

5-2016

# Program Evaluation of the Direct Instruction Reading Interventions: Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading

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Program Evaluation of the Direct Instruction Reading Interventions: Reading Mastery  
and Corrective Reading

By  
Nita M. Jarvis

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  
2016

## Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Nita Jarvis under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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## **Abstract**

Program Evaluation of the Direct Instruction Reading Interventions: Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. Jarvis, Nita M., 2016: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Reading Interventions/Phonics/Direct Instruction/Reading Mastery/Corrective Reading/CIPP Model

The purpose of this program evaluation was to evaluate the Direct Instruction programs, Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading, from SRA McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, which were being used as a school-wide reading intervention. These programs were implemented at a small elementary school in the piedmont area of North Carolina beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. This elementary school had not been able to meet state-mandated reading proficiency requirements for more than 10 years and hoped the Direct Instruction reading program intervention would improve student reading proficiency scores as evidenced by end-of-grade test scores in reading and Diagnostic Reading Assessments.

The CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) Model was used as the evaluation tool for this program evaluation. Research questions were related to the Context of the problem for which the program was addressing, the Input or resources available to address the problem and any strategies that had been tried, the Process or implementation of the program, and the Product or outcomes of the program.

This program evaluation was made available to the elementary school's administrators to use in determining the effectiveness of the reading interventions on their students' reading abilities. Information from the evaluation could be used to make decisions regarding the continuation of the program or the consideration of changes within the program's implementation. Other elementary school administrators who may be considering the use of Reading Mastery, Corrective Reading, or other programs within their own schools may also use results from this study to determine appropriate implementation practices and whether or not these particular programs may be effective in their schools.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **The Problem**

For children in a literate society, learning to read is a key milestone. It is a critical skill that leads to academic success (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001). Reading is a complex activity and involves a number of skills that must be used simultaneously in order for students to make sense of the letters they see on the page. Learning to read and comprehending what is being read are major focuses of learning in the elementary grades. Not only is learning to read important to students' academic well-being but it is also important to their psychological well-being (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, & Tarver, 2004). Lingo, Slaton, and Jolivette (2006) and Whitehurst and Lonigan (2001) considered a student's inability to read a major predictor of future academic failure as well as failure in life functions. The National Reading Panel's (2000) report concluded that it was imperative that at-risk students be identified early and provided with interventions in reading before they fall too far behind their peers (p. 2). In addition, Bursuck and Blanks (2010) suggested that 30-60% of students will fall behind their peers in reading if they are not provided with evidence-based instruction in reading (p. 422).

According to the National Research Council's (1998) Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children, children spend first grade learning to read and fourth grade and beyond reading to learn (p. 207). Most importantly, however, "second grade is broadly viewed as children's last chance. Those who are not on track by third grade have little chance of ever catching up" (National Research Council, 1998, p. 212). In their study on treatment programs for improving reading fluency, Begeny and Silber (2006) also discussed the importance of students acquiring the ability to read fluently before beginning fourth grade. They indicated that failure to

learn to read fluently in the early grades was a major predictor of future school difficulties. They referred to a report from the National Center for Education Statistics (2004) which found that 37% of fourth-grade students in the United States were reading below grade level and that 26% of these students were still below grade level in the eighth grade. In addition, Juel (2006) echoed these findings in her work with initial reading skills in students. She found that 88% of children who were behind their peers in reading skills at the end of first grade remained behind their peers through fourth grade and that 75% of those who were behind their peers then remained so throughout their school careers. The work of Bursuck and his colleagues (Bursuck & Blanks, 2010; Bursuck, Munk, Nelson, & Curran, 2002; Bursuck, Smith, Munk, Damer, Mehlig, & Perry, 2004) showed that effective reading instruction needs to begin early for students; and in order to make a difference for them, it needs to focus on phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, reading fluency, the understanding of vocabulary, and the use and understanding of connected text. In addition, Bursuck et al. (2004) stated that if reading programs are to be effective, they need to be prevention-based; highly intensive; and employ the use of a research-based curriculum which is focused on the explicit instruction of the five components of reading which are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; and use a reliable curriculum-based method for collecting data to be used for making decisions (p. 312).

Based on the research above, this program evaluation sought to determine the effectiveness of a reading intervention program on the reading abilities of students in an elementary school located in the piedmont area of North Carolina. The intervention program included the use of the Science Research Associates (SRA) programs Reading Mastery for students in kindergarten through Grade 2 and Corrective Reading for



students in Grades 3 through 5. Students in the school had been performing below expected levels in reading and the school's new principal decided to use the programs as a reading intervention for all students. This program evaluation examined the school's historical reading data, reasons for the decisions made, and the data regarding the effectiveness of the programs to meet the goals of the program and the school.

### **Nature of the Problem**

The National Reading Panel (2000) defined the five components of reading as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (pp. 2-3). Stahl and Murray (2006) defined phonological awareness as the awareness of sounds in spoken words (p. 92; Murray, 2006, p. 114). This awareness allows one to hear rhymes, syllables, and subword parts. Phonics is the knowledge that sounds are represented by letters (Juel, 2006; Stahl, 2006); and much reading instruction involves learning which sounds are represented by what letters, or developing decoding skills. Being able to decode words and blend sound-letter correspondences quickly determines a child's reading fluency. Fluency allows readers to read words accurately and effortlessly and use appropriate intonation. This type of fluency allows readers to use more of their cognitive resources for comprehending the text being read (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2006). Also important to understanding the text being read is the understanding of vocabulary. Even if a child is able to correctly decode each word in a sentence, if the words being used are unfamiliar, there is incomplete comprehension (Biemiller, 2006). In order for students to achieve a high level of reading comprehension, there must be both word recognition and understanding or vocabulary knowledge (Biemiller, 2006, p. 41). All of these components (phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary), when combined, lead to reading comprehension.

Stockard and Engelmann (2010) concluded that reading is a developmental activity and higher order skills (fluency and comprehension) depend on the acquisition of the more basic skills (phonemic awareness and phonics). When students are able to blend and decode words, they are able to participate in reading practice which then leads to reading fluency. In turn, reading fluency is critical to reading comprehension. It is not enough to be able to decode the words; there must also be a complete understanding of the meaning implied by the word being read in order for comprehension to take place (Adams, 2001, p. 75).

The Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children considered the second and third grades to be a critical time for students to make the transition from learning to read to reading to learn (National Reading Council, 1998). They stated that students' higher order comprehension skills could be affected by their automaticity of lower-level reading skills such as decoding (National Research Council, 1998, p. 210). When much of student reading was spent decoding the words on the page, much of the comprehension was lost. For this reason, the National Research Council (1998) recommended that in order for students to become proficient readers, they would need support in both fluency (decoding) and comprehension (p. 216). Rasinski and Hoffman (2006) agreed with this in their research (p. 169). They concluded that readers have a certain amount of cognitive resources to be used during reading, and comprehension suffers when more resources are needed for word decoding. They further stated, "Before readers can fully marshal their cognitive resources to the task of comprehending the text they must automatize their word decoding" (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2006, p. 172). Rasinski and Hoffman's conclusion that "reading fluency may be at the heart of reading comprehension problems for a substantial number of students"

is at the center of this program evaluation (p. 170).

In the introduction to their study on the impact of Reading Mastery on the reading abilities of students from kindergarten through Grade 3, Stockard and Engelmann (2010) indicated that student success in reading must be built on a foundation of early literacy skills and most specifically reading fluency (p. 4). These early literacy skills include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension. Begeny and Silber (2006) echoed Stockard and Engelmann in their study on the effects of group-based treatment packages to increase student reading abilities, stating, “oral reading fluency has been described as an important link between word decoding and passage comprehension” (p. 184). Both of these studies examined the effects of improving student decoding skills in order to increase their reading fluency. In each study, students were able to make gains in their reading fluency as a result of reading interventions designed to increase the students’ decoding skills. This program evaluation examined the effects of a direct instruction reading intervention program on the decoding and reading fluency skills of students in an elementary school serving students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Each year, teachers and students are held accountable for the teaching and learning that has taken place during the school year. Most often, this is accomplished through the use of standardized tests in reading and math. In North Carolina, these tests begin in Grade 3 and continue until the student graduates from high school. The North Carolina end-of-grade (EOG) test determines a student’s reading proficiency; and a teacher’s effectiveness is determined, in part, by her students’ performances on this test and those tests for other content areas. Third-grade teachers are expected to ensure all of their students are reading and comprehending on grade level by the end of the school year

regardless of the students' proficiency levels when they enter the third grade. The problem that teachers face is that not all of their third-grade students left second grade at a proficient reading level. As of the 2012-2013 school year, North Carolina had no state-mandated reading proficiency test for students in kindergarten through second grade. Each school system determined how their students' reading abilities would be measured in these grade levels. This changed in the 2013-2014 school year when North Carolina began requiring all students in third grade to meet the standards of the Read to Achieve (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2011) legislation and all students in kindergarten through Grade 2 to meet reading proficiency standards determined by mClass reading measures. The Read to Achieve legislation requires that all students in third grade show proficiency in reading. Students may show reading proficiency by showing mastery on the beginning-of-grade reading test given at the beginning of the third-grade year, or the EOG reading test given at the end of third grade, or by showing mastery through the completion of a reading portfolio during the third-grade year. In addition, during the 2013-2014 school year, kindergarten through third grade began to be assessed on their reading skills using the mClass assessment tools provided by the Amplify Company. These online assessments measure student phonological skills, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. They can also be used as a form of accountability for teachers as well as students.

### **Background and Significance of the Problem**

The participants in this study were kindergarten through fifth-grade students who attended a Title I elementary school in the piedmont of North Carolina. For purposes of this study, the school was known as Elementary School. Title I schools receive additional federal funds due to their low socioeconomic status as determined by the

percentage of students who receive free and reduced-price lunches. At Elementary School, 87.7% of the students qualified for the lunch program in the 2012-2013 school year. The school demographics are found in Table 1.

Table 1

*Elementary School Demographics*

Demographic	Number of Students	Percent of Total
Total	430	100
African American	252	59
White	84	20
Multi-Racial	17	4
Hispanic	65	15
Asian	12	3
Economically Disadvantaged	377	88
Limited English Proficient	56	13
Students with Disabilities	52	12

During the 2011-2012 school year, Elementary School had three different principals. The final principal became the new permanent principal of the school. The new principal's focus was to improve student academic performance as measured by reading and math proficiency scores. The students had been making some progress as evidenced by the school's Annual Yearly Progress scores; however, its proficiency scores remained low, especially in reading. Table 2 shows the results of the school's test scores over the past 10 years as reported on the North Carolina School Report Cards (2002-2011). Table 3 shows the end-of-year reading running record and math proficiency

results for second-grade students over the past 3 years. Reading proficiency scores were low for this grade during these years as well.

Table 2

*Reading and Math Proficiency Scores for Grades 3-5*

School Year	Reading			Math		
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
2011-2012	55.1%	59.3%	44.4%	79.6%	79.7%	52.4%
2010-2011	57.1%	54.5%	52.6%	68.3%	71.2%	57.7%
2009-2010	45.6%	46.9%	57.1%	61.8%	67.9%	64.3%
2008-2009	43.4%	43.9%	46.1%	55.4%	64.2%	53.1%
2007-2008	32.1%	33.8%	35.3%	38.1%	38.8%	45.9%
2006-2007	75%	74.4%	84.4%	52.4%	36.6%	51.1%
2005-2006	68%	77.4%	84.5%	36.6%	42.4%	39.3%
2004-2005	78%	82.9%	83.9%	69.2%	81.6%	84.9%
2003-2004	84.5%	77.5%	89.1%	84.5%	87.5%	87.5%

Table 3

*End-of-Year Reading and Math Proficiencies for Grade 2*

School Year	Reading Proficiency	Math Proficiency
2011-2012	42%	51%
2010-2011	48%	53%
2009-2010	46%	57%

The new principal determined the school needed a school-wide reading program to address the students' poor reading abilities. Teachers were providing core instruction in reading using only the reading basal textbooks and materials. Some remedial reading services were being provided to a small number of students by three Title I tutors during the school day. In order to address the school-wide needs in reading, the principal chose to implement the SRA programs Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. The McGraw-Hill Publishing Company publishes these reading programs. Reading Mastery is used with students in kindergarten through second grade, and Corrective Reading is used in elementary schools for Grades 3 through 5. The programs were implemented in the 2012-2013 school year.

Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading programs are phonics-based and focus on student abilities to encode and decode words fluently. The new principal had experience with these programs at a previous school. Students there seemed to improve their reading abilities after the implementation of the SRA reading programs. The principal expected to have similar results at Elementary School.

### **Problem Study**

Elementary School was in need of improving its students' reading scores. The principal decided to implement the reading programs Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading for students in kindergarten through Grade 2 and students in Grades 3 through 5 respectively. This program evaluation considered the effectiveness and impact of these programs on the student reading scores. The academic and psychological aspects of the programs were both considered. The CIPP model was used as the evaluation model because school decision makers considered using the information provided by the program evaluation in order to make future decisions. Feedback was provided to the

principal and School Improvement Team members as they considered the ongoing use of these programs.

### **Study Methodology**

Prior to the beginning of the school year, the school's principal created a master schedule that included a dedicated time each day for the implementation and instruction of the SRA reading programs. All staff members received training by an SRA consultant on the proper implementation of the reading programs. Staff includes teachers, teacher assistants, resource teachers, the curriculum coach, media specialist, and school administrators. A core team was trained on how to administer the placement tests given to the students. These tests determined at what level the students were placed in the program. All students in the school were given the placement tests. The SRA consultant assisted in this process and trained the school's assistant principal on how to evaluate the placement tests and make decisions on student groupings. Materials were ordered, and the program was implemented once they arrived. Each day during their designated SRA instruction time, students in each grade level moved into their SRA groups and received 45 minutes of scripted reading instruction. This instruction incorporated lessons in letter-sound correspondences, blending of sounds, decoding of words, vocabulary, oral reading, comprehension, and writing. Lessons were sequential, fast-paced, and required both oral and written responses from students. Mastery tests to determine student progress were administered after every 20 lessons, and timed readings were done on a regular basis to determine reading fluency for each student.

Once SRA reading lessons had been taking place for about a month, the SRA consultant returned to Elementary School to assess the progress of the program and provide feedback to the staff. Feedback was provided individually and whole group. The



assistant principal and curriculum coach were trained on how to conduct fidelity checks. The second visit included the training of staff on the collection and use of data from the reading programs. The SRA consultant continued to return to the school throughout the school year in order to provide additional feedback, guidance, and training.

The assistant principal and curriculum coach spent each follow-up visit with the SRA consultant in order to further their own training in the program. This also helped them to further their understanding of the program's implementation and how they could assist teachers. The final follow-up visits were used to provide training to the assistant principal on how to understand and analyze the data being collected and how to assist teachers in the proper use of the data collection tools. In addition, the SRA consultant answered the questions the assistant principal and principal had about further implementation of the programs throughout the remainder of the school year and into the next school year. The SRA consultant provided the school administrators with guidance on the use of the data collected in order to make further decisions regarding the reading programs.

### **Study Timeline**

This program evaluation was conducted during the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 school years. These years were considered the initial implementation period for the reading intervention SRA programs Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. Baseline data were collected in August 2012 from first- through third-grade student Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) scores at the end of their previous grade. The same assessments were conducted again in the spring of 2013 for comparison purposes and to determine student growth in reading for the school year. The DRA assessment used a running record score to determine student reading levels. After the first year of

the reading program implementation, the state's department of public instruction required all elementary schools to use the mClass reading assessments from Amplify to determine student reading levels. These were also running record assessments. These assessments were used in the second and third years to determine additional student growth in reading. The SRA programs included the collection of data on the number of lessons completed each month and the progress students were making based on mastery tests, workbook grades, and timed readings. The SRA consultant and the school's assistant principal reviewed these data.

An SRA consultant trained teachers in the implementation of the program in August of the first year. Students were administered placement tests in September 2012, and the program implementation began in October 2012. The SRA consultant provided fidelity checks, follow-up visits, and additional training monthly. The final follow-up visit for the first year took place in March 2013. Additional visits were scheduled in July 2013 for the next school year. These visits were designed to provide additional training and support to any new teachers and for those who were in need of additional support. Fidelity checks were also conducted during these visits.

Surveys of the staff and students were conducted in order to determine adult and student perceptions of the program. Student perceptions of the program and their reading achievements provided insight into the psychological impact of the programs.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this program evaluation was to determine whether or not the SRA reading programs implemented at Elementary School were effective in addressing the problem of low-proficiency scores in reading at the school and the need to improve student reading abilities. Reading scores presented previously served as baseline scores.

Data collected during the program and district and state benchmark reading data were also collected and used to determine the impact of the program on student reading abilities. At the start of this evaluation, the new principal indicated that if the results indicated the SRA reading programs were having a positive impact on student reading abilities, Elementary School would most likely continue to use the programs. He also indicated that if the results showed the SRA reading programs were having little to no positive impact on student reading abilities, the school would probably consider discontinuing the programs or revising the existing program based on the information provided from this evaluation. Research on how fidelity and intensity impact the program's effectiveness provided additional insight for the school's administrative team and others as well. Teacher and student perception data were collected and analyzed as well. This information was also provided to the administrators to be used to inform decision making.

The decision to implement the SRA reading programs at Elementary School was made in order to improve student reading scores. The initial cost to implement the program was over \$20,000, which included teacher materials, student materials, training, and expert consultation visits. Ongoing costs were estimated to be between \$5,000 and \$10,000 yearly for replacement of consumable materials and additional consultant visits and training. Actual costs were within this range. An additional purpose of this program evaluation was to provide Elementary School's administrative team with information they could use in order to make sound fiscal decisions on the continued use of the program.

In addition to the purposes already given, this program evaluation also added to the literature available on the use of Direct Instruction. Many studies address the

effectiveness of Direct Instruction on the reading abilities of at-risk students. The populations for these studies are usually targeted groups of students within a school or several schools. This evaluation addressed the effectiveness of Direct Instruction on an entire student population for one elementary school. Studies of this kind are sparse.

Future school decision makers can use the information from this program evaluation when making determinations about implementing reading programs at their schools. Teachers can use the information from this evaluation in their practice as educators. Direct Instruction research is most often directed at reading (Carnine et al., 2004), but Direct Instruction can be used to teach any content area. Educators can apply information gained from this program evaluation to the instruction of any content area and program implementation.

### **History of SRA Instruction**

SRA is a reading intervention program developed in 1968 by Siegfried Engelmann and was originally known as DISTAR (Direct Instruction System for Teaching Arithmetic and Reading) (Carnine et al., 2004). Houghton-Mifflin and later McGraw-Hill Publishing Companies bought the program, which is now known as SRA. It uses explicit and direct instruction with small groups of children to improve their reading skills. All lessons are scripted and follow specific procedures for presentation. Reading Mastery is the series devoted to students in kindergarten through second grade. Its focus is on developing students' fluid use of decoding and encoding skills through explicit instruction in phonics and letter-sound knowledge (McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 2013). Corrective Reading is the series for students beginning in Grade 3 and continuing through adult learners. It continues to develop student decoding skills while adding comprehension components (McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 2013). Each

series has three levels within the program. Students are given a screening assessment in order to determine their appropriate beginning placement level for instruction. Their progress is monitored throughout the program through both written and oral assessments. The program aims for mastery of reading skills and the ability to decode letter sounds that have been taught, and data are collected throughout the program in order to determine the level of student mastery. Students can be moved within the levels as needed, based on their progress or lack thereof.

Direct Instruction lessons are designed to encompass all five reading components (phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). Lessons are fast-paced and sequenced with easier and foundational skills being taught before others (Carnine et al., 2004). Teachers use scripts to ask and answer questions. Students are taught to respond on signal either individually or in unison. Workbooks for skill practice and student reading books for fluency practice are both part of the program. All stories use words that contain the letter sounds that students have already learned and mastered. This provides students the opportunity to practice reading fluency and reading comprehension as well as discuss vocabulary that may be new or unfamiliar to the students (Carnine et al., 2004).

### **CIPP Program Evaluation Model**

This program evaluation used Stufflebeam's CIPP model (McLemore, 2009) to evaluate the effectiveness of the SRA programs on improving the reading abilities of students at Elementary School. This model is designed to provide program evaluations to stakeholders in order to make decisions about the continuance or changing of the programs. The CIPP model involves four aspects of the evaluation process. These provide the name for the model. They are Context, Input, Process, and Product. CIPP

evaluations consider the Context of the problem for which the program needs to be implemented in order to address the problem. The Input portion of the evaluation considers what resources are available to address the problem and what strategies previously have been used to attempt to solve the problem. The Process phase of the CIPP evaluation considers the implementation of the program and the fidelity of the implementation. The final phase, Product, examines the outcomes of the program and how well the program met the goals it sought to achieve. At the conclusion of this program evaluation, the information and analyses from the program evaluation were available to be used to determine how and if the SRA programs continued to be used at Elementary School.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the use of the CIPP model of evaluation, this program evaluation focused on the following research questions.

#### **Context**

*What needed to be done?*

1. What were the academic issues that created a need for a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?
  - a. What data were used to identify the need for a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?
  - b. What were the administrators' perceptions related to student academic issues that lead to the establishment of a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?
  - c. What were the teachers' perceptions related to student academic issues that lead to the establishment of a school-wide reading program to

improve reading proficiency?

## Input

*How should it have been done?*

2. What reading intervention programs were examined prior to making the decision to use Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading?
  - a. Who were the stakeholders involved in the decision-making process?
  - b. What data were used in the decision-making process?
  - c. What were the perceptions of the various stakeholders involved in making the determination of which reading program to use?
3. Were there any barriers that needed to be addressed prior to the implementation of the reading intervention program?

## Process

*Was it done?*

4. What steps were involved in the implementation of the reading intervention program?
  - a. What type of training was provided to teachers?
  - b. How were teachers' questions handled during the program implementation and what types of questions arose?
  - c. What were teachers' perceptions of the training and support provided to them for program implementation?
  - d. What were teachers' perceptions of the various strategies and activities within the reading intervention program?
  - e. What were the students' perceptions of the various strategies and activities within the program?

5. What process was used to determine the goals of the program?
  - a. What were the academic goals?
  - b. Were there any non-academic goals and if so, what were they?
  - c. Who were the stakeholders involved in this process?
  - d. What were the stakeholders' perceptions of this process?
6. How was the fidelity of the program implementation determined?
7. Were adjustments made to the program during its implementation?
  - a. What were the adjustments?
  - b. Why were they needed?
  - c. What data were used in determining how to adjust the program?

#### Product

*Did it succeed?*

8. What was the impact of the reading intervention program on the reading benchmark scores for students at Elementary School?
  - a. What was the impact of the reading program on reading scores for students in kindergarten through second grade as evidenced by their running records?
  - b. What was the impact of the reading program on reading scores for students in grades three through five as evidenced by their EOG Reading Test scores?
  - c. After examining the impact data, what were the perceptions of the teachers and administrators?
9. Were there any unexpected impacts from the implementation of the reading intervention program?



- a. What were the unexpected impacts?
  - b. What were the stakeholders' perceptions of these unexpected impacts?
10. Were there differences in the effectiveness of the reading intervention at different grade levels?
- a. If there were differences, what were they?
  - b. Does any data exist that could be used to explain these differences and if so, what is it?
11. Does Elementary School plan to continue the use of the reading intervention program?
- a. Who are the stakeholders involved in the process of making this decision?
  - b. What data and evidence will be used in determining the continuation of the program?
  - c. What types of resources will Elementary School need if the program is to be continued?
12. Did the reading intervention program meet the goals determined by Elementary School?
13. What factors had an impact on the effectiveness of the reading intervention program?

### **Definition of Terms**

The definitions or explanations for the following terms are provided as they were used for this program evaluation.

**Alphabetic principle.** The knowledge that written letters in words represent sounds (Bursuck et al., 2002, p. 5).

**Automaticity.** The ability to perform a skill instantly and without obvious

thought (National Research Council, 1998).

**Cognitive apprenticeship.** An instructional approach that attempts to create a master-apprentice relationship between the teacher and student. The teacher provides the student with scaffolding learning opportunities while withdrawing support as the student's skills grow (Ryder, Burton, & Silberg, 2006, p. 179).

**Corrective Reading.** A remedial reading program published by SRA McGraw-Hill Publishing Company. It addresses the reading needs of students beginning in Grade 3 through adults. Its lessons are scripted and targeted at fluent decoding of words in order to increase reading fluency and comprehension (McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 2013).

**Decoding.** The aspect of the reading process that involves using one's knowledge of letter sounds to derive the pronunciation of a word (National Research Council, 1998, p. 52).

**Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS).** A data tracking system created by the University of Oregon. It allows teachers to monitor student progress in reading on the five components of reading. Assessments are short, usually 1 minute in length. DIBELS literacy assessments measure the following student literacy abilities: Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) which is naming upper and lower case letters; First Sound Fluency (FSF) which is naming initial word sounds presented orally; Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) which is separating orally presented words into their individual phonemes; Nonsense Word Fluency (NSF) which is blending phonemes represented by letters into words; and Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) which is a longer assessment that measures a student's ability to fluently and accurately read a text (Center on Teaching and Learning, 2013).

**Direct instruction.** A teaching model in which teachers teach skills in small steps with student practice after each step with guidance from the teacher which leads to high rates of student success during practice. When used in lower case letters, direct instruction is a teaching method and not a program (Carnine et al., 2004).

**Direct Instruction.** A teaching technique based on the work of Sigfried Engelmann. Instruction takes place in small groups and follows a specific sequence of phonetically-based skills. Lessons are teacher-directed, scripted, and fast paced. When used as a proper noun, Direct Instruction is considered to be a program (Stahl, 2001, p. 336).

**DRA.** Developmental Reading Assessment is published by Pearson Company. It is an assessment used by teachers to measure a student's reading ability based on the accuracy and fluency at which the student reads a leveled text as well as the proficiency with which the student is able to retell what has been read.

**Encoding.** The ability to hear phonemes and use letter sound knowledge to spell words (Phillips & Torgesen, 2006, p. 102).

**EOG tests.** Tests in reading, math, and science given to North Carolina students at the end of Grades 3 through 8. These tests are used to determine student growth and proficiency in the areas tested.

**Explicit instruction.** Instruction that is clear and focused, leaving no room for confusion (Adams, 2001, p. 75).

**Fluency.** The ability to read text automatically and quickly with prosody (voice intonation) (Phillips & Torgesen, 2006, p. 104).

**mClass.** Online reading assessment, reporting, and monitoring system used by North Carolina teachers in kindergarten through third grade. It uses DIBELS measures

and assessments to determine student reading proficiencies.

**Phoneme.** The individual sound units of which words are made (National Research Council, 1998, p. 52).

**Phoneme segmentation.** The ability to break a word into its individual sounds or phonemes (National Research Council, 1998, p. 52).

**Phonemic awareness.** The understanding and awareness that words are made up of individual sounds (phonemes) and the features of these sounds (Phillips & Torgesen, 2006, p. 102).

**Phonics.** The instruction of letter sound correspondence also known as the alphabetic principle. Helps students to understand that letters and sounds are related in predictable ways and that this knowledge can be used to read words (Juel, 2006, p. 422).

**Prosody.** The appropriate intonation and voice inflection used when fluently reading a text (Phillips & Torgesen, 2006, p. 105).

**Reading Mastery.** A remedial reading program published by SRA McGraw-Hill Publishing Company. It addresses the reading needs of students in kindergarten through Grade 2. Its lessons are scripted, based on the alphabetic principle, and targeted at fluent decoding of words in order to increase reading fluency and comprehension (McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 2013).

**Reading Success.** A supplemental reading program published by SRA McGraw-Hill Publishing Company. It provides specific instruction in reading comprehension skills for students beginning at third grade and continuing through adulthood (McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 2013).

**Scaffolding.** A term used to describe a system of support provided to learners by an expert or teacher. This type of support provides the learner with just the support

needed to accomplish each level of learning and move to the next level of learning or understanding. As the learner gains knowledge and skill, the expert gradually withdraws the support so the student is able to function independently (Bursuck & Blanks, 2010, p. 424).

**TRC.** Text Reading Comprehension is part of the mClass reading assessment program. It uses running records from student readings and their written responses to measure comprehension. Students are then assigned a reading level based on the accuracy of their running record and their ability to retell what has been read.

### **Summary**

Whitehurst and Lonigan (2001) stated, “It is not an exaggeration to say that the prevention of reading difficulties is a matter of survival for many children” (p. 12). Elementary School serves students from low socioeconomic families; and for many of them, reading is a very important skill they need to acquire. According to Juel (2006), schools have a small window of opportunity to ensure students are able to read well and alleviate achievement gaps. This opportunity occurs in the early elementary grades. Juel also stated that this time is also very important because the self-esteem of students has not yet been damaged by their academic struggles. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers ensure students are able to read well before they enter the upper grades in elementary school. To this end, Elementary School sought to make a difference for its students by implementing Direct Instruction in reading for its students. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the Direct Instruction programs Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading on improving the reading abilities of students in kindergarten through Grade 5 at Elementary School as evidenced by their end-of-year reading scores. The information from this program evaluation was

provided to the school's administrative team so it could be used to make appropriate decisions regarding the continued use of these programs. The CIPP model of evaluation was used as the guide for this program evaluation. The next chapter provides additional information on the components of reading, Direct Instruction, and the CIPP model of evaluation and shows the research that supports this study.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this program evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of a reading intervention program on improving the reading test scores of students at an elementary school in North Carolina. It also provided additional research and information on implementing school-wide reading intervention programs and how Direct Instruction can be used to improve student achievement. In this study, the school known as Elementary School serves students in kindergarten through fifth grade and also has a preschool class for children with disabilities. The enrollment for the school over the past 10 years has averaged around 400 students. It is a Title I school which means that more than 35% of the students receive free or reduced lunches. The school's actual percentage is above 80%. The demographics of the school include African-American, Caucasian, Multi-Racial, Hispanic, and Asian students with the majority of the student population being African American. Five principals served Elementary School from the 2007-2008 school year until the 2011-2012 school year when the current principal was appointed. During this same time period, the school's test scores in reading ranged from 32.1% proficient to 55.1% proficient. Elementary School was making growth in its reading proficiency test scores, but it was still below North Carolina state standards for reading. The new principal decided that Elementary School would establish a school-wide reading intervention program to address the reading needs of the students in all grade levels. He chose to use the reading programs Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading from SRA and published by the McGraw-Hill Publishing Company. These reading programs use direct instruction techniques and were originally developed by Siegfried Engelmann. This evaluation examined the implementation of these reading programs at Elementary

School and analyzed the effectiveness of the programs on improving student reading scores.

