

2010

Program Evaluation of Making Great Readers

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Program Evaluation of Making Great Readers

By
Shelly Bullard

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2010

Approval Page

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Abstract

Program Evaluation of Making Great Readers. Bullard, Shelly L., 2010: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, EdD Program in Educational Leadership, Elementary Schools/Phonics/Reading Readiness/Reading

This study was conducted to evaluate the Making Great Readers program which was piloted in two small Title I elementary schools in western North Carolina during the 2009-2010 school year. The study was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program based on teacher perception and impact on student achievement.

A logic model was used to evaluate this pilot program with a focus on short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes. The research questions examined student reading achievement and teacher perspectives through a concurrent mixed methods approach. Quantitative analysis of phonemic awareness scores were taken from data gathered using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment tool. Growth from baseline assessment data to posttest data suggested a positive effect upon student achievement. Additionally, data from teacher surveys and focus groups were coded using numerical scores. Frequencies, percentages, and summation of numerical scores revealed teachers perceived the phonics program to have a positive impact on student achievement.

An analysis of the data suggests that the Making Great Readers program provides students with a strong foundation in phonemic awareness which translates to future success in reading. Although findings suggest positive effects on student phonemic skills, qualitative data from teacher surveys and focus groups identified the training for teachers as an area possibly needing improvement. These findings can be used by educational planners to guide program selection, implementation, and training to help guarantee that students and teachers are better prepared for reading instruction.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Education, especially in the elementary school, is a process of taking the prior knowledge of the students, presenting new material in a way that links to their prior knowledge, and building upon a previous lesson and mastered material. When students first enter school in kindergarten, they do not come with a blank slate. Students bring individual prior knowledge with them into the kindergarten classroom. Educators view this as the knowledge base for each student. Often there are gaps in the knowledge base which will directly affect the ability to learn material presented in the future. Many educators believe that teaching a child to read is the most fundamental aspect to a sound education. “Reading failure has exacted a tremendous long-term consequence for children’s developing self-confidence and motivation to learn, as well as for their later school performance” (Center for Improvement of Early Reading Achievement [CIERA], 2001, p. 2). Beginning with kindergarten students, the goal of educators is to build a solid foundation for each student which will provide the student the ability to build a solid framework for future education.

Children come to kindergarten with vast ranges of backgrounds. Students come from different family and home life situations. Some students enter kindergarten with knowledge of the alphabet, colors, and letter sounds. Other students come to school with no knowledge of letters, numbers, or colors. Kindergarten teachers are faced with this phenomenon every year. The challenge facing these teachers is taking what is given to them in terms of the students, diagnosing individual levels, and formatting a plan of instruction. The most basic, fundamental aspect of education lies in the ability to read and early reading instruction. Norman and Calfee (2004) stated that “the goal of early reading instruction is to help students move as quickly as possible toward independent

comprehension” (p. 42). The kindergarten year is the time to build the foundation for reading. Teachers must be focused and deliberate in their approach in teaching students to read. They must “reach EVERY child in the classroom, not allowing any child to slip through the cracks” (Wrighton, 1995, p. 2).

In studying the process of teaching reading, a teacher must analyze the steps and milestones that must be reached in order to approach the teaching of reading in a systematic sequence. The most basic building block for teaching children how to read is phonemic awareness.

CIERA (2001) noted:

Phonemic awareness is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in spoken words. Before children learn to read print, they need to become aware of how the sounds in words work. They must understand that words are made up of speech sounds, or phonemes. (p. 2)

Students must have a sound knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make. They must know that letters make sounds, and that when combined together, the sounds make words.

Instruction in phonemic awareness is prescriptive with eight major components. Phoneme Isolation is the ability to recognize individual sounds in words. Teachers working on Phonemic Isolation may ask the student to tell them the first sound in the word “dog,” or the last sound in the word “van.” Phoneme Identity describes the student’s ability to identify the same sounds in different words. Teachers assessing a student’s Phonemic Identity skill would ask a student what sound is the same in fat, fall, and fun. Phoneme Categorization refers to the ability of the child to recognize the odd sound in a group of words. An example of assessing Phonemic Categorization would be

to ask a student of the words bug, bus, and rug, which word does not belong. Phoneme Blending is the ability to take individual sounds and mesh the sounds into a word. In this case, a teacher would ask the student, “What is the word /b/ /i/ /g/?” and the student would answer, “big.” Phoneme Segmentation is the opposite of Phoneme Blending in that students take the entire word and separate it into separate sounds. Phoneme Deletion and Phoneme Addition are the ability to take a given word and recognize another word when a phoneme is removed or added. Finally, Phoneme Substitution refers to the ability to substitute one phoneme for another to make a new word.

In addition to phonemic awareness, students must also have a rich understanding of phonics. “Increased attention to ‘proven practice’ particularly in the area of phonics, has led to a call for increases in the amount of time devoted to phonics instruction in the primary grades” (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 2). While sounding alike, phonemic awareness and phonics are not the same thing. There is a subtle, yet important, distinction between phonics and phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is the understanding that different sounds make up words. Phonics concentrates on the ability to match sounds with print. Phonemic awareness is the concentration on spoken sounds and the awareness that those sounds work together to make words. Phonics is the understanding that there is a predictable relationship between the letters that represent the sounds to make words. Phonics instruction “teaches children the relationships between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language” (CIERA, 2001, p. 12). Phonics instruction is one gateway toward the goal of teaching reading by providing students with the skills to decode unfamiliar words encountered in new and unfamiliar passages (Norman & Calfee, 2004, p. 42). Wrighton (1995) also noted that “knowing the sounds of letters is the best predictor of beginning reading achievement”

(p. 4).

The educational society, moving towards 21st century standards, is deep-rooted in producing globally competitive students while still embracing high-stakes testing. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has mandated that all public school students must make adequate yearly progress (AYP) (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). The school culture is focused on making data-driven decisions in every aspect of education. “The need for better decision making in our nation’s schools has grown in tandem with the rise in standards-based reform and performance accountability systems” (Technology Alliance, 2007, p. 2).

The U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, explained the need for data-driven decision making:

Information is the key to holding schools accountable for improved performance every year among every student group. Data is [*sic*] our best management tool. I often say that what gets measured, gets done. If we know the contours of the problem, and who is affected, we can put forward a solution. Teachers can adjust lesson plans. Administrators can evaluate curricula. Data can inform decision-making. Thanks to No Child Left Behind, we’re no longer flying blind. (Margaret Spellings, U.S. Secretary of Education, Technology Alliance, 2007, p. 1)

This data analysis movement is the latest push of the educational field. Creighton, in *Schools and Data*, argued that “for too long, many school leaders have made decisions about instructional leadership with ‘intuition’ and ‘shooting from the hip.’ All too often, school leaders do not include data collection and data analysis in the decision-making process” (as cited in Technology Alliance, 2007, Data-driven Decision Making in K-12

Schools section, para. 2). The focus has shifted from instruction to learning. The key is analyzing assessment results and making instructional decisions from there.

Research from an educational research company, RAND Education, cites data-driven decision making (DDDM) in education as “teachers, principals, and administrations systematically collecting and analyzing various types of data, including input, process, outcome and satisfaction data, to guide a range of decisions to help improve the success of students and schools” (Marsh, Pane, & Hamilton, 2006, p. 111).

Background of the Study

Two small elementary city schools located in western North Carolina provided the setting for this study. These two elementary schools each independently qualified for Title I status. Title I designation indicated that the school received additional educational funding from the federal government by qualifying as a low socioeconomic school. School A had 68% of students that qualified for the free and reduced lunch program. School B had 70.6% of students that qualified for the free and reduced lunch program. The study schools housed prekindergarten through fifth grade, and were two of three elementary schools in the city district. Both schools were ethnically diverse serving low-to-middle class families. Demographics for the schools, kindergarten through fifth grade, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

School Demographics

Demographic	School A		School B	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Total number of students	366	100%	453	100%
White students	176	47.5%	182	40%
Black students	101	25%	61	13.4%
Hispanic students	57	20.5%	137	30.2%
Other students	32	7%	60	13.2%
Economically disadvantaged	249	68%	320	70.6%
Students with disabilities	38	10.3%	62	13.6%

Feeling the pressures of NCLB and the call for all schools to have 100% proficiency by 2014 (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001) and assessing the gaps in student achievement, the schools in this study took action by addressing the need for a systematic approach to teaching phonics. Kindergarten assessment data, gathered from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) tool, showed a deficit at both schools in phonemic awareness, which directly related to the ability to read. The elementary director and building level administrators, along with the kindergarten teachers, decided to implement a pilot program of Making Great Readers in the kindergarten setting beginning in the fall of 2009.

Program Description

Making Great Readers was a program based on phonemic understanding without the confusion of letter names which creates the practice of See the Sound-Think the

Letter (Howard, 2007). This phonics program utilized a 4-step process which revolved around a triangular basis of connections. This foundation is letter sound, letter shape, and signal. Around that core, the program based the four components of the Making Great Readers program:

1. The Sound Cards – four sets of cards that teach sound-letter connections needed for independent reading;
2. Seeing the Sound in Text – time for children to practice using their sounds in grade-level appropriate texts;
3. Model Writing – demonstrating actual transfer of sound-letter knowledge to the writing practice; and
4. Independent Writing Practice – a time to practice writing what was seen during model writing.

Making Great Readers targeted phonemic awareness, knowledge of the alphabet, phonics, and concepts of print. The program used four types of sound cards (picture sound cards, sound-letter connection cards, letter practice cards, and combination sound and vowel diagraph cards) to move fluidly through the program. It was recommended that only lower case letters be posted at the beginning of the year in the kindergarten classroom. “Most text is lower case letters and this makes it easier for the young learner to move into real text. Another reason is that the capital and lower case letters c, o, p, s, u, v, w, x, and z look exactly alike” (Howard, 2007, p. 20).

The suggested timeline of implementation of the Making Great Readers program was loosely based on a 9-week model broken into four sessions. In the first session, the first 2 weeks were spent working with the picture sound cards (PSC), which introduced 35 sounds using a corresponding hand signal. This enabled the student to make an

auditory connection with a kinesthetic movement. The next session was a 3-week time period which used the sound-letter connection cards (SLCC). These cards provided the letter shapes with the 35 sounds. Suggested movement from the picture sound cards (PSC) to sound-letter connection cards (SLCC) within the 3-week period was given to teachers as a point of reference guide. The third session was a 2-week session that utilized the letter practice cards (LPC). This set of cards had only the lower case letter printed on them (taking away the picture prompt). The goal of this session was for students to see the sound by visualizing the picture taught previously. The final session was a 2-week session using the combination sound and vowel diagraph cards (CSDVC). This was a set of 50 letter combinations that provided the last phonemes to move students to independent reading.

Program Implementation

This study evaluated the effectiveness of the Making Great Readers program in its initial implementation in two small elementary city schools in western North Carolina. The Making Great Readers program was implemented in the kindergarten classrooms at both schools as their phonics instructional tool. Effectiveness was evaluated by using qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data was based on the DIBELS indicators, an assessment of phonemic awareness of the kindergarten students. Qualitative data was derived from teacher surveys and focus groups. Student improvement in phonemic skills was not the only integral aspect of success in this program. Teacher enthusiasm, understanding, and modification of educational practices were also integral components to the successful implementation of this program, as well as lasting effects on school improvement.

Participants

The target population for the Making Great Readers program was the kindergarten students at the target schools in western North Carolina. During the 2009-2010 school year, 106 kindergarten students received instruction using the Making Great Readers program. Only the students who were enrolled from August to March were included in this study.

Written permission to conduct the study was obtained from the superintendent of the school district as well as the school board to complete this study.

Procedures/Timeline

The researcher analyzed the baseline assessment data which was taken using DIBELS assessment tools. This data was collected in August within the first week of school to determine the current academic standings of each kindergartener with regards to phonemic awareness. The implementation of the pilot program began in September in the six kindergarten classes. A progress monitoring check was completed in October and December using the DIBELS progress monitoring tool with a final assessment completed in March as illustrated in Figure 1.

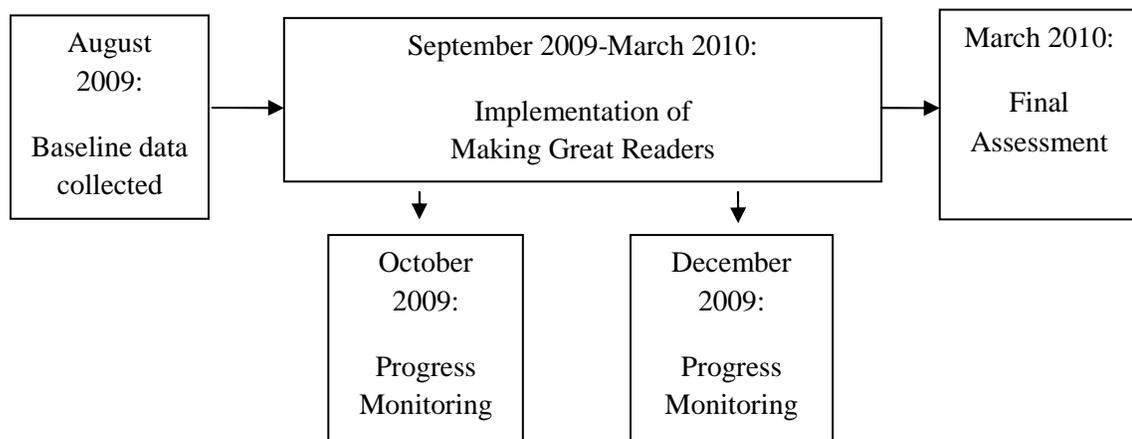


Figure 1. Timeline.

Program Evaluation Model

A logic model was used to evaluate this pilot program of Making Great Readers. The logic model was used to link the problem (situation) to the intervention (our inputs and outputs), and the impact (outcome). This model described logical links between the program, activities, outputs, and audience, as they relate to short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes. In this case the problem was low phonemic awareness of kindergarten students in a small city school in western North Carolina. For the purpose of this study, short-term outcomes were concentrated around the level of understanding of the teachers as they implemented the pilot program. Intermediate outcomes examined behavior changes in the classroom teachers. Long-term outcomes focused on changes in the culture of the school. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the framework for the study.

