3-2024

Readers' Workshop Model Impact Urban Primary Students' Motivation and Reading Progress

Narissa Waller
Lindenwood University

Readers' Workshop Model Impact Urban Primary Students' Motivation and Reading Progress

by

Narissa Waller

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

Acknowledgments

First, I thank the Lord above for His blessings and the scriptures that kept me strong throughout the dissertation process. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who have helped and supported me. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Nasser, my dissertation chair, mentor, and inspiration, for his/her time, wisdom, encouragement, and patience. Your unwavering commitment has helped me complete my dissertation. I am truly grateful to you for supporting me through my quantitative fears, passive voice woes, and data meltdowns and inspiring me to reach the finish line. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Ramey and Dr. Muhammad, for their valuable advice and encouragement. Working with each person on my committee has been an enriching experience for me. I also want to thank the participants who took the time to reflect on their perceptions and opinions. The elementary principals, administrative secretaries, staff, and students were essential contributors to this qualitative study, and I am grateful for their valuable insights. The participating school embraced this research opportunity, and I am deeply grateful for that.

I want to express my gratitude to my mother, Margaret Waller. She has always believed in me more than I deserve. I am also thankful to my sisters, Nikki and Natalie Waller, for their unwavering support and for keeping me in their prayers throughout my journey. I want to pay tribute to my late Aunt JoAnn Hill, who always took pride in all of my accomplishments, no matter how great or small. She is definitely missed. I feel blessed to have the most loving and supportive family in my circle. They have been there for me every step of the way throughout my doctoral and dissertation journey. To my family, I love you, and thank you for everything.

Abstract

In order to assess the impact of the Readers' Workshop on academic success and literacy progress of primary students in an urban Midwest primary school, the researcher conducted a study. Through this study, the researcher aimed to determine whether the implementation of the Readers' Workshop positively affected the academic and literacy progress of primary students in an urban setting. Student progress was analyzed by comparing their assessment scores and reading levels in fall 2022 and spring 2023. The study aimed to identify effective teaching practices that can be implemented to bridge the achievement gap between urban students and their counterparts. The findings of this study can serve as valuable guidance to both administrators and teachers. Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, the researcher analyzed kindergarten, first-grade, and second-grade students' literacy progress and motivation to read. The researcher used a mixed-methods framework to understand the data thoroughly, allowing quantitative and qualitative data collection. The researcher took a comprehensive approach to their investigation, analyzing various quantitative and qualitative data sources by reviewing students' pre- and post-assessment scores, reading levels, and reading motivation. The methodology included four classroom observations, five surveys, and four personal interviews to gain insight into teachers' perspectives on student learning and the impact of the Being a Reader Curriculum on academic progress. The quantitative analyses revealed significant differences in student literacy progress and reading motivation and several themes that assisted in constructing and comprehending participant responses. The quantitative data analysis of the hypotheses moderately aligned with the qualitative results, although there were no discernible differences in students' motivation to read and

literacy progress. There were some discrepancies between the quantitative and qualitative data. For example, even though some students were doing well on curriculum assessments and showing academic growth during progress monitoring, they were still struggling and performing at a basic or below basic level, according to the district assessment. One way to address the achievement gap is to ensure district assessments align with curriculum and instruction and implement resources that provide students with a solid foundation in phonics and phonemic awareness to support student learning. The research indicated that identifying effective strategies for managing and reducing classroom disruptions caused by behavioral issues is essential.

Keywords: Blend, Conferring, Decode, Explicit Teaching, Galileo Assessment

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

Many factors affect early literacy, including aspects of the child's home environment, school experiences, and community wealth. Children from low socio-economic households and communities develop academic skills slower than children from higher-SES groups (Farkas et al., 2009). For instance, low SES in childhood relates to poor cognitive development, language, memory, and socio-emotional processing, and consequently, poor income and health in adulthood. The school systems in low-SES communities are often under-resourced, negatively affecting students' academic progress and outcomes (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). Children living in poverty are at risk for school failure and mental, behavioral, and educational problems (Carter et al., 2008). Certain racial groups are more at risk for poverty than others, and it is frequently described as generational, meaning it can be passed down from one generation to the next. Ethnic minority groups such as Hispanics and African-Americans are more likely to be at risk than other peers, such as Asians and Whites (Carter et al., 2008).

Factors such as poverty, parental involvement, school attendance, and environmental makeup are well-documented contributors to perpetuate the low academic performance of disadvantaged students (Beatty, 2013; Smith, 2006). The failure of impoverished and minority students has become the expected norm in the academic community. Educators often consider these students as 'doomed from the start' or hopeless causes, and they, therefore, give up taking responsibility and accountability for having any influence over their students' failures and low academic performance. Consequently, the achievement gap and unequal educational opportunities affect urban

students' quality of life. African-American and Hispanic students experienced biased disciplinary actions in school (Blake et al., 2010). Consequences of these biased disciplinary practices included increased drop-out rates, low academic achievement, and a pathway to the criminal justice system for minority students via a disconnect from school (Blake et al., 2010).

Chapter One introduces the study by explaining the problem statement, purpose, and rationale of this study. Next, the chapter presents the research questions and defined terms used in the study. Finally, Chapter One concludes with a summary and a description of the remaining chapters.

Statement of the Problem

There is an increasing divide between the academic achievement of low socio-economic students and those from more affluent backgrounds. Research shows that Black and Brown children from marginalized communities have poor-quality instructional materials and limited resources (Rothstein, 2014). In low socio-economic areas, educators play a major role in students' academic progress and closing the achievement gap, contributing to the disparity between test scores for students in under-resourced schools and their more affluent peers. Research also shows that students living in poverty are dropping out of school more frequently than their more affluent peers, and they have little prospect of becoming economically independent members of society (Rothstein, 2014).

The disparity between school performance for students living in poverty and students from more affluent backgrounds is well documented (Berkman, 2015; Bollinger, 2014; Coley & Baker, 2013; Kilty, 2015; Rumberger, 2013; Semuels, 2014). Coley and

Baker (2013) stated that more than one in five American children live in poverty (p. 3). They go on to share another disturbing statistic. Although the United States is one of the 35th wealthiest nations in the world, it ranks the 2nd highest in childhood poverty among developed nations (Coley & Baker, 2013, p. 7).

Students living in poverty are more than six times more likely to attend high-poverty schools than students not from poverty (Boser, 2015). Semuels (2014) posits, "Without access to high-quality education, kids born into poverty are likely to remain there their whole lives" (p. 1). The repercussions for these at-risk children and our society will be significant if these issues continue. According to Coley and Baker (2013), lacking the necessary life skills to become independent contributors to society, under-resourced students face potential incarceration. Research also shows that persons with limited education earn less money in their lifetimes, have shorter life expectancies, and are at increased risk for incarceration (Berkman et al., 2008). Moreover, the research has shown that the achievement gap has widened between students from low socioeconomic areas and their peers. The American Psychological Association (2015) reports poverty is associated with decreased academic performance. Studies have also shown that students who lived in poverty experienced a challenging and unsuccessful educational career, often not completing high school; this bleak outcome contributes to the pipeline to prison crisis (Semuels (2014). Historically, minority students have received unequal access to education, unlike their non-minority peers. They have had inadequate instruction, poor school facilities, and access to fewer resources (Esposito, 1999; Oakes, 2003).

Educators have recognized the achievement gap between students living in poverty and those from more affluent backgrounds for decades. However, it was not until

the federal government enacted the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2001) that they became actively involved in addressing this issue. NCLB (2001) aims to close the achievement gap between impoverished students and those from more affluent backgrounds, with a particular focus on eliminating the achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students. By analyzing and comparing state assessment scores according to racial and ethnic group, economic disadvantage, disability, and limited English proficiency, NCLB aims to eliminate racial disparities in academic achievement.

States held schools accountable for ensuring minority groups met statewide proficiency goals. A number of studies found that accountability systems improve average student outcomes on both state and national tests (Figlio & Rouse, 2007). According to Beatty (2013), equal opportunities for educational attainment are the best-documented strategy to break the cycle of poverty; therefore, finding ways to help at-risk students succeed in school is paramount. As educational institutions change their philosophies concerning academic expectations to include the academic needs of economically-disadvantaged students and ethnic minority groups, advocates hope the racial achievement gap will begin to close.

Purpose of Dissertation

The researcher is investigating the impact of the Readers' Workshop Model on the motivation and reading progress of primary students in urban areas. There continues to be a literacy gap between students in economically-disadvantaged areas and their counterparts. The purpose of this research study is to contribute to the understanding and knowledge base of successful strategies teachers can implement to promote student

academic success and improve reading levels in kindergarten, first, and second-grade students (Amanishakete, 2013). The average urban student score (124) is six points lower than the suburban student's average (Graham & Teague, 2011, p. 1). Although this difference is not significant, small differences in primary reading achievement can affect later educational outcomes. Researchers discovered that the socioeconomic status of a family can significantly impact a student's reading achievement. Students who come from families with a higher socioeconomic status tend to start school with higher levels of achievement compared to their peers from less advantaged backgrounds. It has also been observed that families residing in rural or urban areas tend to have lower socioeconomic status, on average, in comparison to their counterparts living in suburban areas. This highlights the importance of addressing socioeconomic factors in education to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to succeed.

Rationale

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2022) reports that Black children in the United States are more likely than their White counterparts to encounter barriers to educational success. Despite efforts to reduce achievement gaps, progress has not been consistent, and there have been fluctuations in the rate of advancement. Lee (2002) observes that Black-White gaps in U.S. student achievement consistently decreased until 1988 but then started to rise and have since stabilized. Robinson's (2016) review suggests that ongoing socioeconomic and social stratification differences are at the root of the achievement gap despite many measures taken. The recognition of structural inequalities in society, such as those along racial, gender, socioeconomic, and identity lines, has led to the discussion that the education system actually creates an opportunity gap, resulting in unequal

outcomes like achievement gaps (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Differences in academic achievement or the achievement gap between Black students and White students become apparent as children enter the K–12 school system (Chernoff et al., 2007; Kewal Ramani et al., 2016). The educational outcomes of Black students relative to their White peers continue to raise concerns among educators, policymakers, and the public (Barton & Coley, 2010; Campbell et al., 1966; Wixom, 2015). The ability to read is a powerful skill set necessary to lead a productive life. As indicated by the International Literacy Association (ILA, n.d.) "the ability to read, write, and communicate connects people to one another and empowers them to achieve things they never thought possible" (para. 2). Additionally, Guthrie and McRae, (2012) point out that reading comprehension directly impacts "students' self-efficacy for reading and intrinsic motivation to read." (p. 196) According to Amanishakete (2013), research shows that Black and Brown children from marginalized communities have poor-quality instructional materials and limited resources. Studies have been conducted to determine appropriate interventions that can improve at-risk readers' self-efficacy and attitudes toward literacy. In the past, teachers have used parent and student surveys to understand the impact of parental involvement, student self-efficacy, and attitude on literacy proficiency (Jurado, 2014). Previous research also indicates that children from low socioeconomic backgrounds may demonstrate lower levels of school readiness than their higher socioeconomic peers (Garcia & Weiss, 2017). Despite the availability of research on school populations with different demographics, there is a lack of information on the impact of the Readers' Workshop Model (RWM) on the literacy and academic progress of K-2 urban primary

students. More research and data are needed to understand how effective the RWM could be for this population.

Low-income families typically struggle with literacy; this difficulty materializes early and attributed to incremental academic gaps between urban students and their counterparts. Over time, urban students' academic achievement has gradually improved. Unfortunately, the progress of students living in lower socioeconomic areas remains below student expectations. The concern of urban students performing below basic on national assessments extends far beyond independent families. The issue of urban students performing below basic on national assessments is not limited to individual families but is also a result of limited access to print in low-income communities. Additionally, the lack of parent involvement with at-home literacy practice and engagement in academic conversations have created a considerable literacy gap between urban primary students and their counterparts. Gee (2001) and Otto (2008) both support the theory that home is, for many, where the foundation of a child's literacy acquisition is developed through the observation of and interaction with one's environment. For many children from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds, home is not a sufficient environment for deep literacy development (Van Vechten, 2013).

The current prison crisis is significantly influenced by schools, with more than half of incarcerated individuals having entered prison without a high school diploma. Academic achievement gaps have a profound impact on students' educational development, particularly on urban students' literacy progress. These gaps can potentially have long-term effects beyond students' school careers. Many educators focus on ensuring that students achieve reading proficiency by the end of third grade, as this is a

solid predictor of high school graduation rates, leading many educators to focus on the intermediate grades of third, fourth, and fifth (Hernandez, 2011). Hernandez (2011) further asserts that "students who fail to meet this critical academic milestone are more likely to struggle in later years and drop out before earning a high school diploma" (p. 3).

Research Questions

The researcher investigated the following research questions:

RQ1: How do teachers perceive the Readers' Workshop Model's (RWM) effect on students' reading ability?

RQ2: What are the teachers' perspectives regarding their ability to motivate students to read?

RQ3: How do teachers impact students' reading progress?

RQ4: How do teachers implement Readers' Workshop Model intervention?

RQ5: How confident are teachers in teaching the Being a Reader curriculum?

RQ6: What are the implications of students' Galileo assessment scores with regard to reading progress?

Null Hypotheses

Null H1.1: There is no association between kindergarten students' reading level achievement before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo Assessment).

Null H1.2: There is no association between first-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo assessment).

Null H1.3: There is no association between second-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo assessment).

Null H2.1: There will be no difference in kindergarten students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment.

Null H2.2: There will be no difference in first-grade students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment.

Null H2.3: There will be no difference in second-grade students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment.

Limitations

The researcher recognized several limitations of this project. It is important to note that determining whether or not teachers have implemented the curriculum with fidelity can present certain limitations and raise questions. Given that the authors will not run or implement the curriculum in multiple schools, the clinical effectiveness or practicality of the curriculum is unknown at this time. Therefore, it can only be assumed that this curriculum will positively impact the student group for whom it is intended. In addition, the curriculum is designed for professionals who have knowledge and skills for working with diverse populations, particularly those from low socio-economic, urban African-American communities. Additionally, only a limited number of participants could complete the survey based on the results. Out of the 13 individuals who received the *Qualtrics* survey, which included teachers and an instructional coach, only nine started the survey, and just six participants were able to complete it.

Time Frame and Location of the Study

During Fall 2022 and Spring 2023, the researcher collected all teacher survey data, interviews, and classroom observation data. The data collection included teacher perceptions and student literacy progress. This study took place in an urban school district's primary school in the Midwest. The elementary school has five kindergarten teachers, six first-grade teachers, and five second-grade teachers, with class sizes averaging 20 to 25 students per classroom. Only those teachers who volunteered to participate were included in the research, which limits the study's findings to their experiences.

Definition of Terms

Achievement gap- refers to any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students, such as white students and minorities, for example, or students from higher-income and lower-income households.

Blend- to combine letter sounds and sound-spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation (Reading Rockets, 2022)

Conferring- allows teachers to assess each student's comprehension and provides an opportunity to support struggling students, encourage students to read more complex texts, and identify areas of growth for each student (Making Meaning: Whole-Class Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary, 2021).

Decode- is the ability to apply your knowledge of letter-sound relationships, including knowledge of letter patterns, to correctly pronounce written words (Reading Rockets, 2022).

Exit Slip- offer students a physical space to digest ideas, question, ponder, and ruminate over what has been shared and discussed in class. Specifically, exit slips can document learning, emphasize the process of learning, and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction (Fisher & Frey, 2004).

Explicit Teaching- the direct teaching of letter-sound relationships (Seger, n.d.)

Fluency- is defined as the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression (Reading Rockets, 2021).

Galileo Assessment- provides a wide range of assessment options in English language arts, mathematics, and science for students from kindergarten through the 12th grade. Galileo assessments are completely aligned with state test blueprints or your customized pacing guides (Comprehensive Assessment System, 2021).

High-Frequency Words- commonly used words that young children are encouraged to memorize as a whole by sight; so that they can automatically recognize these words in print without having to use any strategies to decode (Farrell et al., 2024).

Independent Reading- the teacher is actively involved, conferring with individual students or groups of students, helping them select appropriate books, and assessing and supporting their reading development (Fountas & Pinnell Literacy, 2021).

Mini-lesson-explicit lessons with a purposeful application in building students' independent reading competencies (Fountas & Pinnell Literacy, 2021).

Phonemic awareness- is the capacity to attend to and manipulate phonemes. Phonemes are the smallest units of speech that make a difference in the meaning of a word (Reading Rockets, n.d.)

Phonics- is the study of the way in which sounds are associated or correspond to individual letters or letter sequences that make up written words (Reading Rockets, 2022).

Phonological awareness- is the awareness of or sensitivity to the sound structure of language. Phonological awareness is an umbrella term used to describe awareness at different levels of spoken language (Eisele et al., 2002).

Readers' Workshop Model- is a model of instruction that focuses on the work of the reader. Readers' workshop provides extensive collections of books, emphasizes student choices of what will be read, limits students' reading to texts that can be read easily by them, requires that the students spend extensive time reading these books, provides explicit teaching through mini-lessons, and monitors and supports reading comprehension development through one-on-one teacher-student conferences (Reading Rockets, 2021).

Self-Efficacy Theory- Social Cognitive Theory posits that learning most likely occurs if there is a close identification between the observer and the model and if the observer also has a good deal of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the extent to which an individual believes they can master a particular skill (Bandura, 1989).

Small Group Instruction- personalized instruction that allows teachers to work more closely with each student. This type of instruction provides the opportunity to evaluate students' learning strengths, locate gaps in the development of their reading or math skills, and tailor lessons focused on specific learning objectives (Excellence in education blog, 2021).

Social Cognitive Theory- Bandura (1977) claimed that social learning theory showed a direct correlation between a person's perceived self-efficacy and behavioral change. Social learning is also commonly referred to as observational learning because it comes about as a result of observing models (Bandura, 1977).

Social Disorganization Theory- Social disorganization theory helped education researchers address important unseen dangers in studying African -American outcomes and achievement gaps. According to social disorganization theory, the number of single-parent households, mobility, diversity, and poverty undermine a community's ability to socially control and pass on the norms, expectations, and values that lead to acceptable, successful community outcomes (Maydun, 2011).

Teacher Turnover- The rate at which teachers exit schools is known as teacher turnover. It consists of both teacher migration "movers," those who transfer or migrate to teaching positions in other schools) and teacher attrition "leavers," those who leave teaching altogether (Boggs, 2022).

Conclusion

The research aimed to explore the literacy gap between economically-disadvantaged students and their peers. The study consisted of five chapters. In Chapter One, the researcher introduced the study, described its problem, and reviewed the rationale and research questions. Chapter Two synthesized the literature related to the study, explained the causal factors that contributed to the achievement gap between urban students and their peers, the history of the inequitable educational system, and the lack of opportunity that promoted inequalities in the educational system in the United States.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Introduction

Chapter Two reviews the literature on the history of urban education, the literacy gap between urban and non-urban students, the need to improve urban students' literacy progress, and the theoretical framework used in the study. The chapter highlights the unequal education system and the reasons for the achievement gap between urban and non-urban students. Studies show that Black and Brown children historically receive poor quality education due to structural inequalities in society. This leads to an opportunity gap and unequal outcomes, such as achievement gaps.

History of Urban Education in the United States

Educators have great moral, ethical, and legal obligations to ensure all students reach their full potential and receive an equal opportunity to become strong contributors to society. Not long ago, America's unequal treatment of African American students manifested into a renowned court case, Brown vs. Board of Education (1954). Although Brown versus the Board of Education (1954) was a successful win, the fight continues for equal educational opportunities for Black and Brown students. There appears to be a continual achievement gap between economically advantaged and disadvantaged students in this country. The lack of opportunity that promotes these achievement gaps makes attaining the American Dream challenging. In the United States, Black children are more likely than their White counterparts to face certain barriers to educational success (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2017a). The progress in reducing achievement gaps has not been steady or evenly paced. The achievement gap between Black and white students consistently declined until 1988; at this point, the achievement gap began an upward

trend (Lee, 2002) and has since stabilized. Despite many measures taken, a recent review suggested that ongoing socioeconomic and social stratification differences are at the root of the achievement gap (Robinson, 2016). The recognition of structural inequalities in society along racial, gender, socioeconomic, and identity lines has translated into a discussion that the education system presents an opportunity gap that leads to unequal outcomes, such as achievement gaps (Billings, 2013). Differences in academic achievement or the achievement gap between Black and White students become apparent as children enter the K–12 school system (Chernoff et al., 2007; Kewal Ramani et al., 2016). The educational outcomes of Black students relative to their White peers continue to raise concerns among educators, policymakers, and the public at large (Barton & Coley, 2010; Campbell et al., 1966; Wixom, 2015). One must be aware of the stark differences to understand the state of urban education in America and the need to improve urban students' literacy progress. The school systems in low-SES communities are often under-resourced, negatively affecting students' academic progress and outcomes (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). When children live in poverty, they are at risk for school failure and mental, behavioral, and educational problems (Carter et al., 2008). Certain racial groups are more at-risk for poverty than others, and poverty frequently has been described as generational. Ethnic minority groups such as Hispanics and African-Americans are more likely to be at risk compared to other peers such as Asians and Whites (Carter et al., 2008). In the United States, Black children are more likely than their White counterparts to face certain barriers to educational success (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2017a). The progress in reducing achievement gaps has not been steady or evenly paced. Black–White gaps in U.S. student achievement consistently declined until

1988 but then began an upward trend (Lee, 2002) and have since stabilized. Despite many measures taken, a recent review suggested that ongoing socioeconomic and social stratification differences are at the root of the achievement gap (Robinson, 2016).