As previously stated, reading is a complex activity. The National Reading Panel (2000) defined reading as including the following behaviors: reading real words in context or isolation, reading pseudowords that the reader can decode and pronounce but have no actual meaning, reading a text orally or silently, and comprehending the text being read either orally or silently (p. 5). Most states have some type of proficiency standards for reading that students are expected to meet. North Carolina begins testing their students' reading proficiency levels in third grade. For more than 10 years, Elementary School has been unable to meet state-mandated guidelines for reading proficiency in North Carolina. The school's principal implemented a reading program from SRA McGraw-Hill Publishing Company in an effort to improve student achievement in reading. This chapter focuses on the research in the areas of reading and Direct Instruction as well as the evaluation method used to determine the effectiveness of program implementation.

Many elementary-aged students in this country are unable to fluently read grade-level text (Begeny & Silber, 2006, p. 183; National Reading Panel, 2000). This inability to read is considered to be a major predictor of failure in school and in turn a major predictor of failures throughout one's life (Lingo et al., 2006). Juel (2006) echoed the findings of Begeny and Silber (2006) in her study on the impact of early school experiences on students' initial reading abilities (p. 410). Juel quoted the National Assessment of Educational Process's 2003 results that showed that 37% of fourth-grade students nationwide had reading proficiency scores below grade level, and the percentage for students from low-income families was even higher. Juel also noted that children



who were not on grade level in reading with their peers by the end of first grade remained behind their peers throughout their school careers (p. 410). Juel stated that schools “have a window in school to help children succeed at learning to read before their self-esteem is seriously eroded or they stop even trying to learn, feeling they simply can’t do it” (p. 416). Bursuck et al. (2004) stated that in order to make a difference for children, effective reading instruction needs to begin early and focus on phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, reading fluency, the understanding of vocabulary, and the use and understanding of connected text. Bursuck et al. further postulated that in order for these programs to be effective, they need to be prevention-based, highly intensive, employ the use of a research-based curriculum focused on the explicit instruction of the five components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), and use a reliable curriculum-based method for collecting data to be used for making decisions (p. 312).

Stockard and Engelmann (2010) confirmed Juel’s (2006) statement in the introduction to their article on the impact of Reading Mastery. In this article, they referred to a number of research studies which indicate that students who are performing below grade level at the end of first grade are more likely to have later academic, social, and emotional problems than their peers (p. 2). They indicated that these research findings have promoted attention to reading achievement in first grade. In addition, the National Reading Panel (2000) report concluded that it was imperative for at-risk students to be identified early and provided with interventions in reading before they fall too far behind their peers (p. 2). In fact, the identification of at-risk students and providing them with reading interventions so that all children are able to read independently by the end of third grade has come to national attention as evidenced by

legislation such as No Child Left Behind (Bursuck et al., 2002). Bursuck et al. (2002) referred to research which shows that children who are at risk for developing reading problems can be identified early in their school careers. Reading problems for these children can be prevented with the use of reading programs which include explicit instruction that is comprehensive and intensive in the areas of phonemic awareness, the alphabetic principle, word identification skills that lead to fluent reading, and comprehension (Bursuck et al., 2002, p. 5).

According to the National Research Council (1998), students who are not reading on grade level by the time they reach third grade have little chance of ever catching up to their peers (p. 212). Therefore, second grade is considered the last chance for closing the reading gap for some students. The National Research Council suggested it is important for second-grade teachers to quickly identify the students who are not on grade level in reading and to identify in which area of reading these students are not proficient. The goal then is to provide instruction and practice to these students in order to close the reading gaps and have them reading and comprehending on grade level by the time they move on to third grade.

### **Components of Reading**

According to the National Reading Panel's (2000) report on Teaching Children to Read, the five components of reading are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension (pp. 2-3). These components are connected and many researchers (Bursuck & Blanks, 2010; Bursuck et al., 2002; Ritchey, 2011; Stockard & Engelmann, 2010) discussed how phonemic awareness and the alphabetic principle are important to a student's ability to understand phonics, which leads to reading acquisition (Bursuck et al., 2004). Once students are able to blend and decode

words, reading practice leads to reading fluency, which is critical to reading comprehension. In addition, students must understand the words, or vocabulary, they are reading in order for reading comprehension to occur. It is not enough to be able to decode the words, there must be a complete understanding of the meaning implied by the word being read as stated by Adams's (2001) article on alphabetic anxiety and systemic phonics instruction. In it, Adams stated, "even when the force of instruction is on phonemic awareness, decoding, or spelling, its value depends integrally on ensuring that students understand and think about (attend to) the meaning and use of each word in focus" (p. 75).

Stockard and Engelmann (2010) stated that learning to read is a developmental process in which reading fluency builds on the skills acquired from phonics instruction and knowledge of phonemic awareness (p. 18). Stahl (2001) concluded the same in his chapter on the teaching of phonological awareness and phonics. Stahl used the work of Linnea Ehri to explain how children move from recognizing that words consist of sounds to then being able to blend and decode words and next to quick and accurate decoding which then leads to reading fluency. Reading fluency finally promotes reading comprehension. Even though teachers may teach these five reading components and a reading program may contain them all, Bursuck and Blanks (2010) said this is not enough to produce good readers. Bursuck and Blanks concluded that in order for students to become good readers "they need to be taught systematically and explicitly using empirically based instructional design and delivery principles" (p. 424).

### **Reading and Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Instruction**

Stahl (2001) defined phonemic awareness as "the ability to reflect on units of the spoken language smaller than the syllable" (p. 341) and phonics instruction as "any

approach in which the teacher does/says something to help children learn how to decode words” (p. 335). Stahl (2001) further defined phonemic awareness and its relationship to reading and word recognition using the works of Ehri (1998) and Murray, Stahl, and Ivey (1996). Ehri explained that when children are learning to read, they progress through a number of developmental phases. The first is an understanding that letters represent sounds. These become phonetic cues as students progress to recognizing initial consonant sounds, final consonant sounds, vowel sounds, and then blending sounds together to make words. Murray et al. identified a student’s ability to segment initial phoneme sounds such as /d/ for “d” as phoneme identity, which means a child understands that the phoneme or sound is constant across various words. Once students are able to blend and decode words, they move to the word recognition phase, which allows students to quickly recognize chunks in words. Automatic word recognition then leads to reading fluency (Stahl, 2001, p. 338).

The National Reading Panel’s (2000) report on teaching children to learn to read found that a child’s phonemic awareness and letter knowledge were the best predictors of how well that child will learn to read during their first 2 years of reading instruction. Furthermore, when children received instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness, the effects of this instruction lasted well beyond the actual teaching (p. 7). This report was a meta-analysis of hundreds of research reports and articles related to reading and conducted since the 1970s. The National Reading Panel employed a rigorous set of criteria when identifying appropriate reading research to include in their report. Thousands of reading research reports were identified, but many were not able to meet the stringent guidelines of the Reading Panel of National Institute. This report is considered to be a hallmark report on the implications for teaching children how to read.

The National Reading Panel defined the purpose of phonics instruction as helping beginning readers to understand how letters and phonemes, or sounds, are linked to one another to create letter-sound correspondences and then to apply this knowledge when reading (p. 8).

In her article, Adams (2001) argued that reading comprehension is precluded by systematic, explicit instruction in the alphabetic principle, or phonemic awareness (p. 67). Adams quoted the research of the National Research Panel (2000) in which they conducted a meta-analysis of 52 studies on the value of instruction in phonemic awareness. They concluded that systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness had a positive impact on the children's reading growth including reading comprehension and word recognition regardless of grade level, ability, or socioeconomic standing (Adams, 2001, p. 67). Adams also stated that research on reading disabilities has shown that a lack of alphabetic knowledge and phonemic awareness is a leading predictor of reading difficulties for children. Adams referred to the Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children (National Research Council, 1998), stating,

Objective, empirical research has proven over and over, using a wide array of methods and instrumentation, that given an alphabetic script, the skillful reader's ability to read with fluency and reflective comprehension depends, integrally and incontrovertibly, on deep, detailed, and ready working knowledge of the spellings and spelling-sound correspondences of the words on the page. (p. 73)

In other words, the rules governing the alphabetic principle have become so automatic and rapid that readers are able to focus their active energies and thought processes on comprehension.

In order to be able to learn to read, students must first be able to recognize all the

letters of the alphabet and to do so quickly and accurately. Then they must be able to identify the phonemes of our language and, finally, to be able to connect the phonemes with the letters that make the phoneme sounds. This gives children the prior knowledge needed to make connections with new learning, especially with regard to reading (Adams, 2001, p. 74). According to Phillips and Torgesen (2006), this is known as “sounding out” a word (p. 102). Children use their knowledge of the relationship between letters and their skills in “blending” these sounds together to read a word. According to Bursuck and Blanks (2010), this ability to segment (break up words into their individual phonemes) and blend (put individual sounds together) words is a crucial component of instruction in phonemic awareness and highly predictive of students’ later abilities to decode words (p. 423). Children need activities that require them to isolate phonemes so they will begin to notice that phonemes exist and begin to discover the nature of phonemes. In the same manner, activities that involve phoneme segmentation and oral blending of phonemes also bring attention to the nature of the alphabetic principle and help children to begin to realize that every word is a certain sequence of phonemes (Adams, 2001, p. 76).

In Juel’s (2006) study, she noted that phonics instruction was meaningless without phonemic awareness (p. 410). Juel found that many children who were lagging behind their peers at the end of first grade were also lacking in phonemic awareness skills at the beginning of first grade. However, Juel went on to say that schools know how to teach phonics and phonemic awareness, but vocabulary knowledge is lacking for our most at-risk students. She also concluded that there is considerable research to confirm phonemic awareness is a predictor of future reading success. Since phonemic awareness can be improved through instruction, students need to be provided instruction in phonemic

awareness in order to improve their reading skills. In addition, Juel noted that phonics instruction needed to be conducted in unison with vocabulary instruction. She concluded that children could be taught to use their knowledge of phonemics to pronounce new words; but if the student was not familiar with the meaning of the word, comprehension was lost and phonics instruction was pointless (p. 421). Juel's conclusion was that educators may not know the best way to ensure children learn to read but that "given the currently available instructional tools, phonics is clearly the best option" (p. 423).

Phillips and Torgesen (2006), in their article on children's initial reading accuracy, stated that phonemic decoding skills are critical to a student's ability to learn to read text. In order for students to be successful, teachers must use early prevention methods to target students who are at risk of lagging behind their peers in the area of phonemic awareness and word decoding (Phillips & Torgesen, 2006, p. 101). The National Reading Panel (2000) echoed this conclusion. One of their major findings was related to the importance of phonics instruction, phonemic awareness, and the need for early interventions (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 2). National Reading Panel proposed that phonics instruction was more effective in kindergarten and first grade than in other grades, which was the same conclusion as Stahl's (2001).

In his chapter on the teaching of phonics, Stahl (2001) discussed a variety of methods and approaches to instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness. Included in the discussion were Direct Instruction, the Orton-Gillingham approach, and Meta-phonics. Stahl reported that there was little empirical research available on the effectiveness of Orton-Gillingham for teaching phonics. He also noted that while the Meta-phonics approach appeared promising, the research was limited to a few studies in which the approach was a part of a larger reform and no control groups were used. Stahl

further stated that early research on Direct Instruction programs showed favorable results but cautioned that in much of the available research, the Direct Instruction programs were being compared with programs that had different goals and did not stress phonics instruction as strongly as Direct Instruction did (p. 337).

### **Reading Fluency**

Phillips and Torgesen (2006) quoted several definitions of reading fluency in their study of phonemic awareness and reading accuracy. These definitions include the concepts of reading accuracy, reading rate, and reading with prosody when reading a text orally (Phillips & Torgesen, 2006, p. 105). Phillips and Torgesen went on to explain how a student's reading fluency and decoding skills impact that student's reading comprehension. Phillips and Torgesen indicated that in order for a child to comprehend what is being read, they must be able to quickly and easily recognize most of the words being read, which is reading fluency. If the child encounters too many unknown words then reading fluency is slowed because the child must apply decoding strategies to the unknown word before moving on in reading the text. Phillips and Torgesen concluded that phonemic awareness and decoding skills are important to a child's ability to read fluently and comprehend what they are reading (p. 109); however, they also noted that more research is needed to show how individual differences in phonemic awareness are related to individual differences in reading fluency (p. 108).

Stockard and Engelmann (2010) concurred with the findings of Phillips and Torgesen (2006). In Stockard and Engelmann's study on the effectiveness of the Reading Mastery program, they defined reading fluency in a similar manner to that of Phillips and Torgesen and also stated that students need to be able to decode words quickly and accurately so that more of their cognitive resources can be used for comprehension (p. 3).



Bursuck and Blanks (2010) also agreed with these findings in their article on reading practices which improve students' reading skills in which they state that being able to devote reading attention to meaning rather than decoding allows fluent readers to better understand the abstract thoughts in text (p. 423).

Begeny and Silber (2006) quoted the National Center for Education Statistics (2004) report card in their article on increasing reading fluency. In it, Begeny and Silber noted that oral reading fluency "is an important link between word decoding and passage comprehension" and "the best predictor of overall reading competence" (p. 184). Begeny and Silber also indicated that oral reading fluency is important to a student's ability to generalize, maintain, and apply his/her reading skills (p. 184). The results of their study indicated small group interventions had a positive impact on student reading fluency (Begeny & Silber, 2006, p. 192).

In their article on the contributions of the work of Stahl and Heubach (2005) on the knowledge of reading fluency, Rasinski and Hoffman (2006) defined reading fluency as "the ability to read words accurately, effortlessly (automatically), and with appropriate phrasing and expression when reading orally" (p. 169). Rasinski and Hoffman measured reading fluency by how accurately and quickly a reader was able to decode words in a given text (p. 175). Rasinski and Hoffman continued by explaining that readers have a limited amount of cognitive resources to be applied to the task of reading. These resources must be used simultaneously to decode words and comprehend what is being read. If the reader must spend too much energy in decoding, comprehension is lowered (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2006, p. 169). They concluded, "although fluency may deal with readers' ability to negotiate the surface level of texts, it has implications for reading

comprehension” (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2006, pp. 169-170). In addition, they reviewed data from Pinnell et al. (1995) that showed fourth-grade silent reading comprehension was related to reading fluency. For every decrease in reading fluency, there was also a decrease in reading comprehension. Their conclusion was this might indicate a connection between reading fluency and reading comprehension (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2006, p. 170). Rasinski and Hoffman then went on to explain the work of Stahl and Heubach on the instruction of reading fluency in classrooms. Stahl and Heubach’s work showed instruction in reading fluency could be sustained over time; this instruction could lead to gains in overall reading achievement and provided quantitative evidence for research on reading fluency (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2006, p. 171).

### **Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension is considered to be the “essence of reading” (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 13). The National Reading Panel (2000) further defined reading as being when readers construct meaning from their interactions with text by intentionally thinking about the text and its meaning to themselves. Their data suggested that reading was enhanced when readers were able to relate their own ideas and knowledge contained in their memories to the ones represented in the text (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 14). In her article on the impact of students’ early school experiences on their ability to read, Juel (2006) stated that knowledge and vocabulary are at the heart of reading comprehension. Juel said that in order for children to be able to comprehend what they are reading, teachers need to focus on word recognition and developing students’ vocabularies. Word recognition is important because it leads to wide reading which, in turn, leads to growth in vocabulary. Without these two, reading comprehension will cease if the text being read has more than 2% of the words as unknown words (Juel,

2006, p. 411).

Adams's (2001) research concurs with that of Juel (2006). Adams explained why word recognition is so important to reading comprehension. A reader's active attention can only be focused on one mental process at a time. In order to comprehend, a reader must be able to focus on the task of creating and monitoring his or her understanding of what is being read. In order to maintain this focus, the reader must be able to automatically recognize the words on the page. When a reader comes to a word that is not automatically recognized, reading comprehension ceases because the reader must focus his or her active attention on understanding the new word before moving on in the reading (Adams, 2001, p. 72).

Stahl's (2006) research in reading included additional information on knowledge, word recognition, and reading comprehension. In his article on understanding the shifts in reading instruction, Stahl discussed how children learn to read and what types of instruction work best in the various stages of learning to read. Stahl concurred with the findings of Juel (2006) and Adams (2001). Knowledge and fluent word recognition are important prerequisites to reading comprehension. Stahl proposed that instruction in an organized phonics program leads to more automatic word recognition. Stahl also discussed the importance of improving a student's fluency in word recognition through the use of repeated readings. Once children learn to recognize words, they need practice with the words in order to become more fluent readers (Stahl, 2006, p. 54).

Stahl (2006) went on to state that vocabulary growth is the best predictor of growth in reading comprehension (p. 55). Stahl suggested children need exposure to a wide variety of genre and subject matter in order to grow in their knowledge of words and their meanings. This can be accomplished through what children read for themselves

and through what is read to them by teachers who stop and discuss word meanings.

In the lower elementary grades, students learn how to read; and in the upper elementary grades and beyond, students read to learn (National Research Council, 1998). This assumes students have learned how to read and can concentrate their reading efforts on the comprehension of the text being read. This means students in Grades 2 and 3 are making the transition from learning to read to reading to learn. In order for this to take place, the automaticity of lower-level reading skills must be present and growing during this period (National Research Panel, 1998, p. 210). Comprehension is a highly intensive thought process that requires readers to be able to focus their energies on meaning instead of decoding. This implies that in order to comprehend well, a student must be able to decode well. The National Research Council (1998) echoed this statement, saying that unskilled decoding limits reading comprehension (p. 75). Therefore, deficits in decoding need to be addressed early in order for students to become proficient readers.

### **Direct Instruction**

Direct Instruction and direct instruction may appear to be the same, but they are not. When Direct Instruction appears as a proper noun it refers to a reading instruction program designed by Siegfried Engelmann and his colleagues. It uses the tenets of direct instruction as its foundation. When direct instruction appears as a common noun, it refers to a teaching method in which the teacher provides the student with instruction broken down into small steps so the student will be better able to acquire a complicated skill.

According to Adams (2001), explicit or direct instruction is instruction that helps students to focus on the learning relationships that matter most (p. 75). The benefit for students who receive explicit instruction in phonemic awareness is that it focuses attention on how the words we say are made up of sounds and not the meaning of the

words we say. Ritchey (2011), in her article on teaching reading to students with learning disabilities, further defined explicit instruction as being teacher-directed with teacher explanations and modeling as well as prompting of students and providing immediate corrective feedback (p. 29). Ritchey went on to refer to several researchers who have shown the effectiveness of using explicit instruction to teach all five components of reading. According to Ritchey, explicit instruction is the most effective way to teach reading to students who are struggling in this area (p. 29).

Not only does direct instruction need to be explicit, it also needs to be intensive (Ritchey, 2011, p. 30). Intensity includes the number of minutes per day of instruction, the number of instructional sessions per week, the number of student-teacher interactions, and the amount of student interaction with text and their use of reading skills (Ritchey, 2011, pp. 31-32). Ritchey found that students who are struggling with reading need more instructional time devoted to the explicit teaching of reading skills, and this instruction needs to take place more often than for students who are not struggling. In addition, struggling readers need to be taught in small groups, which increases the opportunities for students to interact with the teacher. Teachers also need to design lessons that increase the number of interactions students have with reading content by adding strategies such as choral responses instead of single-student responses. This allows students to have more opportunities to practice the skills they are learning.

The National Reading Panel (2000) defined a systematic phonics instruction program as one that has a delineated and sequential set of phonics elements that are taught explicitly (p. 8). Their meta-analysis concluded that systematic phonics instruction significantly enhanced children's abilities to learn to read especially for those with low socioeconomic backgrounds (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 9). However,

they cautioned that programs that focused too much on learning the letter-sound correspondences without also learning to apply them were likely to be ineffective. They recommended that educators ensure students understood the purpose of the instruction was to be able to apply their newly acquired skills accurately and fluently in their daily reading and writing activities (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 10).

The National Reading Panel (2000) also discussed the importance of providing students with effective reading instruction in their report. In it, they stated that effective reading instruction includes phonemic awareness (being able to manipulate the sounds in words), phonics (the understanding that sounds are represented by letters of the alphabetic which can be blended to make words), guided oral reading, and applying reading comprehension strategies while reading in order to improve reading comprehension. These are the same necessary components found in direct instruction (Carnine et al., 2004, p. 7). Engelmann developed the program in the 1960s while working with his two sons. He noticed a connection between what his sons learned and the instructional methods he was using. He began conducting educational research on the effectiveness and efficiency of instructional methods. His research led to the development of the DISTAR program. During the 1970s, Project Follow Through, which was a federally funded research effort, conducted research on the effectiveness of a number of reading programs. DISTAR was the only program to show significant reading gains for students. Engelmann continued his educational research; and his ideas, philosophies on teaching, and programs became known as Direct Instruction. SRA began publishing Engelmann's reading program. Today DISTAR reading has developed into two levels known as Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. These are published by the McGraw-Hill Publishing Company (Stockard & Engelmann, 2010).

Bursuck et al. (2002) also reported on the importance of systematic phonics instruction. In their article on the prevention of reading problems, they indicated that at-risk students are in need of the most carefully designed and intensive instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics. They went on to say that this instruction needs to be explicit, use controlled text for reading, and use carefully planned scaffolding (Bursuck et al., 2002, p. 6). Scaffolding is systematic support provided by an expert, or teacher, to a learner. Scaffolding provides just the right amount of support a learner needs to accomplish the immediate goal and be able to move to the next level of learning or understanding. Eventually, the support is no longer needed as the learner becomes able to function independently. Bursuck et al. indicated scaffolding must be used appropriately. It needs to be temporary and removed gradually as students develop proficient reading skills (Bursuck & Blanks, 2010, p. 424). Bursuck and Blanks (2010) promoted scaffolding through the use of “strategic integration” (p. 424). A strategically integrated lesson provides students with review and practice of previously learned phonemic awareness skills, instruction in new letter sounds, review of previously learned sounds, and practice reading words that consist of mastered letter sounds (Bursuck & Blanks, 2010, p. 424). This is the outline for Direct Instruction lessons (Carnine et al., 2004).

In another article on the use of Direct Instruction to improve reading for struggling readers, Bursuck and Blanks (2010) gave the reason for the use of such carefully designed and explicit instruction. Bursuck and Blanks stated this type of instructional design prevents students from having to guess when it comes to the use of reading strategies, because they have been taught conspicuous reading strategies to apply when reading (p. 424). Some of these strategies include asking questions while reading,

drawing conclusions, making predictions while reading, and being aware of what the reader understands and does not understand while reading.

According to Stockard and Engelmann (2010), Direct Instruction programs use program design, organization of instruction, and positive interactions between teachers and students in order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency (p. 4). In their research article on the effectiveness of the Reading Mastery program (one of the reading programs being used at Elementary School and being used in this program evaluation), they explain how the Direct Instruction model of the program attempts to control for variables that can impact student learning (Stockard & Engelmann, 2010). These variables include

the placement and grouping of students into instructional groups, the rate and type of examples presented by the teacher, the wording that teachers use to teach specific concepts and skills, the frequency and type of review of material introduced, the assessment of students' mastery of material covered and the responses by teachers to students' attempts to learn the material. (Stockard & Engelmann, 2010, p. 4)

To ensure success in reading, it is critical that students be placed in the appropriate groups within the correct track of the Direct Instruction program. Each lesson in the program contains about 10% new material. The remainder of the lesson focuses on the review and application of skills learned previously. This allows for student success and builds student confidence in reading (Stockard & Engelmann, 2010, p. 4). The explicit and sequential nature of Direct Instruction programs ensures the consistency of the program and its lessons regardless of the instructors or the variety of students (Lingo et al., 2006). The research of Bursuck et al. (2002) indicated teachers are not as knowledgeable at identifying and grouping at-risk students for reading (p. 8). The



Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading programs provide teachers with guidelines for assessment, placement, and grouping of students (McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 2013). Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading are the programs being implemented at Elementary School and being analyzed for their effectiveness in improving student reading abilities by this program evaluation.

Assessment is an important component of any program. When discussing Chall's six stages of reading development, Carnine et al. (2004) indicated the importance of assessing within which stage of development a student falls prior to beginning reading instruction (p. 14). Direct Instruction models include screening assessments to determine what students already know in order to place them at the correct level of instruction. In addition, it includes progress-monitoring assessments to ensure students are mastering the content and skills being taught (Carnine et al., 2004).

Begeny and Silber (2006) stated that because so many students are having reading difficulties, teachers are seeking reading intervention programs that target small group instruction instead of one-on-one interventions. Bursuck et al. (2002) referred to research that shows students benefit more from explicit instruction provided in small homogeneous groups or in one-to-one sessions (p. 5; Bursuck et al., 2004, p. 312). However, small group intervention programs are more time efficient and manageable for educators than the one-on-one programs (Begeny & Silber, 2006, p. 183). McGraw-Hill Publishing Company produces two of these programs in their SRA reading materials. They are Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading.

### **Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading**

Reading Mastery was originally known by the name DISTAR and was developed by Siegfried Engelmann in the 1960s. It was later named Reading Mastery and is

published by SRA McGraw-Hill Publishing Company. Reading Mastery uses the educational philosophy of Direct Instruction as defined by Engelmann. According to Carnine et al. (2004), “the research base for direct instruction is solid” (p. 5). The most well-known research involving DISTAR was conducted during Project Follow Through, a 16-year federally funded research program. In the program, several approaches to improving reading for low-income primary grade students were compared. Students participating in the Direct Instruction methods used by DISTAR were the only ones who consistently outperformed students in the other programs. Carnine et al. (2004) described the results by saying, “gain scores for students in Direct Instruction groups averaged nearly a full standard deviation above those of students in comparison groups. Effect sizes of this magnitude are rare in educational research” (p. 5).

Reading Mastery is the SRA McGraw-Hill reading program for students in kindergarten through second grade. Within the program, there are three levels: one for each grade level. The kindergarten level begins with a concentration on oral language skills. This is to ensure students have a basic understanding of following directions and appropriate background knowledge to continue in the program. The program then moves kindergarten students to instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness. It introduces the sounds that letters make without specifically teaching letter names. Within the first 30 lessons of the program, students are reading words. The program focuses on decoding by blending sounds together and then reading the words the “fast way.” Accuracy of decoding comes before reading fluency in Reading Mastery (Stockard & Engelmann, 2010, p. 7). Bursuck et al. (2004) described Reading Mastery as a program that is phonologically and phonetically based with a methodical sequence comprised of multiple scaffolds that support student learning (p. 306).

The lessons in Reading Mastery are scripted and sequential. Lesson length is 45 minutes, and the lesson pace is quick with maximum student engagement. Student mastery of phoneme sounds is required in order for students to progress through each level. Assessment of student mastery is conducted at predetermined intervals, and the teacher keeps a record of student progress. When mastery is not achieved, the student is provided with additional instruction on the phonemes that were not mastered and then the student is retested for mastery. This type of design is what Ritchey (2011) considered to be systemic instruction. Ritchey stated that one of the principles of effective instruction is that it is systemic in nature (p. 32). To be systemic, the program design teaches the basic skills and concepts in order to build a foundation before moving on to more complex ones. The scope and sequence of instruction is carefully planned so that “smaller steps or components of the steps are taught first before the whole strategy (part to whole), and easier skills are taught before more difficult skills” (Ritchey, 2011, p. 32). This is the design of Reading Mastery.

Corrective Reading is also an SRA McGraw-Hill reading program. It is designed for students beginning in third grade who are reading 1-2 years below grade level. It has a decoding strand and a comprehension strand with sequential levels for each strand. When both strands are used together they present a comprehensive approach to reading intervention and instruction. Corrective Reading lessons are set up the same way as the ones in Reading Mastery with scripted lesson presentations lasting for 45 minutes. Reading fluency is assessed after each lesson and students may only progress when they have shown mastery of each lesson. Like Reading Mastery, Corrective Reading addresses decoding skills in order to increase reading fluency and reading comprehension. The program begins at the basic word attack level before moving to

more complex letter and sound combinations. As students move to higher levels, the text length and complexity increase as well (Lingo et al., 2006; McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 2013).

In their research article on the effectiveness of Corrective Reading for improving the reading skills of students with challenging behaviors, Lingo et al. (2006) referred to several other studies on the effectiveness of Corrective Reading. They referred to a study by B. Thompson in which students were provided reading interventions using Corrective Reading, whole language, and traditional reading instruction. The Corrective Reading group outperformed the other two groups in reading tests and showed a gain of 21 words per minute in reading fluency (Lingo et al., 2006, p. 267). They also referred to a study by B. Grossen in which 38 seventh- and eighth-grade students improved their reading abilities by 4.31 months for each month of instruction using Corrective Reading as well as positive results for the seven students in their own study (Lingo et al., 2006, p. 267). All students were able to improve their reading fluency and accuracy, and all but one student saw a gain in their overall reading abilities after receiving between six and 20 lessons (Lingo et al., 2006, p. 283).

