THE IMPACT OF A CAREGIVER WORKSHOP REGARDING

STORYBOOK READING ON PRE-KINDERGARTEN

CHILDREN'S READINESS FOR READING

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The Impact of a Caregiver Workshop Regarding Storybook Reading on Pre-Kindergarten

Children's Readiness for Reading

by Misty M. LaCour

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Abstract

Misty LaCour. THE IMPACT OF A CAREGIVER WORKSHOP REGARDING STORYBOOK READING ON PRE-KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN'S READINESS FOR READING. (Under the direction of Dr. Connie McDonald) School of Education, March, 2010.

This study examined if, by providing caregivers with a workshop regarding effective storybook reading coupled with the receipt of storybooks, Pre-Kindergarten students' emergent literacy development would significantly increase. Pre-Kindergarten children attending two Head Start centers in the Southeastern U.S. participated in the study. Twelve Pre-Kindergarten children comprised the experimental group while ten Pre-Kindergarten children were subjects of the control group. The BRIGANCE CIBS-R Readiness for Reading assessment was used to determine the emergent literacy development of the subjects. The ANCOVA statistical method indicated no significant gain between the experimental group and the control group. A paired samples t-test revealed a significant gain in emergent literacy development for both the experimental group and the control group. On a survey regarding reading interest, caregivers indicated an improvement in student attitude and interest in reading following the workshop. Therefore, this study found that a caregiver workshop on storybook reading may lead to a possible positive influence on student attitude and interest in reading while indicating no significant difference in emergent literacy development for the students whose caregivers attended the workshop.

Keywords: Emergent literacy development, storybook reading, dialogic reading

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A relationship was found between learning to read and a positive home environment which encouraged reading development (Neuman & Roskos, 1993; Roberts, 2008; Smetana, 2005). Parents had more influence on a child's reading development than any other one individual (International Reading Association [IRA], 1996). When a child lived in a household of limited literacy proficiency or one that did not value literacy, the child became particularly at-risk for reading difficulties (Smentana, 2005). A child's success in school literacy programs often depended upon the experiences that occurred at home prior to coming to school (Morrow & Young, 1996). The inclusion of storybooks in the home environment was a key component for developing early literacy skills. Through exposure to storybooks in the home, children began to understand the purpose of books and reading.

A key activity for establishing a literate environment in the home was the activity of sharing a storybook between the caregiver and child. According to Doyle and Bramwell (2006), "shared book reading [was] an interactive way of reading books aloud with children that gives them a chance to be active participants in the reading session, thus providing a meaningful experience that stimulates learning" (p. 555). Shared storybook reading in the home led to receptive language development which ultimately led to reading (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002).

The home literacy environment played a crucial role in the development of emergent literacy skills, with storybook reading as one of the most significant home learning activities to increase these skills (Burgess, Hecht, & Lonigan, 2002). Storybook

reading in the home has been specifically linked to oral language and vocabulary development as well as the development of phonemic and phonological awareness (Burgess, 2002; Holloway, 2004; Kotaman, 2007; Morgan & Meier, 2008; Roberts, 2008; Senechal, LeFevre, Thomas, & Daley, 1998).

Storybook reading in the home, as a form of social interaction between the caregiver and child, was crucial for adequate emergent literacy development (Beech, 2005; Gillet, Temple, & Crawford, 2004; Goodman, 1986; IRA, 1994; National Institute for Literacy, 2003; Pikulski & Chard, 2005; Snow & Ninio, 1986; Sulzby, 1985; Sulzby & Teale, 1987; Teale, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978).   Because conducting storybook reading in the home as a form of social interaction between caregiver and child was crucial for children's adequate emergent literacy development, this study sought to provide storybooks to caregivers coupled with a caregiver workshop, which taught the skills necessary for engaging in effective storybook reading in the home, for the purpose of increasing the emergent literacy skills of Pre-Kindergarten students. This first chapter of the dissertation provided an overview of the study, the research questions addressed in the study, the null hypotheses, background of the study, the professional significance of the study, and the definitions of key terms.

Research Questions

The primary research question addressed in this study was as follows: Was there a significant difference in readiness for reading among students whose caregivers have participated in an intervention workshop coupled with the receipt of storybooks when compared to students whose caregivers have not participated in an intervention workshop nor received storybooks?

The secondary research question addressed in this study was as follows: Was there a significant change in students' readiness for reading after caregivers participate in an intervention workshop coupled with the receipt of storybooks?

Null Hypotheses

The primary null hypothesis tested in this study was as follows: There was no significant difference between groups, the experimental group's readiness for reading posttest mean score and the control group's readiness for reading posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999).

The secondary null hypothesis tested in this study was as follows: There was no significant difference within the experimental group, between the experimental group's pretest mean score and the experimental group's posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999).

A final and third hypothesis tested in this study was as follows: There was no significant difference within the control group, between the control group's pretest mean score and the control group's posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999).

Background of the Study

Cutspec (2006) described dialogic reading as an early childhood intervention strategy based on the theory that children's language develops best when scaffolding techniques were used during the adult/child shared book reading event. Dialogic reading

was a specific form of storybook reading which encouraged emergent literacy development through the social interaction of the adult and child (Cutspec, 2006; Whitehurst, 1992). Research indicated that children, who engaged in shared book reading with adults who used dialogic reading techniques, showed significant increases in language development when compared to children who engaged in shared book reading with adults who used traditional techniques (Whitehurst, 1992).

During dialogic reading, the child was encouraged to take an increasing role as storyteller while the adult prompted the child using questioning, response expansion, and positive reinforcement (Zevenbergen & Riekofski, n.d.). Dialogic reading was a specific type of social interaction which involved sharing the storybook reading event between caregiver and child, making the child a participant in the reading of the story (Whitehurst, 1992). Specific techniques used during dialogic reading can ensure adequate emergent literacy development. The PEER sequence was a primary technique used in effective dialogic reading. The PEER sequence was described as "a short interaction between a child and the adult. The adult: Prompts the child to say something about the book; Evaluates the child's response; Expands the child's response by rephrasing and adding information to it; and Repeats the prompt to make sure the child has learned from the expansion" (Whitehurst, 1992, para. 9).

While prompting the child for a response, the caregivers used CROWD questions to ensure adequate understanding of the story. Caregivers elicited specific responses from the child using the following CROWD questions: Completion, Recall, Open-ended, the five W's, and Distancing (Zevenbergen & Riekofski, n.d.). Through using CROWD questions at the prompting stage of the PEER sequence, caregivers assisted the child in

further development of emergent literacy skills.

Caregivers used the PEER sequence coupled with CROWD questions to enhance the effectiveness of the storybook reading event on increasing the child's emergent literacy development. Caregivers also used additional tips, coupled with the PEER sequence and CROWD questions, to increase the effectiveness of the dialogic storybook reading event. To ensure a productive dialogic storybook reading event, caregivers:

1. Asked children to answer open-ended questions about a story's characters, setting, and events in the story.

2. Expanded on children's answers by repeating the answer, clarifying the answer, or asking further questions.

3. Provided praise and encouragement to [the child] for giving input into the story.

4. Built on children's interests when selecting stories and questions regarding the story (Morgan & Meier, 2008, p. 12).

Caregivers were taught the PEER sequence, use of CROWD questions, and the additional tips for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of the storybook reading event. Through attending a workshop based on dialogic storybook reading, caregivers gained the skills necessary to ensure adequate emergent literacy development for their child. Kotaman (2007) conducted a study using a caregiver storybook reading training workshop on dialogic reading to increase vocabulary development and attitude toward reading in Pre-Kindergarten children.

The dialogic storybook reading training presented in the Kotaman study (2007) lasted 120 minutes, consisting of three sessions. The first session lasted 20 minutes. During the first session, caregivers received information on the importance of vocabulary

development and the effect of dialogic reading on adequate vocabulary development and attitude toward reading in Pre-Kindergarten children (Kotaman, 2007). Previous research studies pertaining to the effectiveness of dialogic reading were also presented during session one. During the second 20 minute session, the trainer taught caregivers how to apply dialogic techniques during storybook reading time (Kotaman, 2007). Modeling and role playing were used to display the use of effective dialogic reading techniques. Session two was followed with a 10 minute break. The final session, lasting 65 minutes, offered time for the caregivers to practice the skills learned during the previous two sessions (Kotaman, 2007). Caregivers practiced applying dialogic reading techniques in role play sessions with other caregivers. At the end of the session, caregivers were provided with storybooks. The storybooks were to be used in the home by the caregiver for the purpose of engaging in dialogic storybook reading with the child.

The caregiver workshop conducted by Kotaman (2007), coupled with providing caregivers with storybooks, resulted in a significant increase in vocabulary development and attitude toward reading in Pre-Kindergarten subjects. This study sought to further the research of Kotaman (2007) by providing a similar caregiver workshop on storybook reading, coupled with the receipt of storybooks by caregivers. This study measured the effect of the caregiver workshop and receipt of storybooks on the overall emergent literacy development of Pre-Kindergarten students.

Professional Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study was to possibly provide an effective early intervention method for increasing storybook reading in the home. Through the increase of storybook reading in the home, children adequately developed emergent literacy skills. Through the

adequate development of early literacy skills at the emergent level, children became reading ready upon entering kindergarten. A crucial method of developing early literacy skills was the occurrence of storybook reading in the home. Effective storybook reading in the home involved dialogic reading which included discussion and scaffolding techniques designed to increase early literacy skills. Through effective storybook reading, caregivers helped ensure adequate development of early literacy skills for their child.

Numerous research studies have previously indicated the importance of storybook reading. However, few studies provided an intervention method for increasing storybook reading in the home. Hammer, Farkas, and Maczuga (2010) suggested that, while many studies focused on students in grades K-12, "relatively few investigations have focused on preschoolers and the factors that impact their literacy outcomes" (p. 74). A similar study conducted by Kotaman (2007) in Turkey indicated an increase in children's vocabulary and reading attitude following a parental workshop on dialogic reading. This study sought to further this research by conducting a study in the U.S. on storybook reading which provided a caregiver reading intervention workshop for the purpose of increasing overall emergent literacy development among Pre-Kindergarten students.

This research study provided an additional early intervention strategy to preschool centers and elementary schools. The reading intervention workshop used in this research study can be easily duplicated and implemented by educators at all levels of instruction. The findings of this research study have the possibility of providing an additional intervention strategy for increasing emergent literacy skills in Pre-Kindergarten students for the purpose of closing the achievement gap evident in the classroom.

Definition of the Terms

To clarify terms used in this study, the following definitions were provided. The provided definitions were derived from the literature.

Dialogic Reading: Conversational reading in which the adult and child held informal conversations throughout the storybook reading process, making the child a participant in the reading event (Whitehurst, 1992).

Emergent Literacy: The earliest stages of reading development, which included the development of specific skills, such as the understanding of print and ability to retell stories. These early skills were necessary to be reading ready upon entering kindergarten and were developed through every day experiences such as storybook reading (Block, 2003; Gillet, et al., 2004; Vacca, Vacca, & Gove, 1995).

Readiness for Reading: The skills necessary for early reading development to include comprehension of the story, concept of print, and phonemic and phonological awareness (Brigance, 1999).

Scaffolding: The strategy of providing support to a child when needed throughout the reading event while gradually removing support over a length of time in order to build the child's ability to read on their own (Block, 2003; Gillet, et al., 2004).

Storybook Reading: The social interaction of a caregiver sharing a storybook with a child (Taylor & Strickland, 1986).

Storybook Reading Workshop: Classroom style workshop provided to caregivers which discussed the stages of reading development, the importance of storybook reading in the home, and strategies for use during storybook reading, such as scaffolding and dialogic reading, which led to adequate early literacy development (Kotaman, 2007).

Summary

  Storybook reading in the home, as a form of social interaction between the caregiver and child, was crucial for adequate emergent literacy development (Beech, 2005; Gillet, et al., 2004; Goodman, 1986; IRA, 1994; National Institute for Literacy, 2003; Pikulski & Chard, 2005; Snow & Ninio, 1986; Sulzby, 1985; Sulzby & Teale, 1987; Teale, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978). Research indicated dialogic reading, which encouraged child participation during the reading event, as the most effective form of storybook reading (Whitehurst, 1992). Caregiver training on the use of dialogic reading in the home during the storybook reading event has shown to be an effective early intervention method for increasing the adequate development of emergent literacy skills among Pre-Kindergarten students (Kotaman, 2007). Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the study, along with the implication of the study to research and the application of the study to the field of education. This study's exploration of the effects of a caregiver Storybook Reading Workshop, coupled with providing caregivers with storybooks, on the development of emergent literacy skills in Pre-Kindergarten students may possibly provide an additional early intervention method for increasing emergent literacy among Pre-Kindergarten students, making all students reading ready upon entering Kindergarten.

  Chapter 2 provided a review of the literature. The chapter began with a review of the theoretical and historical background of emergent literacy development. The chapter continued with a discussion of the home literacy environment and the importance of storybook reading in the home. The chapter followed with a discussion of the impact of storybook reading in the home on the development of specific reading skills such as

semantic and syntactic skill development, concept of print, internalization of the story, and attitude toward reading. The chapter continued with a discussion of dialogic reading and the effect of caregiver training on increasing storybook reading in the home, particularly among children from low-socioeconomic status homes. The chapter concluded with a discussion of recent research studies which have informed the content and methodology of the current study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 was a review of the literature pertaining to the current research study. This review began with a focus on the historical and theoretical basis of the social interaction of storybook reading in the home. The effects of the storybook reading event which occurred between caregiver and child were grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory and the theoretical principles of social interaction as presented by Vygotsky (1978). The review continued with a discussion of the skills developed during the emergent literacy stage due to the storybook reading event between caregiver and child. Finally, the review concluded with a discussion of two recent research studies by Thomason (2008) and Kotaman (2007) which informed the content and methodology of this research study.

