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AN ANALYSIS OF A LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT'S EIGHTH-GRADE
SUMMER READING CAMP CURRICULUM
AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE VOIDS

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the School of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
in the College of Education
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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine if the 2012 Eighth Grade Summer Reading Camp curriculum was aligned with the students' needs. To determine if curriculum alignment existed, the researcher completed a qualitative and quantitative study. The qualitative study consisted of interviewing the school district program development team to ascertain how the curriculum was designed. The quantitative segment involved running descriptive statistics for student performance on the Pre-program Benchmark Examination. The determined student knowledge voids were compared to the amount of instructional time spent taught teaching those individual benchmarks to ascertain if the curriculum was aligned with student need. The curriculum was determined to not be aligned with the performance deficiencies of the students.

My most heartfelt thank you goes to my loving wife, Marie, who put up with my twice-weekly absence for my doctoral classes and all the extra hours I put in completing this dissertation. An apology goes to my two children who were born during my doctoral program, my three-year-old son, James, and my five-month-old daughter, Noelle. Thank you for allowing me to sacrifice our family time to complete this program.

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Thank you, members of my committee: Dr. Ken Murray, Dr. Lee Baldwin, Dr. Rosemarye Taylor, Dr. William Gordon, and Dr. Walter Doherty. I would especially like to thank my Committee Chair, Dr. Barbara Murray, who was always willing to answer my late night phone calls and talk me through any problem that arose.

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CHAPTER 1 THE PROBLEM AND ITS CLARIFYING COMPONENTS

Background

When former President George W. Bush stated that no child would be left behind, he opened Pandora's box of accountability and high stakes testing. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 ushered in the concept that the educational industry was responsible for the rising dropout rate and needed more regulation for the betterment of students (Ede, 2006). This regulation paved the way for high stakes testing that led to the Race To The Top (2009) initiative which has held individual teachers responsible for the test scores of their students. Along with increasing regulation, the NCLB Act (2001) mandated the use of "scientifically based reading instruction" (Ede, 2006, p. 30). According to Ede, programs that would qualify as having a scientific base are those that incorporate "systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension" (p. 30). The question arises as to whether a scientifically based program is aligned with specific student academic deficiencies on high stakes tests.

The state of Florida fulfilled the demands of the NCLB Act (2001), which required that all third graders to be reading on grade level by the time they reached third grade, by mandating the retention of all third graders who did not achieve above a Level 1 on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in Reading (The Florida Legislature, 1008.25, 2012). Not only did third-grade retention gain notoriety; eighth-grade retention was brought to the forefront by the establishment of statute S. 1008.25(5)(b) which stated:

“Each student who. . . scores below Level 3 in FCAT reading or FCAT mathematics, must be provided with additional diagnostic assessments to determine the nature of the student’s difficulty, the areas of academic need, and strategies for appropriate intervention and instruction as described in paragraph (b). . . Upon subsequent evaluation, if the documented deficiency has not been remediated, the student may be retained” (The Florida Legislature, 2011).

One large urban school district (LUSD) enacted a mandatory summer program, a summer reading camp, for all third- and eighth-grade students who achieved a Level 1 on the FCAT Reading as a response to the Florida Statutes. This summer camp provides a scripted curriculum that the instructor is to follow with fidelity.

Statement of the Problem

To date, the school district (which will be referred to as LUSD throughout this document) has not explored whether the summer curriculum is aligned with the needs of the students based upon FCAT Reading deficiencies. LUSD invested over \$64,000 for the 18 days of instruction of the Eighth Grade Summer Reading Camp (LUSD Summary Budget, 2011-2012). If the curriculum is not tailored to address the FCAT Reading deficiencies, the school district is missing an opportunity to increase the reading ability of its students. In this age of increased accountability, high stakes testing and decreased educational funding, LUSD desires to make the most of every instructional opportunity. LUSD understands that a stagnant curriculum cannot meet the dynamic needs of today’s youth. The curriculum must engage students in an intellectual quest that begins at their

individual academic vulnerabilities and continues with their attainment of educational enlightenment.

Purpose of the Study

The study was designed to determine the extent of alignment of LUSD's Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp in meeting the documented needs related to student performance outcomes. It was also intended to highlight the specific areas of curricula gaps based upon student deficiencies illustrated by the results of the 2012 pre-program school district benchmark Reading examination.

Significance of the Study

This study was of paramount significance to LUSD, as will directly affect the school district's most important stakeholder, its students. This study will enable LUSD to strengthen program content and assist in tailoring the curriculum to meet the dynamic needs of the students. Next, in raising the lowest performing students' academic achievement, LUSD can hope to reduce the achievement gap between students; specifically the gap between students of differing socio-economic status. Lastly, LUSD will be able to make its programs more cost effective by gaining higher student achievement for less/similar capital expended.

Definition of Terms

Achievement level. The success a student has achieved with the NGSSS assessed on the FCAT 2.0 is described by Achievement Levels that range from one to five, with Level

One being the lowest and Level Five being the highest. To be considered on grade level, students must achieve levels three or higher.

End of summer examination. Students who have received a Level One on the eighth-grade FCAT 2.0 Reading examination, are given the opportunity to take the post-benchmark examination at the end of the summer camp.

English Language Learners (ELL). ELL students are identified by the school as a result of a home language survey.

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test or Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test 2.0 (FCAT). FCAT is administered to students in Grades 3-11 and consists of criterion-referenced assessments in reading which measured student progress toward meeting the Sunshine State Standards (SSS) benchmarks. (Florida Department of Education, 2012)
FCAT reporting categories. Each student is given an overall score as well as scores in each of the following categories: Vocabulary, Reading Application, Literary Analysis – Fiction/Non-Fiction, Information Text/Research Process. (Florida Department of Education, 2012)

Low socio-economic status (SES). SES describes students who qualify for free or reduced lunch through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) as indicated by the National Department of Agriculture (NAEP Website).

Mandatory retention for Grade 8 students. Students who achieve a Level 1 on the FCAT reading examination and subsequent district examinations are retained in eighth-grade due to state mandate S. 1008.25(5)(b) F.S.

Each student who . . . scores below Level 3 in FCAT reading or FCAT mathematics, must be provided with additional diagnostic assessments to determine the nature of the student’s difficulty, the areas of academic need, and strategies for appropriate intervention and instruction as described in paragraph (b). . . Upon subsequent evaluation, if the documented deficiency has not been remediated, the student may be retained” (Florida Legislature, 2011).

Nonparticipants in summer reading camp. Nonparticipants are students who opt not to attend summer school or students who attend less the 50% of the days and do not take the end-of-summer examination.

Race. Student race is determined by the parent on the student’s school registration information when the student was enrolled in the Large Urban School District. For the purposes of this study, the races will be quantified as: White, Black, Asian, Multi-Cultural, American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic.

Student participation in summer school. Students who achieve a Level 1 on the FCAT reading portion are given the opportunity to complete summer school, with the ability of promotion if they satisfy the requirements of passing the end of summer examination. Students must have attended at least 50% or more of the scheduled summer school days and have past the end of summer examination.

Students with disabilities (SD). Students with disabilities (SD) qualify for exceptional education services. They will usually have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) because they require specifically designed instruction and related services. (NEAP website).

Summer Reading Camp. The terms, Summer Reading Camp and Summer Program, will be used interchangeably in this study.

Summer school curriculum/Teacher prescribed curriculum. The summer school curriculum for LUSD is a purchased/created curriculum used by instructors with fidelity, during the eighth-grade summer school program.

Conceptual Framework

The increased public and political emphasis on teacher and school accountability for student achievement, has led to intense scrutiny into “the alignment between curricula and state standards” (Foertsch, 2003, p. 19). Foertsch (2003) performed a study to “analyze the quality and level of implementation” (p. 1) of a district’s reading program. Foertsch examined different teaching strategies and their subsequent results. Two different items that Foertsch examined were “instructional practices; and teacher beliefs about reading instruction (including program goals, perceptions of strengths and weaknesses, and impact on students’ ability to read)” (p. 22). Much of Foertsch’s research into exploring those items was qualitative in nature and utilized teacher questionnaires and interviews. One important part of an inquiry that Foertsch implemented was surveying teachers regarding the number of hours spent teaching reading skills and strategies. Foertsch believed that “Information obtained from individual interviews supports the finding that strategies and skills for dealing with informational text receives less emphasis at both levels than literary text” (p. 36). Foertsch exploited the interview data to make assumptions regarding curriculum

alignment. Although Foertsh's study occurred concurrently with teaching implementation, the current research study took place the year after the LUSD eighth-grade summer camp instruction was concluded. Due to the fact that this researcher used historical data, the strict curriculum time frames that were built into the LUSD eighth-grade summer curriculum were utilized instead of interviews.

Comparing student achievement deficiencies to the curriculum took Foertsch's (2003) framework to the next level. Foertsch determined if the "local curriculum and assessments are aligned with state mandated assessments" (p. 20) but did not compare student achievement data to those results. However, Foertsch did utilize her results to "judge the likelihood that curriculum will prepare District 31 (Illinois public school) students to perform successfully on the IGAP Reading Assessment" (p. 46). The current study essentially reverse-engineered Foertsch's prior study by comparing student results to the benchmarks and to the curriculum. The LUSD study was structured to pursue Foertsch's (2003) suggestion to "Make sure that the curriculum provides opportunities for students to meet all of the standards and make necessary adjustments in the curriculum for unmet standards and for students who need more instructional support in meeting the learning standards" (p. 54).

Research Questions

1. In what processes did large urban school district officials engage to develop content for the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp?

2. Where did officials from a large urban school district draw the content utilized in the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp?
3. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Vocabulary benchmark
LA.8.1.6.8 "the student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings"?
4. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Vocabulary benchmark
LA.8.1.6.9 "the student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context"?
5. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark
LA.8.1.7.2 "the student will analyze the author's purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning"?
6. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark
LA.8.1.7.3 "the student will determine the main idea or essential message in

grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details”?

7. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.4 “the student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text”?
8. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.5 “the student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text”?
9. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.7 “the student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems)”?
10. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.1.2 “The student will locate and analyze

elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction”?

11. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.1.7 “the student will locate and analyze an author’s use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader’s senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis”?
12. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.2.1 “the student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words)”?
13. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Informational Text and Research Process benchmark LA.8.6.1.1 “the student will explain how text features

(e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader's understanding”?

14. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Informational Text and Research Process benchmark LA.8.6.2.2 “the student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources”?

Delimitations

The delimitations utilized in this study were determined in conjunction with the client, a Large Urban School District (LUSD) from Central Florida. It has 34 middle schools that serve over 37,708 students from various backgrounds and economic levels. These are all contributing factors to the make-up and diversity of the students examined. The convenience sampling was purposeful to gain an accurate picture of the deficiencies of LUSD eighth-grade students but caused further delimitations such as:

1. All students were from one Large Urban School District in Central Florida.
2. All students performed below grade level on the Florida State Reading examination, 2012 FCAT 2.0.
3. All students were in 8th grade and in danger of being retained.

4. The only student data utilized was the student benchmark data from the 2012 LUSD pre-camp benchmark examination.
5. The only curriculum information examined was instructional time frames given by the curriculum framework from the LUSD Summer Camp informational literature.

Limitations

The study had the following limitations:

1. Certain tested benchmarks have a limited quantity of questions that address them. Due to the limited number of questions tested (one to three) per benchmark and the unequal amount per benchmark, student achievement may not be accurately represented for all benchmarks.
2. Due to the limited funds for the summer camp, bus transportation was not available from the student's home to the school. Lack of transportation caused some students to be unable to attend the program. Students with low socio-economic status may have been disproportionately affected by this fact, thereby decreasing their presence in the sample population.
3. As a result of budget constraints, there was minimal supervision of teachers. Lack of supervision may have allowed some teachers to not have taught the curriculum with fidelity. Irregularities between the teaching style and presentation of materials may have impacted student achievement.

4. Due to each student's unique home life situation, it is impossible to account for, or normalize, the amount of support a student received from siblings or family members.
5. Regardless of the desire and effort the teachers and administrator had to actively engage all the students in the curriculum and instruction, not all students had the same level of engagement and intrinsic motivation.
6. At times, a student's behavior may have prohibited their and their counterparts' ability to learn.
7. The data examined in the study is specific to that of the Large Urban School District eighth-grade students for the 2011-2012 school year and summer program. Due to the dynamic nature of students and their subsequent needs, the results may not be generalizable to other counties and future years. Although the student deficiencies may change with the years and location, the procedural steps to determine the curriculum of the program will still have significance.
8. The benchmark examination was created by the LUSD and may not be utilized by other districts, thereby making generalizations and replication of the research specifics difficult.
9. The stigma associated with possible retention and the influence of such on student self-esteem may negatively impact student performance.
10. Two benchmarks were assessed on the 2012 FCAT 2.0 Reading examination and not on the 2012 LUSD pre-camp benchmark examination. Therefore,

deficiencies and knowledge voids could not be determined for those two specific benchmarks. The two benchmarks were: LA.8.1.6.3, (The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words) and LA.8.1.6.7 (The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words).

Organization of the Study

This research study is presented in five chapters. The background and introduction of the study, statement of problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, definition of terms, theoretical framework, research questions, limitations of the study and delimitations of the study have been presented in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature and research related to the problem of the study. Chapter 3 details the methodology and procedures utilized throughout the study. Chapter 4 presented an explanation of the data obtained. Chapter 5 contains a summary and discussion of the findings, implications of the findings for future curriculum determination for LUSD, recommendations for further research, and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter 2 contains a review of literature and research related to the problem of the study. The review has been organized in four sections: (a) retention in respect to federal and state mandates, (b) best practices for summer intervention programs, (c) differing views of curriculum alignment, and (d) opposing viewpoints of prescribed or mandated curricula.

Retention

Federal Mandates

According to the 2011 Nation's Report Card, only 34% of eighth graders performed at or above the proficient level in that year (p. 39). Unfortunately, 34% proficiency is the highest score the nation's eighth-graders have received on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) examination, since it began reporting data in 1992 (Nation's Report Card, 2011). Although the NAEP examination only reported data starting in 1992, it has been in existence since 1969 (Nation's Report Card, 2011).

Due in part to the poor performance of United States students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) examination, President George W. Bush reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) by enacting the No Child Left Behind Act (2001). No Child Left Behind Act (2001) created rigorous standards of assessment and accountability for states and their subsequent districts "To

close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind” (Avoiding the summer slide, 2002). The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) mandated the use of “scientifically based reading instruction” (Ede, p. 30). Programs that would qualify as having a scientific base are ones that incorporate “systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension” (Ede, p. 30).

The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) has been continuously updated and has prompted other programs that affect public education such as the Race To The Top (2010) program. “The Race to the Top program is authorized under sections 14005 and 14006 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p. 3). The Race To The Top (2010) program is focused on “enhancing standards and assessments, improving the collection and use of data, increasing teacher effectiveness and achieving equity in teacher distribution, and turning around struggling schools” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p. 3). However, it is the component of enhancing standards and assessments that links it to the conversation regarding student performance and retention. The Race To The Top (2010) program forced states to adopt a set of common statewide standards and a common assessment (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Florida utilizes its Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test as the state-wide common assessment.

The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) went into more detail with respect to Title I schools in Section 1111(b)(1), stating that “The State’s academic content standards must specify what all students are expected to know and be able to do, contain coherent and rigorous content, and encourage the teaching of advanced skills” (2012). Although the

new requirements declared standards composed of rigorous content, one is hard pressed to find any mention of student retention, especially mandatory student retention in the No Child Left Behind Act (2001). The catalyst for Florida's mandate that all third grade students must achieve a Level 2 on the FCAT 2.0 Reading examination is found in the Reading First initiative within the No Child Left Behind Act (2001).

No Child Left Behind provides more than one billion dollars a year to help children learn to read. Reading First is the part of No Child Left Behind that is dedicated to ensuring all children learn to read on grade level by the third grade. (No Child Left Behind, 2012).

However, there is no mention of an eighth-grade reading requirement or mandate.

State Mandates

The Florida Legislature Statute 1008.25(5)(b) interprets the demands of NCLB and states that

Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, if the student's reading deficiency, as identified in paragraph (a), is not remedied by the end of grade 3, as demonstrated by scoring at Level 2 or higher on the statewide assessment test in reading for grade 3, the student must be retained. (Florida Statutes, 2011)

The mandated retention of third-grade students who achieve a Level 1 on the Reading portion of the FCAT 2.0 has caused much notoriety and prompted many Florida large urban school districts to create summer reading camps. Summer reading camps are

lawful alternatives to retention based upon Florida Statute 1008.25(7)(b)(2), which is written to

Provide students who are retained under the provisions of paragraph (5)(b) with intensive instructional services and supports to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency, including a minimum of 90 minutes of daily, uninterrupted, scientifically research-based reading instruction and other strategies prescribed by the school district, which may include, but are not limited to. . . summer reading camps. (Florida Statute 1008.25(7)(b)(2), 2011)

The summer reading camps are utilized to teach students the skills that will enable them to be successful on an alternative assessment. Performing successfully on an alternative assessment gives those students good cause to be promoted to the next grade level based upon the third type of Good Cause exemptions highlighted in the following description:

The district school board may only exempt students from mandatory retention, as provided in paragraph (5)(b), for good cause. Good cause exemptions shall be limited to the following:

1. Limited English proficient students who have had less than 2 years of instruction in an English for Speakers of Other Languages program.
2. Students with disabilities whose individual education plan indicates that participation in the statewide assessment program is not appropriate, consistent with the requirements of State Board of Education rule.

3. *Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of performance on an alternative standardized reading assessment approved by the State Board of Education.*
4. Students who demonstrate, through a student portfolio, that the student is reading on grade level as evidenced by demonstration of mastery of the Sunshine State Standards in reading equal to at least a Level 2 performance on the FCAT.
5. Students with disabilities who participate in the FCAT and who have an individual education plan or a Section 504 plan that reflects that the student has received intensive remediation in reading for more than 2 years but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading and was previously retained in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, or grade 3.
6. Students who have received intensive remediation in reading for 2 or more years but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who were previously retained in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, or grade 3 for a total of 2 years. Intensive reading instruction for students so promoted must include an altered instructional day that includes specialized diagnostic information and specific reading strategies for each student. The district school board shall assist schools and teachers to implement reading strategies that research has shown to be successful in improving reading among low-performing readers (Florida Statute 1008.25, 2011).

