

EFFECTIVENESS OF A SUMMER SCHOOL LITERACY
PROGRAM ON THE LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT OF
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

JOSEPH R. HOUSTON

**EFFECTIVENESS OF A SUMMER SCHOOL LITERACY PROGRAM ON THE
LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

A Field Study

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School

Austin Peay State University

by

Joseph R. Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST

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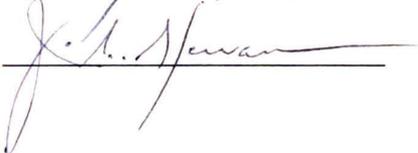
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Field Study written by Joseph R. Houston entitled *Effectiveness of Summer Literacy Program on the Literacy Achievement of English Language Learners*. I have examined the final copy of the field study for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Education Specialist, with a major in Administration and Supervision.


Major Professor

We have read this Field Study
and recommend its acceptance.

Accepted for the Council:


Dean, College of Graduate Studies

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of a summer session on the literacy achievement scores of English Language Learners (ELLs). Using a t-test analysis, it was determined that students who attended the summer session scored significantly higher on the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) post-test than those who did not attend. Additionally, a paired t-test was used to determine the gain or loss of students' literacy achievement over summer vacation. There was a significant loss in literacy achievement for those who did not attend and a gain in literacy achievement of those who attended.

It was concluded that a significant difference was observed in the literacy achievement scores of those ELLs who attended a summer session. This proactive summer session appeared to slow down summer slide, close test-score gaps, and give students extra time to strengthen their literacy competency.

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My sincere appreciation goes to Ms. Sandra Beech, who tirelessly helped me with the manuscript and design of this Field Study. Finally, I would like to thank my friend, Jamie Menard, for his friendship and support.

DEDICATION

This field study is dedicated to my mother, Novie Louise Cole Wylie, my aunt, Billie Cole Carroll; and my brother, John Daniel Houston.

Although deceased, these family members always supported me in my endeavors to further my education.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires 100% of all students to be proficient in reading/language arts by the 2013-2014 school year. Statistics show Clarksville-Montgomery County School System (CMCSS) 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade students were at the 95th percentile in reading/language arts in 2004-2005. To reach this goal, the education of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students must be made a priority. Some of the children and their families are recent arrivals to the United States. States are working hard to teach these students English while maintaining steady growth toward their overall academic goals. The Tennessee Department of Education now allows more flexibility in the performance of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students when calculating their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) totals. At the same time, school districts should be held accountable for insuring that LEP students are given the quality education they deserve. However, this percentage does not include English Language Learners (ELLs) and children with special needs. ELLs are assessed to measure both their English language development and their academic content knowledge as mandated by federal and state regulations (Department of Curriculum and Instruction, 2006).

Purpose of the Study

ELLs face the dual challenge of mastering English and acquiring the academic skills and knowledge deemed essential for a sound education and a productive future. The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a difference in reading fluency and comprehension scores between students who attended and did not attend a summer

school literacy program. Using the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE), literacy defined as reading fluency and comprehension, scores of those ELLs who attended a summer school literacy program were compared to scores of ELLs who did not attend a summer school literacy program.

Research Questions

Three research questions were addressed in this study:

1. Is there a significant difference between the literacy achievement of 3rd – 8th grade English Language Learners who attend a summer school literacy program and those ELLs who do not attend a summer school literacy program?
2. Is there a significant loss of literacy achievement of 3rd-8th grade English Language Learners who do not attend a summer school literacy program?
3. Is there a significant gain of literacy achievement of 3rd-8th grade English Language Learners who do attend a summer school literacy program?

Null Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were proposed for this study:

1. There will be no statistically significant difference between the literacy achievement of 3rd-8th grade English Language Learners who attend a summer school literacy program and those who do not attend.
2. There will be no statistically significant difference in May 2006 and August 2006 literacy achievement scores of 3rd-8th grade English Language Learners who do not attend a summer school literacy program.

3. There will be no statistically significant difference in May 2006 and August 2006 literacy achievement scores of 3rd-8th grade English Language Learners who do attend a summer school literacy program.

Significance of the Study

ELLs in the CMCSS, as well as throughout the United States, embody diversity at many levels, including their socioeconomic status, the types of neighborhoods in which they live, the varieties of English and/or other languages they speak, and their cultural backgrounds. The challenge is magnified by the fact that these students are entering U.S. schools at every grade level and at various times during the academic year (National Education Commission, 1994). There is simply not enough time during the regular academic year for ELLs to become proficient in the English language and to successfully acquire the academic skills on state-mandated tests.

This study will assist the CMCSS administration, ELL teachers, general classroom teachers, and parents to examine the effectiveness of a summer school program intended to maintain or improve the reading fluency and comprehension for ELLs.

