The Influence of the Behaviorist Learning Theory on Fundations

According to Reyhner (2008) a behavioral approach to learning involves breaking information or skills into incremental steps. For example, phonemic awareness and phonics instruction, as well as an emphasis on spelling and comprehension, are critical components in teaching students to read (Reyhner, 2008). Similarly, Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) is focused upon providing direct instruction in carefully sequenced lessons designed to promote numerous requisite skills such as print knowledge, alphabet awareness, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and spelling. Just as the behaviorist theory utilizes repetition to aid students in acquiring skills and then instruction progressively becomes more complex as students master identified skills, Fundations incorporates the same principles by reducing skills into smaller steps until students master the requisite skills (Wilson Language Training, 2007). Formative and summative assessments are another major component in Fundations. At the target elementary school quizzes were provided at the conclusion of each unit as formative assessments. To ensure

summative assessments were standards based, teachers administered the BAS (Fountas & Pinnell, 2014), as a pretest at the beginning of each school year and as a posttest at the completion of the school.

The Effects of Early Intervention on Reading

The most effective way to prevent reading failure is to provide early intervention during kindergarten and the first grade (Fiester & Smith, 2010; Sloat et al., 2007; Wanzek & Vaughn, 2007, 2008). Underachieving readers who are identified and provided explicit, research-based instruction early in their school experience can significantly improve their reading development (Cooke et al., 2009; Fiester & Smith, 2010). Although the content of the intervention needs to mirror classroom instruction, the intervention also must be intensive and systematic (Cooke et al., 2009; Foorman & Moats, 2004).

Applied research studies have supported the use of instructional interventions for immediate improvements in the reading performance of students in the elementary school setting and, moreover, promoted the belief that interventions can significantly impact reading performance over time (Fiester & Smith, 2010; Vaughn et al., 2009). For example, a randomized experiment was conducted by Simmons et al. (2007) with 96 kindergarten students who were at risk of reading difficulty. Students attending a half-day kindergarten program were chosen to participate in one of three instructional intervention groups, with each lasting 108 days. The intervention groups received an additional (a) 30 minutes of small group activities using direct instruction, (b) 15 minutes of small group activities using direct instruction coupled with 15 minutes of independent reading time, or (c) 30 minutes of a commercial program wherein the students worked independently and in small groups. Teachers provided students in all three groups with remediation in the five areas of reading skill identified by members of the National Reading Panel (2000): (a) phonemic awareness, (b) phonics, (c) fluency, (d) vocabulary, and (e) comprehension. Results of the study indicated that kindergarten students who initially had the lowest skills benefited the most from 30 minutes, as opposed to 15 minutes, of direct instruction. These findings suggest that at-risk students can improve in reading skills when provided periods of direct instruction on a supplemental basis.

Another investigative study, conducted by Simmons et al. (2011), was conducted to compare the effect of two supplemental interventions on kindergarten students who were at risk of reading difficulties. The 206 students who participated in the study were from two general geographical regions and attended 12 different elementary schools. The percentage of students within each school qualifying for free and reduced lunch ranged from 50% to 81% (Simmons et al., 2011). Participants were randomly assigned to receive intervention using either a commercial program focusing upon direct instruction or an eclectic, school-designed intervention that involved limited amounts of direct instruction with independent reading and small-group activities (Simmons et al., 2011). Results of the study supported the positive effects of both intervention programs; however, students who were the most at risk for reading difficulties benefited more from the direct instruction than the eclectic school-designed intervention. Simmons et al. emphasized that it is imperative to provide reading interventions for kindergarten students who are at risk of reading difficulties in efforts to prevent reading failure.

Fundations

According to the Florida Center for Reading Research (2004), Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) meets the requirements established through the federal Reading First initiative (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Fundations provides a research-based intervention that addresses the five areas of reading identified by members of the National Reading Panel (2000): (a)

phonemic awareness, (b) phonics, (c) fluency, (d) vocabulary, and (e) comprehension. First published in 2002, Fundations was designed for use in three situations. The first is as a preventive measure utilized in kindergarten through Grade 3, the second is as an intervention targeting students demonstrating the lowest 30% in reading skills, and the third is as an intervention for students who have language-based learning disabilities (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2004). When Fundations is used as a preventive measure, the intervention is intended to be implemented as a supplemental reading system. Teachers incorporate the 30-minute Fundations lessons into their daily literacy instructional block. The intervention provides students with direct and systematic instruction delivered in small increments, and performance is reviewed frequently to ensure skills mastery (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2004).

The teacher's manual presents lessons by (a) providing an overview of the unit, (b) outlining resources corresponding with each lesson, (c) describing the activities to be implemented, and (d) providing a plan for each lesson (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2004; Wilson Language Training, 2007). Teachers follow the lesson plan that is direct, systematic, and partially scripted. With the use of Fundations, teachers systematically teach the phonological principles in reading and spelling in small increments through interactive activities (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2004). Fundations additionally includes computer software and a home-support packet to encourage parental involvement in the learning process.

Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) is an interactive, supplemental reading intervention through which teachers provide students with immediate feedback and skills repetition until the target skills are mastered. Frey and Fisher (2010) explained that, in order to read with automaticity, it is essential for students to develop phonemic awareness so that pathways in the working memory can be created and used to assist in focus on comprehending the text. In order to create automaticity in reading, it is important for teachers to use repetition for building reading fluency and assisting in understanding the written word (Frey & Fisher, 2010).

Every Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) lesson begins with a quick drill of letters and sounds. During this drill, students must recite the letter, oral sound, and key word representing the letter. The key word is presented in the form of a visual on a letter card. When students are learning to read, visual representations provide students a picture to anchor their learning; providing visual pictures while teaching enables students to more readily store and retrieve data (Frey & Fisher, 2010).

Fundations focuses on the use of multimodality methods of learning by utilizing white boards, puppets, letter cards, the manipulation of magnet letters and cards, tapping phonemes using fingers, blending sounds to make words, and writing the words (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2004). In a study conducted by Scheffel, Shaw, and Shaw (2008), the role of multimodality methods in increasing student achievement involving phonemic awareness was supported. Through direct instruction, students learn how to form letters by engaging in gross motor activities and then generalizing their skills to paper (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2004; Scheffel et al., 2008).

Implications Drawn From the Literature

The researchers selected the behaviorist approach for the theoretical framework of this quantitative study for two reasons. First, the Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) intervention utilizes direct instruction in providing sequenced reading lessons. The review of the professional literature was specifically helpful in acquiring an understanding of the tenets underlying direct instruction, one of the embedded instructional approaches within the behaviorist theory.

Second, behaviorism is an applicable theoretical framework for this study because of the embedded focus on influences within the learning environment rather than on the prior academic development; socioeconomic status; or cultural, ethnic, or racial background of students (Moore, 2013; Schunk, 2011; Yanchar et al., 2013).

Additional implications were apparent in the literature review. First, several challenges brought by risk factors frequently noted among students attending the target elementary school of this study were also reported by other researchers (Abadiano & Turner, 2005; Allington, 2012; Kennedy, 2010; Vesely, 2010). The literature specifically underscored concerns on behalf of students with sporadic school attendance, low socioeconomic status, cultural or ethnic differences, and limited background knowledge (Blankstein, 2010; Reutzel & Cooter, 2012). The probability that a high percentage of students attending the school were at risk of reading failure enabled the researchers to understand the potential significance of conducting this quantitative study. Moreover, the researchers were reminded that the most effective way to prevent reading failure is to provide early intervention in kindergarten and first grade (Fiester & Smith, 2010; Sloat et al., 2007; Wanzek & Vaughn, 2008). As Chard et al. (2008) clearly stated, interventions are more effective when provided before the reading difficulties become severe and thus more difficult to address.

Researchers clearly recommended the importance of providing research-based interventions in kindergarten and the first grade in order to prevent continued reading failure (Fiester & Smith, 2010; Sloat et al., 2007; Wanzek & Vaughn, 2008). Cooke et al. (2009), as well as Fiester and Smith (2010), recommended the use of explicit, research-based instruction during these early years as a viable approach for significantly improving the reading development of underachieving students. This recommendation also was supported in several applied research studies (Fiester & Smith, 2010; Simmons et al., 2011; Vaughn et al., 2009; Wanzek & Vaughn, 2008).

Research Question

One research question guided this quantitative study: What are the outcomes of Fundations on the BAS reading subtest scores of kindergarten students over time? To answer this question, the researchers examined and compared changes in pre- and posttest performance data of 179 kindergarten students during School Years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015. Both the pre- and posttest data consisted of BAS reading subtest scores in the four skills areas of (a) letter recognition and letter sounds, (b) phonemic blending, (c) phonemic segmenting, and (d) recognition of high-frequency words. Descriptive statistics were used to determine if there were any performance trends between the pre- and posttest over the 3-year period of time. Related statistics, which were depicted using tables, included measures of central tendency such as the means, ranges, and standard deviations of scores.

Sample Group

The deidentified data that was analyzed through this quantitative study was contributed by 179 kindergarten students within the research setting. Data represented pre- and posttest BAS performance for the academic years of 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015, after the implementation of Fundations. Students who contributed to the data set ranged in age from 5 to 7 years, 53% were males, and 47% were females. The racial and ethnic percentages of the students include approximately (a) 17% African Americans, (b) 12% Caucasians, (c) 66% Hispanics, and (d) 3% Multiracials. For this study both regular education and English language learners were a part of the sample group.

Instrument

The pre- and posttest versions of the BAS reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2014) test, which is still used within the research setting as the benchmark instrument for measuring student

Table 1. *Letter Recognition and Letter Sounds: Student Performance by Year*

Year	*M* Pretest/posttest	*SD* Pretest/posttest	Range Pretest/posttest	Low/high Pretest	Low/high Posttest
2012-2013[a]	11.67/24.90	9.71/3.92	26/18	0/26	08/26
2013-2014[b]	11.38/23.42	10.81/4.50	25/14	0/25	12/26
2014-2015[c]	13.51/23.00	10.78/6.09	26/23	0/26	3/26

Note. $N = 88$. [a] $n = 33$. [b] $n = 24$. [c] $n = 31$. Data represent performance on the BAS reading subtest and are rounded to the nearest 100th.

performance in reading, were the testing instruments used in this study. The BAS was a mandated assessment throughout the school district within the research setting and was administered by classroom teachers to individual students at the beginning and ending of each school year. Quantitative data acquired from the BAS include each of the four skills areas of (a) letter recognition and letter sounds, (b) phonemic blending, (c) phonemic segmenting, and (d) recognition of high-frequency words. Every teacher was trained by the publisher to ensure the uniformity of test administration (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

The reliability coefficient of the BAS (Fountas & Pinnell, 2014) pre- and posttest at the kindergarten level, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, for (a) letter recognition and letter sounds is 0.91, (b) phonemic blending is 0.84, (c) phonemic segmenting is 0.87, and (d) recognition of high-frequency words is 0.93 (Heinemann Publishing, 2011). Content-related validity of the instrument was verified using a comprehensive curriculum review to determine the correspondence between the test content and the content domain (Heinemann Publishing, 2011). Construct validity of the instrument was supported through criterion- and content-related validity (Heinemann Publishing, 2011). Bias was also minimized on the assessment through the avoidance of items with low content validity and poor statistical fit (Heinemann Publishing, 2011).