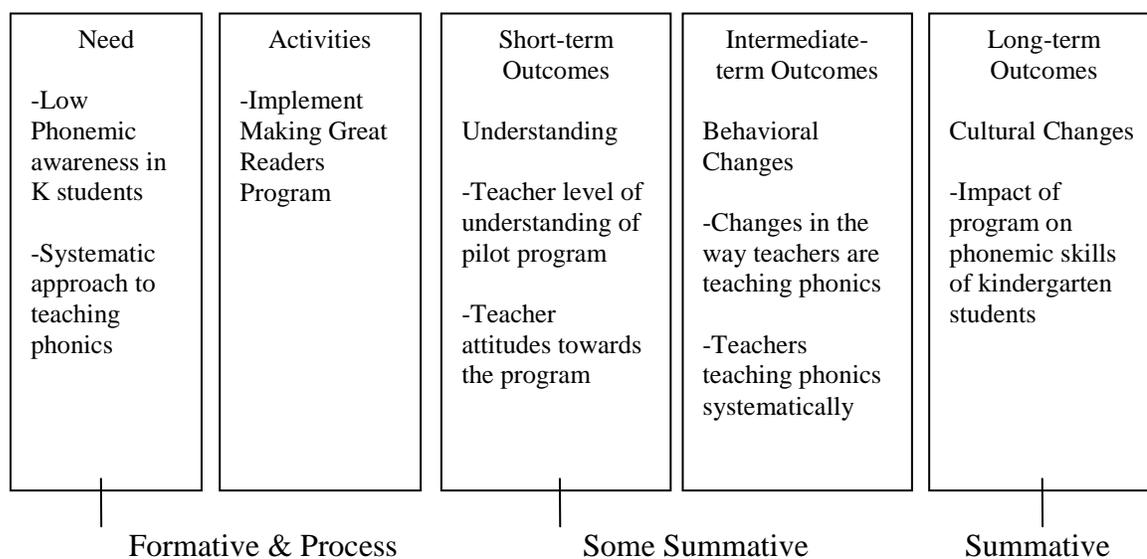


Figure 2. Logic Model – Making Great Readers.

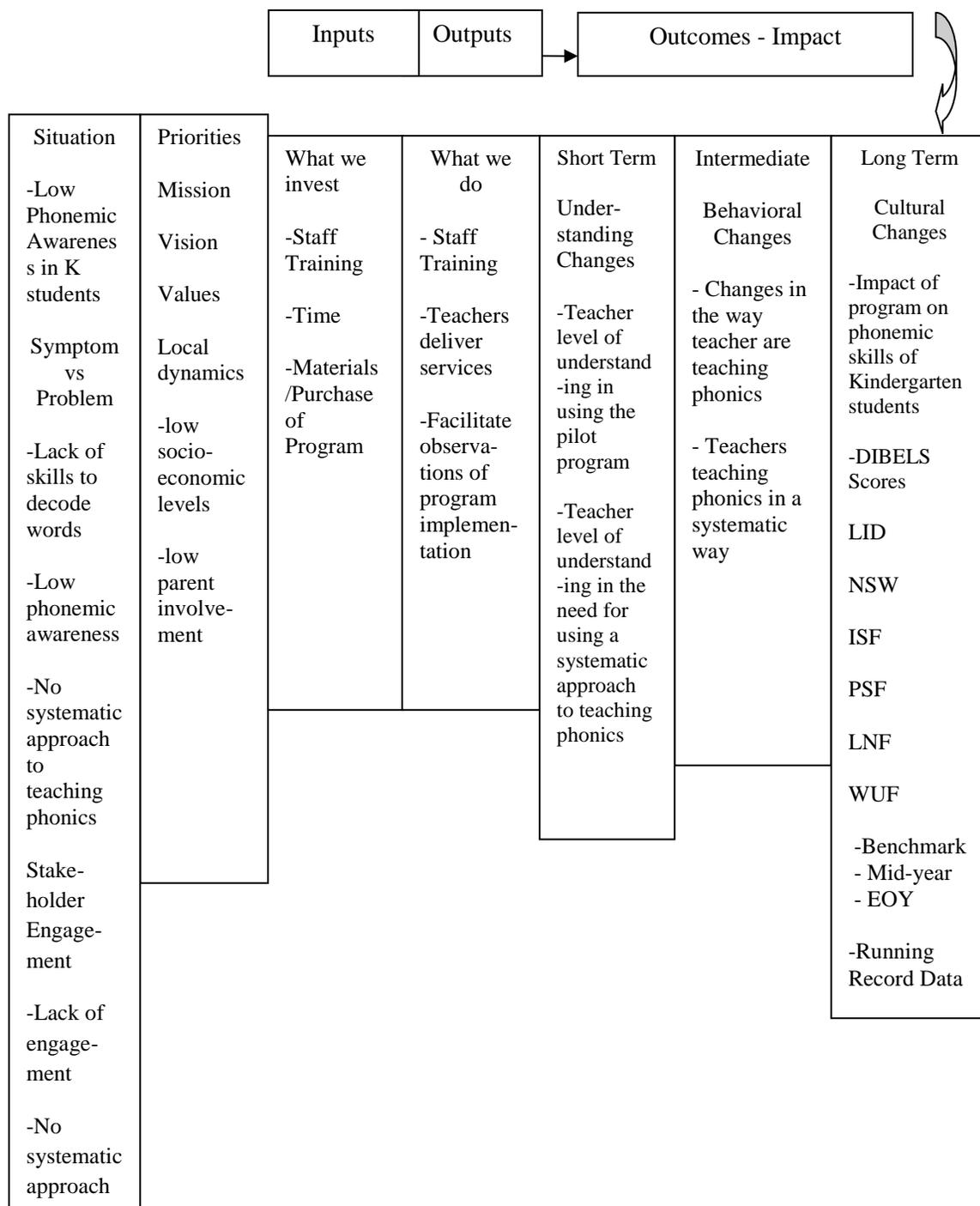


Figure 3. Logic Model – Program Action.

Research Questions

Adhering to the logic model, this study focused around five research questions

that encompassed short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes.

Short-term outcomes.

1. How well do teachers understand the phonics program?
2. What are the teachers' attitudes towards the program?

Intermediate-term outcomes.

3. How have teachers' behaviors changed as a result of program implementation?
4. To what degree has the program become a factor in school improvement?

Long-term outcomes.

5. What is the impact of the program on phonemic skills of kindergarten students?

Definition of Terms

In this study, the following definitions of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and phoneme segmentation, as defined by The National Reading Council (1998), were used. Definitions of *DIBELS*, *Initial Sound Fluency*, and *Nonsense Word Fluency* were defined by the DIBELS Data Systems (Center on Teaching and Learning, 2008).

Phonics. A form of instruction to cultivate the understanding and use of the alphabetic principle, that there is a predictable relationship between phonemes (the sounds in spoken language) and graphemes (the letters that represent those sounds in written language) and that this information can be used to read or decode words.

Phonemic Awareness. The ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in spoken words.

Phoneme Segmentation. The ability to break a word into its separate sounds.

Fluency. The ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with proper expression and comprehension.

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). A set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. They were designed to be short (1 minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills.

Measures of Phonemic Awareness:

Initial Sound Fluency (ISF). Assessed a child's skill at identifying and producing the initial sound of a given word.

Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF). Assessed a child's skill at producing the individual sounds within a given word.

Measure of Alphabetic Principle and Phonics:

Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). Assessed a child's knowledge of letter-sound correspondences as well their ability to blend letters together to form unfamiliar "nonsense" (e.g., ut, fik, lig, etc.) words.

Measure of Accuracy and Fluency with Connected Text:

Oral Reading Fluency (ORF). Assessed a child's skill at reading connected text in grade-level materials.

Measure of Comprehension:

Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) and Retell Fluency (RTF). Assessed a child's understanding of verbally read connected text.

Measure of Vocabulary and Oral Language:

Word Use Fluency (WUF). Assessed a child's ability to accurately use a provided word in the context of a sentence.

Summary

The schools included in this study recognized the need for a systematic method of

teaching phonics. The school administrators, along with the district elementary director, took interest in the Making Great Readers program. Two of the three elementary schools in the district decided to pilot the phonics program in all of their kindergarten classrooms. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the Making Great Readers phonics program as it was implemented in the two elementary schools.

A mixed methods approach was used to evaluate the Making Great Readers phonics program and the improvement of phonemic awareness skills, as well as reading skills in kindergarten students. Teacher behavior and teacher attitude towards the program was also explored. A logic model was used to evaluate the Making Great Readers program with a focus on short-, intermediate-, as well as the possible long-term outcomes. The researcher explored these outcomes by examining how well teachers understood the phonics program, teacher attitudes towards the program, change in teacher behavior as a result of program implementation, the degree that the program had become a factor in school improvement, and the impact of the program on phonemic skills of kindergarten students. Information from this study was used to guide future decisions of the continued implementation of the phonics program.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

“Teaching all children to read requires that every child receive excellent reading instruction, and that children who are struggling with reading receive additional instruction” (International Reading Association, 2000, p. 31). This program evaluation inspected the value of the Making Great Readers program as an instructional model for phonics instruction in two small city schools in western North Carolina. A review of the literature focused on the need for implementation of a phonics program in early elementary grades.

Reading Skills

Ellery (2005) stated that “literacy is the basis for all other content area learning” (p. 4). The process of building an educational system that produces students with a firm ability to read is at the forefront of the educational field. In today’s world, every child must become a reader. Reading is an essential skill that students need to be successful not only in every part of education, but also in life. Because of the importance of reading in education, the more proficient students become in reading, the better their chance of success in school. Children who are poor readers tend to cultivate a negative attitude towards reading, which directly affects their level of reading engagement and eventually their progress in later education (Stanovich, 1986; Torgesen, 2004). However, students today are showing significant failures in the ability to read proficiently.

Extensive research has been conducted to establish the causes of reading difficulties and to determine the best way to teach young children to read. The National Reading Panel stated that over 100,000 studies have been done on reading research since 1966. Over 15,000 studies were done prior to 1966 (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 1).

There are four stages that children go through when learning to read. The first

stage, the emergent stage, occurs “when students begin to make connections that print on a page conveys a message” (Ellery, 2005, p. 8). Emergent readers are beginning to understand the direct link of sounds to letters and letters to words. The second stage is the early stage. In the early stage of reading, students are “less dependent on rhyme, repetition, and patterns within text” (Ellery, 2005, p. 9). Students are moving towards reading most high frequency words automatically. Following the early stage of reading is the transitional stage. The transitional reader is reading longer and more complex books and stories. Transitional readers are able to self-correct during reading and are building fluency. The final reading stage is the fluent stage. These students are relying on text and not picture cues for meaning. They can read independently for extended periods of time. They have strategies to decode unknown words and read with expression. Norman and Calfee (2004) stated that “the goal of early reading instruction is to help students move as quickly as possible toward independent comprehension” (p. 42).

Reading Instruction

At the most basic level, there are two conflicting approaches to teaching reading. One approach moved from the individual parts to the whole. The other began with the whole and moved to the parts. Many debates have been based on this difference of opinion with research supporting each side of the debate; however, “neither technique has proven truly effective and fail safe” (Brooks & Brooks, 2005, p. 273). “One might conclude pessimistically that even distinguished scholars are unable to agree on the scientific consensus about best practices in beginning reading instruction” (Kim, 2008, p. 372). In the 1950s, Rudolf Flesch authored a highly controversial best-selling book, *Why Johnny Can't Read and What You Can Do About It* (1955). Flesch, almost 30 years later, published *Why Johnny Still Can't Read*, which helped to refuel the debate of the best way

to teach children to read (1991).

Phonics Instruction

“Phonics instruction teaches children the relationships between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language” (CIERA, 2001, p. 12). Reading involves “recognizing words and then understanding the individual and collective meaning of those words, with the ultimate goal being to get the meaning of the text” (Griffith & Mesmer, 2005, p. 367). “Children are taught to use their knowledge of the alphabet to sound out, or decode, words” (Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky, Rayner, & Seidenberg, 2002, p. 86). “The importance and effectiveness of systematic phonics instruction, particularly in kindergarten and first grade classrooms, is supported by the findings of three decades of research” (CIERA, 2001, p. 113). CIERA (2001) stated:

Systematic phonics instruction helps children learn to identify words; it increases their ability to comprehend what they read. Reading words accurately and automatically enables children to focus on the meaning of the text. The research is quite convincing in showing that phonics instruction contributes to comprehension skills rather than inhibiting them. (p. 113)

Learning to recognize and name letters is a crucial step for beginning readers; however, the importance of intensive, systematic phonics instruction for children who have difficulty learning to read cannot be emphasized enough. While some children can make the connection without explicit instruction, most students need this direct instruction or their reading skills will suffer.

Over the past 2 decades, much attention of reading research has been aimed at phonics and phonological awareness. There is an increasing body of research which

indicates that “instruction in phonological awareness is beneficial for most children and seems to be critical for others” (Chard & Dickson, 1999, p. 264). “Most recent reading research advocates systematic phonics instruction as a critical element in successful literacy interventions” (Liben & Liven, 2004, p. 59). Research on both phonemic awareness and phonics has been the focus of a great amount of research over the past 2 decades (Anthony & Lonigan, 2004; Ehri et al., 2001; Shaywitz et al., 2002; Torgesen et al., 1999). The National Reading Panel has identified five important reading skills for students to master to improve reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary instruction, and comprehension. Jean Chall (1967) provided a strong foundation to the phonics movement by reviewing research up through the 1960s. She found that early, systematic phonics instruction resulted in better achievement in reading. Since Chall’s landmark research, other researchers have supported her findings. Chall’s research has been consistently supported (Cantrell, 1999; Juel & Minden-Cupp, 2000). More recently, the focus of research has moved to the teaching and delivery of phonics programs. Teaching practices that focus on phonemic awareness at an early developmental age allows educators the avenue to provide students with appropriate reading skills (Torgesen, 2004).