Limitations

Two limitations were considered in this study.

1. The study involves a limited number of elementary and middle school ELLs in one Tennessee County for the 2006-07 school year.
2. The assessment used in this study is only one instrument of literacy and reading fluency measurement. The full range of literacy and reading comprehension evaluation is difficult to measure with a single assessment instrument.

Assumptions

The following assumptions in this study were considered:

1. All ELL teachers are highly qualified to implement the prescribed summer literacy curriculum.
2. All GRADE assessment scores are accurate and consistently measurable.
3. All ELLs are performing at their highest ability and proficiency levels.
4. All CMCSS summer literacy programs are of equal quality.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this study in the stated context:

1. Summer school program is an educational summer school extension of the regular school year, which encompasses reading, language arts, and math intervention and remediation.
2. Summer slide is a term used in the review of related literature that is defined as the regression of literacy achievement during the summer vacation months.
3. GRADE is an acronym for The Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation that is the assessment utilized in this study to measure literacy achievement.
4. ELL is an acronym for English Language Learner defined as one who is learning English as a foreign language.
5. ESL is an acronym for English as a Second Language.
6. ESOL is an acronym for English to Speakers of Other Languages. This is the most current term used in the literature but has the same connotation as ESL.
7. LEP is an acronym for Limited English Proficient defined as one who lacks proficiency in any of the four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
8. FEP is an acronym for Fluent English Proficient defined as one who has mastered proficiency in all four domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

9. TCAP is an acronym for The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program, which is a mandated assessment for all Tennessee students in grades 3-8. ELLs are currently required to take only the language arts and math sections.
10. CMCSS is an acronym for Clarksville-Montgomery County School System, which is located in Clarksville, Tennessee.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Summer Slide

In 1994, the National Education Commission on Time and Learning (1994) urged school districts to develop school calendars that acknowledged a difference in student learning and major changes that have been taking place in American society. The report reflected a growing concern about school calendar issues on the part of local school districts, administrators, and teachers, especially as the calendar related to students at risk for academic failure.

In the early years of formal schooling in the United States, school calendars were designed to fit the needs of particular communities. In agricultural areas, it was typical for children to attend school for 5 or 6 months so that they were free to participate in the farming economy, from planting to harvesting. During the same era, urban schools were operating on 11- or 12- months' schedules (Cooper, Nye, Charton, Lindsey & Greathouse, 1996).

By the turn of the century, the implementation of a more standardized, grade-leveled curriculum created pressures to standardize the amount of time children spent in school. The present 9-month calendar, under which schools are closed in summer, emerged as the norm when 85% of Americans were involved in agriculture. Today only 3.5% of Americans' livelihood is tied to the agricultural cycle, but school calendars, for the most part, have not changed. While some alternatives to the traditional school calendar have been examined throughout the 20th century, a large scale adoption of alternatives has never taken place. However, for a variety of reasons, a renewed interest

in changing the school calendar began to emerge in the late 1980's (Cooper et. al. 1996). Proponents of calendar change call for an extended school year that increases the number of days children spend in school. Supporters of this idea point out that the United States ranks near the bottom among industrialized nations in the number of days children attend school (Barrett, 1990).

Proponents of alternative scheduling raise concerns about the possible negative impact of summer vacations on learning. They suggest that children learn best when instruction is continuous, and a three-month break is simply too long. The extended vacation breaks the rhythm of instruction, leads to forgetting, and requires that a significant amount of time be spent on review of old material when students return to school in the late summer or early fall (Cooper et al, 1996).

Additionally, the long summer break can have a greater negative effect on the learning of children with special needs; for example, children who speak a language at home other than English. ELLs may have their acquisition of English skills set back by an extended period without its usage. Many states that mandate extended-year programs for ELLs and for children with physical or learning disabilities recognize these children's need for continuous instruction (Katsiyannis, 1991).

Data on the effects of summer slide, or the loss of skills, indicate that achievement scores for the same students tend to be considerably lower in the fall than they are in the previous spring, just before the school year closes for the summer. About six million American students attend summer school each year; some students attend for remediation, while others attend for enrichment. Good summer programs can help stem the academic slide that can occur between the closing of one academic school year and

the beginning of the next. Harris Cooper (2003), a leading expert on summer learning loss, writes that long summer vacations break the rhythm of instruction, lead to forgetting, and command a significant amount of review when students return to school in the fall. He continues by stating “that students overall achievement test scores drop by about one month on average over summer vacation” (p. 31).