Poverty is a key community-level variable in explaining the achievement gap (Ferguson, 2004; Wiggan, 2007). African-American children's exposure to neighborhood poverty is particularly problematic in the 1990s. About 39% of Black children were born in poor neighborhoods during the period between 1994 and 1996 (Timberlake, 2007). According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the average Black 12th-grade student's proficiency is roughly the same as the average White 8th grader (Roach, 2004). Any number of logical causal factors explains this achievement gap for a more detailed and diverse list, but they tend to primarily stem from factors such as parental/family attributes, school quality, or individual psychological characteristics (Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). Black children's schooling experiences in America, according to empirical and theoretical studies published by a large cadre of scholars, is that Black children have historically received poor quality instructional materials, limited resources, and pedagogical and curricular methods that are incongruent with their culture and learning styles (Allen et al., 2005; Kunjufu, 2006; Marable, 2005). Kozol (2005) found that 35 out of 48 states spend less money per student in school districts with higher numbers of Black (and increasingly Latino) children (Amanishakete, 2013, p. 1). Schools significantly contribute to the current prison crisis, with more than half of incarcerated individuals entering prison without a high school diploma. Academic achievement gaps affect students' educational development, primarily urban students' literacy progress. Academic achievement gaps can potentially

have lasting effects well beyond urban students' school careers. Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a solid predictor of high school graduation rates, leading many educators to focus on the intermediate grades of third, fourth, and fifth (Hernandez, 2011). "Students who fail to reach this critical milestone often falter in the later grades and drop out before earning a high school diploma" (Hernandez, 2011, p. 3). The school systems in low-SES communities are often under-resourced, negatively affecting students' academic progress and outcomes (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). When children live in poverty, they are at risk for school failure and mental, behavioral, and educational problems (Carter et al., 2008).

Underfunded school districts play a major role in contributing to the achievement gap between low socioeconomic students and their peers. This effect is most evident in Title 1 public schools with low funding allocation and high concentrations of low-income students. The majority of funding for schools is obtained through state and local taxes, with 11% of education funding originating from federal funds. (Peter G. Foundation, 2023, Federal Funding Programs for K-12 section, para. 1). On average, nearly half of the school funds come from local revenues, most of which derive from property taxes. Differences in funding lead to major disparities from district to district, and even school to school, in allocating local property tax funding because of the wide variety in property values and tax revenues collected from these local property taxes (Benner et al., 2018). The federal government's partial solution to these disparities is the Title I program. Title I is a program that identifies public schools with low property tax revenue allocation towards schools and high concentrations of low-income students, providing federal funding for those schools as supplementary aid (Bradley, 2022). This federal policy seeks

to allocate resources to areas of highest need to ensure that all children have access to a fair, equitable, and high-quality education. The policy recognizes that children from families living in areas with high concentrations of poverty are more likely to face educational disadvantages.

According to recent national assessments, low literacy rates among low-income families are due to incremental academic gaps between urban students and their counterparts. Over time, urban students' academic achievement has gradually improved. Unfortunately, the progress of students living in lower socioeconomic areas remains below student expectations. Urban students performing below basic on national assessments are a concern that extends far beyond independent families. This issue stems from low-income communities where access to print is extremely limited. Environmental factors, such as the home literacy environment of students, have a significant impact on their literacy experiences and reading motivation. For many low-SES students, the Home Life Environment (HLEs) where they were raised lacks the resources and activities necessary to build a strong literacy and language foundation. A student's home life environment is a space where learning, exploration, and reading are fostered and encouraged. The HLE must be a place where children read and observe parents reading. Reading exposure may contribute to preliteracy skills, such as phonological awareness, and literacy strategies, such as letter knowledge, word recognition, and word decoding. (pp. 112-113). According to Larson and Marsh (2015), the sociocultural theory "defines the child as an active member of a constantly changing community of learners in which knowledge constructs and is constructed by larger cultural systems" (p. 100). The works of several prominent researchers and linguists, such as Gee (2001), Goodman (2001),

Heath (1982), Mays (2008), and Meier (2003), supported the sociocultural belief that a child's environment has a significant impact on their written and oral language development. The impact of children's environments on their literacy development is especially noticeable when children enter school.

The literacy gap between urban primary students and their counterparts is considerable, and this is mainly due to the lack of parental involvement in at-home literacy practices and academic conversations. Gee (2001) and Otto (2008) both support the theory that a child's literacy foundation is developed through their observation and interaction with the environment, which is usually their home. Unfortunately, for many children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, the home environment does not provide sufficient opportunities for deep literacy development (Van Vechten, 2013).

According to Garcia & Weiss, 2017, research documents that a portion of the gap in school readiness between high and low-SES children is likely due to factors that are correlated with socioeconomic status but are not directly attributable to the parental income, job status, and mother's education level that make up our SES metric. Students' level of ability to learn upon entering school is essential when predicting academic success in kindergarten and beyond. Several contributing factors affect a student's readiness skills, including whether English is the primary language, the number of books accessible to children, pre-kindergarten experience, and exposure to literacy activities, to name a few. Children's language development has a direct impact on their reading achievement (Rothstein, 2002. Moats (1999, as cited in Dwyer & Neuman 2011) stated that kindergarten students' word knowledge impacts their reading comprehension throughout their educational career. Moats (1999, as cited in Dwyer & Neuman 2011),

for example, estimated that the difference at entry into first grade may be as large as 15,000 words, with linguistically disadvantaged children knowing about 5,000 words, compared to their advantaged peers, who have 20,000 words (p.104).

Garcia and Weiss's 2017 report revealed that students' social class is a major predictor of their educational success. Social class performance gaps also have long-term effects, indicating that students who start behind stay behind. The study analyzed the cognitive and noncognitive skills of children when they started school by using data from two academic cohorts, namely the kindergarten classes of 1998 and 2010, to investigate the correlation between their skills and socioeconomic status. According to Garcia and Weiss (2017), large performance gaps exist between children in the lowest and highest socioeconomic status (SES) quintiles, and these gaps have persisted from the 1998 cohort to the 2010 cohort. The academic achievement gaps between the two groups of students have not widened despite growing economic disparities. However, the gaps have not narrowed, even though low-SES parents have increased their involvement in their children's early education. Although some studies suggest a positive correlation between parental involvement and children's academic success, SuiChu and Willms (1996) found no clear-cut relationship between the two. Therefore, it's essential to examine these findings and their implications to see how previous research influences the research project. Harris and Robinson (2014) found that children whose parents were less involved achieved higher levels of academic success compared to children whose parents were more involved.

According to Beatty (2013), there continues to be a more than 20-point gap between white and Hispanic students in reading and mathematics; the gaps between

Black and White students follow a similar pattern (para.1). Beatty's research also highlights increases in achievement gaps among children of different income levels, which are detected in children before entering kindergarten. The stark difference emerges in students' cognitive scores, with students from high socioeconomic groups scoring 60% higher than those in the lowest socioeconomic groups. Research shows that Black and Brown children from marginalized communities have poor-quality instructional materials and limited resources (Beatty, 2013, para.1). According to Lichner et al. (2017), among children in the low-SES group, over one-third are Hispanic, just under a quarter are White17.7 % and 43.2 % are Black. Garcia and Weiss (2017) found that children who entered kindergarten in 2010 were not at all equally prepared for school, with social class being a powerful factor in their abilities at kindergarten entry. In the education arena, children's socioeconomic status (of which income is a key component) is one of the most significant predictors—if not the strongest predictor—of educational success, whether that success is measured by test scores, high school graduation rates, or college attendance and completion rates.

Educators have a crucial role to play in closing the achievement gap between students in low socio-economic areas and their more affluent peers. Unfortunately, students in under-resourced schools often have lower test scores, contributing to this disparity. Beatty (2013) attributes academic achievement gaps to schools with less qualified teachers and poorer resources. The implementation of a rigorous curriculum, the quality of teachers, class size, and teacher attendance and retention are all factors that affect student outcomes.

The increase in teacher turnover continues to occur in many areas of the United States (Hammond, L. D. & Thomas, C. D. 2017). Curbing the constant churn of teachers through high-poverty schools is necessary if students are to receive the education they deserve (Loeb et al., 2013). Hanushek et al. (2016, as cited in Hammond & Thomas 2017), in areas where the student population is primarily of color, the turnover rate has been as high as 70 % (p. 17). In urban schools, the teacher population is more prone to be inexperienced, with a higher rate of no teacher training (Hammond, L. D. & Thomas, C. D. 2017). Turnover means using substitutes and volunteer teachers to cover classes without a staffed teacher. Urban public schools with high percentages of students from socioeconomically marginalized backgrounds in the United States suffer from high teacher turnover (Kokka, 2016). In fact, as many as half of teachers in under-resourced schools in the United States leave within the first five years of teaching and as soon as the first three years in some urban districts (Papay et al., 2017, as cited in Bradford & Kamrath 2020 para.1). High teacher turnover rates in schools with predominantly students of color have resulted in lower academic performance by these students compared to their peers. Additionally, these students are more likely to be placed in special education classes. Urban schools also tend to hire teachers who are less qualified, particularly in high-minority, low-income schools where uncertified teachers are often employed. (Lockwood et al., 2015). By every measure of qualifications—certification, subject matter background, pedagogical training, selectivity of college attended, test scores, or experience—less qualified teachers often teach in schools serving greater numbers of low-income and minority students (Esra et al., 2007). Studies reveal that students of color in low-income schools are 10 times more likely to have uncertified

teachers, not fully prepared, or teaching outside their field of preparation than students in predominantly white and more affluent schools (Hammond &Thomas, 2010, p. 9). This highlights a significant and unacceptable disparity in the quality of education received by students of different socio-economic backgrounds.

According to Jepsen (2015), class size is an extremely popular education reform among many stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and educationalists. With such broad appeal, reducing class size is also popular among policymakers. Intuitively, students in smaller classes should have better learning outcomes than students in larger classes—for example, the teacher can provide more individualized attention in smaller classes, and classroom discipline is easier with fewer students (Jepsen, 2015). Typically, smaller classes enhance student achievement as measured by standardized tests. Smaller class sizes are integral to closing the achievement gap in early grades. Small class sizes offer students from poverty an opportunity to get the individualized attention they require, and they tend to be more beneficial for younger students than for older students. With fewer students in the classroom, an educator is afforded more time to understand students and tailor instruction to meet their needs (Chen, 2020). Studies suggest that students in smaller classes have fewer disciplinary problems and are more likely to take college entrance exams (Chen, 2020). While various research supports the concept of smaller class sizes, there is empirical data that suggests otherwise. Based on several case studies, there is no evidence that reductions in class size are associated with gains in student achievement. The results show little if any, improvement in achievement resulting from the reductions in class size. In addition to class size, studies show that parent involvement affected students'

academic performance (Barnum, 2022). The presence of more parents in the workforce, the fast pace of modern society as a whole, and the declining role of the family have all been reasons that some social scientists have pointed to an apparent decline in parental involvement in education (Jeynes, 2012, Johnson al., 2008). Educators also realize that children in urban areas may be influenced by these realities as much or more than any group in the country (Jasis & Ordonez-Jasis, 2012; Lightfoot, 2007; Johnson et al., 2008).

Parent Involvement

According to the Annie E. Foundation (2023), parental involvement is the active, ongoing participation of a parent or primary caregiver in the education of a child. Parental involvement programs are school-sponsored initiatives designed to require or encourage parental participation in their children's education. Parental involvement typically is confronted as a problem in urban schools as a direct result of limited resources and/or a perceived lack of support at home; however, this one-size-fits-all approach to defining parental involvement does not serve all students well and neglects the various social practices that may comprise parental involvement (Barton et al., 2004; Howard, n.d.; Lightfoot, 2007).

Research has demonstrated that parental involvement positively affects students' academic achievement, leading to a vast amount of literature on the subject (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Scholars continue to show an interest in the topic of parental involvement (PI) because researchers have consistently established a direct association between PI and positive student academic outcomes (Ryan et al., 2010). An ever-growing body of research indicates that parental involvement is a key factor in the success of children in school (Brown, 1999; Coatsworth & Masten, 1998; Columbo, 1995; Gonzalez, 2002;

Vincent, 1996; Zellman & Waterman, 1998). Studies indicate that when parents take an active interest in their child's educational process, their education benefits positively.

According to research (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Farah et al., 2005), children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families typically start school with fewer pre-academic and self-regulatory skills compared to their peers. Failing to provide early prevention for school readiness leads to an academic achievement gap that widens over time (Reardon, 2011; Denton et al., 2001), putting children from disadvantaged families at risk for school failure, dropout, and markedly fewer professional opportunities in adulthood.

Parent engagement is critical in kindergarten because kindergarten is a transition for children and their parents, and success in kindergarten has direct connections to academic success in future grades and learning for life (Stone, 2016). Entrance into kindergarten is a transition for children and their parents. How successful children are in kindergarten directly connects to their academic success in future grades and learning for life. When parents display high levels of involvement, it is associated with better student attendance, higher reading and math scores, higher graduation rates, and less retention (Bunijevac & Durisic 2017). It has also been associated with nonacademic outcomes, such as parent and student satisfaction with school and fewer discipline problems (Hiatt-Michael, 2001), positive attitudes, and more effective programs and schools (Lewis, 1993).

The participation of parents is an essential component of education reform strategies (Bomia et al., 1997). Research highlights that students whose parents are

involved in their education generally have "24 higher grades and test scores, better attendance, higher graduation rates, and greater enrollment in postsecondary education." According to National PTA President Linda Hodge: "It has been proven that parent involvement transcends many of the barriers that contribute to the achievement gap, such as socio-economic status, ethnic/racial background, and the parent's level of education" (as cited in Estrella, 2007, p. 25). "Research showed connections between parental involvement and student academic achievement. Students with involved parents or other caregivers earn higher grades and test scores, have better social skills, and show improved behavior" (Garcia & Thornton, 2014, p. 1). Increased parental involvement is associated with gains in cognition and language and social-emotional development (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2016), as well as children's self-esteem, emotional self-regulation, and self-perceptions of academic competence (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014).

Student Attendance

Ensuring regular attendance is crucial for resolving the early literacy crisis. Students from low-income families tend to miss 10 percent or more of the school year due to excused or unexcused absences. Research has shown a clear correlation between absences and reading abilities. Failure to attend school regularly results in students missing out on fundamental reading skills. One in 10 kindergarten and first-grade students are chronically absent, missing almost a month of school. Children from low-income backgrounds are four times more likely to be chronically absent. Students can overcome their academic difficulties by improving their attendance (Attendance Works, 2014, p. 1).

Student motivation

Motivation involves psychological processes that bring about an individual's desire and intentions to behave in a particular way. The outcomes of motivation are generally expressed in terms of behaviors actually exhibited, the amount of effort exerted, or the choice of the strategy used to complete a job or task (Kinicki & Kreitner 1998). Learning and succeeding in school require active engagement, regardless of social class, race, and ethnicity (Engaging Schools, 2004). Student motivation concerns students' desire to participate in knowledge-gaining activities and includes their "willingness, need, and compulsion to participate in and be successful in the learning process" (Bomia et al., 1997, p. 1). Belmont and Skinner (1991) describe it further, noting that students who are motivated to engage in school "select tasks at the border of their competencies, initiate action when given the opportunity, and exert intense effort and concentration in the implementation of learning tasks; they generally show positive emotions during ongoing action, including enthusiasm, optimism, curiosity, and interest" (p. 3). On the other hand, less motivated or disengaged students "are passive, do not try hard, and give up easily in the face of challenges" (Belmont & Skinner, 1991, p. 4). There are many reasons why urban students become less engaged in learning, including influences from within and outside schools. These include family, culture, physical, social, and emotional health, and prior learning experiences (Mcinerney, 2000). Effectively motivating urban youths in school would provide a breakthrough in bridging the achievement gap that exists between minority and disadvantaged students and their white counterparts (Belmont & Skinner, 1991). Pinkney (2000, as cited in Estrella, 2007) concluded:

> Urban schools and students alike are at an unfortunate disadvantage. For instance, schools lack the budget necessary to accommodate the unique needs of urban students. Structures of urban schools are inherently different from suburban schools in that there are 22 expected changes in student morals and beliefs. Poor health, inadequate motivation, malnutrition, and lack of basic learning skills-all are found to a greater extent among children in urban areas than among students in suburbs (p. 21).

Researchers have found that urban schools report significantly lower feelings of belonging and academic detachment, which may explain why many students under-perform academically, report low motivation, drop out, and even engage in violent behavior (Cooney, 2002). It is important to note, however, that not all students in urban schools fit this criterion of academic devastation, and many remain motivated despite a lack of school belonging. The persistent issue of underachievement among youth living in poverty is a concern for educators, researchers, and policymakers alike (Burns et al., 2004; Kozol, 2005). While some studies emphasize achievement motivation as a stable personality trait, others contend that it can be nurtured. McClelland (1961) suggests that achievement motivation is an acquired, relatively stable, and general feature of personality that drives individuals to strive for success whenever their performance on a task can be evaluated against a standard of excellence.

Content Diversity's Impact on Literacy Development

Educators face many adversities when meeting the literacy needs of racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students. Teachers struggle to find literacy materials that incorporate varied strategies that engage all students. Due to this, these students are

falling below grade level and find themselves losing interest in reading. One of the challenges teachers face is how to capitalize on these diversities in their classrooms in order to have the greatest impact on students' literacy acquisition. Literature is responsible for reflecting society, but in some ways, it is also responsible for shaping it (Foley & Leahy 2018).

The International Reading Association adopted the belief of literacy theorists who indicated that incorporating a student's language and culture can increase the likelihood of success for culturally diverse learners. In support of closing this learning gap, the International Reading Association (2010a) adopted the belief of literacy theorists who indicated that the incorporation of a student's language and culture increases the likelihood of success in the culturally diverse learner. Ladson-Billings (2006) offered that the use of CR reading material may foster academic success by providing meaningful content to students. Other authorities agree that meaningful content will facilitate literacy learning=comprehension and that when teachers incorporate ''culturally relevant reading materials in their literacy lessons, they can engage the learner in the concepts being taught on a more meaningful and personal level'' (Ali et al., 2007, p. 421). In primary years, children start to notice differences in people and develop opinions about these differences; therefore, it is crucial for teachers to incorporate diverse children's literature into classroom reading selections (Wilkins et al., 2016).

Readers' Workshop Impact

When students enter school, their level of readiness plays a significant role in predicting their academic success in kindergarten and beyond. Several factors affect a student's readiness skills: whether English is the primary language, social competence,

and self-regulation. Reading instruction aims to teach students reading strategies while providing text so students can make connections. In an article by Foster (1995), the readers' workshop allows students to control their reading experiences through self-selected texts, discussions with classmates and educators, and direct instruction of reading strategies through mini-lessons based on their individual learning needs. The readers' workshop focuses on allowing students to choose what to read. Krashen (2004) found that no single literacy activity has a more positive effect on students' comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, spelling, writing ability, and overall academic achievement than free voluntary reading. In addition, Allington and Gabriel (2012a) found that students' reading volume and understanding of the text read are increased by being able to choose what they read. Studies have also shown that providing a choice of what to read is about twice as effective at developing literacy skills as teacher-selected reading (Lindsay, 2010). When teachers allow students to choose their own texts, it drastically increases literacy progress and student engagement. Allowing students to choose their own texts enhances their motivation to read, stamina, and reading comprehension.

Atwell (2010) concluded that reading books every day is the only activity that reliably relates to proficiency in reading, and that is frequent, wide book reading that creates avid readers. Additionally, access to books and time to read can lessen poverty's effects on literacy development (Krashen, 2011). In order for students to grow into strong readers, they must develop reading strategies such as decoding, blending, and comprehension skills. Allowing students to apply these reading strategies to an authentic text while they are reading independently will enhance their reading progress.

According to various research studies, many of the reading interventions students experience are not based on social practice. As such, many reading interventions have no social interaction. Much of the instruction occurs in isolation on a computer or by repeating a predetermined script with little interaction with classmates or the teacher, and it is questionable whether there is sustainable growth in this style of literacy learning (Land & Moustafa 2002; Land & Moustafa 2005; McIntyre et al., 2008). In a research article by Nesheim & Taylor (2001), the Readers' workshop is a learner-centered approach to teaching reading and is implemented to encourage students to share their reactions to readings, make connections between the readings and their life experiences, make their own reading selections, and participate in setting goals for their future reading. The readers' workshop model also encourages teachers to have a classroom library that reflects various student interests, genres, and ability levels (Feinberg, 2007).

Components of Readers Workshop

According to Davakos (2018), the Readers Workshop design presents students with instructional strategies and includes a framework of the literacy portion within Language Arts instruction (Serafini & Serafini-Youngs, 2006). Furthermore, the Readers' Workshop Model encompasses several moving pieces, all of which focus on enhancing students' motivation, fluency, and comprehension. Calkins (2010) proposed that through reading workshops, students can "become avid, reflective, critical readers who comprehend with depth and vigor and who construct richly literate lives for themselves in and out of school" (p. 107). To achieve maximum learning ability and participation levels, students must learn to respond to the text through reading response journal entries, teacher and student conferences, and having academic conversations with peers.

The reader response approach to literature is a concept that emphasizes the importance of a reader's interaction with the text. The approach suggests that a work of literature truly comes alive when readers connect and engage with the test. When students select texts, they make personal connections by creating dialogue about literature, and teachers encourage students to engage with the text on a deeper level through peer conversations.

Fulps and Young (1991, as cited in Castillo, 2018) argued, "Reading response journals provide students with an opportunity to respond and interpret their reading personally" (para. 3). The researchers believed that students often do not have opportunities to construct personal meaning as they read and formulate their thoughts during writing. It is essential for teachers to allow students to ask and answer questions about their reading and writing, as one of the primary reasons RWM includes reader response journals is to increase comprehension (Fulps & Young,1991). As stated by Fulps & Young (1991), "Reading response journals enable students to grow as readers and writers by requiring them to use their own background knowledge to construct personal meaning and by encouraging, in writing, the integration of new experiences with past ones" (p. 110). Encouraging students to put what they read in their own words allows them to take ownership of what they read.