The assessments that have been approved by the Florida Department of Education fall under

SBE Rule 6A-1.094221(1)(a) {which} authorizes the use of the following nationally norm-referenced tests in the determination of a good cause exemption for promotion to fourth grade:

Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition (SAT 9)

Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (SAT 10). (Florida Department of Education, 2009, p. 3)

If a school district desires to utilize an alternative test other than the two provided, an application must be submitted to the Just Read! Florida office, and the passing rate will be established as “at or above the 50th percentile on the approved alternative standardized reading assessment” (Florida Department of Education, 2009, p. 4). The Large Urban School District (LUSD) in this study utilized the Iowa Test of Basic Skills to determine if students have demonstrated the academic growth necessary for promotion to fourth grade. LUSD utilized a post-program benchmark examination to determine if eighth-grade students have demonstrated adequate academic success in reading to be promoted to ninth grade.

At the time of the present study, the state of Florida had not established a rule mandating retention for eighth-grade students who fail the Reading portion of the FCAT 2.0, but there has been mandatory retention for ninth-grade students not passing the Reading portion of the FCAT 2.0. It would benefit any district to ensure that rising ninth graders are reading on grade level and prepared for the difficult high school curricular content (Florida Department of Education, 2012). LUSD has highly encouraged any eighth-grade student scoring a Level 1 or 2 on the Reading portion of the FCAT 2.0, to

participate in the district's Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp. The camp's purpose is to provide intensive reading instruction and remediation for those students who were not successful on the Reading portion of the FCAT 2.0 so that they will be better prepared for ninth grade and the FCAT 2.0 that is taken at that grade level (Interviewee C, Personal Communication, April 18, 2012)

In summary, federal standards, such as the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and the Race To The Top program (2010) have been established to ensure the academic competitiveness of the United States of America's students, with the rest of the world, but states have created their own mandates to ensure that the achievement gap is closed and the demands of Federal standards have been met. Florida currently has mandatory retention standards for Grades 3 and 9 which ensure that students cannot graduate without successfully demonstrating reading competency. Although there is no mandatory retention statute for Grade 8 students, many districts have summer remediation programs in place to ensure that eighth-grade students are prepared to enter ninth grade.

Best Practices for Summer Intervention Programs

To determine what the best practices of summer school are, the investigator must first go back to the origins of the summer break and determine the initial purpose of summer school. The summer break that occurs in public schools started in the 1840s under the educational influence of those educators like Horace Mann who claimed that "overstuffing young minds could lead to nervous disorders or insanity" (Altman, 2008,

para. 1). Weiss and Brown (2003) stated that summer break was instituted due to “multiple pressures of increased urbanization and pedagogical views in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (p. 1721). Even more researchers stated that the summer break occurred to ensure that farm children were available to work the fields to fulfill the “needs of the agricultural community” (Hattie, 2009, p. 80). Regardless of the reason, summer break gave students and teachers a time to rejuvenate and reenergize their creative minds (Weiss, & Brown, 2003). National events, however, changed this approach to education in the United States.

The Soviet Union’s launching of Sputnik caused the United States to first promote the utilization of summer school as an academic acceleration option (Dewitt, 2013). The United States feared losing the Space Race and began to find ways to increase the caliber of science and mathematics understanding in its students. The United States was so fearful of losing its technological edge that it ratified the National Defense Education Act of 1958. This increased educational funding at all levels (Powell, 2007). Summer school afforded students the increased instructional time that was believed necessary to compete with, and ultimately bypass, the Soviet Union in the race to put a man on the moon (Dewitt, 2013).

The purpose of summer school, however, has changed throughout the years from focusing on science, to remediation and enrichment, as well as engaging students with disabilities in an extended year program (Powell, 2007; Dewitt, 2013). The aspect of remediation has become the most widely employed motive for school districts’ utilization of summer programs (Dewitt, 2013).

Summer remediation instruction has been specifically important for urban students from families of low income, as they demonstrate the greatest incidences of the “summer slump” (Cooper, et al., 1996). Senator Christopher J. Dodd (2002) explained the summer slump in his opening statements to the Senate subcommittees, “Without summer activities to keep their reading and math skills sharp, students start school in the fall about a month behind where they finished in the spring” (Avoiding the Summer Slide, p. 1). Hattie (2009) further stated that the “. . . break means significant time needs to be spent reviewing previous material in order for learning to commence again” (p. 81) in the fall. Due to the negative effects of being out of school for an extended period of time and the fact that the United States has relatively few agricultural youth, there is much question as to the appropriateness of the long summer break (Hattie, 2009). This is especially true, according to Hattie, as test scores of U. S. students typically lag behind their European and Asian counterparts.

Foreign countries require more instructional hours for students, on average, than the United States of America, and even within the U. S., there are different requirements of instructional hours and days per year. A 2011 report of the Educational Commission of the States indicated that the instructional days per year ranged from 160 days in Colorado to 182 in Ohio (Bush, Ryan, & Rose, 2011). Instructional hours varied not only by state but also by grade level with instructional hours for high school ranging from 900 hours in Alaska, Connecticut, and Florida to 1,137 hours in Wisconsin (Bush et al., 2011). Phetdee reported in 2009 that Finland required students, who on average boast notoriously high standardized test scores, to attend school for 190 days for four to seven

hours per day, and all teachers were required to have earned a master's degree. Japan's students, who also have characteristically demonstrated high standardized test results, attend 243 of school annually, the highest number of days of all countries reviewed (DeStefano, 2012). However, most countries, whose students outperform those from the United States of America, mandate or highly encourage their students to participate in additional hours of tutoring instruction after school (DeStefano, 2012).

Unfortunately, students from families of low socio economic status (SES) living in U. S. urban areas are at amplified risk for the summer slump. These students are at an increased risk “because they do not have the same access to books and reading opportunities as students from better-off families” (Avoiding the Summer Slide, 2002, p. 1). Also, “It is more common for educated parents (typically of higher SES) to read to their children when they are younger as well as to encourage them to read more independently when they are older” (Gallagher, Goodyear, Brewer, & Rueda, 2012, p. 42). Therefore, “children from higher-SES families learn more over the summer than do their less advantaged counterparts” (Burkham, Ready, Lee, & LoGerfo, 2004, p. 18). Consequently, students from more affluent families continue to build their schema or background knowledge and have an increased likelihood of participating in activities that increase their intellect such as: reading books, vacationing in different areas of the country/world, and being exposed to differing ideas and creative influences (Cooper et al., 1996).

To combat the urban low SES students' summer slump, many school districts host summer reading programs that specifically target their Title I schools. These programs

are designed to ensure that low SES students have instructional opportunities to thwart or lessen the impact of the summer slump. The summer break is typically two to three months in length. Therefore, educational decision makers must ensure that their program of choice allows urban students of low SES to receive the most effective instruction in a relatively limited time frame.

There are a plethora of differing viewpoints on what are the essential components of a successful summer reading curriculum. Rush (2004) articulated that there are four necessary components to a reading curriculum: coding competence, semantic competence, pragmatic competence, and critical competence. Coding Competence is explained as the ability to decode words and their meanings, thereby increasing known vocabulary (Rush, 2004). When children's vocabularies are increased, they have an increased ability to read more quickly. This is called fluency (Rush, 2004). Urban youth suffer from low fluency as a result of less exposure to vocabulary at home and higher incidence of television watching at a younger age than their higher SES counterparts (Gallagher et al., 2012). Semantic competence involves comprehension and the ability to make connections to the text (Rush, 2004). Because urban youth are exposed to less text, they are not be able to make those necessary connections. Children's abilities to connect the text to their personal experiences, or to that of other texts, drastically increases their ability to comprehend the new material or readings (Rush, 2004). Pragmatic competence involves knowing how to use text and understanding the cultural and social implications involved in the text (Rush, 2004). Critical competence "highlights the idea that texts are political in nature and seeks to engage students and teachers in a process that exposes and

works against unequal power relationships in society” (Rush, 2004, p. 39). This requires a higher level of thinking that, unfortunately, has not typically been instilled in low SES urban youth.

Hops (2009) reports that summer school curriculum should have an “outcome based approach (that) helps outline the ‘must’ versus ‘should’ components of a course” (p. 52). He stated that this approach will result in a triage type of curriculum and the sacrifice of some content in order to hone in on the keystone concepts (Hops, 2009). Hops (2009) seemed to take a note from Covey (1989) by beginning with the end in mind. He discussed developing assessment and backtracking to order instruction and assignments so that they are aligned with the examination in respect to timeframes and content (Hops, 2009). Hops (2009) also promoted a range of strategies. They included: shorter assignments, frequent assessments and assignments with immediate feedback, viewing films and other tasks as homework instead of utilizing the precious classroom minutes for that task, continuous instructional pace checks done by teacher and involving students, coaching students on time-management, smaller class sizes, handout/outlines to minimize note taking time, and utilizing a jigsaw approach to having students become experts on a subject and teach each other what they learned.

The National Reading Panel (2000) initiated an intensive study to determine the components that were essential to any successful reading program. They found that the most important components were: (a) phonemic awareness with systematic phonics instruction, (b) reading comprehension, and (c) the amount of reading that a child

completes or fluency (National Reading Panel, 2000). These components are discussed in the following paragraphs.

As part of its work, the National Reading Panel (2000) researched the role that phonemic awareness plays in a successful reading program. It found that “teaching phonemic awareness to children significantly improves their reading more than instruction that lacks any attention to PA [phonemic awareness]” (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 2-3). The effect size for phonemic awareness instruction was “0.86” (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 2-3), indicating that students receiving systematic phonemic awareness instruction had a high likelihood of increased reading ability. “Results of the meta-analysis showed that teaching children to manipulate the sounds in language helps them learn to read” (National Reading Panel, p. 2-5). What makes their version of a phonemic awareness session work is the small amount of time it takes to complete. “In these analyses, programs lasting less than 20 hours were more effective than longer programs. Single sessions lasted 25 minutes on average. Classroom teachers as well as computers can teach PA [phonemic awareness] effectively” (National Reading Panel, p. 2-6). Most summer school sessions are extremely brief, lasting around 20 days, and some are held in a computer lab, so this feature can be attractive to many districts.

According to the National Reading Panel (2000), reading “comprehension is critically important to development of children’s reading skills and therefore their ability to obtain an education” (p. 4-1). The National Reading Panel (2000) found that there were three governing themes associated with reading comprehension. They were: that reading comprehension involves a thought process that is very complex and cannot be

understood without examining the role that vocabulary plays, “active interactive strategic processes are critically necessary to the development of reading comprehension” (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 4-1) which involves text comprehension, and that districts must adequately prepare their teachers to be able to teach such a complex cognitive task (National Reading Panel, 2000).

The National Reading Panel (2000) reported that increasing reading comprehension involved vocabulary and text comprehension instruction. The importance of having a strong vocabulary, or word knowledge, has been correlated with reading success since as early as 1925 (Whipple, 1925). Davis (1942) expanded upon Whipple’s (1925) statements and studied the reading comprehension precursors of word knowledge and reasoning in reading or the “measure of ability to manipulate verbal concepts and relate them meaningfully” (p. 366). Davis (1942) wrote that word knowledge is very similar to developing a “recognition vocabulary” (p. 366). He suggested that further study be completed in the fundamentals of reading comprehension for students all the way through college.

Having a large working vocabulary increases a child’s reading comprehension abilities and “There are two types of vocabulary – oral and print” (The National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 13). A person’s oral vocabulary is composed of words that they have been exposed to in conversation but have not experienced them in print. Being exposed to different words in conversation helps the learner to make inferences into the meaning of new words (The National Reading Panel, 2000). Therefore, the larger the oral or print vocabulary of individuals, the better aptitude they have for deciphering the meaning of a

new word. Similarly, the larger the working vocabulary of individuals, the more fluent they will become (The National Reading Panel, 2000). Unfortunately, students of low SES typically do not have a large oral or print vocabulary, and this increases their risk of falling behind (Gallagher et al., 2012).

Fluency is the ability to write or read smoothly, easily and quickly with accuracy (The National Reading Panel, 2000). It is well documented and considered common knowledge that “Reading fluency is an important part of reading proficiency and reading a text fluently is critical for comprehending it” (Hudson, Torgesen, Lane, & Turner, 2010, p. 484). In fact “Reading fluency is the dominant factor in explaining individual differences in performance on the FCAT in grade three, while differences among students in verbal knowledge/reasoning is clearly the most important factor in the tenth grade” (Torgesen, Nettles, Howard, & Winterbottom, 2013, p. 1). Also, student achievement on oral reading fluency examinations has been shown to be a predictor of a students’ ability to attain at or above a Level 3 on the FCAT reading test (Buck & Torgesen, 2013). If reading fluency is so fundamental in becoming a successful reader, what are the best ways to teach fluency?

There are several different best practices for fluency instruction. “The Flippen Reading Connection uses teaching strategies including *oral reading*, *supported reading* and *repeated reading* to improve the reading fluency skills of students such that they acquire ‘automaticity’ in reading” (Flippen Education, 2010). Oral reading is simply reading out loud to/with the teacher or class with a focus on rate and accuracy (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006). Oral reading fluency can “serve as an accurate and

powerful indicator of overall reading competence, especially in its strong correlation with comprehension” (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006, p. 636). “Fluent reading is essential because it is the bridge between word recognition and reading comprehension processes” (Reutzel, Petscher, & Spichtig, 2012, p. 404).

Flippen Education’s (2010) supported reading is similar to The National Reading Panel’s (2000) guided oral reading. In guided oral reading, the teacher guides students through the reading and gives appropriate immediate feedback regarding their performance (National Reading Panel, 2000). Guided oral reading dates back to a time in the 1940s when Betts (1946) described a best practice of reading instruction as helping “students learn to apply what they know to decode unknown words and to apply comprehension skills asking for help when necessary” (p. 430).

Guided oral reading is different from silent sustained reading. In silent sustained reading, students are given instructional time to read to themselves. Silent sustained reading was inadvertently criticized in the National Reading Panel (2000) report which stated that “while encouraging students to read might be beneficial, research has not yet demonstrated this in a clear and convincing manner” (p. 3-3). Reutzel et al. (2012) described two of the main pitfalls of silent sustained reading as ensuring that the children select books they can actual read and comprehend independently and ensuring that they are authentically reading the book.

The National Reading Panel (2000) did, however, promote guided oral reading.

The analysis of guided oral reading procedures led to the conclusion that such procedures had a consistent and positive impact on word recognition, fluency, and

comprehension as measured by a variety of test instruments and at a range of grade levels. (p. 3-3).

Reutzel et al. (2012) also touted the effectiveness of guided oral reading by stating, “Guided oral reading practice is more effective for students and is also preferred by teachers. This is the case because guided oral reading provides a check on whether students are actually reading and how well they do so” (p. 411). Lyons and Thompson (2012) considered “guided reading practices as an element of a balanced literacy framework” (p. 159) for multiple grade levels. Fountas and Pinnell (2012) also detailed the importance of guided reading with active teacher participation as leading to the literary success of their students. Ford and Opitz (2011) concurred that “most descriptions of comprehensive literacy programs now include guided reading as one of the essential components” (p. 225). Yet, Lyons & Thompson (2012) included independent reading (another name for silent sustained reading) as part of their literacy framework. To summarize the current thinking on this topic, guided oral reading should play a role in every reading classroom. However important it is to increase the amount of time a student spends reading, there has to be some accountability for that reading and time.

Urban students of low socio-economic status (SES) are particularly at risk to fall behind their counterparts during the summer break (Cooper et al., 1996). Their risk factors include: less access to reading materials, less intellectually stimulating experiences, lack of parental influence reading to them, and lack of a literacy loving role model (Cooper et al., 1996; Dodd, 2002; Gallagher et al., 2012). Urban youth of SES

need a summer reading program to be able to avoid the summer slump. For a summer reading camp to be successful, it must get the maximum amount of growth out of the limited amount of time given. Research indicates that the following components must be present to maximize instructional effectiveness: coding competence or vocabulary instruction to increase attained word knowledge, fluency, reading comprehension, guided oral reading and smaller frequent assignments and assessments to achieve more efficient and effective data driven interventions (Flippen Education, 2010; Ford & Opitz, 2011; National Reading Panel, 2000). Although any U. S. student would benefit from extra instructional time such as that which many of their European and Asian counterparts receive, it is a necessity for urban youth of low SES. As Casserly et al. (2011) stated,

Rates of improvement of the large cities versus the nation between 2003 and 2009 show that the gains in reading and mathematics in both fourth and eighth grades were significantly larger in large cities than in the national sample. . . [although] districts continue to lag behind national averages (p. 6).

Urban schools have made significant progress in educating all their students.

Unfortunately, there is much ground to cover to close the achievement gaps that still exist.

Curriculum Alignment

To determine the most effective way to align curriculum, one must examine what is and is not working in states, districts, and schools. Researchers have stated that curriculum must be aligned with national examinations to promote consistency and to

provide a measuring device for the nation. Casserly et al. (2011) found that “content and cognitive-demand alignment was not high between NAEP reading specification in grades 4 and 8 and state and district standards” (p. 27). Lack of consistent curriculum alignment was one contributing factor to the disparity among many state scores on the 2011 NAEP Reading examination. The highest scoring states were Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, all scoring average student scale scores of 275 as compared to the national average student scale score of 265 (NAEP Data Explorer, 2012). The lowest reported 2011 NAEP Reading examination average student scale score (242) was from the District of Columbia. The highest reported Reading examination average student scale score of 282 was from the National Private schools (NAEP Data Explorer). One must question which of the previously mentioned states have aligned their state standards with national standards (Common Core State Standards, 2012; NAEP Data Explorer, 2012) and if there is a correlation with aligned standards and achievement scores on the NAEP examination.

Due to the independent nature of private schools and their lack of accountability to state mandates, it is logical that they have been most able to align their curricula to national standards. Private schools are not held to the same mandates and legislation as public schools.

A number of studies have shown that (public school) teachers, administrators and principals often have to contend with curriculum decisions made by government, while at the same time trying to accommodate school-community expectations of being included in the decision-making process. (Flett & Wallace, 2005, p. 208).

State standards, which school curriculum must reflect, should be aligned with the national standards. There was much regional influence in the adoption of state standards until the Common Core State Standards were adopted by all but five states: Alaska, Minnesota, Texas, Nebraska and Virginia (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). The recent shift to adopting Common Core State Standards has catapulted curriculum alignment out of the stagnant benchmark regionalism of the last few decades. Even during the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, however, “different states cover different topics at different grade levels” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, Myths vs. Facts). This rift will exist until full implementation of the standards occurs. The 45 states and three territories that have adopted the standards have only done so only since June 2, 2010 when the standards were introduced by the National Governors Association and the State Education Chiefs. Most states had yet to fully implement the standards in their entirety at the time of this study (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). The mission statement of the Common Core State Standards Initiative is:

The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy. (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2012).