A research synthesis conducted by Cooper et al. (1996) integrated 39 studies examining the effects of summer vacation on standardized achievement test scores. His meta-analysis indicated this summer slide or learning loss was more pronounced for math facts and spelling than for other tested skill areas. Findings in cognitive psychology suggest that without practice, facts and procedural skills are most susceptible to being forgotten (Cooper & Sweeler, 1987). In addition to the complications of the identified subject areas, Cooper’s (2003) meta-analysis indicated that individual differences among students might also play a role. Neither gender, nor ethnicity, nor Intelligence Quotients (IQ) appeared to have a significant influence on summer slide. However, reading scores for disadvantaged children were lower than reading scores for middle-class children. According to Cooper et al. (1996), three approaches to preventing summer slide are offered most often; extending the school year, providing summer school, and modifying the school calendar. In Cooper’s final analysis, he found that summer programs are an effective intervention for purposes of academic remediation, enrichment or acceleration; most importantly, they developed an accumulated knowledge base that can help make the most of summer school as a bridge between traditional academic years.

Summer School Programs

During recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of summer school programs operating across the United States. Increased demands may continue because of shifts in family dynamics with more single-parent families and more working parents in need of child care during summer months, concern among policymakers about global economic competitiveness, the need for an educated work force for the future and emphasis on higher academic standards nationwide (Boss & Railback, 2006). Different types of summer programs include academic programs, enrichment programs, programs to serve special populations and 21st century community learning centers. Some of the more successful summer programs in U.S. school districts provide enrichment-learning experiences through a combination of academic projects, field trips and fun activities. Many of these programs have initial data showing evidence of success in relation to their stated goals; others are in the process of collecting and evaluating their data.

One enrichment program, Camp W.A.T.E.R (Wilderness Adventure Tradition Exploration Research), is a summer math/science camp for middle school students sponsored by the Juneau School District in Alaska in partnership with L'Koot Kwaan-Chilkoot Culture Camp. In operation for five years, the program has been primarily grant financed. The 2002 program was funded with the first of a five-year National Science Federal Equity grant. Thirty-five to 40 campers spent three and a half weeks learning mathematics and science skills through two perspectives: modern scientific methodology and traditions of the Mingit Native American elders. The summary of the evaluation of this summer camp concludes that the projects met the overall goal for greater student ownership and long-lasting effects. "Students wrote with more detailed knowledge of and

pride about their projects than they did about other components of the camp” (Boss & Railback, 2002). These projects helped bolster support for increased culturally appropriate, place-based learning activities for Native students.

Another exemplary program is Portland, Oregon’s Academy Summer School. It has been offered for grades 5-8 for the last four years. The goal is to provide support for students who have not met state or district standards in mathematics, reading or writing. The academy is funded with a combination of Title I, 21st Century and Gear-Up grants, but the program charges a nominal registration fee of \$10-30 per student depending on the time of registration. The mathematics curriculum is focused on calculations, estimations and algebraic relationships. The teachers try to make the lessons as interesting as possible by having hands-on learning activities. The literature curriculum is focused on inferential and literal comprehension. Lesson plans emphasize cooperative learning, with literature that would be interesting to the students. Students also practice by writing work samples of the literature curriculum (Boss & Railback, 2002).

Carrie Colombo, coordinator of Portland’s Academy Summer School, advocates strongly for supporting the students who are in need of assistance of academic support (Boss & Railback, 2002). After four years of data collection, Colombo reported a marked increase in students’ reading and math skills, in their interest in school and in improved behavior. Teachers indicated that the most positive experiences about the program were the support of the school administrative staff, teaching small classes and collaboration with the other faculty. Colombo says, “This program really is a service to the community and to the families-providing a safe, fun learning experience for students in the summer” (p. 25).

The Teach Summer Baltimore Learning Academy, Baltimore, Maryland, was initiated in 1992. Teach Baltimore is an academically intensive summer program, which recruits and trains university students to provide approximately six weeks of reading instruction to elementary students from high-poverty schools. To date, Teach Baltimore has provided summer instruction to over 1,800 Baltimore City Public School students and has recruited and trained 240 college students from 35 institutions of higher education and a wide variety of majors. These college student instructors from higher education contribute more than 32,000 hours of service to area youth (Center for Summer Learning, 2003). The underlying philosophy of the Teach Baltimore Summer Learning Academy is motivated by research on the summer slide and the potential that summer programs may have for reducing the negative effects of learning losses (Center for Summer Learning, 2003).

Teach Baltimore provides considerable instructional time in that it implements a full-day (8:30-2:30) program lasting for seven weeks from June to mid-August. To maximize individual attention, class size is kept to eight students per instructor; in addition, selected curricula provide instruction in areas that are parallel or complementary to school-year curricula. With a total of three hours of reading instruction per morning, Teach Baltimore provides more literacy instruction than do many conventional classrooms during the regular school year. Instructors are encouraged to cover two reading lessons each day and one read-aloud story that incorporates math each week. To maintain interest and enthusiasm for the students, the curricula and supplemental activities were fun and engaging (Borman, Benson & Overman, 2005).