Bursuck and Blanks (2010) did not endorse a specific program or reading product. However, they did encourage and support the use of many of the components and concepts contained within the Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading series. These include systematic, explicit instruction in segmenting and blending words, sound-symbol relationships, and instructional strategies and designs such as modeling, unison response, mediated scaffolding, strategic integration of review with learning new skills, brisk lesson pace, systematic error correction, and mastering skills before moving to new ones.

### **Perceived Gaps in Direct Instruction**

One argument against Direct Instruction comes from those who support whole language reading instruction. It is their belief that reading instruction should be part of whole language instruction and not taught in isolated skills. Children learn words by sight and by using them in context. Because skilled readers are reading whole words in rapid succession, they are not paying attention to each individual phoneme when reading; therefore, phonics instruction should be replaced by whole word recognition (Adams, 2001, p. 68).

Juel (2006) did not diminish the importance of instruction in phonemic awareness; however, she did imply that too much instruction in phonics is not always helpful for students (p. 417). She quoted a study by Blachman in 1997 in which he found that developing a student's phonemic awareness outside of instruction that involves spelling and reading is not advantageous to the student's success in reading. Juel went on to state that outside of reading and writing, a student does not consciously manipulate phonetic elements (p. 417). In her conclusion, Juel noted that a central part of her study was to show that "when teachers focus primarily on developing phonological awareness and decoding without attention to the meanings of words and texts, then there is a serious problem" (p. 423). While this is not a specific argument against the use of Direct Instruction, it is a caution that teachers need to attend to vocabulary instruction as well as phonics instruction.

Even though their report concluded that systematic phonics instruction significantly enhanced children's abilities to learn to read, the National Reading Panel (2000) noted that it did not have the same impact on reading comprehension skills for older students (p. 9). They also cautioned that these types of programs could reduce

teacher interest and motivation (which could also lead to student disinterest) due to the scripted and highly specified nature of some of these programs (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 10).

Bursuck and Blanks (2010) promoted the use of direct and explicit instruction; however, they also recognized why it is often problematic. They identified two specific reasons for the difficulties of using Direct Instruction programs. One is that Direct Instruction programs often do not align with skills being taught in the core reading program in classrooms. This means that skills being taught in Direct Instruction lessons may not be readily applied in other lessons occurring in the classroom. The other is finding the time to conduct the Direct Instruction lessons (Bursuck & Blanks, 2010, p. 428). Scheduling time for regular or daily 45-minute lessons in addition to core content instruction is not an easy task for most educators.

Though Ritchey (2011) supported the use of direct and explicit instruction for the teaching of reading, she cautioned that teachers must not forget to include teaching students how to generalize their knowledge. It is not enough to teach students how to decode or how to use reading strategies. Students must also be able to generalize what they have learned so they can use it in other settings and independently in other reading activities (Ritchey, 2011, p. 30).

Ryder et al. (2006) compared the effects of Direct Instruction on the reading abilities of students in Grades 1-3 with those of more traditional reading approaches such as cognitive apprenticeship and balanced instruction. They found suburban students benefited most from Direct Instruction reading programs while urban students benefited more from non-Direct Instruction reading programs. They also found that schools in the study did not see a decrease in referrals to special education programs. In their study,

Ryder et al. provided a number of principles learned from working with Direct Instruction programs. Among them are that Direct Instruction is highly teacher controlled, students will not transfer skills unless they are taught to do so, instruction must occur at a faster than average rate, and failure is a result of the instructional sequence and not the student (Ryder et al., 2006, p. 180). In addition to test results showing that Direct Instruction did not significantly improve reading abilities for all students, Ryder et al. also found that certain teacher behaviors were correlated with student success in reading regardless of the program being used. These included teacher demeanor, teacher feedback, and teacher encouragement (Ryder et al., 2006, p. 186). Even if the teacher was using Direct Instruction if he or she rated low in teacher behaviors, the students performed lower in reading.

Included in Ryder et al.'s (2006) work were the results of teacher interviews and their perceptions of Direct Instruction. Overall, teachers reported that Direct Instruction was a good corrective program but was not adequate enough to be used as the sole reading program for students (Ryder et al., 2006, p. 187). Their concerns with Direct Instruction included the inability to meet specific student needs due to the highly scripted nature of the program. They had to deviate from or augment the lessons for some students. Some teachers, especially those in the urban areas, felt that the stories in the Direct Instruction program were not sensitive to the issues of poverty, culture, and race that were present in their schools. These teachers reported the need to spend time in creating background knowledge for their students before reading the stories in the series. In their conclusion, the authors stated, "that certain characteristics of teachers, rather than the instruction method that they embrace, is the factor that correlates with high-achieving classrooms" (Ryder et al., 2006, p. 189). This would indicate that teacher effectiveness

has more influence over the students' improvements in reading than the reading program being used.

Direct Instruction lessons are focused on learning to decode and blend words with minimal emphasis on vocabulary. Adams (2001) cautioned that children can be taught to "parrot" anything. It is understanding that produces the true learning (Adams, 2001, p. 76). Children can be taught to tell a joke or a riddle; but unless they understand what it is about, it is not funny to them. Children need to be able to understand the meaning of what they are reading and not just be able to decode the words on the page. Therefore, any reading program that does not also address word meaning will be less effective.

### **Teacher Behaviors and Reading Achievement**

The teachers who use and present instructional methods and reading programs can impact the effectiveness of the instruction and programs. This, in turn, will impact student achievement. Kenyatta (2012) stated that teacher perceptions guide the practices, processes, and teacher-student interactions in classrooms (p. 36). Kenyatta concluded that teacher perceptions impact their expectations of and interactions with students. Their behaviors can cause a student to feel he or she is a valued and capable student or their behaviors can make them feel just the opposite. She stated that when teachers have positive perceptions, they are more likely to provide academic support, feedback, and positive reinforcement (Kenyatta, 2012, p. 39). When students are aware that their teachers have positive perceptions and expectations, they are more likely to be motivated to learn and improve their academic achievement. For those who do not feel supported by their teachers, they are less likely to succeed (Kenyatta, 2012).

In her article, Kenyatta (2012) referred to Darling-Hammond's research when she said that teachers are the most important factor in a student's success in school (p. 37).



While teachers may be the most important factor, Martin (1980) stated that there is no single teacher behavior that can be shown to promote student achievement (p. 50).

However, Martin went on to discuss teacher behaviors that do promote student achievement. In his article on supervision and values clarification, Martin noted that teachers can control their behaviors but only within the confines of their values (p. 51). He went on to say that often teachers' intents and outcomes may not match due to their hidden values, and he even postulates that this might be why students have difficulty learning to read (Martin, 1980, p. 52). Martin gave an example of asking a teacher who values order and structure to teach in a way that is contrary to these values. This causes great anxiety for the teacher, who then finds him/herself providing less effective instruction. Martin postulated, therefore, that teachers need to examine themselves and determine their values in order to be more effective (p. 53). He concluded his paper by observing that when teachers are presented with a new teaching method or program, teachers will support it if it aligns with their values, and they will reject it if it does not (Martin, 1980, p. 58). Therefore, when considering new program implementations, it is important for decision making to be shared among the stakeholders and especially the staff who will be implementing the new programs.

### **The CIPP Model**

The CIPP model is an approach to conducting evaluations developed by Daniel Stufflebeam in the 1960s. It was developed in order to address the need of public schools to have a method of program evaluation that could meet with high standards of evaluation set by the government. The CIPP model framework provides information to decision makers on the effectiveness of that which is being evaluated. It does this in four areas: Context, Input, Process, and Product. Stufflebeam believed that in order for evaluation to

be useful, it must involve the decision makers in the process and answer the questions they would be asking in order to make improvements to the program or project (McLemore, 2009). According to Stufflebeam (2003), the purpose of evaluation should be to provide useful information in order to judge between alternatives, improve the worth of a program or product, and assist in making policy improvements. This is done through a holistic approach to evaluation, which allows decision makers to see the “big picture” of a project through its context and processes. While the purpose of evaluation is improvement, Stufflebeam noted that for some programs, evaluation may indicate the need to terminate the program. In addition, Stufflebeam noted that evaluations based on the CIPP model needed to include values clarification as part of the process as well. As a result, his definition of evaluation was “a systematic investigation of the value of a program or evaluand” (Stufflebeam, 2003, p. 9).

The CIPP model asks questions within the framework of Context, Input, Process, and Product. The Context evaluation asks questions related to the areas that need to be addressed and what processes or programs already exist to meet these needs. The Input evaluation asks what has already been tried, what resources are available, and what appears to be the best option to address the needs. The Process portion of the evaluation seeks to answer how training will be carried out, what measures will be used to determine program effectiveness, and how the program will be implemented. The Product portion of the evaluation will answer questions related to the intended and unintended outcomes of the program and how to move forward (McLemore, 2009; Stufflebeam, 2003).

CIPP evaluations may be of a formative or summative nature. In a formative report, stakeholders are given information that can be used to make ongoing decisions or to address immediate needs. In a summative evaluation, the Product component may be

further divided into assessments that address the impact, the effectiveness, the sustainability, and the transportability of the program. According to Stufflebeam (2003), not all evaluations require the use of all four CIPP components. If the evaluator is conducting a formative evaluation, only the necessary components would be used. However, a summative evaluation usually requires all four components.

Central to the CIPP model of evaluation is the inclusion of all stakeholders throughout the process. This provides evaluators with needed insights and creates an environment in which the stakeholders will more readily accept and act upon the findings of the evaluation report (Stufflebeam, 2003).

### **Summary**

Students need instruction in all five of the basic reading components (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension) on a daily basis as they are learning to read. Each component builds on the one before it, and they work together simultaneously when children read. When students are deficient in one area of reading, it ultimately affects the main purpose of reading, which is comprehension. Research has shown that it is imperative that educators address the early literacy needs of students quickly and efficiently in order to prevent further reading problems for children (Adams, 2001; Bursuck et al., 2002; Bursuck et al., 2004; Juel, 2006; National Research Council, 1998; Phillips & Torgenso, 2006; Stahl, 2001; Stockard & Engelmann, 2010).

While Direct Instruction can provide students with a solid foundation in phonemic awareness and phonics instruction, it is not a complete reading program as defined by the National Reading Panel (2000):

PA (phonemic awareness) training does not constitute a complete reading program. Rather, it provides children with essential foundational knowledge in

the alphabetic system. It is one necessary instructional component within a complete and integrated reading program. (p. 8)

However, when students are equipped with the ability to decode words quickly and accurately, a teacher can then provide the necessary additional instruction to improve student reading comprehension through the teaching of specific reading strategies instead of decoding skills.

The results of Stockard and Engelmann's (2010) research on the effectiveness of the Reading Mastery program showed that students who participated in the program beginning in kindergarten established an advantage in reading fluency over students not receiving Reading Mastery direct instruction by the middle of first grade (p. 17). Increases in reading fluency have been shown to improve reading comprehension (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2006). When these two thoughts are combined, one could determine that instruction using Reading Mastery might improve student comprehension. It is this that the principal at Elementary School was hoping to achieve by implementing Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading in the school. The reading proficiency scores at Elementary School had been below state-mandated standards for more than 10 years. It was evident that the school needed to improve its teaching of reading, and it was the principal's hope that Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading would provide the type of intervention strategies that were needed. Chapter 3 explains the methodology used by the school in implementing these programs. It also provides a timeline for their implementation and the assessments used to determine the effectiveness of the programs. While the research on Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading indicates that students are able to make improvements in reading, time is also needed in order to show gains. As

the programs were implemented, the data from this program evaluation were available to be used to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the programs and their implementation. This information was available to the principal and teachers as they considered making any changes to increase the effectiveness of the programs. The use of the CIPP model for evaluating the effectiveness of these programs was also available to provide the principal and other stakeholders with any information and data they desired as they planned for future needs. Elementary School recognized that changes needed to take place in order for their students to become more successful readers. It was their hope that they were making the right decisions. It was the desire of this author that the results of this program evaluation would provide the school with valuable information as it sought to make improvements.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **The CIPP Model**

With the establishment of mastering reading skills at an early age clearly established in Chapters 1 and 2, this chapter provides information regarding the methodology used in this study. This program evaluation used Stufflebeam's CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model (McLemore, 2009) to evaluate the effectiveness of the SRA programs, Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading, on the reading achievement and reading skills of students at Elementary School. The CIPP model of evaluation was developed by Stufflebeam as a framework for guiding the formative and summative evaluations of programs, projects, institutions, and systems. The CIPP model has been used throughout the United States and around the world in small- and large-scale investigations. It has been used by a variety of disciplines including education (Stufflebeam, 2003) and is designed to provide information to decision makers so they can be better informed when making decisions about the continuance or changing of the programs.

The CIPP model involves four aspects of the evaluation process. These provide the name for the model. They are Context, Input, Process, and Product. CIPP evaluations consider the Context of the problem for which a program needs to be implemented in order to solve or address the problem. The Input portion of the evaluation considers what resources are available to address the problem and what strategies have previously been used to attempt to solve the problem. The Process phase of the CIPP evaluation considers the implementation of the program and the fidelity of the implementation. The final phase, Product, examines the outcomes of the program and how well the program met the goals it sought to achieve (McLemore, 2009; Stufflebeam,

2003). At the conclusion of this program evaluation, the information and analyses from the program evaluation were provided to the school for its use in determining how and if the SRA program would continue to be used at Elementary School.

This program evaluation used academic data and questionnaire results to determine the Context of the problem that Elementary School was attempting to address with the implementation of the Direct Instruction programs from SRA. Administrator, Consultant, and Staff Questionnaires and School Improvement Plans were used to determine the Input portion of the evaluation. Questionnaire information provided by all stakeholders, fidelity data, attendance data, and other SRA data and information were used to consider the Process portion of the evaluation. The Product portion of the CIPP evaluation was determined by the school's academic data, SRA data, and questionnaire data.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the use of the CIPP model of evaluation, this program evaluation focused on the following research questions.

#### **Context**

*What needed to be done?*

1. What were the academic issues that created a need for a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?
  - a. What data were used to identify the need for a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?
  - b. What were the administrators' perceptions related to student academic issues that lead to the establishment of a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?

- c. What were the teachers' perceptions related to student academic issues that lead to the establishment of a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?

## Input

*How should it have been done?*

- 2. What reading intervention programs were examined prior to making the decision to use Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading?
  - a. Who were the stakeholders involved in the decision-making process?
  - b. What data were used in the decision-making process?
  - c. What were the perceptions of the various stakeholders involved in making the determination of which reading program to use?
- 3. Were there any barriers that needed to be addressed prior to the implementation of the reading intervention program?

## Process

*Was it done?*

- 4. What steps were involved in the implementation of the reading intervention program?
  - a. What type of training was provided to teachers?
  - b. How were teachers' questions handled during the program implementation and what types of questions arose?
  - c. What were teachers' perceptions of the training and support provided to them for program implementation?
  - d. What were teachers' perceptions of the various strategies and activities within the reading intervention program?



- e. What were the students' perceptions of the various strategies and activities within the program?
- 5. What process was used to determine the goals of the program?
  - a. What were the academic goals?
  - b. Were there any non-academic goals and if so, what were they?
  - c. Who were the stakeholders involved in this process?
  - d. What were the stakeholders' perceptions of this process?
- 6. How was the fidelity of the program implementation determined?
- 7. Were adjustments made to the program during its implementation?
  - a. What were the adjustments?
  - b. Why were they needed?
  - c. What data were used in determining how to adjust the program?

#### Product

##### *Did it succeed?*

- 8. What was the impact of the reading intervention program on the reading benchmark scores for students at Elementary School?
  - a. What was the impact of the reading program on reading scores for students in kindergarten through second grade as evidenced by their running records?
  - b. What was the impact of the reading program on reading scores for students in grades three through five as evidenced by their EOG reading test scores?
  - c. After examining the impact data, what were the perceptions of the teachers and administrators?

9. Were there any unexpected impacts from the implementation of the reading intervention program?
  - a. What were the unexpected impacts?
  - b. What were the stakeholders' perceptions of these unexpected impacts?
10. Were there differences in the effectiveness of the reading intervention at different grade levels?
  - a. If there were differences, what were they?
  - b. Does any data exist that could be used to explain these differences and if so, what is it?
11. Does Elementary School plan to continue the use of the reading intervention program?
  - a. Who are the stakeholders involved in the process of making this decision?
  - b. What data and evidence will be used in determining the continuation of the program?
  - c. What types of resources will Elementary School need if the program is to be continued?
12. Did the reading intervention program meet the goals determined by Elementary School?
13. What factors had an impact on the effectiveness of the reading intervention program?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this program evaluation was to determine whether or not the SRA reading programs, Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading, which were implemented at Elementary School, were effective in improving student reading proficiency scores and in

improving student reading abilities. Elementary School had a history of low reading proficiency scores as shown in Tables 2 and 3 in Chapter 1. North Carolina EOG reading test scores were used as baseline scores for students in Grades 3, 4, and 5; and student reading levels according to their DRA scores were used for students in kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2. In addition, during the program implementation, data from state and district benchmarks in reading were collected and used to determine the impact of the program on student reading abilities. The school's administrators were able to use the results of this evaluation to determine the continuation, termination, or revisions to the reading program if they desired to do so. Research on how fidelity and intensity impact the program's effectiveness was available to provide additional insight to the school's administrative team and others as well. Teacher and student perception data were also collected and analyzed. This information was also available to be used to inform decision making.

When the current principal was appointed to Elementary School, the school did not have a reading program that addressed student deficits in reading. Therefore, the principal made the decision to implement Reading Mastery in kindergarten through Grade 2 and Corrective Reading in Grades 3 through 5. The initial program implementation costs were over \$20,000, which included teacher materials, student materials, training, and visits from an SRA consultant. Ongoing costs were between \$5,000 and \$10,000 yearly for replacement of consumable materials and additional consultant visits and training. An additional purpose of this program evaluation was to provide Elementary School's administrative team with information to be used to make sound fiscal decisions on the continued use of the program.

In addition to the purposes already given, this program evaluation also added to

the literature available on the use of Direct Instruction. The populations of many studies, which address the effectiveness of Direct Instruction on the reading abilities of at-risk students, are usually targeted groups of students within a school or several schools. This program evaluation addressed the effectiveness of Direct Instruction on the entire student population of one elementary school. There are few studies of this kind.

Direct Instruction research is most often directed at reading (Carnine et al., 2004), but Direct Instruction can be used to teach any content area. Information from this evaluation can be used by educators to expand the concepts and practices of Direct Instruction to other areas of need for the school. The same holds true for other educators as well. Other school decision makers can use the information from this program evaluation in determining the use and implementation of reading programs at their school and, more specifically, the SRA reading programs. Teachers can also use information from this evaluation to improve their own educational practices.

### **Direct Instruction Program**

Direct Instruction is an instructional program developed by Siegfried Engelmann in the 1960s. It is differentiated from the term “direct instruction” by the use of capital letters making it a proper noun. When direct instruction appears as a common noun, it refers to a teaching method in which the teacher provides the student with instruction broken down into small steps so the student will be better able to acquire a complicated skill. When it appears as a proper noun, it refers to the programs designed by Engelmann. Direct Instruction incorporates the concepts of direct instruction in its philosophies and programs.

Engelmann developed Direct Instruction while working with his sons in the 1960s. He noticed a connection between what his sons learned and the instructional

methods he was using. He began conducting educational research on the effectiveness and efficiency of instructional methods. His research led to the development of the DISTAR program. Later DISTAR became known as Direct Instruction. Though DISTAR arose from Engelmann's teaching his sons to read, he applied the same teaching methods to other content areas as well (Carnine et al., 2004).

During the 1970s, Project Follow Through, which was a federally funded research effort, conducted research on the effectiveness of a number of reading programs.

DISTAR was the only program to show significant reading gains for students (Carnine et al., 2004). Engelmann continued his educational research; and his ideas, philosophies on teaching, and programs eventually became known as Direct Instruction. SRA began publishing Engelmann's educational programs. Today the McGraw-Hill Publishing Company publishes these programs (Stockard & Engelmann, 2010). For this program evaluation, the Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading programs were used.

Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading use explicit and direct instruction with small groups of children. Lessons are sequential and designed to improve student reading skills with special attention on phonics instruction. All lessons are scripted and follow specific procedures for presentation. Reading Mastery is the series devoted to students in kindergarten through second grade. Its focus is on developing students' fluid use of decoding and encoding skills through explicit instruction in phonics and letter-sound knowledge (McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 2013). Corrective Reading is the series for students beginning in Grade 3 and continuing through adult learners. It continues to develop student decoding skills while adding comprehension components (McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 2013).

Both Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading have three levels each. Prior to

beginning instruction, students are given a screening assessment in order to determine what skills and phonemes they already know. This allows teachers to place each student at the appropriate level within the program. Reading progress is monitored throughout the program with both oral and written assessments. The program aims for mastery of reading skills and the ability to decode letter sounds that have been taught. Fluency and comprehension are addressed in the higher levels of the program. Lesson length is about 45 minutes, and students must be able to show mastery before moving on in the programs. In order to ensure student mastery, reteaching and retesting are part of the program.

Direct Instruction lessons are designed to encompass all five reading components (phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). Lessons are scripted, sequential, and fast-paced with easier and foundational skills being taught first (Carnine et al., 2004). Students are taught to respond on signal either individually or in unison. Workbooks for skill practice and student reading books for fluency practice are both part of the program. All stories use words that contain the letter sounds that students have already learned and mastered. This provides students the opportunity to practice reading fluency and comprehension as well as discuss vocabulary that may be new or unfamiliar to them (Carnine et al., 2004).

### **Participants**

The participants for this program evaluation were the students attending Elementary School and the staff who worked there. Elementary School was located in the piedmont area of North Carolina and its student population averaged about 400 each school year. Elementary School served students in kindergarten through fifth grade. It also had one preschool class for students with disabilities. The preschool class was not

used in this evaluation. The school had four classes each in kindergarten, first, and second grades. There were three classes each for third, fourth, and fifth grades. The classroom teachers, teacher assistants, reading tutors, curriculum coach, resource staff, and administrators were also participants of the program evaluation. The staff members at the school had between 0 and 30 years of experience with some in their first year of teaching and some in their last.

### **Methodology and Timeline**

This program evaluation was conducted during the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 school years. These years were considered the implementation period for the reading intervention SRA programs, Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. Baseline data were collected in August 2012 from students in first through third grade using their DRA scores from the end of their previous grade. Students in kindergarten had no previous data to be used so their baseline data came from their September DRA scores. The same assessments were conducted again in the spring of 2013 for all students and used for comparison purposes in order to determine student growth in reading. During the following school years, additional student growth in reading was determined by students' mClass scores in reading. Both the DRA assessments and the mClass assessments use running records to determine student reading levels. The SRA programs included the collection of data on the number of lessons completed each week and month and the progress students were making based on mastery tests, workbook grades, and timed readings. The SRA consultant and the school's assistant principal reviewed this data. A final report on the effectiveness of the program was made available to the school principal.

An SRA consultant trained teachers in the implementation of the program in

August 2012. The assistant principal and curriculum coach were also trained so they could provide support to staff in the absence of the SRA consultant. As new teachers and teacher assistants joined the staff at Elementary School, the curriculum coach and other staff members trained them in the use of the SRA programs. The SRA consultant trained and assisted staff in the administration of the screening and placement tests for each level of Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. Students were administered placement tests in September 2012, and the program implementation began in October 2012 when all materials arrived at the school. Students in Grades 3 through 5 whose screening scores indicated there was no need for SRA instruction used the program Reading Success. Reading Success was also a program published by SRA McGraw-Hill. Its focus was on reading comprehension. The SRA consultant trained two teachers in the use of Reading Success. Data collected from these programs and students using them were not included in this study.

Once all students had been given the screening assessments, the SRA consultant trained the assistant principal and the curriculum coach on how to use the screening assessments to determine the appropriate placement within the programs for each student. When all students were assigned to a program level, the assistant principal and curriculum coach determined student groupings and teacher assignments for each group. Spaces for lessons and scheduling of groups were assigned as well. As new students arrived at Elementary School throughout the school year, the assistant principal and curriculum coach assessed these new students using the screening tool and then assigned them to the appropriate SRA group.

The SRA consultant provided fidelity checks, follow-up visits, and additional training throughout the program implementation period. She trained the assistant



principal and the curriculum coach in the use of fidelity checks and how to collect and interpret student data. The assistant principal and the curriculum coach worked with the Elementary School staff to ensure lessons were taught with fidelity and that staff understood how to collect student data using the instruments provided by the program. The final follow-up visit for the first year took place in March 2013. In July 2013, the principal scheduled the school visits for the upcoming school year. These visits were scheduled in order to provide additional training and support to any new teachers and for those who were in need of additional support. Fidelity checks were also conducted during these visits. The SRA consultant also met with the principal to provide updates on the school's progress during her visits. Throughout the program implementation, the assistant principal collected data on all aspects of the program because she maintained all data for the school including the student reading data used for this evaluation.

### **Assessments**

The following assessments were used during this program evaluation: DRA reading levels; mClass reading levels; DIBELS measures; AIMS Web reading measures; EOG reading tests; SRA screening/placement tests, lesson gains data, mastery test data, fluency data, and fidelity check data; staff and student attendance data; and student and staff questionnaires. DIBELS and AIMS Web reading assessments were used by Elementary School to determine student growth in phonemic awareness and reading fluency. DRA levels and mClass levels were determined each quarter of the school year and used to measure student growth in reading skills and reading comprehension. DIBELS, AIMS Web, DRA, mClass, and EOG reading scores were used to determine the effectiveness of the SRA programs on student overall reading abilities. SRA data were used to determine student progress and growth within the reading program. Attendance

data were analyzed in order to determine if staff and student attendance had any impact on the program effectiveness. Information from questionnaires provided insight on teacher and student perceptions of the program and their thoughts about the strengths of the program and areas that needed improvement. These questionnaires can be found in Appendices A and B. The Administrator Questionnaire (Appendix C) provided additional insight into decisions regarding the choice of programs and implementation procedures. Appendix D provided information and insight from the SRA consultant. Samples of the instruments used to determine the fidelity of lesson presentations are found in Appendices E and F. Once program effectiveness data were analyzed, they were made available to the administrators and staff at Elementary School.

In order to measure the progress and growth of children's reading abilities, researchers often use the curriculum-based measurement (CBM) methodology of Deno, Miriken, and Chiang (Stockard & Engelmann, 2010, p. 3). The CBM methodology was originally designed to measure a child's reading ability by measuring oral reading fluency. It has now been expanded to include several different reading skills such as letter naming and phoneme segmentation. The two most commonly used systems that use CBM methodology are DIBELS and AIMSweb (Stockard & Engelmann, 2010, p. 3). The short assessments in these systems compare the results of individual students to nationally established benchmark goals. These systems of reading assessment, when conducted regularly, provide a systematic and efficient method of monitoring student progress in reading fluency (Stockard & Engelmann, 2010, p. 4). Bursuck et al. (2004) used the DIBELS measures for phoneme segmentation and nonsense word fluency to determine student growth in phonemic awareness skills and the DIBELS oral reading fluency measures to determine reading fluency (p. 307).

Nonsense word fluency assessment is one part of the DIBELS and AIMs Web reading assessments. In her article on alphabetic anxiety and systematic phonics instruction, Adams (2001) discussed the importance of a child's ability to decode nonsense words (pp. 77-78). She described a research study conducted by Connelly, Johnston, and Thompson (1999) in which they compared the reading abilities of students who were taught to read using a systematic and explicit phonics program and those of students who were taught to read for meaning using context clues. The researchers discovered that the phonics-taught students read at a slower pace but had greater comprehension than the group that had no phonics instruction. Most importantly, the researchers noted that the phonics group had significantly higher scores on tests of nonsense word fluency. Students with no phonics instruction often refused to attempt to read the unknown words. Adams concluded that tests of student nonsense word fluency indicated a child's ability to decode words and would lead to greater reading comprehension (p. 78).

### **Program Implementation**

Prior to the beginning of the school year, the school's principal created a master schedule that included a dedicated time each day for the implementation and instruction of the SRA program. In order to implement the SRA programs at Elementary School, the staff members were trained in the use and presentation of the program. All staff members received 2 days of training by an SRA consultant during the workdays at the beginning of the school year. A core team was trained on how to administer the placement tests given to the students to determine their program level, and the tests were administered. The SRA consultant assisted in this process. At this time, the SRA consultant also trained the school's assistant principal and curriculum coach on how to evaluate the placement tests

and make decisions on student groupings. Needed materials were determined and ordered. They arrived at the school about two weeks after the order was placed.

After all the students in the school were assessed, groupings were determined and teachers were assigned to the groups. Once the materials arrived, the assistant principal distributed them to the staff members based on the needs of the groups they were teaching. Classroom teachers were responsible for explaining the program to their students and establishing the procedures for changing classes for reading instruction. Then SRA instructional lessons began. When new students arrived, they were assessed and placed in one of the existing groups.

About a month after the lessons began, the SRA consultant returned to Elementary School to assess the progress of the program and provided feedback to the staff. She met individually and with the entire group of staff members to provide the needed feedback and further instructions that were needed. The assistant principal and the curriculum coach were trained on how to conduct fidelity checks. The consultant returned to the school the following month for additional fidelity checks and feedback.

During the SRA consultant's second follow-up visit, she taught the assistant principal and the curriculum coach on the collection and use of SRA data. They prepared notebooks for each teacher and trained them on how to use the notebooks. Attendance logs, workbook grades, and mastery test scores were kept in the notebooks as well as other resource materials for staff members. Additional follow-up visits were arranged. These visits were for checking the progress of data collection and answering any questions that teachers had. The assistant principal filed all placement test materials and results in her office.