The common core initiative has brought national curriculum alignment to the forefront of educational decision making. According to Casserly et al. (2011), “The manner in which the Common Core State Standards are put into practice in America’s classrooms is likely to be the most important factor in their potential to raise academic performance” (p. 53).

Curriculum must not just be aligned to state and national standards. It must be implemented and supported in a similar fashion across districts within the state. Currently, there are major differences in regards to district performances especially between the different sized districts (Casserly et al., 2011). It has been demonstrated that “high-performing districts also created coherent, well-articulated programs of instruction that defined a uniform approach to teaching and learning throughout the district” (Casserly et al., 2011, p. 37). The Common Core State Standards are able to provide the uniformity that is so desperately needed in this age of accountability and high stakes testing. Districts need to take the new Common Core State Standards and utilize them as a catalyst to improve student achievement (Casserly et al., 2011). Casserly et al. (2011) found that the greatest indicator of a successful district was the ability to “articulate a clear direction and implement a seamless set of academic reforms that were focused, high quality, and defined by high expectations” (p. 52). The Common Core State Standards provide that focus on “rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012) and have the potential to improve student achievement scores for large numbers of students.

When districts did not have a well-defined curriculum, “schools used a wide range of materials to implement the standards, which in turn appeared to result in poor cohesion of instructional programs overall and inconsistent use of standards of teaching and learning throughout the district” (Casserly et al., 2011, p. 42). Inconsistent implementation of a standards based curriculum is a road to failure. Therefore, “A management system needs to be in place so that all will know that the curriculum is being taught. Without a management system, the curriculum may or may not be taught” (Squires, 2012, p.134). If the curriculum is not being taught with fidelity, students will not learn the appropriate information for them to be successful in the next grade or to be able to perform with proficiency on state level examinations.

In high performing schools, curriculum and lesson planning “began with the state benchmarks and standards and the district’s grade-level expectations” (Martin, 2006, p. 54). Studies dictate that “ensuring that teachers were clear about what students should learn was essential” (Martin, 2006, p. 54) to student success. The Common Core State Standards set “clear expectations about student performance to all staff members, provides teachers with explicit examples of student work illustrating varying levels of concept mastery, and differentiates instruction for students who bring special challenges to the classroom” (Casserly et al., 2011, p. 56). Differentiated instruction has been cited by almost every educational researcher as being pivotal to student success.

However, it is not only important to have a well-designed curriculum. Schools also need “articulated system-wide targets for improvement, as well as school-specific goals, promoting collaboration among staff at all levels to reach these goals” (Casserly et

al., 2011, p. 39). Thus, the concept of developing a professional learning community to ensure that instruction is aligned with standards has gained attention. Professional learning communities can work toward a goal but afford teachers the freedom to interject their personalities and enthusiasm to the lessons. Also, if the curriculum “does not allow instructional changes to happen rather quickly or it does not focus on instruction, then it probably will not show much academic progress” (Casserly et al., 2011, p. 56). Teachers must be able to continuously adapt their lessons to coincide with the specific academic deficiencies that are manifested in their students. Teachers must give “regular assessments of student achievement and used these assessment data and other measures to gauge student learning, modify practice, and target resources and support” (Casserly et al., 2011, p. 37). They should be afforded professional development and support to assist them in “designing and implementing common assessments and deepening teacher collaboration and professional conversation around interpreting data and allowing data to inform teachers’ practices” (Martin, 2006, p. 54). If teachers do not know how, or are not given the freedom to affect timely successful academic interventions for their students, it is the students who ultimately suffer. “School wide commitment to successful remediation, including high expectations of all personnel, cohesiveness of effort, and a plan that is shared and systematically implemented” (McMillan, 1995, p. 32) is fundamental to success for all. “In each district with significant and consistent gains or high performance, student assessment data were integral to driving the work of the central office and the schools. . . (as) a monitoring system to inform placement of interventions or address specific professional needs” (Casserly et al., 2011, p. 46). In

schools and districts that demonstrated the highest student achievement, “every central-office member, principal, and teacher was expected to consistently review data and use them to make informed decision about instruction and planning” (Casserly et al., 2011, p. 47), and these data came from common assessments. “The first step in the school’s journey to develop common assessments was to ensure that the curriculum was aligned both within and across grade levels with the state’s curriculum standards” (Martin, 2006, p. 54).

In summary, curriculum alignment provides the foundation for schools and districts to begin the process of meeting the needs of all students (Casserly et al., 2011; Martin, 2006). It is the beginning, not the panacea, of effective instructional practices. The Common Core Curriculum movement that was occurring in the U.S. at the time of the study will do much to ensure that curriculum is aligned to district, state and federal standards and assessment specifications (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012; Squires, 2012). Through alignment of curriculum to state standards, the districts will ensure that their students are learning the necessary information to successfully compete with students from other states and other nations.

Prescribed Curriculum

As a result of the No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation and the Race To The Top (2009) program, the nation’s educational community has begun to hold teachers and schools accountable for their students’ results on high stakes tests. Due, in part, to a history of poor urban student performance, there has been a historic increase of

“scientifically based reading instruction” (Ede, 2006, p. 30). Questions have arisen as to teacher implementation, support of programs, and whether a “one size fits all” approach to curriculum design assists all learners in becoming academically successful (Melville, 2008; Scot, Callahan, & Urquhart., 2009).

In order for a mandated curriculum to be successful, those (teachers) who are implementing the curriculum, according to Melville (2008) should be involved in its creation. “The data suggests that teachers who are not intimately involved in the initiation and implementation of a reform may see themselves as being linguistically distanced from both the reform, and the reformers” (Melville, p. 1196). Therefore, if teachers are not part of the curriculum writing team, the curriculum could be written in a way that makes sense to the “expert” but may not translate well to classroom instruction. Teachers have to be able to “make sense of the final curriculum documents’ statements in order to incorporate them in their classroom practice” (Fernandez, Ritchie, & Barker, 2008, p. 198). Curriculum writers must remember that “Teachers were required to interpret the document, internalize it, and use it as a frame of reference” (Fernandez et al., p. 197). Unfortunately, not all people interpret curriculum the same way which leads to inconsistent implementation and fidelity issues. Hence, teachers should have a voice in creating the document that will dictate what and how they will be instructing their students. Teachers can write a curriculum using a common language that other teachers will be able to follow and implement with more consistency.

MacPhail (2007) wrote that if teachers are not involved in the creation of the curriculum, they will have less buy in and may harbor more negative association with the

curriculum. This becomes even more pointed when the “curriculum {is} constructed by agents and agencies external to the school context” (MacPhail, p. 43). Many educators believe that they are simply given the materials and told to implement the new curriculum without any substantial training or input but that they must deal with the consequences (Fernandez et al., 2008). Conversely, researchers observed that some teachers working under an exteriorly imposed curriculum may not mind that it “removed from their lives the demanding task of instructional planning and the need for professional growth” (Smagorinsky, Lakly, & Johnson, 2002, p. 210). However, many teachers found that an externally prescribed curriculum stifled their creativity (Smagorinsky et al., 2002). As expressed by Martel (2010), some studies have shown that “teachers changed very little about their actual classroom instruction as a result of state-mandated curriculum and testing” (p. 6). This indicated that some teachers were passively resisting the change, possibly due to their experiences with the influx and passing of prior educational fads (Flett & Wallace, 2005).

Even if teachers were in favor of a prescribed curriculum, there would still be problems related to implementation. Edwards (2009) wrote that teachers who were removed from the developmental phase of curriculum implementation would implement it differently, leading to decreased effectiveness and fidelity. Ede (2006) discussed the lack of rationality in removing teachers from curriculum development as they are the most knowledgeable individuals regarding the differentiated needs of the students.

Students come to school with baggage. This baggage comes in the form of: improper diets, eating disorders, not having any food in the house or being able to afford

food, social anxiety problems, negative personal experiences at home, abuse in all its forms, learning disorders, prior ineffective teachers, moving multiple times to many schools, and many other huge issues that impact their ability to focus and do well in school. Teachers must help students overcome and compensate for many of these issues; and to do so, they must adjust the curriculum accordingly (Ede, 2006). If the curriculum is being created and mandated from forces outside of the school, teachers cannot account for the diverse needs of different school and students, (Ediger, 2000). Also, many of the curriculums are paced, meaning, that all the students must maintain the same minimal pace of instruction (Scot et al., 2009; Smagorinsky et al., 2002). Anyone who has been in a classroom knows that students learn at different rates. Teachers must be able to adapt the curricula to fit the needs of the learners.

Another problem with a mandated curriculum is that it is typically modeled after a past successful movement that occurred in one school district or state (Flett & Wallace, 2005). “The factors leading to successful reform in one situation do not necessarily apply to another” (Flett & Wallace, 189). Subsequently, many curriculum designers assume that “learning outcomes will be the same despite different contexts” (Edwards, 2011, p. 40) and completely different geographic locations and cultural identities. Additionally, educators have seen many new ideas for curriculum and testing coming out of states such as California and specific schools in Chicago and New York City. Yet, many of the associated tests have not been pilot tested adequately and contain regional bias (Ediger, 2000). Also, the mandatory achievement levels of the tests are often arbitrarily or

politically set which can cause unnecessary stress and accountability questions (Ediger, 2000).

English (2010) commented on the limitations of curriculum, stating that even if teachers teach the prescribed curriculum with fidelity and find ways to make it meaningful to all their students, the curriculum still would be limited in scope.

Narrowing of the curriculum is standard practice for any school trying to raise their math and reading grades (Martell, 2010; Scot et al., 2009). While there are many problems with narrowing the curriculum, there have been documented benefits as well. “The curriculum is {becomes} aligned with the objectives of instruction for teaching together with the test items used to measure student achievement” (Ediger, 2000, p. 1).

Unfortunately, some educators have gotten too comfortable teaching what they want to teach instead of the benchmarks or curriculum that was assigned to their grade level.

Having the curriculum aligned with objectives and the assessment, minimizes the amount of time spent on non-curricular topics (Ediger, 2000). Also, there are higher expectations for student success which will benefit the higher performing students who can become neglected when educators focus on raising the performance of the lowest achievers (Ediger, 2000). Unfortunately, scripted lessons are very time consuming and can cause other untested subjects like science, social studies and the arts to be neglected (Ede, 2006). There are many students who struggle with reading and math. Those students typically perform better at the arts or science, and the loss of those other subjects will leave them further disenchanted with school (Butroyd & Somekh, 2001).

In summary, the No Child Left Behind (2001) act ushered in a new era of accountability for educators (Ede, 2006) in regard to curriculum. Having an intense focus on the curriculum reduced the amount of time teachers spent off topic. Increased expectations of high student achievement have led to high performing students being challenged whereas they once may have been neglected due to a disproportionate amount of time and energy being devoted to lower achieving students. Finally, there are benefits to teachers having to spend less time planning lessons (Ediger, 2000; Martell, 2010; Scot et al., 2009). Unfortunately, the curriculum can become so focused that non-tested subjects do not receive adequate attention (Butroyd & Somekh, 2001; Ede, 2006; English, 2010).

When the curriculum is written by people outside of the educational region, many problems can arise. First, the writers are disconnected from the teachers who will be deciphering and implementing the curriculum (Ede, 2006; Ediger, 2000; Edwards, 2009; Fernandez, et al., 2008, MacPhail, 2007). Second, the writers are disconnected from the cultural, geographic, and individual needs of the students (Ede, 2006; Ediger, 2000). Third, the curriculum is typically modeled after a past successful movement that occurred in one school district or state (Flett & Wallace, 2005). Fourth, the scripted curriculum comes with a pacing guide that all students are supposed to follow even though students do not learn at the same rate (Scot et al., 2009; Smagorinsky et al., 2002). Fifth, narrowing the curriculum to raise mathematics and reading grades often minimizes or eliminates science, social studies and the arts (Martell, 2010; Scot et al., 2009).

Lastly, teachers, the only individuals who can make modifications to meet the individual needs of the students, are excluded from the process and their expertise and creativity are subjugated (Edwards, 2009).

Summary

Literature has been reviewed in this chapter relative to: (a) retention in respect to federal and state mandates, (b) best practices for summer intervention programs, (c) differing views of curriculum alignment, and (d) opposing viewpoints of prescribed or mandated curricula. This review has dealt with some of the indirect and direct effects of high stakes testing and the accountability movement. One of the direct impacts is on teachers who have lost some ability to be creative in finding ways to meet their students at their current level and encourage them to achieve their highest potential. Researchers have also indicated that further study should be conducted regarding the impact increased accountability has on student performance. Much of the literature reviewed indicated that some positive relationships regarding urban minority students had developed from the initiatives, but the vast majority of literature indicated an overall negative relationship that ended with many states and school districts, e.g., Baltimore City Public Schools, and Miami-Dade County Public Schools, both of whom terminated their contracts with scripted curriculum contractors (Ede, 2006).

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

To date, the Large Urban School District (LUSD) has not explored whether the summer curriculum is aligned with the needs of its students based on Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test Reading deficiencies. The LUSD invested over \$64,000 for the 18 days of instruction of the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp (Orange County Public Schools budget, 2011-2012). If the curriculum is not tailored to address FCAT Reading deficiencies, the school district is missing an opportunity to increase the reading ability of its students. LUSD requested this study because of school district officials' desire to make the most of every instructional opportunity in this age of increased accountability, high stakes testing, and decreased educational funding. School district permission to conduct the study was received in July of 2012. The researcher's proposal was approved during the same month, and the study was approved by the University of Central Florida's Institutional Review Board in September of 2012. All approvals to conduct the research are contained in Appendix A.

The study was designed to determine if LUSD's Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp curriculum was aligned with the documented student need. Student need was identified by student performance on the LUSD county Pre-program Benchmark Examination. Also of interest was how the curriculum was developed or chosen.

This chapter contains a description of the methods and procedures used to conduct the study. The population and sample are described followed by an explanation of the

procedures and methodology used to answer the 14 research questions. The chapter contains the instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis used to answer Research Questions 1 and 2 related to the program's creation and those same elements used to answer Research Questions 3 through 14 to determine if the curriculum was aligned with student needs.

Selection of participants

Population

The population was the 665 students who attended the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp in a Large Urban School District (LUSD) in Central Florida. The LUSD contains 34 middle schools with 37,708 students. At the time of the study, the school district racial composition was: 62% White, 34% Hispanic, 30% Black, 4% Asian, 3% Multi-Cultural, 1% American Indian/Alaska Native.

Sample

Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) chart on sample sizes, the recommended sample size for a population of 700, was 248. However, due to the relatively small number of students who attended the 2012 LUSD's Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp and their subsequent data being available on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, all student data available were utilized. Due to the utilization of the entire data set, the results not only increased in accuracy but the research became more intuitive as to whether the program's curriculum was truly aligned to the student performance deficiencies.

Student demographic data were pulled from Summer Reading Camp population to determine if it was an accurate representation of the entire district population. The demographic data consisted of the following classifications: race, Socio-Economic Status determined by enrollment in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), English Language Learners (ELL), and Students with Disabilities (SD).

The entire 2012 Summer Reading Camp's population consisted of: 12% (79) White; 38% (254) Black; 3% (18) Asian; 1.5% (10) Multi-Cultural (defined as being two or more races); 0.45% (3) American Indian/Alaska Native; 0.3% (2) non-labeled; 45% (299) Hispanic; 90% (598) NSLP; 36% (238) ELL; and 31% (204) SD students. It is interesting to note that though the school district did not include Hispanic as a racial option, the Pre-program Benchmark examination data did. Due to this disparity, one is unable to determine if the summer camp population's racial demographic profile matches that of the district population.

Research Questions

1. In what processes did large urban school district officials engage to develop content for the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp?
2. Where did officials from a large urban school district draw the content utilized in the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp?
3. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Vocabulary benchmark

LA.8.1.6.8 “the student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings”?

4. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Vocabulary benchmark

LA.8.1.6.9 “the student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context”?

5. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark

LA.8.1.7.2 “the student will analyze the author’s purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning”?

6. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark

LA.8.1.7.3 “the student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details”?

7. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark

LA.8.1.7.4 “the student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text”?

8. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.5 "the student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text"?
9. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.7 "the student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems)"?
10. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.1.2 "The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction"?
11. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and

Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.1.7 “the student will locate and analyze an author’s use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader’s senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis”?

12. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.2.1 “the student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words)”?
13. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Informational Text and Research Process benchmark LA.8.6.1.1 “the student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader’s understanding”?
14. During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Informational Text and Research Process benchmark LA.8.6.2.2 “the student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety

of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources”?

Sources of Data

Interview Protocol

Research Questions 1 and 2 were utilized to determine the processes and procedures that went into determining how the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp curriculum was created or chosen. To answer the two questions, the researcher developed an interview protocol (Appendix B) composed of nine questions that addressed curriculum development and four that were used to investigate how materials were selected for the Summer Reading Camp. The questions in the interview were created utilizing the article, *Instructional Design and the Importance of Instructional Alignment* by Martin (2011). The researcher contacted the office of LUSD’s Senior Administrator of Curriculum Services and requested a list of those personnel who had been responsible for the selection of the Summer Reading Camp curriculum. Upon receipt of the list of responsible personnel, the researcher determined that of the three people on the committee, two had titles of middle school resource personnel and one was an administrator. To calibrate the instrument, the researcher conducted individual, face-to-face interviews with two school based middle school resource teachers and one school based middle school administrator.

Performance Data

Research Questions 3 through 14 sought to determine if the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp curriculum was aligned with the documented academic deficiencies of that specific population of students. The sources of data to answer these questions were the 2012 pre-program Summer Camp Benchmark scores along with the subsequent subcategory and benchmark scores for all students who were enrolled in the 2012 Summer Reading Program.

Eighth-grade Reading Summer Camp Curriculum

In order to determine curriculum alignment, the Eighth-grade Reading Summer Camp curriculum was analyzed. This was accomplished using a curriculum description and framework for teaching obtained through the LUSD Senior Director of Curriculum Services (Appendix C). Using the curriculum framework that was given, the curriculum was examined and the amount of time daily spent on each aspect of the benchmarks was determined.

Data Collection

To collect the qualitative data for this study, the researcher conducted individual, face-to-face interviews lasting from 30 minutes to one hour with each member of the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp Curriculum Development Committee. The Interview Protocol (Appendix B) was used to guide the interviews. During the

interviews, the researcher typed the interviewee's answers (verbatim) into an interview template using a laptop computer.

To collect the performance data required for this study, the researcher contacted the office of the Senior Director of Accountability, Research and Assessment for the Large Urban School District and requested the 2012 pre-program Summer Camp Benchmark scores, with the subsequent subcategory and benchmark scores for all students who are enrolled in the 2012 Summer Reading Program. . The researcher's original email (Appendix C) was forwarded from the Senior Administrator of Curriculum Services, to two instructional resource teachers who are on the Secondary Reading-District Literacy Team. One of the instructional resource teachers responded to the email and after several clarifications, sent the requested information to the researcher.