Data acquisition. To ensure the anonymity of students and teachers, the researcher requested the deidentified BAS pre- and posttest data from the school district. The request was to enter the data for each of the four subtests, for the pre- and posttests, into an Excel spreadsheet file without student or teacher names or identification numbers. The researcher also requested that the data, for each subtest, be separated by school year. School district officials complied with this request.

Letter Recognition and Letter Sounds

Grade-level performance at the conclusion of the kindergarten year is indicated by a score of 52 (Fountas & Pinnell, 2014). As reflected in Table 1, the mean pretest scores during the 3-year period of 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 increased from 11.67 to 13.51, an overall difference of 1.84 points. For each school year over the 3-year period, the standard deviation was lower on the posttest than on the pretest, indicating that scores are spread further from the mean. The standard deviation on the posttest increased each year (see Table 1).

An examination and comparison of the mean posttest scores indicated that performance declined each year after Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) was implemented as a reading intervention (see Table 1). The mean posttest score in School Year 2012-2013 was

Table 2. *Combined Performance:* 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015

Subtest	*M* Pretest/posttest	*SD* Pretest/posttest	Range Pretest/posttest
Letter recognition and letter sounds[a]	12.24/23.83	10.32/4.95	26/23
Phonemic blending[b]	3.35/9.46	3.61/3.32	9/23
Phonemic segmenting[c]	7.54/16.93	7.23/4.24	19/19
Recognition of high-frequency words[d]	8.21/100.44	8.89/51.81	59/169

Note. $N = 330$. [a] $n = 88$. [b] $n = 37$. [c] $n = 94$. [d] $= 111$. Data represent performance during School Years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 on the BAS reading subtest and are rounded to the nearest 100th. Data representing student performance in phonemic blending include only School Years 2012-2013 and 2014-2015.

24.90, and the mean posttest score in the 2013-2014 school year was 23.42. By the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year, the mean posttest score had declined again to 23.00, representing an overall decrease of 1.9 points in the posttest scores over the period (see Table 1). The range for each of the 3 years was smaller on the posttests than on the pretests but otherwise reflected no discernable pattern.

As also noted in Table 1, over the 3-year period of 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015, the pretest scores ranged from 0 to 26. The minimum posttest score, occurring in School Year 2014-2015, was 3, and the maximum posttest score, which occurred each of the 3 years, was 26. Also noted in each year during the 3-year period was that the standard deviation of the posttest, when compared with that of the pretest, was lower. As reflected in Table 2, the mean posttest score for the 3-year period was 23.83, and the range on the posttest for the period was 3 points lower than on the pretest. At the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year, after Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) had been implemented for 3 years, none of the students with both pre- and posttest scores in this subtest were performing at grade level in the area of letter recognition and letter sounds.

Phonemic Blending

Grade-level performance at the conclusion of the kindergarten year is indicated by a score of 10 (Fountas & Pinnell, 2014). Although no scores were collected during the 2013-2014 school year, data were collected for school year 2012-2013 and 2014-2015. As reflected in Table 3, the mean pretest scores during the period increased from 2.18 to 4.35, a difference of 2.17 points. For the 2012-2013 school year, the standard deviation was lower on the posttest than on the pretest; during the 2014-2015 school year, the standard deviation was higher on the posttest when compared to that of the

Table 3. *Phonemic Blending: Student Performance by Year*

Year	*M* Pretest/posttest	*SD* Pretest/posttest	Range Pretest/posttest	Low/high Pretest	Low/high Posttest
2012-2013[a]	2.18/9.53	3.34/1.18	9/4	0/9	6/10
2014-2015[c]	4.35/9.40	3.62/4.44	9/23	0/9	0/23

Note. $N = 37$. [a] $n = 17$. [b] $n = 20$. Data represent performance on the BAS reading subtest and are rounded to the nearest 100th.

pretest (see Table 3).

The mean pretest score of incoming kindergarten students for School Year 2014-2015 was 2.17 points higher than in School Year 2012-2013 (see Table 3). An examination and comparison of only the mean posttest scores, however, indicated that performance declined after Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) was implemented as a reading intervention; the mean posttest score in School Year 2012-2013 was 9.53, yet the mean posttest score in the 2014-2015 school year was 9.40. A comparison of the two posttest scores indicated an overall decrease of 0.13 points over the period (see Table 3). As also noted in Table 3, the range for School Year 2012-2013 was lower on the posttests than on the pretests, yet the opposite was noted for the 2014-2015 school year.

Further analysis of scores derived from the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 school years indicated that the pretest scores ranged from 0 to 9; the posttest scores ranged from 0 to 23 (see Table 3). A comparison of these data indicated no observable change in the minimum score on the pretest over the 2 years. The mean posttest score for the 2 years was 9.46, and the range on the posttest was 14 points higher than on the pretest (see Table 2). As also reflected in Table 2, the overall standard deviation of the posttest, when compared with the pretest, was lower by 0.29 points. At the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year, after Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) had been implemented for 3 years, 81.08% of the students with both pre- and posttest scores in this subtest were performing at or above grade level in the area of phonemic blending.

Phonemic Segmenting

Grade-level performance at the conclusion of the kindergarten year is indicated by a score of 10 (Fountas & Pinnell, 2014). As reflected in Table 4, the mean pretest scores during the 3-year period of 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 increased from 6.22 to 9.74, a difference of 3.52 points. For each school year over the 3-year period, the standard deviation was lower on the posttest than on the pretest; in addition, the standard deviation on the posttest increased each year as mean scores increased (see Table 4).

Although the mean pretest scores of incoming kindergarten students increased over the 3-year period, an examination and comparison of only the mean posttest scores indicated that performance declined each year after Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) was implemented as a reading intervention (see Table 4). The mean posttest score in School Year 2012-2013 was 18.03, and the mean posttest score in the 2013-2014 school year was 16.52. By the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year, the mean posttest score had declined to 16.06, representing an overall

Table 4. *Phonemic Segmenting: Student Performance by Year*

	M	*SD*	Range	Low/high	Low/high
Year	Pretest/posttest	Pretest/posttest	Pretest/posttest	Pretest	Posttest
2012-2013[a]	6.22/18.03	6.46/3.68	19/19	0/19	0/19
2013-2014[b]	6.26/16.52	7.03/3.96	18/13	0/18	6/19
2014-2015[c]	9.74/16.06	7.75/4.79	19/18	0/19	1/19

Note. $N = 94$. [a]$n = 36$. [b] $n = 23$. [c] $n = 35$. Data represent performance on the BAS reading subtest and are rounded to the nearest 100th.

Table 5. *Recognition of High-Frequency Words: Student Performance by Year*

Year	*M* Pretest/posttest	*SD* Pretest/posttest	Range Pretest/posttest	Low/high Pretest	Low/high Posttest
2012-2013[a]	5.62/76.24	10.30/41.79	59/164	0/59	11/175
2013-2014[b]	9.92/140.12	7.60/46.70	25/132	/25	43/175
2014-2015[c]	10.63/105.54	6.48/49.71	25/169	0/25	6/175

Note. $N = 111$. [a] $n = 50$. [b] $n = 26$. [c] $n = 35$. Data represent performance on the BAS reading subtest and are rounded to the nearest 100th.

decrease of 1.97 points over the period (see Table 4). The range for 2 of the years, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, was smaller on the posttests than on the pretests; the year with the greater difference between the posttest ranges was 2013-2014, with a difference of 5 points when compared with the 2013-2014 range.

When analyzing scores over the 3-year period of 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015, results indicated that the pretest scores ranged from 0 to 19. The minimum posttest score was 0, and the maximum posttest score was 19. A comparison of these data indicated no change in the range of pre- and posttest scores at the conclusion of the 3-year period (see Table 4). As also noted in each year during the 3-year period, the overall standard deviation of the posttest, when compared with that of the pretest, was higher. Observations of the posttest standard deviation indicated a continual increase each year over the 3-year period. The mean posttest score for the 3-year period was 16.93, and the range on the posttest was the same as on the pretest (see Table 2). At the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year, after Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) had been implemented for 3 years, 91.49% of the students with both pre- and posttest scores in this subtest were performing at or above grade level in the area of phonemic segmenting.

Recognition of High-Frequency Words

Grade-level performance at the conclusion of the kindergarten year is indicated by a score of 25 (Fountas & Pinnell, 2014). As reflected in Table 5, the mean pretest scores during the 3-year period of 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 increased from 5.62 to 10.63, a difference of 5.01 points. For each school year over the 3-year period, the standard deviation was higher on the posttest than on the pretest; in addition, the standard deviation on the posttest increased each year as posttest scores also increased (see Table 5).

The mean pretest scores of students steadily increased over the 3-year period, reflecting an overall difference of 5.01 points. Posttest scores also indicated improvement in the second year after Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) was implemented as a reading intervention (see Table 5). The mean posttest score in School Year 2012-2013 was 76.24, and the mean posttest score in the 2013-2014 school year was 140.12. By the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year, however, the mean posttest score had decreased to 105.54. The final increase was 29.3 points over the period (see Table 5). The range for each of the 3 years was larger on the posttests than on the pretests. Another discernable pattern was that, during the 2013-2014 school year, when the mean posttest score was the highest, the range was lower than that of any school year.

When analyzing scores over the 3-year period of 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015, results indicated that the pretest scores ranged from 0 to 59, with the highest pretest score occurring in the 2012-2013 school year. The minimum posttest score was 6, and the maximum posttest score was 175. Another observation was that the maximum posttest score was 175 during each year. A comparison of these data indicated no change in the minimum pretest and maximum posttest scores over the 3-year period (see Table 5). As also noted in each year during the 3-year period, the overall standard deviation of the posttest, when compared with that of the pretest, was higher. The mean posttest score for the 3-year period was 100.44, and the averaged range on the posttest was 110 points higher than on the pretest (see Table 2). At the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year, after Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) had been implemented for 3 years, 94.60% of the students with both pre- and posttest scores in this subtest were performing at or above grade level in the area of recognition of high-frequency words.

Response to the Research Question

The research question that guided this quantitative study was as follows: What are the outcomes of Fundations on the BAS reading subtest scores of kindergarten students over time? To answer this question, the researcher examined and compared changes in pre- and posttest performance data of 179 kindergarten students during each of the three school years of 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015. Both the pre- and posttest data consisted of BAS reading subtest scores in the four skills areas of (a) letter recognition and letter sounds, (b) phonemic blending, (c) phonemic segmenting, and (d) recognition of high-frequency words.

Numerous outcomes were noted in the analysis of available pre- and posttest scores. First, as noted in Table 1, none of the students were performing at grade level in the skills area of letter recognition and letter sounds after a school year of instruction using Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007). In fact, during each of the 3 years, BAS performance indicated that the highest-performing students demonstrated grade-level mastery in only 50% of the related skills. Combined data for the 3 years additionally reflected that the lowest-performing students scored 3 or fewer points in this area after a school year of instruction using Fundations. Second, 81.08% of students performed at or above grade level in the skills area of phonemic blending (see Table 3). In spite of this overall outcome, the mean posttest performance in the 2014-2015 school year, when compared to 2012-2013 performance, reflected a small decline.