Overall, research on promoting summer learning for disadvantaged children has been highly successful in producing consistent empirically based findings that a combination of supportive parents and attendance in summer school can help improve the overall literacy achievement of these students. Results indicate that part of the problem with some summer school programs has been a lack of focus on the interaction between parents, students, and the instructional personnel of the program. Results also suggest that learning opportunities and resources offered through a formal school setting and the commitment of parents make sure that the students attend and graduate out of the program (Cooper, Charton, Valentine, & Mullenbrack, 2002). In addition, according to Susan Black (2005), summer schools that succeed in raising student achievement all share certain general characteristics which include: high-quality teachers, adequate and reliable funding, emphasis on reading and math, teaching that is innovative and creative evaluations of programs that focus on student achievement.

Summer programs are by no means an educational silver bullet. However, these programs hold promise for reducing economically disadvantaged children's summer learning loss. The summer programs' greatest strength is giving struggling students the extra learning time they desperately need (Boulay & Fairchild, 2002).

In a survey of almost 1,200 high schools and middle schools participating in the High Schools That Work reform initiative sponsored by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), virtually all responding schools reported offering summer school in the 8th and/or 9th grade reflecting a widespread concern that too many students are unprepared for high school when they begin ninth grade. If this concern is significant

enough to warrant attention for whole populations, it is of even more importance for ELLs entering high school (Center for Summer Learning, 2003).

According to the Center for Summer Learning, summer programs are a natural choice for schools seeking to ease transition into high school. Likewise, these programs are a student's ideal venue for facilitating the ELL transition from ESL programs into mainstream English classes. Summer academic support programs should increase access to mainstream curriculum for ELLs. Increased opportunities to earn credit during the summer term hasten progress toward graduation requirements and help ELL students prepare for fall courses they might otherwise be ineligible to take. Integrated summer courses allow late-entry immigrant students with limited formal schooling to enroll year-round and to accelerate their long journey toward a diploma (Center for Summer Learning, 2003).

There are several innovative examples of English Language Learners' summer school programs that lessen the chances of summer slide. One such program is Bailey's Summer Program located in the Fairfax County Virginia School District that targets ELL elementary students in the lower grades. There are eight sections of kindergarten at Bailey's Elementary School, more than any other grade. Of the 26,000 students enrolled in summer school, most are younger ELL students who need help reading. The majority of the children enrolled in kindergarten did not meet the benchmark on a literacy screening that assesses them on letter recognition, sounds, and rhyming, among other skills. By the end of the summer, the students should be able to do more than recite. For example, they should actually recognize letters and form sounds when they see them. Ms. Blaney, one of the kindergarten teachers, notes that if students don't hear English all

summer, some fall behind (as cited in Kalita, 2003). She continues that if programs can just help students maintain where they were at the end of the school year and “keep them doing school behaviors, it’s helpful” (p. 35).

The Baily’s Program has another benefit to working parents such as Giovana Gurdia who emigrated from Bolivia nine years ago and works as a house cleaner. Summer school offers a better alternative to day care while her son, Nicolas, will be learning the skills he needs to read all the books his mother buys for him on his own. To Bailey’s Summer School principal, it is refreshing to teach children who want to be in school even as their friends spend days at camps, at pools, or parked in front of a television (Kalita, 2003).

Another program assisting ELLs is The New York City Summer School Program. It is an integral part of the updated promotion policy, which focuses on children identified as English Language Learners, and children of immigrant families (Advocates for Children, 2000). The enormous ethnic and racial diversity of current immigrant and refugee arrivals in New York create important challenges and opportunities for New York’s policymakers and school administrators. Schools must be prepared to respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse multilingual and multicultural student body and take steps to ensure that all New York students receive an education that helps them reach their full potential. Each district was required to prepare a written plan detailing its instructional program in accordance with some key guidelines. All language skills and academic content areas were included in the plans. A minimum of 100 hours of instruction was required, and the session was offered from July 5th to August 10th. Eleven districts implemented a five-day a week / four-hour a day program and 22 districts

implemented a four-day a week / five hour a day program. The earliest program began at 8:00 A.M. and the latest any instructional program ended was 2:30 P.M. During the summer session, guidance staff met with individual students and parents regarding student performance. In addition, a nurse was assigned to buildings in which summer instructional programs were held, and the summer school was staffed with 200 school safety agents (Advocates for Children, 2000).

The majority of NYC's students and parents were positive about the summer school program. A majority of students and many parents were satisfied with the summer school teachers. Most students reported summer school had helped them a lot (69%). Some (28%) said it helped them a little, and a few (2%) said it did not help them at all. Most parents also reported that summer school helped a lot (74%). One fourth said it helped a little, and few (1%) said it did not help at all. Finally, a large representation of the students (85%) and of the parents (88%) said that they thought summer school classes were a good idea for them (Advocates for Children of New York, 2000).