To request the necessary quantitative data to answer Research Questions 3-14, the researcher sent an email message to both the Senior Administrator of the Large Urban School District's Accountability and Assessment Department and the Senior Administrator of Curriculum Services. The request was for the results of the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp Pre-program Benchmark assessment. The researcher had requested that the results contain the individual student performance on each benchmark, each student's ESE/ELL/Economically Disadvantaged status, and each student's identification number. Much more information than had been requested was returned in the form of a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that contained individualized student information including: student name, student identification number, current grade level, school attending, race, ESE status, ELL status, Economically Disadvantaged status,

Reading FCAT score status, Math FCAT score status, Science FCAT score status, performance on each benchmark for the Pre-program Benchmark Assessment, and the performance on each benchmark for the Post-Program Benchmark Assessment.

Once received, the researcher consolidated and streamlined the data set to contain only the information that was pertinent to this study. The superfluous information regarding the Post-program Benchmark Assessment was securely warehoused for possible future use. The relevant information was placed into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (Appendix D).

Also of interest was the time that was allocated to teach individual benchmarks during the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp. The researcher contacted the Large Urban School District's Senior Director of Curriculum Services to obtain a copy of the Eighth-grade Summer Camp curriculum. The curriculum description contained a general framework for teaching but did not indicate time spent on each benchmark or what benchmark was taught. Available information about the curriculum has been included in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Interviews

Analysis of the data for Research Questions 1 and 2 was qualitative in nature. The interview transcripts were examined to determine what similarities or differences existed between the responses of each committee member. Similarities in the views were

used to identify the curriculum design, and ambiguities were examined to identify differences in personal beliefs of the interviewees. Once the curriculum design was identified, it was compared to the corresponding documented best practices from research of literature.

Analysis of Student Performance Data

Student performance data were derived from the Large Urban School District 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination. Data from LUSD's 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination were reviewed to ascertain within what reading subcategories and benchmarks individual students' academic deficiencies were found. The deficiency results were compared to the amount of time spent teaching each benchmark during curriculum of the eighth-grade Summer Reading Program, to determine if academic needs were being addressed.

The determining factor for enrollment in the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp program was student performance on the Reading portion of the 2012 FCAT 2.0 examination. The Reading FCAT 2.0 is criterion-referenced test used to measure student's ability to develop meaning from literary and informational texts. The reading skills measured fulfill Florida's mandated requirements of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards.

Professional writers were employed by the Florida Department of Education to design and write the examination. After the test was written and designed, a team composed of educators and curriculum experts reviewed and revised each question before

it appeared on the FCAT 2.0. Detailed information on the FCAT 2.0 is available via the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test website (Florida Department of Education, 2012).

LUSD mandated that any student who scored a Level 1 on the eighth-grade Reading portion of 2012 FCAT 2.0 must enroll in the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp or risk retention. Students who attended the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp and passed the post benchmark examination were promoted to the ninth grade. All the students enrolled in the 2012 LUSD Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp had achieved a Level 1 on the Reading portion of the 2012 FCAT 2.0. Because the district could not access the individual student benchmark deficiency data from the 2012 FCAT 2.0 examination, it was unable to examine individual student results; thus, LUSD administered a district-wide pre-Summer Camp benchmark examination to all students enrolled in the program. The subcategories for the pre-benchmark examination were the same as the 2012 Reading FCAT 2.0 exam: Vocabulary, Reading Application, Literary Analysis: Fiction and Nonfiction, and Informational Text and Research Process. There were only two benchmarks that were tested on the 2012 Reading FCAT 2.0 examination and not on the pre-Summer Camp benchmark examination. The two non-tested benchmarks were from the Vocabulary subsection. A complete list of the subcategory benchmarks for the FCAT 2.0 eighth-grade Reading examination as indicated by the Florida Department of Education (2012) website including the two non-tested Vocabulary benchmarks are displayed in Appendix E.

Using performance data, descriptive statistical information was located for each benchmark. The built-in descriptive statistical features of Microsoft Excel were utilized to determine the mean (average) sample scores for every individual benchmark that was tested. The mean scores for each benchmark were placed into a table to enable a more effortless comparison, and a percentage correct was calculated for the population on each benchmark. Any benchmark where the mean sample score was less than 50% was considered to be a knowledge void. The pre-program benchmark knowledge voids were then ranked by severity as evidenced by the performance percentage on each benchmark. The lower the sample performance percentage (0% being the lowest and 50% being the highest), the higher was the severity ranking. The most severe knowledge void was given the rank of 1; the second highest severity rank was 2, continuing until all benchmark knowledge voids were ranked.

The ranked benchmark knowledge voids for the examination were then compared to a Summer Camp curriculum item analysis to determine curriculum alignment. The 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp's curriculum was examined to determine how many minutes of instructional time were spent on each of the reading subcategory benchmarks. The percentage of the instructional time spent on each benchmark was calculated by dividing the total instructional time by the amount spent on each benchmark.

After the percentages of benchmark instructional times were tabulated, they were ranked. The benchmark with the highest percentage of devoted instructional time received a rank of 1, followed by the next highest percentage receiving a rank of 2,

continuing through all of the benchmarks. The ranking of benchmark instructional time was compared to the ranking of the 2012 LUSD pre-camp benchmark examination knowledge voids. For the 2012 LUSD eighth grade Summer Camp curriculum to have been aligned with the documented student knowledge voids on the 2012 pre-camp benchmark examination, the instructional benchmark time rankings should ideally have matched the benchmark knowledge void rankings. If the two rankings coincided, the curriculum was determined to be aligned to student need. If the two rankings differed, the curriculum was not aligned with the documented student need.

Summary

Chapter 3 reemphasized the purpose of the research and presented the research questions associated with it. The sample population for the study was composed of the entire population of eighth-grade students attending the Large Urban School District (LUSD) Summer Reading Program for 2012. Information for the 665 students was utilized to elicit the most accurate information available. Descriptive statistics were utilized to determine the mean sample knowledge voids for each benchmark on the 2012 LUSD pre-camp benchmark examination. The average sample student knowledge voids for each benchmark on the four reading subcategories (Vocabulary, Reading Application, Literary Analysis: Fiction and Nonfiction and Informational Text and Research Process) from the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp pre-program LUSD benchmark examination, were ranked and compared to the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp instructional time benchmark rankings to determine curriculum alignment.

CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

This research was initiated due to a request from the Large Urban School District to determine if their eighth-grade Summer Reading Program was meeting the needs of their students. The purpose of this study was achieved through examining qualitative data in the form of interviews and comparing quantitative data in the form of student performance on specific benchmarks to curriculum assigned instructional minutes. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis for the 14 research questions. The first two research questions were answered using the qualitative data that were gathered in face-to-face, individual interviews conducted by the researcher with the three members of the Summer Camp Curriculum Committee.

Research Questions 3-14 were answered utilizing the quantitative data analyzed using student performance scores on the pre-program Benchmark examination and the summer program curriculum framework data.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Research Question 1

In what processes did Large Urban School District (LUSD) officials engage to develop content for the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp?

The first research question was answered through examination of the responses to nine questions. The questions were posed to each of the three members of the LUSD

Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp Curriculum Development Committee in individual face-to-face interviews lasting from 30 to 60 minutes. These questions focused on the design of the program and how it was tailored and monitored to meet the needs of the students. Table 1 presents the complete responses (verbatim) to these questions. The following discussion provides a summary of the major understandings gleaned by the researcher from the first nine interview questions.

As seen in Table 1, the majority of answers to the first nine interview questions given by the three committee members contained the same basic information. Each interviewee, however, was able to expand on certain questions based on the individual's unique understanding or specialty.

All three LUSD Reading Summer Camp Curriculum Development Committee members agreed that the goal of the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp was to provide support for students who performed poorly on the FCAT, although they did differ on how that goal was determined. One committee member believed that the goal came from the superintendent's interpretation of a state goal. Another was unaware of where it originated, and the last stated that it was "designed to serve Level 1 [FCAT Reading result] students who might not be promoted to ninth grade if they didn't improve their skills" (Interviewee C).

By responding to the individual nine questions, the interviewees were able to explain to the researcher their perceptions of how the summer program was conducted. All had similar understandings in regard to how the program worked. The school district had purchased a scripted program that was not being used in any of the middle schools.

One committee member stated, “We also wanted to use different materials than what they used during the year because we didn’t want them saying that they already used it before” (Interviewee B). The programs that were considered had pieces that would benefit some of the perceived general weaknesses of the students.

Students’ weaknesses were identified based upon data from student achievement on different aspects of the Reading portion of the 2012 FCAT 2.0, benchmark examination results, and teacher suggestions. After the weaknesses were identified, students were sorted into predetermined curricula and classes. All interviewees stated that there was not adequate time and training to ensure that the students were placed with high performing teachers who had a documented strength in teaching to a particular weakness. Interviewee B stated, “Of course we can’t wait until the classroom is established, before creating the program so we go on what we know the general needs are.” Committee members indicated that Reading Summer Camp teachers did not have to attend a mandatory in-person training this past year and that even in years past, training opportunities were not adequate. Interviewee A summarized it well in the following statement, “We have such a minimal time to train teachers so we can’t train them what to teach and the strategies to use, so you have to rely upon what the school taught them and how to teach.”

As an alternative, teachers were required to complete online preparation with follow-up visits from coaches. It was mentioned by Interviewee B that there was some concern that preparation using online modules would not ensure that all teachers would gain the necessary preparation. To address this concern, the administrative team built in

a safeguard of having instructional coaches visit schools the first week of the camp to answer questions that teachers might have due to the lack of formal training beforehand.

The committee members who were interviewed afforded teachers much flexibility in determining how the preapproved content would be taught. Interviewee C stated, “The focus calendar would have been coming from a suggestion from us, but we wanted them to use the student data to make instruction decisions.” When asked about specific instructional strategies that were required, Interviewee A answered, “I don’t know that there are any specifically required. For us, summer reading camp is like every other day.”

Table 1

Interview Responses: Summer Reading Camp Program Design (N = 3)

#	Design Questions and Responses
1	<p>How were the goal/objectives of the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp determined?</p> <p>Summer reading camp was determined before I ever got there and the district decided upon it before I ever got there and so I don't know how they figured it to be 8th grade. I know we tried to change it based upon data but the area superintendents wouldn't. (Interviewee A)</p> <p>It originally was designed to serve level one students (based upon FCAT Reading performance) who might not be promoted to 9th grade if they didn't improve their skills. One goal to get them to score in the needs improvement or above range to move onto 9th grade. Another goal was to help the students improve their reading skills, have the teacher identify their individual skills in reading and improve upon them. (Interviewee B)</p> <p>Partially from the state and it isn't paid for from the state and it was determined by the 9th floor (referring to where the county Superintendent's office is located). It was mainly for retention or promotion. (Interviewee C)</p>
2	<p>Describe the goals of Summer Reading Camp.</p> <p>The goals are to bring those level 1 students to have significant growth in their reading and to expose as many students possible that are level ones. (Interviewee A)</p> <p>The original goal was set by the state and the county set them as to provide support for students who scored a level one. (Interviewee B)</p> <p>To remediate students who had scored level one that spring on the FCAT so they can be promoted to ninth grade. (Interviewee C)</p>
3	<p>Describe the instructional objectives.</p> <p>They are based upon the data from each individual school and student. We look at the whole student and then develop their grouping based upon fair, benchmark and FCAT. Look at all the data, disaggregate it and place them in the appropriate groupings. (Interviewee A)</p> <p>In reading we look at six components: comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, phonics, phonemic awareness and oral language. In any reading situation the goal is to determine which areas the student has needs in and to develop an instructional plan to develop their area of need and to enhance it. In secondary we start by checking on their</p>

comprehension, basically the FCAT does that for us. And students who get a level one become our summer camp students. The instruction plan is developed based upon the student's particular needs. (Interviewee B)

Instructionally they needed to diagnose deficiencies in the students and then work, not only on benchmark objective skills, but on foundation skills as to why the students were a weak reader. (Interviewee C)

- 4 Were the objectives sequenced as to what was important using students' performance weakness or expert opinion?

Both, because we use the students strengths and weakness. Looking at the data and what the teachers know about them and working with those teachers during the summer camp time and prior to. One of the things that was important to me and my colleagues was to have the district resource people available, especially during the first weeks, to go help the teachers who were having difficulty grouping, or actually teaching. We set that up from the beginning to give the teachers the support they needed and that was a big thing having the district reading coaches available. (Interviewee A)

The objectives were based upon the needs of the students. Of course we can't wait until the classroom is established, before creating the program so we go on what we know the general needs are. We wouldn't take a student who had deficiencies in fluency and only give them vocabulary. We know that if they have deficiency in fluency we wouldn't back them up to what they already know, we only do that to reinforce that. We start with comprehension and work down the continuum until we find areas of need. But we start with comprehension because if you already know how to comprehend what you read I am going to move onto what your needs are. (Interviewee B)

A little of both, I think that the focus calendar would have been coming from a suggestion from us, but we wanted them to use the student data to make instruction decisions. We didn't require them to die on that sword. (Interviewee C)

- 5 What activities were identified as part of the program?

In looking at the data we found most common deficiencies to be in Vocabulary, and then in selecting programs. We felt that if they had been in a program all year long and had not made significant gains then we didn't want to keep them in that same program. So we picked a program that no one had already used before and it had the appropriate scaffolding based upon the deficiencies. Because there is a wide range in the scores and a high level one is much different than a low level one. We really tried to look into the data and separate that out. Some schools had corrective reading and that was it. When I came in 7yrs ago, all the MS schools had corrective reading (SRA) it was mandated for intensive reading. It wasn't differentiated. (Interviewee A)

The students would have whole group instruction it could be many things depending upon the group, it could be a comprehensions strategy or a vocabulary. And then the students would participate in small group activities, then they would return to the whole group. They might work on the computer but we don't have a specific program that they use. Many schools will just use with what they have. They can do things like vocabulary websites, FCAT Explorer or some middle schools have Successmaker. We don't tell them they have to use a specific website but some schools find a time that they can use one they already use and like. When they go into small group activities one will work with the teacher, one group will do independent reading and another will do application of what they did in small group and/or a writing activity. (Interviewee B)

They were to spend part of the day working on either phonics and fluency or vocabulary and fluency depending upon what best fit the student and the rest of the day they spent on vocab and comprehension. They were to use a mixture of whole group and teacher lead instruction like an elementary reading block type of thing. (Interviewee C)

6 What assessments are being used during SRC?

We use the pre-benchmark assessment with Frank Gilbert. The schools can either use their spring benchmark or they can take the new benchmark assessment. If they didn't take it in the spring they took it the first day. We also use the assessments that came with the program. But the benchmark is used for our purposes. (Interviewee A)

We always encourage teachers to listen to the students read and that is ongoing during the camp. They take notes and do a running record during the camp. Some classes are small 18 and they have opportunities to listen to the students read. Then at the beginning of the program some students did/will take a summer pre-test benchmark examination. So, we do some training to help teachers access that quickly and access that information and some teachers will use the San Diego quick assessment, we ask them to administer that to separate those that need decoding instruction from those that don't. Teachers often do writing samples at the beginning because we know that reading and writing are intertwined. (Interviewee B)

Well, the FCAT score from that spring is the first placement and we asked teachers to administer San Diego quick to determine where they were in terms of readability. And then they did a pre and post benchmark examination and I would say during it would come from the assessments and materials and progress monitoring. (Interviewee C)

7 What instructional strategies are included and required?

I don't know that there are any specifically required. For us, summer reading camp is like every other day. We stress the points that whatever strategies they were using that they should keep using them. We have such a minimal time to train teachers so we can't train them what to teach and the strategies to use so you have to rely upon what the

school taught them and how to teach. (Interviewee A)

There is: direct instruction, whole group instruction that is encouraged to be explicit modeling or they can chose between modeling, shared reading , direct vocabulary instruction, then they go to a small group which they use the same type of strategies, they might use direct instruction, share reading, application of vocab exercises or writing about the reading. More might come out when talking about the materials, because they are tied to materials. (Interviewee B)

Teacher modeling, teacher led small group instruction, independent reading – accountable independent reading. Those were the main ones I can think of. (Interviewee C)

8 How is feedback pertaining to the program solicited?

We examine the benchmark exams to see how many students made significant gains. We look at attendance as well. (Interviewee A)

They have to do it. The teacher is required to send us electronically a list of the students and what their score was on the post test and if they were promoted to the next grade. Feedback of course is the post test, I don't think we did this last year but two years ago we sent out an automated survey to the teachers asking what was helpful and what strengths we saw and the training needs what suggestions they have for trainings and any other general suggests. Then we look at the county overall and how many students moved up a level and how many ended up in the needs improvement or better. It is a short amount of time (speaking about the length of the program) and some years it is 18 or 16 days and it was planned for 20days. This last year was not good but other years it was and you wonder how they did so well and I have to think it is the model and the intensive instruction and the fact that the teacher is engaged with the students. It is so effective overall, although not last year, that I think we should do that model overall (the county) and not just for summer camp. (Interviewee B)

The teachers did give feedback at the end of the summer and we had the data from the pre/post benchmark test which determined whether or not the student was promoted. I think there was a teacher survey at the end when they sent everything in at the end. (Interviewee C)

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Design Questions and Responses

9 How was the program assessed to determine improvement needs?

We look at the benchmark and the results of the actual program itself and the next year we look at what can we supplement based upon the needs of the students. It is important to note that for 8th grade summer reading camp the funding is less so it is kind of restrictive what we can purchase for the program. (Interviewee A)

Direct talking with teachers, the survey that we did with the teachers and the test results. (Interviewee B)

We mainly looked at the benchmark data and how many students participating were able to go on to high school but over the long haul, we looked at who was attending and we noticed that schools were not encouraging all level 1s to attend. Some students did not have to go b/c they were either ESE, but the purpose was twofold for remediation and to assist. We are still trying to encourage all students to attend that achieved a level one so they received that encouragement and enrichment. (Interviewee C)

The second part of the interviews with the three LUSD Reading Summer Camp Curriculum Development Committee members was focused on materials and activities associated with the summer program. Table 2 presents the complete responses (verbatim) to the four questions posed to delve into the processes that were used by officials in program development, i.e., arriving at the basic materials needed, support materials, practice activities, and types of technologies utilized. The following discussion provides a summary of the major understandings gleaned by the researcher from these questions.