Search Process

The search for literature began with a broad review of historical studies, primarily conducted by Sulzby and Teale (1983; 1985; 1986; 1987), regarding storybook reading as it relates to the development of emergent literacy skills. The historic research studies informed the continued search for the theoretical basis for this study which was based on Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory and Vygotsky's theory of social interaction (1978). The next step in reviewing the literature involved a more specific search of recent studies regarding the development of emergent literacy skills as a result of storybook reading in the home and effective techniques for adequately developing these skills. The review of literature included a review of numerous articles, dissertations, books, and professional presentations obtained through online databases, websites, and

the purchase of books and materials.

Thus, the review of literature informed the content, the design, and the specific procedures of this study through a thorough understanding of the theoretical basis for storybook reading, the historical studies related to storybook reading, studies which illuminate the effects of storybook reading on the development of specific early literacy skills, and how dialogic reading was used to increase the effectiveness of storybook reading for the adequate development of emergent literacy skills. Because conducting storybook reading in the home as a form of dialogic reading through caregiver/child interaction was crucial for children's adequate emergent literacy development, caregivers attended workshops which taught skills necessary for engaging in effective storybook reading in the home while providing storybooks for use in engaging in dialogic reading in the home. Hence, this study sought to provide storybooks to caregivers coupled with a caregiver workshop on storybook reading using dialogic reading skills for the purpose of increasing emergent literacy skill development among Pre-Kindergarten students.

Development of the Child

According to Bronfenbrenner, an individual's development was directly affected by the individual's environment which was composed of four interlocking structural settings (Tissington, 2008). The four interlocking structural levels of the ecological environment were:

1. The Microsystems: These were the most immediate contexts in which the developing individual interacts with people, such as those between a child and family members living within the home.

2. The Mesosystems: These were the relationships between the various contexts in which development takes place, such as those between a child's home and the school.

3. The Exosystems: These were the contexts or situations that influence an individual's development, but in which the individual does not directly participate, such as the effect of a parent's workplace on the child.

4. The Macrosystems: These consist of cultural or subcultural values, beliefs, and ideologies that influenced the interactions within and between meso- and exosystems.

5. The Chronosystems: These referred to the chronological nature of development within the individual as well as the history of the surrounding environment.

(Bohlin, Durwin, & Reese-Weber, 2009, p. 31; Fu, n.d. para. 7).

At the early childhood stage of development, the microsystem most directly affected the development of the child. The microsystem was the innermost level of one's environment relating to the activities and interaction patterns of one's immediate surroundings (Tissington, 2008). As such, the most influential microsystem of the child was the interaction with family members within the home (Bohlin, et al., 2009). Within the microsystems of the child, the parent/child relationship was the primary form of interaction for the child (Fu, n.d.). Due to this, the social interaction between the parent and child was an immediate effect on the overall development of the child. The developmental stage of the child, including the development of language, was affected by social interaction. The primary social interaction effects during the emergent literacy

stage of development were between the parent and child.

Social Interaction

The development of language occurred primarily through social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky, language was "a primary form of interaction through which adults transmit to the child the rich body of knowledge that exists in the culture" (Doolittle, 1997, para 5). Children initially developed literacy skills for the purpose of socialization with others (Vygotsky, 1978).

The specific social orientation of the family environment effected the mental development of literacy skills (Teale, 1986). According to Vygotsky (1978), "every function in the child's cultural development appeared twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)" (p. 57). Due to this, all learning occurred first and foremost within the specific culture, family environment, in which the child was born (Doolittle, 1997). Thus, through increased interaction, children began to develop skills, including language and literacy skills (Doolittle, 1997).

Historical Background

An historical research study conducted by Sulzby & Teale (1986) indicated that children best develop literacy skills through interaction with adults, particularly parents, making the home environment a key role in the development of a young child's literacy skills. Through a follow-up study (Sulzby & Teale, 1987), the family was indicated as playing a crucial role in children's early literacy development primarily due to the informal literacy instruction occurring within the home.

Historical research studies conducted by Teale (1983, 1986) indicated the effect

of social interactions on literacy development. In Teale's 1986 study, several families were observed for literacy experiences in the home and children were assessed for reading level. While Teale (1986) found that all families participating in the study used literacy of some form in the home, only three of the families engaged in storybook reading. The findings indicated a correlation between storybook reading in the home and reading ability (1986). The three students who engaged in storybook reading in the home scored higher in the reading assessment than the other children (Teale, 1986). Teale's historical research (1983, 1986) indicated that literacy was not universal, but was based on the specific culture, society, and conditions in which children live.

The activity of sharing a storybook between parent and child was a socially constructed event (Teale, 1983; Sulzby & Teale, 1987). According to Teale (1986), the ways in which literacy entered into the social life of a family affected how it was incorporated into the mental life of the members of the family. Children developed early literacy skills through the social interaction of the family, whether it was through interpersonal communication, such as sending birthday cards to relatives, or through a storybook reading event occurring between parent and child (Teale, 1986). However, among the many interactions with literacy found in the home, storybook reading time between parent and child was proven to be the most productive event in developing early literacy skills (Sulzby, 1985).

The social interaction of the storybook reading event directly provided "the information necessary for literacy acquisition" (Teale, 1983, p. 6). A child must have engaged in social interaction and successfully mastered the first stages of reading development before progressing through more complex stages of reading. The

developmental process of the early stages of reading was "one of social construction in which the child and the parent [were] both actively involved" (Teale, 1983, p. 8). During the early stages of reading development, termed the emergent literacy stage, the child was developing language primarily for the purpose of socially interacting with others (Beech, 2005; Pikulski & Chard, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978). Through the parent/child social interaction, particularly evidenced during storybook reading, children began to develop early literacy skills.

According to Vygotsky's theory of social interaction, in order to effectively develop literacy skills at the emergent literacy stage, children must have played an active role in the learning process through socially interacting with adults (Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2009). Learning, therefore, became a reciprocal experience between child and adult (Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2009). Sulzby and Teale (1987) discovered that the storybook reading event between parent and child was a socially interactive event which involved discussion and questions between parent and child regarding the text. Through the reciprocation of engaging in social interaction during storybook reading, children adequately developed necessary early literacy skills (Sulzby & Teale, 1987).

Emergent Literacy Development

Literacy was described as a developmental process which began with the emergent reading stage (Gillet, et al., 2004; Block, 2003). The development of early reading skills began as early as age two (Block, 2003). During this emergent literacy stage, children were developing language, reading, and writing skills (Block, 2003; Gillet, et al., 2004; Sulzby, 1985). The emergent reading level was a crucial time for

literacy development as children were developing the necessary early skills for future reading development.

In order to adequately develop language, specific developmental stages were indicated which must be mastered progressively by a child (Beech, 2005; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Children developed new reading abilities and skills through each developmental stage of reading (Gillet, et al., 2004). Children progressed through the following stages of development:

1. Emergent Literacy Stage: Children in this stage were discovering basic concepts about print and the language that print represented. During this stage, children were learning to associate pleasure with reading, books, and the interactive process of the storybook reading event. Early skills such as syntactic and semantic skills were beginning to develop as well as the ability to internalize text. Skills developed during the emergent literacy stage were crucial to the development of more advanced reading skills.

2. Beginning Reading Stage: Children in this stage knew enough, at least on a tacit or non-verbal level, about reading and print to learn individual words, or acquire a sight vocabulary, from their encounters with words.

3. Building Fluency Stage: Children who were building fluency, typically in grades 2 and 3, recognized many words automatically and were reading passages that were several sentences long without too much stumbling over words. Children at this stage were comprehending what they read, for the most part. During this stage, children's reading had become fairly rapid and accurate and their oral reading was fairly expressive. Children at this stage

were no longer beginners, but they were not yet fluent independent readers. At this stage, the amount of reading that children do and their degree of success with it had a tremendous impact on their progress to the next stage.

4. Reading to Learn and for Pleasure Stage: Children in this stage, usually from grade 3 on up, were typically reading chapter books for pleasure and homework assignments for learning. By this stage, good readers were pulling dramatically farther ahead of struggling readers in their ease of reading, the amount of time they spent reading outside of school, and the number of pages they read each week.

5. Mature Reading Stage: Mature readers were those who read and compared many sources of information on a topic. They read a text and used the reading experience as a way of generating original ideas of their own. They also recognized and appreciated an author's style and technique. Although many readers did these things in the lower grades, this kind of adult-like reading was more common in middle school and above. High school or college students who don't possess these advanced reading skills had an increasingly difficult time.

(Gillet, et al., 2004, pp. 12-13)

Therefore, literacy was recognized as a development process (Gillet, et al., 2004; Block, 2003). In order to proceed appropriately through these stages, children had to master each preceding stage, beginning with the emergent literacy stage of development (Beech, 2005; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Due to this, students, who were unable to adequately master the emergent literacy stage, were unable to progress through future

stages of development.

Adequate literacy development at the emergent literacy stage was shown to be predictive of successful reading scores during the early elementary grades (Holloway, 2004; Molfese, Molfese, & Modgline, 2002). As each stage was progressive, children who did not gain proficiency in a prior stage were unable to perform adequately in future stages (Gillet, et al., 2004). Through the adequate development of the earliest stages of literacy, children were more likely to score well on elementary reading assessments (Molfese, et al., 2002). This was due to the adequate development of early literacy skills necessary to continue development through the future stages of reading (Gillet, et al., 2004).

Home Literacy Environment

According to Frabotta (2009), literacy started in the home. A relationship existed between learning to read and a positive home environment that encouraged reading development (Neuman & Roskos, 1993). The home literacy environment played a crucial role in the adequate development of emergent literacy skills such as oral language, phonological sensitivity, and word decoding ability (Burgess, et al., 2002).

In order to achieve in reading at the elementary level, children must have developed early literacy skills at the emergent literacy stage. Children developed emergent literacy skills best through interaction with adults, particularly parents, making the home environment an essential aspect in the adequate development of a young child's literacy skills (Gillet, et al., 2004; IRA, 1994; National Institute for Literacy, 2003; Sulzby, 1985; Sulzby & Teale, 1987; Teale, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978).

According to Teale (1986), the home environment played "a significant role in a

young child's orientation to literacy" (p. 193). The family contributed significantly to a child's early literacy development primarily due to the social interaction of literacy instruction in the home (Sulzby & Teale, 1987). The parent was the most important individual in influencing a child's reading ability during the emergent literacy stage (IRA, 1994). This was primarily due to the effect of the social interaction of the home environment on literacy development (Teale, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978).

The home environment during early literacy development was shown to be predictive of reading assessment scores during the elementary grades (Molfese, et al., 2002). By providing a literate environment in the home, parents fostered curiosity about written language and supported the child's efforts to become a successful future reader and writer (National Institute for Literacy, 2003; Neuman & Roskos, 1993; Vacca, et al., 1995). The home environment was shown to be "the most consistent and strongest predictor of children's language and literacy skills" (Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005, p. 356).

A relationship existed between learning to read and a positive home environment which encouraged reading development (Neuman & Roskos, 1993; Smetana, 2005; Roberts, 2008). In a literacy rich home, children were engaged in and enjoyed reading with parents (Frabotta, 2009). Research findings (Morrow, Paratore, & Tracy, 1994) signified the parent as the most important individual in influencing a child's reading ability. By providing a literate environment, the parent fostered interest in and curiosity about written language and supported the child's efforts to become a reader and writer (Vacca, et al., 1995).

Parents had more influence on a child's reading ability than any other one

individual (IRA, 1996). When a child lived in a household of limited literacy proficiency or one that did not value literacy, the child became particularly at-risk for reading difficulties (Smentana, 2005). A child's success in school literacy programs often depended upon the experiences that occurred at home prior to coming to school (Morrow & Young, 1996).

Shared book reading in the home led to receptive language development which ultimately led to reading (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). Storybook reading was one of the most significant home learning activities shown to have led to an increase in emergent literacy skills (Burgess, et al., 2002). The inclusion of storybooks in the home was a key component of the home literacy environment for early literacy skill development.

Storybook Reading in the Home

Emergent literacy skills began to develop best through the interaction between parent and child during the storybook reading event (Burgess, 2002; Goodman, 1986; Gillet, et al., 2004; Snow & Ninio, 1986). The reading of storybooks in the home was proven to be a natural way to encourage the development of emergent literacy skills in children (Gillet, et al., 2004; Teale, 1983; Sulzby, 1985). Storybook reading was a key component of a literate home environment, proven to be the best way to develop early literacy skills (Neuman & Roskos, 1993; Teale, 1986).

A key activity for establishing a literate environment in the home was the parent and child activity of sharing a storybook. Doyle and Bramwell (2006) described the event of sharing a storybook as an "interactive way of reading books aloud with children that [gave] them a chance to be active participants in the reading session, thus providing a meaningful experience that stimulates learning" (p. 555). Shared storybook reading in the

home led to receptive language development which ultimately led to reading (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002).

Through the reciprocal social interaction of sharing a storybook, a child began to adequately develop early literacy skills (Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2009). Shared storybook reading was shown to increase oral language development, listening comprehension, print awareness, phonological awareness, and concept of print (Beauchat, Blamey, & Walpole, 2009; Senechal, et al., 1998). Storybook reading offered the ideal environment to learn about literacy in the home for the following reasons:

(1) Storybook reading provided a situational context for extended conversations between parents and child.

(2) In reading storybooks together, children began to develop concepts of the form and structure of written language.

(3) In their conversational exchanges during storybook reading, parents demonstrated reading strategies which have been used in later literacy development.

(4) Based on parental demonstration of reading strategies, children began to internalize reading strategies used in later literacy development. (Neuman & Roskos, 1993, p. 74).

The home literacy environment played a crucial role in the development of emergent literacy skills, with storybook reading indicated as one of the most significant home learning activities for increasing these skills (Burgess, et al., 2002). Storybook reading in the home was specifically linked to oral language and vocabulary development as well as the development of phonemic and phonological awareness (Burgess, 2002;

Holloway, 2004; Kotaman, 2007; Morgan & Meier, 2008; Roberts, 2008; Senechal, et al., 1998).