Whole-Language Approach

On the other side of the reading instruction debate is the whole-language method. Since the 1980s, whole language has strongly influenced the way students are taught to read and write. The whole-language method of instruction operated under the assumption that students “acquire language rather than learn it through direct teaching; that language learning is child-centered, not teacher-dominated; that language is integrated rather than fragmented; that children learn by talking and doing rather than through passive learning”

(Heald-Taylor, 1989, p. 16). This method was also referred to as literature-based instruction or guided reading. The whole-language approach relies heavily on the student's experience with language (Foorman et al., 2002). Frequent exposure to language is at the focus of whole-language instruction (Brooks & Brooks, 2005). At the root of the whole-language method is the aim to make reading enjoyable. Students must enjoy reading the text that they are reading if they are to be successful and able to practice the strategy independently (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). One of the key principles is that the rules of phonics should not be taught directly. The connection between letters and sounds should be learned through the student's exposure to the text. Students should not be corrected when they make errors in reading words (Foorman et al., 2002). The belief that learning to read occurs naturally from whole to part as children are immersed in language-rich environments with print experiences is the center of the whole-language approach (Goodman, 1989; Harste, 1989).

A fundamental idea of the whole-language philosophy is to “keep language whole and involve children in using it functionally and purposefully” (Goodman, 1986, p. 7). “In a whole language classroom, students interact with text in various ways: questioning, problem-solving, listening, writing, drawing, reading and orally responding” (Church, 1996, p. 3). “Instructors using the whole language approach to instruction do not teach spelling, vocabulary, and grammar as isolated events; rather, whole language instruction teaches the functions of language contextually” (Brooks & Brooks, 2005, p. 272).

Teachers organize the classrooms and instruction to allow students to independently and collectively engage in texts, at their own speed and often in their own ways (Church, 1996). Many teachers adopted this approach because of its appeal to make reading fun for students. Kucer (1991) declared that a strength of the whole language

movement has been its “attempt to link classrooms and real world activities” (p. 532).

Another selling point for educators has been the philosophy behind whole-language instruction which empowered teachers to compose their own curricula. This option led to growing acceptance across America during the 1990s (Foorman et al., 2002).

Teacher Quality

“It is accepted that teachers play a major role in determining the effectiveness of a reading instructional program” (Blair, Rupley, & Nichols, 2007, p. 432). In fact, “two separate studies from the 1960s and the 1970s have shown that, generally speaking, IQ has very little bearing on early reading ability” (Foorman et al., 2002, p. 86). In regards to the role that teachers play in helping children learn to read, Duffy-Hester (1999) stated, “I am convinced that the teacher is more important and has a greater impact than any single, fixed reading program, method, or approach” (p. 492). Recognition that teachers play a significant role in effective instruction is not a new concept. In 1985, the National Academy of Education, the National Institute of Education, and the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois published *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission of Reading*. The authors stated that, “An indisputable conclusion of research is that the quality of teaching makes a considerable difference in children’s learning” (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 85).

The government is playing a larger part than ever in establishing quality education. In 1997, Congress asked the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) to convene a national panel to evaluate the current reading research and advise Congress about the essential components of a reading program (National Reading Panel, 2000). The findings of the National Reading Panel (2000) showed that “teaching phonemic awareness to children significantly improves their

reading more than instruction that lacks any attention to phonemic awareness” (p. 7). The panel focused specifically on what they considered to be the “five most important teachable aspects in reading programs; phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension” (Lamont, 2006, p. 26). According to the National Reading Panel (2000), any reading program which incorporates these elements should improve students’ reading skills. The National Reading Panel’s (2000) analysis revealed that “systematic phonics instruction produces significant benefits for students in kindergarten through 6th grade and for children having difficulty learning to read” (p. 9).

“The findings of the National Reading Panel report directly influenced the goals of the Reading First portion of the No Child Left Behind Act” (Kim, 2008, p. 373). United States federal legislation has implemented numerous mandates including the requirement that the phonics component in federally funded initiatives be explicit and systematic (Kim, 2008, p. 373; No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). The term systematic refers to two connotations, scope and sequence. Scope includes the content, or range, of instruction. Sequence defines an order for teaching. Along with the call for federally-funded initiatives to be systematic, they must also be explicit. This term refers to lesson delivery. A teacher must tell students directly what she is trying to teach for the lesson to be considered explicit (Griffith & Mesmer, 2006, p. 370). Influencing this federal initiative was the National Reading Panel’s (2000) report *Teaching Children to Read*. This report emphasized the importance of teacher quality. The report highlighted that “teachers must be knowledgeable about the research on the teaching of reading and make informed decisions based on this research data” (Blair et al., 2007, p. 433).

The International Reading Association (2000) issued its position listing six research-based qualities of excellent classroom teachers (as cited in Blair et al., 2007, p.

434):

1. They understand reading and writing development, and believe all children can learn to read and write.
2. They continually assess children's individual progress and relate reading instruction to children's previous experiences.
3. They know a variety of ways to teach reading, when to use each method and how to combine the methods into an effective instructional program.
4. They offer a variety of materials and tests for children to read.
5. They use flexible grouping strategies to tailor instruction to individual students.
6. They are good reading "coaches" (that is, they provide help strategically).

The educational spotlight has been focused on reading for some time. Intense scrutiny has been placed on reading and phonics programs. For some time, comparing the whole-language approaches to phonics-based approaches has captured the spotlight of reading research. Studies by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2007) showed that reading skills were improving for fourth graders, particularly among lower- and middle-performing students. Fourth graders scored higher in 2007 than in all previous assessment years, with higher percentages of students performing at or above the basic and proficient achievement levels (NAEP, 2007).

Recent Findings

During the 1980s the differences between the opposing sides of reading instruction began to be the focal point of reading research. At the same time, national legislation began a push towards more outcome-based accountability. A study completed in 1985 by Mary Ann Evans of the University of Guelph in Canada and Thomas H. Carr

of Michigan State University compared two reading programs used in 20 first-grade classrooms (Foorman et al., 2002). Half of the students were offered a phonics-based, traditional reading instructional program. The other half of the students was taught using an individualized method of whole-language instruction that drew from student's experiences with language. The two groups were provided the same amount of reading instruction, had similar socioeconomic profiles and were similar on measures of language maturity and intelligence. This study found that the first group of students scored higher at the year's end on tests of reading and comprehension (Foorman et al., 2002, p. 91). An additional longitudinal study by Byrne, Fielding-Barnsley, and Ashley (2004) found that fifth-grade students who had been trained in phonics 6 years earlier (in kindergarten) demonstrated significant reading skill gains over students who had not received such training. Although over many decades educators and researchers have disagreed on the exact breakdown of how much phonics instruction and literacy-based instruction is needed to successfully teach students to read, there seems to be agreement that a student's ability to understand the alphabetic principle (phonics) is crucial to successful reading (CIERA, 2001; Morris & Slavin, 2003; National Reading Panel, 2000).

Over the past 3 decades, research in reading has uncovered critical data suggesting that once students fall behind in early reading skills, they most often do not catch up (Foorman, Francis, Fletcher, Schatschneider, & Mehta, 1998). "Keith E. Stanovich of the University of Toronto has shown that children's ability to read in the first grade usually provides a good indication of what their 11th-grade reading proficiency will turn out to be" (Foorman et al., 2002, p. 86). His theory is based on the premise that reading requires practice, and those who excel in reading will practice the most during the schooling years. "Hence, the gap between more and less able readers in the first few

grades generally grows over the years” (Foorman et al., 2002, p. 86). This underlines the urgent need for students to acquire reading skills in the early grades.

Summary

In summary, the review of the literature focused on the need for implementation of a systematic phonics program in the early elementary grades. Substantial research has been conducted to establish the best way to teach students to read. Two conflicting approaches to teaching reading, whole-language and the phonics-based approach, still consume much of the research. What is agreed upon is the critical need that students have a solid foundation with a firm ability to read. Leaders in the educational field are relentless in the fact that in today’s world, every child must become a reader.

CIERA (2001) endorsed “the importance and effectiveness of systematic phonics instruction” (p. 113). Based on the research calling for systematic phonics instruction, the need to address the gaps in student achievement, and the knowledge that while phonics instruction is beneficial for most children (it seems to be critical for others (Chard & Dickson, 1999)), the schools in this study decided to pilot the Making Great Readers phonics program in their kindergarten classrooms.

In this study, the researcher conducted a program evaluation of the Making Great Readers phonics program. The researcher evaluated the program in regards to how well the teachers understood the phonics program during its implementation, teacher attitudes towards the program, change in teacher behavior as a result of program implementation, and the impact of the program on phonemic skills of kindergarten students.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the Making Great Readers phonics program. A mixed methods approach was used to evaluate the Making Great Readers phonics program in regards to improvement of phonemic awareness skills as well as reading skills in kindergarten students. Teacher behavior and teacher attitude towards the program was also explored. A logic model was used to evaluate the Making Great Readers program with a focus on short-, intermediate-, and possible long-term outcomes.

The impact of the Making Great Readers program was determined using a mixed methods approach. Quantitative data were gathered by examining the assessment results of running records, as well as specific skills. DIBELS assessments, a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade, were the assessment tools utilized. These assessments were specifically designed to be short (1 minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of Initial Sounds Fluency (ISF), Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), and Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). The measures are linked to one another, both psychometrically and theoretically, and have been found to be predictive of later reading proficiency (Teaching and Learning, 2008). Combined, the measures formed an assessment system of early literacy development that allows educators to readily and reliably determine student progress and to predict future success of students in regards to reading skills. In a longitudinal study focusing on the prediction of reading skills in kindergarten students, Schatschneider, Fletcher, Francis, Carlson, and Foorman (2004) found that letter names, letter-sound knowledge, naming speed, and phonological awareness were good indicators in the prediction of reading outcomes in Grades 1 and 2.

Problem Statement

This program was implemented with kindergarten students at two Title I elementary schools in western North Carolina beginning in August 2009. A summative evaluation of its impact needed to be conducted as student success with early reading skills is strongly predictive of success later in school (Lesaux, Rupp, & Siefel, 2007). Therefore, an evaluation of instructional methods and programs used at the most critical time in teaching young students to read is essential. The goal “of any intervention is to positively impact student achievement...not collecting data on student achievement (once there is some evidence that the program has been implemented) is a major mistake” (Marzano, 2003, p. 166). This study addressed the need of implementing a systematic approach to teaching phonics and provided the evaluation of the program.

A mixed methods approach provided both qualitative and quantitative data to address the research questions of this program evaluation. The researcher used separate quantitative and qualitative approaches to enhance the findings within a single study (Gorard & Taylor, 2004). The study does not focus on a single aspect of the pilot program, but instead seeks to evaluate the Making Great Readers program in its entirety as related to implementation and results of student phonemic skill growth. In addition, this study is intended to reveal the workings of the program and find evidence of its level of perceived effectiveness (Hatch, 2002). Adhering to the logic model, this study also incorporates a mixed methods approach which is recommended for evaluative studies employing a timeline which focuses on a specific portion of an educational program (Chatterji, 2004). The logic model had implications for school-wide programs as well as individual classrooms. One of the greatest strengths of the logic model is its flexibility and versatility (McLaughlin & Jordan, 2004).

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation (2004) provided literature that detailed the use of three types of logic models: theory, activity, and outcome. The theory approach model aligns the theory or theories behind the practice. It asks how or why the studied program will work. The activities approach logic model examines the process of program implementation. This model is beneficial for monitoring and managing the implementation of a specifically studied program. The outcomes approach logic model emphasizes the relationship of resources (or activities/program) to outcomes. The focus, as in this study, is on intended results of the program.

There is no standard design of any type of logic model; each model may vary with program needs. Evaluators may choose one type of logic model or combine any two or three to meet the needs of the study (Kellogg, 2004).

Qualitative data were collected in this study through a teacher survey to determine the understanding, attitudes, and behaviors of the teachers in relationship to the Making Great Readers program. The change of teacher behavior, as well as their perceptions of the program in relation to teaching reading, was assessed as well with teacher surveys.

The teacher survey instrument (Appendix A) was assessed for content validity using three methods. A team of subject matter experts was assembled to review the instrument. Feedback from this team was utilized to refine the survey. This survey was also given to a group of peers in the educational field for review. Input from this group was solicited and recorded. The final validation method was a pilot test which was given to a random sample of teachers. Input was asked in relation to clarity of the questions and understandability. All responses were recorded and adjustments were made to the survey based on input from the three validation methods. The researcher determined face validity prior to sending out the survey for content validity assessment. Six teachers from

both school A and school B were asked to participate in the teacher survey. These teachers were considered a valuable source of information because they implemented the pilot program under evaluation.

Significance of the Study

This research was significant because the findings provided valuable insights at the local level. The impact of a program on student achievement should be determined by the comprehensive analysis of achievement data (Marzano, 2003). School systems that are examining the Making Great Readers program, looking for a systematic phonics program, or investigating other ways to increase phonemic awareness in young students may find this study relevant. Evaluations of a program's effectiveness may serve to inform school officials regarding the value of the program. This information is critical to local school boards as they plan for literacy programs. Schools with similar demographics may find this study useful in impacting decisions made in adoption of a systematic phonics program.

Successful achievement in basic early literacy skills is a catalyst for later educational success. Evaluating the phonics program that these two schools piloted will help ensure that the instructional practices and programs that are being used by teachers are providing students with valid, high-yield results.

The findings of this study were reported to the local superintendent and school board. The findings also had bearing on the implementation of a phonics program in the two elementary schools in the study. The results were used to drive reading instruction, approaches to phonics instruction, and to assist in decision making within the school in regards to reading instruction.

Research Questions

Adhering to the logic model, this study focused around the following six research questions that encompass short-, intermediate- and long-term outcomes.

Short-term outcomes.

1. *How well do teachers understand the Making Great Readers phonics program?* Teachers were asked to self-report on their own attitudes towards the program in written form using a Likert scale to respond to survey questions. Statements used an ordinal scale of completely agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, or completely disagree (Creswell, 2003; Fink, 2006). Surveys were used to assess the understanding levels of the teachers with regard to the Making Great Readers program. Participant responses from the teacher survey were recorded for content analysis. Mean scores were presented to determine positive or negative relationships.