The third observation was that 91.49% of students met or exceeded minimal grade-level performance in the skills area of phonemic segmenting (see Table 4). As also noted in the area of phonemic blending, a small decline in phonemic segmenting occurred in mean posttest performance over time, with data indicating an overall decline of 1.97 points. In the skills area involving the recognition of high-frequency words, 94.60% of students performed at or above grade level after a school year of instruction using Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007). Also noted in the data was that mean posttest scores continually improved during each of the 3 years (see Table 5).

Discussion and Recommendations for Future Research

Based on findings derived from this study, the researchers recommend that kindergarten teachers continue to use Fundations (Wilson Language Training, 2007) for developing reading skills in the areas of phonemic blending, phonemic segmenting, and recognition of high-frequency words but that school leaders endeavor to identify possible contributors to the limited performance improvements of students in the area of letter recognition and letter sounds. Conducting a

related applied research study, with the purpose of collecting qualitative data of teacher efficacy for implementing Fundations and the BAS is a second recommendation. Finally, conducting further research to find an effective intervention to improve skills in the area of letter recognition and letter sounds is needed.

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The University of Central Florida was honored with a significant major gift from the Morgridge Family Foundation to establish the **Morgridge International Reading Center** at the university's College of Education and Human Performance. The gift, made by John and Carrie Morgridge and the Morgridge Family Foundation, supported construction of the facility and the establishment of a professional learning environment that is home to a collective international effort to enhance literacy acquisition and instruction PK-20. The Morgridge International Reading Center is a dynamic complex for the free exchange of ideas and information to improve literacy acquisition and instruction. Our main goal is to advance literacy through communication, collaboration, learning, and research.

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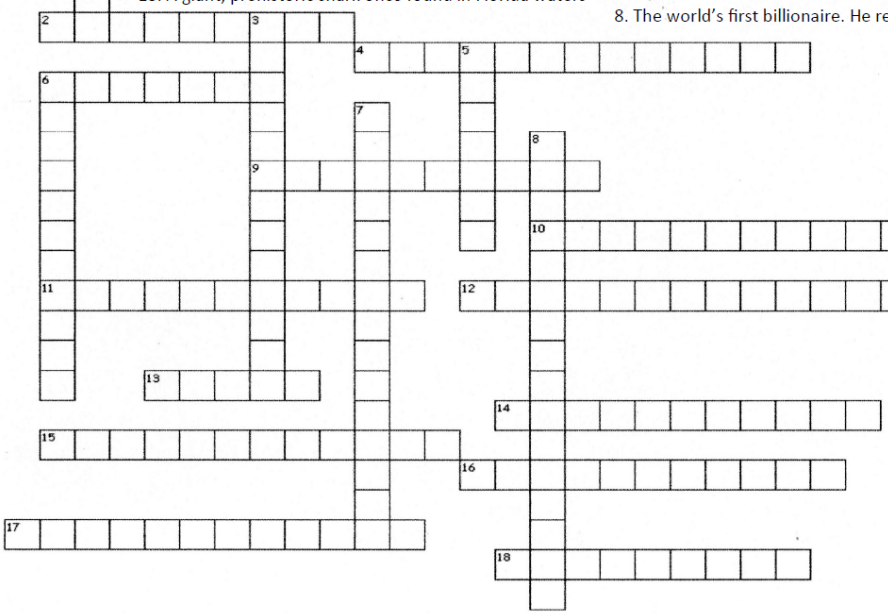
Across

2. What was the capital of West Florida?
4. Who was Florida's first governor?
6. An early Florida group
9. This barefoot mailman disappeared mysteriously
10. Our earliest settlers
11. What was the capital of East Florida?
12. These three industrialists had winter homes in Florida
13. This city was once known as "Ft. Dallas"
14. A deadly mosquito-borne disease (pre Zika)
15. Who started the FEC railway?
16. Florida's first real estate bubble was known as ...
17. He wrote "The Open Boat"
18. A giant, prehistoric shark once found in Florida waters

Down

1. This Apalachicola physician invented air conditioning
3. Our state flower
5. The first woman to fly an airplane in Florida
6. The current capital of Florida
7. Who discovered Florida?
8. The world's first billionaire. He retired to Ormond Beach in the 1920s



THE LITERACY COACH AS COLLABORATOR AND COMMUNICATOR

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Abstract: This study examined the attitudes, beliefs, and interactions of elementary classroom teachers regarding the literacy coach as collaborator and communicator. Results from data focusing on the issues of collaboration and communication are discussed. The data revealed the need for literacy coaches to develop effective communication and rapport with teachers, principals, and other educational colleagues to successfully effect positive instructional change.

Introduction

According to the International Literacy Association's (formerly International Reading Association) Standards for Reading Professionals (International Literacy Association, 2010), a greater emphasis on literacy coaching should exist in preparation programs for reading professionals. The International Literacy Association (ILA) states that the supervised practicum experience should require candidates to work with students who struggle with reading, as well as collaborative and coaching experiences with teachers. In fact, ILA considers the positions of the Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach to be one role and expects to see evidence of both in graduate candidates. Because of this, it is important for preparation programs of reading professionals to develop an awareness of how literacy coaches collaborate and communicate with other professionals in a school setting.

Literacy coaches can assume many roles. These roles can vary from district to district and even from school to school within a district. Walpole and McKenna (2013) likened the role of the literacy coach to the vendor in *Caps for Sale*. A coach may wear many hats in the course of one day and may need to change these hats several times a day based on the needs of the teachers and the school. Literacy coaches are often responsible for professional development, for implementing school reform, and for providing support to teachers to improve classroom instruction. This support often comes in the form of demonstration lessons, modeling, and feedback (Knight, 2006).

This article provides information about the author's investigation of elementary classroom teachers' attitudes and perceptions about the role of the literacy coach in their schools. Specifically, the working relationships between the teachers and coaches are described. Background information about literacy coaching is followed by a description of the study, the findings, and implications. The findings from this research validate the importance of the work of the literacy coach in promoting professional development and strengthening instructional practices in classrooms.

Need for the Study

Because the area of literacy coaching is quickly evolving and changing, there is a need for more information and research about the relationships between reading professionals. For the purpose of this study the term reading professional is used to refer to both reading specialists and literacy coaches. Mraz, Algozzine, and Watson (2008) found the role of the literacy coach is currently open to interpretation from principals and classroom teachers. Some coaches are unsure of their roles because their responsibilities may change as they work in various schools within the same district. There is also a need to clarify the variety of tasks performed by coaches and how these tasks relate to the changes in the traditional role of the reading specialist.

Sustained and intensive professional development for teachers is related to student achievement gains and the most effective form of professional development is intensive, ongoing, and connected to teachers' practice

(Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos 2009). Well-designed professional development that influences teacher practice and student performance can take many forms. Providing professional development thorough literacy coaching offers an opportunity to build collaboration among teachers and addresses the everyday challenges involved in improving teaching while increasing student learning.

The Roles of the Literacy Coach

One way of offering the support needed in effective professional development is through various types of coaching; these include peer coaching, classroom management coaching, content focused coaching, blended coaching, cognitive coaching, instructional coaching and, most specifically, literacy coaching (Knight, 2009).

The International Literacy Association released a position statement entitled *Role and Qualifications of the Reading Coach* in 2004. This position statement listed the requirements for potential literacy coaches. These requirements are: the ability to teach successfully at levels where they will coach, in depth knowledge of reading, the ability to work with teachers and reflect on practice, excellent presentation skills, and the ability to observe, model and present feedback about instruction (International Reading Association, 2004b). The role of literacy coaching is further discussed by ILA in a survey of literacy coaches, which found literacy coaches worked primarily with teachers. In fact, nearly three quarters of surveyed coaches said they focused only on teachers and only one quarter said they worked with both teachers and students (Reading Today, 2006).

L'Allier, Elish-Piper, and Bean (2010) synthesized the role of literacy coaches as literacy leaders in their schools with important guiding principles. These principles state literacy coaching requires specific knowledge about reading; should be time spent working with teachers, requires collaborative relationships; should prioritize activities that support reading achievement; should be intentional yet opportunistic; and should evolve over time. These research based guiding principles address the multifaceted process of literacy coaching and help coaches to be more successful in influencing reading instruction and student achievement.

Collaboration and Communication

Literacy coaching has its roots in the theories of staff development, school improvement, and in the transfer and implementation of new learning. Joyce and Showers (1996) explained that this support includes theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and in-class coaching. Through feedback and in-class coaching, the actual transfer of learning will occur. Joyce and Showers (1996) also highlighted the importance for teachers to have consistent practice in their own work setting. According to Toll (2005), today's literacy coach helps teachers recognize what they know and can do, assists teachers as they strengthen their practice, and supports teachers as they learn more and do more.

It is clear relationship and trust building are important for the literacy coach to able to share planning and participate in conversations about literacy practices and instruction. This can be accomplished when literacy coaches act as mentors by modeling instruction, build confidential relationships with teachers, and connect individually with teachers (Walpole & Blamey, 2008). In studying the climate of collaborative conversations between teachers and coaches, Peterson, Taylor, Burnham and Schock (2009) found that coaches used protocols and data from lessons to provide specific examples of instruction to teachers while also using questioning to enhance conversations with teachers instead of telling them what to do. These coaching conversations and reflections connected the teachers' reading instruction to students' assessment data,

Table 1. *Participants' grade levels, enrollments, and locations*

School	State	Grades	Enroll.	Location
#1	PA	K-5	787	Urban
#2	TX	K-5	487	Suburban
#3	NJ	K-6	839	Urban
#4	NJ	K-5	309	Suburban
#5	FL	K-5	553	Suburban
#6	WV	K-4	599	Rural

ultimately inspiring teachers to improve their instruction.

People skills as well as knowledge of content are important for effective literacy coaches to be able to collaborate and communicate with classroom teachers. Coskie, Robinson, Buly and Egawa (2005) found providing teacher support by developing trusting relationships, understanding issues, and providing feedback were important when attempting to create a professional learning community. Besides people skills, literacy coaches should understand literacy instruction and be able to demonstrate skills in that area, often through demonstration lessons.

The dynamics that exist between literacy coaches and their colleagues differ according to the circumstances set forth by the school culture as well as the administration. Examining the perspectives of elementary classroom teachers on the current roles and expectations of literacy coaches should shed light on the changing roles of the literacy coach.

Participants

Six elementary schools in Florida, New Jersey, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Texas were represented in this study. Participants in this study were elementary classroom teachers (n=60) from these states. In order to add richness to the study, schools in various states were involved in the study. The researcher made initial contact with participants at an international conference.

Table 1 represents participants' grade levels, enrollments, and locations.

Surveys were distributed to elementary classroom teachers (Appendix A). The surveys were cross-sectional (Creswell, 2003) since the data was collected at one point in time and they were self-administered questionnaires. The surveys were adapted from the work of Matsumura, Sartoris, Bicke, & Garnier, (2009) where a study of principals' actions and beliefs was conducted in elementary schools that had recently implemented a new coaching model. This survey was appropriate because the original researchers studied what factors contributed to the effectiveness of literacy coaches.

The adapted classroom teacher survey asked teachers about opportunities to collaborate and communicate with the reading professionals in their buildings as well as how these interactions affected instruction. The classroom teachers were also asked for specific examples of how the coach has been utilized as a resource.