The assistant principal and curriculum coach spent each follow-up visit with the

SRA consultant in order to further their own training in the program. This also helped them to further their understanding of the program's implementation and how they could assist teachers. The final follow-up visits were used to provide training to the assistant principal and curriculum coach on how to understand and analyze the data being collected and assist teachers in the proper use of the data collection tools. In addition, the SRA consultant answered questions the assistant principal and principal had about further implementation of the program for the remainder of the school year and into the next school year. The school administrators used the data collected from the program data sheets, students' progress on their running records during the year, and progress on EOG tests in reading to measure the effectiveness of the program.

Throughout the first school year, students were assessed in reading using AIMs Web assessments and DRA assessments. During the second and third years, mClass reading assessments were used as reading assessment tools. These benchmark assessments were given quarterly. Classroom teachers administered the DRA and mClass assessments, and the school had a core team of staff members trained to administer the AIMs Web assessments. Classroom teachers had access to the AIMs Web data for their students as soon as the assessments were completed. The EOG reading tests were administered to third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students at the end of each school year. These test results were provided to teachers within a few days of test completion.

At the end of each school year, the assistant principal collected all SRA notebooks and materials from the staff members. She removed the data from the notebooks and entered the information into a spreadsheet. The data and information were then available for further analysis and for making placement decisions for students for the next school

year. The notebooks were kept and used for the next school year. SRA teacher and student materials were collected and stored each summer.

Prior to the beginning of each school year, the assistant principal inventoried the SRA materials at Elementary School, and the principal contacted the SRA consultant and determined the dates for her to visit during the school year. One of those dates was always a teacher workday prior to the first day of school for students. This visit was for training new staff and providing a refresher for experienced staff members. During the summer between the first and second years of implementation, a new SRA consultant was assigned to Elementary School due to personality differences between the first consultant and school staff members. Once the second school year began, new students were administered the placement tests, and all third-grade students were administered the placement test for Corrective Reading. The SRA consultant provided the assistant principal and curriculum coach with the guidance they needed in establishing SRA groups for the second and third years of implementation. She also assisted them in ordering additional materials for each year. Student workbooks were consumable and needed to be ordered each year. Once SRA materials arrived at the school, lessons began. The SRA consultant continued to visit Elementary School to conduct fidelity checks and provide school staff with feedback and support during each year of the implementation process. At the end of each school year, the assistant principal again collected SRA data notebooks and SRA materials.

### **Program Analysis**

In order to determine the effectiveness of the reading program intervention, a variety of data were collected and analyzed. Since the principal's purpose for implementing the SRA programs was to improve student EOG reading test scores and

end-of-year DRA and TRC scores, baseline and yearly data were collected for these assessments. Comparisons of beginning and ending scores were made in order to determine yearly and overall growth in reading.

In addition, teachers collected data daily throughout the implementation period in their data notebooks. This information included student and teacher attendance, the number of lessons taught each week, when lessons were not taught and why, student workbook grades, and student mastery test scores. This information was used with the student growth data from the EOG and TRC scores to conduct descriptive statistical analyses. These analyses provided information on variables that impacted student growth in either a positive or negative manner. Variables having a significant impact were determined using Pearson's correlation analysis as shown in Chapter 4 in Tables 10, 11, and 12.

Near the end of the implementation period, all stakeholders were provided with surveys to complete. Student and staff surveys included both open-ended questions and opinion questions using a Likert-type scale. These survey responses provided information on the perceptions of the students and staff as well as information regarding aspects of the program. About 400 students and 50 teachers received surveys. Perceptions were determined to be positive or negative based on the number and type of responses provided by the respondents. The school administrators and the second SRA consultant received questionnaires. Their answers provided insight and answers to many of the research questions.

### **Limitations**

This program evaluation used data that were collected during the first 3 years of the implementation of the SRA reading programs at Elementary School. The data came

from actual classrooms in a real school that had interruptions and student behavior issues. The setting was not one that allowed for empirical research or pristine data. The data collected were from the actual realities that existed within the school in the program evaluation. These “realities” may have had an impact on the data collected in the study and the eventual evaluation. In addition, this program evaluation included only Elementary School so it may be difficult to generalize any findings from this study to other schools. However, schools with similar demographics may want to examine the findings and evaluation results if they are considering using the same SRA programs.

Schools have students that move in and out of the school during each school year. This was another limitation of this program evaluation because it was not possible to maintain the same group of students throughout the entire process. The same limitation applied to the staff as well because Elementary School had changes in staff each school year.

Another limitation for this evaluation was the possibility of teacher resistance to implementing the reading program. The principal of the school made the choice to implement the program in his first full year as principal at Elementary School. Teachers and staff had no input into this decision so there may have been some resistance to a new “mandate.” Therefore, teacher perceptions were included as part of the evaluation process.

### **Summary**

Elementary School was a school located in the piedmont area of North Carolina. The students there had been struggling to meet state-mandated levels for reading proficiency for more than 10 years. The principal of the school decided to implement the Direct Instruction programs, Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading, from SRA



McGraw-Hill Publishing Company. The purpose of this program evaluation was to conduct an evaluation on the effectiveness of these programs for addressing the reading needs of the students at Elementary School. Stufflebeam's CIPP evaluation model was used to conduct this evaluation. The data analysis and evaluation results were shared with the school's leaders so they could use them to make more informed decisions on the continuation of the reading intervention programs. Data related to the students' reading test scores and the effectiveness of the programs are presented in the next chapter. In addition, data regarding the perceptions of the students and teachers are also presented along with possible correlation results for some of the variables which may have impacted student growth in reading.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

### **Background**

This program evaluation sought to use Stufflebeam's CIPP model to determine the effectiveness of a reading intervention program that was implemented at an elementary school to be known as Elementary School. The school's students struggled with reading proficiency for a number of years, and its new principal sought to help the students improve their reading skills by implementing a reading intervention program across all grade levels. The implementation began in the 2012-2013 school year and has continued through the 2014-2015 school year. The program selected by the principal was the SRA reading program created by Siegfried Engelmann as DISTAR and now published by McGraw-Hill as SRA. It has two levels, Reading Mastery for kindergarten through Grade 2 and Corrective Reading for Grades 3 through 5. This researcher was given access to all available reading data that were collected during this time period. In addition, students and staff answered questionnaires about the SRA program in order to provide additional insight and data about the program and its use. Fidelity data that were collected by the SRA consultants and school administrators during this time period were also provided to the researcher.

### **Research Questions**

Stufflebeam's CIPP model of program evaluation was used as a guide and to develop the research questions for this program evaluation. The CIPP model examines four areas of a program: context, input, process, and product. Research questions for each area were developed in order to be specific to Elementary School and its use of the SRA reading program. Those research questions are listed below. Due to the nature of the questions, both quantitative and qualitative data were used in this program evaluation.

## Context

*What needed to be done?*

1. What were the academic issues that created a need for a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?
  - a. What data were used to identify the need for a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?
  - b. What were the administrators' perceptions related to student academic issues that lead to the establishment of a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?
  - c. What were the teachers' perceptions related to student academic issues that lead to the establishment of a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?

## Input

*How should it have been done?*

2. What reading intervention programs were examined prior to making the decision to use Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading?
  - a. Who were the stakeholders involved in the decision-making process?
  - b. What data were used in the decision-making process?
  - c. What were the perceptions of the various stakeholders involved in making the determination of which reading program to use?
3. Were there any barriers that needed to be addressed prior to the implementation of the reading intervention program?

## Process

### *Was it done?*

4. What steps were involved in the implementation of the reading intervention program?
  - a. What type of training was provided to teachers?
  - b. How were teachers' questions handled during the program implementation and what types of questions arose?
  - c. What were teachers' perceptions of the training and support provided to them for program implementation?
  - d. What were teachers' perceptions of the various strategies and activities within the reading intervention program?
  - e. What were the students' perceptions of the various strategies and activities within the program?
5. What process was used to determine the goals of the program?
  - a. What were the academic goals?
  - b. Were there any non-academic goals and if so, what were they?
  - c. Who were the stakeholders involved in this process?
  - d. What were the stakeholders' perceptions of this process?
6. How was the fidelity of the program implementation determined?
7. Were adjustments made to the program during its implementation?
  - a. What were the adjustments?
  - b. Why were they needed?
  - c. What data were used in determining how to adjust the program?

Product

*Did it succeed?*

8. What was the impact of the reading intervention program on the reading benchmark scores for students at Elementary School?
  - a. What was the impact of the reading program on reading scores for students in kindergarten through second grade as evidenced by their running records?
  - b. What was the impact of the reading program on reading scores for students in grades three through five as evidenced by their EOG reading test scores?
  - c. After examining the impact data, what were the perceptions of the teachers and administrators?
9. Were there any unexpected impacts from the implementation of the reading intervention program?
  - a. What were the unexpected impacts?
  - b. What were the stakeholders' perceptions of these unexpected impacts?
10. Were there differences in the effectiveness of the reading intervention at different grade levels?
  - a. If there were differences, what were they?
  - b. Does any data exist that could be used to explain these differences and if so, what is it?
11. Does Elementary School plan to continue the use of the reading intervention program?
  - a. Who are the stakeholders involved in the process of making this decision?

- b. What data and evidence will be used in determining the continuation of the program?
  - c. What types of resources will Elementary School need if the program is to be continued?
12. Did the reading intervention program meet the goals determined by Elementary School?
13. What factors had an impact on the effectiveness of the reading intervention program?

### **Context Research Questions**

According to Stufflebeam (2003), the context portion of the evaluation needs to identify any needed interventions and then develop and rank goals based on the information regarding the problem (p. 5). In simple terms, the Context portion of the CIPP model asks, “What needs to be done to address the problem?” In this program evaluation, the research question that targets the context area asked, “what were the academic issues that created a need for a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?” In order to answer this question, one must also determine what data were used to identify the need for a school-wide reading intervention program, and what were the administrators’ and teachers’ perceptions related to student academic issues that led to the establishment of the program. The answers to these questions were gathered from questionnaires provided to staff members and administrators. These questionnaires are found in Appendices A and C respectively.

The first two questions of the Administrator’s Questionnaire (Appendix C) asked the school’s principal why he decided to implement a reading intervention program and what data he used. His responses helped supply the answers to most of the Context

Research Questions. The principal's answer to the question of why he wanted to implement a reading program is provided below.

Student test scores in reading were low. The school did not use any type of reading program other than the basal reading text book and teachers' lessons came mostly from this resource. There was no specific reading intervention program or strategies being employed by the staff. No consistent research-based program was being used by the staff.

He also stated that the data he used for making this decision were "EOG scores, DRA scores, and AIMS web scores." Table 4 shows the North Carolina EOG reading scores for Grades 3 through 5 at Elementary School for the 5 years preceding the decision to implement the SRA reading program. These scores came from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's (2002-2011) School Report Cards.

Table 4

*Reading Proficiency Scores for Elementary School*

School Year	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
2011-2012	55.1%	59.3%	44.4%
2010-2011	57.1%	54.5%	52.6%
2009-2010	45.6%	46.9%	57.1%
2008-2009	43.4%	43.9%	46.1%
2007-2008	32.1%	33.8%	35.3%

In addition, Table 3 in Chapter 1 shows similar reading scores for the second-grade students during 3 of the above years. Those scores are from the students' DRA

scores and show that second-grade students had reading proficiencies ranging from 42% to 48% for the time period. While the school has shown some improvement in some years, reading proficiency remains a struggle for the students and is the academic issue the principal wished to address.

In addition to the principal's questionnaire, the assistant principal and other staff members were provided with questionnaires to complete. Staff members included teachers, teacher assistants, and other support personnel who worked with the students. During the 3-year implementation period, a total of 57 people taught students using the SRA programs. Fifty of those staff members were given the questionnaires either in person or through the mail. Seven former staff members were unable to be provided with questionnaires due to a lack of contact information. Forty-one of the 50 questionnaires were returned thus yielding a return rate of 82%. One of the questions asked respondents if they believed the school had a problem with reading. Twenty-seven of the returned questionnaires were from staff members who were working at the school during the first year of the program's implementation. Twenty-four of those staff members, or 88.8%, responded that they agreed that the school had a problem with reading. This aligns with the principal's feelings that reading needed to be addressed and answers the research question regarding teacher perceptions of academic issues.

### **Input Research Questions**

The Input portion of the CIPP model asks the question, "How should it be done?" It is in this section that solutions for the problem are considered and stakeholders are provided "input" into the decision-making process. There are several research questions that need to be addressed for this section of the CIPP model evaluation.

The first question to be answered is what other reading intervention programs



were considered prior to making the decision to use SRA reading programs. Related to this main question are the questions of what data were used in the decision-making process, who were the stakeholders involved in the process, and what were the perceptions of these stakeholders.

To answer these questions, the administrator and staff questionnaires were examined. Questions 3, 4, and 5 of the Administrator Questionnaire addressed the research questions being considered here. Question 3 asked the principal and assistant principal why the SRA program was chosen. The principal stated,

I had had experience with them at another school and they seemed to have made a positive impact on that school's reading scores. I also knew it was a research based program and one that could be replicated at all grade levels.

The assistant principal indicated that she did not choose the program but had enjoyed a positive experience with an earlier version of it when she was an elementary school student. She also had an opportunity to observe the current version of the program being used at another elementary school.

Question 4 of the Administrator Questionnaire addressed what other programs were considered. The principal indicated he did not consider any other programs because of his positive experience with the SRA programs at another school. He also indicated that other schools within the same school system were using the programs and that played a role in his decision.

When asked about how he involved other stakeholders in the decision-making process, the principal stated, "I really didn't. I asked my AP (assistant principal) and curriculum coach if they had heard of SRA and what their thoughts were, but I made the decision myself." The assistant principal and staff questionnaires align with the

principal's statement. Question 5 on the Teacher Questionnaire asked respondents if they were involved in the decision-making process for choosing the use of the SRA programs. When looking only at the answers provided by those teachers working at Elementary School at the time the decision was made, 20 teachers (74%) stated they had had no input into the decision. Three (11%) teachers gave a neutral answer, and four (15%) felt they had had some form of input into the decision-making process.

In order to determine the stakeholder's perceptions of using the SRA program, Question 19 on the Teacher Questionnaire was used. It asked the teachers what their thoughts and perceptions were when they first found out they would be teaching SRA. The majority (84%) of the teachers responded in a positive manner by making comments such as "I thought it would be a good program to help address phonics needs the students had"; "I thought it would be an effective program to present reading skills and strategies explicitly"; "Hoped it would be the answer to a majority of reading problems"; and "I was open and willing to try it since it was to benefit my students." Some teachers (12%) answered in a neutral manner by stating, "I did not know much about the program" and "Had not taught it." A few teachers (4%) responded in a negative manner and made comments such as "I was leery because I felt like we were getting another program to do without first being properly trained" and "I was extremely concerned as I am a visual learner with substandard auditory skills which causes me to have poor spelling."

The second major research question for the Input section asked if there were any barriers that needed to be addressed prior to the implementation of the reading intervention program. This was answered with Question 8 of the Administrator Questionnaire. It asked the administrators about any foreseeable problems that they thought would need to be addressed before implementing the SRA programs. In his

answer, the principal indicated that getting teachers to accept the new program and give support to it was a concern. He planned to address it by “giving staff members the information on why we need this and how it could help students.” In addition to the concern regarding the teachers, the principal also stated that having time to implement the programs was a foreseeable problem. He planned to address this by creating a master schedule for the school that included time each day for the SRA lessons. To further address this problem, the principal shared that

Each grade level had a time for SRA with some grade levels having the same time but no more than 2 grades at once. Then a schedule for ensuring all available staff members would be available for instruction had to be created.

Time was a concern for the assistant principal as well, and the master schedule was also her answer on how to address this potential problem. Teacher support was also a concern for the assistant principal. She stated,

Our staff had had some bad experiences with other types of programs being forced upon them and they tended to be resistant to new things that they had no input into. Also, this was a new principal coming in with new ideas and I could see them thinking it was just a passing phase, especially since we had five principals in four years.

Her solution to this issue was to put her full support behind the program and the principal while providing the teachers with encouragement for its use noting that they needed to “give it a chance because we needed to do something!”

### **Process Research Questions**

The process phase of an evaluation should provide information on the implementation of a program and compare the plan for the implementation of the

program with the actual implementation (Stufflebeam, 2003, p. 6). In order to properly conduct the process evaluation, a number of questions needed to be answered. This section involved asking and answering four major questions and several subquestions.

**Implementation process.** The first and major question involved the details of the implementation of the SRA reading programs at Elementary School. This question asked what the steps were for the implementation of the reading program, what type of training the staff received, what types of questions teachers asked about the program, and how these questions were handled. In addition, teacher perceptions of the training and support and teaching strategies and activities were considered as well as the perceptions of the students.

The principal's answers on his questionnaire provided some insight into the decision-making process for the implementation of the SRA reading programs at Elementary School. It has already been noted that very few stakeholders were involved in the principal's previous decisions. With regard to the plan for implementation, Question 6 of the Administrator Questionnaire asked how the process of implementation was determined and who was involved in these decisions. Question 7 of the same questionnaire also asked how stakeholders were involved in the implementation process. The answers to these two questions provided information regarding the decision-making process and the stakeholders involved. The principal answered,

I called some other principals and asked them how they did it. I also met with our SRA Consultant and she provided me with some guidance in this area. These decisions were made in the summer when most staff members were not at school or readily available for discussions

and "I shared all of my decisions with my AP and Curriculum Coach. I discussed with

them my ideas for implementation and as a team we determined the master schedule and when training would take place.” The assistant principal’s answers to the same questions aligned with the principal’s responses. She stated, “Most of the decisions about implementation were made by the principal and the SRA consultant.” She also said, “To my knowledge, stakeholders were involved when they received training and then once they began using the program.”

Once the administrative team and the SRA consultant finished developing the implementation plan for the SRA program, Elementary School began its implementation. The SRA consultant trained all staff members during 2 workdays prior to the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. This training was for the purpose of ensuring staff members’ ability to provide the instruction of the program and its activities in a consistent manner and with fidelity. Teachers, teacher assistants, and resource staff members were all trained. One day of training was for the Reading Mastery levels for kindergarten through Grade 2, and the other day was for the Corrective Reading levels for Grades 3 through 5. Some staff members attended both days because they would be teaching both levels. This training provided staff members with instruction on how to use all of the materials for the programs. These materials included the teacher’s presentation book, the student workbooks, the student reading books, and the student mastery tests. At that time, the majority of the teachers’ questions were with regard to presentation strategies and the lesson activities as well as procedural questions. After the training, the assistant principal sent the staff an email letting them know that if they had further questions at any time to send them to her and she would forward them to the SRA consultant.

The SRA consultant returned during the first month of the school year and trained

a select group of staff members on how to give the Reading Mastery Placement Tests and the Corrective Reading Placement Tests. The training took place in the morning, and placement testing for all students began immediately afterward. The SRA consultant trained the assistant principal and the curriculum coach on using the results to determine the appropriate level and lesson placement for each student in the school. Following this, the SRA consultant and the assistant principal determined the materials to be ordered for the school and placed the order. The administrative team (principal, assistant principal, curriculum coach) used the placement test information to create the student groups and assigned a staff member to each group. When the program materials arrived, the assistant principal disseminated the materials; and SRA reading lessons began.

Once the materials arrived and instruction began, the SRA consultant visited the school on a monthly basis for the first 5 months of program implementation. During this time, she visited each teacher in his/her classroom, observed his/her lessons, provided verbal feedback, and conducted fidelity checks. She also answered teachers' questions and provided model lessons for teachers each time she came to the school. Model lessons were provided for at least one teacher on each visit. During some visits, more than one teacher was provided with a model lesson. The SRA consultant also provided additional training after school once during the school year for the purpose of teaching the staff how to conduct the student check-outs and collect the student data. Data collection included student and teacher attendance, daily information on the lesson number and type of lesson completed, information on missed lessons, student workbook grades, mastery test grades, and timed reading check-outs.

During her monthly visits, the SRA consultant was available after lunch each day to meet with individual teachers and to work with them. At each visit, teachers also

received written feedback in their data notebooks on how well their data collection was progressing. The principal was provided with written notes from the SRA consultant's visits. The assistant principal received a combination of verbal and written feedback, and the curriculum coach received verbal feedback. This feedback provided the administrative team with information regarding implementation progress and areas of needed improvement. As the school year progressed, the SRA consultant began to identify specific teachers who other staff members could go to for assistance. These teachers were noted in her feedback notes to the principal beginning in February 2013. In her note from February 6, 2013, she made a comment regarding a third-grade teacher who

can explain timed check-outs and how to get a lesson a day in for B1, he can be a big help to the Corrective instructors who want to do the best for their students and know they are still learning the program.

In another note from February 12, the SRA consultant discussed a new staff member who replaced one who left. In that note, she indicated the new teacher is energetic and "anxious to restart that group the right way" and that another teacher "is going to mentor her with the program." At the end of the school year, the SRA consultant provided the administrative team with guidance as they made decisions for the next school year and determined what additional materials were needed.

**Participant perceptions.** Teacher perceptions regarding the first year of the implementation of the SRA reading programs were positive based on their answers to Questions 6, 9, and 10 of the Teacher Questionnaire. These questions asked if they agreed that they were provided with appropriate support; appropriate training; and, based on that training, if they were able to fully implement the SRA program. Eighty-eight

percent of those teachers who taught during the first year responded that they either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with these statements. Seven percent provided a neutral response, and 5% somewhat disagreed. No one answered that they strongly disagreed. On the same questionnaire, the answers to Questions 20, 22, and 23 provided additional information on the teachers' perceptions. Question 20 specifically asked about the teachers' perceptions after the first year of SRA implementation, and Questions 22 and 23 asked about the training and support that were received. On Question 20, 45% of the teachers made only positive comments, 27% made only negative comments, and 27% made both a positive and a negative comment. Positive comments included statements such as "It was easier than I thought"; "SRA helped me to realize that students must know their alphabets, the sound of each letter, know how to blend sounds, recognize words in order to be able to read and be fluent readers"; and "If we continue with our schedule then our students will learn the rules of phonics." Negative comments ranged from dissatisfaction regarding student placement and concern over the repetitiveness of the program. Teachers said, "Not the 'total' program I hoped it would be. I do not think kindergarten should be included as the program is a bore to the students in its current form. Nothing but repetition for months"; "It was boring and I couldn't see gains"; and "I didn't think the placement of all students was accurate. It was also very childish in approach to older students." Teachers who had both a positive and a negative statement made comments such as "My Kindergarten students who were learning to read significantly benefited from the program, my second graders less so as they quickly became bored with the same format that was repeated each day"; "I liked doing the program but often things would not be consistent when we had it" and "I feel the brief, frequent practice provided in the program ensured mastery, however, it is difficult to



consistently provide instruction daily.”

With regard to training, half of the teachers made suggestions for improvement and half the respondents made only positive comments. The suggestions for improvement included having “small group training sessions,” having modeled lessons, “extra training in blending,” and providing more time for training of teacher assistants. Positive comments included, “the training and support was good,” “can’t think of other ways training could be improved,” “I liked the training,” and “It was great!” With regard to the support provided to teachers after the training, 85% of the teachers indicated a positive response leaving only 15% of the teachers providing negative responses. Most comments noted that the SRA consultant came regularly and gave good feedback. Several teachers commented that the administrators had been supportive and were able to answer their questions when they had them. Examples of the comments include “We had consistent walk-throughs and visits with the consultant”; “People were available to answer questions when I had them;” and “It has been adequate for me.” The negative comments from the teachers included concerns about being provided with modeled lessons, having time for support, and the SRA consultant’s visits causing performance anxiety. Some of the teachers indicated their desire for the consultant to model the lesson with their students. They also stated, “Time for support is limited” and “on-site demonstrations and critiques simply caused performance anxiety.”

An examination of student answers to some of the questions on the Student Questionnaires (Appendix B) provided insight to student perceptions of the implementation of the SRA reading programs at Elementary School. Question 10 on the questionnaire for second- and third-grade students asked if the student believed SRA had helped to improve that student’s reading ability, and Question 4 on the questionnaire for

fourth- and fifth-grade students asked a similar question but also asked the students to rate how much they believed SRA had helped them improve their reading ability.

Question 7 for the fourth- and fifth-grade students asked if they enjoyed SRA reading.

Table 5 shows the students' answers to these questions.

Table 5

*Student Questionnaire Answers*

Question and Answer	Percent of Grades 2 & 3 Students	Percent of Grades 4 & 5 Students
Do you believe SRA has helped you to become a better reader?		
Yes	66.6	
No	13.8	
No Answer	19.4	
Did you enjoy SRA?		
Yes		66
No		20
Some		10
No Answer		4
How much do you believe SRA helped you to become a better reader?		
Not at all		2
Some		44
A Lot		54

The data in Table 5 indicate that students believed the SRA reading programs were beneficial to them regardless of which program they had used, Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading. However, the students in Grades 4 and 5 had a much stronger opinion of the program than students in Grades 2 and 3 as indicated by only 2% of the upper grade students saying SRA had not helped them; while 13.8% of students in the

lower grades gave the same answer, and 19.4% gave no answer at all. It is interesting to note that while 98% of the upper grade students said SRA helped them become a better reader, only 66% of those students enjoyed the program.

The students in Grades 2 and 3 showed an overall positive perception of the SRA program as did the students in Grades 4 and 5. Some of their positive comments were “It helps me read better”; “Yes, because it helps me spell out my words”; “Yes, because I can read a lot better”; “Yes, by learning my sounds”; “It does because I been a better reader since then and I really appreciate it very much”; “You did a lot of work but it paid off”; and “Yes, before I had SRA I always had a mistake reading, now I don’t.” Some of the negative comments included “No I already know how to read”; “No, I do not like them”; “It got boring”; “I didn’t like it because all I did is reading and talking and questions”; and “No. I already knew everything.”

Teachers and students were asked open-ended questions about the types of SRA reading activities they liked and disliked (Teacher Questionnaire Questions 26 and 27; Student Questionnaire for fourth- and fifth-grade Questions 5, 6, and 7; Student Questionnaire for second-grade and third-grade Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9). Their responses were compiled into the categories used in Table 6, which indicates their perceptions of the various types of SRA reading activities and components. Skill practice included answers about sounding out words, blending sounds, and spelling. Structure and Organization included answers such as “teacher is only a presenter,” “tracking with my finger,” “the way sounds are introduced,” and “could not cheat.” The SRA program includes several game type activities to use with students. Some of the ones included in the participants’ responses were “Be the Teacher,” “Cross Out the Letter,” and “Matching.” The “Teacher/Student Game” is a specific activity used as a behavior

management technique. It is listed separately due to the number of responses that mentioned it specifically by name. Items in the Scheduling category included responses such as “finding time for other interventions” and “taking time away from class.”

Student perceptions of the SRA activities were overall positive in nature. Teacher responses were more equal with about half of their responses being positive in nature and about half being negative in nature. However, the most often given positive statements by teachers were with regard to the skill practice provided by the SRA activities, and the most often given negative statements were with regard to the repetitive nature of the program. In addition, the SRA consultant’s answer to Question 8 of the SRA Consultant Survey (Appendix D) indicated that teachers had a positive attitude about the SRA programs. Her comment was, “Teachers were overall positive about SRA when talking to me.”

Table 6

*Teacher and Student Perceptions of SRA Reading Activities*

Activity and Group	Positive Responses	Negative Responses	Activity and Group	Positive Responses	Negative Responses
Skill Practice			Workbooks		
Teachers	16	1	Teachers	1	1
Students	42	22	Students	26	24
Participation of All Students			Reading the Stories		
Teachers	1	5	Teachers	0	0
Students	0	3	Students	91	29
Structure and Organization			Teacher Modeling and Instruction		
Teachers	5	6	Teachers	0	0
Students	2	1	Students	9	0
Repetition			Coloring		
Teachers	6	8	Teachers	0	0
Students	0	15	Students	10	3
Working in small groups			Answering the Questions	0	0
Teachers	1	1	Teachers	0	0
Students	13	0	Students	13	11
Games			Handwriting		
Teachers	1	0	Teachers	0	0
Students	19	1	Students	3	10
Teacher/Student Game			Scheduling		
Teachers	0	0	Teachers	0	7
Students	27	1	Students	0	9
Tests (Placement, Mastery, etc.)			Liked/Disliked Everything		
Teachers	0	1	Teachers	0	0
Students	2	3	Students	44	3
Behavior Management			The SRA Teacher		
Teachers	1	1	Students	19	5
Students	0	18			

Based on the data presented in Table 6, the teachers and students both made positive responses about only one of the SRA activities. This activity was the practice of skills provided by SRA materials. It is interesting to note that one might expect teachers

to be the ones more likely to provide this answer, but a much larger amount of students than teachers (42 students, 16 teachers) noted the practice of skills. This would seem to indicate that students were aware of the importance of skill practice for their learning and that the practice provided by the program was positive in nature. With regard to the teachers, skill practice was the SRA activity that received the most positive responses of all the answers provided by the teachers.

Another area of interest was related to Small Group Instruction. One might expect teachers to indicate this as a positive component of the program, but students were the ones who were commenting on enjoying working in small groups. Thirteen students mentioned this in a positive manner, and one teacher did. No students noted Small Group Instruction as a negative, but one teacher did. This particular piece of information prompts the question of why more teachers did not note small group instruction as a positive component of the program when most educators are aware of its importance. It would seem that the students enjoyed the extra attention the teacher was able to provide due to the smaller group size.