A unique summer program with major learning benefits to ELLs is a six-week summer bilingual education program in the Jefferson County School District, Corvallis, Oregon. Bilingual Playwriting and Puppetry in the English Language Learners Project dealt with the use of bilingual playwriting and puppetry for primary and intermediate classrooms with mainstream students, ELLs, migrant students, and students identified with special needs. This research project was a coming together of professional interests and beliefs about the teaching and learning process of culturally and linguistically diverse students. An action research methodology was utilized to develop teachers' stories that

described the use of playwriting and puppetry by elementary teachers and a local university instructor working in a Title I summer school program (Holdt, 1997).

The educational needs of language minority students with special needs continue to be recognized as an important area of research (Harry, 1992). Because teachers are the most valuable resource in bilingual/multicultural special education, they need to be empowered with effective instructional strategies to support language minority students with special needs in order to help the students reach their full potential (Baca & Almanza, 1991).

Play writing and puppetry are process-based approaches to first and second language acquisition that provide a natural context for creating, revising and editing oral and written expression (Kao & O'Neil, 1998). This process approach, which utilizes movement and improvisational activities, provides for diverse learning styles and needs. Play writing and puppetry also have the potential of developing not only literacy skills, but also the potential for empowering students (Holdt, 1997). The play project for ELLs included both speaking and writing models describing discrimination in an immigration office. Small group activities were utilized dealing with bilingual stories with bilingual themes. Spanish/English dictionaries were available for students as they worked on their scripts. Students continued to prepare their presentations by labeling the classroom with English/ Spanish words. Finally, a Hispanic guest speaker and all parents were invited to the presentation.

The researchers and teachers worked diligently to provide meaningful and entertaining instruction for ELLs. A well-defined bilingual program was built so that students, parents and the community could come to recognize it as a quality program

benefiting all children. After this first summer research program, the team hoped this endeavor would be the beginning of building the necessary momentum for an established bilingual summer school program; one that incorporates democratic classroom practices, a meaningful and purposeful curriculum, team teaching and continued collaboration between teachers and university researchers (Waldschmidt, Kim, Kim, Martinez, and Hale, 1999).

Summary of Related Literature

Research has shown that the cumulative effect of summer learning differences is a major reason that students from lower socioeconomic environments and from other sub-groups tend to lose ground as they move through school. However, most studies revealed positive but modest improvements as a result of some type of summer intervention program. The literature also suggested that summer programs have the potential to reduce the negative effects of summer slide. Proactive, multi-year programs may play important roles in slowing the summer slide, closing the test-score gaps, and giving all children the extra time many of them need.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The review of the literature emphasized the need to improve the cumulative effect of summer learning differences for students who tend to lose academic progress. The literature also suggested that summer programs have the potential to reduce the negative effect of summer slide. Based on this need, this study examined the effects of a summer literacy program on ELLs in the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System.

Research Design

The descriptive research design of this study examined the literacy achievement of ELLs 3rd-8th in the CMCSS. These ELLs were given a pre-test to determine their current reading/literacy level. One group attended an extended summer session in June 2006. The other group did not attend the summer session. After the summer session, test scores of the two groups were compared. Assessment results comparing the May and August scores were also examined for ELLs who did not attend the summer session and for those who did attend the summer session. This comparison was performed to determine the average loss or gain of literacy achievement.

Participants

ELLs in grades 3-8 who had pre- and post-test scores on the GRADE in the CMCSS were included in this study. Permission was granted from the Institutional Review Board and the CMCSS. There was no risk to the participants since all data were archival and provided anonymously by the CMCSS Testing Coordinator.

All ELL participants had the opportunity to attend the summer session.

Transportation was provided to students and there was no cost to parents to enroll their children. In April 2006, flyers and letters in English and Spanish were sent to all parents advertising the summer camp. Later, detailed information and a brief application were sent to all parents who have expressed an interest in the program.

During the regular academic year, all parents with students in the CMCSS were required to complete a home language survey on the registration form. If any language was selected other than English, students were assessed for language proficiency. If the results on the assessment revealed that the student was deficient in any one domain (speaking, listening, reading, or writing), he/she was placed in the ESOL program pending parent approval.

The Summer Literacy Camp was designed to continue to support and strengthen achievement after the regular school year had ended. The camp was open to all students in the CMCSS, but at-risk students such as ELLs were encouraged to attend to lessen the effects of summer slide. Classes were held from 7:30 AM-12:00 PM, Monday through Friday in June. There was no cost to the parents and transportation was provided to all students attending the camp. The curriculum emphasized reading comprehension/fluency, language arts, and math concepts. The highly qualified staff planned a variety of research-based but fun lessons that included field trips, student projects, and multicultural activities designed to activate students' prior knowledge.