2. *What are the teachers' attitudes towards the program?* Again, teachers were asked to self-report on their own attitudes towards the program in written form using a Likert scale to respond to survey questions. The teacher survey contained questions which related to teacher confidence level in using the program, training, and teacher perceived benefits of the program. Surveys were used to assess the understanding levels of the teachers with regard to the Making Great Readers program. Focus groups were held with teachers from both schools in attendance, in mid-September at school B and in mid-November at school A. All teachers participating in the study attended the focus group discussions. Response frequencies from the teacher survey were broken into themes, tallied, and presented in a frequency table.

Intermediate-term outcomes.

3. *How have teachers' behaviors changed as a result of program*

implementation? Qualitative data was collected from the surveys given to the teachers in regards to their behavior change. Surveys were used to assess the change or lack of change in teacher behavior with regard to teaching phonics.

Focus groups were held, with teachers from both schools in attendance. Response frequencies were broken into themes, tallied, and presented in a frequency table. A document review of teachers' schedules was also conducted to assess if teachers had incorporated a block of time for implementation of the program.

4. *To what degree has the program become a factor in school improvement?* The researcher conducted a document review of each of the participating school's School Improvement Plans for evidence of use of the program. Surveys were used to assess teacher attitudes and levels of implementation with regard to the Making Great Readers program. Participant responses from the teacher survey were recorded. Mean scores were presented to assess teacher attitudes and levels of implementation.

Long-term outcomes.

5. *What is the impact of the program on phonemic skills of kindergarten students?* Students were assessed on four literacy components using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). DIBELS was nationally normed on approximately 32,000 students from 638 schools in 235 school districts (Good & Kaminski, 2002). The DIBELS assessments were a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. They were designed to be short (1 minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills (Center on Teaching and Learning, 2008). "Each measure has been thoroughly researched and demonstrated to be reliable and valid indicators of early literacy development and predictive of later reading

proficiency” (Center on Teaching and Learning, 2008, p. 1). The DIBELS measures linked together to form an assessment system of early literacy development that allows educators to readily and reliably determine student progress (Good & Kaminski, 2002).

The three overall literacy components assessed were phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, and vocabulary. Each area had individual subtests that directly related to the overall literacy component. Measures of phonological awareness were assessed by evaluating a student’s ability to identify and produce the initial sound of a given word called Initial Sound Fluency (ISF) and by assessing a child’s skill at producing the individual sounds within a given word known as Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF). Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF) consisted of the assessor orally stating words with three to four phonemes and asking the student to verbally produce the individual phonemes of the word (Ruby, 2007). Alphabetic principal was evaluated by assessing a child’s knowledge of letter-sound correspondences as well their ability to blend letters together to form unfamiliar “nonsense” words known as Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). Words in this measure consisted of vowel-consonant and consonant-vowel-consonant combinations. Measures of vocabulary and oral language were assessed by evaluating a student’s ability to accurately use a provided word in the context of a sentence called Word Use Fluency (WUF).

This study evaluated the results of each of the DIBELS kindergarten assessments. The DIBELS assessment tool provided raw scores for subtests under the literary components and a global instructional recommendation. The raw scores for each subject are listed in Appendix B in the Percent of Change Table. It should also be noticed that the percent of each subject’s increase or decrease of performance was not only listed in raw data form, but in a calculated percent of change using the formula $[(V_2 - V_1) / V_1] * 100$

where V_1 is the baseline score and V_2 is the final assessment score. The global instructional recommendations were based on patterns of performance from the subtests and are represented in the frequency table. Students that performed well on the DIBELS subtests and have “patterns of performance with the odds in favor of achieving subsequent goals” (Good & Kaminski, 2002, p. 48) were coded at a level of *Benchmark – At Grade Level*. In cases that a pattern of performance on subtests do not meet a clear prediction or “where approximately 50% of students achieved subsequent early literacy goals” (Good & Kaminski, 2002, p. 48), the instructional recommendation was *Strategic – Additional Intervention*. Finally, if a student’s performance on the DIBELS subtests fell in the range where predictor showed against achieving subsequent goals, the instructional recommendation was *Intensive – Needs Substantial Intervention*.

Participants

Participants in this study included all kindergarten teachers and all kindergarten students that were enrolled in school A and school B from August to March of the 2009-2010 school year. The number of participating teachers per school varied according to the number of kindergarten classrooms in each school. The kindergarten student population included in this study was 106 students.

The schools in this study were part of a small city school district that served approximately 3,000 students. These students were very diverse and from predominately middle to low socioeconomic families. Both schools qualified for Title I status. A Title I school was a school that received additional educational funding from the federal government based on poverty levels of the student attending the school. Schools in poverty were defined by the percentage of low-income students. Low-income students were defined as those meeting free or reduced-price lunch criteria. A Title I school must

have had either a percentage of low-income students that was at least as high as the district's overall percentage, or have had at least 35% low-income students (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], 2008). School A qualified for Title I status with 69.72% of the students that qualified for the free and reduced lunch program. School B qualified for Title I status with 70.64% of the students that qualified for the free and reduced lunch program.

School A and school B were both ethnically diverse. The smaller of the two schools, school A, was 47.5% White, 25% African American, and 20.5% Hispanic. School B was 40% White, 30.2% Hispanic, and 13.4 % African American. A small percentage of each school was made up of students with disabilities. School A had 10.3% of the students labeled as disabled and school B had 13.6% of the students labeled as disabled.

Limitations

School-level administrators worked with the elementary director and chose the Making Great Readers phonics program as the pilot program for phonics implementation. The possibility for teacher resistance in the implementation of the program was a limitation to this study. Another possible limitation was the degree of fidelity as related to the execution of the program within individual classrooms. Some teachers may have adhered to the protocol and followed the program guidelines more stringently than other teachers.

Delimitations

This study may have been affected by several established constraints which may have affected the external validity. This study's sample population was limited to kindergarten students enrolled from August to March at two elementary schools in

western North Carolina. Due to the limited sample of participants, all kindergarten students enrolled from August to March were included in the study. Data collection was limited to the 2009-2010 school year. Generalization of this study may be limited to the early elementary school level.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the Making Great Readers phonics program as it was implemented in two small elementary schools. Successful achievement in basic early literacy skills is a catalyst for later educational success. Evaluating the phonics program that these two schools piloted will help ensure that the instructional practices and programs that are being used by teachers are providing students with valid, high-yield results.

A mixed methods approach was used to determine how effectively the Making Great Readers phonics program improved phonemic awareness skills, as well as reading skills, in kindergarten students. Teacher behavior and teacher attitude towards the program was also explored. A logic model was used to evaluate the Making Great Readers program with a focus on short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes. Information from this study was used to guide future decisions of the continued implementation of the program.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

The most basic, fundamental aspect of education lies in the ability to read and early reading instruction. In studying the process of teaching reading, a teacher should analyze the steps and milestones that need to be reached in order to approach the teaching of reading. Making Great Readers was a program based on phonemic understanding without the confusion of letter names which creates the practice of See the Sound-Think the Letter (Howard, 2007). Making Great Readers is a prescriptive program that provides a systematic approach to teaching phonics.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Making Great Readers program. The program was piloted by two small elementary city schools located in western North Carolina during the 2009-2010 school year. Six kindergarten classrooms, approximately 100 students, piloted this program from August 2009 to March 2010. Specific areas targeted in the study included phonemic awareness skills of students with a focus on initial sound fluency, letter naming fluency, phoneme segmentation, and nonsense word fluency. Teacher understanding, attitudes towards the program, and teacher change, or lack of, in instructional behavior were also considered when evaluating the success of the program.

A variety of assessment tools were utilized to collect qualitative and quantitative data on this pilot program. The qualitative measures used included surveys and focus group discussions to identify the concerns of the teachers and teacher attitudes in regards to the Making Great Readers program. Focus groups were used to expose the perceptions of the kindergarten teachers as related to the Making Great Readers program. The focus groups led to important insights about how teachers felt as related to the Making Great Readers program and allowed the facilitator to delve deeper into the group's thinking

based on scripted questions as well as topics that arose more spontaneously. Teacher surveys were also used where teachers were asked to self-report on their own attitudes towards the Making Great Readers program using a Likert scale to respond to survey questions.

The quantitative measures included data analysis from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). The DIBELS assessments gave raw scores for subtests under the literacy components and a global instructional recommendation. The three overall literacy components are phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, and vocabulary. Each area had individual subtests that directly related to the overall literacy component. Measures of phonological awareness were assessed by evaluating a student's ability to identify and produce the initial sound of a given word called Initial Sound Fluency (ISF) and by assessing a child's skill at producing the individual sounds within a given word known as Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF). Phonemic Segmentation Fluency consisted of the assessor orally stating words with three to four phonemes and asking the student to verbally produce the individual phonemes of the word (Ruby, 2007). Alphabetic principle was evaluated by assessing a child's knowledge of letter-sound correspondences as well their ability to blend letters together to form unfamiliar "nonsense" words known as Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). Words in this measure consisted of vowel-consonant and consonant-vowel-consonant combinations. Measures of vocabulary and oral language were assessed by evaluating the student's ability to accurately use the provided word in the context of a sentence called Word Use Fluency (WUF).

Findings

This portion of the study reports the qualitative and quantitative data collected and

is organized by the framework of the logic model, following the six research questions that encompass short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes. This study was carried out through a mixed methods design approach. Separate quantitative and qualitative methods were used to enhance the findings giving more complete insight and understanding of the effects of the Making Great Readers phonics program. DIBELS scores provided quantitative data while teacher survey results and focus group discussions provided the qualitative results.

Short-term outcomes.

Research Question 1. How well do teachers understand the Making Great Readers phonics program? Teachers were asked to self-report on their own attitudes towards the program in written form using a Likert scale to respond to survey questions. Statements used an ordinal scale of completely agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, completely disagree (Creswell, 2003; Fink, 2006). Surveys were used to assess the understanding levels of the teachers with regard to the Making Great Readers program. The teacher survey contained questions which related to teacher understanding in using the program, teacher attitudes towards the program, training, and teacher perceived benefits of the program.

Survey data were received from all six teachers participating in the study. The number of years of teaching experience ranged from 8 years to 14 years. Detailed data about the teachers can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Teacher Demographic Data

Teaching Experience	
Years	Number of respondents
3 or less	0
4-8	2
9-15	4
16 or more	0
Educational Level	
Bachelor's	3
Master's	3
Specialist's	0
Doctorate	0

Questions from the teacher survey (see Appendix A) shown in Table 3 focused on teacher understanding of the Making Great Readers program. Statements used an ordinal scale of completely agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, completely disagree (Creswell, 2003; Fink, 2006). Teachers reported positively to the survey questions relating to understanding of the program. The teacher survey yielded the highest positive results for teacher support of the Making Great Readers program, yet all questions under this topic yielded positive results. Views of teacher training produced the lowest average response.

Table 3

Teacher Survey Results – Understanding

Question	Teachers (n=6) Mean responses
I feel confident in my ability to use the program with my students.	4.3
The Making Great Readers program meets the needs of my students.	4.3
The teachers at this school are supportive of the Making Great Readers program.	4.7
I am adequately trained to teach phonics through the Making Great Readers program design.	3.8
I enjoy using the Making Great Readers program.	4.3
I believe the Making Great Readers program is user friendly for me as a teacher.	4.6
Training for the program allowed me to fully implement all components of the program.	3.7

Research Question 2. What are the teachers' attitudes towards the program?

The researcher convened a focus group at each of the participating schools. Kindergarten teachers participating in the pilot program attended this session. The focus group began with participants stating their names, level of degrees, and how many years they had been teaching. The focus group discussion (see Appendix C) commenced with all participants being asked to react to the phrase “Making Great Readers” with the first word or phrase that popped into their mind. The frequency of common themes was summarized (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Four categories were used to group ideas reported by the teachers: results, ease of use, standard way to teach phonics, and training. The number of

times each theme was reported was tallied. A summary of the findings for teacher attitudes toward the program is provided in Table 4. Comments from the teachers were positive and aligned with the implementation of the Making Great Readers program. All comments centered around the description of a new program for teaching phonics. The focus group questions that related to teacher attitudes relating to the program yielded positive comments from participants. Comments included: “this program is quick and straight-forward. It is a very manageable process to include in my day;” “I feel the program hits on the multiple learning modalities that my students have. It incorporates movement, sound, and speech;” and “I have totally bought-in to this program. I see the results.”

Table 4

Teacher Attitudes Toward the Making Great Readers Program

Overall themes	Frequency of response
Positive results	15
Ease of use	11
Standard way to teach phonics	3
Not enough training	3

Surveys were used to assess the attitudes of the teachers with regard to the Making Great Readers program. Teachers were asked to self-report on their own attitudes towards the Making Great Readers program in written form using a Likert scale to respond to survey questions. The teacher survey (see Appendix A) contained questions that related to teacher attitudes in relation to the program. Teachers reported positively to

the survey questions relating to understanding of the program. The teacher survey yielded the highest positive results for teacher support of the program and the user friendliness of the program. Again, all questions under this topic resulted in high mean responses ranging from 3.7 to 4.7 out of a possible 5 for each question. The mean response in reference to the teacher training question produced the lowest mean responses of 3.7 and 3.8. Results of the teacher survey (see Appendix A) questions shown in Table 5 focused on teacher attitudes in regards to the Making Great Readers program.

Table 5

Teacher Survey Results – Teacher Attitudes

Question	Teachers (n=8) Mean responses
I feel confident in my ability to use the program with my students.	4.3
The Making Great Readers program meets the needs of my students.	4.3
The program design is developmentally appropriately for my students.	4.5
The teachers at this school are supportive of the Making Great Readers program.	4.7
I am adequately trained to teach phonics through the Making Great Readers program design.	3.8
I enjoy using the Making Great Readers program.	4.3
I believe the Making Great Readers program prepares students to become successful readers.	4.2
I believe the Making Great Readers program is user friendly for me as a teacher.	4.6
Training for the program allowed me to fully implement all components of the program.	3.7
I find the program to be beneficial in teaching reading to my students.	4.0
How has the Making Great Readers program met your expectations as an instructional tool?	4.1
How likely are you to recommend Making Great Readers to a colleague?	4.3

Intermediate-term outcomes.