The SRA activity that received the most positive responses from the students was Reading the Stories. Ninety-one students commented in a positive manner about the stories, and 29 indicated a negative response. Teachers did not mention story reading at all. The positive student responses indicate the stories in the program were interesting to them. This is important because students are more likely to want to read when the material is interesting to them (Carnine et al., 2004; Fulmer & Frijters, 2011; Morrow & Gambrell, 2001; National Research Council, 1998). Forty-four students indicated they liked everything about SRA, and three students responded in the opposite manner. No teachers commented either way. This shows that a number of students enjoyed the SRA

program. This might be an area teachers want to consider when making decisions for students. Using student opinions is part of stakeholder input and a necessary ingredient especially when considering how to motivate students.

One activity category that only students mentioned was the SRA teacher. Nineteen students indicated that their SRA teacher was an important factor in their enjoyment of the program, while only five mentioned the SRA teacher in a negative way. Both the positive and negative responses show the importance of the individual instructor of any program. The person who presents the material can do so in a way that inspires students and has a positive influence on them, or they can do just the opposite (Carnine et al., 2004; National Research Council, 1998; Pianta, 2006). Evidently there were some SRA teachers at Elementary School who made a positive impact on their students. Sadly, however, there may have been one or two who had the opposite results as well as indicated by some student responses. It would be interesting to find out if the students who responded in similar ways had the same SRA teachers.

Games and the Teacher Student Game were two other SRA activities the students seemed to enjoy based on the data in Table 6. A total of 46 students made positive comments about these two activities and one teacher did as well. Two students and no teachers made negative comments about these activities. It is interesting to note that only one teacher made any type of comment with regard to any SRA game activity. However, the students appeared to be interested in these activities. When compared with the answers to the repetitive nature of the program (which was overall negative in nature), one might find that the students enjoyed a break from the repetitious lessons by participating in a game activity. Both students and teachers made note of the repetitiveness of the SRA lessons. Eight teachers and 15 students made negative

comments about this, and only six teachers mentioned it in a positive manner. These answers would indicate that both participants and instructors do not enjoy the repetitiveness of the SRA lesson structure.

The teacher and student responses to the use of workbooks are of particular interest. Both teacher and student responses were divided on this activity, but many more students mentioned it than teachers. Only two teachers mentioned workbooks, one made a positive comment and the other a negative one. Student responses were almost as equally divided with 26 positive comments and 24 negative comments. About half of the students saw the use of the workbooks for practice and application of skills in a positive way, and the other half saw no benefit in this. Negative comments made by the students included “was boring” and “too easy.” These types of responses would indicate the need for more challenging material for some students. The students who made positive comments mentioned specific workbook activities such as the matching activities.

Activities and categories that received a majority of negative responses included scheduling, student behavior, and handwriting. Both teachers and students made overall negative comments about scheduling with seven teachers and nine students making these comments. No teachers or students made positive comments about scheduling. Of special interest would be the types of comments made by the teachers and the students and how their comments differed. Teacher comments indicated that SRA schedules were often changed due to instructor absences, assemblies, and field trips. They noted that the lack of consistency in scheduling was a problem. Students were more concerned about having to go to another classroom and to be in groups that did not include any of their friends. Student behavior was also of more interest to students than the teachers. Only two teachers made comments in this category, one was positive and one was negative.



However, 18 students made negative comments and no positive comments. Their comments indicated their concern was with regard to other students in their SRA groups who disrupted the lessons. These comments indicate these students had a desire to learn and did not like it when other students interrupted their learning opportunities.

Handwriting was another activity mentioned by students but not teachers. This would indicate that teachers did not see this particular component of the lesson as being as important as other areas or that it was simply a neutral area for them. Students, however, viewed the handwriting component differently. Ten students made negative comments, and three made positive comments about handwriting. The negative comments indicated students did not like having to rewrite their answers due to poor handwriting. SRA lessons encourage the use of proper handwriting, and the instruction manuals ask the teachers to have students redo their work if the handwriting is sloppy or inadequate.

**Program goals.** The second major question addressed in the Process Evaluation examined the goals for the reading program. Specific questions to be answered were what process was used to determine the goals, what were the academic and nonacademic goals, what stakeholders were involved in determining the goals, and what were the stakeholder perceptions of the process. The answers to these questions may be found in the responses to Question 12 of the Administrator Questionnaire and Question 29 of the Teacher Questionnaire. Additional information regarding the goals for the SRA program can be found in Appendices G and H as well. These documents are excerpts from Elementary School's School Improvement Plans for the year spans of 2012-2014 and 2014-2016 respectively.

Regarding reading program goals, both administrators indicated that improving

reading test scores was the major goal. According to the school's School Improvement Plans, the program goals were also to increase student reading proficiency and, according to the plan for 2014-2016, to have 90% of the school's students reading on grade level by June 2016. The teacher responses indicated a variety of goals. Based on their responses to Question 29 of the Teacher Questionnaire, the teachers believed the program goals were to teach phonics skills, improve reading fluency, improve reading comprehension, improve student reading abilities, lay the foundation for beginning readers, and to provide support for struggling readers. For the purpose of this evaluation, the goal set by the school's School Improvement Plan was used. This goal was to improve student achievement in reading as measured by end-of-year reading assessments for all students.

The administrator's answers to previous questions were used to determine the answers regarding the process of determining goals and the stakeholders involved in this process. The principal was the main participant in all the processes leading to the implementation of the SRA reading programs at Elementary School. Because he made the decisions and then shared them with others, there appears to be no process for determining the goals; and no stakeholders were involved either. The only evidence of a decision-making process or stakeholder input comes from the School Improvement Team Minutes for September 17, 2012 for Elementary School. These minutes can be found in Appendix I. At that meeting, School Improvement Team members discussed goals for their school improvement plan. One goal was to improve student achievement and one of the strategies for achieving this goal was to implement SRA reading in order to provide direct instruction in reading. There appear to be only academic goals for this program.

**Fidelity and program adjustments.** The last two Process Evaluation questions asked how the fidelity of the program and its implementation were to be determined and

if any adjustments were made to the program during its implementation. If adjustments were made to the program, then the question of why the adjustments were made needed to be answered as well as who was involved in this decision, what data were used in making the decision, and what were the specific adjustments that were made.

During the first year of implementation, the notes taken by the SRA consultant during her classroom visits determined program fidelity. During the second and third years of implementation, fidelity was determined by the use of the Walkthrough Forms used by the SRA consultant assigned to Elementary School for those years. Both SRA consultants indicated on their forms or in their notes any issues regarding program fidelity. Their notes also indicated any adjustments they believed needed to be made and why. Based on the notes of the two SRA consultants, the overall program fidelity was considered acceptable. However, the second consultant did note that even though program fidelity was acceptable in the third year, it had decreased somewhat from the second year. The first SRA consultant made note of some issues with fidelity but gave the school an overall rating of 7 based on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest degree of fidelity. It should be noted that even though Elementary School had two SRA consultants, both of them were observing teachers to determine their adherence to the program and its scripted presentation. They both checked the SRA data notebooks for accuracy and completeness of the data. The major difference in the SRA consultants was in the relationships they formed with the staff at the school. The second SRA consultant had a more pleasant demeanor, and the school staff interacted with her in a more positive manner than they had with the first SRA consultant.

The SRA consultant came monthly to Elementary School to conduct fidelity checks during the first year of program implementation. At one of her visits, she trained

the assistant principal and curriculum coach on conducting fidelity checks as well.

Appendix J contains transcripts of the SRA consultant's notes from the first year of SRA program implementation at Elementary School. There are numerous notes on how the program was being implemented by each teacher and for the school as a whole.

Appendices E and F contain the instruments for conducting fidelity checks for Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading respectively. These are the forms used by the SRA consultant for years 2 and 3 of program implementation. The SRA consultant for year 1 of implementation provided teachers with immediate verbal feedback on their lessons and written feedback on their data collection. She provided the principal with both verbal and written feedback as well as copies of her notes. The assistant principal received these at the end of the school year. During the school year, the assistant principal was provided with verbal feedback and some written feedback. Program fidelity could have been improved if the assistant principal had been given access to all the information and feedback from the SRA consultant as it was provided to the school. The assistant principal was unable to address some of the fidelity issues due to being unaware of the some of the problems.

The SRA consultant for years 2 and 3 of implementation provided teachers and administrators with verbal feedback and copies of the SRA Walkthrough Forms. These notes and forms indicated that teachers were conducting lessons with fidelity and were doing a good job. The consultant left many positive comments on the walkthrough forms and shared her thoughts with both administrators at each visit. All fidelity issues in year 2 were addressed immediately due to the improved communication.

Questions 4, 5, 6, and 7 of the SRA Consultant Survey provided additional insight into the level of implementation and lesson fidelity at Elementary School. These

questions asked about the school's strengths, areas of improvement, and the consultant's impression of the school's fidelity of implementation. The consultant's comments were positive in nature, and she noted that the teachers were "very hardworking" and "open to new ideas." However, she did note that fidelity and lesson gains were being impacted by the inconsistency of daily schedules. Lessons were being cancelled due to field trips, assemblies, and teacher absences. This kept the students from being able to have lessons on a daily basis and make the types of gains that could have been made. The consultant did note that the teachers were doing a good job with their lesson presentations and data collection during year 2. However, she noted that year 3 saw a slight decline that she felt was due to a decreased emphasis on SRA schoolwide. This decreased emphasis could have been due to the fact that SRA was no longer being implemented in Grades 4 and 5 and eventually was cancelled in Grade 3 as well.

The school's strengths from the first year of implementation were that "Students were placed appropriately, group sizes were not too big, and teachers and assistants had very good behavior management." The consultant believed that teachers were doing a good job, but the program implementation could be improved by increasing the consistency with which lessons were provided so that more lessons could be taught. Program fidelity was being impacted by the cancellation of lessons due to field trips, school assemblies, and staff absences. Question 7 specifically asks about fidelity. The consultant's opinion for years 2 and 3 of implementation was,

I think there was more fidelity the first year but that may have been due to more teachers using the program so more emphasis was placed on the program. The second year the fidelity was not as good as evidenced in their data notebooks.

Based on the information and comments on the SRA Walkthrough Forms and the

transcribed SRA consultant's notes, lessons were presented with fidelity. Teachers took the feedback provided on their lesson presentation and made improvements as noted by the SRA consultants. The fidelity issues that were noted were with regard to lessons taking place on a daily basis. One consultant noted that teachers seemed to embrace the program and "made strides but lesson gains were not what they should be." The other consultant made a similar comment by saying, "Overall, the teachers were doing a good job but they were not getting enough lessons in, which therefore, impacted the growth seen." These notes and comments indicate that teachers were capable of providing lessons with the fidelity required to make achievement gains, but the implementation of the program needed to be more consistent in order for the students to make all the academic progress that was possible.

In addition to information provided by the SRA consultants, teachers were asked about their fidelity of lesson presentations in their questionnaires. Question 12 asked how closely they follow the SRA script; and Question 24 asked if their degree of fidelity had changed over time and, if so, why. All but one teacher answered that they closely followed the SRA script. Figure 1 shows the teachers' responses to the question regarding whether or not they had changed with regard to the fidelity of lesson presentation. The majority of them (67%) indicated that they had maintained the same level of fidelity throughout the program with those who made a comment noting the lack of change was due to the scripted nature of the program. Those teachers who said their fidelity had improved noted it was due to becoming more experienced with the program. Those who said their fidelity had decreased had varying reasons why. Some noted that they were no longer reading the script word-for-word and others indicated that the absence of other teachers impacted their ability to follow the program due to the presence

of extra students in the room. One teacher noted that her decrease was due to behavior problems with the students in her group which eventually gave her a negative attitude towards SRA. The teachers' comments and data reflect that of the SRA consultants' information. Teachers noted a slight decrease in program fidelity, as did the second SRA consultant. Both teachers and SRA consultants noted the problems with staff absences, which ranged from 76% attendance to 100% attendance rates each year with an average rate of 93%.

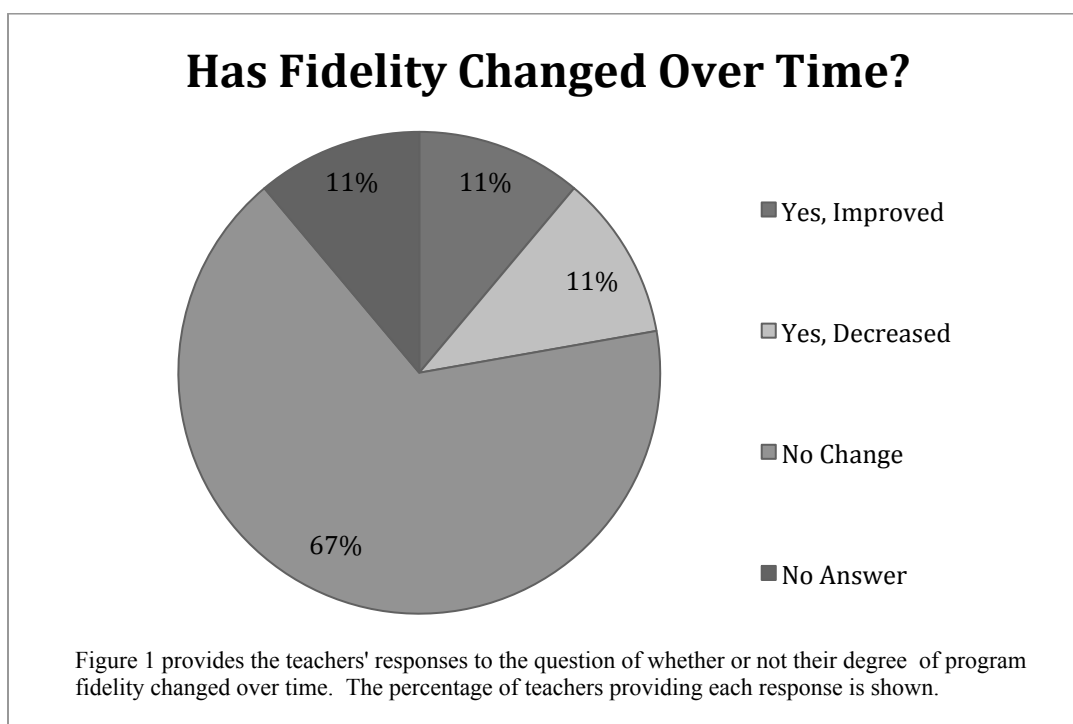


Figure 1. *Teacher Responses to “Has the degree to which you adhere to the program changed over time?”*

The Administrator Questionnaire specifically asked about adjustments that were made during the program implementation in Question 13. According to both administrators, adjustments were made. In their answers, each principal indicated that SRA reading was discontinued for certain groups of students at different times during the

second and third years of implementation. SRA reading was discontinued for Grades 4 and 5 in the month of February during the second year of implementation, and it was not restored after that. The principal's answer provided information on why this change was made, what data were used, and who had input or influence on this decision. He stated,

I decided to discontinue the program for grades 4 and 5 in the winter of the second year. No data were used, however, I did consider input from the fourth and fifth grade teachers. Due to staffing issues and the presence of long-term subs at these two grade levels, they requested the ability to create their own, targeted interventions for their students. They wanted to use the SRA time to implement them. I allowed them to do so.

The assistant principal also noted in her questionnaire the discontinuation of the SRA program in Grades 4 and 5. However, she noted concerns about this, unlike the principal. Her concerns were with regard to the lack of data for making this decision and the lack of data to support the replacement interventions. She commented, "The teacher interventions were not always targeted for specific students and at times completely inappropriate." She also noted that while not all students in Grades 4 and 5 needed to continue in SRA, there were some who would have benefited from continuing to use the program as an intervention.

In addition to the discontinuation of SRA reading for fourth and fifth graders, the third graders also had to discontinue the program. Both administrators indicated this was due to the North Carolina requirement of the completion of a reading portfolio at Grade 3. This requirement was implemented during the second year of the SRA reading program implementation and only impacted third grade. Students needed time to complete these portfolios, so the decision was made to use the time allotted for SRA



reading for this purpose. Due to the nature of this decision, no data were used. The assistant principal noted that this time was chosen because the administrators did not want to use core instructional time for the completion of the reading portfolios. SRA reading was discontinued during the second semester of the second year of program implementation for the third graders. It was discontinued during the first quarter of the school year during the third year of implementation because the reading portfolio requirement was implemented earlier in the school year for third graders than it had been the previous year.

In addition to changes being made at Grades 3, 4, and 5, both administrators also noted that adjustments had to be made each year for kindergarten students. This is also noted in the transcribed notes from the first SRA consultant. The type of data used for these decisions depended on who was making the decisions and the year of implementation. During the first year of implantation, the SRA consultant used SRA data only when making changes to the kindergarten groups or for any other students she moved to other groups. These changes were indicated in her notes. These changes were based on whether or not the students were making progress and with regard to the pace of the student's progress. The assistant principal indicated in her answer to Question 13 that she used different types of data each year when making changes to the kindergarten groups. These changes were with regard to student groupings. When beginning the SRA program in kindergarten, all students started on the first lesson of the first book unless they were already able to read. After several weeks of instruction, it became apparent to teachers and is evidenced through data that some children were able to grasp concepts more quickly and easily than others. Teachers also gained more knowledge of their students' reading abilities during regular classroom reading instruction. In order to

ensure all students were able to move at an appropriate pace, kindergarten groups were changed each year. Students with similar data were grouped together in order to maximize student learning and lesson gains. During the second year of implementation, the assistant principal used SRA data and Reading 3D benchmark data in making her grouping decisions. This was done after the school year started. The assistant principal stated,

I always have to reconfigure the K groups after a period of time. However, the third year, I used AGS screening and Reading 3D data to help me make placement decisions for K students. This seemed to help a lot. Fewer moves to make.

This comment indicated she was using data other than SRA data to make original placement decisions so fewer moves would be needed later in the school year. She also noted that adjustments were made each year for the kindergarten students due to all of them starting at the same place in the program.

In addition to making grouping changes for kindergarten students, students in other grades began to move more quickly or more slowly than others in their groups. In order for the groups to function well and for them to continue to make effective progress, all students in the group needed to be moving at a similar pace. When this did not happen, it became necessary for the groups to be revised. The assistant principal said, "Occasionally a teacher would tell me that a specific student needed to move up or down. I would use their SRA data to determine whether or not to do this."

The assistant principal also noted adjustments to the SRA reading program other than student groupings. These adjustments were related to staffing of groups. In her questionnaire she noted,

I had to make several adjustments each year. Some were because of staff turnover during the school year. Sometimes I was able to just replace the SRA teacher with the new staff member. Other times, I had to rearrange groups for an entire grade level.

Except when groupings had to be rearranged, these types of adjustments were made without the use of data. When new student groups had to be created, these groups were formed based on the lessons the students were working on. All SRA lessons were in sequential order for each level of instruction. Therefore, those students who were working on lessons that were close to one another in the sequence could be moved from one group to another without too much disruption. Other than teachers requesting that students be moved from one group to another, the assistant principal did not indicate that any other stakeholders were involved in the making of her decisions.

### **Product Research Questions**

The Product section of Stufflebeam's CIPP model provides evaluative information to decision makers so they can determine if a program needs to be continued, modified, or discontinued. In simple terms, the Product section asks if a program succeeded in meeting its goals. This program evaluation sought the answers to a number of questions related to this area of the evaluation. Those questions included (1) determining the impact of the SRA reading program on the reading scores of students at Elementary School; (2) the stakeholder perceptions of the program on reading scores as well as (3) determining if there were any unexpected impacts from the program; and (4) were there any differences in program impact at various grade levels and, if it existed, what data indicated the reasons for the difference. In simple terms, the major question of whether or not to continue the SRA reading programs was to be answered along with

who was involved in making this decision, what data were used, and if any additional resources were needed to continue the program. The final questions asked if the program met its goals and what factors had an impact on the effectiveness of the program.

**Impact on test scores.** The goal of the SRA reading program was to improve students' reading proficiency scores as evidenced by their reading scores on tests taken at the end of the school year. Reading scores for students in kindergarten through Grade 2 were determined by reading running records. In the 2012-2013 school year, these running records were part of the DRA tests given to students at these grade levels. The DRA was a school district-required assessment system. This assessment tool changed in the 2013-2014 school year. Students continued to be given a running record assessment, but it was changed to part of the mClass reading assessments of Reading 3D. The running record portion of these tests was the Total Reading Composite (TRC). Reading 3D testing was a requirement of the state of North Carolina, and all elementary schools had to use this system. Running records are conducted by asking students to read leveled text that increases in difficulty. Students are given a text to read that they have not read before. They read the text aloud while the teacher indicated on her copy of the text any errors the student made while reading. Teachers use the following formula to determine the proficiency percentage for the student's reading of the passage: total words read correctly divided by the total number of words in the passage (Opitz & Erikson, 2015, p. 72). Students have mastered the book level if their proficiency is 95% or above and they can successfully answer the comprehension questions that accompany the text. Teachers continue to provide students with increasingly more difficult text until the student can no longer answer the comprehension questions successfully or their reading proficiency falls below 95%. The student's reading level is then considered to be the highest reading level

completed successfully. Running records were developed by Marie Clay and are conducted in the same manner no matter the program being used (Opitz & Erekson, 2015, p. 69). DRA and Reading 3D both use running records, but the text levels are labeled differently. DRA uses an alphabetic and numeric level system, and Reading 3D uses an alphabetic system only. In order to determine the reading growth of Elementary School's students, a correlation of the DRA and Reading 3D levels would be needed. Two correlation charts were needed to make the conversion from DRA levels to Reading 3D levels. The first chart needed was from the Washington Department of Public Instruction (2005). It provided a correlation of DRA levels to Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading levels. All students' DRA scores were converted to Fountas and Pinnell levels. Then the correlation chart of Taybron and Lee (2012) was used to convert the Fountas and Pinnell level scores to Reading 3D levels. Table 7 provides the final correlation chart used to convert the data for Elementary School's students.

Table 7

*Correlation Chart for DRA, Fountas and Pinnell, and Reading 3D Reading Levels*

DRA	Fountas and Pinnell	Reading 3D	DRA	Fountas and Pinnell	Reading 3D
A	A	PC	28	L	L
1	A	PC	28	M	M
2	B	RB	30	N	N
3	C	A	34	N	N
4	C	B	38	O	O
6	D	C, D	38	P	P
8	E	E	40	Q	Q
10	F	F	40	R	R
12	G	G	40	S	S
14	H	H	44-50	T, U, V	T, U, V
16	I	I	60	W, X, Y	W, X, Y
20	J	J		Z	Z
20	K	K			

Once this task was completed, it was possible to compare student reading scores throughout the implementation period. Figure 2 shows the reading proficiency growth scores for all grade levels during this 3-year time period as evidenced by their running records (TRC) and EOG scores in reading. The year prior to the program implementation, 2011-2012, was included as a baseline for comparison.

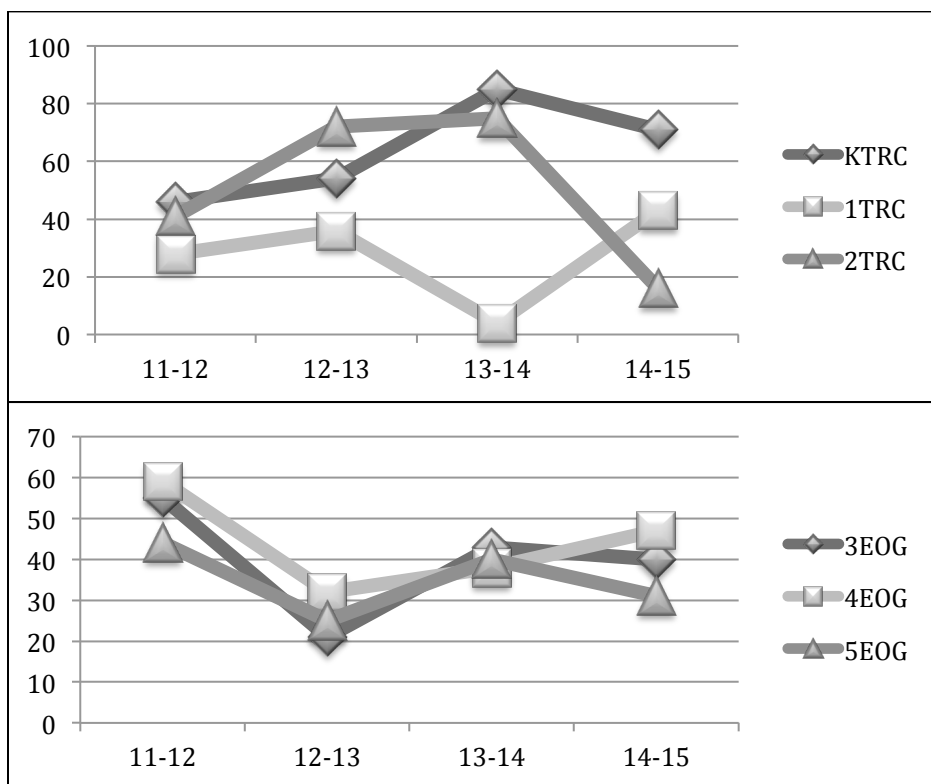


Figure 2 represents the reading growth scores for students at Elementary School. The 2011-2012 school year serves as a baseline. Scores are shown as the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency in reading.

Figure 2. *TRC and EOG Proficiency Growth Scores for Students at Elementary School.*

Based on the data in Figure 2, all grade levels for the K-2 grade span had an increase in reading scores for the first year of implementation. However, the opposite was true of the 3-5 grade span which saw a decrease in reading scores at all grade levels. For the second year of SRA reading implementation, all grade levels had an increase in their reading scores with the exception of first grade. The results for the third year were mixed. First and fourth grades saw an increase in reading scores, while all other grade levels experienced a decrease in reading scores. The scores for students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 during the second year of implementation need to be interpreted with caution due to the discontinuation of the SRA program during that school year. The growth of Grade

4 during the third year of implementation must also be interpreted with caution since no SRA was taught at this grade level. However, students in this grade had received instruction in SRA during the previous 2 years.

The reading scores for students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 during the last 2 years of the program implementation must be considered cautiously. This is due to the fact that these students did not receive SRA reading instruction for the full school year during the 2013-2014 school year or not at all during the 2014-2015 school year. However, these students had received SRA instruction during the first year of the program implementation. This raises the question of whether or not any of the student gains can be attributed to participation in the SRA program. One must also consider whether decreases in reading proficiency could be attributed to the discontinuation of the program. Based on the data presented in Figure 2 only, one could assume that the SRA program had an overall positive impact for the students in kindergarten and first grade as their ending scores were higher than their beginning scores and they participated throughout the length of the program. The second-grade students saw significant growth for the first 2 years of the program implementation and then sharply decreased during the third year. Looking at the data in Figure 2 alone will not provide all the information needed to address why this group saw a decline, especially since this particular group of students had had more total years of SRA instruction than those in kindergarten and first grade. While all of the decrease cannot be attributed to teacher absences, some of it may be due to the fact that two of the four second-grade teachers were on maternity leave during that school year. Each of these teachers was on leave for 3 months.

When examining only the data in Figure 2 for Grades 3, 4, and 5, the question of why there was a decrease in reading scores for all three grades during the first year of



implementation arises. The data in this figure cannot fully answer this question; but some of the factors include teacher absences, teacher maternity leaves, staff turnover, and program acceptance and fidelity by some staff members. In addition, the state of North Carolina revised their end-of-year reading assessments that school year. The impact of this revised test cannot be discounted in this research, but it cannot be the sole reason for changes in test scores either. During the second year of program implementation, all three grade levels had an increase in test scores. This occurred even though all three grade levels discontinued using the SRA program at some point in the school year. It should be noted that the program discontinuations occurred during the second half of the school year so the students did receive SRA instruction for more than half of the school year. The following year, no SRA instruction was provided to fourth- or fifth-grade students. However, fourth-grade students continued their growth in reading while fifth graders saw a decline. Did students grow because they had had SRA instruction or because the teacher-created interventions were successful? Did student reading scores decrease because they were no longer receiving SRA instruction? These questions need to be answered, but this research has no significant data with which to do so. However, there is more than one way to determine if the SRA program had an impact on student reading scores. If the baseline data were used, the answer would be that the program was not effective because the ending scores are lower than the beginning scores. If the reading scores from the first year of implementation were used as a baseline due to the changes in the end-of-year reading tests, then the data would indicate that the SRA program had a positive impact on all three grade levels due to final reading scores being higher than those at the end of the first year. Regardless of how the data are considered, a definitive statement cannot be made about the impact of SRA on this particular group of

students based on the data provided in this program evaluation.

**Teacher perceptions.** Teacher perceptions of the impact of the SRA reading program were considered through their answers to Questions 4, 8, 11, 14, and 15 of the Teacher Questionnaire. These questions asked if the respondents believed Elementary School still had a problem with reading, if the SRA program met the reading needs of their students, if the SRA program was the right way to address the reading problems of the school, were students transferring their learning outside of the SRA groups, and did they believe the SRA program had been beneficial to students. Table 8 provides teacher responses to these questions.

Table 8

*Teacher Perceptions of the SRA Reading Program*

Question	Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
4. Since implementing the SRA program, our school no longer has a problem with reading.	31.7	41.4	21.9	2.4	2.4
8. The SRA program meets the reading needs of my students.	4.8	26.8	34.1	31.7	2.4
11. SRA is the right way to address the reading problems of students at our school.	12.2	17.1	46.3	21.9	2.4
14. My students are transferring what they learn in SRA to when they are reading at other times.	9.7	14.6	34.1	39	2.4
15. SRA has been beneficial to students at our school.	4.8	7.3	51.2	36.6	2.4

*Note.* Numbers are percentages.

The majority of the teachers indicated that they believed the school still had a problem with reading; however, their answers were more divided when asked if the SRA program met the reading needs of their students with about one third of the teachers saying it did not, one third saying that it did, and one third giving a neutral answer. These data indicated that staff members believed reading was still a problem for students at Elementary School, but they are not sure if the SRA program was the solution to the problem. Some of them believed that it was the answer to the problem, while a similar number also believed that it was not, and another group was not sure about SRA. These data indicated the staff was struggling with determining a solution to their students' reading problems.