Conferencing is the dialogue between the teacher and the student (Eischens & Streefland, 2014). Teachers conference one-on-one while the readers' workshop is in progress, which gives teachers insight into students' progress (Williams, 2021). Conferencing also helps teachers develop relationships with students through conversations about their chosen books and feelings about their progress (Lause, 2004).

During this conversation, teachers also observe students' ability to apply reading strategies and note students' strengths and areas of support. Morgan et al. (2013) (as cited in Eischens & Streefland, 2014) describe conferencing as a way "to understand students' reading experiences better, to explore students' book selections, and to help students find books that capture their interest and are at an appropriate level," (p. 8). allowing teachers time to give one-on-one feedback that addresses improvement needs and what students have done well. They allow time for differentiation and opportunities to work one-on-one with students. Teachers can observe their class and jot down specific observations to record students' reading habits. Observations can be as simple as watching students' behavior and body language as they read. Lause (2004), as cited in Eischens & Streefland, 2014), discovered observations can provide teachers with knowledge of what students are capable of during independent reading time and what skills they may still need support developing.

The Readers' Workshop Model allows teachers to incorporate discussions and student text interpretations, which moves the discussion to higher levels. In this goal, teachers may still choose topics, but student input drives the discussion. The first goal is to change teacher-student interaction patterns. Changing the classroom dialogue pattern will allow for more student input and less control from the teacher. The goal is for the teacher to become coequal in the discussion instead of the leader. Sharing provides a time for teachers and students to voice these discoveries through the literature they have been reading. Sharing time can be flexible throughout the reading workshop block of time, either at the beginning or end of the workshop. There does not need to be a specific time for sharing. Students can take the time to share about books they have enjoyed, offer

suggestions about what to read next, and confer about anything related to reading. Miller (2014) states, "Students develop confidence and self-efficacy as readers through their relationships with other readers in reading communities that include both their peers and teacher" (p. xxvii). Teachers need to keep in mind that students will want to share their findings and ideas; therefore, enforcing a time limit is beneficial (Ruetzel, 1991). Miller (2014) states, "Students develop confidence and self-efficacy as readers through their relationships with other readers in reading communities that include both their peers and teacher" (p. xxvii). Conversations help students build empathy, understanding, respect for others' opinions, and ownership of their learning; this will allow students to expand their ideas by considering the insights of their peers.

Another component of the readers' workshop model is the mini-lesson. Mini-lessons serve as a source of instruction focusing on literacy standards mandated by the state and local school districts (Ruetzel, 1991). Mini-lessons showcase direct and explicit instruction that focuses on specific strategies. The mini-lesson focusses on a reading strategy teachers explicitly teach in a condensed amount of time. Williams (2021) states, "Lessons broken down into smaller, more meaningful parts make it easier for students to process and remember new information" (p.9). According to author Meyer (2010), "The teachers think aloud while reading the text, making their thinking visible for the students as they predict, ask questions, clarify, make connections, and comment about the text" p. 1, para 4). Additionally, mini-lessons are an opportunity to introduce or review reading routines and expectations to students. Whatever the topic of the mini-lesson, the most important thing is for teachers to help students make connections with reading and apply their learning to situations in daily reading.

Research has long shown that teaching early elementary students phonics is the most reliable way to ensure they learn how to read words. Much of the current debate around reading instruction has focused on phonics teaching, as many schools don't currently follow research-based best practices (Schwartz, 2020). In Education Week's national survey of early reading teachers, only 23% said beginning readers should use these texts most often. The majority, 61%, said that students should read books with high-frequency words, predictable sentence structures, and pictures emphasizing meaning (Schwartz, 2020, Getting reading right: An education week project section, para.1). Often called leveled books, these texts are rated on a difficulty scale. Teachers aim to match students with books at their level.

The academic curriculum requires elementary students to read longer and more complex texts in order to build their vocabulary, enhance their comprehension skills, and achieve fluency in reading.

According to the Common Core Standards:

> To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new. (Common Core State Standards National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. 4).

Theoretical Perspective

Decades of research explain the connection between SES and academic achievement. Studies have addressed determining appropriate interventions that improve at-risk readers' self-efficacy and attitudes toward literacy. Prior research also suggests that children from low socioeconomic backgrounds demonstrate lower levels of school readiness than peers of higher socioeconomic backgrounds. African-American student achievement outcomes have been and continue to be a critical concern for education researchers. Scholars have made strides in their analysis of pertinent factors that explain achievement gaps between African-American and White students, such as poverty, family composition, teacher/school quality, and achievement motivation, among others (Alexander & Entwisle,1992; Davis-Kean, 2005; Rankin & Quane, 2002).

Social Disorganization Theory

Social disorganization theory helped education researchers address important unseen dangers in studying African -American outcomes and achievement gaps. According to social disorganization theory, the number of single-parent households, mobility, diversity, and poverty undermine a community's ability to socially control and pass on the norms, expectations, and values that lead to acceptable, successful community outcomes. Social disorganization theory analyzes the community's effects on students' academic achievement based on neighborhood characteristics, socioeconomic status, parents' education, and profession.

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura (1977) claimed that social learning theory directly correlated a person's perceived self-efficacy and behavioral change. Social learning is also commonly referred

to as observational learning because it results from observing models. Bandura (1986) argued that personal, behavioral, and environmental influences cause human behavior. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) holds that portions of an individual's knowledge acquisition can be directly related to observing others within social interactions, experiences, and outside media influences. The theory states that when people observe a model performing a behavior and the consequences of that behavior, the Personal Factors (Cognition, Affect, Biology) and Environmental Factors of Behavior remember the sequence of events and use this information to guide subsequent behaviors. Observing a model can also prompt viewers to engage in behavior they have already learned (Bandura, 1986, 2002).

People learn by observing others, with the environment, behavior, and cognition as the chief factors influencing development in a reciprocal triadic relationship. For example, each behavior witnessed can change a person's way of thinking (cognition). Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) revolves around the process of knowledge acquisition or learning directly correlated to the observation of models. *Modeling* is the term that best describes and, therefore, is used to characterize the psychological processes that underlie matching behavior (Bandura, 1977). According to Bandura (1977):

> learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions, this coded information serves as a guide for action. (p. 22)

A common misconception regarding modeling is that it only leads to learning the behaviors teachers previously modeled. However, modeling can lead to innovative behavior patterns. Observers typically see a given behavior performed by multiple models. In contrast, however, when simple routines prove useful, modeling can stifle innovation. So, the most innovative individuals appear to be those who are exposed to innovative models, provided that the models are not so innovative as to create an unreasonably difficult challenge in modeling their creativity and innovation (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Bandura et al., 1963).

Self-Efficacy Theory

Reading comprehension impacts "students' self-efficacy for reading and intrinsic motivation to read" (Barbosa et al., 2009, p. 196). Social Cognitive Theory posits that learning most likely occurs if there is a close identification between the observer and the model and if the observer also has a good deal of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the extent to which an individual believes they can master a particular skill (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy beliefs function as an important set of proximal determinants of human motivation, effect, and action, which operate on action through motivational, cognitive, and affective intervening processes (Bandura, 1989). Perceived self-efficacy was introduced by Bandura (1977) as "an integrative theoretical framework to explain and predict psychological changes achieved by different modes of treatment" (p. 191). Bandura's (1977) Self-efficacy theory connects students' academic achievement with their levels of motivation. According to Bandura (1995), self-efficacy is "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 2). Bandura and other researchers have found that an

individual's self-efficacy plays a major role in approaching goals, tasks, and challenges. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to believe they can master challenging problems and they can recover quickly from setbacks and disappointments. Individuals with low self-efficacy tend to be less confident and don't believe they can perform well, which leads them to avoid challenging tasks. The more students exhibit effort, perseverance, and motivation, the likelihood of increased student engagement, positively impacting literacy skills. Students involved in stimulating classroom environments that encourage peer interaction and foster learning will be more likely to become confident learners. Individuals with a sense of efficacy tend to work harder and persist longer when encountering difficulties than those who doubt their capabilities. Albert Bandura (1989) maintained that humans are active information processors and respond to their environment based on their experiences and the conclusions they draw internally. Individuals observe and participate in social interactions throughout their lifetimes, and they develop as individuals based on both these observations and their own interactions. Bandura (1989) proposed that behavior is not a product of unidirectional causation; it is instead influenced by cognition, environmental factors, and personal factors.

Gardner (1963) stated, "The ultimate goal of the educational system is to shift to the individual the burden of pursuing his own education." Bandura (1973) has posited that perceived self-efficacy encompasses more than beliefs that effort determines performance. Judgments of one's knowledge, skills, strategies, and stress management also form efficacy beliefs. Perceived academic self-efficacy is defined as personal judgments of one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action to attain designated types of educational performances (Bandura, 1977; Schunk, 1989).

Bandura (1977) hypothesized that efficacy beliefs influence the level of effort, persistence, and choice of activities. Self-efficacy is positively related to self-rated mental effort and achievement during students' learning from text material that was perceived as difficult (Salomon, 1984). Bandura (1989) states:

> Perceived self-efficacy is another cognitive factor that plays an influential role in the exercise of personal control over motivation. Whether negative discrepancies between internal standards and attainments are motivating or discouraging is partly determined by people's beliefs that they can attain the goals they set for themselves. Failure can easily dissuade those who have self-doubts about their capabilities. Those confident in their capabilities intensify their efforts when they fail to achieve what they seek, and they persist until they succeed. (p.47-48)

According to Schunk, the expectations of personal efficacy derive from 4 principal sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. Schunk (1989b) discussed how self-efficacy might operate during academic learning. At the start of an activity, students differ in their beliefs about their capabilities to acquire knowledge, perform skills, master the material, and so forth. Initial self-efficacy varies as a function of aptitude (e.g., abilities and attitudes) and prior experience. An individual also acquires capability information from the knowledge of others. Similar others offer the best basis for comparison (Schunk, 1989b). Observing similar peers perform a task conveys to observers that they, too, can accomplish it. Allington (2000) believed that for children to become good readers, they must spend more time reading (Allington, 2000). Research has shown that early success

in reading is one of the cornerstones of a lifetime of reading habits. Research suggests that students who can manipulate the spelling-to-sound code early appear to enter a positive feedback loop (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1992). Furthermore, a reciprocal effect occurs when reading increases their reading ability (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1992). Current research indicates that many students still have limited opportunities to actively engage with print and text in school despite the importance of this type of instruction and practice. Chard and Kam'enui (2000) examined the print reading of first-grade students at risk of reading difficulties. The researcher made observations during students reading instruction in general education and/or Title I intervention. A more recent study of student print reading suggests that little has changed over the years in the number of reading students at risk of experiencing reading difficulties in their reading instruction and indicates this lack of print practice may start as early as kindergarten. Kent et al. (2012) studied the number of times students at risk of reading difficulties in kindergarten spent actively engaged in print reading (sounds, words, or text) during Tier I core reading instruction. In kindergarten, educators identify students who may be at risk of reading difficulties, those who score less than eight letters correct on a Letter Naming Fluency [LNF] measure. These students are observed individually in their Tier I reading instruction in the fall and spring. Findings suggest that during an average 90-minute reading instructional block, kindergarteners at risk of reading difficulties read orally on average for more than 1 minute despite receiving large amounts of code-focused instruction. This evidence suggests that students have limited practice reading print, resulting in reading difficulties from the earliest grades.

Scripted Reading Program

Illiteracy is a major concern in America. National concern for the lack of reading proficiency of U.S. adolescents has grown over the past twenty or so years and has reached a level described as a crisis (Jacobs, 2008). Many large urban school districts have opted for scripted programs for high-poverty, low-achieving, struggling adolescent readers. The theory supporting such programs includes components of reading that are "research-based" or "research-proven" (Shanahan, 2002). They are an extension or an example of what some would refer to as the "science of reading" (Walsh et al., 2006, p. 28).

Many economically disadvantaged and minority students are a part of this struggling reader group. To remedy the problem, literacy scholars and policymakers have documented a growing understanding of how classrooms and school cultures can help advance struggling adolescent readers' development (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010). However, despite efforts from literacy scholars and policymakers, students fail to become proficient readers.

Educators have tried several different literacy programs to provide quality instruction to urban, struggling readers. Unfortunately, students' ability to read on grade level and motivation to read remains challenging; moreover, students' enthusiasm to read has been linked to reading achievement. There continues to be ongoing research regarding how to improve urban, economically-disadvantaged students' motivation to read. Researchers of motivation theory often attribute students' disengagement and devaluing reading as distinct motivational orientations to intrapersonal cognitive processes (Bandura, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992). Other

researchers may attribute motivation to the interpersonal relationships between the teacher and the student (Wentzel, 2009).

Some school district leaders chose reading programs that included reading scripts for teachers to use to help support students' critical thinking and improve reading achievement (Dresser, 2012). Additionally, many large urban school districts opted for scripted programs for high-poverty, low-achieving, struggling adolescent readers. The theory supporting such programs includes components of reading that are "research-based" or "research-proven" (Shanahan, 2002, p. 28). These theories extend and provide examples of what some would refer to as the "science of reading" (Glaser et al., 2006, p. 28). The "science of reading" is a body of research studies from the past four decades on early reading or aspects of reading. The studies included in the "science" are only those designed to compare in randomly formed groups, demonstrating the effectiveness of one method over another. This science was built primarily from the summaries of these studies (Adams, 1990; Chall, 1967; NICHD, 2000).

Researchers often cite the Science of Reading as the current reason for schools to adopt scripted models of reading instruction, explaining that scripted reading instruction is when the commercial reading program, not the classroom teacher, determines what the teacher says during instruction (McIntyre et al., 2008). The program sets the lesson pace (a certain number of lessons within a certain number of days). The teacher's job is to execute the pre-made plan of the scripted program without making adjustments for the instructional needs of the children in the classroom. In fact, in most cases, districts pay people (instructional coaches/literacy leaders) to observe teachers to ensure that they

follow the commercial program verbatim (Bradley & Delpit, 2003). According to Bradley and Delpit:

> As a result of the all-consuming testing enterprise, classrooms—particularly those in low-income, urban areas—are inundated with scripted instructional programs, packaged classroom management schemes, and consultants whose job is to 'police' teachers to ensure that all of the scripts are followed and all of the management policies implemented. (p.284)

In hopes of urban students improving their literacy ability, school districts turned to "silver bullet" programs. School districts' strict adherence to a script and a "one-size-fits-all" approach was under the assumption it would lead to better performance and higher achievement under the cloak of improved test scores (Allington & Walmsley, 1995; Alvermann, 2002). However, high assessment scores do not directly correlate to better-reading students. Previous studies have confirmed that teachers' skills and dedication are the most effective factors in enhancing students' academic performance. (Bond, 1967; Dewitz, 2013; Dykstra, 1997; Graves, 1997; Jones, 2013; O'Connor & Pearson, Vadasy, 2013).

Conclusion

The literature review examined the history and research of the achievement gap between urban students and their peers. The literature review analyzed existing research on urban primary students' motivation to read and their literacy progress compared to their peers. Next, the researcher explained the potential causes of students' lack of motivation to read and lower academic success. The researcher reviewed the theoretical

framework of social disorganization theory, social cognition theory, and self-efficacy theory. The next chapter explores the methodology.

In Chapter Three, the researcher provides this study's methodology. The methodology includes the study's purpose and a description of the research design. Additionally, the researcher introduces the research sites, participants, population, and sample. Consideration is also given to the data collection, methodology, and analysis while the researcher describes the ethical considerations.

Chapter Three: Research Method

This mixed methods study examined the history and research of the literacy achievement gap between urban students and their peers. In addition, this study identified the impact the Readers' Workshop Model had on students' academic success and motivation to read. Several fields of study have employed mixed methods research, including education, social sciences, and various healthcare disciplines (Cameron & Molina-Azorin, 2011, p. 286). Previous studies have addressed determining appropriate interventions that improve at-risk readers' self-efficacy and attitudes toward literacy. The available research did not focus on the Readers' Workshop Model's impact on K-2 urban primary students' literacy and academic progress. Given that current studies provide little to no data regarding the impact of the Readers' Workshop Model (RWM) on urban students academically, the problem addressed by this study was the literacy gap between students in economically-disadvantaged areas and their counterparts. This study determined if the Readers' Workshop Model was a successful strategy teachers could implement to improve students' enthusiasm to read and independent reading levels in kindergarten, first, and second-grade students. These research questions guided the study:

Research Questions

RQ1: How do teachers perceive the Readers' Workshop Model's (RWM) effect on students' reading ability?

RQ2: What are the teachers' perspectives regarding their ability to motivate students to read?

RQ3: How do teachers impact students' reading progress?

RQ4: How do teachers implement Readers' Workshop Model intervention?

RQ5: How confident are teachers in teaching Being a Reader curriculum?

RQ6: What are the implications of students' Galileo assessment scores with regard to reading progress?

Null Hypotheses

Null H1.1: There is no association between kindergarten students' reading level achievement before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo Assessment).

Null H1.2: There is no association between first-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo assessment).

Null H1.3: There is no association between second-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo assessment).

Null H2.1: There will be no difference in kindergarten students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment.

Null H2.2: There will be no difference in first-grade students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment.

Null H2.3: There will be no difference in second-grade students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment.

Chapter Three includes sections on the research method, design, sample, and population. This chapter also includes information on data collection, the study's qualitative and quantitative approach, and assumptions. Finally, the researcher describes the instrumentation, analysis, delimitations, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

This study investigated the achievement gap between urban students and their peers through teachers' perspectives and classroom observations. It used a mixed-methods research approach to test the null hypotheses that there was no association between the reading level scores of first, second, and third-grade students before and after the implementation of the Readers' Workshop Model as measured by the Galileo assessment. This study employed an empirical methodology and a mixed-methods approach to establish connections that concerned the literacy gap between urban students and their counterparts. The most significant benefit of this study was how it explored the factors that affected students' early literacy development. The data obtained from this theoretical approach was a valuable tool that contributed to the understanding and knowledge base of successful strategies teachers implemented to promote academic success and improve reading levels in kindergarten, first, and second-grade students (Amanishakete, 2013).

The Site and Participants

The study took place in a Title-1 elementary school in Missouri. A mixed-methods research design determined reading progress and students' motivation to read utilizing the Reader's Workshop Model of reading instruction. The teacher population of this study was from an urban Missouri elementary school. The researcher did not collect student participants' ages, which was not pertinent to this study. The researcher invited general education classroom teachers from the participating elementary school to volunteer to participate in the study during the 2022 fall semester. The instructional coach and teachers from the pre-k through second-grade primary building volunteered to allow

the researcher to conduct classroom observations. Each potential teacher participant had the autonomy to participate in the study (Bluman, 2015, p. 14). Throughout the 2022 fall semester, the instructional coach and teachers were presented with surveys through Qualtrics. The researcher allowed them time to complete the survey at their convenience. Four pre-k through second-grade teachers agreed to be observed throughout the year.

Population

A population is a group with the same characteristics (Creswell 2012). According to U.S. News Education, the research site was a public school located in Midwest MO in a large suburb setting. The population for this study included kindergarten, first, and second-grade students in a k-2 primary building located in Midwestern Missouri during the 2023-2024 school year. The data indicated that 11% of students achieved proficiency or above in math, while 18% scored at or above that level for reading. The school's minority student enrollment was 97%, African American student enrollment was 92.4 %, the Caucasian student population was 2.6%, Hispanic/Latino student enrollment was 1.5%, and students with two or more races were 3.5%. The student-teacher ratio was 12:1, which was lower than most districts. The student population was comprised of 52% female students and 48 % male students. The school enrolled 99% of economically-disadvantaged students. The school employed 28 equivalent full-time teachers. Lastly, the school evaluated the effect of the Reader's Workshop Model on students' reading progress through a random sample population.

A random sample population was used to evaluate the Reader's Workshop Model's effect on students' reading progress. The researcher randomly sampled teachers' and students' classroom data within a pre-K through the second-grade primary building.

In this study, the researcher took the sample and used simple random sampling because each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. The function of simple random sampling was to choose individuals to participate and represent the population. As a result, the researcher understood the various problems that the students faced. Random sampling enabled the researcher to select a subset of participants from a population randomly. Data was collected from that random subset of all willing participants in the study in the chosen elementary school. Contrarily, the study was limited to a few potential participants due to the number of experienced teachers at the research site. The research site served an urban population that struggled to recruit skilled and committed teachers; because teacher retention was a concern, recruiting qualified participants proved difficult.

The sampling included an elementary school in a local urban Missouri school district. The participating elementary school within the school district had mid-size class sizes and, typically, three to four teachers per grade level. Thus, the researcher hoped for high participation from the chosen school district teachers to provide a valid result (Fraenkel et al., 2019). However, Music, Art, and Physical Education teachers, administrators, and special education teachers were excluded from this study because they were unfamiliar with the Readers' Workshop Model.

The ages of the participants were unknown to the researcher as they did not correlate to the study of all the participating elementary teachers and students. One instructional coach completed the survey; nine teachers received the survey; however, four teachers completed the Qualtrics survey. In addition, the researcher conducted classroom observations in kindergarten, first and second-grade classrooms. The criterion

for the classrooms was to implement the Being a Reader model and participate in the Galileo, a mandated district assessment. Archived data was secured from the district for the current study. The Instructional Reading Level (IRL) scores from the fall 2023 Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) determined the number of students reading at or above grade level and those reading below grade level at the beginning of the school year.