Data Analysis

The research design of this study was grounded theory. The goal of grounded theory is to develop a theory and conceptual categories from systematic research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory as defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) is:

inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection pertaining to that

phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory should stand in a reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with the theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to the area is allowed to emerge.

Surveys were reviewed and analyzed by the researcher and coded according to the themes and patterns that emerged. Themes were analyzed through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Defining the themes of the study enabled the researcher to describe the study using rich narrative.

The theory evolved during the research process due to the relationships between data collection and analysis. During data collection and analysis, theoretical sampling was used to ensure the collected information was complete. If additional data needed to be collected, it was collected based on analysis of the data and the emerging themes. Themes were further refined and organized to add to the description of the research and to the emerging theory. The researcher developed themes after careful consideration of the survey instrument. The original themes (collaboration and communication) under consideration were analyzed.

A second review of the data revealed the additional, more specific themes revealing (1) literacy coaches are recognized as providers of job embedded professional development by classroom teachers, (2) literacy coaches are influential in helping improve literacy instruction, (3) literacy coaches work collaboratively with other educators to achieve instructional goals in literacy, (4) communication and rapport development between coach-teacher are important to successfully effecting positive instructional change. A final review of the data revealed no new themes had emerged, thus it was determined that data saturation had occurred.

Limitations

Although this study was relatively small in size and may limit reliability from the findings, it could be replicated on a larger level. The researcher made initial contact with participants while attending an international conference. They were selected based on their willingness to participate in the study; therefore, this is considered a purposive sample (Berg, 2009) for which the researcher uses knowledge about a group to select subjects who represent the population.

Classroom Teacher Survey Discussion

In order to collect data about the relationship between elementary classroom teachers and literacy coaches, a teacher survey (Appendix A) was sent to approximately 150 teachers in the six elementary schools and 60 surveys were returned (40% return rate). According to the teacher survey, 92% of the respondents (n=60) were very positive about the coach's role in improving teachers' literacy instruction: 60% of the teachers felt the literacy coach had been extremely influential in helping change or improve their literacy instruction, 32% felt the literacy coach was very influential in helping change or improve their literacy instruction. Eight percent (8%, n=60) felt the literacy coach was somewhat influential in helping change or improve their literacy instruction. Teachers described the literacy coach's role as provider of "on the job training," "asker of intriguing questions," modeler of "use of excellent literature or new ways to teach reading," and provider of "additional materials and resources." Many of these roles are a clear match for the requirements set forth by the International Literacy Association (2004b). These include the ability to teach successfully at levels where they will coach, in depth knowledge of reading, the ability to work with teachers and reflect on practice, excellent presentation skills, and the

Table 2. *Teachers' (n=60) perceptions of the roles of reading professionals*

Statement	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Influential in changing/improving literacy instruction	60%	32%	8%	0
Opportunities for collaboration	58%	33%	5%	4%
Convenience	50%	32%	16%	2%
Goals aligned/well-communicated	58%	37%	5%	0
Literacy coach and the reading specialist work together	52%	42%	3%	3%

ability to observe, model and present feedback about instruction (International Reading Association, 2004b).

Collaboration with Teachers

When asked if the literacy coach helped to provide opportunities for collaboration between themselves and other professionals, 58% of teachers (n=60) considered the literacy coach to be extremely helpful, 33% considered the literacy coach to be very helpful, and 9% combined to call the literacy coach either somewhat or not helpful. This high recognition (91%) of the coaches' ability to collaborate supports themes related to communication and rapport building with teachers and other professionals. Teachers' examples of collaboration with literacy coaches included sponsoring peer observations, meeting regarding grouping and schedules, acting as a sounding board, organizing grade level meetings, facilitating study groups, and providing professional development opportunities.

Convenience is an important factor in whether teachers are able to work collaboratively with the literacy coach. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the surveyed teachers felt that collaborative work with the coach was convenient. Fifty percent (50%) of surveyed teachers responded that it was "extremely convenient" and 32% responded "very convenient." The remaining 18% of surveyed teachers reported that it was "somewhat" convenient (16%) or "not at all" convenient (2%). Comments in this area suggested teachers were pleased with the availability of the literacy coach. For example, comments included "the literacy coach is ALWAYS available to help us when we have questions," the literacy coach has "an open door policy," or "she is able to help throughout the day at anytime." This is a finding literacy coaches should consider when scheduling time to ensure they are available to consult with teachers and meet specific needs on a regular basis.

Communication with Teachers

Almost all of the surveyed teachers (95%) reported the literacy coach's and the principal's goals for literacy instruction in the school were aligned and well-communicated to the teaching staff and 94% agreed the literacy coach and the reading specialist worked well together to achieve the school's instructional goals in literacy. Table 2 represents the survey data in chart form.

Teachers surveyed (n=60) were asked to describe how they interact with the literacy coach. Most talked with the literacy coach about instruction, goals, and professional development; met with the literacy coach and other teachers in grade level/team meetings; and attended professional development or in-service sessions led by the literacy coach. Some teachers reported they utilized the literacy coach as a resource and about half of the surveyed teachers met with the literacy coach for planning. A few teachers met with the literacy coach after observations or demonstration lessons. Since collaboration

time is so important, the researcher concluded that lack of time in the schedule is the reason more meetings did not occur.

When there was time for collaboration, teachers listed numerous examples of how the presence of the literacy coach affected opportunities for collaboration among teachers. These examples include "collaboratively developing lessons," "listening when I feel stuck," and acting as a "driving force" for collaboration. In addition to collaboration, teachers also listed examples of personal benefits from working with the literacy coach. Again, these were numerous, but a few examples included encouragement to ask questions, keeping staff informed on best research, and sharing a wealth of knowledge. One teacher encapsulated the relationship with the literacy coach by stating on the survey, "I would not be the teacher I am if it wasn't for her" while another stated "If I ever have a problem, I am able to reach out to her and talk to her about anything." Table 3 represents the survey data about coach-teacher interaction.

Discussion

Further analysis of the survey data showed the emergence of the following additional themes: (1) literacy coaches are recognized as providers of job embedded professional development by classroom teachers, (2) literacy coaches are influential in helping improve literacy instruction, (3) literacy coaches work collaboratively with other educators to achieve instructional goals in literacy, (4) communication and rapport development between coach-teacher are important to successfully effect positive instructional change. Two major themes that emerged from the surveys of elementary classroom teachers were discussed and explored in this study. These themes are: (1) literacy coaches work collaboratively with classroom teachers to achieve instructional goals in literacy and (2) literacy coaches and other professionals (reading specialists, classrooms teachers, and principals) work together in aligning/communicating the school goals. Because of this collaboration and communication, literacy coaches are influential in helping improve school-wide literacy instruction.

Classroom teachers agreed literacy coaches are influential in helping improve literacy instruction. Numerous examples of this influence in helping improve literacy instruction were evident in the comments on the survey. One teacher praised the literacy coach's ability to help with gaining a "better understanding of the literacy model." Another teacher listed a specific example of benchmark observations of phonics lessons that led to modeling from the literacy coach then planning and implementing the new lessons with the literacy coach's guidance. Surveyed teachers gave many examples of resources the literacy coach provided, including assessment

Table 3. *Teachers' (n=60) interaction with the literacy coach*

Interaction/Form of Support	Percentage
Talk with coach about instruction, goals, professional development	95
Attend professional development	88
Meet with coach after observations/ lessons	45
Meet with coach for planning	55
Meet with coach/ other teachers in grade level/team meetings	90
Meet with coach for other reasons	37
Utilize coach as a resource	73

materials, leveled books, and professional books. This influence on literacy instruction is supported by the research of Walpole and Blamey (2008) who listed mentoring, building confidential relationships, and individual connections as important to a literacy coach's success with teachers.

Surveyed classroom teachers identified collaboration between themselves and literacy coaches as very important. One teacher commented on the importance of a non-threatening approach that allows for open collaboration, "Sometimes it's just nice to have lunch with the literacy coach and talk about what I can do about a student." Another teacher described the literacy coach as "more than a coach…she is friend to me because when I have a question or a need I feel comfortable asking her for help." These findings match those of Coskie, Robinson, and Egawa (2005) who recognized the importance of people skills and developing trusting relationships between teachers and coaches.

The importance of communication between educational professionals and literacy coaches was stressed in research by Toll (2005). Vogt and Shearer (2007) also discussed the different roles related to literacy coaching in a continuum from informal to formal and these roles can be seen in the survey data. Classroom teachers described a combination of both formal and informal approaches. These teachers mentioned many opportunities they had to interact with the literacy coach including modeling, lunches, meetings, observations, and study meetings.

Implications for School and Classroom Practice

This study leads to several important implications for literacy coaches, classroom teachers, and principals. Literacy coaches should continue to maintain an open and collaborative environment that encourages communication with the classroom teacher. Convenience is also a factor, so coaches and principals should consider this when planning schedules. Support from principals and/or administrators should come in the form of time to meet with classroom teachers for modeling, observations, planning and post conferences, as well as opportunities for coaches to continue their own professional learning. In order to remain current in the field of literacy, it is important for coaches to participate in their own professional development through networking, attendance at conferences, and reviews of the current literature. Classroom teachers should continue to welcome the literacy coach into classrooms and make good use of time spent in coaching activities to improve literacy instruction and ultimately student achievement.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further research on literacy coaching is needed so that correlations between effective coaching and improved student achievement can be explored. One way to supplement this research would be to study a larger and more diverse sample or to conduct a longitudinal study on the influence of the literacy coach on effective literacy instruction. Surveys, interviews, and observations with other constituents such as parents, administrators, supervisors, and students would add to this body of work.

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Appendix A
Teacher Survey

Please answer the following questions based on the scale listed below the question or add comments where requested.

1. How influential has the literacy coach been in helping you change or improve literacy instruction?

Extremely Very Somewhat Not at all

2. To what degree has the literacy coach helped to provide opportunities for collaboration between you and other professionals?

Extremely Very Somewhat Not at all

3. To what degree is it convenient to work with the literacy coach in the building?

Extremely Very Somewhat Not at all

4. To what degree are the literacy coach's and the principal's goals for literacy instruction in the school aligned and well-communicated to the teaching staff?

Extremely Very Somewhat Not at all

5. How well do the literacy coach and the reading specialist work together to achieve the school's instructional goals in literacy?

Extremely Very Somewhat Not at all

6. Please cite at least one example of how the coach has helped you change or improve your literacy instruction.

7. Please cite at least one example of how the presence of the coach in the building affected opportunities for collaboration among teachers.

8. What personal benefit to you do you receive from the work of the literacy coach in your classroom/ school?

9. In which of the following ways do you interact with the literacy coach? (Please check all that apply and feel free to add comments)

___ Talk with coach about instruction, goals, professional development
___ Attend professional development or in-service sessions led by coach
___ Meet with coach after observations or demonstration lessons
___ Meet with coach for planning
___ Meet with coach and other teachers in grade level/team meetings
___ Meet with coach for other reasons (please list examples)
___ Utilize coach as a resource (please list examples)
___Other (please list below)

Adapted from: Matsumura, L., Sartoris, M., Bickel, D., & Garnier, H. E. (2009). Leadership for literacy coaching: The principal's role in launching a new coaching program. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 45(5), 655-693. doi: 10.1177/0013161X09347341

THE JANE ADDAMS CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD: STUDENT RESPONSES AND CRITICAL LITERACY APPLICATIONS

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Abstract: The Jane Addams Children's Book Award has been presented annually to social issues books that make difference visible, give voice to those traditionally silenced, and show how people can begin to take action on important issues. This article serves to educate others on the history of the Jane Addams Children's Book Award, as well as offer information on current winners and classroom applications for use in higher education settings. We also include authentic student responses to Jane Addams award-winning and honor books. From this analysis, we identify major themes that capture how these students responded to these texts.