When asked if SRA was the right way to address the students' reading problems, 46.3% of the teachers gave a neutral answer; about 30% gave a negative response; and about 24% gave a positive response. These answers indicated that teachers did not believe the SRA program was the answer to the school's reading problems. However, when asked if the program had been beneficial to their students, only about 12% gave a negative response and about 39% gave a positive response. The remaining teachers (51%) gave a neutral response to this question. This information indicated that while teachers believed their students benefited from participation in the SRA program, the majority did not believe the program was the answer to the school's reading problems. These data concur with those presented in the paragraph above. Teachers felt that there were positive aspects to the SRA program but could not say conclusively that it was the solution to their students' reading problems.

Any time teachers provide skills instruction to students, the purpose of the instruction would be that students retain the information learned and apply the skills in

their everyday activities when the skills are needed. The data in Table 8 show that teachers were somewhat concerned about students applying the skills taught in SRA to other areas of their learning. Slightly more than half (51.2%) of the teachers were unsure if students were able to do this based on their neutral response to the question regarding student transfer of skills learned. About 39% believed that students were transferring what they had learned in SRA reading, but about 12% believed that students were not able to do this. These data would indicate again that teachers were not sure about the effectiveness of the SRA program. When looking at the overall data presented in Table 8, it is evident that the majority of teachers were not sure about the SRA program. However, there were more positive responses than negative responses which indicated that for those staff members who had either a positive or negative perception of the program, the overall perception was a positive one.

**Additional program impacts.** One impact from implementing the SRA reading program was that teachers were able to ensure their students were provided with a lesson in phonics on a daily basis. Prior to the program implementation, there was no specific requirement that phonics be taught on a daily basis. Teachers included phonics lessons when they felt it was appropriate. Once the SRA reading program began, phonics was taught daily as a part of the program. Question 16 of the Teacher Questionnaire asks the teachers if they found they were teaching phonics on a regular basis with the SRA program. Seventy-eight percent of them responded positively to this question. A negative response was given by 2.4% of the teachers, and 19.5% gave a neutral response. In addition to their responses on this particular question, teachers also noted that they considered phonics instruction to be a strength of the program based on their comments and answers to Question 24 which asked about the strengths of the SRA program.

Teaching phonics on a regular basis also had an impact on student writing and spelling skills as noted by some of the teachers' comments which included "improved not only reading but writing skills" and "taught the students the phonics rules for spelling."

Phonics is one of the five major components of reading and needs to be taught daily at the lower grades and for struggling readers in the upper grades (Adams, 2011; Carnine et al., 2004; National Research Council, 1998; Opitz & Erekson, 2015; Stahl, 2001). The SRA program provided Elementary School teachers a means to ensure they were providing phonics instruction on a daily basis. Daily phonics instruction using these programs may have also led to an increase in student phonics skills such as decoding as evidenced by a rise in their DIBELS test scores. Over the life of the program implementation, students having proficient DIBELS scores at the end of the school year rose from about 30% to about 80%.

Teachers and administrators noted no negative impacts from the use of the SRA reading program. However, the assistant principal did comment on the discontinuation of the SRA reading program for students in Grades 3, 4, and 5. She noted,

I think it was a mistake to stop using SRA completely at the upper grades. It was taken away and replaced with teacher created interventions. While some kids could have probably benefited from this, there was a large group that needed to continue. The teacher interventions were not always targeted for specific students and at times completely inappropriate,

and "At the 3rd grade level, SRA was removed and was replaced with no intervention."

This indicates the assistant principal was concerned that a reading intervention program was discontinued for students and either replaced with inadequate reading interventions or, even worse, with no reading interventions. In order to make academic gains in

reading, all students, but especially the struggling readers, needed to be provided with some type of intervention in reading to improve their reading skills (Bursuck & Blanks, 2010; National Research Council, 1998; Ritchey, 2011).

**Effectiveness of the SRA reading program.** Figure 2 gives the end-of-year reading scores for the students at Elementary School for the 3 years of its implementation. These graphs indicate there was a difference in the effectiveness of the programs based on grade level and year of implementation. As previously discussed, during its first year of implementation, kindergarten, first, and second grades all made gains in their reading scores based on their running record scores. The upper grades, however, all saw a decline in their reading scores based on their EOG scores in reading. This was the first year of implementation and all grade levels used the SRA reading program for the entire year. However, the lower grades used the Reading Mastery series; and the upper grades used the Corrective Reading series. In addition, the lower grade students used the same reading assessment as they did for the baseline year; but, as discussed previously, the upper grades reading test had been changed from the baseline year. During the second year of implementation, all grades had a growth in reading scores with the exception of first grade. During this year, the upper grades discontinued the use of Corrective Reading during the second semester of the school year. For this year, the data to be examined would be the growth of the upper grades, even though the program was discontinued, and the lack of growth by first-grade students. For the third year of implementation, growth scores were mixed and only the kindergarten group used the reading program for the entire year. Several types of data need to be considered in order to determine, if possible, why the differences in growth exist.

Table 9 provides additional data for the program's first year. These data can be

used to examine the possibility of why a difference in reading growth scores exists.

Table 9

*Lesson and Attendance Data for SRA Reading Implementation Year 1*

	Kinder- garten	First Grade	Second Grade	Lower Grades	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade	Upper Grades
Students on Grade Level	74.42%	52.86%	71.74%	65.75%	24.32%	32.25%	23.81%	26.63%
Average TRC/EOG Growth	2.59 levels	4.4 levels	4 levels	3.9 levels	No data available	-.45 points	2.13 points	0.87 points
Average # of Lessons Taught	47.25	76.63	59.66	62.86	53.43	51.91	43.32	66.06
Average # of Days Lessons Taught	41.8	67.19	70.54	60.2	63.38	66.11	66.75	49.59
Average Lesson Gains	3.38/wk	3.59/wk	3/week	3.37/wk	2.85/wk	3.09/wk	2.79/wk	2.9/wk
Average Teacher Attendance	97.45%	94.26%	92.43%	94.58%	96.8%	93.32%	94.05%	94.8%
Average Student Attendance	96.43%	93.33%	95.52%	94.92%	95.2%	94.61%	95.18%	95.01%

The number of days lessons were taught and the number of lessons taught are two different categories because some lessons took more than 1 day to teach and some days teachers could cover two lessons. There was no growth data available for third grade for the first year because these students did not take the Beginning of Grade Three Reading Test that year. Students the following years did take this test, and it was used as a baseline for reading growth.

Students in Grades 2 and 3 had the highest growth scores as well as the highest

average number of lessons taught and the highest average number of days that lessons were taught. This might indicate that student growth in reading was impacted by the number of lessons taught and the number of days lessons were taught; or, in other words, the more lessons and days students were taught, the higher their reading growth would be. Attendance did not appear to be a factor because both teacher and student attendance percentages were similar; however, as will be discussed later, it was a factor. To determine if there was a correlation between student reading growth and any of the factors listed in Table 9, the Pearson correlation was determined for each factor for each grade level. Those results are presented in Table 10.



Table 10

*Correlations between Reading Growth and Other Variables for Year 1 of Implementation*

		SRA Teacher	Teacher Attendance	Student Attendance	Avg. Lesson Gains/Week	Number of Lessons Taught	Number of Days Lessons Taught
Kindergarten	Pearson Correlation	.117	-.194	.359	-.041	.172	.385
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.579	.352	.078	.845	.410	.057
	N	25	25	25	25	25	25
Grade 1	Pearson Correlation	.070	.113	.119	-.008	.111	-.029
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.566	.354	.330	.945	.364	.814
	N	69	69	69	69	69	69
Grade 2	Pearson Correlation	-.353*	.150	.054	-.019	-.104	.319*
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.020	.339	.730	.903	.507	.037
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43
Grade 3	No growth data available						
Grade 4	Pearson Correlation	-.023	.062	.450**	-.242	-.248	-.013
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.882	.691	.002	.118	.109	.932
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43
Grade 5	Pearson Correlation	-.117	.220	.118	-.049	-.045	.139
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.438	.142	.436	.748	.764	.356
	N	46	46	46	46	46	46

*Note.* \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed); \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed).

Based on the data presented in Table 10, there appears to be a significant positive correlation between the number of days SRA lessons were taught and student reading growth in second grade and a significant negative correlation between the growth of these same students and their SRA teacher. This latter correlation is disturbing because it

indicates that an ineffective instructor taught some of the students. This information can be used to provide administrators with information on which particular instructors need to be retrained or should not be assigned to teach an SRA group. This same information also can be used to determine who the most effective instructors were and ensure they are being assigned to teach SRA reading. In spite of the negative growth correlation for the SRA teacher, this group of students made the highest average growth for reading proficiency when compared with the other two grade levels using the Reading Mastery series. In addition to this data, the attendance of fourth-grade students had a significant positive correlation to their growth. This group also had higher average reading growth scores than the other grade levels using the same Corrective Reading series.

Table 10 provides correlation data related only to the first year of SRA program implementation. Tables 11 and 12 provide the same type of growth correlation data for years 2 and 3, respectively, of the program implementation. The data in these tables show there are different factors of significance to student growth during these years. For the second year of implementation, there again was a correlation between student growth and the SRA teacher; but this time, it was a positive correlation for the kindergarten groups. However, there was a negative growth correlation for this same group with regard to teacher attendance. This would indicate that those teachers with better attendance had better student growth, and those students with the most effective instructors had higher gains in reading. In addition, kindergarten students had the highest average reading growth scores this year. During the same time period, fifth-grade students saw a positive growth correlation between the number of lessons taught and the number of days lessons were taught. This indicates teachers were able to teach an appropriate number of lessons on the days lessons were taught. Despite this information,

the fifth-grade students did not have the highest average reading growth scores for this year. Theirs were the second highest. Of particular concern are the negative correlations in third grade. Of the six factors examined, four had negative correlations to student reading growth at this grade level. Those factors included the SRA teacher, average lesson gains per week, the number of lessons taught, and the number of days lessons were taught. Based on this information one would expect this group of students to have the lowest reading growth scores for this school year; however, they do not. Their reading growth scores are the highest. This brings about the question of why this might be. This group of third graders is the same group of students who made the highest reading growth the year before when they were second graders. This could have had an impact on their ability to show growth in spite of the negative correlations. Despite the student growth in third grade, the negative growth correlations are still disturbing and indicate a problem with program fidelity and consistency. There is no additional data for third grade when the information for the third year of implementation is examined in Table 12. This is due to the fact that the program was discontinued soon after it began during this school year. The data collected were so minimal, they could not be used for this research.

Table 11

*Reading Growth Correlations by Grade Level for Year 2*

		SRA Teacher	Teacher Attendance	Student Attendance	Avg. Lesson Gains/Week	Number of Lessons Taught	Number of Days Lessons Taught
Kindergarten	Pearson Correlation	.532**	-.618**	.017	.137	-.193	-.145
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	.000	.910	.365	.199	.336
	N	46	46	46	46	46	46
Grade 1	Pearson Correlation	.259	-.167	-.013	.059	.125	.178
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.054	.219	.924	.666	.360	.188
	N	56	56	56	56	56	56
Grade 2	Pearson Correlation	-.161	.175	.059	.063	.132	.086
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.211	.175	.647	.629	.305	.506
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62
Grade 3	Pearson Correlation	-.281*	.038	-.137	-.267*	-.280*	-.372**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.033	.775	.306	.043	.033	.004
	N	58	58	58	58	58	58
Grade 4	Pearson Correlation	-.111	.091	-.068	-.248	-.067	.082
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.461	.546	.654	.096	.658	.590
	N	46	46	46	46	46	46
Grade 5	Pearson Correlation	-.318	.206	.027	.077	.566**	.593**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.063	.234	.877	.659	.000	.000
	N	35	35	35	35	35	35

*Note.* \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed); \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed).

During the third year of the implementation of the SRA program, only kindergarten, first-, and second-grade students were using the program for the majority of

the school year. The growth correlation data for this year are presented below in Table 12. Once again, a negative correlation exists between student reading growth and the SRA teacher. This time it is for first grade. The fact that this appears each year of the program's implementation shows the need for the school's administrators to determine if the same SRA instructor is the one attached to this data each year or if it is due to different instructors each year. If it is the same instructor, this teacher needs to be retrained or discontinue teaching this program. If the data are attributed to different instructors, refresher training is warranted for all. In spite of this negative growth statistic, first-grade students made the most growth for this school year when compared to kindergarten and second grade. Table 12 also shows a positive growth correlation for kindergarten students with regard to the average lesson gains per week. However, this group saw a decrease in their reading growth scores. This might be attributed to the actual number of lessons students were able to complete during the school year.

Table 12

*Reading Growth Correlations by Grade Level for Year 3*

		SRA Teacher	Teacher Attendance	Student Attendance	Avg. Lesson Gains/Week	Number of Lessons Taught	Number of Days Lessons Taught
Kindergarten	Pearson Correlation	-.020	-.048	.140	.292*	.148	-.068
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.863	.680	.230	.011	.207	.560
	N	75	75	75	75	75	75
Grade 1	Pearson Correlation	-.314*	.066	-.071	.223	-.039	-.169
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.010	.598	.572	.071	.753	.174
	N	66	66	66	66	66	66
Grade 2	Pearson Correlation	.001	.195	.109	-.047	-.195	-.198
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.990	.109	.374	.702	.108	.103
	N	69	69	69	69	69	69

*Note.* \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed); \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed).

**Future plans for SRA reading.** Each summer, school principals make decisions about the programs their schools will be using for the upcoming school year. These decisions can be made based on a number of factors such as budget, program effectiveness, and stakeholder feedback. Sometimes, personnel from the school district's central office provide input into the decisions being made. At the end of its third year of implementation, Elementary School's principal must make a decision about the continuation of SRA reading at his school. When he implemented the program, his goal was to improve reading test scores for the students at Elementary School. If his decision is based on whether or not this goal was met, he could use the data presented in Figure 2. This indicates that SRA has had a positive impact on the growth of reading test scores for

the majority of the students. While students are experiencing growth in reading, are they meeting the reading expectations as determined by the state of North Carolina? Table 13 presents information to assist in answering this question. While it is obvious that student reading proficiency scores have improved for kindergarten and first-grade students, the same is not true for the other grade levels or for the school as a whole. This information bears considering as plans for the future are being made at Elementary School.

Table 13

*Reading Proficiency Scores for Elementary School*

School Year	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Total
2014-2015	71.4	42.6	16.4	39.62	47	31.48	41.42
2011-2012	45.78	28.3	41.18	55.1	59.3	44.4	45.67

*Note:* Numbers are percentages.

The administrators' answers to Question 12 of their questionnaire provided some insight to their thoughts on how they might want to use SRA reading in the future. The principal indicated that SRA has not seemed to help improve student EOG scores in reading, but he did note that TRC scores seem to be improving. The assistant principal stated,

Unfortunately our EOG reading scores have not improved. I think this might be because those scores are based on comprehension and many of our students are still struggling with vocabulary and decoding at the upper grades. However, there seems to be some reading progress being made in the lower grades, especially in first and kindergarten. These are the grade levels where students are really

learning to read and SRA seems to be helping with this.

Both administrators recognized that the most gains are being made in the lower grades.

This would indicate they might consider continuing SRA reading for the lower grades.

The administrators might want to seek input from the teachers before making any further decisions, especially since this group has not had many formal opportunities, if any, for providing their opinions about the continuation or discontinuation of this program. If the program is to continue for kindergarten, first-, and second-grade students at Elementary School, the assistant principal will need to inventory the current supply of SRA materials and place an order for any additional materials needed. There has been a need each year to replace the consumable workbooks, especially those for the lower levels of Reading Mastery. No additional teacher materials are needed because there has been enough for the last 2 years after additional teacher materials were acquired the first year.

The principal, assistant principal, and the SRA consultant met during the summer, prior to the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year, to discuss reading programs, reading updates, staff development, and the SRA program. At that meeting, it was decided to continue using the SRA reading program at the kindergarten level for all kindergarten students. It would be used at the first- and second-grade levels at the teacher's discretion as an intervention. The assistant principal and the SRA consultant inventoried the materials and determined that no additional materials would be needed for the upcoming school year. No formal data were used to make this decision, but the group did discuss feedback they each had received from teachers. During this meeting, the SRA consultant raised the question of what would teachers at grade levels other than kindergarten be using for a phonics program. She cautioned the administrators that in order for students to continue to make gains in reading, phonics would need to be taught daily in the lower



grades. She reminded them that SRA provided that instruction on a daily basis.

One unanticipated outcome from the use of the SRA programs was the knowledge and skill in using Direct Instruction as a teaching strategy. During their summer meeting, the principal, assistant principal, and the SRA consultant designed a method of providing targeted small group instruction for all students in all grade levels. They called this new idea a “learning paradigm” and determined it would be used for reading, math, and other content areas. Central to their “learning paradigm” were the major aspects of Direct Instruction: small groups, targeted instruction, explicit teaching, and brief lessons. Teachers would provide differentiated small group lessons to all students on a daily basis in the core subjects. Direct Instruction through the SRA programs was being provided to a small portion of the student population, but all students were being provided with Direct Instruction each day through this new model.

### **Summary of Findings**

Elementary School’s principal and staff recognized that their students were struggling in reading. This was evident in their state reading test scores which had been below state standards for several years. In an effort to address this problem, the school’s new principal decided to use a school-wide reading program to address the issue. He made this decision with almost no input from the stakeholders involved. The school implemented the SRA reading programs Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading at the appropriate grade levels for each program. These programs began being used in the 2012-2013 school year and for the 2 years following. A total of 57 staff members taught lessons over the length of the program implementation with 12 staff members teaching each of the 3 years.

Throughout the process of planning and decision making for the SRA programs,

the school's principal made the majority of decisions with only some input from stakeholders. Each year, except for the first one, grade levels discontinued using the SRA program during the school year. Some grade levels replaced the SRA program with teacher-made reading interventions, and others used the time for additional reading instruction. The principal and the assistant principal differed in their opinions on the discontinuation of services. The assistant principal was concerned that students were not receiving adequate instruction to replace the SRA programs.

Program fidelity during the program implementation period was considered to be adequate based on the information provided by the SRA consultants and teacher questionnaires. However, data from teacher data notebooks indicated that program consistency had an impact on the program fidelity. This in turn had an effect on student growth in reading. Correlation data indicated that the number of lessons provided to students, the number of days lessons were taught, and who the SRA teacher was had significant correlations with student growth. These were both positive and negative in nature.

Students and teachers also viewed the programs differently. Their perception data indicated that both groups viewed the programs positively, but student opinions were much stronger. They named many aspects as being things they enjoyed, and almost all of them stated that SRA had helped them to become better readers. Even though teacher perceptions of SRA were positive in nature, they did not believe that SRA had solved the school's reading problems.

During this 3-year time period, some grade levels experienced growth in reading and others did not as shown in Figure 2. The data were different for each school year. The goal for the program was to improve reading test scores. Overall, this did not occur.

However, Reading Mastery was successful for kindergarten and first-grade students. These two grade levels had an overall increase for the 3 years of the program implementation. Teacher and student perception data indicated that SRA reading was considered to be beneficial by both groups. However, teachers still believed that reading was a problem for the school, and they were divided in their opinions about SRA being the solution to the problem. Chapter 5 discusses more fully some of the implications from the research findings especially as they apply to future research and as they may benefit administrators and educators who are considering the implementation of new programs in their schools.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### Study Summary

This program evaluation was conducted in an elementary school in the piedmont area of North Carolina. The school's students had been struggling in the area of reading as evidenced by their end-of-year reading scores. A new principal was appointed to the school at the end of the 2011-2012 school year. He wanted to see an improvement in student reading scores so he decided to implement the SRA reading programs Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. This study was a program evaluation using Stufflebeam's CIPP model to determine the effectiveness of these programs on improving the reading test scores of the students at Elementary School.

Researchers use the CIPP model as a way to evaluate the effectiveness of programs. The CIPP model uses four components: Context, Input, Process, and Product. Each component asks a specific question. Those questions are "What needs to be done," "How should it be done," "Was it done," and "Did it succeed?" These questions provided the basis for the research questions for this program evaluation and focused on answering the following.

#### Context

##### *What needed to be done?*

1. What were the academic issues that created a need for a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?
  - a. What data were used to identify the need for a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?
  - b. What were the administrators' perceptions related to student academic

issues that lead to the establishment of a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?

- c. What were the teachers' perceptions related to student academic issues that lead to the establishment of a school-wide reading program to improve reading proficiency?

#### Input

*How should it have been done?*

2. What reading intervention programs were examined prior to making the decision to use Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading?
  - a. Who were the stakeholders involved in the decision-making process?
  - b. What data were used in the decision-making process?
  - c. What were the perceptions of the various stakeholders involved in making the determination of which reading program to use?
3. Were there any barriers that needed to be addressed prior to the implementation of the reading intervention program?

#### Process

*Was it done?*

4. What steps were involved in the implementation of the reading intervention program?
  - a. What type of training was provided to teachers?
  - b. How were teachers' questions handled during the program implementation and what types of questions arose?
  - c. What were teachers' perceptions of the training and support provided to them for program implementation?

- d. What were teachers' perceptions of the various strategies and activities within the reading intervention program?
  - e. What were the students' perceptions of the various strategies and activities within the program?
- 5. What process was used to determine the goals of the program?
    - a. What were the academic goals?
    - b. Were there any non-academic goals and if so, what were they?
    - c. Who were the stakeholders involved in this process?
    - d. What were the stakeholders' perceptions of this process?
  - 6. How was the fidelity of the program implementation determined?
  - 7. Were adjustments made to the program during its implementation?
    - a. What were the adjustments?
    - b. Why were they needed?
    - c. What data were used in determining how to adjust the program?

#### Product

##### *Did it succeed?*

- 8. What was the impact of the reading intervention program on the reading benchmark scores for students at Elementary School?
  - a. What was the impact of the reading program on reading scores for students in kindergarten through second grade as evidenced by their running records?
  - b. What was the impact of the reading program on reading scores for students in grades three through five as evidenced by their EOG reading test scores?

- c. After examining the impact data, what were the perceptions of the teachers and administrators?
9. Were there any unexpected impacts from the implementation of the reading intervention program?
- a. What were the unexpected impacts?
  - b. What were the stakeholders' perceptions of these unexpected impacts?
10. Were there differences in the effectiveness of the reading intervention at different grade levels?
- a. If there were differences, what were they?
  - b. Does any data exist that could be used to explain these differences and if so, what is it?
11. Does Elementary School plan to continue the use of the reading intervention program?
- a. Who are the stakeholders involved in the process of making this decision?
  - b. What data and evidence will be used in determining the continuation of the program?
  - c. What types of resources will Elementary School need if the program is to be continued?
12. Did the reading intervention program meet the goals determined by Elementary School?
13. What factors had an impact on the effectiveness of the reading intervention program?

The answers to these questions were gathered in several ways. Surveys were provided to all stakeholders who included students, staff members, administrators, and

the SRA consultant. In addition, all data collected by the staff in their SRA data notebooks for all years of the program implementation were used. These data included attendance information for staff and students as well as weekly lesson gain forms which indicated how many lessons were taught each week, when substitute instructors taught lessons, and why lessons were cancelled. In addition, the data notebooks provided information on the total number of lessons taught each year and information on student mastery of concepts and their scores for their timed readings. Student end-of-year reading scores were also used to determine the growth in reading. These scores included EOG reading tests for Grades 3, 4, and 5 and end-of-year running record scores for kindergarten, first-, and second-grade students. Written feedback notes and information from fidelity checks that were provided to school staff were also used in this program evaluation. Student growth in reading was determined using data from student EOG reading test scores and end-of-year running record scores. These are the reading scores that are reported to the Department of Public Instruction in North Carolina, and they are used as part of the formula for determining the effectiveness of schools in this state. These are the reading scores the principal hoped to see grow as a result of this reading intervention program.

Surveys were provided to staff members currently working at Elementary School, and surveys were also sent to teachers who had taught SRA lessons but were no longer employed by the school. Administrators, students, and the SRA consultant were also provided with surveys. Each group was provided with a survey designed to answer questions pertinent to that group. The surveys included both open-ended questions and some similar to a Likert scale. Questions of the Likert variety were converted to numerical data in order to run descriptive statistical analyses of the data. Open-ended



question responses were tabulated and used to determine staff and student perceptions of the program. The open-ended question responses provided by the administrators and the SRA consultant provided much needed insight for the answers to a number of specific research questions. Some of those questions were included in the Context and Input components of the research questions.

The data collected from teacher SRA data notebooks were entered into a statistical program; and bivariate correlation tests were run in order to determine any relationships between student growth in reading and variables such as attendance, number of lessons taught, and the particular instructor. These analyses were run for each individual year of the program and for the overall program.

The major question to be answered in this program evaluation was whether or not the SRA reading programs were effective in improving the reading test scores for students at Elementary School. The Reading Mastery program was successful based on the overall improvement of student scores for students using this program but was most effective for students in kindergarten and first grade. However, test scores for students in Grades 3 through 5 using Corrective Reading did not show an overall improvement in reading scores during the same time period. While these may appear to be straightforward and simple answers, there are a few factors that may have impacted these results. These factors include things such as scheduling, changes made at the upper grade levels, and the transience of the student population.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The purpose in implementing the SRA reading programs at Elementary School was to improve the reading achievement scores for the school's students. During the first year, there was improvement in reading scores for kindergarten, first, and second grades

but not third, fourth, and fifth grades. However, the scores for Grades 3, 4, and 5 need to be interpreted with caution due to the fact that the reading test scores for the state of North Carolina were renormed during that school year. This makes reading growth difficult to determine. The second year, all grade levels had an increase in reading scores with the exception of first grade. During the last year of implementation, only first- and fourth-grade students saw an increase in their reading scores. Overall, kindergarten and first-grade students saw the most gains in reading. When examining the data presented in Figure 2 in Chapter 4, all grade levels with the exception of Grade 2 saw an increase in reading test scores from year 1 of the program implementation. If the first year of implementation is used as a baseline for Grades 3, 4, and 5 due to the renormed reading scores, the programs could be viewed as successful for these grade levels. As already discussed, student gains were most likely impacted by missed lessons, staff attendance and turnover, student transience, problems with scheduling, and teacher commitment to the programs.

**Student transience.** When examining the yearly data for the evaluation, one must keep in mind that the data are for a different group of students and staff for each year. This is due to students moving in and out of the school district and changes in staff members as well. Elementary School has a transient student population with about one fourth of the student population changing each school year. This could have impacted the data for this evaluation, because not all students received SRA instruction for the same amount of time each year. This also impacted the number of students receiving continuous SRA instruction throughout the life of this program evaluation. There were even some students who attended Elementary School as kindergarten students for the first year of SRA implementation, attended a different school during the second year, and then

returned to Elementary School for the third year of implementation. Despite these changes in student population, 51 students received 3 full years of SRA instruction; and 194 students received 2 full years of instruction. Table 14 shows the yearly growth for students based on the total number of years the student received SRA instruction.

Table 14

*Yearly Reading Growth for Students at Elementary School*

Years of SRA Instruction	Growth for 1st Year of Implementation	Growth for 2nd Year of Implementation	Growth for 3rd Year of Implementation
1 Year			4.32
2 Years		4	4.89
3 Years	4.1	4.47	5.11

The data in Table 14 would indicate that for those students who remained at Elementary School for the duration of the program implementation, their yearly gains were the highest and their total gains each year grew from the previous year as well. This would indicate that all students at Elementary School would probably have benefited from being able to receive SRA instruction for each of the years of this program evaluation, and the school might have seen more success with the programs. In Stockard and Engelmann's (2010) study of the longitudinal effects of Reading Mastery on student reading skills, they found that students who began Reading Mastery instruction in kindergarten and continued through Grade 3 had much higher gains in reading than those who had fewer years of instruction or no instruction in Reading Mastery. These results, when coupled with those of this study, would seem to indicate the need to have continued SRA instruction for all the students at Elementary School for the duration of the time period in order to achieve maximum reading growth.

**Staff turnover.** Related to student transience is staff turnover. As previously noted, a total of 57 people taught SRA lessons during the 3-year implementation period. This does not include any substitutes who might have attempted to teach SRA lessons. During the first year of implementation, 39 staff members taught SRA lessons. At the beginning of year 3, only 11 of the original staff members were still teaching SRA lessons on a daily basis. This indicates a significant staff turnover, which could possibly have created a problem with program consistency. In their study on the impact of teacher turnover on student achievement, Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013) reported a decrease in student achievement in reading of between 6.0% and 8.3% of a standard deviation when students experienced teacher turnover in a school year. However, the scripted nature of the lessons helped to reduce this concern when related to this study. The SRA consultants also indicated that fidelity of lesson presentation was not an issue during the implementation, which reduced concerns related to staff turnover.

However, training was a concern for some staff members as indicated by their survey responses. Four staff members responded that the training they received was not adequate. This could have been the result of training that had to occur during the school year and was not provided by the SRA consultant. There were a few teachers who were hired after the beginning of the school year during some years, so they were not able to receive the same training the other staff members received especially since the training provided at the beginning of the year was a full workday in length. Either the curriculum coach or another teacher trained the new staff members instead of the SRA consultant. It is imperative that timely and appropriate training be provided in order for any program to achieve its greatest potential (Boulton, 2014; Han & Weiss, 2005).