Children who engaged in storybook reading in the home scored higher on reading assessments than children who did not experience storybook reading in the home (Teale, 1986; Smetana, 2005; Roberts, 2008; Holloway, 2004; Kotaman, 2007; Morgan & Meier, 2008). Therefore, according to Smetana (2005), reading was "the product of early literacy skills acquired, at least in part, through skill-building interactions with parents" (p. 305). Children who did not experience storybook reading in the home entered the classroom with limited expressive and receptive oral language as well as a lack of understanding regarding the purpose of books (Smentana, 2005). Through exposure to storybooks in the home, children began to understand the purpose of books and reading.

Concept of Print

One of the first steps in emergent literacy development was the understanding the concept of print. Concept of print referred to specific skills necessary for early literacy development. According to Marie Clay (as cited in WGBH Educational Foundation, 2002), concept of print was the skill of understanding "how printed language works and how it represents language" (para. 1). In order for a child to possess adequate concept of print, the child must have shown understanding of the following concepts:

1. A book had a front and a back and a cover.

2. We read the words in a book, not the pictures.

3. Print was read from left to right and from top to bottom.

4. Language was made out of words.

5. Words were made out of sounds.

6. Sounds could be matched with letters.

7. There was a limited set of those letters.

8. The letters had names.

9. Other parts of print had names, too, such as sentence, word, letter, beginning, and end.

(Gillet, et al., 2004, p. 15)

Through the adequate understanding of these concepts, students had begun to adequately develop emergent literacy skills.

According to Snow and Ninio (1986), the child must first develop a realization that the purpose of the book was for reading and that pictures in a book were representations of meaning. The beginnings of reading and writing occurred once written language began to make sense (Goodman, 1986). Effective storybook reading events increased student's concept of print (Zucker, Ward, & Justice, 2009). Storybook read-alouds provided "an important context for supporting children's emergent literacy skills, particularly children's developing knowledge of print forms and functions" (Zucker, et al., 2009, p. 69).

During the emergent literacy stage, children were learning the purpose of books and the language that books represented (Gillet, et al., 2004; Sulzby, 1985). Obtaining a concept of print was one of the first steps in emergent literacy development. According to Marie Clay (as cited in WGBH Educational Foundation, 2002), children developed the following skills through an understanding of the concept of print: (a) print carried a specific message; (b) books contained a specific organization; (c) printed language contained letters, words, and sentences; and (d) alphabetic awareness. These skills of

concept of print were essential to adequate emergent literacy development. A key component of the home environment which led to the understanding of the concept of print was the parent/child social interaction of shared book reading (WGBH Educational Foundation, 2002). When engaging in storybook reading, children indicated an increase in the understanding of the concept of print (Lovelace & Stewart, 2007).

Semantic and Syntactic Skills

Semantic and syntactic skills were two of the systems involved in oral language, necessary for understanding and reading text (Jennings, Caldwell, & Lerner, 2006). Syntax was described as the grammatical structure of the sentence (Gillet, et al., 2004; Jennings, et al., 2006). Syntax, also commonly referred to as grammar, governed "the formation of sentences in a language" (Jennings, et al., 2006, p. 35). Syntactic rules must be constructed by children to understand the formation of grammar and the structure of sentences.

Semantics referred to the meaning of the text, words, and vocabulary (Gillet, et al., 2004; Jennings, et al., 2006). The understanding of words and vocabulary, leading to the understanding of text, was necessary for reading achievement. Factors involved in mastering a child's semantic ability include:

1. Size of vocabulary: The number of words that students used or understood.

2. Knowledge of multiple meanings of words: An understanding of words which had multiple meanings as well as when each meaning was appropriate.

3. Accuracy of vocabulary meaning: The ability of a child to use a word accurately, not overextending or underextending the meaning.

4. Accurate classification of words: The ability to group words into like

categories.

5. Relational categories of words: Relationship words such as prepositions, comparative terms, time elements, and terms of human relationship.

(Jennings, et al., 2006, p. 36-37)

The development of semantic skills began in the emergent literacy stage of development leading to future adequate, continued development of these skills. The storybook reading event was shown to be effective in developing early syntactic and semantic skills. Children began to derive an understanding of the organization of written language as well as its rhythm and structures through listening to storybook read-alouds (Neuman & Roskos, 1993; Smetana, 2005).

By engaging in storybook reading in the home, children began to exhibit behaviors of pretending to read books (Smetana, 2005; Sulzby, 1985; Sulzby & Teale, 1987). This behavior indicated an early understanding of semantic and syntactic content of books, an important aspect of comprehension. In addition to pretending to read books which had been read to the child, Sulzby and Teale (1987) found that children would typically pretend to read unknown books as well, extending the evidence of semantic and syntactic understanding through prediction of how a new book would be read based on knowledge of previous readings. Sulzby (1985) found that, as children progressed, the child began to see the book as a unit instead of individual pages.

Once this occurred, the children began using speech that mimicked reading when looking at storybooks. According to Gillet, Temple and Crawford (2004), "reading to children [familiarized] them with books, [acquainted] them with characters and plots and other patterns of literature, and gradually [helped] them to learn the elaborated syntax and

special vocabulary of written language" (p. 232).

Attitude toward Reading

In addition to the development of specific literacy skills, storybook reading promoted a positive attitude toward literacy (Taylor & Strickland, 1986; Kotaman, 2007). Previous research indicated a correlation between student attitude toward reading and the home literacy environment (Taylor & Strickland, 1986; Wiseman, 2009). Through storybook reading, the child was able to enjoy books, thus developing an attitude which led to further interest in reading and literacy. By encouraging enthusiasm and a positive attitude toward reading, the parent was helping the child to develop an active engagement in literacy activities (Snow & Tabors, 1996). Children who possessed a positive attitude toward reading typically were from homes that read stories with a semantic orientation while infusing discussion of the story throughout the reading (Lancy & Bergin, 1992). By encouraging enthusiasm and a positive attitude toward reading, the parent was helping the child to actively engage in literacy activities (Snow & Tabors, 1996).

A positive attitude toward reading was recognized as a key component of future development of literacy skills. According to McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995), attitude toward reading affected "the level of ability ultimately attained by a given student through its influence on such factors as engagement and practice" (p. 934). From storybook reading, a child obtained a familiarity with reading text, a positive attitude toward literacy, and developed a knowledge base for future literacy learning. Through the development of a positive attitude toward reading through storybook reading, children began to develop a connection with storybooks leading to the ability to internalize the story.

Internalization

Jennings, Caldwell, and Lerner (2006) defined comprehension as "the essence of the reading act" (p. 15). Specific strategies were implemented in order to increase comprehension ability. Strategies used to increase comprehension were particularly effective when coupled with narrative texts. Narrative texts were the typical type of text used for early childhood reading, as the text tells the child a story (McDonald, 2009). The inclusion of storybooks within the home, coupled with the use of strategies for increasing comprehension, led to further development of emergent literacy skills.

Comprehension involved multiple skills which, when effectively combined, led to an in-depth understanding of the text (Gillet, et al., 2004; Jennings, et al., 2006). The skills and concepts involved in comprehending text included: prior knowledge, asking questions, vocabulary, finding main ideas, making inferences, imaging or visualizing, summarizing, and comprehension monitoring (Gillet, et al., 2004, p. 230-231). A key to integrating all of these skills to actively comprehend text was the ability to internalize the text (Pressley, n.d.).

According to Vygotsky (1978), the process of obtaining internalization required a specific process of transformation:

1. The task of reading which initially represented an external activity was reconstructed and began to occur internally.

2. The interpersonal process of reading, between parent and child, was transformed into an intrapersonal process, occurring inside the child.

3. The process of transforming reading from an interpersonal process to an intrapersonal process occurred as a result of the series of developmental stages

of reading.

Storybook reading was a socially constructed activity that led to story internalization by the child (Sulzby & Teale, 1987; Teale, 1983). Storybook reading required the child to interpret the story internally using words to create the meaning of the story (Neuman & Roskos, 1993). Storybook read-alouds were one of the most important interactions for literary interpretation (Sipe, 2000). Through multiple readings of storybooks, children were able to move from interpsychological functioning, in which the child viewed the story externally, to an intrapsychological functioning, in which the child internalized the story elements (Sulzby & Teale, 1987). Story internalization was a key element of learning to comprehend the story.

One of the factors that affected comprehension ability was an individuals' background (McDonald, 2009). Story discussions between parent and child were essential to the development of the ability to internalize the story. Through internalization of the story by the child, the child transformed reading from an interpersonal task to an intrapersonal task. In order to assist children in the process of internalizing text, discussion during storybook reading led to an in-depth understanding of the story through increased comprehension of the story (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). This form of comprehension through discussion assisted the child in focusing on the personal meaning of the story. Through discussions which focused on the personal meaning of the story, an internal connection from the child to the story elements was developed.

Dialogic Reading

Storybook reading provided the child with a positive attitude toward reading, the

ability to internalize text meaning leading to the development of comprehension skills, understanding of the concept of print, and the development of syntactic and semantic skills. Effective storybook reading in the home was often accompanied by discussion or teaching related to the storybook (Sulzby & Teale, 1987). In order for the storybook reading event to be effective, the storybook reading time must be interactive with students actively engaged in the reading (Kindle, 2009). Storybook reading was proven to be an effective means of supporting adequate emergent literacy development when the storybook reading event was interactive, actively engaging students (Kindle, 2009; Zucker, Justice, & Piasta, 2009).

Parent questioning and discussion was specifically linked to the development of written language, vocabulary, and comprehension skills (Senechal, et al., 1998; Walsh & Blewitt, 2006). Through the discussion of vocabulary words during storybook reading, children indicated significant gains in vocabulary development (Justice, Meier, & Walpole, 2005; Roberts, et al., 2005). In addition, through the discussion of specific words, such as rhyming words, during the storybook reading event, children indicated an increase in phonological awareness (Ziolkowski & Goldstein, 2008).

Discussion of the story between parent and child also led to inclusion of the common verbal pattern called "text-to-life" interactions (Neuman & Roskos, 1993). This form of interaction focused on the personal meaning of the story leading to internalization of the story (Neuman & Roskos, 1993). Through the internalization of the story, the child was creating an internal connection from the child to the story elements (Neuman & Roskos, 1993). Children derived a more thorough understanding of text when allowed to discuss and comment about the story throughout the storybook read-

aloud (Sipe, 2000).

Observations of effective exchanges of discussion throughout the storybook reading event revealed scaffolding techniques used by the parent throughout the discussion with the child (Neuman & Roskos, 1993; Sulzby & Teale, 1987). Through parental scaffolding, children were able to participate in the storybook reading event and, therefore, more adequately build early literacy skills (Sulzby & Teale, 1987). Parent teaching during the storybook reading event was shown to be specifically linked to written language development (Senechal, et al., 1998). Questioning during storybook reading was one of the essential elements to developing vocabulary and comprehension skills among preschool children (Walsh & Blewitt, 2006).

Parents used an array of scaffolding techniques to increase the effectiveness of the storybook reading experience through discussion of the storybook which provided support to learners until able to complete the complex task alone (Block, 2003; Skibbe, Behnke, & Justice, 2004; Teale, 1983). Skibbe, Behnke, and Justice (2004) provided a list of possible scaffolding techniques which had proven effective in increasing emergent literacy skills among emergent readers. A list of each scaffolding technique, along with an example of a response to the student, was provided as follows:

1. Praise/affirmation: "You did it without me!"

2. Phonological cue: "It's /h/, /h/, house."

3. Extension: "What letter was that?"

4. Answer restatement: "Pig." Stated after child's response of pig.

5. Question restatement: "Do you know what rhymes with cat?" followed by the question "What rhymes with cat?"

6. Directive: "Say it again."

7. Multisensory cue: "What do you see?"

8. Prompting question: "What do you think?"

(Skibbe, et al., 2004, p. 194)

The scaffolding responses used throughout the storybook reading event prompt the emergent reader to further increase early literacy skills (Skibbe, et al., 2004). Coupling scaffolding techniques with dialogic reading techniques was proven to be particularly effective in increasing emergent literacy development.

The use of scaffolding techniques during the storybook reading event helped ensure that children were engaging in the storybook reading event at the Zone of Proximal Development (Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2009). According to Vygotsky, the Zone of Proximal Development was the target point of balancing a child's ability to perform on his own with a parent's assistance through scaffolding (Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2009). The Zone of Proximal Development was the point at which a child learns most effectively, thus benefiting the most from the storybook reading event (Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2009).

Parental use of scaffolding techniques during storybook reading increased the discussion occurrences between adult and child (Bellon-Harn & Harn, 2008; Liboiron & Soto, 2006). Through exchanges of discussion throughout the storybook reading event, parental scaffolding was used to support the child's learning while gradually reducing support as the child's language and comprehension developed, thus engaging the child in the Zone of Proximal Development (Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2009; Neuman & Roskos, 1993; Sulzby & Teale, 1987; Teale, 1983).

The storybook reading event was most effective when parents used dialogic reading strategies, a specific form of discussion, along with scaffolding techniques (Whitehurst, 1992). Doyle and Bramwell defined dialogic reading as "a particular type of shared book reading that includes strategies [such as] questioning and responding to children while reading a book" (p. 555). Effective storybook reading in the home, which led to the greatest increases in skills, was often accompanied by dialogic reading techniques such as discussion or teaching related to the storybook (Sulzby & Teale, 1987). Discussion occurrences of the story between parent and child were an essential element of dialogic reading (Neuman & Roskos, 1993; Kotaman, 2007). Children derived a more thorough understanding of text when allowed to discuss and comment about the story throughout the storybook read-aloud (Sipe, 2000).