The interviewees indicated that the prescriptive curriculum was purchased based upon a few factors including: reputation of the program, simple research, having specific components that would address vocabulary and fluency issues and price. Interviewees indicated that they collaborated with other department personnel, utilizing their personal

experiences with different programs to determine some academic options for a prescribed curriculum.

Interviewee C described the efforts to arrive at a curriculum:

Elementary did an exhausted study on what was available and strengths and weaknesses and cost. Independently I did a search on what would work and the format. Our summer coach in the reading camp had found great success with After the Bell before and she gave us a favorable recommendation and the search I did, it stood ahead of anything else.

Another of the committee members, Interviewee A, described the process, indicating that individual student achievement data was not used in determining program activities: “We looked at the achievement gaps (benchmarks, FCAT) and what the schools were already using that wasn’t working. We never looked at one single test or data to determine things in the program, except who should go.”

The committee also took into account the amount the significantly small amount of time that was available to affect growth for students: Interviewee B stated that while looking for an affordable option, “We also had to look at the extent of the time and it is hard to get much accomplished in 20 days.” Interviewee C noted the support that had been received from Just Read Florida. “[We did] get direction from Just read Florida and we have to write a reading plan which the state helps us write and every class needs some whole group, small group instruction and independent reading.” Ultimately, with direction from the state that included necessary options and input from many

stakeholders, committee members chose the option that had the most components they wanted for the right price.

Table 2

Interview Responses: Summer Reading Camp Program Materials (N = 3)

#	Program Materials Questions and Responses
1	<p>How were the basic materials for the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp identified?(After the Bell)</p> <p>We looked at the achievement gaps (benchmarks, FCAT) and what the schools were already using that wasn't working. We never looked at one single test or data to determine things in the program except who should go. (Interviewee A)</p> <p>... (name removed to maintain anonymity) has been a big part of this for many years but she worked with many people like ... (name removed to maintain anonymity) and we looked at the outcomes which were improvements in reading and the benchmarks. We also had to look at the extent of the time and it is hard to get much accomplished in 20 days. We also wanted to use different materials than what they used during the year b/c we didn't want them saying that they already used it before. So we looked for things to help them and most need phonics or vocab. So we looked for programs that were strong in that. Also, we had to consider the comprehension benchmarks b/c we were looking at the skills measured by FCAT which were mostly comprehension. (Interviewee B)</p> <p>With great care. Elementary did an exhausted study on what was available and strengths and weaknesses and cost. Independently I did a search on what would work and the format. Our summer coach in the reading camp had found great success with After the Bell before and she gave us a favorable recommendation and the search I did, it stood ahead of anything else. There were two or three other members who also looked at it. The reasons were the suitability to the program, it was somewhat affordable, and we get direction from Just read Florida and we have to write a reading plan which the state helps us write and every class needs some whole group, small group instruction and independent reading. After the Bell is suited to all those needs. (Interviewee C)</p>
2	<p>How were the support materials identified?</p> <p>Based upon their strengths and FCRR and based upon our own research. (Interviewee A)</p> <p>We know that After the Bell addresses many skills being comprehension, some vocabulary and some strategies that mainly comprehension strategies we know that kids have needs in comprehension and if they got a level one (on FCAT Reading) they definitely have vocabulary needs. And so we chose REV IT UP, rev stands for robust encounters with vocabulary. We chose it after looking at a number of vocabulary programs because it was written by two members high in the field Isabell Beck and the other one I only remember McKoen. Anyway, they are at the top of the field and it was</p>

researched based and consistent with the newest info on vocab that had been researched. I have never gotten a bad evaluation on that and people tried to take it out of our hands for the rest of the year. Everyone got both.

If students had decoding needs, they were instructed in REWARDS. That was selected because it is a way to improve and review phonics; it is designed for 20 days. It is direct instruction. It brings in prefixes and suffixes which we know builds students ability to read new multisyllabic words. What we find is a lot of kids know the sounds and can read shorter words but did not adapt that skill for longer words and REWARDS helps that. If they did not have decoding needs we suggested Vocabulary through Morphemes. This is a systematic way to instruct students mainly on prefixes and suffixes and their meanings. This helps them with their vocab of course and word recognition and being able to read new words. Both are designed to give students a system for reading new words. REWARDS is for students who score middle third grade skills or below. Morphemes are for 3.5 and above. Over the years we also used USA today and that was for real word application. (Interviewee B)

If you are considering the one that was Morphemes and REWARDS and a great Vocabulary program that everyone did. Those were meant to remediate those main two reasons why students are disfluent, lacking in phonics – REWARDS. The other is vocabulary and you can decode all day long but if it isn't in your vocabulary you hit a wall and so it impacts your comprehension and you need phonics. (Interviewee C)

3 How were practice activities identified for the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp?

We took what was a best practice rotation model as a foundation and adapted what we had based upon read 180. We adapted what materials we had and what was available to the school and came up with a rotation model. (Interviewee A)

All the materials have comprehensive instructional sequences that present new information and give students the opportunity to learn something new, work with that in practice. All of the programs are consistent with the Gradual Release Model. (Interviewee B)

All four of the programs are pretty explicit in terms of activities, the activities were not determined by us but by the program itself. Teachers had the most opportunity to change things up in her small group but the rest were pretty explicit. (Interviewee C)

4 What types of technologies were utilized?

We used whatever the school had b/c every school is different. So we didn't say you had to use a specific computer piece. (Interviewee A)

Some of it was used in a lot of different ways, some schools used Successmaker and incorporated that, some used FCAT explorer, some teachers had them do research, some

#

Program Materials Questions and Responses

had them do writing. Our view is the teacher knows best and overall our view is that students have access to technology throughout the year and it didn't bring them up but we wanted them interacting with the teacher with text. It is not to say that there isn't technology that would do a good job but we haven't included that yet in our summer camp program. (Interviewee B)

I don't know that there are any, rewards and some of the others can use Elmos or whatever those are called, and the white board and some other tech to deliver instruction but After the Bell is read 180 without the computer. So it utilizes another task card. (Interviewee C)

Additional Analyses

Upon completion of the interviews, interviewees were given an opportunity to supply additional details or comments. Table 3 provides additional comments made by the interviewees. The most poignant comments regarding the fidelity of program instruction were made by Interviewee A who discussed the fact that some of the teachers may not have been chosen because they were the most effective instructors; "For some teachers, they just want to teach for extra money and not for student performance, and not always the best teachers are selected and sometimes principals sneak in someone who hasn't had reading training."

Table 3

Additional Interviewee Comments

Is there anything else regarding the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp that you would like to share with me?

Interviewee A

I wanted to say that we did find every year that there were teachers that came to the training, explained how to use all the materials, how to adapt it and do the program. We still had teachers that were going to do their own thing, which has a significance of whether the program is effective. For some teachers, they just want to teach for extra money and not for student performance and not always the best teachers are selected and sometimes principals sneak in someone who hasn't had reading training. Unfortunately if you don't have someone overseeing that it will happen. That is a huge piece of inconsistency between areas.

One of the reasons why we wanted the areas superintendents, to look at having 6th and 7th reading camps, b/c the numbers went down drastically. It went from 2400-2700 to now 600-800 students. The kids don't care at the 8th grade. If you can do it at the end of 6th grade, parents still care and the kids think they still have a chance and care. We really wanted the younger students to get more student and parent buy in, the parents will make their kids go b/c they are more involved. Most middle schools pass the student on anyways.

(In reference to funding) Look at how many teachers we employ each year and not the funding b/c if you look at the cost and the amount of teachers and it is much more. They only allocate one teacher per school not the number of kids in it. We do a day one, a 2 day and 3 day count. One school scheduled 150 kids but only had 15 show.

Interviewee B

I wanted to say that we did find every year that there were teachers that came to the training, explained how to use all the materials, how to adapt it and do the program. We still had teachers that were going to do their own thing, which has a significance of whether the program is effective. For some teachers, they just want to teach for extra money and not for student performance and not always the best teachers are selected and sometimes principals sneak in someone who hasn't had reading training. Unfortunately if you don't have someone overseeing that it will happen. That is a huge piece of inconsistency between areas.

One of the reasons why we wanted the areas superintendents, to look at having 6th and 7th reading camps, b/c the numbers went down drastically. It went from 2400-2700 to now 600-800 students. The kids don't care at the 8th grade. If you can do it at the end of 6th grade, parents still care and the kids think they still have a chance and care. We really wanted the younger students to get more student and parent buy in, the parents will make their kids go b/c they are more involved. Most middle schools pass the student on anyways.

Is there anything else regarding the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp that you would like to share with me?

Interviewee B (continued)

(In reference to funding) Look at how many teachers we employ each year and not the funding b/c if you look at the cost and the amount of teachers and it is much more. They only allocate one teacher per school not the number of kids in it. We do a day one, a 2 day and 3 day count. One school scheduled 150 kids but only had 15 show.

One thing that I think is important is that we provided all the materials for the schools. Also, we provide training for the teachers. Every year prior to this last year, we had a face to face 5hr training and the (previous year's) surveys requested online opportunities so we developed online training models and teachers were very pleased with them. One question we have to ask is do students do better when we do face to face trainings (for the teachers)? Or, did that not have an impact? They had to do five modules and had to pass a test; so they did have some accountability. One thing you might want to have is the framework that we gave them for their instructional day that showed their rotation for the day. Also, we perform visits at the schools and the whole team divided up and every site had 1-3 visits. Especially important because of the not having face to face. The feedback we got back from teachers was that they liked the materials but there were too many of them. It was tough to get it all in. From our point of view it is better that way. Teachers would call us and tell us they couldn't get it in and we would help them through that. We were responsive for the independent needs of the teachers and students.

Interviewee C

Nothing was reported.

Research Question 2

Where did officials from a large urban school district draw the content utilized in the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp?

The second research question was answered through examination of the responses to the four questions posed regarding materials and activities in the face-to-face interviews that were completed with each member of the LUSD Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp Curriculum Development Committee. Interviewee A stated that they

“took what was a best practice rotation model as a foundation and adapted what we had based upon Read 180 (from Scholastic).” All the committee members stated that there were multiple aspects of the summer camp curriculum that utilized different programs; such as: After the Bell, REWARDS, Vocabulary through Morphemes, and REV IT UP.

Interviewee B explained the different purposes of the various programs:

We know that After the Bell (a companion to Read 180) addresses many skills being comprehension, some vocabulary and some strategies that mainly comprehension strategies we know that kids have needs in comprehension. REV IT UP, REV stands for Robust Encounters with Vocabulary. We chose it after looking at a number of vocabulary programs because it was written by two members high in the field Isabel Beck and the other one I only remember McKoen. Anyway, they are at the top of the field and it was researched based and consistent with the newest info on vocab that had been researched. What we find is a lot of kids know the sounds and can read shorter words but did not adapt that skill for longer words and REWARDS helps that. . . REWARDS is for students who score middle third grade skills or below. If they did not have decoding needs we suggested Vocabulary through Morphemes. This is a systematic way to instruct students mainly on prefixes and suffixes and their meanings. This helps them with their vocab of course and word recognition and being able to read new words... Morphemes are for 3.5 (grade level) and above.

Another member explained that “All four of the programs are pretty explicit in terms of activities. The activities were not determined by us but by the program itself.

Teachers had the most opportunity to change things up in [their] small group but the rest were pretty explicit” (Interviewee C).

Quantitative Data Analysis

Student performance data and the analysis of curriculum benchmarks were used to answer Research Questions 3-14. These data were derived from the Large Urban School District 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination. Data from LUSD’s 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination were reviewed to ascertain within what reading subcategories and benchmarks individual students’ academic deficiencies were found. The deficiency results were compared to the amount of time spent teaching each benchmark during the eighth-grade Summer Reading Program, to determine if academic needs were being addressed. The data analysis used to arrive at the percentages and rankings needed to further analyze the data for Research Questions 3-13 is presented in Tables 4-6 and discussed. Following this, Research Questions 3-14 are discussed separately based on the data presented in Tables 4 and 6.

The first essential calculation was the population’s mean percentage correct for each individual benchmark. This was determined utilizing Excel’s statistical features. The resulting mean percentages for each individual benchmark are shown in Table 4. The means ranged from a high of 62 to a low of 28.

Table 4

Reading Subcategory Results: Percentage Correct Responses on the 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination

Reading Subcategories of the 2012 Large Unit School District Pre-program Benchmark Examination	% Correct
Vocabulary	
LA.8.1.6.8 The student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.	62%
La.8.1.6.9 The student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context	42%
Reading Application	
LA.8.1.7.2 The student will analyze the author's purpose in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning	41%
LA.8.1.7.3 The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	36%
LA.8.1.7.4 The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	35%
LA.8.1.7.5 The student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning.	54%
LA. 8.1.7.7 The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems).	43%
Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction	
LA.8.2.1.2 The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action.	51%
LA.8.2.1.7 The student will locate and analyze an author's use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader's senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis.	43%
LA.8.2.2.1 The student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).	45%
Informational Text and Research Process	
LA.8.6.1.1 The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader's understanding.	45%
LA.8.6.2.2 The student will assess, organize, synthesize and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.	28%

Next, the benchmarks determined to be deficient were ranked from lowest to highest mean scores. Any average performance over 50% was ignored, as over 50% was not considered a documented deficiency. Three benchmarks received mean scores over the 50% cut-off and, therefore, were not included in Table 5. The benchmarks with documented deficiencies are displayed in rank order of lowest to highest percentage correct and are shown Table 5. There were nine benchmarks with student performance deficiencies ranging from 28% to 45%. Four of the nine benchmarks were related to the Reading Application subcategory. The single highest and lowest performance deficiencies were from the benchmarks associated with the Informational Text and Research Processes subcategory. Two of the nine benchmarks were from the Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction subcategory, and there was one Vocabulary benchmark with a student deficiency.

Table 5

Reading Subcategory Results: Ranked 2012 Pre-program Benchmarks With Deficiencies

Rank-ordered 2012 Pre-program Benchmarks With Deficiencies	% Correct
1. Informational Text and Research Process - LA.8.6.2.2 The student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources	28%
2. Reading Application - LA.8.1.7.4 The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	35%
3. Reading Application - LA.8.1.7.3 The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	36%
4. Reading Application - LA.8.1.7.2 The student will analyze the author's purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	41%
5. Vocabulary - LA.8.1.6.9 The student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.	42%
6. Reading Application - LA.8.1.7.7 The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems).	43%
6. Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction - LA.8.2.1.7 The student will locate and analyze an author's use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader's senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis.	43%
8. Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction - LA.8.2.2.1 The student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).	45%
8. Informational Text and Research Process - LA.8.6.1.1 The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader's understanding.	45%

In order to determine curriculum alignment, the curriculum was analyzed. Using the curriculum data that was obtained, the curriculum was examined and the amount of time daily spent on each aspect of the benchmarks was determined. It had initially been assumed by the researcher that the benchmarks taught would be identical to those tested, but this was not the case. A number of non-tested benchmarks were addressed in the instruction. Thus, Table 8 in Appendix F reflects the amount of time devoted on a daily basis to each of the tested and untested benchmarks which had documented deficiencies during different activities throughout each of the 18 days of the Summer Reading Camp. The time spent teaching specific benchmarks ranged from 1,045 minutes to 110 minutes. The top three usurpers of time were non-tested Vocabulary benchmarks.

With these data, the researcher was able to analyze the extent to which the assigned instructional time was aligned with the benchmarks. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 6 which displays the total minutes and percentage of instructional time in the program in rank order devoted to each tested and untested benchmark. For curriculum alignment to exist, the largest performance deficits should match the dominant quantity of instructional time spent on said benchmark. Only one of the top seven allocations of instructional time on specific benchmarks was utilized for a tested benchmark. Six of 13 benchmarks taught had performance data associated with them from the Pre-program Benchmark Examination.

Table 6

Total time and Percentages of Time Devoted to Tested and Untested 2012 Pre-program Benchmarks

Rank	Time Allocated to Tested and Nontested Benchmarks	Total Minutes	Percentage of time
<i>Vocabulary Benchmarks (Untested)</i>			
1	LA.8.1.6.3 The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.	1,045	23%
2	LA.8.1.6.7 The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words.	790	17%
3	LA.8.1.6.1 The student will use new vocabulary that is introduced and taught directly.	495	11%
<i>Reading Application Benchmark (Tested)</i>			
4	LA.8.1.7.5 The student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.	440	10%
<i>Fluency Benchmark (Untested)</i>			
5	LA.8.1.5.1 The student will adjust reading rate based on purpose, text difficulty, form, and style.	375	8%
<i>Vocabulary Benchmarks (Untested)</i>			
5	LA.8.1.6.5 The student will relate new vocabulary to familiar words.	375	8%
7	LA.8.1.6.10 The student will determine meanings of words, pronunciation, parts of speech, etymologies, and alternate word choices by using a dictionary, thesaurus, and digital tools.	330	7%

Rank	Time Allocated to Tested and Nontested Benchmarks	Total Minutes	Percentage of time
<i>Reading Application Benchmark (Tested)</i>			
8	LA.8.1.7.3 The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	220	5%
<i>Vocabulary Benchmarks (Untested)</i>			
9	LA.8.1.6.2 The student will listen to, read, and discuss familiar and conceptually challenging text.	120	3%
<i>Literary Analysis Fiction/Non-Fiction Benchmarks (Tested)</i>			
10	LA.8.2.1.2 The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction.	110	2%
10	LA.8.2.2.1 The student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).	110	2%
<i>Informational Text/Research Process Benchmark (Tested)</i>			
10	LA.8.6.2.2 The student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.	110	2%
<i>Reading Application Benchmark (Tested)</i>			
10	LA.8.1.7.4 The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	110	2%

Data for the following discussion of Research Questions 3-14 were derived from two sources. Table 4 displays the percentage of correct responses for the respective benchmarks discussed on the Pre-program Benchmark Examination, and Table 6 presents the rank order of benchmarks (tested and untested) by total instructional minutes and percentage of time devoted to each.

Research Question 3

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.8 "The student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings"?

Table 4 illustrates that students performed the highest on the 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.8 "the student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings," with a mean correct percentage of 62%. This score was above the 50% threshold determination of a documented performance deficiency.

Due to students achieving the highest performance on this benchmark, the program should spend the least amount of instructional time on this benchmark to be aligned with student need. Table 6 indicated that no instructional time was earmarked for this benchmark. Thus, the curriculum was considered to be aligned, and no knowledge void was seen to exist.

Research Question 4

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.9 "the student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context"?

Table 4 illustrates that students performed the fifth lowest on the 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.9 "the student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context" with a mean percentage correct of 42%. A mean score of 42% was below the 50% threshold determination of a documented performance deficiency.