**Teacher impact.** One aspect of the program and student gains that has not been

discussed is the reading growth of groups of students based on the individual SRA teacher. In Chapter 4, it was shown that there was a correlation between student gains and the SRA Teacher for some grade levels during some years of the program implementation; however, the data did not examine the specific teachers and the growth for their students. It also did not examine the impact teacher perceptions may have had on student reading gains. When these data are considered, it indicates there may have been an impact on student gains based on teacher perceptions. The average student growth in reading for teachers who had an overall positive perception of the SRA program was 5.46 points, while the average gain for students whose teachers had an overall negative perception was 4.12 points. While this may not seem like a large difference, when these gains are considered over multiple years then the cumulative effect is greater. The student perception data also indicated that the SRA teacher was a positive impact as well with 19 students indicating their teacher was an important aspect of the program. Research on teacher effectiveness and student achievement indicates that teachers with positive attitudes toward their students and toward learning tend to be more effective teachers, and their students make greater academic gains (Breault, 2013; Walker, 2008).

**Student perceptions.** Another area of student gains that was not considered was based on the students' own perceptions of the SRA program. In order for a student to make academic gains, the student must perceive the intervention in a positive manner (Carnine et al., 2004; National Research Council, 1998; Strickland, 2001). In the student survey data, 44 students commented that they liked everything about the SRA program; and only three stated they disliked everything. In addition, students made 320 positive comments about the SRA programs compared to 158 negative ones. This would seem to

indicate that, overall, students had a positive perception of the SRA programs and most likely their perceptions of the program helped them to be more successful in using their new skills to improve their reading abilities. It may have for some students, as indicated by their negative responses, but probably not for the majority of them. Other studies (Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsaia, & Cox, 1999; Parault & Williams, 2009; Stutz, Schaffner, & Schiefele, 2016) have indicated the importance and links of student motivation and perceptions with academic gains in reading.

**Student behavior.** Another area with regard to students was related to student behavior and group management. The SRA program suggests the use of the teacher-student game for behavior management. In this game, the teacher creates a chart on which the student group can receive points and the teacher can receive points. The object of the game is for the student group to have the most points at the end of the lesson. Points are given to the student group for following rules and procedures. The teacher receives points when the group or an individual is not following the rules. This game had varying degrees of success based on the teacher. Some actually gave rewards for student points, and some played the game with enthusiasm. Other teachers were not consistent with its use or lacked faith in the ability of the game to engage the students and help with behavior management. These teachers saw less success with the management of student behaviors. There were several incidents each year where an administrator had to be called to provide assistance with a particular student or group of students during SRA. This occurred about three or four times each year. Based on the survey responses of the students and teachers as reported in Table 6 in Chapter 4, 18 students responded that the behavior of other students was an issue during SRA lessons; while only one teacher indicated that it was. This is interesting in that students saw behavior as more of a

problem than the teachers did and prompts one to consider seeking more information with regard to this particular outcome. Certainly, if students saw behavior as an issue during lessons and administrators were being asked to provide assistance during lessons, negative student behaviors probably had an impact on the growth scores for some groups of students due to the disruption of the lesson flow. Better oversight and accountability for the use of the discipline techniques provided within the program could have been related to improved student achievement as indicated by the studies of Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003) and Freiberg, Huzinec, and Templeton (2009).

**Teacher and student attendance.** There were days when the regular SRA teacher was absent but another SRA teacher provided instruction to students. While it is ideal for instruction to be provided by the same teacher on a daily and consistent basis (Miller, 2012; Tingle, Schoenberger, Wang, Algozzine, & Kerr, 2012; Woods & Monagno, 1997), it is better to have received instruction from a qualified substitute than no instruction at all. If qualified substitutes had not been available to provide lessons, there may have been a more significant correlation between staff attendance and student growth. In a study on the impact of teacher attendance on student achievement, Roby (2013) compared the student scores for schools in Ohio. He found that when student achievement for the 30 schools with the highest teacher attendance and the 30 schools with the lowest teacher attendance were compared, there was a difference of almost 70 percentage points. The high attendance schools achieved 91.33% of their goals, while the low attendance schools achieved only 20.11% of theirs. Substitutes taught classes for the absent teachers, but the effects of teacher absences in this study indicate the need for teachers to limit their absences in order to maximize student learning.

In addition to teacher attendance, student attendance should also be considered. It

is reasonable to assume that in order for a child to make gains in reading based on a reading intervention that is being provided, the child must be present to receive the intervention. Unlike staff attendance, which can impact a number of students, student attendance only impacts the student who does not attend. While this hypothesis would seem to make sense, the data from this program evaluation do not support it. The only significant correlation between student attendance and growth in reading is found in the first year of implementation and only for the fourth-grade students. When the data are examined more closely, they show that for the students who made the most gains in reading each year, the majority of them had three or fewer absences. There are some students each year who made large gains in reading with more than three absences; but overall, high student growth occurred with three or fewer absences.

**Lesson gains.** The impact of attendance on student growth in reading is another area to discuss. The data presented in Tables 10, 11, and 12 showed only one significant correlation between teacher attendance and student growth; however, there are other ways teacher attendance impacted student growth. There were a number of significant correlations between student growth and the number of lessons taught and average lesson gains per week. In order for students to make higher gains in reading, they needed to have been provided with an increased amount of lessons. Carnine et al. (2004) and McGraw-Hill Publishing Company (2013) recommended daily instruction in order to achieve consistent and maximum growth for students. The number of lessons taught each week is directly related to the number of days that lessons are taught during the week. Two factors play a role in how many days per week SRA lessons were taught. Those were teacher attendance and lessons being cancelled due to outside factors such as field trips and school assemblies. The importance of teacher attendance has already been



discussed and more careful planning and scheduling, which are recommended by the publishing company and others (Carnine et al., 2004; McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 2013), could have alleviated some of the lesson cancellations.

**Misplaced priorities.** The data from teacher SRA notebooks provide some insight into why lessons were not provided on a daily basis. When lessons are not taught, teachers must give a reason for this on the lesson gains page. Some of the reasons were due to assemblies, field trips, teacher workdays, holidays, and snow days. It must be noted here that school administrators and teachers could have added more SRA instructional days by having assemblies and field trips in the afternoons instead of in the mornings during SRA time. SRA could also have been switched to the afternoons on days when it was not possible for it to take place in the morning. This would have provided for greater lesson gains per week as well and more growth in reading. Creating a master schedule that includes time each day for SRA reading instruction was the best way to ensure that there was time provided for SRA instruction on a daily basis. However, the schedule needed to be flexible enough so SRA instructional time could be moved to another time in the day if needed due to field trips or school assemblies. In order to make the most gains possible, SRA lessons needed to occur each day (Carnine et al., 2004; McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 2013).

**Value of large-scale programming.** There is limited research on the use of Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading on a large scale such as was attempted at Elementary School. This program evaluation can contribute to the literature on this subject. There are a number of studies on the use of Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading with small groups of students, but few exist for either program using entire grade levels. Despite the discontinuation of Corrective Reading at the upper grade levels,

this research still provides information and data on its use with whole grade levels for more than a year of implementation. Figure 2 in Chapter 4 shows that reading scores were beginning to show improvement the year the program was discontinued. This evaluation provides data for the use of Reading Mastery at three grade levels for more than 2 years of implementation and indicates student growth in reading during this time period.

**Maximizing the use of CIPP model.** The CIPP model is an appropriate method to use for conducting program evaluations; however, it is recommended by this researcher to use it from the beginning of a program even while the program is in the planning stages. This would provide all stakeholders with the opportunity for input and therefore improve teacher acceptance and adoption of the new program. In addition, the use of the CIPP model would provide for regular data analysis and program decision making. In addition, if a school decides to use a consultant for any type of program implementation, this person needs to be chosen carefully. The success and acceptance of a program can be impacted by the quality of the relationships a consultant forms with the staff with which he or she is working. Good relationships breed success, while poor relationships can lead to dissatisfaction and program failure (Fowler, 1996; Fullerton & West, 1996; Smolkin, 2005).

**Lessons learned.** As school administrators and other educational leaders are considering the addition of new programs, they would be well served to remember the value of using the CIPP model. By doing so from the origins of their planning and discussions, it would help to ensure the input of all key stakeholders throughout the process and in making all major decisions. Student input should be considered as well because they are key stakeholders in schools and they have unique perceptions to offer.

In addition, educators need to create schedules that, while being flexible, also protect and prioritize instructional time. Disruptions to scheduling should be kept to a minimum. All staff members need to have effective training in all aspects of a new program and in its data collection in order for the program to serve to its maximum potential. In addition, all key expected behaviors for staff and students need to be clear. Data need to be examined on a regular basis and when indicated, teachers who need retraining should be provided with what is needed in order for them to function at an optimum level. Lastly, school staff members need to keep in mind that change and improvement takes time. Any new program needs time to show its effectiveness, and data should always be examined and analyzed as part of the decision-making process. Elementary School may have been better served had the data been used in making the decisions to discontinue the SRA programs for third, fourth, and fifth grades.

**Conclusion.** In summary, the SRA reading programs were somewhat successful for improving reading scores at Elementary School. However, Reading Mastery was the more successful of the two programs, especially for the kindergarten and first-grade students. All grade levels experienced some growth in reading, but not all of them experienced the type of growth the school was hoping for. This was probably due in a large part to the inability of the school to provide students with the number of lessons needed on a weekly basis especially since presentation fidelity was never an issue for the school. In addition, the discontinuation of the programs at the upper grade levels impacted the success of the program at those grade levels. When examining the data in Table 14, it is evident that the longer a student was provided with SRA instruction, the greater the gains in reading were.

In addition, the CIPP model provided an excellent guide for this program

evaluation. However, it would be best used from the planning stages of any program so appropriate decisions can be made based on data and input from all stakeholder sources. The importance of using data for decision making cannot be overstated. The lack of the use of data in making decisions most likely had a negative impact for students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 of this program evaluation. However, the achievement data and survey data from this evaluation indicate that some students saw gains in their reading scores and most of the students believed SRA was beneficial to them. Teachers also believed that SRA was beneficial but that the school still had a problem with regard to reading scores.

### **Limitations**

During the implementation of the SRA reading programs, a number of issues arose. Data, survey answers, and consultant notes indicated that staff turnover was an issue that may have impacted the effectiveness and fidelity of the programs. There were other staffing concerns related to training and program management. Additional concerns were noted with regard to student transience and the collection and use of data.

It has been previously noted that staff turnover was an area of concern, but the evidence indicated it had not impacted the fidelity of lesson presentations. The major problem with staff turnover was related to training. All teachers needed to receive training before beginning instruction for students. SRA consultants provided training sessions at the beginning of each school year. This was to ensure program fidelity and training consistency. However, concerns and issues occurred when staff turnover occurred during the school year. If the SRA consultant was not scheduled to visit Elementary School within a week or so of the new staff member's arrival, the new teachers had to receive immediate training from someone other than the consultant. The curriculum coach most often provided this training but at times was not able to provide

staff with the training that was needed. There were at least three staff members who received training by observing lessons being provided by a good SRA teacher for about three days and then beginning their own lesson presentations. The other teachers taught them how to collect SRA data. This was not the ideal situation for training and most likely had an impact on student gains. Teacher surveys also concur with this statement, as four staff members responded that the training they received was not adequate.

Another limitation was related to the transient student population and the need for testing and placement of new students. As new students were added to the school, they needed to be administered the appropriate placement test and added to an existing SRA group. The assistant principal administered the tests and made the placement decisions. Testing and placement decisions were sometimes delayed due to a lack of notification to the assistant principal and due to time constraints on her schedule. This would delay instruction for new students for a day to as much as 2 weeks. Lack of instruction meant fewer gains in reading.

The SRA consultants both noted the need to have a different staff person in charge of SRA due to the assistant principal's time constraints. They noted that it would be best if a single person could focus solely on the management of the SRA programs. However, this was not possible at Elementary School; and the responsibilities for testing, training, and observations of lessons were divided between the curriculum coach and the assistant principal.

The collection of data was another limitation of this program evaluation. During the first year of program implementation, teachers received limited training on data collection; and the training they did receive was after they had begun teaching the lessons. Data notebooks were provided to each teacher. The SRA consultant trained the

staff on the use of each section of the notebook. Training from an “expert” was provided for that one session only. Afterwards, teachers’ immediate questions were asked of the curriculum coach and assistant principal who provided the answers they could until the SRA consultant returned the following month. This created some problems with data collection as evidenced by some of the SRA consultant’s notes during the first year of implementation. The consultant provided teachers with feedback through written notes in the data notebooks. Had the teachers been provided with training on data collection and then had some follow-up training about a week later, it would have improved their knowledge, skill, and fidelity of data collection. This would probably have alleviated some of the problems that arose in this area.

This program evaluation used extant data which can be considered a limitation but can also be a strength. It is a strength because the data is “living” data that shows how the SRA programs actually impacted students and their reading abilities. It is a limitation in that it is not the type of data that comes from scientific laboratory research and therefore cannot be used to make generalizations. However, it is the appropriate type of data to use for a program evaluation using the CIPP model. In addition, this evaluation is also limited in its ability to generalize its findings beyond the elementary school in which it was conducted. This study was designed as a program evaluation; and as such, its purpose was to inform decisions being made at Elementary School. However, other educational institutions can benefit from lessons learned during this program evaluation.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

The literature on the effectiveness of Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading programs is sparse with regard to studies involving large school populations. Further research on how these programs may impact whole grade levels or entire school

populations may be warranted. However, researchers may want to focus on how these programs improve specific reading skills as well as reading comprehension. While this program evaluation's focus was on improving reading comprehension, an unanticipated improvement in specific reading skills, such as decoding, occurred as a result of the use of these programs. Future research in this area would be appropriate.

In addition, other researchers may want to conduct research studies similar to this one but with smaller student groups such as one grade level instead of a whole school. One could target one grade level and follow them over time as they progress through their elementary school careers. Data for a longitudinal study would provide insight on long-term effects of these programs on the reading abilities and reading scores of students.

This program evaluation was able to show a positive impact on student reading scores when using the SRA Reading Mastery program. However, findings for Corrective Reading were inconclusive. Further research on the effectiveness of using Corrective Reading as a reading intervention for students in the upper elementary grades would be warranted. While this program evaluation was indicating some growth at these grade levels during the second year of implementation, more data were needed in order to make conclusive statements regarding the effectiveness of Corrective Reading for improving the reading scores for these students.

Another area to be considered for further research would be on how principals make academic decisions for their schools and how the use of data may or may not influence these decisions. It would be of interest to this particular program evaluation had data been used in making decisions during year 2 of the program implementation. The data trend for reading scores in Grades 3 through 5 were on the increase from year 1

to year 2. However, scores declined in year 3 when Corrective Reading instruction was discontinued for all three grade levels. The question arises of whether or not student reading scores would have continued to improve if the program had continued to be implemented. Additional research on how principals make decisions would lend itself to the knowledge base and literature that other administrators might use when making their own decisions in the future.

One final area to consider for additional research would be how teacher and student perspectives impact student growth. It was interesting to note that both groups had positive perceptions of the SRA programs; however, the students seemed to have stronger positive opinions. Additional research on which has the greater impact on student growth, teacher perceptions or student perceptions, would be of particular interest to most reading teachers and administrators. Positive perceptions will improve the effectiveness of a program, but whose perceptions have the greater impact? This would be the question to answer. In addition, the data collected during this evaluation indicated that certain SRA teachers had a positive impact, while others had a negative impact. This causes one to ask if the ones with positive impacts were also the ones with positive perceptions. This is another area to consider for further research as well.



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Appendix A  
Teacher Questionnaire

### SRA Teacher Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please indicate the levels of SRA that you have taught and for how long.

_____ Reading Mastery	_____ less than 4 months _____ 4 months to 1 year _____ 1 ½ years _____ 2 years or more
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_____ Corrective Reading	_____ less than 4 months _____ 4 months to 1 year _____ 1 ½ years _____ 2 years or more
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2. If you taught more than one group of students for SRA, please indicate the number of groups you have taught for each year.

Reading Mastery-Year One-Number of Groups \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Mastery-Year Two-Number of Groups \_\_\_\_\_

Corrective Reading-Year One-Number of Groups \_\_\_\_\_

Corrective Reading-Year Two-Number of Groups \_\_\_\_\_

Please read each statement then place a mark in the box below the phrase that corresponds most closely with your degree of agreement with the statement.

	Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
3. Before we began using SRA, our school had a problem with reading.					
4. Since implementing the SRA program, our school no longer has a problem with reading.					
5. I was involved in making the decision to implement the SRA reading program at our school.					
6. I feel I am able to implement the SRA program correctly.					
7. I was provided with appropriate training for teaching the SRA program.					
8. Teachers at my grade level support the SRA program.					
9. The SRA program meets the reading needs of my students.					
10. The principal asked my opinion about reading intervention programs before choosing to implement the SRA program at our school.					

	Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
11. I was able to fully implement the SRA program after receiving training.					
12. I have had appropriate support since beginning the SRA program.					
13. SRA is the right way to address the reading problems of students at our school.					
14. I follow the script for SRA very closely.					
15. The SRA program prepares students to become successful readers.					
16. I like using the SRA program.					
17. My students are transferring what they learn in SRA to when they are reading at other times.					
18. SRA has been beneficial to students at our school.					
19. When teaching SRA, I found that I was teaching phonics on a regular basis.					
20. I would recommend SRA to other teachers.					
21. I believe all students should participate in SRA reading.					
22. I believe SRA has had a positive impact on my students.					

Please respond to the following questions. If a question does not apply to you, please write "N/A" in the space provided. If you need additional space, please use the back of the sheet.

23. When you first discovered you would be teaching SRA in the 2012-2013 school year, what were your thoughts and perceptions about this?

24. What were your thoughts and perceptions after the first year of SRA implementation?

25. What were your thoughts and perceptions after the second year of SRA implementation?

26. How could your training for SRA have been improved?



27. What type of support have you had since you began teaching SRA? Has this been adequate for you? What other types of support would you have liked to have had?

28. Has the degree to which you adhere to the program changed over time? If so, how?

29. Which students do you think benefit most from using the SRA programs?

30. What do you consider to be the strengths of the SRA programs?

31. What do you think the weaknesses of the SRA program are?

32. If you could improve the SRA programs, how would you do it?

33. In your understanding, what were the goals of the SRA programs? Are these goals being met? Please explain your answer.

34. How do you think the reading deficits at our school should be addressed?

Additional Comments:

Appendix B  
Student Questionnaires

**SRA Student Questionnaire  
Kindergarten and First Grade**

1. What grade are you in?
  - A. Kindergarten
  - B. First
  
2. Did you go to Elementary School last year?
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
  
3. Do you think SRA has helped you to become a better reader?
  - A. Yes
  - B. No

Explain your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. How often do you use what you learn in SRA?
  - A. Never
  - B. Only during SRA
  - C. Sometimes when I am trying to read
  - D. All the time when I am reading
  
5. Which of these SRA activities do you think help you to be a better reader?
  - A. Learning the sounds
  - B. Writing the letters
  - C. Saying the words slow and then fast
  - D. The workbook pages
  - E. The mastery tests
  
6. Which of these SRA activities do you like the most?
  - A. Learning the sounds
  - B. Writing the letters
  - C. Saying the words slow and then fast
  - D. The workbook pages
  - E. The mastery tests
  
7. Which of these SRA activities do you not like?
  - A. Learning the sounds
  - B. Writing the letters
  - C. Saying the words slow and then fast
  - D. The workbook pages
  - E. The mastery tests

8. Why do we have SRA?

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**SRA Student Questionnaire**  
**Second and Third Grade**

1. What grade are you in? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many years have you had SRA lessons? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why do we have SRA?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How often do you use what you learn in SRA?
  - a. Never
  - b. Once in awhile
  - c. Almost every day
  - d. All the time
5. Which SRA activities do you like the most? Tell why.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Which SRA activities do you like the least? Tell why.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Which SRA activities do you think help you to be a better reader? Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What do you like about SRA?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What do you dislike about SRA?

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10. Do you believe SRA has helped you to become a better reader? Explain your answer.

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**SRA Student Questionnaire**  
**Fourth and Fifth Grade**

1. What grade are you in?
  - a. Fourth
  - b. Fifth
2. In what grades did you attend Elementary School?
  - a. Kindergarten
  - b. First
  - c. Second
  - d. Third
  - e. Fourth
  - f. Fifth
3. Which of the following have you participated in while attending Elementary School?
  - a. SRA-Reading Mastery (Kindergarten to Second Grade)
  - b. SRA-Corrective Reading (3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade)
  - c. Reading Success (3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade)
4. If you participated in any of the SRA programs listed in Question 3, how much do you believe they helped you to become a better reader?
  - a. Not at all
  - b. Some
  - c. A lot
5. What activities in SRA do you believe were the most helpful to you? Why?  

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6. What activities in SRA do you believe were the least helpful to you? Why?  

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7. When you were participating in SRA, did you enjoy it? Why or why not?  

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8. What do you think is the best way for teachers to teach students how to read?

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Appendix C  
Administrator Questionnaire

### **SRA Administrator Questions**

1. Why did you decide to implement a reading intervention program?
2. What data did you use to support this decision?
3. Why did you choose SRA Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading?
4. Were there other programs you considered? If so, why did you decide not to use them? If not, what were the reasons for this?
5. How did you involve stakeholders in the process of program selection?
6. How was the process of implementation determined? Who were the people involved in these decisions?
7. How did you involve stakeholders in the process of implementation?
8. What problems did you foresee with the implementation of this program and how did you address them?
9. Were there any issues regarding program implementation that you did not foresee? If so, what were they and how were they handled?
10. What do you consider the strengths of the program to be?
11. What would you consider the weaknesses to be?
12. What were your goals for the program? Are they being achieved? Please explain your answer.
13. Did you make adjustments during the program implementation? If so, why, what were they, and what data did you use for this decision?

Additional Comments:

## Appendix D

### SRA Consultant Questionnaire

### **SRA Consultant Questionnaire**

1. How did you become involved in working with Elementary School?
2. What knowledge had been shared with you about Elementary School's first year in implementing SRA prior to your first meeting with school personnel?
3. What was your first impression of Elementary School?
4. What did you see as the school's strengths and areas of improvement?
5. What was the school doing well with regard to SRA instruction?
6. What were things the school needed to do differently with regard to SRA instruction?
7. During your first year in working with Elementary School, what was your impression of the fidelity of instruction? During your second year?
8. During your first year in working with Elementary School, what was your impression of the teachers' attitudes with regard to SRA? During your second year?
9. At the end of your first year with Elementary School, what were your concerns?
10. What recommendations did you make for the school at the end of your first year with them?
11. What has been your impression of the implementation of SRA during your second year in working with Elementary School?

## Appendix E

### SRA Reading Mastery Presentation Fidelity Instrument

## Reading Mastery Signature K-1 Walkthrough Form

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Lesson Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation:		Yes	No	Comments
All students are visible to the teacher.				
Materials are organized, distributed, and managed well during the lesson.				
STAR/Reading rules reviewed before beginning lesson.				
Review list reviewed prior to lesson.				
<b>Word Attack/Vocabulary</b>				
Students are attending to teacher presentation book.				
Teacher signal is clear and consistent.				
Students respond in unison.				
Responses are correct and confident.				
<b>Corrections in Word Attack:</b>				
Steps	That word is _____			
	What word?			
	Sound out or spell _____			
	What word?			
	Start over			
<b>STORY READING:</b>				
Students are tracking.				
Student errors are corrected with, "That word is _____."				
Student re-reads sentence.				
Fluent reading praised. Dysfluent reading corrected with model-test.				
Appropriate question strategies are used.				
• Teacher gets attention.				
• Teacher asks question.				
• Teacher gives wait time for individual responses.				
• Teacher calls on group or individual to respond.				
If an error occurs, Teacher has group scan the text and has same student answer.				
<b>WORKBOOK:</b>				
Teacher monitors independent work.				
Workbooks are checked.				
Incorrect answers are corrected.				
<b>Pacing Guide</b>				
<b>Mastery Test Summary Forms</b>				
<b>Fluency Checkout Forms</b>				

## Appendix F

### SRA Corrective Reading Presentation Fidelity Instrument

## Corrective Reading Decoding Walkthrough Form

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_  
 School: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Lesson Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation:		Yes	No	Comments
All students are visible to the teacher.				
Materials are organized, distributed, and managed well during the lesson.				
STAR rules reviewed before beginning lesson.				
Review list reviewed prior to lesson.				
<b>Word Attack/Boardwork</b>				
Students are tracking in student book.				
Students respond in unison.				
Responses are correct and confident.				
<b>Corrections in Word Attack:</b>				
Steps	That word is _____			
	What word?			
	Spell _____			
	What word?			
	Start over			
<b>STORY READING:</b>				
Students are tracking.				
Student errors are corrected with, "That word is _____."				
Student re-reads sentence.				
Fluent reading praised. Dysfluent reading corrected with model-test.				
Appropriate question strategies are used.				
• Teacher gets attention.				
• Teacher asks question.				
• Teacher gives wait time for individual responses.				
• Teacher calls on group or individual to respond.				
If an error occurs, Teacher has group scan the text and has same student answer.				
<b>CHECKOUTS/PAIRED READINGS:</b>				
Assign student partners/Quick transitions.				
Students count errors on tally sheets.				
Teacher paces/monitors checkouts.				
<b>WORKBOOK:</b>				
Teacher monitors independent work.				
Workbooks are checked.				
Incorrect answers are corrected.				
<b>Pacing Guide</b>				
<b>Mastery Test Summary Forms</b>				
<b>Fluency Checkout Forms</b>				
<b>Student graphs (B1, B2) in back of student book.</b>				



## Appendix G

Excerpt from 2012-2014 School Improvement Plan for Elementary School

# PIEDMONT, NC SCHOOL SYSTEM

2012-2014

School Improvement Plan for  
Elementary School

## SCHOOL DATA AND SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Guiding Questions: Review school data and consider a variety of perspectives including overall school/student performance, sub-group performance, attendance, teacher satisfaction, instructional practice (from walk-throughs/observations), and student learning (also from walkthroughs/observations as well as data).

1. Describe the data you have collected and analyzed to develop your school improvement plan. Data were collected from EOG test scores in reading, math, and science; sub-group performance data from test scores; student performance indicators (i.e. DRAs, student portfolios, etc.); Classroom Walk Through data showing patterns of instruction, informal survey data from staff members, and NC Working Conditions Survey data.

2. What does your analysis tell you about your school?

The data analysis shows less than 60% of the school's students achieving grade level proficiency in reading indicating the need for significant improvements in students' reading abilities. Proficiency scores in math also indicate a need for improvement in this area as well. Data also indicated that parents support the school but the level of parental involvement at the school needs to be increased. Overall teacher satisfaction data shows that to be at appropriate levels. Classroom Walk Through data indicates a need for teachers to provide more differentiated instruction and small group lessons. Student work, models, and exemplars need to be more visible throughout the school. Technology use was a strength for the school.

3. Based on this analysis, what are your school's strengths?

Technology use and integration into instruction.

Math was a relative strength but still needs improvement.

Parents are supportive of the school (but attendance at school functions is low)

4. What does the analysis tell you about your school's gaps or opportunities for improvement?

While Limited English Proficient students are not a sub-group for the school, they are not performing at the same level as their peers. This is also true for students identified in the Exceptional Children's program. There is an opportunity to incorporate a structured reading program in the school. Additional staff development is needed in providing differentiated instruction through the use of small groups.

5. What 3-5 top priorities emerge as the focus for your school's 2012-2014 school improvement plan?

Increased reading proficiency.

Increased math proficiency.

Increased parental attendance at school functions.

Increased use of differentiated instruction in small group settings based on student needs.

## PRIORITY GOAL 1 and ASSOCIATED STRATEGIES

### School Goal 1 - Improvement in Student Achievement

(Enter the goal below.)

To improve student achievement in reading and math.

Supports which district goal: Goal 2 ~ The Piedmont, NC School System will provide a rigorous, relevant curriculum designed to prepare students for a globally competitive world.

How will you document improvement? Through DRA & EOG scores, AIMS Web test scores, ClassScape test scores

### School Goal 1 - Provide Implementation Strategies

(Identify research-based strategies whenever possible.)

#### Strategy **1**

Strategy:

Use SRA direct instruction reading program at all grade levels

Action Steps:

1. Train staff on the use of Mastery Reading, Corrective Reading, Reading Foundations and Reading Success direct instruction programs.
2. Create a master schedule that includes time each day for SRA instruction at all grade levels.
3. Test students in Kindergarten through fifth grade to determine appropriate beginning levels for SRA programs.
4. Develop appropriate groups for direct instruction and create instructional teams.

What data will be used to determine whether the strategies were deployed with fidelity?

Observation data, Classroom Walk-throughs, Peer Observations, and Formal Observations

How will you determine whether the strategies led to progress toward the goal?

(Include formative, benchmark, and summative data as appropriate.)

Formative assessments in classrooms, STAR Reading and STAR Math assessments, AR and AM tests, AIMS Web benchmark tests, ClassScape benchmark tests, EOG test scores

Funding: Title I

SIT Review Date: December: June/July

## Appendix H

Excerpt from 2014-2016 School Improvement Plan for Elementary School

## School Improvement Plan Elementary School 2014-2016

### **Goal 1: Literacy**

#### **Objective:**

90% of All Students will demonstrate proficiency by performing on grade level in Reading by 06/10/2016 as measured by Reading 3D, Discovery Education, and end-of-grade assessments.

### **Strategy 1: Implement Guided Reading**

#### *Description*

Teachers will be trained in the use of Guided Reading. They will implement Guided Reading in their classrooms.

#### *Research*

Reading instruction is more effective when it is done in a small group setting through direct, explicit instruction.

#### **Activity 1: Guided Reading Training**

*Type:* Professional Learning

*Description:* Teachers will work with Reading Design Coach in order to learn how to implement Guided Reading appropriately in their classrooms. The Reading Coach will provide teachers with guidance through model lessons and feedback from observations.