Data Collection

Being a Reader (BAR) was a research-based reading curriculum adopted by the school district 6 years ago (Collaborative Classroom, 2023). The literacy assessments embedded within the BAR curriculum measured students' progress. Teachers assessed students' sight word and letter sound progress every four weeks to determine instructional reading level. This comprehensive reading curriculum was created to engage readers in grades K-2. Being a Reader Workshop Model infused mini-lessons, independent reading, and conferring into instruction to develop enthusiastic, fluent readers. Students' literacy levels were assessed according to the district's mandated Galileo assessment. Previous studies examined urban students' motivation and reading ability based on basal reading instruction instead of a guided reading program. This study was conducted to determine how a guided reading program impacted urban students' enthusiasm and literacy development. Being a Reader curriculum was designed to meet students at their current academic ability. After 30 weeks of Being a Reader instruction, students would demonstrate fluency, comprehension, decoding strategies, and independent reading progress.

Research Design

The researcher utilized a mixed-methods research design to determine reading progress and students' motivation to read using the Reader's Workshop Model of reading instruction; additionally, teacher surveys, interviews, and classroom observations were performed. The study's design aimed to identify patterns by creating themes and conclusions from the instructional coach and teachers. The researcher collected qualitative teacher data through an online Qualtrics survey. The teachers' and instructional coaches' responses to open-ended questions and the researchers' classroom observations impacted the experimental design of this study. The teachers' responses to the open-ended questions and the researcher's classroom observations contributed to the flexibility of the research design; this combination of data gathering was a rigorous use and integration of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (experimental research integrated with qualitative research) or collection of qualitative and quantitative data from different sources, such as quantitative test data along with qualitative interview data, to find out if findings from the two sources converge (Creswell, 2015; Springer, 2010). Moreover, the qualitative methodology presented an appropriate approach to the study's initial research and data collection, accompanying the literature review (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Instrumentation

Survey research is "the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions" (Check & Schutt, 2012, p.160). Before the data collection phase, the researcher utilized Qualtrics to develop a set of survey questions for participants (see Appendix A). The researcher developed eight interview questions for

participants (see Appendix B). The researcher sent the participating school district a recruitment email (see Appendix C) and a recruitment email (see Appendix D) for the teacher survey. The researcher created an instrument to collect data for this study; a survey was administered to gain discrete insight into participants' thoughts and feelings. According to Fink (2017), surveys are most effective when the collected data reflects participants' perceptions and knowledge of a topic. First, the researcher collected the qualitative data through an online teacher survey utilizing Qualtrics (see Appendix A). The researcher piloted the survey, and the dissertation committee evaluated it to ensure its validity and alignment with the research study. The researcher adjusted the teacher survey for clarity with the intent of participants fully understanding the study's research questions. The Qualtrics instrument consisted of two multiple-choice questions and eight written response questions. Couper & Singer (2017) concluded:

> Instead of simply forcing respondents to agree (or otherwise) with the statements we proffer or pick one of the responses we provide, we can allow them to tell us what's on their mind with respect to the topic under discussion, whether by offering a straightforward open-ended question or by capturing everything they say during the interview (p.14).

Data Collection/Data Analysis

Teachers reflected on their ability to implement the Readers' Workshop Model, a Being a Reader curriculum component. Data was collected and obtained from interviews, surveys, and observations. Secondary data was derived from student assessment scores. Data collected represented students' reading progress concerning blending, decoding, and overall fluency skills. Teachers questioned the effectiveness of the Being a Reader

curriculum (BAR) and their competency to provide engaging and quality instruction. The researcher conducted a chi-square test and ran a paired sample t-test due to pre-and post-test data collection from the same population. This study was designed to investigate and determine the impact of the Readers' Workshop Model on the reading progress of primary school students in urban areas using a mixed methods approach. The quantitative strand comprised data from the Galileo assessment scores and reading level scores. In contrast, the qualitative data included teacher surveys, interviews, and student observations. Interviews were conducted in twenty-minute increments; teachers self-evaluated their ability to improve students' reading progress and considered obstacles they faced.

Responses were coded under categories that assisted in facilitating the analysis. The codes for the analysis would develop as the responses are analyzed. Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) supported the use of this type of analysis when they stated that "administering questionnaires and interviewing the participants can be a valid and productive way to assess the accuracy of observations" (p. 593). The qualitative component of the study allowed the researcher to obtain teacher perceptions on the impact of the Being a Reader curriculum on urban students' literacy progress.

Assumptions

Four assumptions supported the validity of this study. First, teacher participants had at least two years of experience as educators, which qualified them with a knowledge base to provide useful data for the study adequately. Second, the teachers and instructional coach participants used their experiences to answer the survey questions and interview responses candidly. Third, the teacher participants were familiar with teaching

an urban classroom population. Lastly, potential benefits from the research study could enhance academic success, develop self-efficacy, and motivate students to read. Possible outcomes could also reduce the risk of school failure and minimize behavior concerns. As a result, students began to embark on the journey to close the literacy gap, transitioning a portion of them from non-proficient to proficient readers.

Ethical Considerations

This study followed the ethical standards and guidelines for protecting participants as outlined by Lindenwood University. Creswell (2013) noted that researchers must establish the ethical treatment of participants in their research studies. The researcher obtained Lindenwood University IRB and site approval. The recruitment process ensured that participants did not feel coerced into participation. Coercion was eliminated by participants receiving a consent form. The first question of the Qualtrics survey required "yes" to move forward in the survey. After potential participants were identified, the purpose of the study was explained. In addition, clarification on the data collection process, the frequency, and the length of interviews and surveys were also explained. Informed consent was obtained from willing participants by completing the Lindenwood Consent form. After approval, the researcher communicated with the instructional coach and teacher participants to begin the survey and interviews for the data collection process. Teachers completed the Qualtrics survey; this survey was utilized to distribute questionnaires. Qualtrics was a web-based software that created surveys and generated reports. Using Qualtrics allowed surveys to be shared with participants discretely for completion; results were immediately reviewed.

The researcher shared the Qualtrics survey link with the instructional coach and elementary school teachers in mid-November 2022. Although the researcher received anonymous responses from the Qualtrics survey, teacher participation was low. Due to low involvement, the researcher e-mailed teachers the Qualtrics survey link again in January 2023. Responses were stored on a password-protected laptop used only by the researcher. The researcher collaborated with participating teachers to schedule dates and times for classroom observations. Parents and students were not required, as there were no interactions with the students during the classroom observations. The researcher observed classrooms throughout the school year. After the study, data was collected and de-identified. No identifying information, including emails, was used in the final report. The researcher analyzed and organized teacher survey results and classroom observation data; patterns were identified and placed into themes.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher investigated the perspectives of teachers on ways to motivate and improve the reading abilities of their students. The data was gathered during the Spring 2023 semester by conducting surveys and interviews with teachers, as well as collecting quantitative data from both teachers and students. The quantitative data included an analysis of the relationship between students' reading level achievement before and after the implementation of the Readers' Workshop Model, based on the Galileo Assessment scores, and also analyzing the changes in students' reading scores from fall to spring using the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment. The following chapter will present the results of the qualitative study. Chapter Four explores the results of the mixed-methods study; this chapter also presents the data for each

hypothesis and the results of the research question. Chapter Four includes the presentation of the data collected. The researcher features a discussion of the qualitative teacher survey responses. Finally, the researcher synthesizes students' secondary data.

Chapter Four: Analysis

This mixed methods study analyzed the growing gap in academic achievement between students from low socio-economic communities and those from more affluent backgrounds. The researcher explored teacher perceptions of the effects of the Readers' Workshop Model on students' reading ability and motivation to read while also identifying common themes and similarities through survey responses. The study aimed to investigate the impact of the Readers' Workshop Model on the reading progress, as measured by the Teacher College Benchmark and motivation of primary students in urban areas, where there is still a literacy gap between economically-disadvantaged students and their peers. The study aimed to contribute to the understanding and knowledge base of successful strategies teachers can implement to promote academic success and improve reading levels in kindergarten, first, and second-grade students (Amanishakete, 2013).

Studies have explored interventions to help improve self-efficacy and attitudes toward literacy among struggling readers. Furthermore, previous research has utilized surveys taken by both parents and students to help teachers understand the influence of parental involvement, student self-efficacy, and attitudes on literacy skill development. It has been determined that children from low socioeconomic backgrounds demonstrate lower levels of school readiness than peers of higher socioeconomic backgrounds. The available research does not focus on the impact the Readers' Workshop Model has on K-2 urban primary students' literacy and academic progress, although more research and data do exist in relation to school populations with dissimilar demographics. As there is currently a shortage of research on the effect of the Readers' Workshop Model (RWM) on

urban students' academic performance, the researcher aimed to investigate how RWM can boost and enhance students' literacy skills.

The researcher focused on students' motivation to read and literacy progress during the Being a Reader instructional lesson, specifically whole group, independent reading, and small group instruction. A researcher analyzed data from survey participants to find patterns, connections, and recurring themes in their perceptions of the Readers' Workshop Model. The study also identified the individual components of the intervention that had the most significant impact on improving students' reading abilities. Furthermore, the researcher observed four elementary classrooms in the participating school district to examine how effectively teachers motivated their students to read.

Ultimately, this study's results can provide educators and leaders with current research and findings to contribute to understanding successful strategies teachers can implement to promote urban students' literacy progress. Chapter Four explains the detailed qualitative results from the teacher survey data, teacher interviews, and classroom observation data. The various grade levels and years of experience contributed to the similarities and differences in teachers' perceptions.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

RQ1: How do teachers perceive the Readers' Workshop Model's (RWM) effect on students' reading ability?

RQ2: What are the teachers' perspectives regarding their ability to motivate students to read?

RQ3: How do teachers impact students' reading progress?

RQ4: How do teachers implement Readers' Workshop Model intervention?

RQ5: How confident are teachers in teaching the Being a Reader curriculum?

RQ6: What are the implications of students' Galileo assessment scores with regard to reading progress?

Null H1.1: There is no association between kindergarten students' reading level achievement before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo Assessment).

Null H1.2: There is no association between first-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo assessment).

Null H1.3: There is no association between second-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo assessment).

Null H2.1: There is no difference in kindergarten students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment.

Null H2.2: There is no difference in first-grade students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment.

Null H2.3: There is no difference in second-grade students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment.

Qualitative Results

The survey was conducted in the Fall of 2022 among 10 experienced teachers who know how to administer the Galileo District Assessment and implement the Readers' Workshop Model. The survey consisted of 10 questions and was sent to each individual for their feedback. A total of 5 educators agreed to participate. This category comprised

one instructional coach and four classroom teachers, entailing one teacher from each grade level. Teacher participants were asked to complete a 10-question survey. The survey questions were primarily open-ended, asking participants to share their perspectives on the Readers Workshop Model and how it has impacted students' literacy progress and motivation to read. It is crucial to consider not only the perspectives of teachers but also the additional skills and strategies that can help promote urban students' literacy progress. Determining if the Readers' Workshop Model positively impacts reading progress and students' eagerness to read is also important. Being a Reader curriculum is designed to meet students at their current academic ability. After 30 weeks of Being a Reader instruction, students will demonstrate fluency, comprehension, decoding strategies, and independent reading progress. Implementing the Being a Reader model aimed at developing enthusiastic, fluent readers. Overall, participants shared whether the intervention helped students' literacy development.

Primary data were collected via interviews, surveys, and classroom observations. Pre and post-secondary assessment data were collected from students' Instructional Reading Level (IRL) scores; fall and spring Galileo Reading Assessment will be used to determine the number of students reading at or above grade level, as measured by Teacher College Benchmark (TCB's) and those reading below grade level at the beginning of the school year. The former was coded and analyzed to determine teachers' attitudes and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the Being a Reader curriculum on students' reading progress and motivation to read, whereas the latter was investigated to determine any differences in literacy progress, as measured by the final Galileo.

Qualitative Results

Research Question 1

How will teachers perceive the Readers' Workshop Model's (RWM) effect on students' reading ability?

Theme One: Small Group Instruction

Students possess a wide range of foundational skills; small group instruction assists in meeting students at their instructional point. This approach allows for a more personalized learning experience and helps ensure that every student reaches their full potential. While the small group component of Being a Reader impacted participants, some positive and negative effects were also associated with the intervention. The Being a Reader curriculum uses various classroom strategies, including whole class, small group, and personalized instruction, to effectively develop confident and proficient readers, with 100 % of participants responding that the small group component is the most effective according to all the participants. The participant stated:

> Small group instruction had the most impact because it provided explicit instruction. My students struggling with reading can work independently and focus on their needs. During small groups, students are much more focused; it also affords practice to support phonics and phonemic awareness, which my students benefit from.

The researcher observed a kindergarten and second-grade teacher using the small group reading component to support the theme. During classroom observations, the teacher instructed a group of four students to walk quietly to the small group reading area. The students promptly located their designated small group book and proceeded to the table.

The teacher set a timer for 15 minutes and explained the expectations for the small group session, which included still bodies, quiet voice, eyes watching, and ears listening. The students complied with these expectations. The teacher provided positive praise to the students. The teacher began the lesson by demonstrating a word blending activity and then had the students practice. Next, a new letter sound is introduced, with the teacher modeling its pronunciation and asking the students to repeat it three times. The teacher also reviewed previously learned sounds. High-frequency words were reviewed by displaying the words on a card, and the students were instructed to say, spell, and say the word again. A new high-frequency word is introduced using the same strategy in preparation for the next book. The teacher and students identified where the new word belonged on the high-frequency word wall and provided each student with the new word. Many students needed help with blending and utilizing word attack strategies to decipher unfamiliar words. The teacher reminded the students to read quietly and monitored each student's individual reading progress while taking notes on their strengths and areas needing support.

Theme Two: Curriculum Effectiveness

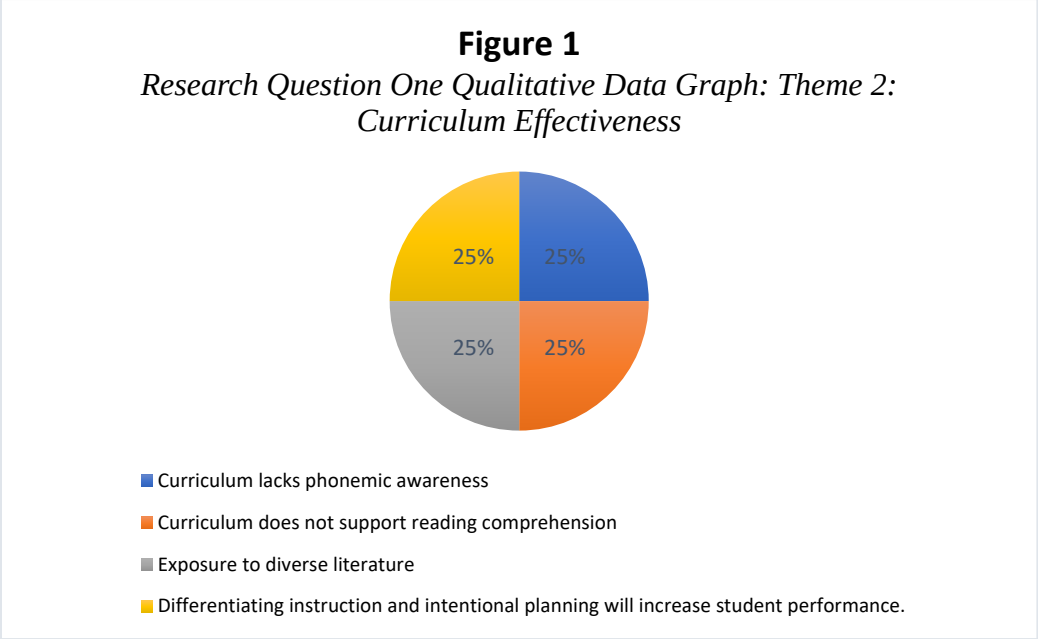
To answer Research Question 1, the researcher analyzed students' academic progress, specifically students' reading growth, based on the Being a Reader independent reading level benchmark. Survey and interview participants' responses varied regarding the Readers' Workshop Model's (RWM) impact on improving urban students' reading skills. Teachers generally supported the (RWM) program but were concerned about the curriculum. Some teacher participants expressed concerns that the Being a Reader curriculum did not adequately cater to the needs of urban students. They believed it did

not provide enough support for developing basic reading skills during whole-group instruction.

Furthermore, students received limited exposure to these fundamental concepts, mainly during small-group sessions. Figure 1 displays the qualitative data for curriculum effectiveness. Survey question 5 revealed that 25% of participants felt the program lacked a strong phonemic awareness piece, making it difficult for students to develop foundational skills. A survey participant stated, "Due to missing phonemic awareness pieces, students struggle to develop foundational skills." Another 25% stated that the Being a Reader model does not lend itself to support the core foundation of reading comprehension. However, 25% noted that exposure to diverse literature and topics helped motivate students to read, while another 25% believed intentional planning and differentiated instruction were key factors in increasing student performance.

Figure 1

Research Question One Qualitative Data Graph Theme 2



While some teachers found the program helpful in motivating students to read, others needed help in implementing it and found it ineffective. However, those who supported the Being a Reader curriculum pointed out the effectiveness of certain model components, such as Independent Reading (IDR) and word study. They found that the (IDR) segment improved students' high-frequency word recognition and fluency, while the word study practice improved students' ability to decode unfamiliar words. The success of the Readers' Workshop Model hinges on multiple factors, such as the specific needs and learning styles of each student, as well as the resources and support provided to teachers.

Theme Three: Tailoring Instruction

The Readers' Workshop Model aims to equip young students with foundational skills that enhance their literacy progress, motivate them, and provide instruction tailored to meet the needs of urban students. Collaborative Classroom (2023) believed that the Being a Reader curriculum is designed to support students' beginning skills and strategies required to grow as readers and thinkers. Teachers need to be able to teach to specific standards when it comes to students completing assessments. By honing in on those standards with fidelity, students should be able to answer questions no matter how they are presented easily.

The researcher observed the teacher providing individualized learning for all students during the classroom observation. The implementation of literacy workstations allowed for targeted skill practice, ranging from letter identification to comprehension development through reading short passages; the word work activities were tailored to meet each student's current ability level, enabling them to concentrate on high-frequency

words corresponding to their skill set. I observed another classroom using differentiated instruction by seating students based on similar ability levels. Each group of students worked on the same high-frequency words and practiced phonics and word work together. Within-class ability grouping means that the same class teacher teaches all children within the class and tends to follow the same curriculum. Children in different groups are given different levels of challenge, expectations, and support (Williams, 2021).

Theme Four: Independent Reading

The researcher was unable to observe students reading independently. However, there was a combination of responses from teacher participants regarding the impact of independent reading on students' motivation to read and reading progress. In the survey, 4 (100 %) elementary teachers mentioned that students benefited from independent reading. A participant stated, "In my opinion, Independent Reading (IDR) instruction helps facilitate good independent reading behaviors and helps students develop strong independent reading habits." To help students prepare for the Galileo assessment, it is essential to provide them with opportunities to practice reading independently and in groups with peers; as a result, these opportunities will help build their reading stamina and prepare them for longer passages. Most teacher participants, 3 (75%), agreed that individual reading was a beneficial reading readiness skill; however, the teacher participants noticed that only a few students wanted to read independently. Oftentimes, students struggle to read the expected time for their grade level expectations.

Research Question 2

What are the teachers' perspectives regarding their ability to motivate students to read?

Theme One: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

To answer Research Question 2, the researcher interviewed teachers regarding their perspectives on the success of motivating students to read. Research has shown that intrinsically motivated children spend 300% more time reading than students with low intrinsic motivation. Building children's reading motivation will allow them to become more confident, engaged readers (Guthrie & McRae, 2012). According to the survey, teachers recognized that allowing students to choose their own reading material can boost their interest in reading. In addition, external resources like Kagan's Cooperative Strategies and Marzano's Teach Like a Champ were mentioned as helpful in motivating students. These strategies offer students the chance to interact with one another, share ideas, develop good listening skills, and gain new perspectives from their peers. One participant suggested that adding more literature to student libraries and encouraging at-home practice would greatly increase students' desire to read. It seems that having access to a wide variety of books and the ability to practice their reading skills at home can make a significant difference in students' motivation to read. Of the four teacher participants responding to the survey, 4 (100%) believe they positively impact students' reading motivation.

Theme Two: Student Preferred Text

When students get the chance to delve into books that captivate their attention, reading becomes a pleasurable experience. It has been observed that students tend to read

more, comprehend better, and have higher chances of continuing their reading journey if they get to choose what they read (Allington & Gabriel, 2012). In fact, self-selected reading is twice as effective as teacher-selected reading when it comes to enhancing motivation and comprehension skills. A participant stated:

> I have observed students being engaged in reading when given the opportunity to read text that interests them. The books are fiction and non-fiction and related to their writing assignment**.** Students enjoy reading a paragraph at a time. Opting for something of their choice is always more gratifying than being obligated to read a text that doesn't capture their attention. Furthermore, it's an effective way to inspire students to delve into diverse genres and authors they may not have otherwise explored.

Teachers from kindergarten to second grade recognize the importance of intrinsic motivation in creating a positive and supportive classroom environment. Intrinsic motivation helps to encourage students to take ownership of their learning, which can lead to lifelong learning habits. Providing engaging and reading material that challenges students to think critically can ensure that students are motivated and eager to learn. A teacher stated:

> It's challenging to spark students' interest, but they become more engaged when they have a passion for a topic. This applies to reading as well. Students who love a genre will read more and improve their vocabulary, word attack skills, fluency, and comprehension. As an educator, it's essential to provide a variety of diverse text genres.

Based on the feedback of teachers from kindergarten to second grade, small group lessons play a vital role in enhancing the engagement and motivation of students when it comes to reading. Without small group instruction, students would not get the necessary support to improve in areas where they need help. A participant stated:

> Students are most engaged when reading their Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS) books. (SIPPS) is an intervention focusing on improving foundational skills. The participants agreed that students are most excited about small group lessons and stories; they enjoy reading aloud. Typical responses included students being most engaged during Independent Reading (IDR) and small group reading due to its flexibility.