Introduction

Incorporating critical literacy into the classroom is a struggle that many educators face today. Comber (2001) argued that mandated curricula, with its sanitized versions of knowledge and history, contribute to the reproduction of societal inequalities, but that "there is potential for critical inquiry in all that students and teachers do in schools" (p. 100). Powerful literature can provide a place for children to explore their thinking and their world (Laman, 2006). Books invite us to consider issues of equity and justice from the perspective of the characters, as well as our own life experiences (Pierce, 2006). Within tensions in literature, students can begin to see the problematic contradiction inherent in dominant systems of meaning, challenge the status quo, and work for change (Engestrom, 1987).

Social issues books can illuminate diversity, give voice to those traditionally silenced, explore dominant systems of meaning in our society, question why certain groups are positioned as "others," and show how people can begin to take action on important issues (Harste, Breau, Leland, Lewison, Ociepka, & Vasquez, 2000). These texts can provide an opportunity for students to see both themselves and others, explore constraints and underpinnings of social expectations, and perhaps even imagine a different way of being (O'Neil, 2010; Yoder, 2013). Finally, such books can motivate and engage a variety of students (Guerra, 2012; Wood & Jocius, 2013). The Jane Addams Children's Book Award has been presented annually to social issues texts. This article serves to educate readers on the history of the Jane Addams Children's Book Award, as well as offer information on classroom applications for use in elementary education settings. We also include authentic student responses to Jane Addams award-winning and honor books.

The Jane Addams Children's Book Award

Since 1953, the Jane Addams Children's Book Award has been presented annually to remarkable pieces of literature for young people which "promote the cause of peace, social justice, world community, and the equality of the sexes and all races as well as meeting conventional standards for excellence" (Jane Addams Peace Association, 2016, http://www.janeaddamspeace.org/jacba/). Prior to 1993, one winner and several honor books were selected each year. In 1993, a Picture Book category was added, providing the opportunity for two winners annually in addition to the honor books. From 1963 until 2002, the awards were announced in September to coincide with Jane's birthday. In 2003, the announcements were changed to April 28, the day the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) was founded. Each October there is an awards ceremony open to the public.

In order to be considered for the award, a book must have been published the preceding year for children ages two through twelve. The themes of the award winning books have varied throughout the years, but may include solving disagreements through nonviolent means, taking an active role in creating a better future for all peoples, and overcoming prejudice. Books should also address questions pertaining to social justice and personal responsibility including how people from different cultures can live together peacefully and how young people can create nonviolent solutions to injustices (Jane Addams Peace Association, 2016, http://www.janeaddamspeace.org/jacba/). A table presenting winners and honor books (denoted by *) from 2005-2016 can be found in the appendix.

Our Study

After a brief introduction of the Jane Addams Children's Book Award, student responses were collected during two summer graduate-level courses on multicultural children's literature (2010 & 2011). The courses took place during six weeks; face-to-face classes were scheduled for once a week (three hours long) and students participated online asynchronously by uploading individual documents and/or links to websites and engaging in conversations (e.g., literature circle discussions, weekly reading discussions) on various forums. The participants were twenty-five preservice teachers from a large, public university in the southeast. All were female and their teaching preference levels ranged from early childhood to middle school. Most were part of the university's master's program that was completed right after obtaining an undergraduate degree; however there were four women who were completing traditional master's in reading and literacy. These four had had careers outside of teaching and were completing this degree in anticipation of becoming teachers.

One of the culminating assignments for the course was described to the students as follows:

- Read and critique TWO picture books that have won the Jane Addams award or honor in the past 10 years
- Read TWO refereed education articles published in the last 10 years that relate in some way to the issues in the books you have selected to read and critique
    - One of your articles may relate to issues of social justice in a general sense if unable to find two related articles
- Write a 1-1 ½ page critique of the articles
- Read and write a critical review of the two picture books
- Provide a synopsis of the books and explain why you think these books are deserving of the award
- Show a link between your books and the articles (3-4 pages total-excluding citations)

The assignments were posted onto our class website to be graded, but were also discussed during the last face-to-face class meeting.

Findings

We analyzed the student responses from the assignments by using a constant comparative method to identify categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). To start, we created categories intuitively as we first read our data and continued as we coded statements within the assignments. Then, we compared key words with others in the same category and other categories, which reflected any cultural insights, personal connections to the literature, and/or thoughts about social justice education. From this analysis, we combined our categories to identify six major themes that captured how these preservice teachers responded to the Jane Addams award-winning books and issues of social justice in education. These themes were:

1. Addressing "Off-Limit" Topics
2. Inequalities/Social Injustices of Today

3. Authority/Empowerment/Authenticity
4. Aesthetic Responses (Connections)
5. Efferent Responses (Learning Something New)

In the following sections, we discuss specific student responses under each theme.

Addressing "Off-Limit" Topics

Some adults (including parents and teachers) shy away from using "sensitive" or potentially disturbing images and situations in literature, thereby practicing censorship to protect children from harsh realities (McDaniel, 2004, p. 473). Apol (1998) explained that "adults mediate most, if not all, of a child's reading, and that mediation is not disinterested; it is a way for adults to shape children, to promote for children a certain version of reality" (p. 45). Furthermore, Lewison, Leland, and Harste (2000) wrote that, "There is a tradition among elementary teachers of protecting the 'innocence of childhood' by keeping complex, unpleasant (but commonplace) issues out of the classroom" (p. 14). According to them, a potential danger of this practice is that the books being shared in the classroom are disconnected from children's everyday experiences and make the classroom seem to be a place where important issues are not discussed. Evans, Avery, and Pederson (1999) examined the underlying system of taboo and safe text topics for social studies courses. They found that the "closer to students' lives, the more meaningful, the more the topic is to be taboo" (p. 221).

One of the themes we saw in our students' assignments was that they understood this pressure to keep some topics in the classroom off-limits; however, they felt that using these books would bring up natural conversations with such topics.

- The assignment has made me set a long term goal toward becoming a culturally responsive teacher. I want to play an active role in exposing my students to important issues, despite controversy.
- We are already creating an "off limits" topic area by not briefly discussing race with our children…. This book {*Sojourner Truth's Step-Stomp Stride* (2009)} uses bold language such as "She was big. She was black. She was beautiful." I think this book would not allow for teachers to just "skip" over the topic of race and would allow for students to comment on what they thought or felt by this opening line.

Inequalities/Social Injustices of Today

A second important theme we saw was that students were beginning to understand that social justice issues were not necessarily frozen in the past. "{Educators} have been socialized to believe and act upon what Weiner (2000) describes as a "seamless ideological web" (p. 381) that asserts that people's culture best accounts for the problems they experience; perpetuates the myth of American meritocracy; insists that racism and other forms of oppression are problems of the past; and posits that assimilation (cultural and linguistic) is a valued goal" (Fuentes, Chanthongthip, & Rios, 2010, pp. 358-359). Their responses show that they are challenging this ideological web.

- I think this would allow students to see prejudice isn't something that happened hundreds of years ago but still occurring.
- Social justice is both "historical and current," these two parts are inseparable, and are therefore two components we as educators must help students understand to provide them with the skills they need for social change.
- I was completely oblivious to the needs of homeless children…. I believe homelessness is a topic less discussed. I am in my 5th year of school and it is a topic that I have never delved deep into. I wish it was more discussed as I believe many educators are misinformed and

have negative stereotypes and judgments towards homeless people.

Some other examples of current social justice issues that were discussed in their assignments include war, segregation, and gender inequalities.

Authority/Empowerment/Authenticity

The inauguration of federal initiatives have left many clouded with what teachers, districts, and states must teach and/or not teach and the requirement of using specific instructional materials (Ladson-Billings, 1994). This furthers complicates the inclusion of children's literature addressing social issues. Many districts in large states have adopted a one-size-fits-all curriculum in reading instruction, irrespective of the economic, social, cultural and academic diversity present among the population. Even if teachers were willing to incorporate social justice issues books into their classrooms, a mandated curriculum from the district or state may be stopping them. Award-winning books from the Jane Addams Peace Association, prescreened and already deemed to be important, quality literature, can empower teachers to find ways to include them in their curricula.

- I feel very confident about using this book in a classroom, especially since it has received high praise from experts in the field. Tingle's book exemplifies the criteria of the Jane Addams Book Awards in that its subject of peace, social justice and equality through cross-cultural understanding is vitally important in our lives.
- This author has been recognized, by relevant authorities, as one who writes about African-American experiences with authenticity
- I think the book is an inspiration to girls and boys sending the message that gender stereotypes inaccurately portray gender roles and abilities. I think it is important as educators to provide our students with examples of successful and strong women and girls in literature and to challenge the traditional image concerning the typical social roles of male and female, both domestically and socially.
- Before diving into this assignment, I wasn't even sure that I would feel comfortable bringing up the idea of social justice in my classroom. However, now that I have seen the importance of it, especially from two different ends of the spectrum (community to culture), I feel as though I could dive into these subjects with my students. Knowing that I feel comfortable talking about these issues, I could create that comfortable conversation environment with my students.

Aesthetic Responses (Connections)

When we read and transact with a text, we bring with us specific social, political, and cultural factors that then influence our interactions with the story. These personal interpretations are both valid and desirable (Rosenblatt, 1978). Furthermore, Rosenblatt wrote that, "As the student shares through literacy the emotions and aspirations of other human beings he can gain heightened sensitivity to the needs and problems of those remote from him in temperament, in space, or in social environment" (p. 261). Our students' aesthetic responses to the books they read showed how they connected to the major issues within the books and individual characters.

- I was devastated when Granny Judith urges Christmas John to make his break for freedom without her. When he returns to take her across the river with him, I cheered. {From *Night Boat to Freedom*}
- I believe Selavi was this dedicated and driven because of a positive role model in his life. I wish the stories would have shown the positive role model in the life so that other homeless students reading the book could relate.
- I was touched by this story because so many of us take our access to education

for granted. It makes me feel uneasy thinking about all of the American students who skip school, drop out, or complain about school while children in other nations have to sneak around and risk their safety in order to learn.

- I already put this book on my Amazon wish list and can't wait to have it as part of my classroom library.

Efferent Responses (Learning Something New)

> As the reader responds to the printed words or symbols, his attention is directed outward, so to speak, toward concepts to be retained, ideas to be tested, actions to be performed after the reading. To designate this type of reading, in which the primary concern of the reader is with what he will carry away from the reading, I have chosen the term "efferent," derived from the Latin, "efferre," "to carry away." (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 24)

When our students read and responded to these social justice issue texts efferently, they carried away knowledge and skills that could serve them well in the future.