Research Question 3. How have teachers' behaviors changed as a result of program implementation? The focus group questions that related to changes in teacher behavior in regards to the teaching of phonics in their daily schedules yielded positive comments from participants. Focus group discussions about teacher behavior and change in behavior in relation to teaching phonics produced two themes. Incorporation of a standardized way of teaching phonics, positive results on student achievement, and the ease of implementation were the three recurring themes. Comments included: "I am now doing a standard way for teaching phonics;" "This is a manageable way to teach phonics. I never found it to be this easy before;" and "This program is easy to use. The kids like it and I am seeing growth. I will continue to use this program even if it is not adopted by our school." One negative comment was, "I still have a hard time with not teaching letter names or the upper case letters. But I guess it will grow on me." Four categories were used to group ideas reported by the teachers: results, ease of use, standard way to teach phonics, and training. The number of times each theme was reported was tallied. A summary of the findings for teacher attitudes toward the program is provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Change in Teachers' Behaviors as a Result of Program Implementation

Overall themes	Frequency of response
Positive results on student achievement	15
Ease of implementation	12
Standard way to teach phonics	4

Quantitative data was collected from the surveys given to the teachers in regards to their behavior change. Specific questions on the teacher survey were used to assess the change, or lack of change, in teacher behavior in relationship to teaching phonics. Survey questions produced positive relationships as reported by the teachers in the change of their methods of teaching phonics. The mean score of the survey responses yielded scores ranging from 4.0 to 4.3 in teacher satisfaction. Results from this portion of the survey are listed in Table 7.

Table 7

Teacher Survey Results – Teacher Behaviors

Question	Teachers (n=8) mean responses
I have the resources necessary to effectively teach phonics through the Making Great Readers program.	4.3
I believe the Making Great Readers program produces the desired results as demonstrated by local and state measures.	4.2
I believe the Making Great Readers program prepares students to become successful readers.	4.2
I believe the Making Great Readers program provides students with the strategies to become independent readers.	4.1
I find the program to be beneficial in teaching reading to my students.	4.0
As a result of this program, I am systematically teaching phonics more regularly.	4.1

In addition to the focus group discussions and the teacher survey, kindergarten teachers from school A and school B submitted their classroom schedules (Appendix D)

documenting when each teacher utilized the program with their students. In review of these documents, schedules showed the classroom teachers having a set block of time for implementation of the pilot program.

Research Question 4. To what degree has the program become a factor in school improvement? The researcher conducted a document review of each of the participating school's School Improvement Plans (see Appendix E) for evidence of use of the program and implementation into the daily school routine. In review of these documents, each School Improvement Plan included the implementation of the Making Great Readers program as one of the strategies used to teach phonics.

Surveys were used to assess teacher attitude and levels of implementation for long-term school improvement with regard to using the Making Great Readers program as a consistent phonics program. Again, survey responses were positive. Teacher support of the pilot program yielded the highest results with a mean value of 4.7. Results of survey questions relating to school improvement with the implementation of Making Great Readers are noted in Table 8.

Table 8

Teacher Survey Results – School Improvement Efforts

Question	Teachers (n=8) mean responses
The teachers at this school are supportive of the Making Great Readers program.	4.7
I believe the Making Great Readers program produces the desired results as demonstrated by local and state measures.	4.2
I believe the Making Great Readers program prepares students to become successful readers.	4.2
I believe the Making Great Readers program provides students with the strategies to become independent readers.	4.1
I find the program to be beneficial in teaching reading to my students.	4.0
I am getting good results using this program.	4.3
As a result of this program, I am systematically teaching phonics more regularly.	4.1

Long-term outcomes.

Research Question 5. What is the impact of the program on phonemic skills of kindergarten students? Students were assessed on four literacy components using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). DIBELS was nationally normed on approximately 32,000 students from 638 schools in 235 school districts (Good & Kaminski, 2002). The DIBELS assessments are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. They are designed to be short (1 minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the

development of early literacy and early reading skills (Center on Teaching and Learning, 2008).

At each school, a list of kindergarten students enrolled as of August 2009 was obtained and compared to a list of students enrolled as of March 2010. This list was limited to those students who were continuously enrolled from August 2009 to March 2010. When examined, 106 students fit the criteria for inclusion in this study.

Students in school A and school B were administered a pretest in August using the DIBELS assessment measures in order to establish baseline data. Students were progress monitored in October and December with the final assessment, or posttest, given in March.

Analysis of DIBELS global instructional ratings in kindergarten, after the Making Great Readers program was implemented, showed that of the 78 students in the intensive and strategic groups, 59 students were rated overall as achieving the benchmark category on the final assessment. Additionally, the overall number of students rated as benchmark increased from 28 students to 59 students. Figures 4 and 5 present the percentage distribution for kindergarten students at school A and school B.

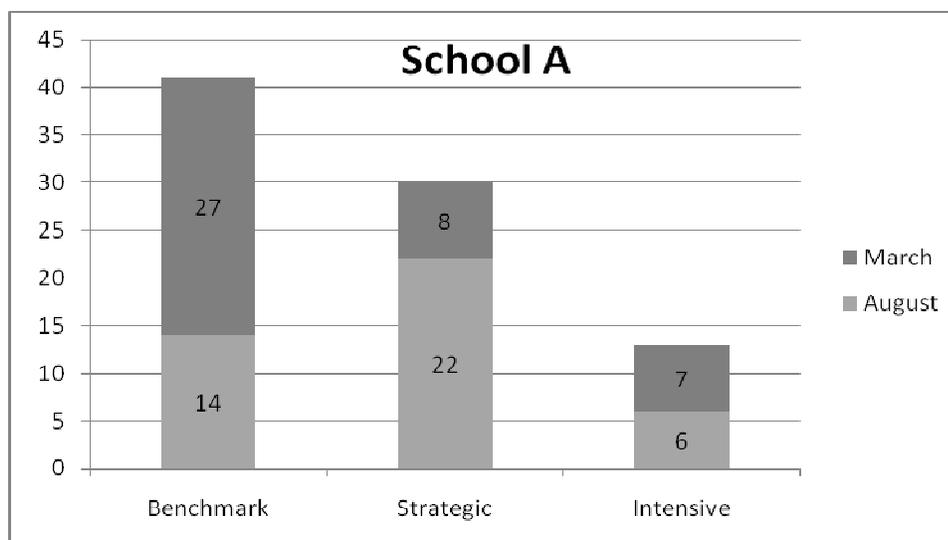


Figure 4. Kindergarten Assessments – Percentage Distribution of Instructional Recommendations for School A.

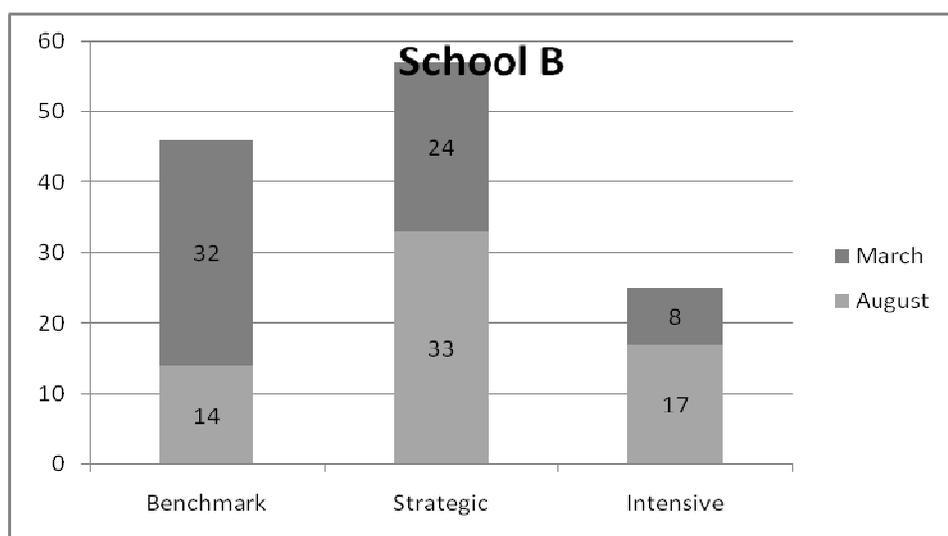


Figure 5. Kindergarten Assessments – Percentage Distribution of Instructional Recommendations for School B.

The raw scores from each of the DIBELS subtests are presented in Table 9 analyzing the percent of change by classroom setting. The percent of each subject's increase or decrease of performance along with the raw scores for each subject are listed in Appendix B in the percent of change table. It should also be noticed that the percent of

each subject's increase or decrease of performance was not only listed in raw data form, but in a calculated percent of change using the formula $[(V_2 - V_1) / V_1] * 100$ where V_1 is the baseline score and V_2 is the final assessment score.

Table 9

Raw Scores by Classroom – Initial Sound Fluency

	School A n=42			School B n=64		
	Baseline	Posttest	% Change	Baseline	Posttest	% Change
Class 1	10	33.64	236.40%	14.50	31.54	117.51%
Class 2	9.89	27.52	178.26%	7.42	21.38	188.14%
Class 3	15.33	26.5	72.86%	10.61	28.23	166.06%

Table 10

Raw Scores by Classroom – Letter Naming Fluency

	School A n=42			School B n=64		
	Baseline	Posttest	% Change	Baseline	Posttest	% Change
Class 1	16.23	46.11	184.10%	5.27	21.18	301.89%
Class 2	13.10	28.94	120.91%	10.61	28.95	172.85%
Class 3	10.33	36.83	256.53%	8.71	25.52	192.99%

Table 11

Raw Scores by Classroom – Word Usage Fluency

	School A n=42			School B n=64		
	Baseline	Posttest	% Change	Baseline	Posttest	% Change
Class 1	10.29	17.52	70.26%	5.81	21.09	262.99%
Class 2	2.37	15.15	539.24%	3.23	16.14	399.69%
Class 3	8.16	27.33	234.92%	16.33	21.42	31.16%

Summary

Data from the teacher surveys and focus groups were used to address each research question. The teachers reported no disagree or completely disagree for any of the statements on the survey. The mean score of 4.7 revealed the strongest agreement with the statement that the pilot program was supported by teachers. Adversely, there was less agreement that the training that the teachers received was adequate.

Perceived strengths of the phonics program were revealed through focus group discussions. Teachers identified student results as related to increased phonemic awareness skills and ease of implementation as the strongest aspects of the pilot program. These results had a direct implication on the researcher's recommendations for action.

Data from the DIBELS assessments were used to address the effectiveness of the Making Great Readers program on phonemic awareness skills. Results showed significant growth in the skills of kindergarten students as related to phonemic skills.

Chapter 5: Results

This study was conducted to evaluate the Making Great Readers program. Specifically, the study aimed to evaluate the program's effects on growth of phonemic skills in kindergarten students. Phonemic awareness is an essential part of student readiness in preparation of beginning readers. Allington (2001) stated that the age of information dissemination "places far greater demands on the reader" (p. 7) than ever before. Neglecting to teach reading effectively while children are in the early elementary years may lead to difficulty later in school and in life (Biehler & Snowman, 1986; Costa & Kallick, 2000; Gardner, 1999; Slavin, 1998). Students must have a sound knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make. They must know that letters make sounds, and that when combined together, the sounds make words. Preparing students to face increasing literacy challenges requires that educators address the task of teaching reading and reading readiness with the most effective instructional practices.

However, student improvement in phonemic skills was not the only integral aspect of success in this program. The researcher utilized a logic model to guide this program evaluation. The logic model had implications for short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes which affected school-wide programming as well as individual teachers and classrooms. Teacher enthusiasm, understanding, and modification of educational practices were also integral components to the successful implementation of this program as well as lasting effects on school improvement. Teacher understanding and enthusiasm directly related to the short-term outcomes of the employed logic model. Teacher modification of educational practices was the outcome based on the intermediate goals of the logic model, while successful implementation of the program, as well as lasting effects on phonemic awareness skills of the kindergarten students and, in turn, school

improvement, was the goal of the long-term outcomes.

This study did not focus on a single aspect of the pilot program, but instead sought to evaluate the Making Great Readers program in its entirety as related to implementation and results of student phonemic skill growth. In addition, this study was intended to reveal the workings of the program and find evidence of its level of perceived effectiveness (Hatch, 2002). Adhering to the logic model, this study also incorporated a mixed methods approach which is recommended for evaluative studies employing a timeline which focuses on a specific portion of an educational program (Chatterji, 2004). The logic model had implications for school-wide programs as well as individual classrooms (McLaughlin & Jordan, 2004).

The Kellogg Foundation provided literature that detailed the use of three types of logic models: theory, activity, and outcome (2004). The outcomes approach logic model emphasizes the relationship of resources (or activities/program) to outcomes. This type of logic model was utilized in this study. The focus of this study was the implementation of the pilot program and the evaluation of the program in regards to short-, intermediate- and potential long-term outcomes. There is no standard design of any type of logic model; each model may vary with program needs. Evaluators may choose one type of logic model or combine any two or three to meet the needs of the study (Kellogg, 2004). The researcher in this study chose the outcomes approach logic model because of its emphasis on the relationship of activities/resources/programs to outcomes or desired results. Short-term and intermediate outcomes were evaluated; however, long-term outcomes were not proven due to the time restraints of this study.

Student assessment data showed that this pilot program was found to not only be essential in building phonological awareness, but it provided a sound foundation for

reading readiness. Analysis of each research question proved the success of the Making Great Readers program.

Research Question 1. How well do teachers understand the Making Great Readers phonics program? According to the theory of the logic model, one of the inputs or investments in this pilot program is staff training. The fulfillment of short-term outcomes relied on teacher understanding, which was a two-prong aspect. One characteristic of teacher understanding that was researched was how well teachers understood the need for using a systematic approach to teaching phonics. The second characteristic of teacher understanding was the level of knowledge and understanding of the phonics program and how to implement the program in their classrooms. This knowledge and awareness provided strong indicators that the short-term outcome, which was understanding changes, had been met. The short-term goals being met directly related to the intermediate goals, which focused on behavioral changes.