Students benefit from an intervention program that specifically focuses on improving students' foundational skills in phonological awareness, phonics, and sight words; having strong foundational skills in these areas is crucial for students to achieve overall reading proficiency and success. SIPPS books, as this intervention program, are specifically designed to improve students' foundational skills, which is highly effective in keeping students engaged and motivated while significantly improving their skills.

Theme Three: Leveled Readers

Selecting appropriate reading material for students is a crucial task that requires careful consideration. Simply picking a book level without proper assessment may not yield the desired results. Teachers are expected to conduct a reading assessment at the beginning of the school year to determine the appropriate reading level for each student. Teachers can confidently assign students to their appropriate level using the assessment

score, ensuring they receive appropriate materials for their current instructional level. The books should present some challenges in terms of vocabulary and comprehension, but not so much that the student becomes frustrated or overwhelmed. By selecting the right books, students are appropriately challenged and develop new reading strategies while still enjoying the experience of reading. The readers' workshop model encourages teachers to have a classroom library that reflects various student interests, genres, and ability levels (Feinberg, 2007).

Utilizing leveled readers is an effective approach for delivering precise reading instruction to pupils of varying skill levels. By customizing the reading material to match each student's level, educators can assist them in advancing their reading abilities and overall comprehension. Leveled readers can help every student, whether a beginner or an advanced reader, to reach their full potential. Although the researcher did not observe the Independent Reading (IDR) component, the researcher observed that every classroom had a leveled book cart accessible to students. Teacher participants agreed it is essential to use this effective tool to ensure every student achieves academic success.

A teacher participant stated:

> Encouraging students to choose their own reading materials during independent reading time is brilliant. I have noticed how it can significantly increase students' motivation to read when they can select books that interest them and align with their reading level. Allowing students to choose their own reading materials during independent reading time is absolutely brilliant. When students are given the freedom to select

books that align with their interests and reading ability, their motivation and engagement increase significantly.

Students choosing their reading materials during independent reading time (IDR) is an effective way to increase motivation, especially when they can choose books that interest them and align with their reading level.

Theme Four: Reading Strategies

As participants mentioned, certain reading strategies can enhance students' motivation and reading ability. Two of the most effective strategies are word attack strategies and reading with a partner. By practicing decoding unfamiliar words daily, students can improve their reading skills. Partner reading can also be a great way to provide personalized support and feedback, which helps boost students' confidence. Working in pairs, students engage in various reading activities that help build their confidence, concentration, and social skills while enhancing their motivation to read. Partner reading allows students to work together on various texts, building their reading confidence, increasing concentration, and improving their reading motivation. Partner Reading improves fluency, reading rate, and word attack skills. Additionally, these activities can significantly improve students' readiness for the Galileo district assessment. According to a teacher, scaffolding is an effective strategy to enhance students' motivation and reading skills. This approach is useful in overcoming potential barriers such as phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency; by providing students with varying levels of support, teachers can meet each student at their current level of ability. As students progress, teachers gradually reduce the amount of support until they can accurately perform the task independently.

Research Question 3

How do teachers impact students' reading progress?

Theme One: Formal and Informal Assessments

The researcher probed teachers for effective strategies implemented during instruction to measure their impact on students' reading progress to answer Research Question 3. Elementary teachers who responded reported that progress tracking was helpful in successfully implementing the Readers' Workshop model. They emphasized the importance of using the program's assessment tool to measure student growth. Assessing students frequently, such as weekly instead of monthly, or when progress reports are due, allows me to identify support areas and quickly implement the appropriate intervention. Classroom assessment data can be used to provide personalized attention and assistance to each student in the classroom, which can significantly impact their achievement of educational goals. Interventions such as small groups allow for individualized instruction to be facilitated, using targeted techniques that help both students and teachers monitor progress and witness tangible outcomes.

Theme Two: Student Assessment Data Inform Instruction

To help assess how well the Being a Reader model improves students' literacy development, teachers progress monitor student growth—by assessing students' academic performance, quantifying their rates of improvement or progress toward goals, and determining how they respond to instruction. A participant stated:

> As a teacher, I must conduct regular assessments of my student's academic performance; this helps track students' progress toward identified goals. By measuring students' improvement rates and evaluating how they

respond to instruction, I can adjust instruction to meet my students' performance levels to ensure success.

By measuring students' improvement rates and evaluating how they respond to instruction, teachers can tailor their approach to their individual needs and ensure their success. This approach can help identify areas where students need additional support and make adjustments to instruction to ensure they understand the material. It also helps teachers identify areas where they need to improve their instructional strategies and make necessary adjustments to ensure their students are receiving the best possible education.

Theme Three: The Power of Reflecting

It is important that both teacher and student reflect on their learning and progress. Teachers' reflections on instructional practice play a crucial role in informing instruction, empowering students to take ownership of their learning, and tracking their own progress over time. A teacher participant stated, "I can gain valuable insights into students' learning progress by offering quick reflective prompts or exit slips at the end of a lesson or unit." It's important for students to be able to express their understanding of subjects in their own words. This not only helps them track their progress but also enables them to set new targets for learning. Students are provided with a quick informal assessment for all subjects. In addition, every 2-3 weeks, students complete individual mastery assessments to ensure they have a solid grasp of the content. This assists teachers in adjusting their instructional practice to meet students' needs better and empowers students to take ownership of their learning and track their progress over time.

A teacher shared how they communicate with their students about their progress, covering improved reading and comprehension abilities, effort, and focus. These

discussions occur both in group settings and during individual conferences. The teacher also reflects on their own teaching after each lesson, evaluating its effectiveness and considering what adjustments can be made to improve future instruction. "I constantly reflect on whether every lesson I teach is effective. I think about what opportunities I missed and how I can adjust what I'm doing to improve instruction next time." Another teacher mentioned the importance of discussing with students how they have done and what they can do better. A discussion centered on standards and expectations is also important. According to the teacher, engaging in daily personal reflections is crucial for personal growth and development, and it should be a continuous practice.

Theme Four: Exit Slips as a Quick Formative Assessment.

In essence, exit slips are a straightforward yet powerful tool for promoting student engagement and success in the classroom. They are a vital tool used by teachers to assess student comprehension following a class or lesson. These written responses are a quick and informal way for educators to gauge how well students understand the material and drive instruction. Fifty (50%) participants mentioned that exit slips effectively assess students' understanding and check in with them. One participant stated, "Exit slips are a simple, effective tool I use to help students reflect on their own learning and take ownership of their progress." A participant also stated that by using a quick formative assessment, teachers can assess the effectiveness of their instruction and identify any misconceptions. Quick formative assessments also provide opportuni**ties** for students to track their academic progress. Another participant stated:

> I talk with students about their progress, allowing them to reflect on their learning. We discuss how it is much easier for them to see and read words

> and understand their reading. We also discuss their effort and focus. Conversations are held in whole-group and individual conference sessions to discuss their progress. Although my class does not keep a journal of their progress and areas of improvement, we regularly talk about the standards and my expectations for each day and ongoing.

When students have clear expectations of their academic goals and are given the opportunity to reflect, they are more likely to take ownership of their learning and be accountable for their progress. It's crucial to not only monitor students' progress but also to involve them in the process. By encouraging students to reflect on their academic progress and set clear goals for themselves, teachers can help them take responsibility for their learning and motivate them to achieve their objectives. This approach also allows teachers to identify areas where students need additional support and make necessary adjustments to ensure their success. By fostering a sense of ownership and accountability in their learning, students are more likely to experience academic growth. Another participant stated:

> I believe that having regular discussions about standards and expectations is a great way to track progress and find areas for improvement. While journaling may be helpful for some, it's not necessary for success. As long as there is transparent communication, students should have a clear idea of what they can do to get better.

While exit slips and the daily whole group and individual conferencing regarding student progress are effective approaches to improving students' reading progress, informal observations during literacy stations allow teachers to observe and reflect on

students' independent progress. It's important to have a variety of methods for assessing progress, and informal observations during literacy stations capture students' abilities in a more natural and authentic setting. It allows teachers to take notes while observing how students work independently in their comfort zone without direct guidance or support. This can help them identify areas where students are struggling and adjust their teaching accordingly.

Research Question 4

How do teachers implement the Readers' Workshop Model intervention?

Theme One: Effectively Providing Instruction

To answer Research Question 4, the researcher observed participating classrooms in a PRE-K through second-grade primary school to better understand the Readers' Workshop Model's impact on literacy development and students' motivation to read. Being a Reader Workshop Model infuses mini-lessons, independent reading, and conferring into instruction to develop enthusiastic, fluent readers. One participant mentioned that the Readers' Workshop equips students with foundational skills and strategies to read texts of their choice independently. Understanding the moving pieces and how each component of Being a Reader relates to itself and planning how they fit together. Another participant discussed the importance of implementing the curriculum with fidelity:

> To follow the program as it is written. As teachers, we are often pulled in many directions and can easily get sidetracked from the program. However, reading through the entire curriculum will significantly increase the chances of properly implementing it in the classroom. It's crucial that

> we prioritize fidelity to ensure our students get the most out of the program.

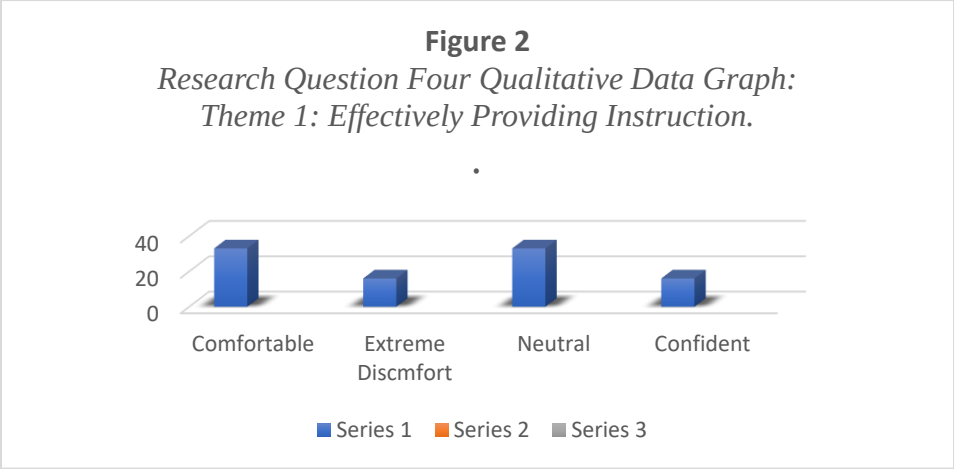
During the observation, the researcher noticed that the teacher closely followed the teachers' manual depending on the component of the Being a Reader curriculum being taught. Students were asked to walk to their assigned seats during the whole group instruction and praised for following directions quickly and quietly. The class reviewed an anchor chart outlining student expectations for good listening and appropriate partner behavior. Throughout the lesson, the teacher frequently paused to check for comprehension and encourage academic conversation using Kagan Cooperative Learning Strategies like turn and talk and stand hand up pair up. While most students were engaged, the teacher was observed speaking with unengaged partners, and one student was given a warning and then asked to return to his seat.

While a few teachers expressed confidence in their ability to implement the curriculum, others faced challenges due to their lack of experience. Specifically, some teachers struggled with understanding the curriculum's structure and how to incorporate it into their teaching methods effectively. They also faced issues with adapting to the new teaching materials and aligning them with their students' learning goals. Many participants agreed on the importance of understanding the various components involved in the readers' workshop approach, such as read-aloud, partner discussions, answering questions about the story, and reviewing vocabulary using flashcards. Consistency and fidelity in implementing these components were also highlighted as crucial factors. Additionally, one participant stressed the significance of effective classroom management, establishing routines, and ensuring students are familiar with the process.

These key components are integral to the success of the workshop model. Figure 2 shows how the implementation of the Being a Reader model received mixed reviews from participants based on their experience and confidence levels. The survey results showed that 33% of participants expressed discomfort in implementing the model, while 33% remained neutral. However, it's worth noting that at 16%, one participant was highly confident in implementing the model, while another 16% expressed extreme discomfort.

Figure 2

Research Question Four Qualitative Graph Theme 1



Research Question 5

How confident are teachers of the Readers' Workshop Model in teaching the Being a Reader curriculum?

Theme One: Teacher Support

The researcher examined teachers' comfort and proficiency level with the Readers' Workshop curriculum according to survey responses to answer Research Question 5. Another important theme that emerged from participants was teachers' comfort level in utilizing the Readers' Workshop Model to implement the Being a Reader

curriculum. Some teachers had more experience and knowledge than others, resulting in different comfort levels. Some participants said teachers were not provided sufficient professional development to implement the Being a Reader curriculum effectively.

One of the participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the professional development program, citing its ineffectiveness due to several reasons. They stated:

> Absolutely not, because the training was provided after teachers implemented the curriculum. We were given the Being a Reader curriculum and told to use it; then, training was provided, but the training was also repetitive. Training also took a long time to address students' individual needs. The training was even about how to read the manual; it wasn't effective in improving the delivery of the lessons.

The study revealed that the 1-2 hours allotted for professional development were insufficient to develop relevant instructional strategies, as one participant expressed. Additionally, 25% of participants believed that utilizing curriculum-based assessments could significantly enhance teacher confidence in providing quality instruction. The study also highlighted the inadequacy of professional development in meeting teachers' needs.

Theme Two: Peer Coaching

Peer coaching is an essential and effective method for teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge. Dalton and Moyer (1991) defined peer coaching as a company between teachers in a nonjudgmental atmosphere built on a collaborative and reflective dialogue. It creates an opportunity for teachers to share their experiences and expertise, leading to the development of new strategies. By providing communities of practice, teachers can come together to discuss, experiment with, and fine-tune new teaching

strategies. A participant expressed the importance of peer coaching and how it can impact teachers' confidence and the quality of instruction. One participant stated:

> I've found that professional development programs can sometimes fall short in supporting teachers. That's why I think peer coaching can effectively address the just-in-time needs of teaching. By having colleagues work together and provide support, I can become a more confident teacher by receiving the kind of guidance that speaks directly to my instructional struggles.

Interview participants agreed that as a teacher, it can be incredibly helpful to observe more experienced colleagues in action. Observing peers implement the small group, whole group, IDR, and conferring components of the Being a Reader curriculum is crucial. Moreover, seeing how others handle the same challenges while delivering effective instruction can make improvement seem more achievable and practical. Peer coaching effectively creates a relaxed and non-invasive atmosphere, leaving teachers less guarded and more open to feedback. Unfortunately, opportunities to observe colleagues are rare, but they are taken advantage of when possible.

Theme Three: Professional Learning Communities

According to teachers, collaborating with teammates, the instructional coach, and the principal during professional learning committees (PLC) meetings fosters support and confidence. One participant stated:

> Working collaboratively with an instructional coach can help teachers enhance their teaching techniques and become more familiar with the curriculum. Instructional coaches provide constructive feedback,

oftentimes "coaching in" during instructional lessons, explaining what an ideal lesson should consist of and modeling the different components of readers' workshop.

Working with fellow teachers in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) can positively impact student achievement. In these communities, teachers can exchange effective methods, discuss challenges, and address any issues that may be hindering their teaching abilities. Moreover, instructional coaches and principals can assist teachers in analyzing data from informal and formal assessments, student work, and observations and determining the next instructional steps. Instructional leaders and teachers also use (PLCs) to disaggregate district-wide assessment data, identify patterns and misconceptions, and adjust instruction based on the needs of students. This helps in evaluating the effectiveness of evidence-based interventions. Teachers can use this type of dialogue to improve their skills and confidence in supporting their students' education.

Research Question 6

What are the implications of students' Galileo assessment scores with regard to reading progress?

Theme One: Reading Progress Effect on Assessment Scores

Galileo fall and spring assessment scores measure students' literacy progress, determine instruction's impact, and identify learning patterns to answer. Based on the research conducted, most participants believed that students would make significant progress in literacy between fall and spring. However, some participants felt that progress may be limited for some students. The results revealed that 60% of participants believed that students would make progress ranging from 100% to 80%, while another 25%

believed that student progress would range from 79 % to 50%, and another 15% believed that students' progress would be limited, with less than 50% of students making progress during this time frame. One participant stated:

> Encouraging students to read by themselves prepares them for the reading component of the Galileo assessment; additionally, working with students in small groups and scaffolding with students on those standards will help scores. Additionally, the Galileo assessment has very little impact on our students' reading readiness or literacy progress, as it does not provide students with opportunities to engage with the text in the same way as the Being a Reader curriculum. You're expecting students to generalize their reading abilities to a test they have not been given opportunities to engage.

Based on the data collected in the various classrooms, half of the observed classrooms were reading at or above grade level. According to the data collected, the first classroom revealed that out of 19 students, 12, or 63%, were reading on grade level. Similarly, the next classroom showed that 12 out of 19 students, or 63%, were reading at grade level. The next classroom showed only 8 out of 18 students, or 44%, were reading at grade level, and the final classroom showed 10 out of 21 students, or 47%, were reading at grade level.

Theme Two: Aligning the Curriculum to District Assessments

Ensuring that the district assessments align with the curriculum can enhance students' academic progress. It's crucial that the grammar and sentence skills required for the test coincide with what is taught in the Being a Reader program. Despite the curriculum's emphasis on listening comprehension, there may be some areas that

necessitate improvement to guarantee students are thoroughly equipped for the assessment. According to one participant:

> One suggestion is to rephrase this section for better clarity and coherence: The grammar and sentence skills required for the test need to align with what is taught in the Being a Reader curriculum. The curriculum focuses on listening comprehension, but some components are still missing to help students perform better on the test.

During the discussion, a participant expressed the opinion that the Being a Reader curriculum does not align with the Galileo assessment, which poses a challenge for teachers trying to prepare students for the test. This participant suggested that the assessment content should be integrated into the curriculum so that teachers can provide appropriate instruction that aligns with the test and helps students perform better. They emphasized that knowing the content of the Galileo assessment is crucial for teachers to prepare their students effectively, as the current curriculum is not sufficient to match the assessment.

A participant stated:

> It can be a challenge for teachers to adequately prepare their students for the test while also adhering to the curriculum. Integrating the assessment content into the curriculum could be a viable solution to ensure teachers provide appropriate instruction that aligns with the test and helps students perform better. It is crucial for teachers to have a comprehensive understanding of the Galileo assessment content to prepare their students

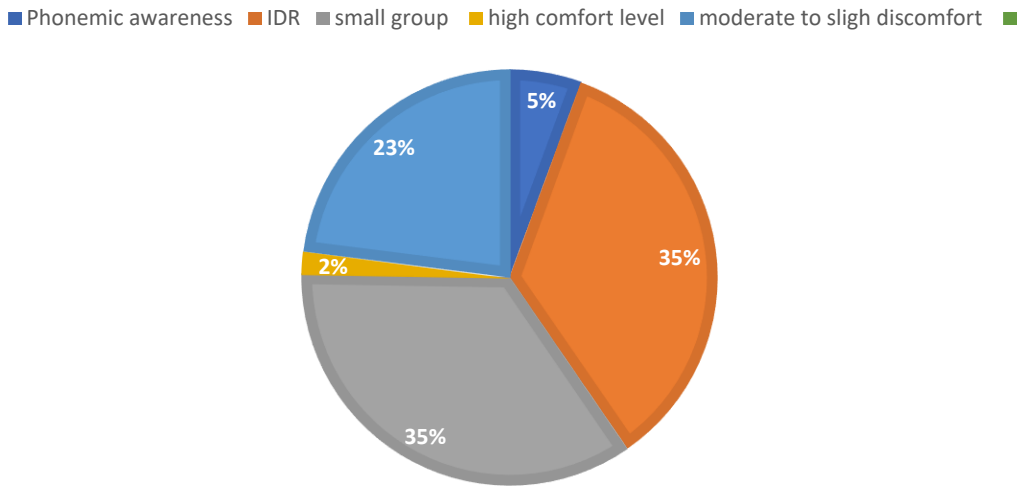
effectively, as the current curriculum may not be sufficient to match the assessment requirements.

All Qualitative Data

Figure 3 shows that based on the data, the survey results indicated that most teachers perceived the (RWM) Readers Workshop Model intervention as lacking phonemic awareness and comprehension support. However, it did provide exposure to diverse literature. Teachers believed that students benefit from Independent Reading (IDR) and small group activities. On the other hand, when asked about their comfort level with implementing the RWM, 5% of teachers expressed high confidence, 66% reported moderate to slight discomfort, and 16% were extremely uncomfortable with the program.

FIGURE 3

TEACHERS' ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT READERS WORKSHOP MODEL AND EFFECTIVENESS



Quantitative Results

Null Hypothesis 1.1

There is no association between kindergarten students' reading level achievement before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo Assessment).

The researcher conducted a chi-Square test using a significance level of .05 for all statistical analyses to determine whether reading development improved between the Galileo assessments conducted in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. After analyzing the 2021-2022 data, the p-value is .0395. The chi-square test results for null hypothesis 1.1 were $\chi 2 = 8.338$, $df = 3$ $p < .05$. Data analysis indicated an association between the Readers' Workshop Model and kindergarten students' reading levels, causing the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. Unfortunately, no assessment data was available for the 2022-2023 year.

Null Hypothesis 1.2

There is no association between first-grade students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment.

For the 2021-2022 year, the researcher conducted a similar analysis for first-grade students using the same statistical tests. The p-value is .0002, and the chi-square test results for null hypothesis 1 were $\chi 2 = 7.815$, $df = 3$ $p < .05$. Data analysis indicated an association between the Readers' Workshop Model and first-grade students' reading levels, causing the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. For the 2022-2023 year, the researcher used a chi-square test with a significance level of .05 to determine if there was no association between first-grade students' literacy progress and the Readers' Workshop

Model based on the 2022-2023 Galileo assessments. The p-value is .0074, and the chi-square test results for null hypothesis 1.2 were $\chi 2 = 11.986$, df = 3 $p < .05$; this indicated an association between the Readers' Workshop Model and first-grade students' reading levels, causing the researcher to reject the null hypothesis.