During dialogic reading, the child was encouraged to take an increasing role as storyteller while the adult prompted the child using questioning, response expansion, and positive reinforcement (Zevenbergen & Riekofski, n.d.). Dialogic reading was a specific type of social interaction which involved sharing the storybook reading event between caregiver and child, making the child a participant in the reading of the story (Whitehurst, 1992). Specific techniques were used during dialogic reading to ensure adequate emergent literacy development. The PEER sequence was a primary technique used in effective dialogic reading. The PEER sequence was described as "a short interaction between a child and the adult" (Whitehurst, 1992, para. 9). In the PEER sequence, the adult:

1. Prompted the child to say something about the book.

2. Evaluated the child's response.

3. Expanded the child's response by rephrasing and adding information to it.

4. Repeated the prompt to make sure the child has learned from the expansion.

(Whitehurst, 1992, para. 9)

While prompting the child for a response, the caregiver used CROWD questions to ensure adequate understanding of the story.

Caregivers elicited specific responses from the child using the following CROWD questions: Completion, Recall, Open-ended, the five W's, and Distancing (Zevenbergen & Riekofski, n.d.). CROWD questions were described as follows:

1. Completion questions were similar to fill-in-the-blank questions. Typically in a completion question, the parent asked the child a question leaving a blank at the end for the child to complete (Whitehurst, 1992). According to Whitehurst (1992), "completion prompts provide children with information about the structure of language that [was] critical to later reading" (para. 12).

2. Recall questions asked the child to recall information already read in the book. Recall questions were appropriate for all books, except alphabet books (Whitehurst, 1992). Recall prompts were used throughout the reading as well as at the end of the book. The use of recall prompts in storybook discussions helped "children in understanding story plot and in describing sequences of events" (Whitehurst, 1992, para. 13).

3. Open-ended prompts focused on the pictures in the book. Open-ended prompts, therefore, were particularly effective when reading picture books. A common open-ended prompt used when looking at a picture was one that asks the child to describe what was happening in the picture (Whitehurst, 1992).

According to Whitehurst (1992), "open-ended prompts help children increase their expressive fluency and attend to detail" (para. 14).

4. Wh-prompts used the five W questions: what, where, when, why, and how (Whitehurst, 1992). Typically Wh-prompts also focused on the pictures in the story, asking the child specific questions regarding the pictures and the story. Wh-questions were particularly effective in teaching children new vocabulary (Whitehurst, 1992).

5. Distancing prompts asked the child to internalize the text, relating the story to the child's own experiences (Whitehurst, 1992). The use of distancing prompts during the storybook reading event helped "children form a bridge between books and the real world, as well as helping with verbal fluency, conversational abilities, and narrative skills" (Whitehurst, 1992, para. 16).

Through using CROWD questions at the prompting stage of the PEER sequence, caregivers assisted the child in further development of emergent literacy skills. Caregivers used the PEER sequence coupled with CROWD questions to enhance the effectiveness of the storybook reading event on increasing the child's emergent literacy development.

Caregivers also used additional tips, coupled with the PEER sequence and CROWD questions, to increase the effectiveness of the dialogic storybook reading event. To ensure a productive dialogic storybook reading event, caregivers:

1. Asked children to answer open-ended questions about a story's characters, setting, and events in the story.

2. Expanded on children's answers by repeating the answer, clarifying the answer,

or asking further questions.

3. Provided praise and encouragement to the child for giving input into the story.

4. Built on children's interests when selecting stories and questions regarding the story. (Morgan & Meier, 2008, p. 12)

In effective storybook reading, which included dialogic reading strategies such as discussion and parental scaffolding throughout the reading event, the adult became "the listener, the questioner, [and] the audience for the child" (Whitehurst, 1992).

Parental Training

Variations in adult mediation of the text affected the child's independent functioning with the text (Sulzby & Teale, 1987). Children read at higher levels when read to by parents who had been provided training on the use of dialogic reading techniques such as effective use of discussion and scaffolding during the storybook reading event (Darling & Westberg, 2004). Educators worked with parents to emphasize literacy development through the use of specific strategies in the home during storybook reading events (Darling & Westberg, 2004). In addition to providing academic support and development toward improving the home literacy environment, family literacy programs also met psychosocial needs for parents through establishing supportive relationships between educators and parents (Prins, Toso & Schafft, 2009). Effective family literacy events provided family's with information regarding the impact of the home environment on child literacy development (Frabotta, 2009).

Parental training on the use of effective educational techniques within the home was proven to be effective in significantly increasing preschool children's readiness for reading skills (Ford, McDougall, & Evans, 2009). Parental instruction on the use of

questioning and responsive communication throughout storybook reading resulted in an increase in the child's communication during the storybook reading event (Rosa-Lugo & Kent-Walsh, 2008). Through parental instruction on dialogic reading with an emphasis on storybook reading in the home, children exhibited an increase in early literacy development (Kotaman, 2007). Educator provided parental training on the use of dialogic reading, specifically the use of the PEER and CROWD discussion and scaffolding techniques, during storybook reading was essential to increasing emergent literacy skills in Pre-Kindergarten children (Kotaman, 2007).

Effects of Poverty

Family characteristics were shown to have an impact on children's language development (Hammer, et al., 2010). Socio-economic status and cultural background effected the home literacy environment with significantly different behavioral patterns exhibited between groups during the storybook reading events (Rodriguez, Hines, & Montiel, 2009). Research indicated a significant difference between middle socioeconomic (SES) background families and low-SES background families when engaging in the storybook reading event (Rodriguez, et al., 2009). Middle-SES background families typically exhibited more strategies conducive to providing adequate emergent literacy development among preschool children than low-SES families (Rodriguez, et al., 2009).

According to Rowan, Cohen, and Raudenbush (2004), "the gaps in achievement among poor and advantaged students [were] substantial" (p. 2). Through multiple studies, The U.S. Department of Education (2001) indicated results that "clearly demonstrated that student and school poverty adversely affected student achievement" (p. 8). In data

from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS) measuring kindergarten students

achievement on the ECLS reading achievement assessment, low-SES students scored at

about the 30th percentile, middle-SES students scored at about the 45th percentile, and

upper-SES students scored at about the 70th percentile (Rowan, et al, 2004).

   A significant variability existed in children's language ability based on SES status

as well (Hay & Fielding-Barnsley, 2009). One study found that almost all children of

high-SES status entered kindergarten reading ready while only 1 in 4 children of low-

SES status entered kindergarten reading ready (Hay & Fielding-Barnsley, 2009). The

inclusion of literacy learning activities during the storybook reading event for low-SES

families were shown to impact emergent literacy development among preschool aged

children (Young, 2009).

   Payne (1996) defined poverty as "the extent to which an individual does without

resources" (p. 16). Resources included financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, and

physical resources as well as support systems, relationships, role models, and knowledge

of hidden rules (Payne, 1996). Poverty directly affected academic achievement due to

the lack of resources available for student success. According to Payne (1996), "low

achievement [was] closely correlated with lack of resources, and numerous studies [had]

documented the correlation between low socioeconomic status and low achievement" (p.

116). The availability of multiple, quality storybooks in the home was an important

aspect of a literate home environment that played a key role in increasing emergent

literacy development (Frabotta, 2009; Young, 2009).   Due to an overall lack of resources

in the home, many low-SES families lacked the resources necessary to provide multiple,

quality storybooks in the home.

Through research conducted by Bergeson (2006), the need to create stronger, better partnerships between schools, families, and communities while providing better intervention programs for students struggling with exceptional outside barriers was evident. Parent participation in family literacy programs was shown to increase reading levels among early elementary students (Imperato, 2009). The children, of the families who participated more frequently, showed the largest increases in reading levels (Imperato, 2009). Family literacy programs were shown to transform parental thinking about reading with their children (Kabuto, 2009). As a result, children's attitudes and thinking toward reading were transformed (Kabuto, 2009). Through the transformation of parental thinking toward reading, parents who participated in a targeted family literacy program were able to engage their child in the storybook reading event while implementing strategies which encouraged comprehension (Kabuto, 2009).

As we continue to develop an understanding of the importance of the family literacy environment, "we also need to develop our understanding of how to connect and build on the ways of learning that also have been shown to positively impact students' growth and development" (Wiseman, 2009, p. 141). Through family literacy programs which supported the home literacy environment through targeted instruction and through providing necessary resources such as storybooks for use in the home, the possibility of closing the achievement gap evident between high and middle-SES families and low-SES families may begin to close.

Recent Research

A recent study conducted by Thomason (2008) regarding the Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy (FFCL) provided evidence of the effectiveness of providing

storybooks to families on the aspects of the home literacy environment, indicating a positive effect on early literacy development. According to Thomason (2008), the FFCL's goal was "to send books to every child in the State of Georgia who [was] between birth and 5 years of age" (p. 3). The books were mailed to the children's homes for a cost of $35 per child per year (Thomason, 2008). The Thomason study (2008) sought to determine the impact of participation in FFCL on the home literacy environment.

The findings of the Thomason study (2008) indicated a positive relationship between participation in the FFCL and the home literacy environment, with the impact on the home literacy environment increasing over the length of time of participation. In addition, the Thomason study (2008) found that few families visited the library or possessed several other forms of literacy within the home. This finding suggested the possible importance of providing storybooks to families for use in storybook reading within the home.

Particularly among families of low-SES status, resources, such as storybooks, may not have been available within the home (Payne, 1996). The lack of storybooks within the home may have caused a negative effect on the home literacy environment leading to an adverse effect on the emergent literacy development of Pre-Kindergarten children. Further research was needed to determine the effectiveness of providing storybooks to families of low-SES status.

Specific books were used by parents to possibly ensure adequate emergent literacy development through the use of dialogic reading during the storybook reading event. The American Library Association (n.d.) provided a list of suggested books for

use in dialogic storybook reading in the home for the purpose of building emergent

literacy skills (Appendix A).

In addition to providing storybooks for use in the home, research suggested the

need for parental training on the use of effective techniques during the storybook reading

event, leading to an increase in emergent literacy skills. In a recent study conducted by

Kotaman (2007), a parent workshop on dialogic reading in the home resulted in an

increase in vocabulary development and attitude toward reading in middle-SES children

located in Bursa, Turkey.   The dialogic storybook reading training for caregivers lasted

120 minutes, consisting of three sessions. The first session lasted 20 minutes. During the

first session, caregivers received information on the importance of vocabulary

development and the effect of dialogic reading on adequate vocabulary development and

attitude toward reading in Pre-Kindergarten children (Kotaman, 2007). Previous research

studies pertaining to the effectiveness of dialogic reading were also presented during

session one. During the second 20 minute session, the trainer taught caregivers how to

apply dialogic techniques during storybook reading time (Kotaman, 2007). Modeling

and role playing were used to display the use of effective dialogic reading techniques.

Session two was followed with a 10 minute break. The final session, lasting 65 minutes,

offered time for the caregivers to practice the skills learned during the previous two

sessions (Kotaman, 2007). Caregivers practiced applying dialogic reading techniques in

role play sessions with other caregivers. At the end of the session, caregivers were

provided with storybooks. The storybooks were to be used in the home by the caregiver

for the purpose of engaging in dialogic storybook reading with their child.

The caregiver workshop conducted by Kotaman (2007), coupled with providing

caregivers with storybooks, resulted in a significant gain in vocabulary development and attitude toward reading in Pre-Kindergarten subjects. The findings of the Kotaman study of 2007 suggested the effectiveness of a caregiver workshop coupled with the receipt of storybooks on the adequate development of vocabulary and attitude toward reading among middle-SES preschool children. A need existed to perform a similar study in the U.S. with children from low-SES families, determining the effect of a caregiver workshop regarding storybook reading coupled with the receipt of storybooks on the overall emergent literacy development of Pre-Kindergarten students.

Conclusion

Based on previous research, storybook reading was a key aspect of the home that led to the adequate development of emergent literacy skills. The social interaction that occurred between parent and child played a crucial role in the storybook reading event. A parent implemented specific strategies, such as discussion and scaffolding, during storybook reading to increase the effectiveness of the activity leading to an increase in literacy development.

Through the adequate development of early literacy skills at the emergent level, children were reading ready upon entering kindergarten. A crucial method of developing early literacy skills was the occurrence of storybook reading in the home. Effective storybook reading in the home involved dialogic reading which included discussion and scaffolding techniques designed to increase early literacy skills. Through effective storybook reading, parents helped ensure adequate development of early literacy skills for their child. Because conducting storybook reading in the home as a form of dialogic reading through caregiver/child interaction was crucial for children's adequate emergent

literacy development, caregivers attended workshops which taught skills necessary for engaging in effective storybook reading in the home while providing caregivers with storybooks for use in the home.

Chapter 2 was a review of the literature. Topics discussed include the theoretical framework for storybook reading, historical research studies, the effects of the home literacy environment on early literacy skill development, the development of specific reading skills due to storybook reading, and an early intervention strategy for increasing the occurrence of effective storybook reading in the home. Chapter 3 discussed the methodology for this research study. The research questions and hypotheses were presented along with the research design. The subjects engaging in the study were identified as well as the instrument used for collecting data through assessment of the subjects. The methods for analyzing the data were presented and discussed as well. Chapter 3 concluded with a summary of the methodology of the research study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of providing caregivers storybooks coupled with a caregiver workshop, focused on effective storybook reading in the home, on the emergent literacy of Pre-Kindergarten students. Chapter 3 provided a description of the research design and procedures conducted in this study. This chapter explained the research context, presented the research questions and null hypotheses, provided a description of the population and sample, discussed the instrumentation, and provided a thorough discussion of the data collection and analysis procedures.