The teacher survey yielded the highest positive results for teacher support of the Making Great Readers program, in contrast to views of teacher training which produced the lowest scores as can be seen in Table 3. This illustrates that teachers had a basic understanding of the Making Great Readers program. These positive results provided a strong foundation for building on the short-term outcomes of teacher support and understanding. Again, because these short-term outcomes were met, the groundwork was laid for the intermediate- and long-term outcomes as stated in the logic model.

On the contrary, the teacher survey also indicated that teachers felt they were not well trained and were in need of further professional development with regards to the pilot program. This should be taken into consideration for future training and staff development offerings.

Research Question 2. What are the teachers' attitudes towards the program?

This question also yielded a positive response in teacher enthusiasm and implementation of the program in the classroom setting. The focus groups at each of the participating schools produced positive comments in relation to teacher attitudes about the program. Teachers were encouraged by the efficiency and manageability of the program. Teachers also spoke to the inclusiveness of the multiple modalities that the program incorporated.

When asked to self-report on their attitude toward the Making Great Readers program teachers reported positively. The teacher survey yielded the highest positive results for teacher support of the program and the user friendliness of the program. This indicated that teachers would embrace the program as a systematic approach to teaching phonemic skills to their students. Again, this positive report of teacher attitudes is a precursor that directly related to the intermediate outcomes in the logic model. The researcher identified behavioral changes of the teachers, in regards to the way they teach phonics, as the intermediate outcomes. Teacher attitudes towards the pilot program positively affected the studied behavioral changes of the teachers.

Intermediate-term outcomes.

Research Question 3. How have teachers' behaviors changed as a result of program implementation? Research Question 3 specifically analyzed the intermediate outcomes as stated by the logic model used in this study. The intermediate outcomes studied were to analyze the changes in the way teachers were teaching phonics. This research question was answered by focus group discussions and from data derived from the teacher survey.

Teachers self-reported on their change in behavior in relation to the way they taught phonics during focus group discussions as well as on the teacher survey.

Two major themes occurred during focus group discussions. They were incorporation of a standardized way of teaching phonics and the ease of implementation. Teachers stated that they were so encouraged by the program that several have already adopted this method for teaching phonics. Teachers spoke to the past need of a prescriptive method of teaching phonics and reported that the pilot program provided this in an easy to use format. Again the theme of manageability resulted from this discussion. Teachers reported that the program is a quick, manageable, easy to use program that equipped them with a systematic way to teach phonics. The reactions of the teachers lead the researcher to deduce that they have significantly changed their instructional approach due to the pilot program.

Survey data derived from the teacher survey corroborated the focus group discussion. Data collected from the survey produced positive relationships as reported by the teachers in the change of their methods of teaching phonics. These results indicated that teachers have changed their instructional methods. There was a marked change in teacher behavior in that after incorporating the pilot program, teachers reported that they did utilize a different way of teaching phonics. These results were also supported by the document review of classroom schedules which showed evidence of teachers having a set block of time for implementation of the pilot program. Survey data, coupled with the responses from focus group discussions and document review, produced a positive outcome in regards to change in teacher behavior.

Research Question 3 specifically analyzed the intermediate outcomes as stated by the logic model used in this study. The intermediate outcomes studied were to analyze the changes in the way teachers were teaching phonics. The collected data indicated that teachers reported a change in their methods of teaching phonics. These intermediate

measures, paired with the previously mentioned short-term outcomes, provided implications that suggested teachers understood the need for a systematic way of teaching phonics and actually changed their methods of teaching phonics.

Research Question 4. To what degree has the program become a factor in school improvement? The researcher conducted a document review of each of the participating school's School Improvement Plans (see Appendix E) for evidence of use of the program. In review of these documents, each School Improvement Plan included the implementation of the Making Great Readers program as one of the strategies used to teach phonics.

Surveys data that assessed teacher attitudes and levels of implementation for long-term school improvement with regard to using the Making Great Readers program as a consistent phonics program yielded positive results. Teacher support of the pilot program yielded the highest results with a mean value of 4.7 out of a possible 5. These results indicated the teachers were supportive in adopting the Making Great Readers program as their method of phonics instruction. In turn, this also implied that the pilot program, if adopted, would have a lasting effect on school improvement in the future. Each of these aforementioned factors contributed to the assessment of the program as related to the long-term outcomes of the logic model. The long-term outcomes concentrated on the possible cultural changes within the school. The impact that the program had on school improvement is proven by documentation of the pilot program as a reading strategy in the School Improvement Plans, positive data results from the teacher survey on teacher support of the program, and the impact that the program had on the phonemic skills of kindergarten students.

Long-term outcomes.

Research Question 5. What is the impact of the program on phonemic skills of kindergarten students? Analysis of practices and programs used at such a crucial time in a student's educational career must be based on evidence that "goes beyond best guesses or informed hunches about what is and is not working" (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2001, p. 14). Killion (2002) stated that "evaluation provides the analysis that informs future decisions and policies. Without periodic, objective evaluation, practices may cease to have the intended impact. Evaluation keeps us honest. It offers more than conjecture, opinion, or individual preferences" (p. 12). This research question provided the basis for the evaluation of the impact of the piloted phonics program on student achievement.

Students in school A and school B were administered a pretest in August using the DIBELS assessment measures in order to establish baseline data. Students were progress monitored in October and December with the final assessment, or posttest, given in March. Students were assessed on four literacy components using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). DIBELS was nationally normed on approximately 32,000 students from 638 schools in 235 school districts (Good & Kaminski, 2002). The DIBELS assessments were a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. The DIBELS measures link together to form an assessment system of early literacy development that allows educators to readily and reliably determine student progress (Good & Kaminski, 2002). Students that performed well on the DIBELS subtests and have "patterns of performance with the odds in favor of achieving subsequent goals" (Good & Kaminski, 2002, p. 48) were coded at a level of *Benchmark – At grade level*. In cases that a pattern of performance on subtests do not meet a clear prediction or "where

approximately 50% of students achieved subsequent early literacy goals” (Good & Kaminski, 2002, p. 48), the instructional recommendation was *Strategic – Additional Intervention*. Finally, if a student’s performance on the DIBELS subtests fell in the range where predictors showed against achieving subsequent goals, the instructional recommendation was *Intensive – Needs Substantial Intervention*.

The three overall literacy components assessed were phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, and vocabulary. Each area was assessed using individual subtests that directly related to the overall literacy component. Analysis of DIBELS global instructional ratings in kindergarten after the Making Great Readers program was implemented showed that of the 78 students in the intensive and strategic groups, 59 students were rated overall as achieving the benchmark category on the final assessment. Additionally, the overall number of students rated as benchmark increased from 28 students to 59 students. It should be noted that the Benchmark goals grew during the year. A score that would place a student at the proficient or benchmark level at the beginning of the year would not equal a proficient, or benchmark, score at the end of the year. As the year progresses the benchmark score is raised.

Benchmark scores from school A grew from 34% on the baseline assessment to 64% on the posttest. Benchmark scores from school B grew from 21% on the baseline assessment to 50% on the posttest. In both cases, the proficiency level almost doubled. School B also showed a 13% decline in the number of students in the intensive (or well below proficiency) level. It is apparent that the Making Great Readers program produced growth in the phonemic skills of kindergarten students in both schools in this study. These results show a strong support for the pilot program that this study evaluated based on student growth in phonemic skills.

The raw scores from each of the DIBELS subtests showed success as well. The percent of each subject's increase of performance was also strongly positive. It was found that students showed significant growth on the DIBELS subtests in Initial Sound Fluency, Letter Naming Fluency, and Word Usage Fluency. Students' average percent of change in Initial Sound Fluency was over 150%. The average percent of change of kindergarten students in Letter Naming Fluency was over 200%, and the average percent of change in Word Usage Fluency was over 250%, as shown previously in Figure 4 and Figure 5.

The DIBELS assessments that were given to the subjects in this study are predictors of early literacy skills. Results of this study suggest that the Making Great Readers program was successful in raising the phonemic awareness of kindergarten students. According to the results of the DIBELS assessments, students participating in the Making Great Readers program lowered their chances of falling behind in early literacy skills. Analysis of DIBELS global instructional ratings in kindergarten (see Figures 4 and 5) revealed that out of 106 kindergarten students, 23 scored well below proficiency expectations (or intensive) at the beginning of the year. After being exposed to the Making Great Readers program, 15 of the 106 (14.1%) students remained in the below proficiency category. It should be noted that the DIBELS assessment target is raised as the school year progresses. In other words, what is considered proficient in August may not yield a proficient score in March as the target is raised to reflect progression of the school year. In addition, of the 61 students who placed in the strategic category at the beginning of the year, 25 of them moved to the benchmark category. Results showed at the end of this study, 57% of the kindergarten students were performing at or above grade-level expectations. The findings from data analysis of Research Question 5 proved that the kindergarten students in this study showed

phenomenal growth in relation to phonemic awareness skills.

Implications for Future Change

This study provided evidence that the pilot phonics program implemented by the two Title I elementary schools participating in this study was effective as it related to increased phonemic skills of kindergarten students. According to Marzano (2003), collecting and analyzing data to assess the effectiveness of programming choices is essential. It is imperative to evaluate teaching practices to ensure that they are having the intended impact on student learning (Killion, 2002). Early success with reading skills builds a solid foundation for students to build upon for years to come. Early reading success has been connected to success in achievement up to 10 years later (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997).

The findings of this study provided insight as to the effectiveness of the Making Great Readers phonics program. The use of the results of this study to guide program selection, implementation, and training will help guarantee that students and teachers are better prepared for reading instruction.

Recommendations

Findings of this study support that the Making Great Readers program is effective. This is supported by numerous data sources. The DIBELS scores showed impressive growth averaging approximately 200% in all assessed areas. In addition, teacher survey results and focus group discussion showed that teacher perception of the program was that it was successful, effective, and had many strong points. Therefore, it is the researcher's recommendation that the program be continued as the systematic phonics program in kindergarten. Findings of this study should be shared with the local school board, school and district level administrators, teachers, and parents.

Although the recommendation is made to continue using the Making Great Readers program, the researcher suggests some changes should be considered. The findings of the teacher survey and focus group discussion revealed that training could be improved. It is the recommendation of the researcher that a more systematic staff development plan should be devised with follow-up training and support for teachers implementing this program being offered.

An additional recommendation for future study is to follow the kindergarten participants as they move into the upper elementary grades to evaluate any significant differences in reading skills as opposed to students that did not participate in this study. A longitudinal study on the participants of this study would be beneficial to assess the long-term outcomes and benefits of the Making Great Readers program. It is impossible to ascertain the long-term effects as noted in the logic model in a 9-month study. However, a longitudinal study, as mentioned above, would provide pertinent information as related to the logic model referenced in this study. Possible areas of study could include analyzing a change in student attitude towards reading.

In the case of a replication study, the researcher recommends the addition of observations of teachers using the Making Great Readers program. Documentation of these observations would add an additional layer of validity to the study.

Conclusions

Allington (2001) stated that “American schools should be places where all children can expect to be successful readers” (p. 7). The necessity for students to become successful readers is more apparent now than ever. This study was relevant to the educational community as an evaluation of the Making Great Readers program. Long-term effects may also serve as a catalyst for social change. Successful achievement of

learning tasks, such as reading, often leads to “academic and even career success, while failure in reading may cause difficulty with later tasks, hinder success, and lead to disapproval by society (Havighurst, 1952, p. 2). Another study sites that individuals with higher literacy skills, namely reading skills, are more likely to earn a sustaining income and are less likely to request public assistance (Kutner et al., 2007).

This study was needed to assess the effectiveness of the piloted program and to serve as guidance for making future programming decisions. The conclusions drawn from this study are based upon the findings from quantitative and qualitative data analysis through the use of the logic model. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data analyses increases the chances of finding answers to the research questions (Burke, Johnson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The logic model is most informative when it answers the research questions and provides useful information to the program (McLaughlin & Jordan, 2004). This study utilized the short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes to provide an evaluation of the Making Great Readers program.

Five of six teachers (83%) in this study strongly agreed that student achievement was positively affected by the Making Great Readers program design. They also strongly agreed or agreed (83%) that the program was easy to implement and was supported by the teachers in the two schools in this study.

Students showed gains in all areas assessed by DIBELS measures. The measures are linked to one another, both psychometrically and theoretically, and have been found to be predictive of later reading proficiency (Teaching and Learning, 2008). Combined, the measures formed an assessment system of early literacy development that allows educators to readily and reliably determine student progress. In Initial Sound Fluency, which assessed the students’ skills at identifying and producing the initial sound of a

given word, students averaged a 159.9% gain from baseline data to the posttest. In Letter Naming Fluency, which assessed the students' skills at identifying letters and their names, students averaged a 204.8% gain from baseline data collection to the posttest. Finally, in Word Usage Fluency, which assessed the students' abilities to accurately use a provided word in the context of a sentence, students showed an average of a 256.3% gain.

Analysis of DIBELS global instructional ratings in kindergarten after the Making Great Readers program was implemented showed that of the 86 students in the intensive and strategic groups, 32 students were rated overall as achieving the benchmark category on the final assessment. Additionally, the overall number of students rated as benchmark increased from 37 students to 70 students. Figures 4 and 5 present the frequency distribution for kindergarten students at school A and school B.

Teacher quality must also be considered when analyzing student gains. Students who have qualified teachers who have strong knowledge of the content and the resources they need are at an advantage (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teacher responses from the teacher survey revealed that all of the teachers in this study had teaching degrees ranging from bachelor's to master's levels of education. In addition, the average years of teaching experience of the teachers participating in this study ranged from 4 to 8 years of experience to 16 or more years of experience.

The literature supports that effective early phonics instruction has a positive impact on student reading achievement and is predictive of later reading success. Instructional programs and practices used in the early educational setting are critical to this success. Therefore, it is imperative that these programs be evaluated. The findings of this study suggest that the Making Great Readers phonics program provides students with a strong foundation in phonemic awareness which translates to future success in reading.