Instrument

The Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) was used to assess all ELLs in grades 3-8. A pretest (Form A) and a post-test (Form B) were administered. It should be noted that Forms A and B of the GRADE measured exactly the same literacy skills. The two forms of the assessment only contained re-worded questions. The CMCSS Testing Coordinator approved this criterion-referenced diagnostic, and it was also used for the after school program assessment.

The GRADE is a developmentally based diagnostic with two parallel assessment forms. Items were evaluated with a sample population of over 20,000 examinees. Item calibrations and tests of goodness-of-fit to the RASCH model or one-parameter model were completed utilizing the Wright and Linacre (1995) BIGSTEPS program. Alpha and split-half reliability coefficients were determined and reveal an alpha range from .82 to .94, with a median of .90, a split-half range from .81 to .94, with a median of .90 revealing substantial evidence for a high degree of consistency (American Guidance Services, 2001).

Procedure

ELLs in grades 3-8 in CMCSS were given the GRADE (Form A). Highly qualified ELL teachers administered this assessment in the ELL classroom in May 2006. A summer session was offered to all ELLs in June 2006. When the 2006-07 academic year began in August 2006, all ELLs were again assessed using the GRADE (Form B). It is important to note that both forms (A&B) measured the same literacy skills. These test results from both GRADE forms were compared to determine if the literacy scores of

those ELLs who attended the Summer Literacy Camp would change significantly.

Additionally, a statistical analysis measured the change of literacy achievement of those ELLs who did and did not attend the summer literacy program.

A statistical software program (Excel) was implemented to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between literacy scores of those ELLs who attended a summer literacy camp and those who did not. T-tests compared scores to determine if the null hypotheses would be rejected or accepted. In addition, a paired t-test compared scores from May to August of those students who attended the summer session and scores of those students who did not attend. Again, tests compared scores to decide if the null hypotheses would be rejected or accepted. The significance level was set at .05.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

This study was undertaken to determine the effects of a summer school literacy program on the literacy achievement of English Language Learners.

Archival data on the GRADE were utilized to measure literacy achievement. A pre-test (Form A) was administered to 70 participants in grades 3-8 in May of 2006. A post-test (Form B) of the GRADE was then administered to the same participants in August of 2006.

The data from the assessment instrument were analyzed using the Microsoft Excel software program. The program computed the t-test, paired t-tests, and associated p-values. The results of the data were then examined to determine the effects of the Summer School Literacy Program on those students who attended and those students who did not attend.

Research Question # 1

The first research question explored the difference in the literacy scores of those who attended the summer program and those that did not. The question asked if there was a significant difference between the literacy achievement of 3rd-8th grade students who attended a summer school literacy program and those ELLs who do not attend the program as measured by the GRADE test.

Hypothesis # 1

There will be no statistically significant difference between the literacy achievement of the 3rd-8th grade students who attend a summer school literacy program and those who do not attend.

A t-test analysis was used to determine if a significant difference existed between ELL summer school participants' GRADE scores and non-summer school participants' scores. Results can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 *ELL Summer School Participants and Non-Summer School Participants*

	Number of participants	Mean	Standard Deviation	P-Value
Summer school	31	28.39	12.93	
Non-Summer school	39	22.85	14.83	
				4.18135E-11*

* $P < .05$

A statistically significant difference was found between the scores of the ELL summer school participants and the non-summer school participants. The data analysis indicates that students that attended the summer literacy program scored significantly higher on the GRADE post-test in August than those that did not; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question # 2

Research questions #2 and #3 examined the gain or loss of student literacy achievement over the summer vacation. Question #2 dealt with students who did not attend a summer school program and asked if there was a significant loss of literacy achievement by 3rd-8th grade English language learners who did not attend a summer school literacy program.

Hypothesis # 2

There will be no statistically significant difference in May 2006 and August 2006 literacy achievement of 3rd-8th grade students who do not attend a summer school literacy program.

A paired t-test analysis was used to determine if a significant difference in literacy achievement existed between May and August evaluations of those ELLs who did not attend the summer program. Results of the analysis can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2 *ELL Non-Summer School Participants*

	Number of participants	Mean	Standard Deviation	P-Value
Pretest (May 2006)	39	24.44	15.30	
Post-test (August 2006)	39	22.82	14.83	
				0.043575151*

*P< .05

There was a statistically significant difference in literacy achievement of 3rd-8th grade students who did not attend a summer school program on the May and August GRADE test. The scores in August were significantly below scores in May.