The review of literature indicated the importance of storybook reading in the home on adequate reading development, beginning with the development of emergent literacy skills. Because of the developmental process, students were able to develop complex reading skills only after the adequate development of emergent literacy skills (Beech, 2005; Gillet, et al., 2004; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). A correlation was determined as occurring between the development of emergent literacy skills at the Pre-Kindergarten level and academic performance at the elementary level (Holloway, 2004; Molfese, et al., 2002). In order to ensure that all students were reading ready upon entering kindergarten, caregivers attended workshops on storybook reading which included dialogic techniques for the purpose of ensuring adequate development of early literacy skills (Kotaman, 2007). Because conducting storybook reading in the home as a form of social interaction between caregiver and child was crucial for children's adequate emergent literacy development, this study sought to provide caregivers with storybooks and a caregiver workshop which taught the skills necessary for engaging in effective

storybook reading in the home for the purpose of increasing the emergent literacy skills of Pre-Kindergarten students.

Research Context

This study included students from two Head Start centers in the Southeastern U.S. The Head Start centers were located in Escambia County, Florida. Escambia County was the western most county of the state of Florida, bordering south Alabama. The population of the area was 54,283 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Of these individuals, 14.8% live below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). 69.3% of the population was white, 25.3% were African American, 14.7% were Hispanic, and 5.4% were from other ethnicities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). 5.9% of the population was under 5 years old (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Of the 3,164 children under the age of 5, many attended various preschool centers, including Head Start centers, located throughout the area.

To help ensure that all children were reading ready upon entering kindergarten, a community literacy advocacy group, Every Child a Reader in Escambia (ECARE), was created to assist families and preschool centers in providing all children with the opportunity to adequately develop early literacy skills. ECARE (2009) was a community-wide collaborative effort to improve emergent literacy with the goal of "investing where the payoff [was] biggest and most fruitful for the community as a whole…in its youngest citizens from birth to five years old" (para. 5).

This study assisted ECARE in their pursuit to ensure that all children were reading ready upon entering kindergarten. Through a collaborative effort with ECARE, two Head Start centers were chosen to participate in this study based on the greatest need and availability. This study sought to further the goals of ECARE by assisting both

families and preschool centers in providing Pre-Kindergarten students with the resources

necessary to adequately develop early literacy skills. Through the caregiver workshop on

storybook reading provided in the Head Start centers, the emergent literacy development

of Pre-Kindergarten students was assessed for improved development.

Research Design

This study was a quantitative, quasi-experimental design. The study design

included a nonrandomized control and experimental group with a pretest and posttest for

each group. The pretest and posttest scores were derived from the Readiness for Reading

component of the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills

Revised (CIBS-R). The mean pretest and mean posttest scores for each the control group

and the experimental group were used to determine any significant differences in the

readiness for reading scores based on the intervention of the caregiver workshop on

storybook reading coupled with the receipt of storybooks. The independent variable in

the study was the caregiver storybook reading workshop coupled with the receipt of

storybooks by the caregivers of the Pre-Kindergarten students participating in the

experimental group. The dependent variable in the study was the emergent literacy

development of the Pre-Kindergarten students. This study sought to determine any

change in the dependent variable, emergent literacy skills, based on providing caregivers

of the experimental group with the independent variable, a caregiver workshop on

storybook reading coupled with the receipt of storybooks for use in the home.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

The primary research question addressed in this study was as follows: Was there a

significant difference in readiness for reading among students whose caregivers have

participated in an intervention workshop coupled with the receipt of storybooks when compared to students whose caregivers have not participated in an intervention workshop nor received storybooks?

The secondary research question addressed in this study was as follows: Was there a significant change in students' readiness for reading after caregivers participate in an intervention workshop coupled with the receipt of storybooks?

The primary null hypothesis tested in this study was as follows: There was no significant difference between groups, the experimental group's readiness for reading posttest mean score and the control group's readiness for reading posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999).

The secondary null hypothesis tested in this study was as follows: There was no significant difference within the experimental group, between the experimental group's pretest mean score and the experimental group's posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999).

The third and final hypothesis tested in this study was as follows: There was no significant difference within the control group, between the control group's pretest mean score and the control group's posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999).

Population and Sample

This study sought to replicate and further a recent research study conducted by

Kotaman (2007). In order to thoroughly further Kotaman's study (2007) which

predominantly involved middle-SES subjects, this study primarily involved subjects of

low-SES status. As such, Head Start centers were targeted for participation. The mission

of the Florida Head Start programs (n.d.) was to "provide comprehensive, developmental

services for low-income preschool children ages three to five and social services for their

families" (para. 1). Research studies suggested an achievement gap among children from

low-SES families and children from middle-SES or high-SES families. Because Head

Start centers provided preschool services to low-SES families, a need for increased

literacy support and development was evident among children who attended Head Start

center. The findings of the 1997 Family and Child Experiences Survey on language and

literacy development, as reported by Hammer, Farkas and Maczuga (2010),

"demonstrated that children entered Head Start with vocabulary, letter identification, and

early writing abilities that were below those of the average preschooler" (p. 73). The

current research study complimented the overall mission of Head Start centers by

providing an early intervention strategy for increasing the emergent literacy development

of children attending two Head Start centers in the Southeastern U.S.

Through a meeting with the Deputy Director of Children's Services for Escambia

County Head Start and the Education Assistant for Escambia County Head Start,

permission to conduct the study in two Head Start centers in the area was granted

(Appendix B). The two Head Start centers which participated in this study, indicated

using a pseudonym to protect the identity of the participants, were recommended by the

Deputy Director of Children's Services for Escambia County Head Start and the

Education Assistant for Escambia County Head Start based on greatest need for

intervention, accessibility, and likelihood of active participation in the study (Appendix C).

The Oak Grove Head Start center had fourteen students enrolled for the 2009-2010 academic year. Of these students, all were four years old. At the Oak Grove Head Start center, the demographics of the students included nine females and five males. Among these students, two students were of Caucasian ethnicity, ten were of African American ethnicity, and two were of Hispanic ethnicity. All caregivers of the students enrolled at the Oak Grove Head Start center were provided the opportunity to participate in the study. By providing permission for the child to participate in the assessment only, the child became part of the control group in this study. By providing permission for the child to participate in the assessment and, as the caregiver, choosing to participate in the storybook reading workshop, the child became part of the experimental group in this study. Of the total fourteen students at the Oak Grove Head Start center, five students were subjects in the control group while seven students were subjects in the experimental group.

The second center which participated in this study, Ferry Day Head Start center, enrolled four year old students only. For the 2009-2010 academic year, the Ferry Day Head Start center had nineteen students enrolled. Of these students, ten were female and nine were male. Among the students enrolled in the Ferry Day Head Start center, three were Caucasian, fourteen were African American, and two were Hispanic. Following the same protocol for group participation as provided for the Oak Grove Head Start center, five students were subjects in the control group and five students were subjects in the experimental group.

Instrumentation

The experimental and control groups of Pre-Kindergarten students were administered the Readiness for Reading assessment of the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (CIBS-R), determining a pretest mean score for each group (Brigance, 1999). Following the pretest, the caregivers of the experimental group attended a workshop regarding effective storybook reading, coupled with the receipt of twenty storybooks for use in reading with their child at home. The storybooks were chosen from a list of ten storybooks for use in dialogic reading as provided by the American Library Association (Appendix A). In addition, the Opening the World for Learning Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum by Pearson Education (2009), as recommended by Early Reading First, provided suggested storybooks for use in building early literacy skills during early childhood (Appendix D). The twenty storybooks used in the study were a compilation of the storybooks recommended by the American Library Association (n.d.) and the Opening the World for Learning Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum (2009), modified based on availability of purchase (Appendix E). After seven weeks of instructional time, the experimental and control groups of Pre-Kindergarten students were administered the Readiness for Reading assessment of the CIBS-R as a posttest, establishing the posttest mean score of readiness for reading skills for each group (Brigance, 1999).

In addition, the caregiver interview portion of the Readiness for Reading assessment of the CIBS-R was conducted (Brigance, 1999). The caregivers of the experimental group of students were interviewed during the caregiver workshop and at the time of the posttest assessment through a brief survey containing the two open-ended

reading interest questions provided in the Readiness for Reading component of the CIBS-R (Brigance, 1999). Results of the survey assessments were notated to provide an overall depiction of the subjects' home reading behaviors throughout the duration of the study.

The CIBS-R was chosen as the assessment tool for this study based on the assessment's reliability and validity, as well as the assessment's ability to measure overall emergent literacy skill development. The CIBS-R was shown to be a reliable assessment, reasonably predicting future performance of students on standardized assessments (Buros, 1999). Several forms of reliability measures were provided, with all correlations exceeding .80, and many measures, such as test-retest, reporting a value as high as .97 (Buros, 1999). While the content validity of the CIBS-R was weak, the construct validity evidence was strong, making the CIBS-R a valid general cognitive ability assessment as well as a measure of discrete skill mastery (Buros, 1999). In addition, the CIBS-R adequately measured overall development of emergent literacy skills. An alignment of emergent literacy skills to assessment items was conducted by the researcher (see Appendix I).

The caregiver workshop, which provided caregivers with strategies for effective storybook reading in the home, was created and administered by the researcher based on the dialogic reading workshop conducted by Kotaman (2007), modified as necessary to meet the needs of the study. The dialogic reading sessions provided to parents in the study conducted by Kotaman (2007) were two hours in length. The workshop consisted of three sessions. The first session, 20 minutes in length, provided instruction to the parents on emergent literacy skill development and the impact of parental use of dialogic techniques while reading storybooks with children (Kotaman, 2007). Relevant research

was also discussed during session one. Session two, also 20 minutes in length, consisted of modeling and role playing by the researcher and an assistant (Kotaman, 2007). The final session, 65 minutes in length, allowed time for parents to practice the skills learned during the workshop (Kotaman, 2007). Parents practiced the techniques learned during the previous sessions with other parent participants. At the end of the sessions, parents received dialogic storybook readings and a checklist (Kotaman, 2007). In the Kotaman study (2007), parents were asked to self report on the checklist regarding how many times per week the techniques learned in the workshop were applied in the home. Seven weeks following the workshop, children were provided the posttest assessment to determine any significant differences in scores when compared to the pretest scores.

This study sought to closely replicate the workshop components provided in the study by Kotaman (2007), modifying as necessary for changes in subject groups. A workshop on dialogic storybook reading in the home, similar to the workshop presented in the Kotaman study of 2007, was created by the researcher and provided to caregivers of the experimental group for the Oak Grove Head Start center and the Ferry Day Head Start center. The workshop replicated the format of three sessions beginning with the informative session followed by the modeling session and ending with the practice session. The workshop concluded by providing storybooks to the caregivers. The seven week waiting period between the workshop and the posttest was also implemented in this study.

To further the study by Kotaman (2007), caregivers participating in this study completed a survey at the time of the pretest and the posttest as part of the CIBS-R assessment, in place of the checklist. In addition, this study furthered Kotaman's

research by assessing changes in Pre-Kindergarten students' overall emergent literacy skill development instead of assessing vocabulary only as conducted in the Kotaman study (2007).

Data Collection

Data were collected using the Readiness for Reading component of the CIBS-R assessment as a pretest and posttest. The Readiness for Reading component contained an observing and listening assessment of the child and a survey assessment of the caregiver. Through answering the yes/no observational assessment questions, the student's level of readiness for reading was determined. All data were organized in a data collection table (see Table 1). Data were collected anonymously. Each student was assigned a number for data collection to maintain anonymity. In addition, the student's participation group, control or experimental, as well as pretest and posttest level was identified.

Table 1

Data Collection Table

Student number	Subject Group	Pretest Level	Posttest Level
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

The survey portion of the CIBS-R assessment was completed by caregivers during the caregiver workshop and at the time of the posttest. The survey contained two open-ended questions regarding the caregiver's overall view of the student's reading attitude and interest. Upon compilation of all survey responses, patterns were identified and discussed as they emerged in the pretest surveys and the posttest surveys.

The primary costs associated with the study were the purchase of the CIBS-R assessment, the storybooks, travel expenses, and workshop costs (see Appendix F). Funding for the study was provided by the researcher and a grant by Every Child a Reader in Escambia (ECARE).

Data Analysis

Once all data were collected, the data collection table was re-organized to separate subjects' scores into control group scores and experimental group scores. The individual scores for each group were charted in a line graph to establish a visual representation of any individual changes in emergent literacy development from the pretest data collection time to the posttest data collection time. The Readiness for Reading mean score for each group for the pretest was calculated and the Readiness for Reading mean score for the posttest was calculated.

Two statistical analyses were used to address the null hypotheses. The Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to address the primary null hypothesis: there was no significant difference between groups, the experimental group's readiness for reading posttest mean score and the control group's readiness for reading posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999). ANCOVA was

purposively chosen to address the primary null hypothesis for the purpose of determining any significant differences between groups using the adjusted posttest scores while adjusting for uncontrolled variables (Wildt & Ahtola, 1978).

A paired samples t-test was used to address the secondary null hypothesis: there was no significant difference within the experimental group, between the experimental group's pretest mean score and the experimental group's posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999).   A paired samples t-test was used to determine any significant change between the experimental group's pretest Readiness for Reading mean score and posttest Readiness for Reading mean score.

In addition, a paired samples t-test was used to address the third null hypothesis: There was no significant difference within the control group, between the control group's pretest mean score and the control group's posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999). A paired samples t-test was used to determine any significant change between the control group's pretest Readiness for Reading mean score and posttest Readiness for Reading mean score.

The survey component of the assessment was analyzed using the constant comparative method of data analysis. The survey responses were grouped by pretest responses and posttest responses. Each group of responses was coded to determine any categories of similar responses. Categories were analyzed for any emerging themes. Overall themes of responses were determined and discussed, seeking to illuminate the overall reading behaviors of the student in the home, as perceived by the caregiver.