- I have always believed that one of the biggest problems with history courses, particularly in K-12, is that they fail to teach students that all of history is connected. That to be able to understand what happens today, we must first understand what happened yesterday and the day before and so on, and so on. We cannot separate ourselves from our past, as much as we can separate ourselves from the DNA from our parents. All of it is imbedded in us, and can be traced all the way back to the beginning of time. This inevitable connection is what makes history interesting.
- After reading both Jane Addams award winners, I learned things I had never known about slavery and the Civil Rights Movement. I completely agree that these topics are typically ignored in the elementary classroom, and I am disappointed that no teacher ever used literature to teach me the multiple perspectives that fill in the gaps of history.

Ideas for Classroom Applications

Fuentes, Chanthongthip, and Rios (2010) concluded with their research that there is "a need for social justice educators to fill their curriculum with strategies toward taking action that speak to their students in ways that assist them in finding their own sense of personal agency and pointing them toward the value of taking action on a larger level" (p. 370). Critical literacy strategies can do this by going beyond traditional notions of reading and writing to include critical thinking, questioning, and transformation of self or one's world (McDaniel, 2004). Shannon (1995) gave this explanation:

> Critical perspectives push the definition of literacy beyond traditional decoding or encoding of words in order to reproduce the meaning of text or society until it becomes a means for understanding one's own history and culture, to recognize connection between one's life and the social structure, to believe that change in one's life, and the lives of others and society are possible as well as desirable, and to act on this new knowledge in order to foster equal and just participation in all the decisions that affect and control our lives (p. 83).

Many studies that use children's literature to foster students' critical literacy skills use what Cai (2008) called a transact-to-transform approach. He explained that this came from a combination of Rosenblatt's transactional approach to reading and Banks' transformational approach to integrating multicultural education (literature) into the curriculum. The goal of the transact-to-

transform approach is for students to transact with multicultural children's literature in order to possibly change their perspectives on cultural issues.

The following critical literacy strategies have been compiled from scholarly works and could be used in conjunction with any (or all) of the Jane Addams award winners and honor books.

- Have students write an interior monologue, a writing device that "prompts students to empathize with other human beings" (Bigelow & Christensen, 1994)
- Engage students in an author-study approach to children's literature. "When students analyze an authpor's biography, interviews, and collection of work, they see writing as a powerful tool of personal expression" (Fox, 2006)
- Examine the four dimensions of critical literacy (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002):
  1. Disrupting the commonplace
  2. Interrogating multiple view points
  3. Focusing on sociopolitical issues
  4. Taking action & promoting social justice
- Questions to be used with young children (Apol, 1998):
  - Questions about how characters & situations are portrayed:
    - Who do you like in the story?
    - Who is always in the background in this story?
    - Which people don't you hear in the story, and what might they say if you heard them?
  - Questions about how info is presented:
    - Are there other ways to show this person/place/event?
  - Questions about how the texts are probably intended to be read:
    - What do you think the writer wants readers to think?
  - Questions about how they as readers respond to the text:
    - What did you notice about this story?
    - How does this make you feel?
- Selection guidelines (Ching, 2005)
  - Does the book's subject matter, topic, or theme demand attention beyond racial harmony and require emphasis on equity or reparation?
  - Does the work demonstrate awareness of or challenge existing structures of power and domination?
  - Does the historical context demand a narrative of cultural survival?
  - For books that may exceed a child's social development, does the book's communal function justify its selection?

In order for students to explore these texts on a deeper level, we suggest using the five critical literacy practices described by Ciardiello (2004). They include examining multiple perspectives, finding an authentic voice, recognizing social barriers and overcoming borders of separation, regaining one's identity and listening and responding to "the call of service" (p. 138). The goal of these practices, as with any critical literacy curriculum, is to enable students to have critical conversations and become conscious consumers of texts.

Examining multiple perspectives is an important element to critical literacy. By analyzing the perspectives, students are able to recognize that information within texts can be

construed from many viewpoints not just the ones present in the literature. It also helps students identify those perspectives which are not present and consider why they are missing. Students can take this one step further by assuming the role of different characters throughout the book in a "hot seat" activity. Finding an authentic voice refers to recognizing those who are able to express themselves freely in the text. Essentially, who has been silenced and who has been supported. Recognizing social barriers and overcoming borders of separation allows students the chance to identify those characters and characteristics which society positions as acceptable and valuable. By moving past these social boundaries, students can learn to appreciate the variety our society offers with a mix of citizens and cultures. Students can consider what social barriers exist in today's society and how we may overcome them in our own communities.

Regaining one's identity occurs when someone is able to strip away the layers of prejudice and oppression that have dominated her self-image. Until this time, one may believe the dominant groups' position – a position that suggests he is inferior - through the process of internalized oppression. Texts can open the door for discussion into how different people are treated within both local and global societies. Students can record instances of insensitive or callous behaviors and remarks they witness throughout the week and share them as a class. What do these instances say about our society? Finally, listening and responding to "the call of service" requires that student assume civic responsibility. Students need to be aware of how they impact society. Do students see people in their community who don't have a voice or aren't heard? What can they do about the situation? How can students take an active role in making our society a more socially just and peaceful place to live?

Final Thoughts

Jane Addams award-winning and honor books afforded our students with opportunities to explore "off-limit" topics, inequalities/social injustices of today, issues of authority, empowerment, and authenticity, and both aesthetic and efferent responses. They used powerful literature to explore their thinking and their world (Laman, 2006). By exposing them to these books through an assignment in a multicultural children's literature course, we hope to inspire them to share these books with their future students and to hold critical conversations about the important social justice issues these books raise.

- Personally, the most inspiring part of *A Place Where Sunflowers Grow* was that a teacher (the art teacher) made a profound impact on this student's life when she needed it most…. It is uplifting to me that teachers were able to promote social justice through such an act, and supported artistic expression as a means of helping their oppressed Japanese-American students.

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Appendix A: Jane Addams Children's Book Award Winners & Honor Books (2014-2005)

2016	Meyer, Susan Lynn. (2015). *New Shoes*. New York: Holiday House. Lowery, Lynda Blackmon. (2015). *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March.* New York: Dial Books. * Winter, Jonah. (2015). *Lillian's Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965*. New York: Schwartz & Wade Books. * Danticat, Edwidge. (2015). *Mama's Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation.* New York: Dial Books. * Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux. (2015). *The Book Itch: Freedom, Truth & Harlem's Greatest Bookstore.* Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books. * Hilton, Marilyn. (2015). *Full Cicada Moon.* New York: Dial Books.
2015	Tonatiuh, Duncan. (2014). *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and her family's fight for desegregation*. New York: Abrams Books. Kanefield, Teri. (2014). *The Girl From the Tar Paper School: Barbara Rose Johns and the advent of the Civil Rights Movement.* New York: Abrams Books. * Elvgren, Jennifer. (2014). *Whispering Town.* Minneapolis, MN: KarBen Publishing.

	* Hendrix, John. (2014). *Shooting at the Stars: The Christmas Truce of 1914.* New York: Abrams Books. * Wiles, Deborah. (2014). *Revolution*. New York: Scholastic Press. * Engle, Margarita. (2014). *Silver People: Voices from the Panama Canal.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
2014	Markel, Michelle. (2013). *Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Maker's Strike of 1909.* New York: Harper Collins. Rhodes, Jewell Parker. (2013). *Sugar*. New York: Little Brown & Company. *Levy, Debbie. (2013). *We Shall Overcome: The Story of a Song*. New York: Jump at the Sun Books. *Suneby, Elizabeth. (2013). *Razia's Ray of Hope: One Girl's Dream of an Education.* Tonawanda, New York: Kids Can Press. *Erskine, Kathryn. (2013). *Seeing Red.* New York: Scholastic Press. *Westrick, A.B. (2013). *Brotherhood.* New York: Viking Penguin Young Readers.
2013	Woodson, Jacqueline. (2012). *Each Kindness.* New York: Nancy Paulsen Books. Levinson, Cynthia. (2012). *We've Got a Job: The 1963 Birmingham Children's March.* Atlanta: Peachtree Publishers. *Warren, Sarah. (2012). *Dolores Huerta: A Hero to Migrant Workers*. New York: Marshall Cavendish Children. *Evans, Shane W. (2012). *We March.* New York: Roaring Brook Press. *Bausum, Ann. (2012). *Marching to the Mountaintop: How Poverty, Labor Fights and Civil Rights Set the Stage for Martin Luther King Jr's Final Hours*. New York: National Geographic. *Montgomery, Sy. (2012). *Temple Grandin: How the Girl Who Loved Cows Embraced Autism and Changed the World.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Books for Children.
2012	Roth, Susan L. and Trumbore, Cindy. (2011). *The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families.* New York: Lee & Low Books for Older Children. Conkling, Winifred. (2011). *Sylvia & Aki*. Berkely, CA: Tricycle Press. *Grossnickle Hines, Anna. (2011). *Peaceful Pieces: Poems and Quilts about Peace*. New York: Macmillan. *Ramsey, Calvin Alexander and Stroud, Bettye. (2011). *Belle, the Last Mule at Gee's Bend*. New York: Candlewick Press.

	*Nelson, Kadir. (2011). *Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans.* New York: Balzer & Bray. *Lai, Thanhha. (2011). *Inside Out & Back Again*. New York: HarperCollins.
2011	Nivola, Claire A. (2010). *Emma's Poem: The Voice of the Statue of Liberty*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Books for Children. Park, Linda Sue. (2010). *A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story.* New York: Clarion Books. *Pinkney, Andrea Davis. (2010). *Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down.* New York: Little, Brown Books. *Strauss, Gwen. (2010). *Ruth and the Green Book.* New York: Lerner Publishing Group, Inc. *Rhodes, Jewell Parker. (2010). *The Ninth Ward.* New York: Little, Brown Books. *Brimmer, Larry Dane. (2010). *Birmingham Sunday.* Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press.
2010	Winter, Jeanette. (2009). *Nasreen's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan.* New York: Beach Lane Books. Partridge, Elizabeth. (2009). *Marching for Freedom: Walk Together, Children, and Don't You Grow Weary***.** New York: Viking Children's Books. *Pinkney, Andrea Davis and Pinkney, Brian. (2009). *Sojourner Truth's Step-Stomp Stride*. New York: Disney-Jump at the Sun Books. *Lyon, George Ella and Anderson, Stephanie. (2009). *You and Me and Home Sweet Home***.** New York: Richard Jackson Book/Atheneum Books for Young Readers. *Stone, Tanya Lee. (2009). *Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream***.** New York: Candlewick Press. *Hoose, Phillip. (2009). *Claudette Colvin*. New York: Melanie Kroupa Books/Farrar Straus Giroux.
2009	Nivola, Claire A. (2008). *Planting the Trees of Kenya: The Story of Wangari Maathai*. New York: Frances Foster Books/Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Engle, Margarita. (2008). *The Surrender Tree: Poems of Cuba's Struggle for Freedom***.** New York: Henry Holt Books for Young Readers. *González, Lucía. (2008). *The Storyteller's Candle/La velita de los cuento*. Illustrated by Lulu Delacre. New York: Children's Book Press.