This indicated that nonattendance in the ELL summer program negatively impacted literacy achievement. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Research Question #3

Question # 3 examined the May and August scores of summer program participants to determine if there was a significant difference of literacy achievement scores of 3rd-8th grade students who attended a summer school literacy program.

Hypothesis # 3

There will be no statistically significant difference in May and August literacy achievement scores of 3rd-8th grade students who do attend a summer school literacy program.

A paired t-test analysis comparing May and August GRADE scores was used to determine if a significant difference existed in the May and August scores. Results are found in Table 3.

Table 3 *ELL Summer School Participants*

	Number of participants	Mean	Standard Deviation	P-Value
Pretest (May 2006)	31	20.74	11.90	
Post-test (August 2006)	31	28.39	12.93	
			12.93	3.09851E-07*

*P < .05

A statistically significant difference between May and August literacy achievement of 3rd-8th grade students who attended a summer literacy program was found; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. A significantly higher August mean

score indicated that attendance in the summer program positively impacted literacy achievement.

Chapter V

Discussion

Problem and Purpose

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) now requires 100% of all students to be proficient in reading/language arts by the 2013-14 school year. Statistics show Clarksville-Montgomery County School System's (CMCSS) 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade students were at the 95th percentile in reading/language arts in 2004-05 as measured on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). However, this percentage does not include English Language Learners and children with special needs. To reach this goal for all students, successful literacy competency must be made a priority. Federal and state regulations mandate ELL assessment to measure not only English language development but also academic content knowledge in language arts and math.

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a difference in literacy achievement scores between ELLs who attended and did not attend a summer literacy program. Using the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE), literacy achievement scores of those ELLs who attended the program were compared to those ELLs who did not attend the program. This study focused on three research questions and corresponding hypotheses:

1. Is there a significant difference between the literacy achievement of 3rd-8th grade ELLs who attend a summer school literacy program and those who do not attend a summer school literacy program?
2. Is there a significant loss of literacy achievement of 3rd-8th grade ELLs who do not attend a summer school literacy program?

3. Is there a significant gain of literacy achievement of 3rd-8th grade ELLs who do attend a summer school literacy program?

Trends

Since the null hypotheses were rejected, the data provide some interest for educators. Data analysis shows that the post-test mean score for the ELL participants in the summer program were significantly higher than the post-test mean score for non-participants in the summer program.

Those ELLs who did not participate in the summer program experienced negative literacy achievement, moving from a pretest mean of 24.44 to a post-test mean of 22.82. This strongly suggests that students who do not participate in the summer program are losing literacy skills over summer vacation. This loss can affect ELLs' literacy achievement for the following school year and slow their progress for academic success.

Those ELLs who participated in the summer school literacy program experienced a positive mean gain, moving from a pretest mean of 20.74 to a post-test mean of 28.39. These participants improved their average mean score significantly. Obviously, these participants will be better prepared for literacy achievement challenges the following school year.

Although not part of the hypotheses, those ELLs who did not attend the summer session had a higher mean average in May (24.44) than those students who did attend the summer session (20.74). Following the summer session, that trend was reversed. Those that did not attend the session had an average mean score of 22.82 and those who did attend the summer session had an average mean score of 28.39.

Benefits and Effects of Summer Literacy School

Although summer school is hardly a panacea for overcoming challenges such as the literacy achievement gap, research has shown that it can boost student learning in specific areas. As stated earlier in this field study, anecdotal evidence suggested that children learn best when instruction is continuous and extended summer break is too long. The three-month vacation breaks the rhythm of instruction; it can lead to forgetting previously learned material, and requires a good deal of time spent on review when students return to school in the fall (Cooper, 2003). In addition, Mr. Cooper claims that students' overall achievement scores drop about one month on average over the summer break. Long summer breaks can have a greater negative effect on learning retention for children who speak a language at home other than English. ELLs may have their acquisition of English skills set back by an extended period without usage (Katsiyannis, 1991). For students who need more time to meet learning goals, especially ELLs, summer school offers the benefit of a longer calendar year to reinforce those literacy skills already learned.

The climate of a summer literacy program also seems to have an effect on student learning as compared to the traditional school year. One exemplary program mentioned earlier in the literature review is the Bailey's Summer Program in Fairfax County, Virginia. This program targets ELLs in the lower grades, especially Kindergarten. The students were behind in letter recognition, sounds, rhyming, and other skills. At the end of the summer session, students had gained considerable progress in all skills and had fun learning those skills (Kalita, 2003). Summer programs most often feature smaller classes, more individualized instruction, and more relaxed atmospheres. One such program

mentioned in this study with major benefits to ELLs is in the Jefferson County School District, Corvallis, Oregon. The program incorporated play writing and puppetry to first and second language acquisition. This approach emphasized democratic classroom practices and a meaningful and purposeful curriculum (Holdt, 1997). The experience of success during a summer session can boost students' confidence as learners for the long term. These proactive summer learning programs can help slow summer slide, close test-score gaps, and give these children extra time many of them need.