Outcomes as related to the logic model were positive in relation to short-term, intermediate-term, and possible long-term outcomes. The fulfillment of short-term outcomes relied on teacher understanding. One characteristic of teacher understanding that was researched was how well teachers understood the need for using a systematic approach to teaching phonics. The second characteristic of teacher understanding was the level of knowledge and understanding of the phonics program and how to implement the program in their classrooms. This knowledge and awareness provided strong indicators that the short-term outcome, which was understanding changes, had been met. The short-term goals being met directly related to the intermediate goals, which focused on behavioral changes. The positive report of teacher attitudes is a precursor that directly related to the intermediate outcomes in the logic model. The researcher identified behavioral changes of the teachers, in regards to the way they teach phonics, as the intermediate outcomes. Teacher attitudes towards the pilot program positively affected the studied behavioral changes of the teachers.

This study suggests that the Making Great Readers program was successfully implemented in school A and school B. Teacher understanding, attitude, and behavior change all yielded positive results which directly related to the short-term and intermediate-term outcomes of the logic model. The positive change in skill level of the kindergarten students will have an impact on the long-term outcomes as stated in the logic model. This improvement of reading skills will be a contributor to long-term change and cultural change within the schools.

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Appendix A
Teacher Survey

Teacher Survey

Please answer the following questions based on your experience with the Making Great Readers (MGR) program.

1) I feel confident in my ability to use the program with my students

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

2) The Making Great Readers program meets the needs of my students

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

3) The program design is developmentally appropriately for my students

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

4) The teachers at this school are supportive of the Making Great Readers program

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

5) I am adequately trained to teach phonics through the Making Great Readers program design

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

6) I have the resources necessary to effectively teach phonics through the Making Great Readers program

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

Please provide examples:

7) I believe the Making Great Readers program produces the desired results as demonstrated by local and state measures

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

8) I enjoy using the Making Great Readers program

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

Why or why not?

9) I believe the Making Great Readers program prepares students to become successful readers

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

10) I believe the Making Great Readers program is user friendly for me as a teacher

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

11) I believe the Making Great Readers program provides students with the strategies to become independent readers

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

12) I believe the Making Great Readers program meets the learning styles of each of my students

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

13) Training for the program allowed me to fully implement all components of the program.

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

14) I find the program to be beneficial in teaching reading to my students

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

15) I am getting good results using this program

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

16) As a result of this program, I am systematically teaching phonics more regularly

5 = completely agree

4 = somewhat agree

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat disagree

1 = completely disagree

17) How has the Making Great Readers program met your expectations as an instructional tool?

5 = completely satisfied

4 = somewhat satisfied

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat dissatisfied

1 = completely dissatisfied

18) How likely are you to recommend Making Great Readers to a colleague?

5 = very likely

4 = somewhat likely

3 = neutral

2 = somewhat likely

1 = not at all likely

19) Check all that apply:

Which group of students do you feel this program is most beneficial

_____ at all achievement levels

_____ at grade level

_____ above grade level

_____ below grade level

20) When using the Making Great Readers program, which aspect do you teach first: the sound, signal, or both?

21) Would you use upper case letters or lower case letters when implementing this program? Why?

22) In your opinion, what are the strengths of the Making Great Readers program that is being used to teach phonics to kindergarten students.

23) In your opinion, what are the ways the Making Great Readers program could be improved?

24) What would you consider to be the most valuable benefit of using the Making Great Readers program? (Please choose one)

Motivates students

Provides students with success

Helps prepare students for reading readiness

Other: (Please list)

25) How many years have you been teaching

_____ 3 or less

_____ 4-8

_____ 9-15

_____ 16 or more

26) What is your educational level

_____ Bachelor

_____ Masters

_____ Specialist/6 yr

_____ Doctorate

Appendix B

Subject's Raw Scores/Percent of Change

	ISFb	ISFm	LNFB	LNFM	WUFb	WUF m	% ISF	%LNF	%WUF
J-A	6	19	1	60	6	8	216.67%	5900.00%	33.33%
J-B	7	20	21	60	17	8	185.71%	185.71%	-52.94%
J-C	1	28	13	44	16	15	2700.00%	238.46%	-6.25%
J-D	9	38	1	38	6	28	322.22%	3700.00%	366.67%
J-E	1	39	25	44	7	29	3800.00%	76.00%	314.29%
J-F	5	38	10	50	17	22	660.00%	400.00%	29.41%
J-G	15	45	1	45	28	16	200.00%	4400.00%	-42.86%
J-H	18	27	4	28	1	11	50.00%	600.00%	1000.00%
J-I	1	38	21	48	2	4	3700.00%	128.57%	100.00%
J-J	5	24	13	40	1	11	380.00%	207.69%	1000.00%
J-L	10	35	20	45	17	16	250.00%	125.00%	-5.88%
J-M	12	45	29	48	8	16	275.00%	65.52%	100.00%
J-N	13	33	39	47	18	24	153.85%	20.51%	33.33%
J-O	27	40	29	53	9	26	48.15%	82.76%	188.89%
J-P	16	42	8	44	4	15	162.50%	450.00%	275.00%
J-Q	14	26	24	47	13	32	85.71%	95.83%	146.15%
J-R	10	35	17	43	5	17	250.00%	152.94%	240.00%
S-A	1	8	1	16	4	30	700.00%	1500.00%	650.00%
S-B	1	4	1	12	1	0	300.00%	1100.00%	-100.00%
S-C	5	32	1	28	1	16	540.00%	2700.00%	1500.00%
S-D	1	5	1	3	1	1	400.00%	200.00%	0.00%
S-E	1	1	1	15	1	15	0.00%	1400.00%	1400.00%

S-F	14	60	2	37	1	14	328.57%	1750.00%	1300.00%
S-G	12	30	2	17	1	22	150.00%	750.00%	2100.00%
S-I	21	34	1	18	1	22	61.90%	1700.00%	2100.00%
S-J	7	32	49	37	1	16	357.14%	-24.49%	1500.00%
S-K	20	30	4	27	3	33	50.00%	575.00%	1000.00%
S-L	1	23	27	43	1	5	2200.00%	59.26%	400.00%
S-M	4	38	31	39	3	0	850.00%	25.81%	-100.00%
S-N	1	7	14	42	1	1	600.00%	200.00%	0.00%
S-O	9	9	1	3	1	1	0.00%	200.00%	0.00%
S-P	16	40	41	57	4	14	150.00%	39.02%	250.00%
S-Q	11	46	31	43	12	24	318.18%	38.71%	100.00%
S-R	24	34	9	43	1	32	41.67%	377.78%	3100.00%
S-S	16	48	19	47	5	24	200.00%	147.37%	380.00%
S-T	23	42	13	23	1	18	82.61%	76.92%	1700.00%
B-A	2	20	3	28	14	20	900.00%	833.33%	42.86%
B-B	6	8	3	12	6	14	33.33%	300.00%	133.33%
B-C	8	30	1	40	5	40	275.00%	3900.00%	700.00%
B-D	17	32	3	38	1	21	88.24%	1166.67%	2000.00%
B-E	19	39	13	39	1	25	105.26%	200.00%	2400.00%

B-F	40	30	39	64	22	44	-25.00%	64.10%	100.00%
W-B	6	21	1	7	1	0	250.00%	600.00%	-100.00%
W-C	5	15	1	21	1	0	200.00%	2000.00%	-100.00%
W-D	3	36	1	4	25	25	1100.00%	300.00%	0.00%
W-E	15	21	1	14	1	0	40.00%	1300.00%	-100.00%
W-F	8	39	1	20	1	32	387.50%	1900.00%	3100.00%
W-G	11	24	7	18	1	8	118.18%	157.14%	700.00%
W-H	19	47	1	39	22	42	147.37%	3800.00%	90.91%
W-I	12	15	1	16	1	17	25.00%	1500.00%	1600.00%
W-J	8	24	1	23	1	24	200.00%	2200.00%	2300.00%
W-K	14	45	1	26	1	34	221.43%	2500.00%	3300.00%
W-L	10	39	4	30	1	22	290.00%	650.00%	2100.00%
W-M	14	11	1	2	1	0	-21.43%	100.00%	-100.00%
W-N	8	22	1	7	1	9	175.00%	600.00%	800.00%
W-O	7	12	5	23	1	10	71.43%	360.00%	900.00%
W-P	21	49	2	16	9	40	133.33%	700.00%	344.44%
W-Q	28	52	3	22	1	1	85.71%	633.33%	0.00%

W-R	13	19	4	24	1	10	46.15%	500.00%	900.00%
W-S	20	33	1	8	14	35	65.00%	700.00%	150.00%
W-T	24	24	24	28	1	31	0.00%	16.67%	3000.00%
W-U	12	32	27	49	16	55	166.67%	81.48%	243.75%
W-V	31	50	16	46	11	23	61.29%	187.50%	109.09%
W-W	30	64	12	23	16	46	113.33%	91.67%	187.50%
Ja-A	2	22	6	23	1	0	1000.00%	283.33%	-100.00%
Ja-C	4	19	1	25	1	23	375.00%	2400.00%	2200.00%
Ja-D	1	10	1	9	1	0	900.00%	800.00%	-100.00%
Ja-E	4	0	1	20	1	0	-100.00%	1900.00%	-100.00%
Ja-G	1	20	2	12	1	9	1900.00%	500.00%	800.00%
Ja-H	5	16	1	36	1	0	220.00%	3500.00%	-100.00%
Ja-I	1	11	1	24	1	1	1000.00%	2300.00%	0.00%
Ja-J	6	17	11	37	1	21	183.33%	236.36%	2000.00%
Ja-K	8	32	1	11	12	10	300.00%	1000.00%	-16.67%
Ja-L	3	26	21	46	1	5	766.67%	119.05%	400.00%
Ja-M	12	23	7	35	18	44	91.67%	400.00%	144.44%

Ja-N	7	26	10	23	1	26	271.43%	130.00%	2500.00%
Ja-O	4	21	9	31	1	9	425.00%	244.44%	800.00%
Ja-P	14	23	11	52	1	30	64.29%	372.73%	2900.00%
Ja-Q	8	8	4	2	1	15	0.00%	-50.00%	1400.00%
Ja-R	4	20	18	26	1	20	400.00%	44.44%	1900.00%
Ja-S	8	21	8	52	2	20	162.50%	550.00%	900.00%
Ja-T	29	45	46	41	16	31	55.17%	-10.87%	93.75%
Ja-U	13	28	16	39	4	20	115.38%	143.75%	400.00%
Ja-V	14	36	34	39	1	19	157.14%	14.71%	1800.00%
Ja-W	8	25	14	25	1	36	212.50%	78.57%	3500.00%
C-A	7	7	1	3	9	11	0.00%	200.00%	22.22%
C-B	1	13	1	17	6	8	1200.00%	1600.00%	33.33%
C-C	5	16	1	18	8	21	220.00%	1700.00%	162.50%
C-D	1	44	1	36	1	15	4300.00%	3500.00%	1400.00%
C-E	1	23	6	16	31	21	2200.00%	166.67%	-32.26%
C-F	25	34	1	13	13	33	36.00%	1200.00%	153.85%
C-G	6	25	3	27	9	10	316.67%	800.00%	11.11%

C-H	12	18	3	28	5	6	50.00%	833.33%	20.00%
C-I	9	15	3	11	16	28	66.67%	266.67%	75.00%
C-J	12	42	1	17	29	59	250.00%	1600.00%	103.45%
C-L	1	26	30	30	27	30	2500.00%	0.00%	11.11%
C-M	9	20	1	5	14	17	122.22%	400.00%	21.43%
C-N	11	30	1	16	23	14	172.73%	1500.00%	-39.13%
C-O	6	26	19	43	13	28	333.33%	126.32%	115.38%
C-P	15	16	1	1	14	0	6.67%	0.00%	-100.00%
C-Q	36	64	32	53	18	30	77.78%	65.63%	66.67%
C-R	12	50	15	34	24	21	316.67%	126.67%	-12.50%
C-S	14	30	24	60	28	16	114.29%	150.00%	-42.86%
C-T	15	41	15	27	48	23	173.33%	80.00%	-52.08%
C-U	16	20	9	56	3	24	25.00%	522.22%	700.00%
C-V	9	33	15	25	4	35	266.67%	66.67%	775.00%
		Ave %chng							
		ISF	LNF	WUF					
	School A								
	Class 1	790.58 %	989.94 %	218.77 %					

	Class 2	391.30 %	674.49 %	909.47 %				
	Class 3	229.47 %	1077.3 5%	896.03 %				
	School B							
	Class 1	176.18 %	948.99 %	882.99 %				
	Class 2	404.77 %	712.22 %	1015.3 1%				
	Class 3	607.05 %	735.21 %	161.53 %				
		433.22 %	856.37 %	680.68 %				

Appendix C

Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Questions

Each of you have been using the MGR program that we are here to talk about today with your kindergarten students. Your responses will be recorded and transcribed for content analysis. All responses will be kept confidential.

1. Tell us your name and how long you have been teaching.
2. When you hear the name, MGR, what do you think?
3. What do you like best about the MGR program?
4. If you were making the decision to purchase a phonics program, using what you know now, would you purchase this program?
5. What barriers exist with this program?
6. Did anything surprise you about the program?
7. What are the strengths of the program?
8. What could be improved?
9. Most valuable benefit of the program?
10. Has using the Making Great Readers program changed the way you teach in regards to reading instruction?
11. Do you feel that the implementation of the Making Great Readers program has changes the way this school addresses teaching reading?

Appendix D
Teacher's Daily Schedules

Teacher's Daily Schedule for Making Great Readers

Jarvis

9:30 - during SRA before we start our lesson.

10:00 - during whole group reading

1:45 - during guided reading groups

Fulbright

9:30 - during SRA before we start lesson

10:00 – (and any time during the day that we have extra time)

Caulder

12:50 - SRA groups to wrap up the lesson

*I pull them out for my lower reading group one time a week.

Standish

8:30 – beginning of each small group reading

1:30 – Daily wrap-up

Johnson

9:15 – Beginning of reading groups

12:30 – Circle time

Buff

8:45 – Group time

1:00 – Small group time

Appendix E
School Improvement Plans

Newton Conover City Schools School Improvement Plan
2008-11 Planning Cycle Year 2

School: South Newton Elementary

Goal: Globally Competitive Students 21st Century Professionals

Healthy, Responsible Students Leadership for Innovation

21st Century Systems

District SMART Objectives: 1.1.1 All schools will meet annual ABC Expected Growth Standards at or above the State Average in all subjects as measured by the EOGs each academic school year.