For the program to be aligned, this would indicate that students should spend a relatively high amount (fifth highest) of instructional time on this benchmark. Table 6 indicated that no instructional time was earmarked to be devoted to this benchmark. Thus, the curriculum was determined to not be aligned to any extent with student need for benchmark LA.8.1.6.9.

Research Question 5

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.2 "the student will analyze the author's purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning"?

Table 4 illustrates that students performed the fourth lowest on the 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.2 "the student will analyze the author's purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning" with a mean percentage correct of 41%.

A mean score of 41% was below the 50% threshold determination of a documented performance deficiency. Due to students achieving the fourth lowest average performance on this benchmark, for the curriculum to be aligned with student need, the program should spend considerable (fourth highest) instructional time on this benchmark. Table 6 indicates that no instructional time was earmarked for this benchmark. Thus, the curriculum was determined to not be aligned, to any extent, with student need for benchmark LA.8.1.7.2.

Research Question 6

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.3 "the student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details"?

Table 4 illustrates that students performed on average the third lowest on the 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.3 "the student will determine the main idea or essential message in

grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details” with a mean percentage correct of 36%. This score was below the 50% threshold determination of a documented performance deficiency, thereby indicating such a deficiency.

Due to students achieving the third lowest average performance on this benchmark, for the curriculum to be aligned with student need, the program should spend a relatively high (third highest) amount of instructional time on this benchmark. Table 6 indicates that only 5% (the eighth highest amount) of instructional time was designed to be expended on benchmark LA.8.1.7.3. Therefore, the curriculum was determined to be only marginally aligned with this benchmark.

Research Question 7

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.4 “the student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text”?

Table 4 illustrates that students attained the second lowest percentage (35%) of correct responses on the 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.4 “the student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.”

A mean percentage correct of 35% was below the 50% threshold determination indicating a documented performance deficiency. Due to students achieving the second

lowest average performance on this benchmark, for the curriculum to be aligned with student need, the program should devote a substantial (second highest) amount of instructional time on this benchmark. Table 6 indicates that the least amount of instructional time (2%) was earmarked to be expended on benchmark LA.8.1.7.4. Due to the limited amount of time allotted to this benchmark, the curriculum was deemed to not be aligned with the documented student need.

Research Question 8

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.5 "the student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text"?

Table 4 illustrates that students performed on average second best on the 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.5 "the student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text" with a mean percentage correct of 54%.

A score of 54% was above the 50% threshold determination of a documented performance deficiency. Due to students achieving the second highest mean performance

on this benchmark, for the curriculum to be aligned with student need, the program should spend the second least amount of instructional time on this benchmark. Table 6 indicates that 10%, the fourth greatest quantity of instructional time, has been allocated to this benchmark. Having a disproportionate amount of the instructional time allocated to a benchmark that students performed above deficiency on, indicates that the curriculum is not aligned with the students' academic needs for benchmark LA.8.1.7.5.

Research Question 9

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.7 "the student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems)"?

Table 4 indicates that the students performed sixth worst on average (tied with benchmark LA.8.2.1.7) on the 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.7 "the student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems)" with a mean percentage correct of 43%.

A score of 43% was below the 50% threshold and determined to be a documented performance deficiency. Due to students achieving the sixth lowest average performance on this benchmark, for the curriculum to be aligned with student need, the program should spend the sixth most amount of instructional time on this benchmark. Table 6

indicates that no instructional time was allocated for instruction on benchmark LA.8.1.7.7. Thus, the curriculum was determined not be aligned, to any extent, with student need.

Research Question 10

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.1.2 "The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction"?

Table 4 illustrates that the students performed third best on average for the 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.1.2 "The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction" with a percentage correct of 51%.

A score of 51% was above the 50% threshold determination of a documented performance deficiency. Due to students achieving the third highest mean performance on this benchmark, for the curriculum to be aligned with student need the program should spend the third least amount of instructional time on this benchmark. Table 6 reveals that a very small amount (2%) of instructional time (and the same as allocated to two other

benchmarks) was devoted to teaching benchmark LA.8.2.1.2. This means that the curriculum was aligned with student need for this benchmark.

Research Question 11

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.1.7 "the student will locate and analyze an author's use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader's senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis"?

Table 4 reveals that students performed sixth worst on average (tied with benchmark LA.8.1.7.7) on the 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.1.7 "the student will locate and analyze an author's use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader's senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis" with a percentage correct of 43%.

A score of 43% was below the 50% threshold determination, thereby indicating a documented performance deficiency. Due to students achieving the sixth lowest average performance on this benchmark, for the curriculum to be aligned with student need, the program should spend the sixth highest amount of instructional time on this benchmark.

Table 6 indicates that no instructional time was allocated for benchmark LA.8.2.1.7. Poor performance on this portion of the 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination, necessitated that instructional time be expended on this benchmark. The curriculum was determined to not be aligned, to any extent, with student need in this regard.

Research Question 12

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.2.1 "the student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words)"?

Table 4 illustrates that students performed at a low ranking of eighth (tied with benchmark LA.8.6.1.1) on this benchmark. They achieved a mean percentage of correct responses of 45% on the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.2.1 "the student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words)."

A score of 45% was below the 50% threshold determination, thereby establishing a documented performance deficiency. Due to students achieving the eighth lowest average performance on this benchmark, for the curriculum to be aligned with student need the program should spend the eighth most amount of instructional time on this

benchmark. Table 6 indicates that this benchmark was tied for 10th place in the rankings with three other benchmarks in the percentage of time (2%) devoted to instruction. Although the ranking of deficiency (8) and instructional time spent on benchmark LA.8.2.2.1 (10) differed, they are relatively close and indicate that the curriculum is largely aligned with the demonstrated student need for instruction on benchmark LA.8.2.2.1.

Research Question 13

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Informational Text and Research Process benchmark LA.8.6.1.1 "the student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader's understanding"?

Table 4 illustrates that students performed eighth worst on average (tied with benchmark LA.8.2.2.1) with a mean percentage of correct responses of 45% on the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Informational Text and Research Process benchmark LA.8.6.1.1 "the student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader's understanding." A score of 45% was below the 50% threshold determination of a documented performance deficiency. Due to students achieving the eighth lowest average performance on this benchmark, for the curriculum to be aligned with student need, the program should spend an inverse amount, the eighth highest, amount of

instructional time on this benchmark. Table 6 reveals that no instructional time was allocated for instruction related to benchmark LA.8.6.1.1.

Lack of student comprehension of benchmark LA.8.6.1.1, indicated by poor performance on the 2012 Pre-program Benchmark Examination necessitated that instructional time be expended on this benchmark. Since no instructional time was allocated for benchmark LA.8.6.1.1, the curriculum was not considered to be aligned with the student need for this benchmark.

Research Question 14

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Informational Text and Research Process benchmark LA.8.6.2.2 "the student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources"?

Table 4 contains the analysis of data relative to the percentage of correct responses (28%) for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Informational Text and Research Process benchmark LA.8.6.2.2 "the student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources." This benchmark was the lowest ranked performer (tied with benchmark LA.8.2.2.1). The score of 28% was below the 50% threshold and

established the benchmark as a documented performance deficiency. Due to students achieving the lowest average performance on this benchmark, for the curriculum to be aligned with student need, the program should spend the highest amount of instructional time on this benchmark. Table 6 indicates, however, that the least amount of time (2%, tied with three other benchmarks) was allocated for the instruction of benchmark LA.8.6.2.2. The curriculum was not considered to be aligned with student with respect to this benchmark.

Summary

Examining the answers of the three interviewees provided insight into the first two research questions. The program was chosen after examining which pre-designed program fit the criteria that the curriculum committee had created. Some of the components of the criteria included: not currently being used by any school in the school district, reputation of the program, simple research, having specific components that would address vocabulary and fluency issues and the price of the program. Also, there were four components or aspects of the program that were purchased to fulfill the needs of the students: After the Bell, REWARDS, Vocabulary through Morphemes, and REV IT UP.

Informative results were exposed through the investigation of the Pre-program Benchmark Examination student performance deficiencies and through comparing those results to the amount of instructional time spent teaching specific benchmarks. Table 7 illustrates the misalignment of the Large Urban School District Eighth-grade Summer

Reading Camp curriculum with students' performance deficiencies. Of the nine benchmarks with documented student achievement deficiencies (mean score of less than 50%) on the Pre-program Benchmark Examination, only four were budgeted instructional time in the curriculum. Two of the student achievement benchmark deficiencies were ranked eighth and two were ranked tenth for instructional time allotted. The four instructed student achievement benchmark deficiencies received approximately 11% (550 min) of instructional time over the course of the summer program. Coincidentally, two of the five benchmarks on which students performed over 50% received approximately the same amount of instructional time as the four with noted deficiencies (12% or 550 min of the total instructional time). As shown in Table 7, the majority of instructional time, approximately 77% (3,530 min), was usurped by non-tested benchmarks. Due to the majority of instructional time being devoted to non-tested benchmarks, the curriculum was not found to be in alignment with the needs of students as documented by their performance deficiencies. Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the findings as well as implications and recommendations for the school district and recommendations for future research.

Table 7

Comparison of Benchmarks Taught and Tested

Instructional Time Ranking	Eighth-Grade Benchmarks	Total Minutes Taught	Percentage of Total Instructional time	Ranking of Benchmark Deficiency	Percentage Correct
Untested Vocabulary Benchmarks					
1	LA.8.1.6.3 The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.	1045	23	Non-Tested	NA
2	LA.8.1.6.7 The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words.	790	17	Non-Tested	NA
3	LA.8.1.6.1 The student will use new vocabulary that is introduced and taught directly.	495	11	Non-Tested	NA
Tested Reading Application Benchmark					
4	LA.8.1.7.5 The student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.	440	10	No Ranking, Above deficiency	54
Untested Fluency Benchmark					
5	LA.8.1.5.1 The student will adjust reading rate based on purpose, text difficulty, form, and style.	375	8	Non-Tested	NA

Instructional Time Ranking	Eighth-Grade Benchmarks	Total Minutes Taught	Percentage of Total Instructional time	Ranking of Benchmark Deficiency	Percentage Correct
Untested Vocabulary Benchmarks					
5	LA.8.1.6.5 The student will relate new vocabulary to familiar words.	375	8	Non-Tested	NA
7	LA.8.1.6.10 The student will determine meanings of words, pronunciation, parts of speech, etymologies, and alternate word choices by using a dictionary, thesaurus, and digital tools.	330	7	Non-Tested	NA
Tested Reading Application Benchmark					
8	Reading Application - LA.8.1.7.3 The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	220	5	3rd	36
Untested Vocabulary Benchmarks					
9	LA.8.1.6.2 The student will listen to, read, and discuss familiar and conceptually challenging text.	120	3%	Non-Tested	NA

Instructional Time Ranking	Eighth-Grade Benchmarks	Total Minutes Taught	Percentage of Total Instructional time	Ranking of Benchmark Deficiency	Percentage Correct
Tested Literary Analysis Fiction/Non-Fiction Benchmarks					
10	LA.8.2.1.2 The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction.	110	2	No Ranking, Above deficiency	51
10	LA.8.2.2.1 The student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).	110	2	8th (tied with LA.8.6.1.1)	45
Tested Informational Text/Research Process Benchmark					
10	LA.8.6.2.2 The student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.	110	2	1st (Largest Deficiency)	28
Tested Reading Application Benchmark					
10	LA.8.1.7.4 The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	110	2	2nd	35
Non-Taught but Tested Benchmarks with Deficiencies					
NA	Reading Application - LA.8.1.7.2 The student will analyze the author's purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	NA	NA	4th	41

Instructional Time Ranking	Eighth-Grade Benchmarks	Total Minutes Taught	Percentage of Total Instructional time	Ranking of Benchmark Deficiency	Percentage Correct
NA	Vocabulary - LA.8.1.6.9 The student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.	NA	NA	5th	42
NA	Reading Application - LA.8.1.7.7 The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems).	NA	NA	6th	43
NA	Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction - LA.8.2.1.7 The student will locate and analyze an author's use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader's senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis.	NA	NA	6th	43
NA	Informational Text and Research Process - LA.8.6.1.1 The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader's understanding.	NA	NA	8th	45
Non-Taught but Tested Benchmarks Above 50% Deficiency Threshold					
NA	Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction - LA.8.2.1.2 The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction.	NA	NA	NA	51

Instructional Time Ranking	Eighth-Grade Benchmarks	Total Minutes Taught	Percentage of Total Instructional time	Ranking of Benchmark Deficiency	Percentage Correct
NA	Reading Application - LA.8.1.7.5 The student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.	NA	NA	NA	54
NA	Vocabulary - LA.8.1.6.8 The student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.	NA	NA	NA	62

CHAPTER 5 RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of the study, discussion of the findings, conclusions, implications for the Large Urban School District (LUSD), and recommendations for further research. As a client based research study, the implications for the client are a synthesis of the research with details regarding program effectiveness. The recommendations for further research indicate subsequent research questions that the client may want to pursue as well as general concepts that may have external validity or interest for other districts that have summer camp programs.

Summary of the Study

This client- based research study was conducted to examine LUSD's Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp to determine if the curriculum was aligned with the students' needs. The students' needs were determined by the results of the pre-summer camp district benchmark examination. The entire population's pre-summer camp district benchmark examination results were analyzed for each individual benchmark that was tested. The mean student performance for each benchmark was determined. Those averages were ranked by severity of knowledge void or deficiency as indicated by a mean percentage of correct responses of less than 50%. The benchmark deficiency ranking was compared to the amount of instructional time spent teaching each benchmark during the 2012 LUSD's Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp. For the curriculum to be aligned

with the students' needs, the benchmark that had the largest deficiency should have the most instructional time spent upon it.

The 14 research questions for this study were researched in two different groups. Research Questions 1 and 2 were researched utilizing a 13-question interview focused on the processes used in the arriving at the content for the summer program and its development. Individual in-person interviews were conducted with three district personnel (one at the administrator level and two at the instructional coach level) who were on the district middle school summer read camp committee.

Research questions 3-14 were answered by comparing two sets of quantitative data. Student achievement scores from LUSD's pre summer camp benchmark assessment were examined to determine the average score on each individual benchmark. The average scores were then ranked by knowledge void, with the lowest average score indicating the highest knowledge void. Average scores below 50% were considered to be documented deficiencies or knowledge voids. The ranked benchmark knowledge voids were then compared to the second set of quantitative data that was studied.

The second set of data that was examined consisted of the quantity of instructional time spent teaching 11 benchmarks. The amount of time spent on each individual benchmark was calculated and subsequently ranked by magnitude. The benchmark that comprised the most instructional time was assigned a rank of one and each less significant amount of time was assigned the next higher rank. These rankings were then compared to the ranked knowledge voids. If the curriculum was aligned with the students' needs, the rankings were expected to match. For instance, the benchmark

that received the highest knowledge deficiency ranking (1) should have been the benchmark receiving the highest amount of instructional time and the highest ranking (1).

The summary and discussion which follows has been organized around the two distinct aspects of the study. In the summary and discussion of qualitative findings, Research Questions 1 and 2 are discussed in terms of the processes used to develop the summer program and its content. The summary and discussion of Research Questions 3-14 is focused on an interpretation of the results of the qualitative analysis for each benchmark investigated.

Summary and Discussion of the Qualitative Findings

Research Question 1

In what processes did Large Urban School District (LUSD) officials engage to develop content for the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp?

This question was answered by examining all three interviewee's answers. All three of the interviewees stated at one point during their interview that the curriculum was based upon the needs of the students. Interviewee A, in particular, stated:

They (instructional outcomes) are based upon the data from each individual school and student. We look at the whole student and then develop their grouping based upon fair, benchmark and FCAT. Look at all the data, disaggregate it and place them in the appropriate groupings.

What Interviewee A was stating was that the students are put into different groups to receive varying aspects of the prepackaged program. The program itself was actually chosen based upon non student performance-related criteria. The conditions that determined what program was chosen were: the program must not be currently being used by any school in county, reputation of the program, simple internet research, having specific components that would address vocabulary and fluency issues and the price of the program.

The interviewees stated that they believed vocabulary and fluency components were essential criteria because of student need. In reviewing the literature on quality reading interventions, one finds that vocabulary and fluency instruction should play a role in reading intervention programs. The National Reading Panel (2000) reported that increasing reading comprehension involved vocabulary and text comprehension instruction. Long before the National Reading Panel made this observation, it was deemed necessary for students to have a large working vocabulary to successfully comprehend what they are reading (Davis, 1942; Whipple, 1925). Along with having a strong foundation in vocabulary, “Reading fluency is an important part of reading proficiency and reading a text fluently is critical for comprehending it” (Hudson et al., 2010, p. 484). In fact, Torgesen et al. (2013) stated, “Reading fluency is the dominant factor in explaining individual differences in performance on the FCAT in grade three, while differences among students in verbal knowledge/reasoning is clearly the most important factor in the tenth grade” (p. 1). Buck and Torgesen (2013) concurred in their statement that “Performance on brief oral reading fluency measures can quite accurately

predict whether or not a given students will attain a score at level 3 or above on the FCAT reading test” (p. 9). All of the aforementioned literature indicates that focusing on fluency and vocabulary builds the foundation for which reading comprehension is built.

It is perhaps due to the research and the interviewees’ belief that program need centered on vocabulary instruction that (a) 79% (3,585 minutes) of the summer program instructional time was dedicated to Vocabulary benchmarks and that (b) another major portion of instructional time (8% or 375 minutes) was allocated to teaching a single Fluency benchmark. The population of students performed poorest on the benchmark related to Informational Text and Research Processes with a mean percentage of correct responses of only 28%. The next three benchmarks on which students performed lowest related to Reading Application benchmarks. One Vocabulary benchmark was ranked as fifth in overall performance deficiencies, and one tested Vocabulary benchmark was determined to be above the 50% performance deficiency cut off. Although researchers have indicated that vocabulary instruction will have a positive impact on students’ reading proficiency and comprehension, perhaps it would have been in the students’ best interest to have the curriculum reinforce vocabulary instruction while teaching the overall concepts of information text and research processes, and reading application (Buck & Torgesen, 2013; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012; Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006; McMillan, 1995; National Reading Panel, 2000; Rush, 2004; Slavin et al., 2002; Torgesen et al., 2013).

Research Question 2

Where did officials from a large urban school district draw the content utilized in the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp?