Recommendations

The analyses of data in this study appear to support that the Clarksville Montgomery County School System should continue to offer the Summer School Literacy Program each academic year. Certainly, all at-risk students, including ELLs with low language proficiency skills, should be encouraged to participate in this summer program. The data have revealed the positive literacy outcomes in student scores after attending this summer session. Further, an additional rigorous analysis could be undertaken using a more powerful statistical procedure and include ELLs in K-12. Last, it is difficult to suggest any program or curriculum changes for the school systems summer program, but the program may lend itself to change based on future analyses.

Possible Future Research

It would be beneficial and conceivable to broaden this study to include more ELL participants and to evaluate how gender analysis might affect the GRADE or equivalent assessment literacy scores. Additionally, the same group of ELL participants could be tracked over time to better evaluate their literacy achievement scores and their overall academic progress. This study could also be expanded to compare and evaluate summer

literacy programs in other Tennessee school districts with moderate to large ELL populations. The results of such a study would allow ELL educators across Tennessee to collaborate more effectively on improving best teaching practices for their English Language Learners. Such expanded studies on summer literacy programs for at-risk students would give significant credence to the positive impact that these summer programs can have on student achievement.

Reflection and Conclusion

Throughout this research, no single model existed for the most successful summer program. What did appear was a number of factors, conditions and variables—all key ingredients for success in developing summer programs, especially for at-risk populations. A growing number of educators have begun to integrate research and evaluation studies with the objective of identifying key characteristics for successful programs.

This study has hopefully assisted the CMCSS administration, ESOL teachers, general classroom teachers, and parents in examining the effectiveness of one summer school literacy program intended to maintain or improve literacy achievement not only for ELLs but also for any student who is losing ground academically during the regular school year. Such knowledge can guide our policy priorities and choices as American education is restructured to help all our children meet the challenges of the 21st century (Cooper, et al, 1996).

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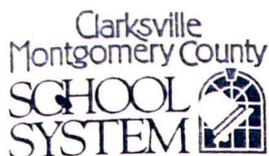
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

School System Permission Letter



Dr. Kimi Sucharski
 Assessment, Research, At Risk Programs
 Board of Education 621 Gracey Avenue Clarksville, Tennessee 37040
 Phone: 931-920-7823 Fax: 931-920-9823 kimie.sucharski@mciss.net

Mr. Joseph R. Houston
 54 Union Street
 Clarksville, TN 37040

March 21, 2006

Dear Mr. Houston:

Your research, survey, and/or research project proposal entitled, "Effectiveness of Summer School Literacy Camps on the Literacy Achievement of English Language Learners" has been approved by the research committee. The date of approval was March 20, 2006.

You have been granted permission to utilize the archival data from the AGS Grade student data and CMCSS 21st CCLC data. Please read the [Research Policy and Procedures Handbook](#) for all information concerning research in Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools.

I look forward to you sharing your results with us. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. K. L. Sucharski

Kimi Sucharski
 Accountability and At-Risk Programs

Appendix B
IRB Approval Letter



June 15, 2006

Joseph Houston
521 Union Street
Clarksville, TN 37040

Re: Your application regarding study number 06-025: Effectiveness of Summer Literacy Programs on the Academic Achievement of English Language Learners

Dear Joseph Houston:

Thank you for your recent submission. We appreciate your cooperation with the human research review process. I have reviewed your request for expedited approval of the new study listed above. This type of study qualifies for expedited review under FDA and NIH (Office for Protection from Research Risks) regulations.

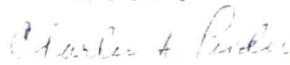
Congratulations! This is to confirm that I have approved your application through one calendar year. This approval is subject to APSU Policies and Procedures governing human subject research.

You are granted permission to conduct your study as described in your application effective immediately. The study is subject to continuing review on or before June 15, 2007, unless closed before that date. Enclosed please find the forms to report when your study has been completed and the form to request an annual review of a continuing study. Please submit the appropriate form prior to June 15, 2007.

Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and approved. If you have any questions or require further information, contact me at (221-7415; fax 221-7641; email pindere@apsu.edu). Again, thank you for your cooperation with the APSU IRB and the human research review process. Best wishes for a successful study!

Sincerely,


Charles A. Pinder, Ph.D.
Chair, Austin Peay Institutional Review Board
cpi@apsu.edu

*exp. to continue until
June 15, 2008*


www.apsu.edu

P.O. Box 11501 • Clarksville, TN 37044 • P (603) 221-7414 • F (603) 221-7641