District Indicator: ABC/AYP data - Growth Calculations

School SMART Objective (Target): We will increase our reading proficiency from 52.9% to 84.4% proficient and achieve Expected Growth Status as measured by the EOGs each academic school year

School Indicator(s): DIBELS Assessments/Quarterly Assessments ABC/AYP,

(PLAN) Team Smart Goal	(DO) Action Steps	Resources Funding Sources		(Study) Person(s) Responsible or committee Reports Quarterly To Whom What are the quarterly results?	What Data sources will be used to support effectiveness	(ACT) Based upon quarterly results, should/how should strategies be changed
		On Site	Need			
Grade <u>Kindergarten</u> Reality: Kinders were 36% proficient in	Small group reading			Grade level will report results as follows:	DIBELS Reading 3D	-Small Groups will be flexible based on results from assessment data from

<p>Reading Readiness as measured by the DIBELS reading Assessment.</p> <p>Grade <u>Kinder</u> Smart Goal:</p> <p>We will increase kindergarten reading proficiency from 36% to 80 % proficient by May 2010 as measured by the DIBELS Reading Assessment.</p>	<p>Monthly Progress Monitor using DIBELS</p> <p>Making Great Readers</p> <p>Making the most of small groups</p> <p>Leveled reading library</p>	√		<p>-Monthly Progress Monitoring</p> <p>-Reports Monthly to Grade Level, IC, SIT and Principal</p>		DIBELS and Reading 3D
<p>Grade <u>1</u> Reality:</p> <p>1st graders were 67 % proficient in Reading as measured by the DIBELS reading Assessment.</p> <p>-We see a large gap between DIBELS Reading Readiness results and RR results</p> <p>Grade <u>1</u> Smart Goal:</p> <p>We will increase 1st grade reading proficiency from 67% to 85 %</p>	<p>Small group reading</p> <p>Monthly Progress Monitor using DIBELS</p> <p>Makin Great Readers</p> <p>Making the most of small groups</p> <p>Leveled reading library</p>	√		<p>- Grade level will report results as follows:</p> <p>-Monthly Progress Monitoring</p> <p>-Reports Monthly to Grade Level, IC, SIT and Principal</p>	DIBELS Reading 3D	-Small Groups will be flexible based on results from assessment data from DIBELS and Reading 3D

<p>proficient by May 2010 as measured by the DIBELS Reading Assessment.</p> <p>-Focus on low to bring up -Focus on RR</p>						
<p>Grade <u>2</u> Reality:</p> <p>2nd graders were 38 % proficient in Reading as measured by the DIBELS reading Assessment.</p> <p>Grade <u>2</u> Smart Goal:</p> <p>We will increase 2nd grade reading proficiency from 38% to 80 % proficient by May 2010 as measured by the DIBELS Reading Assessment.</p>	<p>Small group reading- targeting instructional reading level</p> <p>Monthly Progress Monitor using DIBELS</p> <p>Makin Great Readers</p> <p>Making the most of small groups</p> <p>Leveled reading library</p>	√		<p>- Grade level will report results as follows:</p> <p>-Monthly Progress Monitoring</p> <p>-Reports Monthly to Grade Level, IC, SIT and Principal</p>	<p>DIBELS</p> <p>Reading 3D</p>	<p>-Small Groups will be flexible based on results from assessment data from DIBELS and Reading 3D</p>
<p>Grade <u>3</u> Reality:</p> <p>Teachers administered a local reading pretest to take the place of the NC</p>	<p>- Strategically implement Protected time to offer small group instruction to students who need the extra help</p> <p>- Implement</p>	√		<p>Grade level will report results as follows:</p> <p>-Quarterly Assessment</p>	<p>Quarterly Assessment Data</p>	<p>Interventions will be aligned with results from Quarterly Assessment Data. Small group instruction</p>

<p>Pretest</p> <p>1st Quarter: Current Reality: Thirty-three out of 55 third graders scored 50% or higher.</p> <p>Grade <u>3</u> Smart Goal:</p> <p>We will have 3rd grade Reading proficiency to 70% by May 2010 as measured by the EOG Reading Test.</p> <p>1st Quarter Team Goal: Forty-eight out of 55 third graders will score 50% or higher.</p>	<p>Wordly Wise vocabulary strategy to facilitate the development of vocabulary skills</p> <p>-Utilize tutors to help provide small group instruction for all students</p> <p>1st Quarter Reflection: Small reading groups every day</p> <p>Use RUNNERS & QARs with a reading selection once a week</p> <p>Tutors work with reading groups every day</p> <p>Work through 1st quarter reading assessment</p>			<p>Data</p> <p>-Reports Quarterly to Grade Level, IC, SIT and Principal</p>		<p>will be centered on the areas of need for at-risk students</p>
<p>Grade <u>4</u> Reality:</p> <p>4th graders were 52.8 % proficient in Reading as measured by the EOG reading Test.</p> <p>1st Quarter Current Reality: 16 out of 37 fourth graders scored 55% or higher.</p>	<p>- Strategically implement Protected time to offer small group instruction to students who need the extra help</p> <p>- Implement Wordly Wise vocabulary strategy to facilitate the development of vocabulary skills</p>	√		<p>Grade level will report results as follows:</p> <p>-Quarterly Assessment Data</p> <p>-Reports Quarterly to</p>	<p>Quarterly Assessment Data</p>	<p>Interventions will be aligned with results from Quarterly Assessment Data. Small group instruction will be centered on the areas of need for at-risk students</p>

<p>Grade <u>4</u> Smart Goal:</p> <p>We will increase 4th grade reading proficiency from 52.8% to 60 % proficient by May 2010 as measured by the EOG Reading Test.</p> <p>1st Quarter Team Goal: 25 out of 37 fourth graders will score 55% or higher.</p>	<p>-Utilize tutors to help provide small group instruction for all students</p> <p>1st Quarter Reflection Wordly Wise</p> <p>Weekly reading selection from Reading Street</p> <p>RUNNERS & QARs</p>			<p>Grade Level, IC, SIT and Principal</p>		
<p>Grade <u>5</u> Reality:</p> <p>5th graders were 58.9 % proficient in Reading as measured by the EOG reading Test.</p> <p>1st Quarter Current Reality: Thirty-nine percent of fifth graders scored 65% or higher.</p> <p>Grade <u>5</u> Smart Goal:</p>	<p>- Strategically implement Protected time to offer small group instruction to students who need the extra help</p> <p>- Implement Wordly Wise vocabulary strategy to facilitate the development of vocabulary skills</p> <p>-Utilize tutors to help provide small group instruction for all students</p>	√		<p>Grade level will report results as follows:</p> <p>-Quarterly Assessment Data</p> <p>-Reports Quarterly to Grade Level, IC, SIT and Principal</p>	<p>Quarterly Assessment Data</p>	<p>Interventions will be aligned with results from Quarterly Assessment Data. Small group instruction will be centered on the areas of need for at-risk students</p>

<p>We will increase 5th grade reading proficiency from 58.9% to 65 % proficient by May 2010 as measured by the EOG Reading Test.</p> <p>1st Quarter Team Goal: Sixty-four percent of fifth graders will score 65% or higher.</p>	<p>1st Quarter Reflection AR teams</p> <p>Reading conferences daily</p> <p>Comprehension strategies through read aloud, small groups</p> <p>EOG-type selections weekly</p> <p>Data notebooks</p>					
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Signature of Principal/Date Signature of SIT Chair/Date Signature of Superintendent

Plans must be checked and modified quarterly

SIT members must help develop plans.

Original _____ or Amendment # _____

Page _____ of _____

Newton Conover City Schools School Improvement Plan
2008-11 Planning Cycle Year 2

School: Thornton Elementary

- Goal: Globally Competitive Students 21st Century Professionals
 Healthy, Responsible Students Leadership for Innovation
 21st Century Systems

District SMART Objectives: 1.1.1 All schools will meet annual ABC Expected Growth Standards at or above the State Average in all subjects as measured by the EOGs each academic school year.

District Indicator: ABC/AYP data - Growth Calculations

School SMART Objective (Target): We will increase our reading proficiency from 52.9% to 84.4% proficient and achieve Expected Growth Status as measured by the EOGs each academic school year

School Indicator(s): DIBELS Assessments/Quarterly Assessments ABC/AYP,

(PLAN) Team Smart Goal	(DO) Action Steps	Resources Funding Sources		(Study) Person(s) Responsible or committee Reports Quarterly To Whom What are the quarterly results?	What Data sources will be used to support effect-iveness	(ACT) Based upon quarterly results, should/how should strategies be changed
		On Site	Need			

<p>Grade <u>Kindergarten</u> Reality:</p> <p>Kindergarteners were 23% proficient in Reading Readiness as measured by the DIBELS reading Assessment.</p> <p>Grade <u>Kindergarten</u> Smart Goal:</p> <p>We will increase kindergarten reading proficiency from 23% to 50 % proficient by May 2010 as measured by the DIBELS Reading Assessment.</p>	<p>Small group reading</p> <p>Monthly Progress Monitor using DIBELS</p> <p>Making Great Readers</p> <p>Making the most of small groups</p> <p>Leveled reading library</p>	√		<p>Grade level will report results as follows:</p> <p>-Monthly Progress Monitoring</p> <p>-Reports Monthly to Grade Level, IC, SIT and Principal</p>	<p>DIBELS</p> <p>Reading 3D</p>	<p>-Small Groups will be flexible based on results from assessment data from DIBELS and Reading 3D</p>
<p>Grade <u>1</u> Reality:</p> <p>1st graders were 50 % proficient in Reading as measured by the DIBELS reading Assessment.</p>	<p>Small group reading</p> <p>Monthly Progress Monitor using DIBELS</p>	√		<p>- Grade level will report results as follows:</p> <p>-Monthly Progress Monitoring</p>	<p>DIBELS</p> <p>Reading 3D</p>	<p>-Small Groups will be flexible based on results from assessment data from DIBELS and Reading 3D</p>

<p>Grade <u>1</u> Smart Goal:</p> <p>We will increase 1st grade reading proficiency from 50% to 70% proficient by May 2010 as measured by the DIBELS Reading Assessment.</p>	<p>Makin Great Readers</p> <p>Making the most of small groups</p> <p>Leveled reading library</p>			<p>-Reports Monthly to Grade Level, IC, SIT and Principal</p>		
<p>Grade <u>2</u> Reality:</p> <p>2nd graders were 50% proficient in Reading as measured by the DIBELS reading Assessment.</p> <p>Grade <u>2</u> Smart Goal:</p> <p>We will increase 2nd grade reading proficiency from 50% to 80% proficient by May 2010 as measured by the DIBELS Reading Assessment.</p>	<p>Small group reading-targeting instructional reading level</p> <p>Monthly Progress Monitor using DIBELS</p> <p>Makin Great Readers</p> <p>Making the most of small groups</p> <p>Leveled reading library</p>	√		<p>- Grade level will report results as follows:</p> <p>-Monthly Progress Monitoring</p> <p>-Reports Monthly to Grade Level, IC, SIT and Principal</p>	<p>DIBELS</p> <p>Reading 3D</p>	<p>-Small Groups will be flexible based on results from assessment data from DIBELS and Reading 3D</p>

<p>Grade <u>3</u> Reality:</p> <p>Teachers administered a local reading pretest to take the place of the NC Pretest</p> <p>Grade <u>3</u> Smart Goal:</p> <p>We will have 3rd grade Reading proficiency to 80% by May 2010 as measured by the EOG Reading Test.</p>	<p>- Strategically implement Protected time to offer small group instruction to students who need the extra help</p> <p>- Implement Wordly Wise vocabulary strategy to facilitate the development of vocabulary skills</p>	√		<p>Grade level will report results as follows:</p> <p>-Quarterly Assessment Data</p> <p>-Reports Quarterly to Grade Level, IC, SIT and Principal</p>	<p>Quarterly Assessment Data</p>	<p>Interventions will be aligned with results from Quarterly Assessment Data. Small group instruction will be centered on the areas of need for at-risk students</p>
<p>Grade <u>4</u> Reality:</p> <p>4th graders were 63.8 % proficient in Reading as measured by the EOG reading Test.</p> <p>Grade <u>4</u> Smart Goal:</p> <p>We will increase 4th grade reading</p>	<p>- Strategically implement Protected time to offer small group instruction to students who need the extra help</p> <p>- Implement Wordly Wise vocabulary strategy to facilitate the development of vocabulary</p>	√		<p>Grade level will report results as follows:</p> <p>-Quarterly Assessment Data</p> <p>-Reports Quarterly to Grade Level, IC, SIT and Principal</p>	<p>Quarterly Assessment Data</p>	<p>Interventions will be aligned with results from Quarterly Assessment Data. Small group instruction will be centered on the areas of need for at-risk students</p>

<p>proficiency from 63.8% to 80% proficient by May 2010 as measured by the EOG Reading Test.</p>	<p>skills</p>					
<p>Grade <u>5</u> Reality: 5th graders were 65.9 % proficient in Reading as measured by the EOG reading Test. Grade <u>5</u> Smart Goal: We will increase 5th grade reading proficiency from 65.9% to 75 % proficient by May 2010 as measured by the EOG Reading Test.</p>	<p>- Strategically implement Protected time to offer small group instruction to students who need the extra help - Implement Wordly Wise vocabulary strategy to facilitate the development of vocabulary skills -Utilize tutors to help provide small group instruction for all students</p>	<p>√</p>		<p>Grade level will report results as follows: -Quarterly Assessment Data -Reports Quarterly to Grade Level, IC, SIT and Principal</p>	<p>Quarterly Assessment Data</p>	<p>Interventions will be aligned with results from Quarterly Assessment Data. Small group instruction will be centered on the areas of need for at-risk students</p>

Signature of Principal/Date Signature of SIT Chair/Date Signature of Superintendent

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SIT members must help develop plans