Themes from the pretest results were compared to themes from the posttest results to determine any caregiver perceived improvements in reading interest.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided an explanation of the procedures conducted in this study, providing information regarding the study's research questions and null hypotheses. The specifics of the subjects were described along with data collection methods. A discussion of how data were analyzed to address the null hypotheses was provided. Chapter 4 provided a discussion of the study's results based on the methods presented in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether or not students' emergent

literacy development would significantly increase as measured by the BRIGANCE

Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills-Revised (CIBS-R) Readiness for Reading

assessment following an intervention workshop regarding storybook reading. Chapter 4

included a discussion of the research findings as related to the research questions,

additional findings, and a chapter summary.

All students attending the Ferry Day and Oak Grove Head Start centers in the

Southeastern U.S. whose caregivers completed the consent form were tested using the

Readiness for Reading portion of the BRIGANCE CIBS-R. The Readiness for Reading

assessment determined the emergent literacy development level of the student by testing

the student on specific areas of emergent literacy to include concept of print,

internalization of text, and semantic and syntactic skills. The levels of readiness for

reading, as presented in the CIBS-R, ranged from 1 to 12, with 1 being the lowest level of

emergent literacy development and 12 being the highest level of emergent literacy

development. Students who did not meet the skills for the lowest level of reading

readiness, 1, were scored as 0.

After the completion of the initial testing of all students, establishing the pretest

scores, caregiver workshops were conducted based on caregiver volunteers. All

caregivers were provided with equal opportunity to attend the workshops through the

dissemination of workshop information which was provided equally to all caregivers in

the same format at the same time. The caregiver workshops included information on how

literacy develops, ideas for creating a literate home environment, and details regarding the steps for inclusion of dialogic reading techniques during the storybook reading event. The workshops began with a lecture format using researcher created posters as visual aids. Following the lecture, a period of researcher modeling was provided to model the effective use of dialogic reading techniques during storybook reading. Lastly, caregivers practiced dialogic reading techniques with peers, and when possible with students, while engaging in discussions and questions regarding the techniques. The workshop concluded with a review of the skills learned, followed by providing caregivers with handouts detailing the primary information learned during the workshops. At the conclusion of the workshop, each caregiver was provided with twenty storybooks. Before exiting the workshop, caregivers completed a survey as provided in the Readiness for Reading portion of the BRIGANCE CIBS-R assessment asking questions regarding student's attitude toward reading.

After seven weeks of school instructional time, eight weeks total as one week of school was cancelled due to a hurricane, all students previously tested using the Readiness for Reading portion of the BRIGANCE CIBS-R assessment were again tested, establishing the posttest scores. The students whose caregivers attended the intervention workshop and received storybooks comprised the experimental group of students. The remaining students comprised the control group of students. Following the posttest, additional caregiver surveys asking the two open-ended questions regarding student's attitude and interest toward reading were provided to caregivers. To ensure no harm to any students, storybooks were provided to the control group of students at the point of completion of data collection.

Research Question Findings

      Data were collected by the researcher using the researcher created data collection table (see Table 1). Twenty two students participated in the study with twelve students participating in the experimental group and ten students participating in the control group. Each student was identified with a student number and the group of participation. Individual scores were collected for both groups.

      The scores for the experimental group were obtained for all individuals. Individual scores were plotted using a line graph to provide a visual representation of any changes occurring from pretest to posttest for each individual subject (see Figure 1). The line graph (Figure 1) indicated individual changes of the subjects. The line graph suggested an overall increase in emergent literacy development when comparing the pretest scores to the posttest scores. However, as indicated in the line graph, two subjects did not experience an increase in emergent literacy skills from the pretest to the posttest. One of the subjects experienced a decrease in emergent literacy development while one subject's emergent literacy development remained unchanged. The findings of these two subjects, however, were atypical with the majority of the individual subjects of the experimental group experiencing a growth in emergent literacy development.

      The overall growth in emergent literacy development of subjects participating in the experimental group was overwhelming positive, with many students indicating at least a two level increase in emergent literacy development. These findings, as evidenced in the line graph provided in Figure 1, indicate an overall increase in emergent literacy development for the subjects of the experimental group. However, the decline in emergent literacy development for one subject and the unchanged development in

emergent literacy skills for one subject should be noted as these two results affect the mean and standard deviation scores.
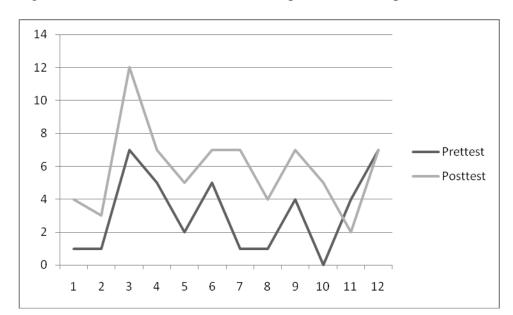
Figure 1. Pretest and Posttest Scores – Experimental Group
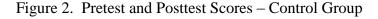
Likewise, the scores for the control group were obtained and plotted using a line graph (see Figure 2). The line graph provided a visual representation of the control group's individual scores, indicating any changes experienced by each individual.
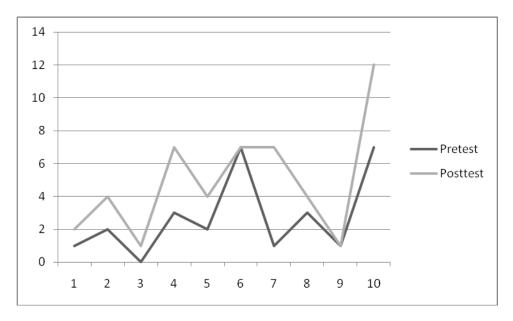
Similar to the experimental group, most subjects participating in the control group, with the exception of two subjects, experienced an increase in emergent literacy growth. The two subjects who did not experience emergent literacy growth experienced no change between the pretest and the posttest results. As evidenced in the line graph provided in Figure 2 among the subjects experiencing growth, the subjects scores increased by at least one level of emergent literacy development.

Overall, most subjects within the control group experienced a gain in scores with two subjects from the control group experiencing no change in emergent literacy growth. The two subjects with no change in emergent literacy development should be noted as

they affect the mean and standard deviation scores for the control group.

Figure 2. Pretest and Posttest Scores – Control Group

After obtaining and plotting individual scores for each group, establishing an understanding of the pattern of individual scores, the mean and standard deviation (SD) for both groups were determined (see Table 2). In addition to establishing the mean and standard deviation for both groups for the pretest and the posttest scores, the adjusted posttest scores were determined. The adjusted posttest scores, used in completing the paired samples t-test and the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistical methods, were included in Table 2 as well. The adjusted posttest scores were indicated as Adjusted Mean scores (Adj. Mean) and the Adjusted Standard Deviation (Adj. SD) scores for both the experimental and control groups.

The group title, test conducted, mean for all tests, standard deviation for all tests, adjusted mean scores for the posttest, and adjusted standard deviation for posttest scores were provided in Table 2. Following the determination of these scores, the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistical method was completed.

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation

Group	Test	Mean	SD	Adj. Mean	Adj. SD
Control	Pretest	2.70	1.50		
Experimental	Pretest	3.17	0.81		
Control	Posttest	4.90	1.58	2.20	2.10
Experimental	Posttest	5.83	1.13	2.67	2.19

The One-Way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistical method was used to address the primary research question: was there a significant difference in readiness for reading among students whose caregivers have participated in an intervention workshop coupled with the receipt of storybooks when compared to students whose caregivers have not participated in an intervention workshop nor received storybooks? ANCOVA was purposively chosen to account for uncontrolled variables. In the ANCOVA statistical method of data analysis, "all uncontrolled variables [were] distributed among the groups in such a way that they can be taken into account when the test of significance [was] employed" (Wildt & Ahtola, 1978, p. 14).

The One-Way ANCOVA data analysis completed in the current study was based on each group's adjusted posttest scores as the dependent variable while using the pretest as the covariate. As explained by Elsevier (2003), "when comparing pretest to posttest changes in non-randomized groups, most researchers were correctly avoiding ANCOVA

with posttest as the dependent variable and pretest as the covariate" (p. 277). However, there has been a widespread use of ANCOVA in which the difference score (posttest minus pretest) has been used as the dependent variable, and pretest as the covariate" (Elsevier, 2003). Therefore, because the current study used non-randomized groups, the adjusted posttest scores were used as the dependent variable with the pretest as the covariate.

The summary of the results from the One-Way ANCOVA analysis, as calculated using SPSS, was provided in Table 3. The summary of the One-Way ANCOVA analysis provided the Sum of Squares for the treatment group, error, and total, indicating the F-value and p-value which determine the significance of any differences between the experimental group and control group.

Table 3

Analysis of Covariance Summary

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Treatment	1.522	1	1.522	.321	.577
Error	89.967	19	4.735		
Total	226.000	22			
Corrected	93.455	21			

Note. R Squared = .037, Adjusted R Squared = -.064

The results of the ANCOVA statistical analysis findings were $F_{1,19}=0.321$,

p=0.577. At the .05 significance level, the calculated F-value indicated no significant difference in scores. Likewise, the p-value supported these findings. According to the p-value, there was a 57% probability of observing a result as extreme as that observed solely due to chance, therefore indicating the results to not be considered statistically significant (Hennekens, 1987).

The One-Way ANCOVA statistical analysis tested the primary null hypothesis. The primary null hypothesis stated that there was no significant difference between groups, the experimental group's readiness for reading posttest mean score and the control group's readiness for reading posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised. Based on the findings of the One-Way ANCOVA statistical method of data analysis, there was not significant evidence to reject the primary null hypothesis. Therefore, the current study failed to reject the primary null hypothesis.

In addition, the Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was conducted to test the assumption of ANCOVA that all variables had equal variance across groups. The results of the Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances, as completed in SPSS, were provided in Table 4.

Table 4

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

Dependent Variable: Adjusted Posttest

F	df1	df2	p
.372	1	20	.549

Therefore, according to the p-value results of the Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances, there was no reason to doubt the assumption of homogeneity of variances.

A paired samples t-test was used to address the secondary research question: was there a significant change in students' readiness for reading after caregivers participate in an intervention workshop coupled with the receipt of storybooks? A paired samples t-test was used to compare the means of the pretest and adjusted posttest scores in order to compute any statistical difference between the means (Archambault, 2000). Following statistical calculations, completed using SPSS, the t-test analysis of the experimental group's scores were $t(11) = 4.222$, p=.001, indicating a significant gain in scores within the experimental group at the .05 significance level. A summary of the results of the data analysis were provided in Table 5.

Table 5

Paired samples t-test Summary for Experimental Group

	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Pretest	12	3.17	2.48	4.222	11	.001
Posttest	12	5.83	2.62			

The paired samples t-test analyzed collected data to test the secondary null hypothesis. The secondary null hypothesis stated that there was no significant difference within the experimental group, between the experimental group's pretest mean score and the experimental group's posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999). Due to the results of the paired samples t-test, the current

study rejected the secondary null hypothesis.

In addition, the control group's pretest and adjusted posttest scores were also analyzed using the paired samples t-test in order to test the third null hypothesis. The third and final null hypothesis tested in this study was as follows: There was no significant difference within the control group, between the control group's pretest mean score and the control group's posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999). A summary of the paired samples t-test for the control group was provided in Table 6. Following statistical calculations completed using SPSS, the t-test analysis results were $t(9) = 3.317$, p=.009, indicating a significant gain in scores within the control group at the .05 significance level. Due to the results of the paired samples t-test data analysis, the current study rejected the third null hypothesis.

Table 6

Paired samples t-test Summary for Control Group

	N	Mean	SD	t	DF	p
Pretest	10	2.70	2.452	3.317	9	.009
Posttest	10	4.90	3.414			

Therefore, while the experimental group experienced a significant gain in readiness for reading, the control group also experienced a significant gain. While the control group's gain was not as large as the gain experienced by the experimental group, both groups did experience significant gains in emergent literacy development. Due to this, the current study rejected both the second and third null hypotheses. These findings

suggested that the gain experienced by the experimental group was not necessarily due to the caregiver's attendance at the workshop coupled with the receipt of storybooks.

Additional Findings

The caregiver surveys provided insight into the student's attitude toward reading as well as the caregiver's perception of literacy. Using the constant comparative method of data analysis (Appendix H), specific attitudes and behaviors emerged for both the pretest and the posttest surveys as indicated in Tables 7 and 8. The attitudes and behaviors were provided in the order of prevalence of occurrence within the caregiver surveys and comments.

Table 7

Survey Themes – Pretest

Child liked to look at pictures.

Child liked to pretend to read.

Child looked at books on occasion.

Child played with books, to include coloring in them and acting them out.

Following the caregiver workshops and seven week period of time following the pretest data collection, at the time of the posttest, surveys were again analyzed using the constant comparative method to determine current attitudes and behaviors as perceived by the caregiver. The results of this analysis were provided in Table 8. Attitudes and behaviors were listed in order of prevalence of occurrence, as perceived by caregivers completing the surveys.

Table 8

Survey Themes – Posttest

_____

We read one of the storybooks every day.

Child loves for us to read the storybooks together.

Child told caregiver about the story.

Child was beginning to sound out words.

_____

While specific caregiver responses to the workshops or the usefulness of the

training experience were not purposefully collected, many caregivers did provide

comments verbally and as additions to the survey. Table 9 provided caregiver comment

themes recorded from verbal and additional written caregiver responses following the

workshop.

Table 9

Caregiver Comment Themes

_____

Appreciation for workshop and storybooks

Increased caregiver self-efficacy

Need for continued training and resources

_____

Caregiver comments provided on the surveys as well as verbally following the

workshop were analyzed to determine any perceived areas of improvement. From

analysis of the caregiver comments, the overall effects of the workshop on attitude and

interest in reading were provided in Table 10.

Table 10

Caregiver Perceived Areas of Improvement

_____

Student interest in reading improved

Attitude toward reading, both for students and caregivers, improved

Confidence of caregiver improved

Increase in emergent literacy skills exhibited during storybook reading time experienced

_____

Summary

Readiness for Reading scores as determined using the Brigance CIBS-R assessment were analyzed using the One-Way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistical method and the paired samples t-test. Based on the ANCOVA data analysis, the study failed to reject the primary null hypothesis, indicating no significant difference between the experimental group's posttest scores and the control group's posttest scores.