In responding to this question, all of the committee members stated that there were aspects of the summer camp curriculum that utilized different programs, i.e., After the Bell, REWARDS, Vocabulary through Morphemes, and REV IT UP. Unfortunately, the way these different aspects were utilized did not coincide with the performance deficiencies of the students. All of these programs have a strong focus on vocabulary instruction. Vocabulary through Morphemes and Robust Encounters with Vocabulary (REV IT UP) deal specifically and solely, with vocabulary instruction. Although increasing students' vocabulary provides them with a foundation for reading comprehension and success, there are ways to integrate vocabulary instruction while teaching different concepts, such as that associated with the benchmark on which students performed poorest, Informational Text and Research Processes (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Summary and Discussion of the Quantitative Findings

Analysis of data for Research Questions 3-14 combined to determine whether the LUSD Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp's curriculum was aligned with students' needs. Revisiting the conceptual framework of Foertsch's (2003) reminds one that program curricula creators must "Make sure that the curriculum provides opportunities for students to meet all of the standards and make necessary adjustments in the

curriculum for unmet standards and for students who need more instructional support in meeting the learning standards” (p. 54). Hops (2009) wrote specifically to the creators of a summer school curriculum. He encouraged them to use an “outcome based approach (that) helps outline the ‘must’ versus ‘should’ components of the course” (p. 52). Foertsch (2003) and Hops (2009) stated clearly that although districts should use research based interventions, the interventions themselves should be influenced by students’ performance on the actual benchmarks. For the curriculum to be properly aligned, this research should have yielded positive results for Research Questions 3-11. It did not. There were only four research questions that received positive or slightly positive results, and three of those were a result of students scoring above proficiency level, thereby not requiring additional instruction on those specific benchmarks. In the following paragraphs, the findings for each research question are discussed individually in light of research-based best practices.

Research Question 3

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.8 “the student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings”?

The research showed that the population of students performed successfully (68%) on this benchmark on the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp pre-benchmark examination. As a result of the students’ demonstrated understanding of this benchmark,

it is somewhat appropriate that the summer camp curriculum allotted no instructional minutes for its instruction. Examining the item specifications of the 2012 Reading portion of the FCAT 2.0, reveals that Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.8 had the majority of the Vocabulary questions tested (4/7) (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012). The Florida Department of Education had deemed the benchmark to be of importance due to the large number of questions assigned to it. The school district should have afforded its students instructional time on this benchmark. Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.8 is tested on the eighth grade Summer Reading Camp Pre-program Benchmark Examination, indicating that the school district had determined that the ability to perform the academic tasks associated with it were worth knowing and testing. It was surprising, however, that the three Vocabulary benchmarks that received the most instructional time, were not tested on the benchmark examination, and only one was tested on the 2012 Reading portion of the FCAT 2.0 (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012).

For the purposes of this study, 50% was established as the cut-off mean score for determining whether a performance deficiency existed. Although 50% is the score that the state mandated students must achieve on particular examinations for good cause promotion to the next grade, 68% of students understanding the questions associated with Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.8 is insufficient if educators desire to ensure that all students receive a highly effective and rigorous education.

It is worth restating that Casserly et al. (2011) discovered the greatest indicator of a successful school district was when it was able to “articulate a clear direction and implement a seamless set of academic reforms that were focused, high quality and

defined by high expectations” (p. 52). When only 68% of students have demonstrated proficiency on a benchmark, it would be recommended that a highly effective school district question what can be taught differently to help students learn to their greatest potential.

Research Question 4

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the pre-program benchmark exam’s Florida Reading: Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.9 “the student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context”?

Students performed poorly (fifth ranking) on Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.9 for the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp pre-benchmark examination with only 42% of students answering questions correctly on this benchmark. However, no instructional time was allocated in the curriculum for this benchmark. The curriculum was not aligned with this documented student academic deficiency. The 2012 Reading portion of the FCAT 2.0 had one of seven Vocabulary questions associated with Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.9 (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012). If the Florida Department of Education and the Large Urban District deemed Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.9 important enough to test and the students have demonstrated a performance deficiency for the benchmark, the curriculum certainly should have had time allocated for its instruction. Foertsch (2003) suggested that curriculum creators “Make sure that the

curriculum provides opportunities for students to meet all of the standards and make necessary adjustments in the curriculum for unmet standards” (p. 54).

Research Question 5

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination’s Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.2 “the student will analyze the author’s purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning”?

The entire population of students taking the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp Pre-program Benchmark Examination had a mean performance of 41% for Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.2. The curriculum did not allot any time to the teaching of benchmark LA.8.1.7.2 and, therefore, was not aligned with the documented student performance need to be attentive to this benchmark. It is imperative that the curriculum address this performance deficiency because that specific benchmark is tested on the Reading portion of the FCAT 2.0 (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012). Ediger (2000) reminded readers that “The curriculum is (should be) aligned with the objectives of instruction for teaching together with the test items used to measure student achievement” (p. 1). If the curriculum is not aligned with the students’ performance on specific test items, it may waste valuable instructional time on items that the students already know, or not need as severely. The curriculum did allocate 17% (770 minutes) of its instructional time for alternate Reading Application benchmarks LA.8.1.7.5, LA.8.1.7.3

and LA.8.1.7.4 (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012). The other three benchmarks are all tested on the Reading portion of the FCAT 2.0 and all carried more weight, as they had more questions associated with them. However, the school district should have included those benchmarks on the eighth grade Summer Reading Camp Pre-program Benchmark Examination to examine if the population of students demonstrated performance deficiencies on them or not. Lack of performance deficiencies would indicate the students would be better served having more instructional time in other benchmark areas. If performance deficiencies were discovered, the curriculum could be aligned with need.

Research Question 6

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.3 "the student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details"?

The population of students taking the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp Pre-program Benchmark Examination exhibited the third lowest performance (36%) on benchmark LA.8.1.7.3. The curriculum, however, was allotted the eighth most amount of instructional time (5% or 220 minutes) on this benchmark. This indicated that the curriculum was only marginally aligned with student need and should have been allocated more instructional time to educating students on this benchmark. Also, this

specific benchmark should definitely have received more instructional time because it had the most FCAT 2.0 points (7 of 15 possible) associated with it for any Reading Application benchmark (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012). It had the same amount of questions associated with it as all the Vocabulary benchmarks combined; however, the Vocabulary benchmarks received 79% of the instructional minutes and benchmark LA.8.1.7.3 only received 5%.

Research Question 7

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.4 "the student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text"?

The population of students taking the 2012 eighth grade Summer Reading Camp Pre-program Benchmark Examination performed second lowest on average (35%) on the Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.4. However, the curriculum scheduled the least amount of instructional time (2% or 110 minutes) for it. The Summer Reading Camp curriculum was not aligned with the student performance needs, as evidenced by student performance on the pre-program summer benchmark examination. Benchmark LA.8.1.7.4 is tested on the FCAT 2.0 and should have received ample instructional time to ensure that the students fully understood cause and effect relationships in text (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012).

Research Question 8

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.5 "the student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text"?

The population of students who took the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp Pre-program Benchmark Examination performed above proficiency for the Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.5. Because students received their second highest benchmark performance (54%) on benchmark LA.8.1.7.5, the curriculum should not have apportioned much instructional time for this benchmark as it appeared to be aligned with student need. The curriculum contained the fourth greatest amount of time (10% or 440 minutes) for instruction on this benchmark. Benchmark LA.8.1.7.5 is tested on the FCAT and warrants certain instructional time be allocated for it. However, there are other benchmarks on which students exhibited lower rates of success that are tested with a higher percentage of points, thus necessitating more instruction. Martin (2006) and Casserly et al. (2011) indicated that curriculum should be aligned to student performance need.

Research Question 9

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.7 "the student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems)"?

The population of students who took the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp Pre-program Benchmark Examination performed below proficiency on Reading Application benchmark LA.8.1.7.7 with only 43% of students providing correct responses for this benchmark. The Summer Reading Camp curriculum, however, allotted no instructional time for the direct instruction of this benchmark. Thus, the curriculum was not aligned with the students' academic needs. Reading application benchmark LA.8.1.7.7 is important not only because it is a student performance deficiency. It has also been tested by at least two questions on the Reading portion of the eighth-grade 2012 FCAT 2.0 (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012). If the state and the school district both deem this topic important enough to be tested, the curriculum should have some time apportioned for its direct instruction.

Research Question 10

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.1.2 "The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction"?

The population of students who took the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp Pre-program Benchmark Examination performed below proficiency on Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.1.2, with only 43% of students responding correctly to items associated with the benchmark. The curriculum allotted no instructional time for the direct instruction of benchmark LA.8.2.1.2. Thus, the curriculum is not aligned with the students' academic needs. Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.1.2 had more questions associated with it (8) than all of the other benchmarks that are tested on the Reading portion of the eighth-grade FCAT 2.0 (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012). In fact, Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.1.2 had more questions associated with it on the Reading portion of the eighth-grade FCAT 2.0 than all of the Vocabulary benchmarks combined (7) (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012). Unfortunately, 81% of the instructional time was allocated to Vocabulary benchmarks, many of which did not have performance deficiencies nor had any data associated with them due to not being tested on the Pre-program Benchmark Examination.

Research Question 11

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.1.7 "the student will locate and analyze an author's use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader's senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis"?

The population of students taking the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp Pre-program Benchmark Examination had a mean percentage of correct responses of 43%; thus, a performance deficiency was indicated. Because no instructional time was budgeted in the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp curriculum for benchmark LA.8.2.1.7 instruction, the LUSD Reading Camp curriculum was determined to not be in alignment with respect to this performance indicators, nor was it aligned with the specific benchmarks tested on the Reading portion of the 2012 FCAT 2.0. The Reading portion of the 2012 FCAT 2.0 contained 2 of 45 questions specifically related to benchmark LA.8.2.1.7 (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012). Tested benchmarks are the ones that the Florida Department of Education deem imperative for students to understand.

Research Question 12

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.2.1 "the student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words)"?

The population of students who took the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp Pre-program Benchmark Examination performed with a mean percentage correct of 45%, below the 50% level of proficiency set for this research study, thereby indicating a performance deficiency, ranking eighth lowest of all the benchmarks in student performance. The 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp curriculum budgets 2% (110 minutes) of instructional time, tenth overall, allocated for the instructional of Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.2.1. This small allocation is appropriate due to the majority of students having more dire need of instruction on other benchmarks. Likewise, the allotment is suitable when the Reading portion of the 2012 FCAT 2.0 only had one question tied to Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.2.1 (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012).

Research Question 13

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Informational Text and Research Process benchmark LA.8.6.1.1 "the student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader's understanding"?

The population of students taking the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp Pre-program Benchmark Examination performed with a mean percentage correct of 45%, below the 50% level of proficiency set for this research study, thereby indicating a performance deficiency and a ranking of eighth lowest in student performance. The 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp curriculum, however, budgeted no instructional time for the instructional of Informational Text and Research Process benchmark LA.8.6.1.1. Given this level of performance, more instructional time should have been allotted to the benchmark. The lack of time devoted to this benchmark was also inappropriate when one considers that the Reading portion of the 2012 FCAT 2.0 had six items linked to Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction benchmark LA.8.2.2.1 (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012). This emphasis of six items is almost equal to that placed on the Vocabulary section (seven items). The Summer Reading Camp curriculum was determined not to be in alignment with student need related to Florida Department of Education benchmark LA.8.2.2.1.

Research Question 14

During the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp, to what extent does the curriculum align with the student knowledge voids for the Pre-program Benchmark Examination's Florida Reading: Informational Text and Research Process benchmark LA.8.6.2.2 "the student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources"?

The population of students taking the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp Pre-program Benchmark Examination exhibited their poorest level of performance on benchmark LA.8.6.2.2 with an average score of only 28%. It would appear that the 2012 Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp curriculum should have allocated the most instructional time for the teaching of this benchmark, but it did not. The curriculum had only 2% (110 minutes) of its total instructional time allocated for benchmark LA.8.6.2.2. The Informational Text and Research Process category of the Reading portion of the 2012 FCAT 2.0 had six of 12 items linked to benchmark LA.8.2.2.1 (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012). This is a large number of questions to be associated with a single benchmark when one considers that the entire Vocabulary category of the Reading portion of the 2012 FCAT 2.0 contains only seven items. The number of questions utilized by the FCAT indicates the emphasis and importance that the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) has placed on LA.8.2.2.1. Given this and the school district's emphasis by testing it on the Pre-program Benchmark Examination, it would appear to

warrant more instructional time. The curriculum was not aligned with student needs for instruction related to LA.8.2.2.1.

Conclusions

The 2012 LUSD eighth-Grade Summer Reading Camp curriculum was not aligned with student needs. Only seven of the 13 benchmarks that were taught were actually tested on the FCAT 2.0. Only six of the 13 benchmarks that were tested were taught, and only four of those six were benchmarks on which students performed below proficiency.

Implications for the School District

The results of this research indicated that the school district would be wise to reexamine the Eighth-grade Summer Reading Camp curriculum. The following specific implications and recommendations are offered to the school district for consideration in ensuring that the Summer Reading Camp curriculum is aligned with benchmarks and provides the most appropriate support to meet student needs.

Careful consideration should be given to the emphasis placed on benchmarks in the Summer Reading Camp curriculum. As a high performing school district, LUSD would be wise to focus its Summer Reading Camp curriculum on tested benchmarks to provide for a better indicator of student success on the FCAT 2.0. This could be accomplished by each benchmark having a corresponding number of questions to that of the FCAT 2.0. Hops (2009) reported that summer school curriculum should have an

“outcome based approach (that) helps outline the ‘must’ versus ‘should’ components of a course” (p. 52). In this case, the ‘must’ that should be taught refers to the standards on which students performance was weakest.

In planning the summer school curriculum, standards and benchmark examination results should drive instruction. Curriculum designers should ensure that the curriculum is aligned with student performance deficiencies, taking into account which benchmarks are tested, and placing more weight on the FCAT 2.0. Researchers have shown that “Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them” (Common Core State Standards Initiative). Instruction should be based upon standards.

As a first step, LUSD may wish to reexamine its benchmark examination. Much of the summer reading camp instructional time was usurped by benchmarks that were not tested on the FCAT and not assessed on the benchmark examination. As one example, it was found in this study that students were being tested on a Reading Application benchmark that had the least weight of the five that are tested on the Reading portion of the FCAT 2.0 (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012). If the LUSD is not testing the most important benchmarks, the benchmark results will not be a statistically reliable approximation of how students will perform on the FCAT 2.0. Also, without valid results to consider, the LUSD cannot properly plan the necessary interventions. Researchers have shown that when high performing schools and districts make any curriculum decisions, they always “began with the state benchmarks and standards” (Martin, 2006, p. 54) and planned backwards from there.

A number of imbalances were found in this research related to specific benchmarks.

1. The district afforded instructional time in the summer camp curriculum for seven non-tested vocabulary benchmarks, but they did not reserve any time for the Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.9, one of the main Vocabulary benchmarks tested on the eighth-grade Reading FCAT (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012).
2. There are two other main eighth-grade FCAT tested Vocabulary benchmarks, LA.8.1.6.3 and LA.8.1.6.8, that are tested on the eighth-grade Reading FCAT (FCAT Reading Content Focus, 2012). LA.8.1.6.3 was not, however, tested on the Pre-program Benchmark Examination but was assigned the most instructional time in the program (1,045 minutes). Adding Benchmark LA.8.1.6.3 to the Pre-program Benchmark Examination could yield information to document the need for this allocation of instructional time or whether it could be reallocated to another benchmark.
3. Although students displayed a modest understanding of Vocabulary benchmark LA.8.1.6.8 (68%), and therefore was not addressed in the Reading Summer Camp, it presents some interesting questions. It would be interesting to know when, in the year, this benchmark was taught. A larger question is related how much attention this benchmark (identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings) at 68% proficiency should or can be given during the instruction of other benchmarks.

Limitations of the Study

As with most research, one encounters limitations along the way. There were limitations associated with both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research.

All data to conduct the study were accessed within the Large Unit School District. Because of the nature of the Reading Summer Camp, some data related to the curriculum framework and benchmarks were not precise, and the researcher was called on to make judgments as to proficiency levels and estimates of time allocations.

Interviews that were conducted with the three members of the Summer Camp Curriculum Committee as part of the research were uneven in certain respects. Of the three interviewees, one had inadvertently acquired the interview questions before the interview. This led to a higher degree of preparedness and thoroughness in responding to the researcher's questions. Another of the interviewees was a replacement for an original committee member who had less knowledge of the committee's work than the other two individuals interviewed.

Recommendations for Future Research

It would be beneficial to most districts to identify the extent of specific benchmark knowledge retention in their students. To accomplish this task, a researcher could utilize the same procedural steps that this researcher employed in determining the ranked student performance deficiencies on a benchmark examination. Next, the researcher would compare those ranked performance deficiencies to the instructional calendar to see if the earliest taught benchmark corresponded with the largest student

performance deficiency. If retention is an identified problem, the district would have to conceive of ways to periodically review benchmarks throughout the year to combat retention loss. If retention is not an identified problem, the researcher could examine the ways that the district has taught and/or retaught the corresponding benchmarks.

Many, if not all, school districts have their own benchmark examinations. Districts use the results of these examinations to make pivotal instructional decisions, regarding (a) benchmarks that need to be retaught, (b) students that need specific interventions, and (c) categorizing students for possible retention. It would benefit most districts for a researcher to examine if, and to what extent, benchmark examinations are testing the identical benchmarks as the state examination. This examination will assist districts in ensuring that their assessments are aligned with the state examination. Also, it would be imperative that such a study examine the predictive measure that benchmark scores have on the actual FCAT performance.

Future research needs to be conducted examining the effect that benchmark testing has on curriculum decisions. It may be difficult for large districts to alter their curriculum based upon test results, but that is a best practice and the reason why students are tested (Casserly et al., 2011).

Future researchers and school district decision makers can follow the same format created and utilized by this researcher to determine curriculum alignment.

1. Retrieve the population of students' benchmark examination scores.
2. Disaggregate the data to the individual benchmark level.
3. Determine the mean population performance for each benchmark.

4. Rank the means by assigning the lowest mean the rank of 1, continuing until the highest mean has the highest numerical ranking.
5. Examine the curriculum, and determine how many minutes are devoted to each specific benchmark.
6. Rank the amount of time spent on each benchmark with the greatest quantity of time receiving the rank of 1 and continue until the benchmark with the least amount of instructional time has the highest numerical ranking.
7. Complete a table (such as Table 7) that aligns the ranking of the benchmark performance to that of the instructional minutes ranking.
8. Examine the state test item specifications, example:
<http://fcab.fldoe.org/fcab2/pdf/ReadingContentFocus2012.pdf>, to determine how many questions each benchmark received on the prior year examination to determine the weight that the state places upon individual benchmarks.
9. Rank the benchmarks by the number of questions, or weight, that was assigned to them for the last year's state test.
10. Add the ranking of benchmark weight to the table created.