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2008	McCully, Emily Arnold. (2007). *The Escape of Oney Judge: Martha Washington's Slave Finds Freedom***.** New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux. Brimner, Larry Dane. (2007). *We Are One: The Story of Bayard Rustin***.** Honesdale, PA: Calkins Creek. *Judge, Lita. (2007). *One Thousand Tracings: Healing the Wounds of World War II*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children. *Curtis, Christopher Paul. (2007). *Elijah of Buxton.* New York: Scholastic Press. *Weatherford, Carole Boston. (2007). *Birmingham, 1963***.** Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press, Inc.
2007	Tai, Amy-Lee. (2006). *A Place Where Sunflowers Grow***.** Illustrated by Felicia Hoshino. New York: Children's Book Press. Kadohata, Cynthia. (2006). *Weedflower***.** New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers. *Tingle, Tim. (2006). *Crossing Bok Chitto: A Choctaw Tale of Friendship & Freedom*. Illustrated by Jeanne Rorex Bridges. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press. *Raven, Margot Theis. (2006). *Night Boat to Freedom***.** Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. New York: Melanie Kroupa Books. *Freedman, Russell. (2006). *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott*. New York: Holiday House**.** *Winthrop, Elizabeth. (2006). *Counting on Grace*. New York: Wendy Lamb Books.
2006	Haskins, Jim. (2005). *Delivering Justice: W. W. Law and the Fight for Civil Rights***.** Illustrated by Benny Andrews. New York: Candlewick Press. Blumenthal, Karen. (2005). *Let Me Play: The Story of Title IX, the Law that Changed the Future of Girls in America*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers. *Alarcón,Francisco X. (2005). *Poems to Dream Together=Poemas Para Soñar Juntos***.** Illustrated by Paula Barragán. New York: Lee and Low Books, Inc. *Porter, Pamela. (2005). *The Crazy Man*. Toronto: Groundwood Books/House of Anansi Press.

	*Carvell, Marlene. (2005). *Sweetgrass Basket***.** New York: Dutton Children's Books/a Division of Penguin Young Readers Group.
2005	Landowne, Youme. (2004). *Sélavi, That is Life: A Haitian Story of Hope***.** El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press. Bausum, Ann. (2004). *With Courage and Cloth: Winning the Fight for a Woman's Right to Vote.* Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society. *English, Karen. (2004). *Hot Day on Abbott Avenue.* Illustrated by Javaka Steptoe. New York: Clarion Books. *Hall, Bruce Edward. (2004). *Henry and the Kite Dragon*. Illustrated by William Low. New York: Philomel Books/Penguin Young Readers Group. *Rumford, James. (2004) *Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing***.** Translated into Cherokee by Anna Sixkiller Huckaby. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Books for Children. *Ellis, Deborah. (2004). *The Heaven Shop.* Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

Book Review: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire

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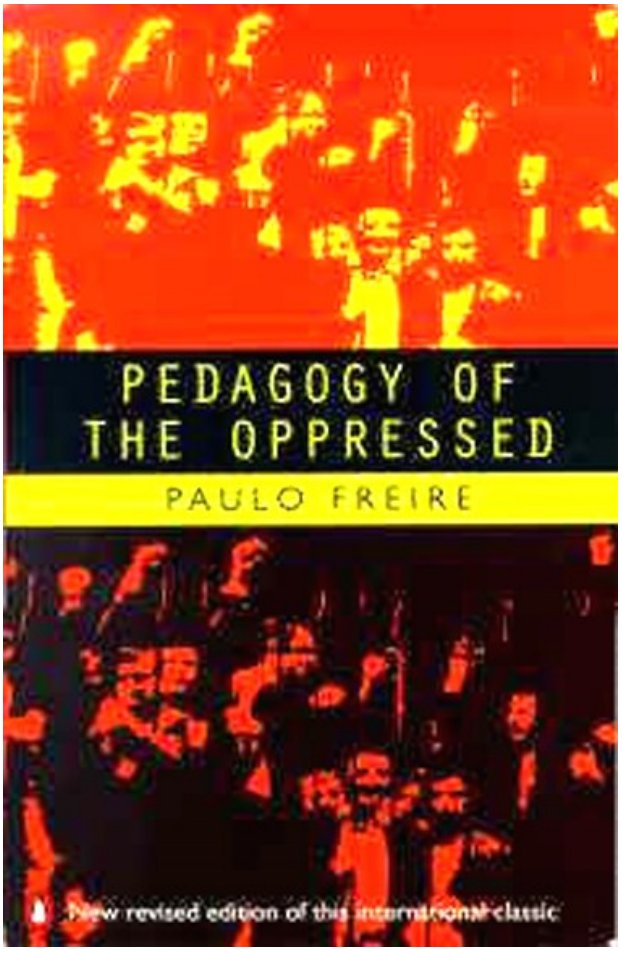

Pedagogy of the Oppressed is a watershed book in critical pedagogy that proposes a new pedagogical relationship between teachers and students. Critical pedagogy is an educational movement, founded by Freire and later developed by Henry Giroux that is "guided by passion and principle, to help students develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action" (Giroux, 2010).

Background

Freire's lived experiences inspired the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and provided the framework in which it was written. As a child he grew up in a middle-class family, but interacted with children that lived in poverty and also experienced hunger himself. When he began his career as an educator, his goal was to challenge oppression by analyzing the brokenness of the class system as well as to provide opportunities for students to think critically about the human condition and how it might be improved.

Freire was put in prison and later exiled from Brazil because of his influence on political pedagogue as well as the global recognition he received from his literacy training. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* book was inspired by his upbringing and was originally published in Portuguese in 1968 after he was expelled from his home country by the military regime (Schugurensky, 1998). The purpose of this paper is to analyze Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and explain how his ideas are still relevant and are being used in our educational contexts today.

Freire's Arguments

Freire (2000) presented and argued ideas regarding oppression and education in each of the four chapters of the book. The emphasis in Chapter One is the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor. The argument in Chapter Two revolves around the importance of challenging the banking approach of education, where students are passively receiving knowledge from their teachers. The focus of Chapter Three is on dialogue and critical thinking in education. Chapter Four synthesized his ideas by promoting unity,

communication, and change through cultural awareness and a willingness to adjust according to the needs of the people. Each of these ideas and arguments will be explored in detail.

In Chapter One, Freire (2000) stated that humanization has always been humankind's central problem and that the ultimate task challenging humanity is for the oppressed to liberate themselves and also their oppressors. He explained, "Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both" (p. 44). According to Freire (2000) there are aspects of freedom that both the oppressed and oppressors fear. Because of the unhealthy view of freedom and society, both the oppressed and the oppressors fear giving up their current situations and experiences. The oppressors fear losing what they enjoy on a regular basis in terms of wealth and power, while the oppressed fear taking on extra responsibility. Freire believed transformation could happen through education and therefore encouraged a pedagogy of the oppressed, which focused on reflection and action through critical thinking, humanization, and vulnerability. He stated, "The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization." (p. 48). Freire (2000) further supported this idea when he said,

> Discovering himself to be an oppressor may cause considerable anguish, but it does not necessarily lead to solidarity with the oppressed… In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation that they can transform. (p. 49)

Within this framework, Freire (2000) promoted a healthy view of reality that included both the oppressed and the oppressors working together to construct a society of change and freedom.

The second chapter revolved around the banking educational system. In the banking education approach, students are viewed as passive recipients of the knowledge that is passed down from their teachers. Freire (2000) challenged this approach and explained that the banking approach of education would never help students think critically about their current oppressed situation. He wanted students to be exposed to real life situations in the classroom and to objectively and critically think through possible solutions. As a result, he believed that when students entered the world, they would be able to transform the oppressive structure that restricted humanization. The educational approach that Freire proposed was one of problem posing. According to Freire (2000) problem-posing education involves, "a constant unveiling of reality… and affirms men and women as beings in the process of becoming-as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality" (p. 84). Blackburn (2000) explained that the trouble with problem-posing education is that it begins with the assumption that the oppressed have no power and that the educator has the key to their freedom. I understand this challenge and yet embrace the idea that education must promote equality and provide students with the opportunity to make choices that will help them improve their situations. Freire urged for them to be given the option to make these choices themselves. I agree with Freire and believe this approach should be used in the classroom. As an international baccalaureate (IB) educator I am involved in a similar approach to what Freire suggested because the IB promotes dialogue and problem-posing educational

experiences with their students. Each of my units is based on concepts, a statement of inquiry, skills to be developed, and activities that promote student thinking. Although this type of education requires a lot from an educator, it is necessary if societies are going to experience freedom and authentic transformation (Blackburn, 2000).

Chapter Three builds on this problem-posing education idea. Freire (2000) emphasized the need for dialogue and interaction between the oppressed and the oppressors. He suggested that education should be a place where organized, systematized, and a developed representation of what students want to learn is presented in order for students to become aware of the oppressive system as well as to enhance their ability to discuss and express their concerns. Freire (2000) stated, "As they discuss the world of culture, they express their level of awareness of reality… Their discussion touches upon other aspects of reality, which comes to be perceived in an increasingly critical manner" (p. 117). He further stated that, "The important thing, from the point of view of libertarian education, is for the people to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades" (p. 124). The goal is for each student to become a master of their own thinking, understanding, and assessment of their culture. In doing so, he believed that change could happen if students were able to critically discuss their understanding of reality with those around them, especially those that oppress. One issue confronting Freire's approach is that emphasizing the problem-posing format on students might hinder the student's ability to form or express their opinions and ideas. Even though this is a legitimate concern, this very concern can be applied to any educational approach. I believe that as long as the educator makes clear his or her intentions as well as fosters an environment that promotes mutual respect, the critical thinking skill students develop will allow them to form and articulate what they ultimately believe (Schugurensky, 1998).

The focus in Chapter Four was on unity through reflection and communication. He stated, "…human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world" (p. 125). Because we are different than animals in the fact that we can improve the environment we live in, we need to be proactive in making changes that improve our living situation. An acknowledgment that dehumanization takes place through oppression by the oppressors and critical awareness of those being oppressed are essential to transform the living condition that is experienced by so many. According to McLaren (1999) Freire's idea is rooted in courageous and authentic dialogue established in love and is the birthplace for transformation. He explained, "Authentic revolution attempts to transform the reality which begets this dehumanizing state of affairs" (p. 130). He further discussed that factors that contribute to a cultural revolution include: community, communication, unity, and organization. Because community encourages communication and leads to cooperation, Freire concluded that unity should be sought by both oppressors and oppressed. Through unity an organized approach can be formed and a process to for both the oppressed and oppressors to experience freedom can be established. According to Blackburn (2000), Freire's worldview revolves around the idea that humans are able to make rational and creative choices that help them become more fully human. I agree with Freire's perspective because I not only believe we are rational

beings, but also moral beings that can make choices that enhance our living conditions.

Impact of the ideas

Freire is considered a leader in democratic education and his ideas had an immediate and lasting impact on education (Gadotti, & Torres, 1997; McLaren, 1999). With more advanced research on the brain and how information is processed, a progressive approach to education is being applied in classrooms around the world. There is a growing emphasis on discovery learning, and education is evolving more and more into what Freire envisioned. Ultimately, as educators we should all desire Freire's proposal of transformation through unity, love, and freedom for the oppressed as well as oppressors as both students and teachers humbly seek to understand the world around them through reflection, critical thinking, and dialogue.