The paired samples t-test statistical method indicated a significant gain in scores when comparing the experimental group's pretest scores to the experimental group's posttest scores. Thus, the secondary null hypothesis was rejected. Statistical analysis using the paired samples t-test suggested a significant gain in readiness for reading scores within the experimental group.

In addition, the control group also experienced a significant gain in readiness for reading scores as evidenced by the paired samples t-test statistical method. Due to this finding, the current study also rejected the third null hypothesis.

Additional findings, indicating an improvement in student attitude toward reading and caregiver confidence in assisting their child to read, were among the primary effects of the workshop and the receipt of the storybooks as determined by the caregiver surveys and verbal responses of the caregivers.

Chapter 5: Summary and Discussion

Chapter 5 began with a review of the research questions, null hypotheses, and the research methodology, followed by a summary of the results. Chapter 5 continued with a discussion of the research findings to include interpretations of the findings, relationship of the current study to previous research, limitations of the study, implications of the study, and suggestions for additional research.

Research Questions

The primary research question addressed in this study was as follows: Was there a significant difference in readiness for reading among students whose caregivers have participated in an intervention workshop coupled with the receipt of storybooks when compared to students whose caregivers have not participated in an intervention workshop nor received storybooks?

The secondary research question addressed in this study was as follows: Was there a significant change in students' readiness for reading after caregivers participate in an intervention workshop coupled with the receipt of storybooks?

Null Hypotheses

The primary null hypothesis tested in this study was as follows: There was no significant difference between groups, the experimental group's readiness for reading posttest mean score and the control group's readiness for reading posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999).

The secondary null hypothesis tested in this study was as follows: There was no significant difference within the experimental group, between the experimental group's pretest mean score and the experimental group's posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999).

The third and final null hypothesis tested in this study was as follows: There was no significant difference within the control group, between the control group's pretest mean score and the control group's posttest mean score, when using the Readiness for Reading assessment in the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (Brigance, 1999).

Review of Methodology

As discussed in Chapter 3, this study was a quantitative, quasi-experimental design. The study design included a nonrandomized control and experimental group with a pretest and posttest for each group. The pretest and posttest scores were derived from the Readiness for Reading component of the BRIGANCE Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills Revised (CIBS-R). The mean pretest and adjusted mean posttest scores for each the control group and the experimental group were used to determine any significant differences in the readiness for reading scores based on the intervention of the caregiver workshop on storybook reading coupled with the receipt of storybooks. The independent variable in the study was the caregiver storybook reading workshop coupled with the receipt of storybooks by the caregivers of the Pre-Kindergarten students participating in the experimental group. The dependent variable in the study was the emergent literacy development of the Pre-Kindergarten students. This

study sought to determine any change in the dependent variable, emergent literacy skills, based on providing caregivers of the experimental group with the independent variable, a caregiver workshop on storybook reading coupled with the receipt of storybooks for use in the home.

The subjects of the study were Pre-Kindergarten students attending two Head Start centers in the Southeastern U.S. The experimental group was determined based on caregiver participation in the caregiver workshop regarding storybook reading provided at the centers. The remaining students participating in the study comprised the control group. From the Oak Grove Head Start center, the control group was comprised of five subjects while the experimental group was comprised of seven subjects. From the Ferry Day Head Start center, the control group and the experimental group included five subjects each. Therefore, twelve students participated in the experimental group and ten students participated in the control group.

All subjects were administered the Readiness for Reading assessment from the BRIGANCE Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills-Revised (CIBS-R). Following administration of the pretest, caregivers attended a workshop regarding the importance of storybook reading in the home to include dialogic reading skills to be administered during the storybook reading event. Upon completion of the workshop, caregivers were provided with twenty storybooks specifically chosen for their effective use in increasing emergent literacy skills and in performing the dialogic reading technique (see Appendix E). The caregivers attending the workshops completed a survey determining the perceptions of the caregivers regarding their child's attitude toward reading. Following the seven weeks of instructional time between the pretest and posttest, all subjects were

again administered the Readiness for Reading assessment of the BRIGANCE CIBS-R,

determining the posttest scores. At the time of the posttest data collection, all caregivers

of the experimental group were provided with the survey based on the perceptions of the

caregivers regarding their child's attitude toward reading.

Adjusted posttest scores of the control and experimental groups were analyzed

using the One-Way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistical method to determine

any significant differences between the control and experimental groups' scores. Scores

of the experimental group were analyzed using a paired samples t-test to determine any

significant gains within the experimental group. In addition, scores of the control group

were analyzed using a paired samples t-test to determine any significant gains within the

control group. Caregiver surveys were analyzed using the constant comparative method

to determine themes among caregiver responses at the time of the pretest data collection

and at the time of the posttest data collection.

Summary of Results

Data were collected during the study using the data collection table created by the

researcher (see Table 1). The One-Way ANCOVA data analysis statistical method and

the paired samples t-test statistical method was completed by the researcher using SPSS.

The constant comparative data analysis method (Appendix H) was completed by the

researcher.

The results of the One-Way ANCOVA were $F_{1,19} = 0.321$, $p = 0.577$. ANCOVA

was specifically chosen "to adjust the analysis for variables that could not be controlled

by the experimenter" (Milliken & Johnson, 2002, p. 1). Due to this, the statistical

difference between the groups considers and adjusts for additional variations and outside

variables which can affect the data (Milliken & Johnson, 2002; Wildt & Ahtola, 1978). The results of the One-Way ANCOVA data analysis did not reveal a significant difference between the experimental group posttest scores and the control group posttest scores. Due to this, the current study failed to reject the primary null hypothesis.

The results of the paired samples t-test for the experimental group were $t(11) = 4.222$. The results revealed a significant gain in scores when comparing the experimental group's pretest scores to the experimental group's posttest scores. Based on the statistical analysis, the experimental group's readiness for reading scores significantly improved from the pretest to the posttest. Due to this, the current study rejected the second null hypothesis. However, the paired samples t-test results for the control group were $t(9) = 3.317$, which also indicated a significant gain in readiness for reading scores for the control group leading to the current study also rejecting the third null hypothesis. While the gain in readiness for reading scores experienced by the control group was not as large as the gain in readiness for reading scores experienced by the experimental group, both groups did experience a significant gain in emergent literacy development. This suggests the possibility that the gain experienced by the experimental group was not necessarily due to the caregiver workshop since both groups experienced a gain in emergent literacy development.

An additional finding based on the results of the constant comparative method of data analysis (Appendix H) revealed themes which suggested improved student attitudes and interest in reading following the caregiver workshops and seven week period of time between the pretest and posttest. When comparing pretest comments to posttest comments, student interest in reading as well as an increase in student attitude toward

reading began to become evident. In addition, caregivers expressed gains in confidence as a result of the workshop. The experience of the caregiver provided through completion of the surveys and oral responses following the workshop, indicating a gain in caregiver confidence, was an unexpected finding.

Interpretation of the Findings

The primary findings of the study, determined using the One-Way ANCOVA statistical method, did not indicate a significant difference in the emergent literacy development of the experimental group when compared to the control group. This primary finding was supported by the results of the paired samples t-test. While the results of the paired samples t-test indicated a significant gain in emergent literacy development among the experimental group, the control also experienced a significant gain in emergent literacy development as evidenced by the results of the paired samples t-test. These findings suggested that, although the experimental group did experience a gain in emergent literacy development, the gain experienced by the experimental group was not necessarily due to caregiver attendance at the storybook reading workshop coupled with the receipt of storybooks.

One possibility for the lack of significant difference between groups may be the small sample size used in the current study. The use of a small sample size may have resulted in the current findings, as a small sample size can have an adverse effect on statistical analysis (StatSoft, n.d.). A larger sample size may have the potential of resulting in a significant difference in a replicated study.

An additional possibility for the lack of significant difference between groups may be the short length of time, seven weeks, between the pretest and posttest data

collection. The length of time of seven weeks between the pretest and posttest was specifically chosen to replicate the Kotaman study of 2007, which also used a seven week period of time between pretest and posttest. Likewise, similar to the current study, Kotaman's study (2007) did not find a significant difference in scores when comparing the experimental group to the control group as evidenced through the ANCOVA statistical method of data analysis. In a recent research study conducted by Ford, McDougall, and Evans (2009), a significant difference between groups was found, with the experimental group indicating a significant gain in emergent literacy skills when compared to the control group, when parents attended family literacy workshops over the course of twelve months. The findings of the current study and previous studies (Ford, et al., 2009; Kotaman, 2007) suggested the possibility of finding a significant difference between groups when the time between pretest and posttest was greater than the seven weeks indicated in the current study.

The secondary analysis using the paired samples t-test statistical method indicated a significant gain in emergent literacy development when comparing the experimental group's pretest scores to the experimental group's posttest scores. The results of the paired samples t-test revealed a possible positive influence of the caregiver workshop on Pre-Kindergarten students' readiness for reading scores. However, when comparing the control group's pretest scores to the control group's posttest scores using the paired samples t-test statistical method, a significant gain in emergent literacy development was also indicated for the control group. This finding suggests that the significant gain in emergent literacy development experienced by the experimental group may not be due to the caregiver workshop as the control group also experienced a gain in emergent literacy

development. A possible cause for these findings may be the small sample size used in the study (StatSoft, n.d.). An additional possible cause may be the short length of time, seven weeks, between pretest and posttest data collection (Ford, et al., 2009; Kotaman, 2007).

An additional finding of the study was revealed in the caregiver surveys. While caregivers did express some student interest in reading in the pretest surveys, the posttest surveys provided detailed descriptions of an increased interest in reading. Surveys indicated specific reading patterns now experienced in the home which were not expressed as being experienced prior to the workshop. In addition, posttest surveys revealed a possible increase in student attitude as perceived by the caregiver. This increase in student attitude may be due to an increase in attitude toward reading by the caregiver which was included on one posttest survey. An additional primary finding gained from the caregiver surveys and informal caregiver comments was the level of appreciation expressed by the caregivers for the workshops and the storybooks. This unexpected finding revealed the possible need for caregivers to receive instructional assistance regarding how to increase their child's emergent literacy level, evidenced through the comments expressed regarding the receipt assistance in creating a literate home environment.

Finally, the ability to provide families with storybooks for use in this study was paramount to the effectiveness of the study as caregivers expressed the need for storybooks in their homes due to a lack of currently available resources. Having targeted low-SES families in this study, many families expressed the lack of resources available in the home for a daily storybook reading time. Caregivers expressed appreciation for the

receipt of the storybooks for use in reading with their child in the home. In addition, the posttest surveys contained some comments related to the establishment of a daily storybook reading time within the home based on the receipt of the new storybooks.

Relationship of the Current Study to Previous Research

Numerous research studies (Burgess, 2002; Burgess, et al., 2002; Cutspec, 2006; Justice, et al., 2005; Kotaman, 2007; Liboiron & Soto, 2006; Lovelace & Stewart, 2007; Smentana, 2005; Snow & Ninio, 1986; Sulzby, 1985; Sulzby & Teale, 1987) indicated the importance of engaging in storybook reading in order to adequately develop emergent literacy skills. In addition, studies (Darling, 2004; Holloway, 2004; International Reading Association, 1994; Lancy & Bergin, 1992; Morrow & Young, 1996; Roberts, et al., 2005; Roberts, 2008; Senechal & LaFevre, 2002; Senechal, et al., 1998; Sulzby & Teale, 1985; Teale, 1986) indicated the importance of the home literacy environment on a child's emergent literacy growth, citing the caregiver as the most important individual to the child's literacy development. Additional studies (Cutspec, 2006; Doyle & Bramwell, 2006; Kotaman, 2007; Morgan & Meier, 2008; Whitehurst, 1992; Zevenbergen & Riefkofski, n.d.) indicated the use of dialogic reading techniques as one of the most effective means of engaging children during the storybook reading event for the purpose of increasing emergent literacy development. Kotaman (2007), as well as Rosa-Lugo and Kent-Walso (2008), found that parental instruction on reading techniques, such as dialogic reading, produced an increase in the home literacy environment, leading to an increase in specific emergent literacy skills. Finally, Thomason (2008) found that providing families with resources, such as storybooks, in the home was a significant element in affecting the home literacy environment.

The purpose of this current study was to further these previously discussed studies. By incorporating the findings of the previous studies, this study sought to find an intervention method which incorporated findings of these studies for the purpose of increasing a student's overall emergent literacy development. As such, caregivers were provided a workshop which incorporated the importance of storybook reading in the home along with instruction on the use of dialogic reading techniques during the storybook reading event. Through the workshop, the importance of caregivers engaging their child through a regular storybook reading event was also incorporated. Lastly, families were provided with storybooks to ensure adequate resources for engaging in the storybook reading event in the home.

The current study sought to specifically replicate and further the Kotaman study of 2007. This current study was derived from the Kotaman study of 2007 by replicating the design of the study as well as the workshop specifics. The current study furthered the Kotaman study (2007) to include measurement of overall emergent literacy development to comprise concept of print, semantic and syntactic skills, and internalization of the text, instead of only measuring vocabulary only, as in the Kotaman study (2007). The Kotaman study (2007) regarding the impact of a storybook reading workshop for caregivers on young children's reading attitude and vocabulary development revealed similar results to the current study. Similar to the current study, the Kotaman study (2007) did not find a significant difference in the vocabulary scores when comparing the experimental group to the control group using the ANCOVA statistical method. Likewise, the current study supported these findings. The current study failed to reject the primary null hypothesis, thus indicating no significant difference in readiness for

reading scores when comparing the experimental group posttest scores to the control group posttest scores.