APPENDIX A
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Submit this form and a copy of your proposal to: Accountability, Research, and Assessment P.O. Box 271 Orlando, FL 32802-0271	Orange County Public Schools RESEARCH REQUEST FORM RECEIVED JUL 09 2012	Your research proposal should include: Project Title; Purpose and Research Problem; Instruments; Procedures and Proposed Data Analysis	
Requester's Name: <u>Eric Sochacki</u> Date: <u>7/9/12</u>			
Address: Home <u>2155 Black Lake Blvd Winter Garden, FL 34787</u> Phone <u>407-319-7401</u>			
Business <u>675 Old Air Highway, Apopka, FL 32712</u> Phone <u>407-824-2200 ext 2225</u>			
Project Director or Advisor: <u>Dr. Barbara Murray</u> Phone <u>321-759-8212</u>			
Address: <u>University of Central FL College of Education, ED 2225</u>			
Degree Sought: (check one)	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctorate	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> None	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's	<input type="checkbox"/> Specialist	
Project Title: <u>Analysis of the 8th grade OCP's summer Reading Camp curriculum and student performance knowledge voids.</u>			
ESTIMATED INVOLVEMENT			
PERSONNEL/CENTERS	NUMBER	AMOUNT OF TIME (DAYS, HOURS, ETC.)	SPECIFY/DESCRIBE GRADES, SCHOOLS, SPECIAL NEEDS, ETC.
Students	0	0	Date and curriculum
Teachers	0	0	Information is all that is needed.
Administrators	0	0	
Schools/Centers	0	0	
Others (specify)	0	1	Curriculum files
Specify possible benefits to students/school system: <u>more effective and meaningful curriculum development and align it with documented student needs.</u>			
ASSURANCE			
Using the proposed procedures and instrument, I hereby agree to conduct research in accordance with the policies of the Orange County Public Schools. Deviations from the approved procedures shall be cleared through the Senior Director of Accountability, Research, and Assessment. Reports and materials shall be supplied as specified.			
Requester's Signature: <u>Eric Sochacki</u>			
Approval Granted:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Date: <u>7-9-12</u>
Signature of the Senior Director for Accountability, Research, and Assessment: <u>Victoria Centurion</u>			

NOTE TO REQUESTER: When seeking approval at the school level, a copy of this form, signed by the Senior Director, Accountability, Research, and Assessment, should be shown to the school principal.

Reference School Board Policy GCS, p. 249

7/1/2012

FORM ID #GB0103/23-1/1FY REV 1/04

University of Central Florida

College of Education

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL APPROVAL

Permission to Continue with Dissertation

Date 7/12/2012

Name Eric Sochocki

PID: e2186242

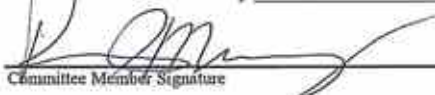
College of Education Code

Program Major Executive Educational Leadership Code 827 829 Degree EdD

Working Title of Dissertation AN ANALYSIS OF THE 8TH GRADE ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SUMMER READING CAMP CURRICULUM AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE VOIDS.

This student is hereby certified as having met all requirements to continue dissertation research.

Date admitted to Candidacy 7/12/2012


Committee Member Signature


Committee Member Signature


Committee Member Signature


Committee Member Signature (Outside COE)


Dissertation Advisor Signature

Filed in Graduate Admissions Office and Doctoral Studies Office


Doctoral Program Coordinator Signature

7-12-12
Date



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: Eric Sochocki

Date: September 21, 2012

Dear Researcher:

On 9/21/2012, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Exempt Determination
Project Title:	AN ANALYSIS OF A LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT'S 8TH GRADE SCHOOL SUMMER READING CAMP CURRICULUM AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE VOIDS
Investigator:	Eric Sochocki
IRB Number:	SBE-12-08686
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 09/21/2012 03:39:42 PM EDT

IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Design Questions

1. How were the goal/objectives of SRC determined?
2. Describe the goals of Summer Reading Camp.
3. Describe the instructional objectives.
4. Were the objectives sequenced as to what was important using students' performance weakness or expert opinion?
5. What activities were identified as part of the program?
6. What assessments are being used during SRC?
7. What instructional strategies are included and required?
8. How is feedback pertaining to the program solicited?
9. How was the program assessed to determine improvement needs?

Material Questions

1. How were the basic materials needed identified? (i.e. After the Bell)
2. How were the support materials identified? (ReadingA-Z.com)
3. How were practice activities identified?
4. What types of technologies were utilized?

APPENDIX C
CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING DATA/CURRICULUM

From: Kempinger, Daniel
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 10:40 AM
To: Sochocki, Eric
Subject: RE: sorry, one more request

Eric,

I hope this helps. These were the expectations. We didn't have district support in place throughout the summer, and I'm not sure how accountable the teachers were for the lessons.

Here is a website to identify the benchmarks in case you need it:
<http://etc.usf.edu/flstandards/la/new-pdfs/points-8.pdf>

Let me know if this needs any explaining.

Daniel Kempinger, Ed. S.
Instructional Resource Teacher
Secondary Reading-District Literacy Team
407.317.3200 X2864
Orange County Public Schools

From: Sochocki, Eric
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2013 10:20 AM
To: Kempinger, Daniel
Subject: RE: sorry, one more request

That would be awesome! Thanks again.

From: Kempinger, Daniel
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2013 10:07 AM
To: Sochocki, Eric
Subject: Re: sorry, one more request

Eric. I will send you the benchmarks covered within the units that the teachers were supposed to cover. I will be back in the office tomorrow if that is okay.

Daniel Kempinger
Instructional Resource Teacher
Secondary Reading-District Literacy Team
445 West Amelia Street
Orlando, FL 32801
407-317-3200 X2864
Orange County Public Schools

On Feb 11, 2013, at 9:47 AM, "Sochocki, Eric" <eric.sochocki@ocps.net> wrote:

Good morning,

I hope your week is starting off on a good note and that this email doesn't derail that. Mrs. Knight said that you may be able to assist me again with information regarding the 8th grade Summer Reading Camp.

I am still bragging about you to my fellow researchers about how you were so quick in getting me the student achievement benchmark data (they weren't so lucky). Now, I need to compare those knowledge voids with the amount of time spent teaching the specific benchmarks.

What I need is a daily/weekly schedule that indicates how much time was spent teaching specific benchmarks. I have the general schedule from the website that gives this general information:

Secondary Intensive Reading Block
Reading Course Code Number 100010

Time and Materials	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Method	Reading Components
15 minutes After the Bell	Class opening & Language Development *Explicit and scaffolded modeling of strategies in instructional level text.				Whole Group	* Comprehension * Vocabulary * Fluency * Word Analysis
20 minutes After the Bell	Reading Comprehension				Whole Group	* Vocabulary * Comprehension
60 minutes Differentiated Instruction After the Bell	Differentiated instruction *Teacher Led Reading Instruction *Independent Reading *Independent Skills Practice				Small Groups determined by student data	* Comprehension * Vocabulary * Fluency * Phonics * Phonemic Awareness *Oral Language
15 minutes After the Bell	Writing Instruction				Whole Group	* Comprehension * Vocabulary * Fluency
20 minutes	BREAK				Whole Group	
30 minutes REV it Up!	Monday Read Aloud, Intro Voc (Steps 1,2,3)	Tuesday Use Vocab (Steps 4,5,6)	Wednesday Rev up Vocab & Assess (Steps 7-10)	Thursday Wrap Up or begin new lesson; continue rotation	Whole Group	* Vocabulary/Fluency
10 minutes	Teacher determined activities (This time is built in for teacher directed work based on student need.) This also might be a good time for the After the Bell 'Read Aloud'.				Small/Whole Group	
60 minutes REWARDS, Vocabulary through Morphemes	Each day: Two groups of 25 minutes each. Teacher first works with students who have placed into REWARDS while other students practice or read independently. Then, teacher instructs students who did not place into REWARDS using Vocabulary through Morphemes while students who have placed into REWARDS practice or read independently.				Small Groups determined by student data	* Word Analysis * Fluency * Vocabulary * Comprehension
10 minutes	Wrap Up Activities				Whole Group	

Sample Schedule: **8:45 – 10:35** **110-minute Intensive Reading Block (After the Bell)**
 10:35 – 10:55 **BREAK**
 10:55 – 12:45 **110-minute Intensive Reading Block**

Although variations occur due to student needs, here are general expectations for completion of materials:

		Students
After the Bell	3 units. Units 1, 3, and 5 are recommended	All
REV it Up!	Choose 4 to 5 lessons that will be most engaging for your students. Each lesson moves through a 10-step process. Complete at least 4 lessons.	All
Vocabulary through Morphemes	Part 2, Prefixes: Lessons 1-16 (more if time allows)	Students who score 5.0 and above and do not need REWARDS.
REWARDS	Lessons 1-15 (20 lessons total; it may be possible to complete)	Students who score below 5.0 (San Diego Quick, may be used) and demonstrate need for advanced decoding skills.
Independent Reading	After the Bell classroom libraries and supplemental libraries	All

The problem is, this is so general ex: vocabulary (which of the two vocabulary benchmarks are taught?). It doesn't even have specific lessons with their associated benchmarks. I know that my counterparts that are doing the elementary version of my research have been able to procure such a document.

It would make my research much more meaningful if such a document existed for the 8th grade summer reading camp. Attached is the spreadsheet that I need to fill out to make my research work for OCPS's needs. I am just showing it to you so you understand what I am trying to do with it.

Please let me know if there is any additional information/clarification that you require. I am sorry that this ended on your plate, as you have already helped me more than you know.

Sincerely,

Eric Sochocki

Assistant Principal
OCASA Board Member
Apopka Elementary School
407-884-2200 ext 3022225
<image003.png>

Adapt, improvise, overcome!

From: Knight, Carmen
Sent: Saturday, February 09, 2013 6:13 PM
To: Sochocki, Eric
Subject: Fwd: sorry, one more request

Daniel Kempinger will be contacting you with the information you need.

I hope things are going well for you.

Sent from my iPad Diane Knight

From: Sochocki, Eric
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2013 2:30 PM
To: Knight, Carmen
Subject: sorry, one more request

Good afternoon Mrs. Knight,

I appreciate all the help that you and Ms. Young have given me with the 8th grade summer reading camp project. I have one last (hopefully) request though, is there a daily schedule that includes the benchmarks for the program? I ask this because I need to match up the amount of time spent teaching each benchmark to the average student performance on the pre camp benchmark exam. My elementary counterparts were able to procure one for the elementary reading camp from Clair Hoey.

I realize that this is not your responsibility anymore, but figured you would know if one existed. All I have now is a very basic one that says, 15 min after the bell, 20 min after the bell... but doesn't give the actual lesson number or benchmark identifying details.

Thanks for any direction you can afford me.

Sincerely,

Eric Sochocki

<instructional time.xlsx>

The information contained in this e-mail message is intended solely for the recipient(s) and may contain privileged information. Tampering with or altering the contents of this message is prohibited. This information is the same as any written document and may be subject to all rules governing public information according to Florida Statutes. Any message that falls under Chapter 119 shall not be altered in a manner that misrepresents the activities of Orange County Public Schools.

[References: Florida State Constitution I.24, Florida State Statutes Chapter 119, and OCPS Management Directive A-9.] If you have received this message in error, or are not the named recipient notify the sender and delete this message from your computer.

Program	Units	Benchmarks	Length
R.E.V. it up!	Teacher's Choice (delivered to non-disfluent students)	LA.8.1.6.1; LA.8.1.6.2; LA.8.1.6.3;	30' per day total 12 instructional days, each benchmark addressed 4Xs throughout summer
Vocabulary through Morphemes	Part 2-Prefixes	LA.8.1.6.7	16 days X 25 minutes
REWARDS	Lesson 1(Disfluent students only)	LA.8.1.6.1; LA.8.1.6.3; LA.8.1.6.5; LA.8.1.5.1	15 Days X 25 minutes
<p>This program is designed to help disfluent students learn strategies to decode multisyllabic words. I don't feel good saying that comprehension skills were taught, even though they get assessed on comprehension at the end of the passage. Also, there is a writing component that I don't think the teachers utilize, so I don't feel comfortable adding those.</p>			
After the Bell	1	LA.8.1.7.3; LA.8.1.6.3; LA.8.1.7.5; LA.8.1.7.4; LA.8.2.2.1; LA.8.1.6.10; LA.8.1.6.7	A unit should take 5 days, and each benchmark is addressed for one of those days. Only exception was 1.6.3 was taught 2 days.
After the Bell	3	LA.8.1.6.3; LA.8.2.1.2; LA.8.1.6.7; LA.8.1.7.3; LA.8.1.6.10	A unit should take 5 days, and each benchmark is addressed for one of those days. Only exception was 1.6.3 was taught 2 days.
After the Bell	5	LA.8.1.6.3 X2 days; LA.8.1.7.5 X3 days; LA.8.1.6.7X2Days; LA.8.6.2.2; LA.8.1.6.10	

APPENDIX D
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC AND PERFORMANCE DATA

Student ID (District)	
Nationality	
Gender	
Economically Disadvantaged	
ESE / Students with Disabilities (SWD)	
Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	
% Correct	Overall (24 pts max)
Raw Score	LA.8.1–LA.8.1.6: Benchmark LA.8.1.6.8
% Correct	
Raw Score	LA.8.1–LA.8.1.6: Benchmark LA.8.1.6.9
% Correct	
Raw Score	LA.8.1–LA.8.1.7: Benchmark LA.8.1.7.2
% Correct	
Raw Score	LA.8.1–LA.8.1.7: Benchmark LA.8.1.7.3
% Correct	
Raw Score	LA.8.1–LA.8.1.7: Benchmark LA.8.1.7.4
% Correct	
Raw Score	LA.8.1–LA.8.1.7: Benchmark LA.8.1.7.5
% Correct	
Raw Score	LA.8.1–LA.8.1.7: Benchmark LA.8.1.7.7
% Correct	
Raw Score	LA.8.2–LA.8.2.1: Benchmark LA.8.2.1.2
% Correct	
Raw Score	LA.8.2–LA.8.2.1: Benchmark LA.8.2.1.7
% Correct	
Raw Score	LA.8.2–LA.8.2.2: Benchmark LA.8.2.2.1
% Correct	
Raw Score	LA.8.6–LA.8.6.1: Benchmark LA.8.6.1.1
% Correct	
Raw Score	LA.8.6–LA.8.6.2: Benchmark LA.8.6.2.2
% Correct	

APPENDIX E
SUBCATEGORY BENCHMARKS FOR
THE FCAT 2.0 EIGHTH-GRADE READING EXAMINATION

SUBCATEGORY BENCHMARKS
FOR THE FCAT 2.0 EIGHTH-GRADE READING EXAMINATION AS INDICATED
BY THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WEBSITE (2012).

The Vocabulary subcategory of the 2012 FCAT 2.0 eighth-grade Reading examination contained the following benchmarks:

LA.8.1.6.3 The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words (*not tested on the pre-Summer Camp benchmark exam*).

LA.8.1.6.7 The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words (*not tested on the pre-Summer Camp benchmark exam*).

LA.8.1.6.8 The student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.

LA.8.1.6.9 The student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context. (p. 94)

The Reading Application subcategory of the 2012 FCAT 2.0 eighth-grade Reading examination contained the following benchmarks:

LA.8.1.7.2 The student will analyze the author's purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.

LA.8.1.7.3 The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.

LA.8.1.7.4 The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.

LA.8.1.7.5 The student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.

LA.8.1.7.7 The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems). (p. 98)

The Literary Analysis, Fiction and Nonfiction subcategory of the 2012 FCAT 2.0 eighth- grade Reading examination contained the following benchmarks:

LA.8.2.1.2 The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction.

LA.8.2.1.7 The student will locate and analyze an author's use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader's senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis.

LA.8.2.2.1 The student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words). (p. 110)

The Informational Text and Research Process subcategory of the 2012 FCAT 2.0 eighth-grade Reading examination contained the following benchmarks:

LA.8.6.1.1 The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader's understanding.

LA.8.6.2.2 The student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources. (p. 117)

APPENDIX F
INSTRUCTIONAL TIME DEVOTED TO BENCHMARKS

Table 8

Daily Allocation of Instructional Minutes to Benchmarks

Benchmarks	Daily Allocation of Minutes																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Total	
Vocabulary Benchmarks																				
LA.8.1.6.8 The student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.																				0
LA.8.1.6.9 The student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.																				0
Reading Application Benchmarks																				
LA.8.1.7.2 The student will analyze the author’s purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.																				0
LA.8.1.7.3 The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	110 (U1)										110 (U3)									220
LA.8.1.7.4 The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.				110 (U1)																110
LA.8.1.7.5 The student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with			110 (U1)										110 (U5)	110 (U5)	110 (U5)					440

Benchmarks	Daily Allocation of Minutes																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Total	
subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.																				
LA.8.1.7.7 The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems).																				0
Literary Analysis Fiction/Non-Fiction Benchmarks																				
LA.8.2.1.2 The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction.									110 (U3)											110
LA.8.2.1.7 The student will locate and analyze an author's use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader's senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis.																				0
LA.8.2.2.1 The student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices,									110 (U3)											110

Benchmarks	Daily Allocation of Minutes																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Total	
key/guide words).																				
Informational Text/Research Process Benchmarks																				
LA.8.6.1.1 The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader's understanding.																				0
LA.8.6.2.2 The student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.																		110 (U5)		110
Benchmarks Not Tested but Taught																				
LA.8.1.5.1 The student will adjust reading rate based on purpose, text difficulty, form, and style.				25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	375
LA.8.1.6.1 The student will use new vocabulary that is introduced and taught directly.	30	30	30	30 + 25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	495
LA.8.1.6.2 The student will listen to, read, and discuss familiar and conceptually challenging text.					30	30	30	30												120
		110 (U1)	110 (U1)	25	25	25	25	25 +	25 +	25 +	25 +	25 +	25 +	25 +	25 +	25	25	25	25	1045

Benchmarks	Daily Allocation of Minutes																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Total	
LA.8.1.6.3 The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.								110 (U3)	30	30	30	30	110 (U5)	110 (U5)						
LA.8.1.6.5 The student will relate new vocabulary to familiar words.				25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	375
LA.8.1.6.7 The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words.	25	25	25	25	25	25	25 + 110 (U1)	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25 + 110 (U5)	25 + 110 (U5)			790
LA.8.1.6.10 The student will determine meanings of words, pronunciation, parts of speech, etymologies, and alternate word choices by using a dictionary, thesaurus, and digital tools.						110 (U1)							110 (U3)						110 (U5)	330

Note. 30min = REV it UP, 25min = Vocabulary through Morphemes, 25min = REWARDS, 110min = After the Bell (Unit 1, 3 or 5)

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