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Technology:
The Lower Cost of Seeing

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It is often said that we are living in an information age, but that doesn't actually mean that everything is just about information. There are still "hard goods," and they too have been impacted by technology. One of the big technologies in our lifetime as a tool for change has been the internet, and one aspect that it has changed is shopping, and this doesn't just mean going online to Amazon and being able to shop from home. Online shopping has changed more than increased access to items not carried in your local stores, it has also led to a general decrease in the cost of a number of items (The Economist, 1999). It is about a change in price, the falling cost of prescription eyeglasses, that this article is looking at.

If you have good vision and don't need glasses, congratulations! You must have cared for your eyes during your life and did well in the genetics lotto for vision; but for the other 75% of adults who were not so lucky, some form of assistive technology for vision correction is needed (VCA, n.d.). My own vision issues started around sixth grade, when my class went to the eeecafaterium to do our school physical check up; there were things like scoliosis check, getting our polio sugar cube, that sixteen needle shot, and a basic eye test. It was during that eye test, that it was noted that I was having vision issues (nearsighted), not needing glasses yet, but soon. When informed about my needing glasses in the near future, my mother was concerned, not only about my vision, but also about the cost of glasses.

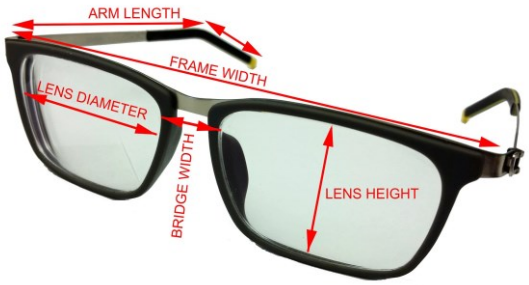
From that point on, I began shifting my seat, moving more to the front of the classroom but still straining to see what was written on the board, until I finally had to get glasses. Today, over forty years later, I still can remember and envision the difference that having classes made for me. I remember putting them on for the first time, going outside and being able to see that pine trees have needles, clouds have sharp edges, and the moon has craters, maria, and mountains. While my mother was pleased in my new vision, she was still concerned about the ongoing cost of exams and glasses, as I was the first in the family to need them. Once I got glasses, she was constantly reminding me to take care of them, don't lose them or break them, as they would be costly to replace.

My story isn't unusual, if you got your glasses when you were in school, you most likely remember the difference it made, and I'm sure that your parents complained about costs and your care of the glasses too. But with the advent of the internet, some of this has changed, especially in terms of cost. The last time I purchased my glasses from a "regular" glasses store, they cost me over $300, that would be for the frames, lenses (polycarbonate extra), and anti-reflective coating to decrease back glare. Such a price isn't that unusual either, as the industry retail average is around $220 to $240, although using some services like Costco can drop that average price for a complete pair of eyeglasses to $186 (Howard, 2016). Compare that price though to me purchasing five pair of prescription glasses from an online service including shipping for under $100.

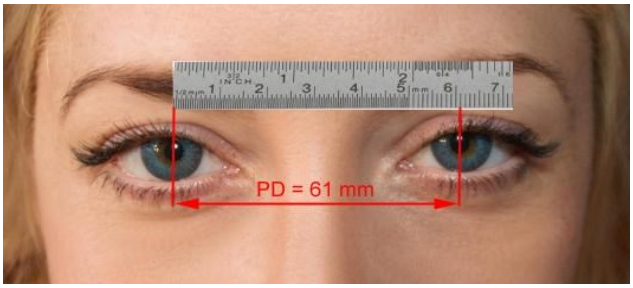
This cost change is something that I talk about in presentations as one of the impacts that technology has made today. Recently, while doing an in-service at a school, after the workshop one of the teachers asked me to talk

to her principal and PTA about these glasses purchasing options. The school was in a lower SES area, and it turned out that the school had seven students needing glasses and their families couldn't afford them. While many people might not think of glasses that way, glasses are a form of assistive technology, and as such it would be the responsibility of the school to pay for them (US DOE 2001). In reality though, glasses are not something you actually want school to buy, as then the school would own them. As school property, the glasses would be tracked as school equipment that would have to be returned at the end of the school year as part of the school's equipment inventory. To overcome this issue, most schools will often go to community organizations, like the Lions Club or the Rotary Club, to raise money so that the children would own their glasses. This school though, was lacking such support at the time and was looking for other possibilities.

So at a meeting with the principal, the PTA representative, and the teacher, I explained how I bought my glasses, and then took them online to show the process. All they needed, I explained, is the student's glasses prescription information, not the prescription sheet itself, just the lens information. You take the lens information from the prescription and fill in online, the prescription type (usually single vision), the Sphere, Cylinder, and Axis. Along with the lens information from the prescription, you will also need some measurements of the students (at least the head width and pupil distance). When they saw that they could get the glasses with lenses for less than $10 each, and even let the students pick the frames that they wanted, all for less than $75 for all the students in need, they were quite excited. That price, they told me, was funding they could easily find.



With this kind of DIY glasses shopping, it is important to take good measurements; pupillary distance (PD), face width, and the temple length to make sure that glasses will fit. You want to make sure that the person's head width isn't too wide or small for the glasses they want (of course you might need to leave some room to grow). When you measure the distance between the pupils, they should look straight ahead into the distance (not at the person making the measurement), this measurement becomes the optical center of the lens.



Once you get your glasses delivered, there are only a few adjustments you can make, so get those measurement right before you order. With plastic frames or parts, you can adjust parts like the glasses temples, bowing them out or changing the bending around the ear. You do this by heating them up in hot water and then slowly bend them into the shape you want. Keep returning them to the hot water until they are the shape you want, and then let them cool. I have read about people who have had issues concerning returning their glasses or that customer service isn't always great. But for a

six to fifteen dollar pair of glasses, instead of returning them, I would rather just put them in the Lions Club glasses box for someone else to use.

Below are a few companies that provide low cost glasses:

Zenni Optical
http://www.zennioptical.com/
Glasses starting at $6.95, with free single vision lenses included

EYE Buy Direct:
https://www.eyebuydirect.com/
Glasses frames starting at $6 with single vision lenses added on for an additional $6.95

GlassShop.com:
http://www.glassesshop.com/
Children's single vision glasses starting at $19.95

Coastal: https://www.coastal.com/
Glasses starting at $35 with free lenses (single vision)

At America's Best
http://www.americasbest.com/
Not an online store, but you can get an eye exam and two pair of glasses for $69.95.

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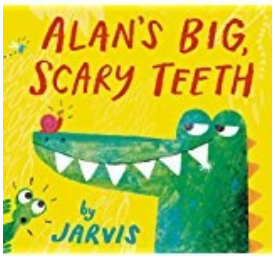
Happy Reading with Technology (and yes glasses are a form of technology)

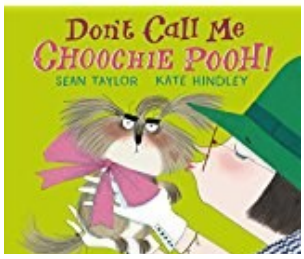
FRA Children's Book Award

2017-2018
Florida Reading Association's
Children's Book Award Nominations

Alan's Big, Scary Teeth
by Jarvis



Don't Call Me Coochie Pooh
by Sean Taylor & Kate Hindley



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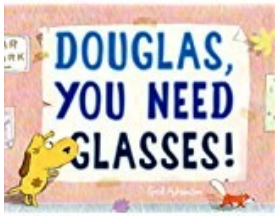

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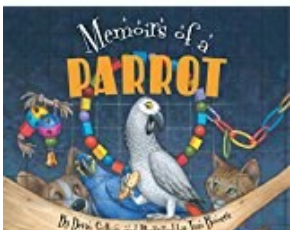

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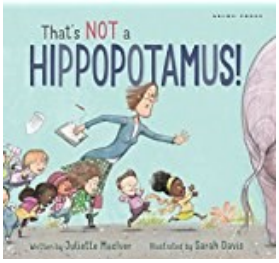

Tree
by Britta Teckentrup

Visit www.flreads.org (Projects) to learn how to involve your students in the selection of the 2017 winner.

Mortimer McQuark is a stranger in a strange land...

A retired professor of quantum physics, he finds himself back in the classroom — but this time substitute-teaching Florida history, a subject he knows nothing about, to middle school students, something equally foreign. To prepare for his lessons, the Professor purchases an odd, metal-bound book, *Hidden History*. While pouring over its contents, he discovers "Bookworm Holes"— a means of entering Florida's past.

Time travel used to be the Professor's favorite theory.
Now it's his reality.
And he's not so crazy about it any more.

Florida's Pre-History
After narrowly escaping a hungry Megalodon, the Professor encounters Florida's earliest settlers, the Native Americans.

The First Floridians
The Professor moves deeper into *Hidden History*, interacting with a member of the Timucua tribe and learning more about the perils our earliest settlers faced, both from the land and from across the sea.

The Seminole Wars
The Professors waits out the 1703 British siege on St. Augustine in the depths of the Castillo de San Marcos. After successfully proving a time-travel theory, he moves forward to the 1830s and into the events leading to the Seminole Wars.

The Frontier Years
The Professor continues to move through the mid-1800s. In this chapter he learns of the horrors of the frontier era—Yellow Fever and the Civil War— and of the life-changing invention of Panhandle physician, Dr. John Gorrie.

Spanish-American War
Set during the Spanish-American War, Stephen Crane's "The Open Boat" is considered by many to be the finest example of realism in an American short story. The Professor experiences Mr. Crane's being shipwrecked off of Florida's East Coast which prompted him to write the story.

Florida's Lighthouses
The Professor has learned that in Florida, "It's all about water." While lighthouses are romantic destinations for tourists, life for the keepers was filled with loneliness and danger.

Barefoot Mailmen
In South Florida's early years, mail was delivered by a group of brave, often barefooted, men. The Professor interacts with real-life mailman Ed Hamilton, and learns not only about his life, but of his mysterious death.

The Great Freeze
1894 was a desperate time in Florida's history. A tiny bouquet of orange blossoms is credited for the expansion of Henry Flagler's FEC railroad and the evolution of tiny Fort Dallas into present-day Miami.

Three Titans
Three of our nation's top industrialists, Henry Flagler, Thomas Alva Edison, and Henry Ford, had homes in Florida. Their impact on our state is explored as the Professor's visits these men at their various estates.

Florida during WWI
Florida's wide, hard-packed beaches played an invaluable part in training our nation's first pilots for combat. The Professor meets the first woman to fly in Florida, and the Army's one and only female pilot, Ruth Law.

Boom and Bust
The Professor experiences firsthand the thrills of the Florida Land Boom and the heartache of the Bust.

WWII & Blackout
Few states were as directly affected by World War II as Florida. The Professor meets a family from the era and learns how they coped with the challenges of both blackouts and rationing.

Segregation
Thanks to the friendship of a young African-American local, the Professor experiences life before the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Above & Beyond
The United States Space Program had a huge effect on Florida's economy and growth. Now the Professor has the opportunity to return to the present… but will he?

Who would have thought learning Florida history could be so much fun?
Or so
dangerous???

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The membership year is from July 1 through June 30. Membership applications received after March 1 will become effective immediately and extend through June 30 of the following year.

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