Null Hypothesis 1.3

There is no association between second-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo assessment).

For the 2021-2022 year, the researcher conducted a chi-square test for second-grade students. The p-value is .1404, and the chi-square test results for null hypothesis 1.3 were $\chi 2 = 7.815$, df = 3 $p > .05$. Data analysis indicated no association between the Readers' Workshop Model and second-grade students' reading levels based on the Galileo assessment, causing the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis. For the 2022-2023 year, second-grade results revealed a p-value of .2950, and the chi-square test results for null hypothesis 1 were $\chi 2 = 7.815$, df = 3 $p > .05$. Data analysis indicated no association between the Readers' Workshop Model and second-grade students' reading levels, causing the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

The 2021-2022 Galileo scores showed that 72% of kindergarten students met the expected growth on the English Language Arts portion of the Galileo assessment. First-grade students met literacy expectations at 82%, while 60% of second-grade students met expected growth rates. The researcher analyzed secondary data from the district MPI (Missouri Performance Index) and Expected DL (Developmental Level) Growth database. At 71% of kindergarten students met the expected growth on the English Language Arts portion of the Galileo assessment. The first-grade classrooms had 77% of

their students meet the expected reading growth rate, and 58% of second-grade students met the expected reading growth. This suggests that the Readers' Workshop Model implemented through the Being a Reader Curriculum may impact literacy progress.

Figure 4 shows the chi-Square data, which revealed an association between the Readers' Workshop Model and the reading development of kindergarten and first-grade students during the academic years 2021-2022. The statistical analysis was conducted to determine whether there was any improvement in reading development between the Galileo assessments, causing the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. For second grade during 2021-2022, the assessment data indicated no association between the Readers' Workshop Model and second-grade students' reading levels based on the Galileo assessment, causing the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Figure 4

2021-2022 Galileo Data Analysis

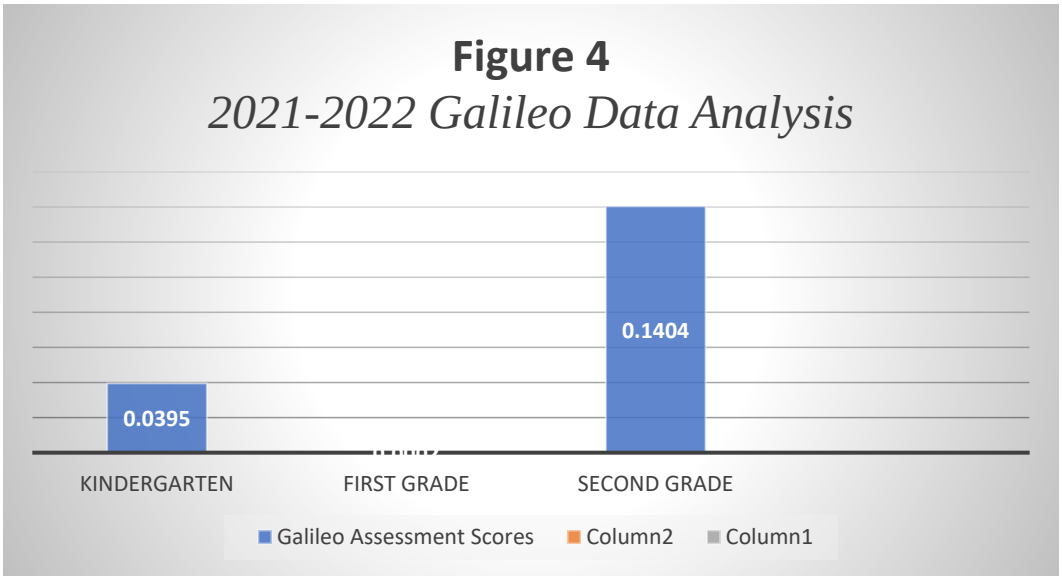


Figure 5 shows the chi-square data, which revealed an association between the Readers' Workshop Model and the reading development of first-grade students during

the academic years 2022-2023. The statistical analysis was conducted to determine whether there was any improvement in reading development between the Galileo assessments, causing the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. For second grade during 2022-2023, the assessment data indicated no association between the Readers' Workshop Model and second-grade students' reading levels based on the Galileo assessment, causing the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Figure 5

2022-2023 Galileo Data Analysis

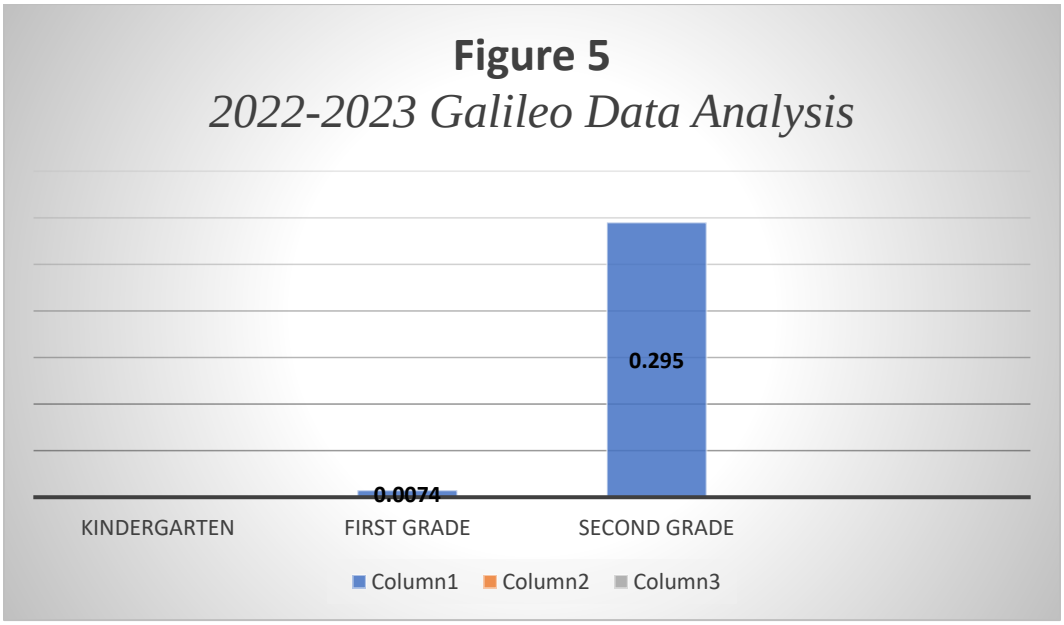


Figure 6 shows the chi-square data for the 2022-2023 Galileo assessment scores. The data showed that 64% of first-grade students met literacy expectations, while only 49% of second-grade students met expected growth rates; the expected growth rate percentage for kindergarten students is unavailable. The researcher analyzed secondary data from the district MPI (Missouri Performance Index) and Expected DL (Developmental Level) Growth database. Kindergarten data was not available. The first-

grade classrooms had 78% of their students meet the expected reading growth rate, and 62% of second-grade students met the expected reading growth rate. This suggests that the Readers' Workshop Model implemented through the Being a Reader Curriculum may impact literacy progress.

Figure 6

Pre/Post Galilea Assessment Data Results

2021-2022 & 2022-2023 Pre/Post Galileo Assessment Data Chi-Square Results

	2021-2022 Pre-assessment	2021-2022 Post-assessment	2022-2023 Pre-assessment	2022-2023 Post-assessment
Kindergarten	72	62	85	-
First-grade	53	64	79	75
Second-grade	70	69	61	75

	1st Grade P-value-	2nd Grade P-value
Kdg. P-value-.0395	.0002	.1404

Chi-Square Test

P-value	2021/2022 P-value	2022/2023 P-value
Kdg.	.0395	-
First-grade	.0002	.0074
Second-grade	.1404	.2950

Null Hypothesis 2.1

There is no difference in kindergarten students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model.

The researcher utilized a Wilcoxon two-tailed test to analyze paired, ordinal data. The sample size was 24, n=24. Since the Teacher College Benchmark measures students' reading ability by alphabet, the letter was converted into a corresponding number for

analysis purposes. To calculate the students' reading level, the letter was matched to its corresponding number, i.e., A=1, B=2. Next, the researcher calculated the difference between the fall and spring reading levels.

Figure 7

2022-2023 Kindergarten Reading Data

Student	Fall Reading Level	Spring Reading Level	The Difference between Fall and Spring Reading Levels
Student 1	1	3	-2
Student 2	1	3	-2
Student 3	1	6	-5
Student 4	1	3	-2
Student 5	1	2	-1
Student 6	1	1	0
Student 7	1	3	-2
Student 8	1	3	-2
Student 9	1	3	-2
Student 10	1	1	0
Student 11	1	1	0
Student 12	1	4	-3
Student 13	1	3	-2
Student 14	1	1	0
Student 15	1	4	-3
Student 16	1	2	-1
Student 17	1	1	0
Student 18	1	4	-3
Student 19	1	2	-1
Student 20	1	10	-9
Student 21	1	4	-3
Student 22	1	1	0
Student 23	1	3	-2
Student 24	1	2	-1

After conducting a Wilcoxon two-tailed test with a significance level of a= .05 and critical value of, according to the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Critical Values Table, it was found that the p-value was .0001 and the result was significant at $p<.05$. This

helped to determine whether the Readers' Workshop Model had a significant impact on the Teacher College Benchmark reading level scores of kindergarten students by comparing their fall and spring reading scores or their scores before and after the program.

According to Figure 7, the researcher observed a significant change in the reading level scores of the students. Based on the results obtained, the researcher found that the reading level scores of the students showed significant change. The $p<.05$ indicates a very small p-value, less than 0.1 percent, resulting in rejecting hypothesis 2.1. The Wilcoxon signed rank test indicated a difference between paired observations when the median difference was zero. The intervention did affect the outcomes if the before and after reading levels were significantly different; consequently, the researcher rejected null hypothesis 2.1.

Null Hypothesis 2.2

There is no difference in first-grade students' Teacher College Benchmark reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model.

The researcher utilized a Wilcoxon two-tailed test to analyze paired, ordinal data. The sample size was 19, n=19. Since the Teacher College Benchmark measures students' reading ability by alphabet, the letter was converted into a corresponding number for analysis purposes. In order to calculate the students' reading level, the letter was matched to its corresponding number, i.e., A=1, B=2. Next, the researcher calculated the difference between the fall and spring reading levels. After conducting a Wilcoxon two-tailed test with a significance level of a= .05 and critical value of 46, according to the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Critical Values Table, it was found that the p-value was

.00014 and the result was significant at $p<.05$. According to Figure 8, the researcher analyzed the difference between the fall and spring reading levels of first-grade students before and after implementing the Readers' Workshop Model. The analysis showed that the student's Teacher College Benchmark reading levels were significantly impacted. The researcher rejected null hypothesis 2.2 as the p-value is less than .0001, which indicated a significant difference in first-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model.

Figure 8

2022-2023 First-Grade Reading Data

Student	Fall Reading Level	Spring Reading Level	The Difference between Fall and Spring Reading Levels
Student 1	1	8	-7
Student 2	4	9	-5
Student 3	3	5	-2
Student 4	3	8	-5
Student 5	4	11	-7
Student 6	3	5	-2
Student 7	6	12	-6
Student 8	3	4	-1
Student 9	4	8	-4
Student 10	4	11	-7
Student 11	3	9	-6
Student 12	1	2	-1
Student 13	2	4	-2
Student 14	5	11	-6
Student 15	8	11	-3
Student 16	2	4	-2
Student 17	3	6	-3
Student 18	2	6	-4
Student 19	9	11	-2

Null Hypothesis 2.3

There is no difference in second-grade students' Teacher College Benchmark reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model.

The researcher utilized a Wilcoxon two-tailed test to analyze paired, ordinal data. The sample size was 19, n=19. Since the Teacher College Benchmark measures students' reading ability by alphabet, the letter was converted into a corresponding number for analysis purposes. In order to calculate the students' reading level, the letter was matched to its corresponding number, i.e., A=1, B=2. Next, the researcher calculated the difference between the fall and spring reading levels.

Figure 9

2022-2023 Second Grade Reading Data

Student	Fall Reading level	Spring Reading level	The Difference between Fall and Spring Reading Levels
Student 1	16	16	0
Student 2	9	12	-3
Student 3	8	12	-4
Student 4	10	12	-2
Student 5	3	4	-1
Student 6	1	1	0
Student 7	10	12	-2
Student 8	9	12	-3
Student 9	3	4	-1
Student 10	3	4	-1
Student 11	9	12	-3
Student 12	7	8	-1
Student 13	10	12	2
Student 14	3	3	0
Student 15	14	15	-1
Student 16	7	12	-5
Student 17	12	13	-1
Student 18	2	2	0
Student 19	7	12	-5

After conducting a Wilcoxon two-tailed test with a significance level of a= .05 and critical value of 46, according to the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Critical Values Table, it was found that the p-value was .00014 and the result was significant at p<.05. According to Figure 9, the researcher analyzed the difference between the fall and spring reading levels of first-grade students before and after implementing the Readers' Workshop Model.

The analysis showed that the student's Teacher College Benchmark reading levels were significantly impacted. The researcher rejected null hypothesis 2.2 as the p-value is less than .0001, which indicated a significant difference in first-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model.

The researcher utilized a Wilcoxon two-tailed test to analyze paired, ordinal data. The sample size was 19, n=19. Since the Teacher College Benchmark measures students' reading ability by alphabet, the letter was converted into a corresponding number for analysis purposes. In order to calculate the students' reading level, the letter was matched to its corresponding number, i.e., A=1, B=2. Next, the researcher calculated the difference between the fall and spring reading levels. After conducting a Wilcoxon two-tailed test with a significance level of a= .05 and critical value of 46, according to the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Critical Values Table, it was found that the p-value was .00064 and the result was significant at p<.05. According to the Wilcoxon two-tailed test with a significance level of .05, the Readers' Workshop Model significantly impacted the reading level scores of second-grade students before and after the program. The results showed a significant change in the reading level scores of the students. The researcher rejected the null hypothesis 2.3 as the p-value is less than .00064, which indicates a

significant difference in second-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model.

All Quantitative Analysis

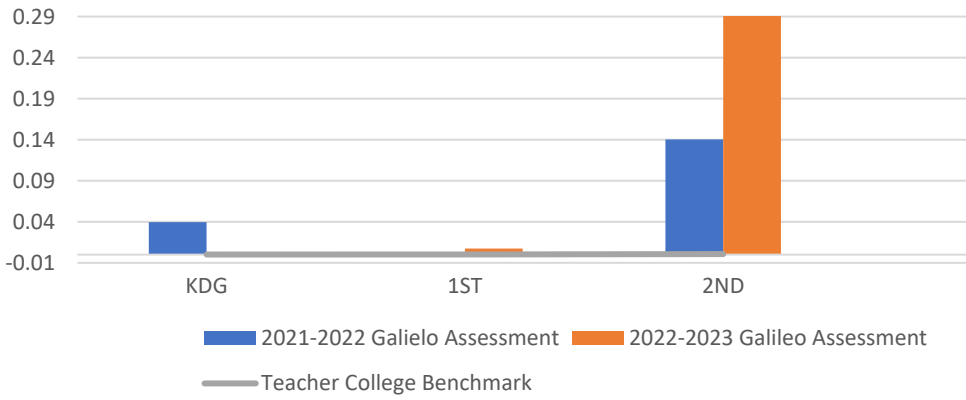
Figure 10 shows that based on the data, second-grade students didn't make as much progress in literacy as the kindergarten and first-grade students did, as measured by the Galileo assessment. The data also suggests that the Readers' Workshop Model had a positive impact on the reading level scores of students in all three grades, according to the Teacher College Benchmark.

Figure 10.

All Quantitative Data

Figure 10

All Qualitative Data:
Kindergarten through Second-grade Galileo District Assessment & Teacher College Benchmark Literacy Progress



Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher presented the findings of the teacher survey and classroom observations. The researcher used the data from classroom observations, teacher interviews, and survey responses and identified themes. The themes reflect the

culmination of survey responses and classroom observation data collected from kindergarten, first, and second-grade classrooms. The researcher examined the elementary school teacher's perceptions through an open-ended survey. The researcher chose to examine an urban, Title-1 Midwest Elementary School that serviced pre-k through second-grade students. The researcher surveyed kindergarten through second-grade teachers, and four educators completed the survey.

The goal of this qualitative research is to understand how kindergarten to second-grade teachers perceive the effectiveness of the Readers' Workshop Model in promoting students' motivation to read and improving their literacy progress. After analyzing the reading progress data from the four observed classrooms, the study has revealed that 56 students out of 79 (70%) demonstrated an improvement in their reading skills. As of the end of the 2023 academic year, 42 students (53 %) were considered proficient readers, representing over half of the total student population that was observed.

Based on survey responses, many teachers need more training and material to implement the Readers' Workshop Model of the Being a Reader curriculum. However, most teachers agreed that the Readers' Workshop Model's small group component significantly impacted their students' motivation to read and progress in literacy. Additionally, allowing students to choose their own leveled texts and practicing word attack strategies during independent reading improved fluency and reading levels, as per teacher survey responses.

In Chapter Four, the researcher analyzed the themed results from the teacher survey and classroom observations to understand how the Readers' Workshop Model impacts students' motivation to read and their progress in reading. The study focused on

teachers' perceptions of the impact of this model on students' reading abilities. The qualitative data gathered through the information presented in Chapter Four was used to present findings and conclusions in Chapter Five. Chapter Five presents the findings and conclusions derived from the qualitative data collected in Chapter Four. The researcher will also reflect on the study and recommend further research. Finally, the study concludes with a summary of the findings.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Reflection

This mixed methods study investigated the literacy gap between economically-disadvantaged students and their counterparts. It assessed the effectiveness of the Readers' Workshop Model and other strategies on the academic progress of K-2 students in an urban school in Midwest Missouri. Chapter Five also provides recommendations for the program, future research suggestions, and a conclusion. The study aimed to contribute to the limited research on the impact of the Readers' Workshop Model on the motivation to read and literacy progress of K-2 primary students in urban areas. The researcher also examined students' academic growth by examining their independent reading levels and pre- and post-district-wide Galileo assessment scores. From a qualitative lens, the researcher examined the impact of the Readers' Workshop model on students' motivation to read and their reading progress. The researcher used data collected from the institution's administrative office to test the hypotheses using the chi-square and Wilcoxon tests. The researcher used fall and spring Galileo assessment scores for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. For the qualitative analyses, the researcher created a 10-question Qualtrics survey. The survey was sent to 10 current teachers with two years of teaching experience. Five participants agreed to participate in the survey, and four of the 10 agreed to share additional feedback in an interview. The researcher discovered a *moderate* correlation between implementing the Readers' Workshop Model and the academic and reading progress of kindergarten and first-grade students.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1: How do teachers perceive the Readers' Workshop Model's (RWM) effect on students' reading ability?

RQ2: What are the teachers' perspectives regarding their ability to motivate students to read?

RQ3: How do teachers impact students' reading progress?

RQ4: How do teachers implement Readers' Workshop Model intervention?

RQ5: How confident are teachers in teaching the Being a Reader curriculum?

RQ6: What are the implications of students' Galileo assessment scores with regard to reading progress?

Null H1.1: There is no association between kindergarten students' reading level achievement before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo Assessment).

Null H1.2: There is no association between first-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo assessment).

Null H1.3: There is no association between second-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo assessment).

Null H2.1: There is no difference in kindergarten students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment.

Null H2.2: There is no difference in first-grade students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment.

Null H2.3: There is no difference in second-grade students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment.

Six research questions guided this mixed methods study. The results include data from teacher survey responses, classroom observations, and information presented in the literature review. The researcher analyzed elementary educators' perceptions of how the Readers' Workshop model impacts students reading progress and motivation to read. Additionally, the researcher observed kindergarten, first, and second-grade students during different parts of the Readers' Workshop Model while teaching the Being a Reader curriculum. This section includes conclusions based on the study's results. Through observations and survey data, educators have shared their perceptions about how the Readers' Workshop Model affects student literacy development and motivation to read. It seems that while students have been improving in their reading skills, there are still some who struggle during independent reading.

Research Question One Discussion

How do teachers perceive the Readers' Workshop Model's (RWM) effect on students' reading ability? The researcher observed how educators utilize the small group reading component of the Readers' Workshop Model. Although the researcher could not observe the entire second-grade lesson due to the teacher's preparation time and frequent interruptions, the researcher observed a complete kindergarten small-group reading lesson through an online platform. Despite some similarities between the two classroom observations, they differed significantly. These differences included the grade level, students, teachers, teaching style, time of day, small-group lesson, classroom management, and arrangement. Nonetheless, the researcher identified commonalities that led to the formation of themes.

The researcher found that several contributing factors determined the impact of the Readers' Workshop Model on urban students reading ability in the qualitative survey. Responses from elementary teachers fell under four main themes: (a) small group instruction, (b) curriculum effectiveness, (c) tailoring instruction, and (d) independent reading. Based on the feedback from teachers and participants, the small group component has proven highly effective. The elementary teachers unanimously responded that the small group component is the most effective according to all the participants.

Teacher responses revealed that small-group instruction could potentially play a role in helping students develop the phonic skills necessary for literacy progress, based on teacher responses. Teachers agreed that many students had difficulties with breaking down and effectively applying word attack methods to figure out words they weren't familiar with. The teachers explained how they utilized small group instruction and adapted their teaching methods to accommodate each student's needs. This approach enables students to learn at their own pace and progress according to their abilities.