#### **Activity 2: Guided Reading Implementation**

*Type:* Direct Instruction

*Description:* Teachers will determine student groups for Guided Reading instruction. They will then plan differentiated lessons for each reading group. Student data will be used to determine groups and groups can be flexible based on student needs and skills being taught. Teachers will work with the Reading Design Coach to improve their lessons and their practice.

#### **Activity 3: Book Room**

*Type:* Academic Support Program

*Description:* Book sets will be assembled and catalogued in order for teachers to be able to use them when working with Guided Reading groups. Books already in the school will be used first. Additional materials may be purchased in order to support content integration with literacy instruction.

### **Strategy 2: SRA**

#### *Description*

Students in Kindergarten through third grade will receive lessons from SRA on a daily basis.

#### *Research*

Direct Instruction in reading has been shown to improve students' reading abilities. Based on results from the Follow Through Project, students who

received reading instruction using SRA materials showed the highest gains in reading.

**Activity 1: SRA Training**

*Type:* Professional Learning

*Description:* New teachers will be trained on teaching Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading. Other staff will be provided with refresher training as needed. An SRA consultant will work with teachers throughout the school year in order to assist them with improving their practice.

**Activity 2: SRA Instruction**

*Type:* Direct Instruction

*Description:* Students in grades K-3 will receive daily instruction from the SRA series Reading Mastery or Corrective Reading. Students will be placed in small groups according to their reading levels. Data will be collected daily on student progress. Teachers will review this data and use it to make decisions regarding classroom instruction.

**Strategy 3: Reading Interventions**

*Description*

Teachers will use data collected from reading and writing assessments in order to determine student needs for literacy interventions. Teachers will then provide students with individualized or small group interventions in reading and writing.

*Research*

Teachers will use analyzed data in order to design lessons, interventions, remediation, or enrichment activities that will meet the needs of each student. These activities should especially target any student deficits in literacy in order to close gaps in knowledge and learning.

**Activity 1: Data Discussions**

*Type:* Other

*Description:* Teachers will participate in discussions regarding student achievement and progress in reading and writing. This data will include formative assessments, benchmark data, classroom observations, and teacher-made assessments. Data from Reading 3D and Progress Monitoring will be used as well. Teachers will determine the remedial needs of their students based on the analysis of the data presented. Teachers will work collaboratively to develop plans for remediation and intervention. These discussions will take place on a monthly basis. Resource teachers will be included in these team discussions.

**Activity 2: Data Notebooks**

*Type:* Other

*Description:* Teachers will maintain a data notebook that includes literacy assessment data. This data should be from formative assessments, common assessments, benchmark assessments, Reading 3D, Progress Monitoring, Guided Reading, and classroom observations. These notebooks will be used during planning, data discussions, parent conferences, and teacher/administrator conferences. As digital conversion takes place, notebooks will be converted to a digital format.

Appendix I

September 17, 2012 School Improvement Team Minutes for Elementary School



Elementary School SIT Minutes  
9-17-12

Members present: M, J, H, L, T, R, B, P, H, J, J, M, H

J called the meeting to order. The first item for discussion was the Matching Funds Grant. The following were suggestions: additional Scholastic book kits, replacing antiquated printers, purchasing additional laptops or iPads, creating a Science Lab, and additional awning to reach to the end of the sidewalk. The team decided that the awning would be the first priority for the grant funding. If any additional funds are available then it will be used for making a handicap accessible playground area.

M thanked everyone for all the great activities that took place during the Sneak Peek last week. The Parents were impressed and enjoyed the visit. M went on to explain that teachers would be receiving Commissioner's money again this year. He wanted teachers to be aware that the money could only be used for instructional supplies. Other items would need to be purchased with school funds provided to teachers. P said there was no money in the media budget to cover items such as listening centers. She suggested commissioner funds be used for these types of purchases.

M discussed the new STEM bus the district has. It will be unveiled on Saturday, September 22. Elementary School will be the first school the bus will visit. It will come during the week of September 24. A schedule will be sent out for classes to visit the bus. Students in grades K-1 will have 30 minutes to visit and grades 2-5 will have 45 minutes. We should expect to have a lot of visitors on campus on that Tuesday.

The next agenda item to be discussed was the school's marketing plan. Several ideas were shared and discussed. The team decided to do an Elementary School Alumni Reunion with several activities planned during a week of celebrations. Some of those will include a Time Capsule, visits to the school, a parents-versus-staff sports activity, and sending invitations to community leaders to join us that week. Ads will be placed in the newspaper to invite alumni to return and to describe the week's events. J and H volunteered to chair the committee. Anyone interested in helping them should let them know. Send any ideas for additional activities to them as well.

The team discussed replacing the teacher assistant representative on the team since V had moved. MM was the runner-up last year so it was decided that she would replace V.

J asked for the team's input for the staff development on the early release day in October. The team decided the time should be used to work on additional training in the use of the new lesson plan template and implementation of the Common Core Curriculum Standards. M shared that he hopes to be able to provide teachers with a day of unit planning time for each semester.

The last major agenda item was to develop the new School Improvement Plan. The school's vision and mission will remain the same. M and J will enter the school's data and data analysis into the appropriate spaces. The team suggested the following goals and

strategies.

Goal 1: Student Achievement

- Implement SRA Reading for direct instruction in reading
- Use data from AIMS Web, SRA testing, and STAR testing to inform instruction
- Implement AR and AM programs
- Create master schedule that supports use of new programs and classroom instruction
- Use of formative assessments to guide instruction
- Continue use of Building Blocks strategies in Kindergarten

Goal 2: Implementation of Common Core Standards

- Participate in district PLCS
- Use of new lesson plan template
- Work with lead teacher to develop lesson plans and strategies
- Work collaboratively to develop unit plans

Goal 3: Parental Involvement

- Plan activities to be held at a variety of times to accommodate parent schedules
- Ideas for Parent Nights:
  - Math & Movie Night
  - Technology Night
  - Living Museums
  - Student-led conferences
  - Story Spinners
- Hold a Curriculum Night to explain the Common Core Standards and changes to the curriculum
- Hold a Reading Night to kick off AR
- Hold a student Art Show in conjunction with the Science Fair

H explained that it was a district expectation that all Crusin' Clipboards should be in place and being used by the end of September. The first few sessions she has with teachers will be on lesson planning.

The next SIT Meeting will be on Monday, October 1.

## Appendix J

Transcript of Notes from SRA Consultant for Year One of Program Implementation

## Transcript of Notes From SRA Consultant for Year One of Program Implementation

**October 24, 2012** Notes provided to principal (shared with assistant principal at end of the school year)

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> until 9:30

J-red 90 (no training) moved to 83 for demo

W-red 90 out

B-red 80 blending-demo-good vowels

R-red 69 good rhythm-maternity coming up

B-red 48 check # on 50 capitals

B-red 1 go to 7-then on 1<sup>st</sup> grade

J-red 40 move back to 41 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders handwriting emphasis

W-red 40 (no training) on 43-saw C at School H

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade 10:00-10:45 K starts at 10:15

L-B1 #1 demo'd experienced

C-B2 #1 great questions speeding wpm-wow!

D-B1 #1 demo'd sounds l & s vowel problems

S-B1 #1 now on #3-demo'd workbook-good questions

P-B1 #3 vowels are in need of emphasis

M-A1 shows points in workbook-skip Mastery 1-this group will move faster

A-B1 had to see her during 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> emphasizing letters and sounds-added manipulatives of letters

4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade 11:00-11:45

F-CR-A using rewards (talk to principal)

P-CR-B1 T/S game do at your desk-sounds-taking off "uh" from quick sounds

S-CR-B2 #1 slow down-demo-had Reading Foundations cvc-cvcc

T-CR B1 demo'd

### Notes from Visits

#### K and 1st

1. Stress with instructors of red book (RMSK) from the beginning of the book:
  - a. Following directions watching teacher's finger move from ball to ball
  - b. Make sure they are all answering on signal
  - c. Know the quick sounds so you can blend correctly
  - d. 1<sup>st</sup> know sounds, then blend like singing without breaking the sounds
  - e. do not "uh" to those quick sounds (/f/"uh" /d/"uh" etc.)
  - f. don't accept "close enough" or squirmy behavior or not answering on signal
  - g. don't color in workbooks unless mastery testing is being done
  - h. write "a" on the line correctly for students
  - i. quick sounds: b, c, d, g, h, k, p, t, j, ch See back of the Teacher Guide

Notes from visits to groups in red book RMSK but not starting at the beginning AND for those in orange book RMS1

1. We must remember that most of those students have memorized many small words as sight words so starting further into the red book or starting with the orange book means those students need to prove that they can sound out and blend the words in the Word Attack section of the Teacher Presentation Book. Teachers of groups need to modify the script from "Say it fast" to "sound this out"-now "what word"

2. Make sure the instructors know which words are on the red list so those can be recognized as NOT TO BE SOUNDED OUT.
3. Don't accept sloppiness in workbooks

(A copy of the *Reading Mastery Red Words* list is attached to the notes at this point.)

Notes from CR groups

1. Corrective needs a brisk pace in the Word Attack part. Make sure your students know their long and short vowels then make sure they know the vowel combinations, blends and their pronunciations as they appear.
2. No sloppy in workbooks. It is meant to be independent work after being explained then after 7-8 minutes (enough time) take pencils and give out colored pencils or pens so teacher can call out answers for work check. Students correct errors to fix up after teacher finishes writing down % grades on the documentation sheet for workbooks. Students fix errors-those without errors spend a few minutes to read ahead or look back.
3. Emphasize which are "red" words-can't be sounded out
4. No speed reading in Check-Outs. If words read is greater than 135 wpm-that's speed word "calling"

**November 13, 2012**

Notes provided to principal and assistant principal

Make sure students are doing the student teacher game

Make sure teachers are having letters stand on the line, sound out letters and blends the right way  
Time in the groups. Don't leave early. If you come to a stopping point, review the lesson.

Talk with custodians about clocks for SRA.

Give students hints, use the motor for "th" sounds

If they read more than 130 wpm make them read it again. Slow them down and make them read with expression.

Make sure to work with fidelity. Slow and steady.

Sounds-can't have words without vowels. If they say their name they are long. Long and short vowel sounds-details oriented with recognizing sounds for students-no creating sounds  
"d" says d

Letter recognition, sounds, spelling, writing

Pull down from top to bottom (Handwriting Without Tears)-keep the pencil on the paper  
throughout the formation of the letter except for j, t, f, k, i

Blackline masters-we are not ready to do this yet

**November 13, 2012**

Notes provided to assistant principal

J does need some help-only 10 lessons during these 6 weeks and read comment on Lesson Gains page. She also needs help with Assessment part especially since she should be up to lesson 108 timed readings by Christmas. She must pick up pace-CC could help her with this. 1<sup>st</sup> group has no workbook data for lessons 90-98. 2<sup>nd</sup> group workbook page is scary. No reteaching was done and only 2 workbook pages are recorded. Only 11 lessons taught since October and no Assessments recorded. Since these are 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders doing only 5 lessons since October and recording this little means she needs some help. I can't reach her until January.

**November 13, 2012**

Assistant Principal notes from meeting with SRA Consultant

Kindergarten needs to focus on Following Directions

Need an inservice for sounds-don't add vowel sounds at end

Need to work on difference between long and short vowels

When blending sounds, don't break the sounds

Make sure the Teacher's Name is at the top of the attendance pages-encourage teachers to keep a clean copy to make more copies from  
 Lesson Gain Chart-in the Comments section-tell why you used the code you did-use one sheet for each month  
 Workbook Grading Form-always keep one clean sheet for making copies from-highlight those students scores that are below 85%-in the red book do not start workbook grading until lesson 41  
 Assessment Pages-do them in pencil-do not move on if not mastered-timed tests start at lesson 108-teachers need a timer-the boxes on the charts show the maximum time and maximum errors  
 Language for Learning-for kids who just aren't ready for Reading Mastery  
 After December 4, look at changing students to other groups

**December 4, 2012** Notes provided to principal (shared with assistant principal at end of the school year)

1<sup>st</sup> Block 8:45-9:30 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade  
 still haven't seen P (CR-3<sup>rd</sup> grade) in 2<sup>nd</sup> block 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is on field trip  
 F-1<sup>st</sup> grade-red #14 try to get lesson a day soon management to start can improve but did get order and give points for sit up student Z is an issue smooth delivery and pacing

H-1<sup>st</sup> #16 Word Attack-Individual turns-it's ok to mix it up (bottom to top) Following Directions-talked about

R-1<sup>st</sup> #18 management not as tight when we walked in-went over STAR

R-1<sup>st</sup> #18 Sit up needs tightening T/S discuss

B-1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> #61 not sounding out by blending

S-1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> #20 remember to affirm /th/ sounds-very good-review it

M-green book-ask for time to meet before school around 7:20ish-2 things-C/O and data-lesson 7

2<sup>nd</sup> block 10:00-10:45 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and Kindergarten

W-K #16 using T/S just did MT 15

J-subbing for W-K #12

B-K #14 did Following Directions beautifully management firm-don't need individual turns for Following Directions

W-K #14

Go see H at 12:00 about red #55 MT

B-K#18record MT's use T/S

J-K#12 move faster

B-K#7 start with her or end with her on Wed. talked to her about moving faster-a lesson a day

3<sup>rd</sup> Block 11:00-11:45 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>

T-4<sup>th</sup> CR B1 #10 MT doing MT so we talked about upcoming lessons

P-4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> CR B1 #10 MT

S-4<sup>th</sup> CR B2 #7 working on questions in story -how are c/o's-explained graphing

J-CR B1 #11 on workbook on target

B-CR B1 #9 from K-focusing on sounds-starts graphing

H-missed at 11:42 B2 #9 said they needed to be at lunch

H-B1 #9

Issues

-fidelity to program-don't mix in other programs  
 -data questions  
 -see M-green book before school Wednesday

Meetings in Art Room through Gym

Sounds-Blends-Internal Blending-Fluency

12:30-1:00 meet with red up to 90ish

1:00-1:30 red above 90 and orange/green 108-timed readings

1:30-2:00 CR

Afterschool meet with certified staff Use What is an Error? yellow sheet

SRA Data

R-up to 13-good data

R-up to 18-good data

H-up to 16-mastery test day go ahead

F-up to 14-almost ready for mastery

B-good data for all 3 groups

J-very good data for all groups

M-good

P-good

W-needed to record workbook in %'s

S-B1-some lessons take 3 days-K group on target-2<sup>nd</sup> group of B1-same thing-takes 3 days per lesson

W-assessment for K not correct-use criteria-not P's and A's for 1<sup>st</sup> group

B-nothing recorded except Lesson Gains

B-17 now for K-2 groups-K at 7-3 days for lesson 7-left note about lesson a day

T-B1-lesson 10-ready for MT10

S-B2-no assessment info-c/o's missing-I explained this in visit with graphing

J-OK

P-OK-just needed help

H-OK

**December 5, 2012** Notes provided to principal (shared with assistant principal at end of the school year)

Note: Have students call me Ms. \_\_\_\_.

1<sup>st</sup> Group 8:45-9:30

M-green book-data forms plus explain c/o's (too early for data)

W out, B out-get notebooks

B-orange-1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> #7 11 in group-have pencils too soon fidelity issue-good to review but  
 I hope this doesn't happen very often

B-see her later

J-saw yesterday

J-orange #10 wonderful!

H/P-did not see

W-saw Tuesday

2<sup>nd</sup> Group

S-time to talk!

P-3<sup>rd</sup> grade-Word Attack B1 #11 needs to pace quicker Student-could be 1:1

w/ESOL then P has one child left in group CR-A  
 F-EC-CR-A #4 use T/S w/STAR hold vowels 3 seconds  
 C-3<sup>rd</sup> grade CR B2 #13 move group has 6 students  
 D-3<sup>rd</sup> focus on phonics

3<sup>rd</sup> Group 11:00-11:45 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>  
 G-CR-A #17 go faster also about A group-3<sup>rd</sup> grade groups would need B1-try MT10  
     need 8 B1 have RM red list!  
 B-B2 #10 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>  
 A-EC-B1 #19 starting graphing doing great!  
 H-B2 #9 just did c/o with them-talked about the difference of “word calling” and “reading for meaning”

#### Issues

1. rearranging B1 groups of 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> to accommodate J
2. move student I w/1:1
3. show B exact data collection for orange RM1
4. move C from B2 to Reading Success Foundations
5. move G EC into B1 for both groups of CR-A (get RMK from her room)
6. S-2 girls and couple other 4<sup>th</sup> graders who need to have MT data to show 105 wpm at least to move to Reading Success group
7. H/P groups?
8. Who is replacing S?

Instructors I need to see in January

B, P, H, B, W, D, P again, S in teaching

Data for:

J-all scores are ½ of criteria-try to FC in January

B-B2-not much data

P-not much data

B-red 80-didn't make sense on Lesson Gains or workbook or Assessment-did 5 lessons since October-left note for AP

A-B1-3 in group-2<sup>nd</sup> group B1-need to retest 2 students on Assessments

J-taking way too long-started at #90 and has only done 10 lessons Group 2-another RMK  
 group-no one met mastery but she moved on

L-needs to move faster in B1

J-OK

W-OK-asked her to push lesson a day

H-too slow

Did not see B

#### **December 4-5, 2012** Notes provided to the assistant principal

Your 2 biggest problems in data are this teacher (J) and B and of course H. Lessons in red book by now take about 25 minutes in Kindergarten and 15-20 minutes in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Time for them to drink caffeine or 5 energy drinks. B-needs help with recording Lesson Gain lesson numbers each day not checkmarks and I don't understand the number 85 used on Lesson Gain chart and workbook page. She also needs help with the Mastery Test reteach concept. I have not observed B since October at lesson 82.



**December 5, 2012** Notes taken by Assistant Principal at Meeting with SRA Consultant

Kindergarten-do 2 lessons and 1 workbook page-workbook pages can be finished later in class.  
 B-could fast cycle 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> groups  
 B group-possible fast cycle  
 F-try 2 lessons/day  
 S-work on vowel combinations with her  
 Lesson 108 starts timed readings  
 T/S game needs to be in front of you and children need to be able to see it  
 Go over Check Outs-1<sup>st</sup> student should be tracking while 2<sup>nd</sup> reads-do just tallies-out of sight from reader-need to observe this  
 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> should be doing at least one lesson/day and most should do 2 for 1 in the Red books  
 Teachers feel pushed and overwhelmed-need to let them breathe  
 Fill, fell, feel-what did kids actually hear?-kids need to know vocabulary and make sure they heard what we actually said  
 Teachers want a day to just to be able to talk with SRA Consultant-will do in March-she can give another day in February-could we do ½ day or early release-another school is getting subs to cover classes for this

**February 6, 2013** Notes provided to principal (shared with assistant principal at end of the school year)

Here is a list of the things I wanted to discuss or at least to mention for future progress:

- Next Monday there are a number of instructors who are going to work with me on proper sound articulation. You know about this.
- Please emphasize seeing the Teacher/Student game being utilized in the rooms as you walk in and out during SRA/DI instructional times. I am still trying to get that to be consistently used in front of the students. It really helps with management issues and students love the game. You only have a few who are not using it but having you mention it will make it important.
- K teachers seemed very positive and open to teaching more structured Handwriting. I gave a suggested book source to CC and AP. The long-term sub in P's room was using college rule theme paper for K students to write on. I have to tell you that of all the schools I work with, this is the only school without the proper writing paper for those little ones to learn the formation and structure of handwriting. Just as we want our students to have a good breakfast each day, we want our students to start their elementary years with the proper training in reading and writing. K and 1<sup>st</sup> have the responsibility of creating enough correct practice in handwriting that it does not inhibit student writing in classrooms. Some of the 3-5 teachers specifically pointed out how hard it is to read the writing of their students, how strange and time-consuming some students' writing motions are, and how it does affect assignments. When we teach handwriting consistently and correctly in K and 1<sup>st</sup>, all students benefit. Plus it adds to the culture that this school has high expectations in all areas. In one of the many afternoon meetings (I met with every teacher and TA Monday and Tuesday), I was told that they don't have to teach handwriting anymore since it is not in the Common Core. It is true that teaching cursive is about gone except for private schools and in many schools up north, but it is not true that since there is no numbered objective for handwriting in Common Core, that it doesn't have to be taught. The Common Core also doesn't say we have to teach following directions, responsibility, honesty, persistence, respect, etc...but that doesn't mean we ignore or devalue those areas.
- There are two things that would benefit from your support and I would appreciate it if you would take the time to do these: 1) stop in the Media Conference room between 8:45 and 9:30 to see Ms. J's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. They have been moved to a better seating arrangement and Teacher/Student game anymore. They are to sit in those comfortable seats, listen to directions,

and follow them, just as they did when they were so successful in chairs in the portable. Your words can mean so much when it takes so little time to say "I know what needs to be done here and I expect it from you." These are some of the top students you want to nurture. 2) A little named L (in T's DI group between 11:00 and 11:45) is very capable but forgets his glasses. Would you mind just telling him that YOU expect him to always wear them and do his best please? Another boy in there named J doesn't seem to care and said as much. I know T is on top of things but it helps that You, with the power of your office, can turn some little things around with your caring and setting the high bar for little boys we need to save.

-You need some support for the Corrective Reading instructors who are new at this. Since L is there every day and can explain timed check outs and how to get a lesson a day in for DI, he can be a big help to the Corrective instructors who want to do the best for their students and know they are still learning the program. L shows his experience with the program and I do think he could be a great source for others if they will be open to it.

-The biggest issue I have seen is P's roomful of students are losing this very important year of structure, discipline, and growth in reading. I am sure that each sub has tried to do the best they could. While all the other K groups in this reading program are at least to lesson 38-40ish, this one little group is on number 7 and not all of them could pass the first mastery test of naming four sounds. This is showing the knowledge of only 2 sounds. I will finish assessing the rest of the class on Monday and get together with AP and CC to rearrange the K groups.

-You have so many positive things going on and almost everyone is working very hard. Hang in there to keep on keeping on since this initiative takes time, lots of encouragement, and instructors who can deliver. I wish I could magically wave a wand and solve the enormous problem of constantly needing to find new staff.

**February 11, 2013**

Notes provided to principal (shared with assistant principal at end of the school year)

1) The K reorganization of groups should make a difference in having one level of mastery to deal with at a time within a group. I used all the RM data information and the AIMSWEB red/yellow/green information on subtests of reading to form the groups. As we talked about, the instructors with the higher functioning students should have 10-12 in their groups and the neediest fragile learners should make up the smallest numbered groups of no more than 7-8.

2) I hope you are open to using L as a resource for the Corrective Reading instructors. He definitely knows the program well and can look at data to tell about mastery or not. He can help with sounds and formats. And, very importantly, he can help with timed check outs. If that is ok with you, I would like to get his email address from you and then I will start to feed him some information and ideas to help others.

3) One Reading Mastery instructor, J, had problems with timed check outs for that level (different from Corrective Reading) the last time I checked her data. When I saw it this time it was still definitely a problem but she was gone for the day when it was discovered. At her group's level, they have a criteria of reading for a certain time with certain number of errors allowed in order to pass or master and move on. The last time I worked with her, all her data was exactly like the criteria! That is, every single child read exactly the same amount of time with the same number of errors...all the same! This time, she had whited out those columns and every child had a different time but everyone of them had "3" errors, which was the error limit for the criteria. This, of course, means that she needs help understanding that each child reads differently and errors vary. Unfortunately you have no one who really has had experience with this program, as L has had with Corrective, so CC is your best person to help J understand how to do the timed check outs properly. This is very important.

4) When I worked with J about sound production, she had a great attitude. I told her about the DVD disc that came in the kits to help with sounds. I also told AP about this so others can use

those disks. Your original order also came with other DVD disks called Reading Mastery Teaching Tutor (for K/red and 1<sup>st</sup>/orange) which will be very helpful. AP said that she didn't have them and you probably did. We burned those at School G so there are a number of copies for instructors to take home to use and practice. If you can't find them, contact B and ask her to send them.

5) There was a very productive time after school explaining Reading Success to the new AIG teacher. I imagine that AP told you about that. It is a good thing that the new teacher is energetic and anxious to restart that group right away. S is going to mentor her with the program. S and T seem to add so much to Elementary School.

6) I moved a few individual students to different groups due to data that I saw. Hopefully, in March I can really study data again to see how the lesson gains are going and the mastery of assessments are shown. Most first and second graders were moved to the Accelerated Cycle of lessons. Also, F and her TA are doing well with Corrective A for their students. They just need to get in a lesson a day instead of a lesson a week. The students can handle it and both instructors are ready to increase the pacing now.

Again, there are many positive things happening at Elementary School. It was so good to see instructors smiling more and feeling better about the opportunities they are providing for students learning to read.

**February 11, 2013** Assistant Principal notes from meeting with SRA Consultant

Check in on S-students are not arriving on time

F-needs to do assessments and record the data

J-look at her timed readings and data-is it possible to observe her doing a check out? Have CC work with her?

Make sure teachers know that they must make up Mastery Tests and Check Outs when students are marked absent. Do them the next time they test students.

**March 25, 2013** Notes provided to principal (shared with assistant principal at end of the school year)

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 8:45-9:30

J-orange #55-10 in group went over STAR worked on /r/

W-#112 all 1<sup>st</sup> format 1 not 2 and workbook clarification

Sub-B R is out (remove student P)

B-#122 red student B-placement for?-move to R FC will start now

M-green #24 starting vocabulary (five moved up-how was decision made?) student

T not cooperating-B1 next year movement to green book is extremely hard add modeling

see notes about B's 2 groups

could not find B or B

Kindergarten-needs to be on 45 minutes-start at 10:00-even Ms. J Kindergarten teacher  
like W should observe Language For Learning at School H or School L

10:00-10:45 Kindergarten and 3<sup>rd</sup>

No J again

P-3<sup>rd</sup>-B1 #28 went back to lesson 16 copy graph demo'd Word Attack-STAR too

Talked to P and T about finishing B1 (53 now) before end of year. They need to teach 6 syllables until end of SRA groups

C-B2 #54 Word Attack (6 syllables)-go to next after B2 excellent delivery could have gone to Reading Success

B-K #34 went back-now blending well-use 2 for 1 from now on  
 P-K #25 went back sub for W  
 J-#64 demo'd format hard to get her to listen to me  
 B-K #37 45 minutes now "my turn"-add this and tighten up  
 W-K #27 lowest (L4L) next year? Only one is really getting it

4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 11:00-11:45

H-B1 excellent delivery graphing  
 A-Media-B1 #50 c/o timeexcellent delivery  
 S-next to Science Lab-B2 #35 made modifications in order to finish up stories all data is excellent  
 M-by S and AIG-B2 #42 interim-ask for help-need BT-"thinks she knows more than she does" T/S needed ask C to model for two days and explain data student M not cooperating Needs disk  
 H-AIG-Reading Success Lesson 9 vocabulary word "persecuted"-using journals well! Applying concepts to common core 5<sup>th</sup>  
 S-Reading Success-#27 applying CCSS to Common Core Has mentored H well 4<sup>th</sup> pick up here in fall

Comments for 3-25-13

So many are covering for others groups often not where they should be (some locations)  
 Schedules day before-planned out and don't tell teachers I'm coming  
 4<sup>th</sup> comes back early!  
 Clocks off-S  
 Problems w/J's data  
 Lots of days missed for field trips, assessments, workshops, and absences  
 Cannot count lesson gains for Kindergarten-they changed groups

**April 16, 2013**

Assistant Principal notes from meeting with SRA Consultant

Staff turnover has been an issue.  
 Sounds should be refined during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of implementation  
 The Curriculum Coach should be the go to for SRA instead of the Assistant Principal-growth was hampered by the AP's ability to focus on SRA  
 Next year consider that some staff members are not of the caliber needed to do this program effectively (two specific instructors were noted) but the majority were marvelous with SRA.  
 Remember this is an auditory approach being used on a visual society  
 Most of the staff embraced SRA and made strides but lesson gains were not what they should be  
 Absenteeism was a problem  
 Other problem-SRA being cancelled due to field trips-maybe have an afternoon time slot to make up missed lessons  
 "Catch Up" time-extra slot of time to do more lessons  
 Our students were further behind in language, attention, and focus in order to be able to learn something the first time around-they need instruction twice  
 2 lessons per day only in the red book-could do workbooks in the afternoon with additional activities  
 Add Orton-Gillingham strategies in the afternoons  
 Kindergarten-next year begin with their placement in mid-September-students with low oral language skills need to be clustered-students with attention spans of 10 minutes to attend to 1-step directions need Language for Learning-Teachers should take the bottom half of

the students and the teacher assistants should take the top half and work in the same rooms

Each year you get more lesson gains-staff confidence will be higher

We will get enhanced training at the beginning of the school year

Need better management-more positive energy-not “dead” lessons-need a good pace to keep children on task-Teacher/Student Game needs to be used better next year

## Learn from our mistakes

Workbooks could be more fun by understanding how to make them into games and used more efficiently

Fast Cycle is more effective with a strong positive teacher (gave a specific name here)

Management – Expectations – Syllabication                      these are not in the script

Need to prepare sub packets for SRA groups-get ideas from FCRR-match activities with books we have in the rooms

On a scale of 1-10 we were a 7 our teachers were what made this year so successful

A half-time person to do SRA would greatly help

Move students to different groups based on their data.

There is a short program after the orange book that leads into the green book-35 lesson program-  
title “Transitions”

There will be no new placement tests for Corrective Reading next year-will continue where they are-new 3<sup>rd</sup> graders will be placed in this manner: those in Red and/or the first ½ of Orange will go to Corrective Reading B1; second ½ of orange should be given an alternative placement test-if they do well they should go to “Transitions” and then to green-if don’t do well then go to B1

Kindergarten will take the placement tests

Students in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will continue where they are