According to the survey and interviews, there were mixed opinions about the impact of the Readers' Workshop Model on urban students' reading skills. Teachers generally supported the program but had concerns about the curriculum. Some teachers believed that the Being a Reader curriculum did not meet the needs of urban students, particularly in terms of developing basic reading skills during whole-group instruction. Students had limited exposure to these essential concepts, primarily during small-group sessions. To ensure that students can successfully complete assessments, it is important for teachers to teach specific standards. Focusing on these standards makes students better equipped to answer questions regardless of how they are presented.

Research Question Two Discussion

What are the teachers' perspectives regarding their ability to motivate students to read? During the study, the researcher could not observe the Independent Reading component of the Being a Reader curriculum. Responses from elementary teachers fell under three main themes: (a) intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, (b) leveled readers, and (c) reading strategies. The data revealed that teachers acknowledged that allowing students to choose their leveled reading material can significantly enhance their interest in reading. During the survey, a participant highlighted the significance of monitoring students' weekly progress to ensure they are being challenged appropriately. Doing so can lead to higher motivation levels among students to read.

Research has shown that intrinsically motivated children spend 300% more time reading than students with low intrinsic motivation. Building children's reading motivation will allow them to become more confident, engaged readers (Guthrie & McRae, 2012). Teachers have acknowledged that allowing students to make their own reading choices can increase their interest in reading. They also mentioned external resources like Kagan's Cooperative Strategies and Marzano's Teach Like a Champ, which effectively motivates students. These strategies help students connect with each other, share ideas, improve their listening skills, and gain new perspectives from their peers. One survey participant proposed the idea of increasing the number of books available in student libraries and promoting reading at home, which could potentially boost students' desire to read. The results suggest that having access to a diverse range of books and the opportunity to practice reading skills at home can positively impact students' motivation to read.

Using leveled readers is a highly effective method of providing customized reading instruction to students with different skill levels. By aligning the reading materials with each student's abilities, teachers can undoubtedly assist them in improving their reading skills and comprehension. It's a valuable tool for all students, regardless of their present reading level, since even advanced readers can benefit from leveled readers to optimize their potential. The researcher observed that every classroom had a cart of leveled books that students could use, a crucial resource for academic achievement. A teacher participant stated, "Letting students choose their own books during independent reading boosts their excitement and helps them find appropriate material."

Research Question Three Discussion

How do teachers impact students' reading progress? Participants emphasized the effectiveness of various components within the Being a Reader model, including Independent Reading (IDR), word study, and individualized instruction, in improving students' performance. During the study, the researcher found what factors contribute to the progress of students' reading and how teachers impact that progress. Responses from elementary teachers fell under four themes: (a) formal and informal assessments, (b) data inform instruction, (d) the power of reflecting, and (d) exit slips. The researcher asked teachers about their strategies during instruction to effectively measure their impact on students' reading progress. The impact of teachers on students' reading progress is centered around four key themes. These themes center around the critical importance of progress monitoring, identifying areas of support, and utilizing both formal and informal assessments. One particularly effective form of assessment is the use of exit slips, which provide a quick and reliable way to identify students who may be struggling with a

particular concept. Armed with this knowledge, teachers can then plan targeted small-group instruction that is tailored to each student's individual needs. By using assessment data to inform their instruction, teachers can avoid the pitfalls of a one-size-fits-all approach and provide personalized lessons that maximize student learning outcomes. While teachers are expected to engage in reflective practice to improve their teaching, it is equally important to encourage students to reflect on their learning. Daily personal reflection can be a powerful tool for fostering personal growth and development, and it is a practice that should be encouraged continually. By encouraging students to reflect on their learning, teachers can help them develop the skills and habits that will serve them well throughout their academic and professional lives.

Research Question Four Discussion

How do teachers implement the Readers' Workshop Model intervention? Customized learning approaches, tailored to the unique needs of each student, are undoubtedly effective in enhancing their skills and knowledge and enabling them to reach their full potential. Educators adopting such an approach can significantly impact their student's academic growth and development. During the three classroom observations, the teachers utilized academic language recognized as essential for the students. Additionally, they differentiated instruction to ensure all students were engaged and learning at their own pace.

Research Question Five Discussion

How confident are teachers of the Readers' Workshop Model in teaching the Being a Reader curriculum?

The researcher observed what factors contribute to the progress of students' reading and how teachers impact that progress. Responses from elementary teachers fell under three categories: (a) teacher support, (b) peer coaching, and (c) professional learning communities. The study analyzed how comfortable and proficient teachers were with the Readers' Workshop curriculum. Some teachers had more experience than others, resulting in varied comfort levels. Participants felt teachers were not adequately trained to implement the Being a Reader curriculum effectively. The study explored whether the district provided sufficient professional development opportunities for teachers. Peer coaching is an effective way for teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge. It involves collaborative and reflective dialogue between colleagues, allowing them to share experiences and expertise. Through communities of practice, teachers can discuss and refine new teaching approaches. Peer coaching is vital for teacher growth, providing direct guidance to address instructional struggles and helping them become more confident in their profession.

Collaborating with fellow teachers in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) can positively impact student achievement. In these communities, teachers can exchange effective methods, discuss challenges, and address any issues that may be hindering their instructional abilities. Moreover, instructional coaches and principals can assist in analyzing data from informal and formal assessments, student work, and observations and determining the next instructional steps. (PLCs) are also used to disaggregate district-wide assessment data, identify patterns and misconceptions, and adjust instruction based on the needs of our students. This helps evaluate the effectiveness of evidence-based

interventions and improves teachers' skills and confidence in supporting students' education.

Research Question Six Discussion

What are the implications of students' Galileo assessment scores with regard to reading progress? Responses from elementary teachers fell under two categories: (a) reading progress and (b) curriculum alignment to assessment. Regarding listening comprehension, it appears that some crucial elements are still lacking to aid students in achieving better results on their exams. One participant believed that the curriculum does not correspond with the test. They pointed out that the questions on the exam are not covered in their curriculum and that the curriculum does not prepare students for these types of questions. The participant emphasized that as a teacher, knowing what is on the Galileo assessment is important to provide proper instruction and adequately prepare students.

Based on the data, the researcher concluded that null hypotheses one and two were rejected as there is an association between the performance of kindergarten and first-grade students and the Readers' Workshop Model (RWM) as measured on the Galileo assessment. However, the data revealed no association between the assessment scores of second-grade students and RWM for two consecutive years, leading the researcher to fail to reject null hypothesis three. Additionally, the study showed no significant change in the reading levels of students as measured by the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB). The p-value is less than 0.001 for kindergarten through second grade, indicating strong evidence to reject hypotheses one, two, and three.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1.1 Discussion

For H1.1, I Rejected Null H1.1: Therefore, there was an association between kindergarten students' reading level achievement before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo Assessment). The results of the data analysis demonstrate that the Readers' Workshop Model is an effective tool for improving the reading skills of primary students in urban areas. The study highlights the importance of adopting effective teaching practices to bridge the achievement gap between urban students and their counterparts. The Readers' Workshop Model has the potential to assist young learners in developing foundational supports and enhancing their reading abilities. Adopting the Readers' Workshop Model can assist young learners in developing foundational supports. In elementary education, reading proficiency and comprehension are essential indicators of student success. With phonemic awareness and reading comprehension being the majority of concepts addressed on the Galileo assessment, teachers have expressed concerns about the Being a Reader Curriculum, which they feel lacks sufficient support for foundational skills. Teachers adjust their instructional approach and focus on individual needs during small-group instruction to address this issue. This personalized approach helps teachers meet their students' needs better, improving performance. By using these strategies and providing students with tailored support, they can move closer to reaching a reading proficiency level of 80%.

Hypothesis 1.2 Discussion

For H1.2, I Rejected Null H1.2: Therefore, there was an association between first-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as

measured by the Galileo assessment). In 2021-2022, a little over half of first-grade students, at 64%, met the expected growth goal of 80% proficiency. The researcher analyzed secondary data from the district MPI (Missouri Performance Index) and Expected DL (Developmental Level) Growth database. A significance level of .05 was used for all statistical analyses to determine whether reading development improved between the Galileo assessments conducted in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 for first grade. The data analysis revealed a significant association between the Readers' Workshop Model and the progress made by first-grade students in their reading abilities. According to the findings, implementing the Readers' Workshop Model positively impacted the growth of the students' reading abilities. These results suggest that the Readers' Workshop Model can be considered an effective tool to improve the reading skills of urban first-grade students.

Hypothesis 1.3 Discussion

For H1.3, I Failed to Reject Null H1.3: Therefore, there is no association between second-grade students' reading level scores before and after the Readers' Workshop Model. (as measured by the Galileo assessment). The researcher used a significance level of .05 for all statistical analyses to examine whether reading development improved between the Galileo assessments conducted in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 for second grade. Based on the Galileo assessment results for two consecutive years, it has been observed that the reading levels of second-grade students have declined. This decline highlights the need to design a curriculum that caters to the evolving needs of students as they progress through their academic journey. The lack of academic progress among second-grade students has left them struggling to develop the reading skills required to

perform at their grade level. Therefore, it is imperative to provide them with appropriate support and resources to break this cycle and ensure that they achieve their full academic potential.

Hypothesis 2.1 Discussion

For H2.1, I Rejected Null H2.1: Therefore, there was a significant difference in kindergarten students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment. It was determined whether the Readers' Workshop Model had a significant impact on the Teacher College Benchmark reading level scores of kindergarten students before and after the program using the Wilcoxon two-tailed test at a significance level of .05. Based on the results obtained, the researcher found that the reading level scores of the students were significantly impacted by (RWM). The $p<.0001$ indicates a very small p-value, less than 0.1 percent, resulting in rejecting Hypothesis 2.1. The findings have indicated a significant change in the reading level scores of the students, and as a result, the hypothesis could be rejected.

Hypothesis 2.2 Discussion

For H2.2, I Rejected the Null H2.2: Therefore, there was a significant difference in first-grade students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment. The researcher analyzed the difference between the fall and spring reading levels of first-grade students before and after implementing the Readers' Workshop Model. Most students' reading levels increased by at least one level; the analysis showed that the student's Teacher College Benchmark reading levels were significantly impacted. First-grade students' literacy progress was analyzed with a significance level of .05. The results showed a significant change in the student's reading

level progress as measured by the Teacher College Benchmark. As a result, the hypothesis could be rejected. In short, the data suggests that the Readers' Workshop Model did impact the reading level progress of first-grade students.

Hypothesis 2.3 Discussion

For H2.3, I Rejected Null H2.3. Therefore, there was a significant difference. There is a difference in second-grade students' reading scores from fall to spring based on the Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) assessment. The Readers' Workshop Model significantly impacted the reading level scores of second-grade students before and after the program, according to the Wilcoxon two-tailed test at a significance level of .05. The results showed significant change in the student's reading level progress as measured by the Teacher College Benchmark and as a result, the hypothesis could be rejected. During the year, four students did not progress and failed to achieve the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). While most of the students showed improvement in their reading levels, it was only by one level, which is still below the expected level of progress. Although the Being a Reader curriculum and the Readers' Workshop Model have been effective in enhancing the academic performance of students, it may not be the most effective approach for this particular group of students.

Recommendations for Future Studies

The researcher initiated a mixed methods study to analyze the Readers' Workshop Model's impact on urban primary students' reading ability. There continues to be a literacy gap between students in economically-disadvantaged areas and their counterparts. This research study aims to contribute to the understanding and knowledge base of successful strategies teachers can implement to promote student academic success

and improve reading levels. The researcher observed classrooms to see how teachers affect students' reading progress and motivation, how well teachers implemented the Readers' Workshop Model, and how students' Galileo scores relate to their reading progress. The results of this study offered valuable information and served as an incredible educational experience. While the study offers valuable insights, it's important to acknowledge its limitations and the need for further research. Additional data obtained from future research would support the information provided by the current study.

The first recommendation for future research would involve a case study with two control groups of students. One group would receive the Readers' Workshop Model intervention, while the others would not. The study should include the same grade levels and be conducted within the same school district to ensure consistency. Classroom observation data and teacher perceptions could be used to measure the effectiveness of the intervention. A long-term longitudinal study could provide insights into the lasting impact of the Readers' Workshop Model. It could help explain its effects on the literacy progress and academic success of second-grade students and beyond.

A quantitative-based approach may help determine the most effective time for reading instruction. Teachers implement the RWM at various times throughout the day, and opinions vary on when students benefit most from reading instruction. It may be worth conducting a study where reading instruction is taught at the same time across grade levels, as this could potentially eliminate some limitations in the current study. By running this study in the same grade level, we could better understand the impact of instruction at specific times of the day. Based on the researcher's recommendation, conducting a quantitative study would prove helpful in analyzing how students' reading

development and motivation to read are affected when teachers provide reading instruction simultaneously. The study would require teachers to be adaptable and open-minded. Research suggests that students become more invested in their education when they can choose their own reading materials, discuss them, and learn personalized strategies. The above recommendations would allow students and teachers to reflect and share their perceptions regarding the Readers' Workshop Model and its impact on students' reading motivation and development. Teacher interviews, survey results, and classroom observations indicated the Readers' Workshop Model's overall positive impact on students' reading progress. Furthermore, teachers highlighted the significant benefits of small-group instruction for students. However, it is imperative to provide teachers with additional support on effectively implementing each Readers' Workshop Model component.

Personal Reflections

The researcher gained valuable insights both educationally and personally from the study. The researcher's reflections include changes aimed at improving data quality, aiming to enhance urban students' motivation and ability to read while incorporating teacher perspectives and concerns to inform best practices. Moreover, the researcher shares personal reflections and growth throughout the research and experience.

Based on the researcher's findings, it seems that the Readers' Workshop Model may be effective in improving the academic achievement of urban primary students. However, some gaps in the district-approved curriculum may be addressed to meet students' needs better. It would have been beneficial to have more data from a larger sample population to support these findings further. Follow-up teacher interviews taken

after the last Galileo assessment could have provided additional insights and perspectives on the impact of the Readers' Workshop Model.

This study allowed the researcher to recognize the challenges involved in identifying what effective reading instruction entails and the important roles teachers and students play in guaranteeing students' academic success by developing reading proficiency and fostering a passion for literature. By incorporating readers' workshop, teachers can establish a conducive reading atmosphere that promotes student engagement, learning, collaboration, and independence. This approach encourages students to actively participate in their education and work together to achieve their goals. Additionally, it helps students develop a sense of autonomy and take ownership of their learning, which can positively impact their academic success.

Finally, the researchers' beliefs were further confirmed that small group instruction tailored to individual skill sets is key to helping urban students overcome literacy gaps and providing students with appropriate leveled readers. The classroom observations proved that engaging texts are crucial in keeping students focused and motivated throughout the learning process. As teachers described, being mindful of their personal perceptions of a student's abilities, providing positive feedback, monitoring progress, and reflecting on their instructional practice can greatly enhance student motivation and foster a "can do" attitude. These practices can create equitable opportunities for all students to develop their reading skills and help bridge the literacy gaps between urban students and their counterparts.

Limitations

The study acknowledged certain limitations, such as that teacher participants were chosen through convenience sampling. Additionally, the study only included certified general education teachers with at least two years of teaching experience and servicing kindergarten through second-grade urban students in a school in the Midwest region of Missouri. Although all participants held an elementary teaching position within the same district, their varied experiences, levels of graduate education, grade-level expertise, students, and professional development could have impacted the study's outcomes. Unfortunately, the researcher could not observe all aspects of the Readers' Workshop Model due to scheduling conflicts and the timing of observations. This may limit the scope of the study and the conclusions that can be drawn from it.

The study was conducted with participants who voluntarily agreed to participate and could decline the invitation. The participants in the study had the option to decline the invitation, and those who agreed to participate did so voluntarily. The response rate among the urban primary school teachers who received a recruitment email was low, prompting the researcher to follow up with the candidates. As a result of this follow-up, 5 out of the 10 candidates were successfully recruited to participate in the study. The participants comprised one instructional coach and four primary general education teachers ranging from kindergarten through second grade. The study's limitations are evident in that only one elementary school was observed, and a small number of classrooms across different grade levels were analyzed. Moreover, several variables differed between classrooms, including students, teachers, teaching styles, classroom

management, classroom size, and daily schedules, which could have influenced the study's outcomes.

Conclusion

This research explored how the Readers' Workshop Model affects the literacy development and reading motivation of primary school students living in urban areas. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to examine the participants' experiences. The survey results, classroom observations, and interviews of the participants provided valuable insights into the perceptions of teachers and the impact of breaks on student engagement in elementary school. The study addresses six research questions through teacher perceptions, classroom observations, and interviews. Chapter One introduces the research problem statement and rationale and includes the research questions and terms used throughout the study. The researcher also presents an overview of the research limitations and the terms used in the mixed methods study.

In Chapter Two, the researcher provided a thorough review of the literature that explored the history of urban education, the literacy gap between urban students and their counterparts, the need to improve urban students' literacy progress, and the theoretical framework used in the study. In Chapter Three, the methodology of the study is presented. The researcher created a survey to gather instructional coaches' and elementary school teachers' thoughts, emotions, and viewpoints on how the Readers' Workshop Model has affected their students' literacy progress and interest in reading. The survey was given to 10 educators at the research site, and four teachers and one instructional coach completed it. Observations were also conducted for kindergarten, first, and second-grade classrooms to collect qualitative data. Chapter Four provided an overview of the

methods used to collect data, including the instrument, participant interviews, and classroom observations. The survey data were carefully reviewed to identify patterns, similarities, and differences. This process involved developing codes and concepts that were common among the data. These common concepts were then organized into several overarching themes. The same process was followed for analyzing and forming themes from the notes taken during classroom observations and experiences.

Chapter Five summarizes the research findings and draws conclusions based on the data analysis and literature review. The study suggests that the Readers' Workshop Model has the potential to positively impact the reading development of kindergarten and first-grade students as measured by the Galileo assessment. This can increase engagement, confidence, fluency, and reading comprehension. The results of the study clearly indicate that the Readers' Workshop Model and Being a Reader Curriculum had a significant positive impact on the reading level progress of kindergarten and first-grade students. However, the same cannot be said for second-grade students, as the data shows that their reading progress was not positively impacted by the Readers' Workshop Model in both the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of teaching practices must be evaluated and adjusted regularly to ensure that all students are receiving the support they need to succeed academically. Therefore, it is crucial to continue exploring and implementing innovative teaching methods that cater to the unique needs of every student.

The Being a Reader Workshop Model may not be an effective approach for second grade students in this specific demographic. Alternatively, the Science of Reading philosophy could better meet their needs. The Science of Reading emphasizes the five

core components of reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. This approach provides students with a solid foundation in reading and comprehension, which is crucial for their academic success. To prepare students for district and state assessments at various grade levels, it's important to ensure that the curriculum aligns with state standards. Teachers can use various assessment methods, including formal and informal assessments, to evaluate students' progress. By personalizing their teaching approach to meet the needs of individual students, teachers can provide targeted instruction that addresses specific areas of concern. Small group instruction is an effective way to promote literacy development among students. Moreover, encouraging students to reflect on their learning and prioritize improving their independent reading skills leads to positive outcomes on students' scores on the Galileo district assessment and overall academic performance.

References

Aikens, N. L., & Barbarin, O. (2008). Socioeconomic differences in reading trajectories: The contribution of family, neighborhood, and school contexts. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100,* 235-251. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.100.2.235

Allen, B. A ., Boykin, A. W., & Hurley, E. A. (2005). Communal versus individual learning of a math-estimation task: African American children and the culture of learning contexts. *The Journal of Psychology*, *139,* 513-527.

Alvermann, D. E. (2002). Effective literacy instruction for adolescents. *Journal of Literacy Research, 34*(2), 189-208. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15548430jlr3402_4

Amanishakete, A. (2013). In spite of racism, inequality, and school failure: defining hope with achieving Black children. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *82*(4), 408–421. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.82.4.0408\

American Psychological Association (2015). Effects of poverty, hunger, ND homelessness on children and youth. http://www.apa.org/pi/families/poverty.aspx

The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2022). Grade-level reading. Kids count data book. https://www.aecf.org/resources/2022-kids-count-data-book

The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2023). Parental involvement in your child's education. The key to student success. https://www.aecf.org/blog/parental-involvement-vs-parental-engagement https://www.aecf.org/resources/2022-kids-count-data-book

Attendance Works (2014). Attendance in the early grades: Why it matters for reading. A Research Brief.

Baker, B., & Coley, R. J. (2013). Poverty and the future: Finding the way forward. The ETS Center for Research on Human Capital and Education. http://www.ets.org/s/research/pdf/poverty_and_education_report.pdf

Bandura, A. (1977a). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84*(2), 191-215. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191

Bandura, A. (1977b). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American Psychologist, 44*(9), 1175-1184. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.44.9.1175

Barbosa, P., Coddington, C. S., Guthrie, J. T., Klauda, S. L., McRae, A., & Wigfield, A. (2009). Impacts of comprehensive reading instruction on diverse outcomes of low- and high-achieving readers. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 42*(3), 195-214.

Barnum, M. (2022). Does class size really matter? A chalkbeat look at the research. https://www.chalkbeat.org/2022/6/10/23162544/class-size-research/

Barton, A. C., Drake, C., George, M., Perez, J. G., & St. Louis, K., (2004). Ecologies of parental engagement in urban education. *Educational Researcher*, *33*(4), 3-12. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033004003

Barton, P. E., & Coley, R. J. (2010). The Black-White achievement gap: When progress stopped. *Educational Testing Service*. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED511548

Beatty, A. S. (2013). Schools alone cannot close the achievement gap. Issues in Science and Technology 29(3).

Benner, M., Boser, U., & Martin, C., (2018). A quality approach to school funding. Lessons learned from school finance litigation. *Advancing Racial Equity and Justice, Building an Economy for All.* https://www.americanprogress.org/article/quality-approach-school-funding/

Berkman, E. (2015). It's not a lack of self-control that keeps people poor. *The Psych Report*. http://thepsychreport.com/society/its-not-a-lack-of-self-control-that-keeps-people-poor/

Biancarosa, G., & Snow C. (2004). Reading next: A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York. Washington DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. http://www.all4ed.org/publications/ReadingNext/index.html

Billings, G. L. (2013). "Stakes is high": Educating new century students. *The Journal of Negro Education, 82*(2), 105–110. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.82.2.0105

Blake, J. J., Darensbourg, A., & Perez, E. (2010). Overrepresentation of African American males in exclusionary discipline: The role of school-based mental health professionals in dismantling the school to prison pipeline. *Journal of African American Males in Education 1*(3).

Bluman, A. G. (2015). Elementary statistics: A step by step approach: A brief version. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education

Boggs, O. (2022). Collaborative approaches to recruiting, preparing and retaining teachers for the field.

Bollinger, L. C . (2014). Sixty years later, we need a new Brown. *The New Yorker.* http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/sixty-years-later- we-need-a-new-brown

Bonner, P. J. et al., (2018). Voices from urban classrooms: Teachers' perceptions on instructing diverse students and using culturally responsive teaching. *Education and Urban Society, 50*(8), 697–726. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124517713820

Boser, U. (2015). Separate and economically unequal: Lack of economic diversity in schools is a problem that needs to be addressed. *U.S. News.* http://www.usnews.com/opinion/knowledge-bank/2015/06/17/separate-andeconomically-unequal-why-schools-need-socioeconomic-diversity

Bradford, K. R.& Kamrath, B. (2020). A case study of teacher turnover and retention in an urban elementary school. *Educational Considerations (45)*3, https://newprairiepress.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2181&context=edconsiderations.

Bradley, K. (2022). The socioeconomic achievement gap in the US public schools. https://ballardbrief.byu.edu/issue-briefs/the-socioeconomic-achievement-gap-in-the-us-public-schools

Brown, D., & Zhou, M. (2015). Education learning Theories: 2nd edition.

Brown *v.* Board of Education of Topeka, 267 U.S. (1954). *Records of the Supreme Court of the United States.* National Archives. https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/brown-v-board-of-education#:~:text=Citation%3A%20Brown%20v.,Record%20Group%20267%3B

%20National%20Archives.&text=In%20this%20milestone%20decision%2C%20the,basis%20of%20race%20was%20unconstitutional.

Bradley, R. H., & Corwyn, R. F. (2002). Socioeconomic status and child development. *Annu. Rev. Psychol. 53,* 371–399. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135233.

Brown *v.* Board of Education of Topeka, 267 U.S. (1954). *Records of the Supreme Court of the United States.* National Archives. https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/brown-v-board-of-education#:~:text=Citation%3A%20Brown%20v.,Record%20Group%20267%3B%20National%20Archives.&text=In%20this%20milestone%20decision%2C%20the,basis%20of%20race%20was%20unconstitutional.

Bunijevac, M., & Đurišić, M. (2017). Parental involvement as an important factor for successful education. *CEPS Journal, 7*(3)

Cameron, R. & Molina-Azorin, J. F. (2011). Mixed methods research in business and management. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches, 5*(3), 286-289.

Campbell, E. Q., Coleman, J. S., Hobson, C. J., McPartland, J., Mood, A. M., & Weinfeld, F. D. et al. (1966). Equality of educational opportunity. *U.S. Government Printing Office*. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED012275

Carter, N. P., Hawkins, T. N., & Natesan, P. (2008). The relationship between verve and the academic achievement of African American students in reading and mathematics in an urban middle school. *Educational Foundations*

Chard, D. J., & Kam'enui, E. J. (2000). Struggling first-grade readers: The frequency and progress of their reading. *The Journal of Special Education, 34*(2), 28-38. DOI:10.1177/002246690003400103

Chen, G. (2020). Third grade reading correlates with high school graduation rates. Public School Review.

Chernoff, J. J., Flanagan, K. D., McPhee, C. & Park, J. (2007). Preschool: First findings from the preschool follow-up of the early childhood longitudinal study, birth cohort (ECLS-B). U.S. Department of Education NCES 2008-025. First Look. National Center for Education Statistics.

Coatsworth, J. D., & Masten, A. S. (1998). The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments: Lessons from research on successful children. *American Psychologist, 53*(2), 205-220. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.53.2.205

Coley, R. J., & Baker, B. (2013). Poverty and education: Finding the way forward. The ETS Center for Research on Human Capital and Education. http://www.ets.org/s/research/pdf/poverty_and_education_report.pdf

Comprehensive Assessment System. (2021). Assessment Technology Incorporated. https://www.ati-online.com/galileoK12/k12-assessment.php

Couper, E., & Singer, M. P. (2017). Some methodological uses of responses to open questions and other verbatim comments in quantitative surveys. *Methods, Data Analyses 11*(2), 115-134. DOI: 10.12758/mda.2017.01

Creswell J. W. (2015). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Davakos, M. (2018). The impact of reading workshop on third graders in a summer reading camp. Doctoral dissertation. https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/5076

Denton, K., Germino-H. E., & West J. (2001). *American's kindergarten: Findings from the early childhood longitudinal study, kindergarten class of 1998-1999 (NDES 2001-070R)*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics.

Dresser, R. (2012). The impact of scripted literacy instruction on teachers and students. *Issues in Teacher Education, (21)*1, 71-87.

Dwyer, J., & Neuman, S. (2011). Developing vocabulary and conceptual knowledge for low-income preschoolers: A design experiment. *Journal of Literacy Research, 43*(2), 103-129. Doi: 10.1177/1086296X11403089

Farah, M. J., Noble, K. G., & Norman, M. F. (2005). Neurocognitive correlates of socioeconomic status in kindergarten children. *Dev. Sci. 8,* 74–87. doi:10.1111/j.1467-7687.2005.00394.x

Eischens, L., & Streefland, E. (2014). The impact of reader's workshop on reading engagement. https://sophia.stkate.edu/maed/69

Eisele, M., Jordan, L., Lane, H., & Pullen, P. (2002). Preventing reading failure: Phonological awareness assessment and instruction. *Preventing School Failure. 46*(3), 101-110.https://doi.org/10.1080/10459880209603354

Esposito, C. (1999). Learning in urban blight: School climate and its effect on the school performance of urban, minority, low-income children. *School Psychology Review, 28* (3), 365-377.

Estrella, J. (2007). Leadership in the classroom: Closing the achievement gap through motivation. [Honors College Theses] Pace University.

Excellence in Education. (2021). [blog]. CORE. https://www.corelearn.com/small-group-instruction-blog/#:~:text=Personalize%20Instruction%3A%20Small%20group%20instruction,focused%20on%20specific%20learning%20objectives.

Farrell, L., Hunter, M., & Osenga, T. (2024). Reading Rockets. *A new model for teaching high-frequency words.* https://www.readingrockets.org/topics/phonics-and-decoding/articles/new-model-teaching-high-frequency-words#:~:text=Current%20practices-,High%2Dfrequency%20words,stories%20in%20the%20reading%20program.

Ferguson, R. (2004). An unfinished journey: The legacy of Brown and the narrowing of the achievement gap. *Phi Delta Kappan, 85,* 656-669.

Farkas, G., Hillemeier, M., Maczuga, S., & Morgan, P. L., (2009). Risk factors for learning-related behavior problems at 24 months of age: Population-based estimates. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 37,* 401-413. doi:10.1007/s10802-008-9279-8

Figlio, D. N., Rouse, C. E., & Schlosser, A. (2007). Leaving no child behind: Two paths to school accountability. National Center on Performance Incentives.

Fink, A. (2017). How to conduct surveys: A step by step guide (6th ed.). Sage.

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2004). *Improving adolescent literacy: Strategies at work.*

Foley, B. C., & Leahy, M. A . (2018). Diversity in children's literature. *World of Educational Research, 5*(2).

Fraenkel, J., Wallen, N., & Hyun, H. (2019). How to design and evaluate research in education (10th ed.). McGraw Hill Education.

Garcia, L. E., & Thornton, O. (2014). The enduring importance of parental involvement. https://www.region10.org/r10website/assets/File/The%20Enduring%20Importance%20of%20ParentalInvolvemen1.pdf

Garcia, E., & Weiss, E. (2017). Reducing and averting achievement gaps: Key findings from the report 'Education inequalities at the school starting gate' and comprehensive strategies to mitigate early skills gaps. Economic Policy Institute.

Gee, J. P. (2001). What is literacy? *Journal of Education, 171,* 18-25.

Goodman, Y. (2001). The development of initial literacy. In E. Cushman, E. R. Kintgen, B. M. Kroll & M. Rose (Eds.), *Literacy: A critical sourcebook* (316-324). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Graham, S., & Teague, C. (2011). Reading levels of rural and urban third graders lag behind their suburban peers. Carsey Institute.

Guthrie, J., & McRae, A. (2012). Teacher practices that impact reading motivation. Reading Rockets. https://www.readingrockets.org/article/teacher-practices-impact-reading-motivation

Hammond, L. D., & Thomas, D.C (2017). Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it. *Learning Policy Institute.*

Harris, A. L., & Robinson, K. (2014). Parental involvement is overrated. *New York Times.* https://archive.nytimes.com/opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/04/12/parental-involvement-is-overrated/

Heath, S. B . (1982). What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and school. *Language in Society, 11*(1), 49-76.

Hernandez, D. J. (2011). Double jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation. Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Hiatt-Michael, M. D. (2001). Schools as learning communities: A vision of organic school reform. *School Community Journal, 11*(2), 93-112.

Hill, N. E., &, Tyson, D. F. (2009). Parental involvement in middle school: a meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement. *Dev Psychol, 45*(3), 740-63. doi:10.1037/a0015362.

Howard, N. R. (n.d.). Terms of engagement: Redefining parental involvement and STEM identity for Black girls. In Joseph N. M. (Ed.), *Understanding the intersections of race, gender, and gifted education: An anthology by and about talented Black girls and women in STEM.* Charlotte, NC: Information AGE Publishing.

International Literacy Association. (n.d.). Why literacy? http://www.literacyworldwide.org/why-literacy

Jasis, P. M., & Ordonez-Jasis, R. (2012). Latino parental involvement: Examining commitment and empowerment in the schools. *Urban Education, 47*(1), 65-89.

Jencks, C., & Phillips, M. (1998). The Black-White test score gap: Why it persists and what can be done. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

Jepsen, C. (2015). *Class size: Does it matter for student achievement? Smaller classes are often associated with increased achievement, but the evidence is far from universal.* IZA World of Labor. wol.iza.org

Jeynes, W. (2012). A meta-analysis of the efficacy of different types of parental involvement programs for urban students. *Urban Education, 47*(4). https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912445643

Johnson, V. R., Mapp, K. L., Meza, C., & Strickland, C. S. (2008). High school family centers: Transformative spaces linking schools and families in support of student learning. *Marriage & Family Review, 43*, 338-368.

Jurado, M. (2014). Parental involvement impacting student academic success in avid. Ursida: *The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado, 4*(2).

Kent, S. C., Otaiba, S. A ., Roberts, G., & Wanzek, J. (2014). The relationship of print reading in tier I instruction and reading achievement for kindergarten students at risk of reading difficulties. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, *37*(3), 148-160: https://www.jstor.org/stable/44290337 JSTOR

Kewal Ramani, A., MacFarland, J., Musu-Gillete, L., Robinson, J., Wilkinson-Flicker, S., & Zhang, A. (2016). Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups 2016. *National Center for Education Statistics.*

Kilty, K. M. (2015). Fifty years later: Access to education as an avenue out of poverty, *Journal of Poverty*, *19*(3), 324-329

Kokka, K. (2016). Urban teacher longevity: What keeps teachers of color in one under-resourced urban school? *Teaching and teacher education 59,* 169-179 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.05.014

Kozol, J. (2005). The shame of the nation: The restoration of Apartheid schooling in America. New York: Crown.

Kunjufu, J. (2006). An African centered response to Ruby Payne's poverty theory. Chicago: African American Images.

Ladson-Billings. G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. schools. *American Educational Research Association 35*(7), 3-12.

Larson, J., & Marsh, J. (2015). Reframing sociocultural theory: Identity, agency, and power. In *Making Literacy Real: Theories and Practices for Learning and Teaching* (2nd ed.). 135-164. SAGE Publications

Lee, J. (2002). Racial and ethnic achievement gap trends: Reversing the progress toward equity? *Educational Researcher, 31*(1), 3-12. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3594304

Lightfoot, D. (2007). "Some parents just don't care": Decoding the meanings of Parental involvement on urban schools. *Urban Education, 39*(1), 91-107.

Lewis, M. C. (1993). *Beyond barriers: Involving Hispanic families in the education process*. Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Lockwood, J. R., Pepper, M. J., Springer, M. G., & Steele, J. L., (2015). The distribution and mobility of effective teachers: Evidence from a large, urban school district. *Economics of Education Review, 48*(1), 86-101.

Making Meaning: Whole-class reading comprehension and vocabulary (2021). Center for Collaborative Classroom. https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/programs/making-meaning/#:~:text=During%20IDR%2C%20the%20teacher%20confers,of%20growth%20for%20each%20student.

Mays, L. (2008). The cultural divide of discourse: Understanding how English-language learners' primary discourse influences acquisition of literacy. *The Reading Teacher, 61(*5), 415-418.

Marable, M. (2005). Beyond brown: The revolution in Black studies. *The Black Scholar, 35*, 11-22.

Maydun, N. (2011). Connecting social disorganization theory to African-American outcomes to explain the achievement gap.

Meier, T. (2003). "Why can't she remember that?" The importance of storybook reading in multilingual, multicultural classrooms. *The Reading Teacher, 57*(3), 242-252.

Meyer, E. (2010). A collaborative approach to reading workshop in the middle years. *The Reading Teacher 63*(6).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, § 20 U.S.C.6319 (2015).

Oakes, J. (2003). Introduction to education inadequacy, inequality, and failed state policy: A synthesis of expert reports prepared for Williams v. State of California. Santa Clara Law Review, 1299.

Otto, B. (2008). Language Development in Early Childhood. (3rd Ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill.

Peter G. Peterson Foundation. (2023). How is K-12 education funded? https://www.pgpf.org/budget-basics/how-is-k-12-education-funded

Reading Rockets (n.d.). WETA. Fluency. https://www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/fluency

Reading Rockets (2022). WETA. Phonological and phonemic awareness. https://www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/phonologicalphonemic

Roach, R. (2004). The great divide. *Black Issues in Higher Education, 21*, 22- 25.

Robinson. L. R. (2016). In black and white: The achievement gap and the integration of schools. https://oaks.kent.edu/ugresearch/2016/2016all/26.

Reardon, S. F. (2011). The widening academic achievement gap between the rich and the poor: New evidence and possible explanations, in Whither opportunity? R. Murnane & G. Duncan, (Eds.), *Rising inequality, schools, and children's life chances* (91–116). Russell Sage Foundation.

Rothstein, R. (2014). The racial achievement gap, segregated schools, and segregated neighborhoods-a constitutional insult. *Economic Policy Institute.* https://www.epi.org/publication/the-racial-achievement-gap-segregated-schools-and-segregated-neighborhoods-a-constitutional-insult/

Rothstein, R. (2002). Class and schools: Using social, economic, and educational reform to close the Black-white achievement gap. *Economic Policy Institute.*

Rumberger, R. W. (2013). Poverty and dropouts. American Psychological Association. http://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicator/2013/05/poverty- dropouts.aspx

Seger, W. (n.d.) Explicit, systematic phonics instruction? So glad you asked… collaborative classroom. https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/blog/explicit-systematic-phonics-instruction-glad-you-asked/

Semuels, A. (2014). A different approach to breaking the cycle of poverty. *The Atlantic*. http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/12/a-differentapproach-to-breaking-the-cycle-of-poverty/384029/

Sight word. (2021). In Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sight_word

Smith, J. G. (2006). Parental involvement in education among low-income families: A case study.

Stone, B. (2016). The effect of parent involvement on reading comprehension on the academic achievement of second-grade students. Goucher College Talk: Phonics (2021). In Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk%3APhonics

Sui-Chu, E. H., & Willms, J. D. (1996). Effects of parental involvement on eighth-grade achievement. *The Sociological Quarterly, 69*, 126-141.

Timberlake, J. (2007). Racial and ethnic inequality in the duration of children's exposure to neighborhood poverty and affluence. *Social Problems, 54*, 319-342.

Thernstrom, A., & Thernstrom, S. (2003). *No excuses: Closing the racial gap in learning*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

U.S. News Education. (n.d.). https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/missouri/walnut-grove-elementary-209908#:~:text=Overview%20of%20Walnut%20Grove%20Elementary&text=The%20student%20population%20of%20Walnut,the%20school%20serves%20PK%2D2.

Van Vechten, D. (2013). Impact of home literacy environments on students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds. St. John Fisher College.

Wang, M. T., & Shiekh-Kahlil, S. (2014). Does parental involvement matter for student achievement and mental health in high school? *Child Dev., 85*(2), 610-25. doi:10.1111/cdev.12153.

Wentzel, K. R. (2009). Students' relationships with teachers as motivational contexts *Handbook of motivation at school,* 301–322. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203879498

Wiggan, G. (2007). Race, school achievement, and educational inequality: toward a student-based inquiry perspective. *Review of Educational Research, 77*(3), 310-333.

Williams, J. L. (2021). Teachers' use of within-class ability groups in the primary classroom: A mixed methods study of social comparison. *Front Psychol.* doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2021.728104

Wixom, M. A. (2015). *Closing the achievement gap:* Four states' efforts. *Education Commission for the States*. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED561914

Appendix A: Survey Questions

1. What impact do you have on your students' motivation to read?

2. How comfortable are you implementing the components of the "Being a Reader" curriculum?

a. Extremely uncomfortable
b. Somewhat uncomfortable
c. Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
d. Somewhat comfortable
e. Extremely comfortable

3. What are the positive and/or negative impacts of "Being a Reader?"

4. Based on Teacher College Benchmark (TCB) and Being a Reader (BAR) data, what percentage of students will show progress in reading from Fall to Spring?

a. 100%-80% and above will show reading progress from Fall to Spring
b. 79%-50% will show reading progress from Fall to Spring
c. Below 50% will show reading progress from Fall to Spring
d. No students will show reading progress from Fall to Spring

5. What strategies do you believe contributed to your students' literacy progress?

6. What instructional strategies have you found supported and developed students' reading ability? For ex.: whole group instruction, small guided reading instruction and/or independent reading.

7. What areas of support or special considerations would you suggest to improve students' literacy progress?

8. How can possible concerns or limitations impact instructional ability and students' literacy progress? Please discuss possible limitations.

9. Teacher look fors are aligned with our building goals. What instructional feedback would benefit your impact on instruction?

10. What are some potential factors that could affect the impact of your instruction? Please explain.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. How might a teacher implement Being a Reader curriculum with fidelity?
2. What components of Readers' Workshop Model (whole group instruction, independent instruction, small group instruction and independent reading) did you notice enhanced students' reading performance?
3. Considering the amount of district approved training; do you think you were provided sufficient professional development to implement Being a Reader curriculum effectively? Why or why not?
4. What activities have you observed students being most engaged with in order to improve their ability to read?
5. What instructional practices are essential for students' reading readiness to prepare them for the following grade level?
6. How does teachers' instructional ability affect Galileo's literacy scores? Why or why not?
7. What elements of Being a Reader would you benefit from additional support?
8. Do you encourage students to reflect on their learning? Please explain your answer. How often do you reflect on your instructional practice? Why?

Appendix C: Survey E-mail

Hello!

In the Fall of 2022, you were selected to participate in a research study regarding the Readers' Workshop Model's impact on urban students. I am currently studying the effects this model has on urban primary students' literacy progress as a doctoral student at Lindenwood University and am sending you this e-mail to ask for your help.

In order to better understand if could you please take a few minutes to fill out this short 10-question survey? The survey is anonymous, and you may stop at any time, should you want. This survey is being sent to educators who have at least two years teaching experience. Participation in the survey is completely voluntary and will have no direct benefits to participating.

At the end of the survey, you will find an additional opportunity for a short interview to further aid my research. Again, this this be completely voluntary and will have no direct benefits to participating.

I truly appreciate your assistance in my research! Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions.

Thank you,

Narissa

Appendix D: Survey Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Narissa Waller under the guidance of Dr. Nasser at Lindenwood University. Being in a research study is voluntary, and you can stop at any time. We are doing this study to contribute to the understanding and knowledge base of successful strategies teachers can implement to promote student academic success and improve reading levels in kindergarten, first, and second-grade students. First, teachers will reflect on their ability to implement the Readers' Workshop Model, a component of Being a Reader curriculum. Then teachers will participate in a twenty-minute interview. Last, teachers will complete a survey. I will conduct a thirty-minute classroom observation. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time by simply not completing the survey or closing the browser window. There are no risks from participating in this project. We will not collect any information that may identify you. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

WHO CAN I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

Narissa Waller: nw931@lindenwood.edu

Dr. Nasser: rnasser@lindenwood.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director – Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu.

Vitae

Narissa Waller completed her undergraduate degree in Public Relations from the University of Central Missouri State in December 1999. Narissa began her teaching career in 2007 as a kindergarten and first-grade teacher with the Grand Prairie School District. In 2010, she embarked on a new adventure and accepted a position teaching high school English in Hebei province, Qinhuangdao, China. Narissa earned a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Ashford University in 2012. Narissa's passion for teaching continued, and in 2015, she transitioned to teaching kindergarten in Midwest Missouri. In 2019 Narissa began helping young adults with developmental delays to navigate the challenges of transitioning into the workplace and to achieve their full potential. She has since become an experienced and accomplished mentor and has also served on the Curriculum Advisory Committee.