Similar to the current study, the Kotaman study (2007) did find significant gains in vocabulary development when comparing the experimental group's pretest scores to the experimental group's posttest scores. Likewise, the current study found a significant gain in emergent literacy skills when comparing the experimental group's pretest scores to the experimental group's posttest scores. The current study also tested for gains in emergent literacy skills within the control group, similar to the Kotaman study of 2007. The current study also found a significant gain in emergent literacy skills when comparing the control group's pretest scores to the control group's posttest scores. This finding was unlike the findings of the Kotaman study (2007) which indicated no significant gain in vocabulary development within the control group. The findings of the current study suggested that the gain experienced by the experimental group was not necessarily due to caregiver participation in the storybook reading workshop coupled with the receipt of storybooks. While the Kotaman study (2007) tested only vocabulary development, the current study tested overall readiness for reading indicating a student's overall emergent literacy development. Due to these findings, the Kotaman study (2007) suggested a significant gain in vocabulary experienced by the experimental group which was not experienced by the control group. Conversely, the current study indicated a significant gain in readiness for reading for both the experimental group and the control group.

The findings of this study also indicated an increased positive attitude of the Pre-Kindergarten children as perceived by caregivers following the workshop. This finding

furthered the findings of the Kotaman study (2007) which indicated an increase in student attitude toward reading based on an assessment of student reading attitude. The current study found a possible increase in student attitude as perceived by the caregiver. In addition to the current study findings of an increase in positive attitude, an increase in the occurrence of storybook reading within the home, an increased interest in storybook reading, and an increase in the exhibition of specific emergent literacy skills during the storybook reading event were also expressed by caregivers in the surveys. An unexpected finding was the increase in caregivers' attitudes and confidence level toward reading with their child as expressed by the caregivers following the workshop.

The research question findings and additional findings of this current research study furthered previous research. The current research study findings provided further understanding regarding the effects of storybook reading, the importance of the home literacy environment, the impact of dialogic reading techniques during storybook reading, and the effectiveness of parental training on children's emergent literacy development. The primary findings of this research study were consistent with and support previous research findings while furthering previous findings. The results of this current research study assisted in the continued understanding of the development of emergent literacy skills among Pre-Kindergarten students.

Limitations of the Study

Six limitations of the study were determined and discussed below. Given the scope of this research study, an understanding of the various limitations was helpful in thoroughly interpreting the results and implications of the current study.

The primary limitation of the study was the small sample size of the subjects and

the use of only one city location. Two Head Start centers located in the Southeastern

U.S. were chosen for the purpose of the scope of this study. While the two Head Start

centers used for the study were in varying locations within the same city, with one

location from the northern area of the city and one location from the southern area of the

city, the use of only one city location created a limitation for the study. Due to this

limitation, the sample size participating in the study was relatively small. This may have

created an adverse affect in the statistical analysis (StatSoft, n.d.). This limitation had a

possible effect on the results of the statistical analysis as well as the generalizability of

the study to the larger population.

A second limitation of the study was the use of an attitude assessment which was

solely based on the caregiver's perception of the child's attitude. In the survey, the

caregiver answered two questions regarding the child's attitude toward reading. The

caregivers completed the survey before the workshop and at the time of the posttest data

collection. However, the results of the survey were strictly based on the caregiver's

perception. This created a limitation as the caregiver's perception of the child's attitude

and interest in reading may have been affected by changes in the caregiver's own attitude

and interest in reading.

A third limitation of the study was the lack of measurement regarding the

caregiver's experience during and following the workshop. The current study measured

the effects of the workshop and storybooks on the Pre-Kindergarten children only. While

the study did unexpectedly obtain results regarding the caregiver's experience through

the posttest survey and informal caregiver comments, this was not an intended finding

nor was it measured from all participants.

A fourth limitation of the study was the lack of the inclusion of a reading log from the families. While the 2007 Kotaman study included a reading checklist, the current study did not measure the occurrence of reading within the home during the duration of the study. While the study did infer an improvement in the home literacy environment as evidenced by comments provided in the completed surveys, there was no direct measure of any actual occurrence of storybook reading or dialogic reading techniques occurring in the home following the workshop.

A fifth possible limitation of the study was the length of time between the pretest data collection and the posttest data collection. The current study replicated the design of the 2007 Kotaman study which indicated a length of seven instructional weeks between the pretest data collection and the posttest data collection. The data analysis for the current study indicated similar results as the Kotaman study, finding significant gains within the experimental group as indicated by the results of the paired samples t-test and no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group as indicated by the ANCOVA data analysis. The short period of time between the pretest data collection and the posttest data collection may be a limitation which adversely affected the posttest scores, possibly not allowing enough time between data collection dates for adequate increase of scores.

A final, and unavoidable, limitation of the study was the procedure used in the study for determining group assignment of subjects. Participants of the experimental group were based on caregiver volunteers who elected to attend the workshop. This limitation was minimized in this study through the following methods: (a) all caregivers received equal opportunity for participation in the caregiver workshops; (b) all caregivers

were provided with the same information regarding the workshops; (c) all caregivers were provided the information regarding the workshops at the same time and location; and (d) ANCOVA was used to analyze the data to take into account the effects of these uncontrolled variables.

While limitations of the study did exist, the findings of the study indicated significant gains in readiness for reading scores and attitude toward reading for students whose caregivers attended a workshop on storybook reading coupled with the receipt of storybooks based on the results of the paired samples t-test and the analysis of caregiver surveys.

Implications of the Study

While the study did not find a significant difference between the experimental group's emergent literacy development and the control group's emergent literacy development, the study findings did suggest the possible impact of the caregiver workshop on furthering the development of emergent literacy skills while supporting a positive student attitude toward reading. A similar caregiver workshop on dialogic reading techniques during the storybook reading event had proven effective in increasing emergent literacy skills in previous studies (Kotaman, 2007). Therefore, this study further supported these findings by revealing a significant, positive gain in emergent literacy development while suggesting an increase in student attitude and interest in reading. In addition, the inclusion of storybooks in the home had shown to have a positive effect on the home literacy environment (Thomason, 2008). As such, this study further supported these findings by revealing a possible positive impact of the storybooks on the home literacy environment as evidenced in the caregiver survey and comments.

Caregiver workshops were proven effective in increasing emergent literacy development (Kotaman, 2007; Rosa-Lugo & Kent-Walso, 2008). This study supported these findings by indicating a significant, positive gain in Pre-Kindergarten student's emergent literacy development as well as an increase in student attitude toward reading following the caregiver workshop. Although no significant difference was evident between the experimental group's emergent literacy development and the control group's emergent literacy development, this finding provided Pre-Kindergarten centers and Elementary schools with an additional intervention technique to consider for possibly supporting emergent literacy development and attitude toward reading in students.

Research (Darling, 2004; Holloway, 2004; IRA 1994; Lancy & Bergin, 1992; Morrow & Young, 1996; Roberts, et al., 2005; Roberts, 2008; Senechal & LaFevre, 2002; Senechal, et al., 1998; Sulzby & Teale, 1985; Teale, 1986) indicated the importance of the home literacy environment on the adequate development of emergent literacy skills. This current study explored a possible intervention technique designed to increase the effectiveness of the home literacy environment. In addition, numerous research studies indicated the importance of storybook reading in the home (Burgess, 2002; Burgess, et al., 2002; Cutspec, 2006; Justice, et al., 2005; Liboiron & Soto, 2006; Lovelace & Stewart, 2007; Smentana, 2005; Snow & Ninio, 1986; Sulzby, 1985; Sulzby & Teale, 1987) and the effectiveness of including dialogic reading techniques during the storybook reading event (Cutspec, 2006; Doyle & Bramwell, 2006; Kotaman, 2007; Morgan & Meier, 2008; Whitehurst, 1992; Zevenbergen & Riefkofski, n.d.). This research study provided a training tool for teaching others how to effectively incorporate dialogic reading techniques into the storybook reading event. The workshop developed

in this research study can be replicated to provide to others in the field of education, as well as to caregivers. The workshop can be replicated and provided to caregivers and educators for the purpose of including dialogic reading techniques during the storybook reading event in the home as well as in the classroom.

Suggestions for Additional Research

While this study furthers the literature, additional research needs to be conducted to further understand the connection between the school and the home literacy environment, as well as the effectiveness of storybook reading and dialogic reading techniques on emergent literacy development. Additional research studies can help further the generalizability of this study while discovering new information crucial to furthering the understanding of the storybook reading and home literacy connection to emergent literacy development. Suggestions for additional research related to this study were created based on the findings and discussion of results of the current study.

1. The current study needs to be replicated using a larger sample size which includes centers from multiple city locations. Through a replicated study with an increased sample size from various locations, the research would determine if a significant difference between the experimental and control groups would occur.

2. The current study needs to be replicated using an increased length of time between the pretest and posttest data collection. The current study, as well as the Kotaman study (2007), used a period of seven instructional weeks between the pretest and the posttest. An increased length of time may provide a better possibility for a significant increase in emergent literacy development between the experimental group and the control group.

3. A similar quantitative study needs to be conducted in which a specific measurement of student attitude is completed. The current study measures student attitude based on the caregiver's perceptions as evidenced in a caregiver survey. An additional study which utilizes an attitude assessment tool would further this study by providing an actual measurement of the student's attitudes following the caregiver's participation in the workshop.

4. A similar mixed methods study needs to be conducted in which the caregiver's experience is measured. The caregiver's perception of one's own ability to provide reading instruction at home was not measured in the current study. A study which seeks to determine the effectiveness of the caregiver workshop as perceived by the caregiver would be greatly beneficial in modifying the workshop to be most useful in further developing the effectiveness of the home literacy environment.

5. A study which replicates the current study with the addition of home reading logs is needed. Through furthering the current study with the addition of home reading logs, a better understanding of the impact of the caregiver workshop on the home literacy environment will be determined. This addition will provide further understanding of the home literacy environment and information necessary to further modify the workshops to be most effective.

6. A mixed methods study which measures the effectiveness of the caregiver workshops on preschool center teachers is needed. While many preschool center teachers provide exceptional educational experiences through storybook reading events, dialogic reading techniques have shown to be especially effective in

increasing emergent literacy development. A variation of the workshop provided in this study could be created to present to preschool teachers for the purpose of including dialogic reading techniques during the classroom storybook read aloud time. The emergent literacy development of the students could be measured as well as observations conducted of the classroom storybook read aloud time before and after the workshops. The study would provide additional information on the effectiveness of dialogic reading while providing a possible additional tool to educators for increasing emergent literacy development through classroom instruction.

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Appendix A

Books Recommended for Dialogic Storybook Reading in the Home

by the American Library Association

Benny Bakes a Cake by Eve Rice

Big Red Barn by Margaret Wise Brown

Chugga-Chugga Choo-Choo by Kevin Lewis

Cows in the Kitchen by June Crebbin

Curious George Rides a Bike by H.A. Rey

Good Night, Gorilla by Peggy Tathmann

Jesse Bear by Nancy Carlstrom

Jump, Frog, Jump by Robert Kalan

New Road! By Gail Gibbons

Trucks by Anne Rockwell

Wind Blew by Pat Hutchins

Any title by Richard Scarry

Appendix B

Research Support from Head Start Escambia County

From: Judy Dickinson [mailto:judy.dickinson@headstartpensacola.org]

Sent: Fri 6/12/2009 11:34 AM

To: Misty Lacour

Subject: RE: Thank you You are most welcome. It is a VERY EXCITING project to be

part of!!! Misty,

even if it wasn't a good project, your sweet and gentle demeanor is enough

to disarm anyone and gain support for most anything you wish to do. We'll be

in touch by Wednesday of next week. Have a wonderful week-end.

Judy

-----Original Message-----

From: Misty Lacour [mailto:mlacour@uwf.edu]

Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2009 4:48 PM

To: judy.dickinson@headstartpensacola.org; rosa.moddy@headstartpensacola.org

Cc: deborah.nagle@headstartpensacola.org

Subject: Thank you

Judy and Rosa,

Thank you both so much for meeting with me today and supporting the research

study! I am so excited about working with you both. I look forward to

hearing from you within the next couple weeks regarding the center locations

for conducting the study. If, in the meantime, you have any additional

questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks :)

Misty LaCour

Appendix C

Head Start Participating Locations

From: Rosa Moody [mailto:rosa.moody@headstartpensacola.org]

Sent: Wed 6/17/2009 1:55 PM

To: Misty Lacour

Subject: Classroom selections

Hi Misty,

   We are going with Oak Grove which is a 3 and 4 year old classroom,

the Family Advocate is *(name removed to protect privacy)* whom you already know.

The other classroom will be at Ferry Day, this is a 4 year old classroom

and the Family Advocate is *(name removed to protect privacy)*.   Hope these will work

out we considered past parent participation, location of the centers as well as

teacher strengths and age of the children.   Please let me know if you have

any questions or concerns.

Have a great day!   Rosa

Appendix D

Opening the World of Learning

Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Storybook List

Unit 1: Family

Peter's Chair

Noisy Nora

Whistle for Willie

Corduroy

Unit 2: Family

The Little Red Hen Makes Pizza

A Letter to Amy

Matthew and Tilly

Hooray a Pinata

Unit 3: Wind and Water

One Dark Night

Rabbits and Raindrops

The Snowy Day

A Hat for Minerva Louise

Unit 4: The World of Color

The Lion and the Little Red Bird

Max's Dragon Shirt

Dog's Colorful Day

Dear juno

Unit 5: Shadows and Reflections

Play with Me

The Puddle Pail

Raccoon on His Own

Kitten for a Day

Unit 6: Things that Grow

I Heard Said the Bird

Make Way for Ducklings

The Ugly Vegetables

Appendix E

Storybooks Provided to Caregivers at the

Storybook Reading Workshop

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats

Whistle for Willie by Ezra Jack Keats

The Wind Blew by Pat Hutchins

Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats

The Ugly Vegetables by Grace Lin

A Letter to Amy by Ezra Jack Keats

Corduroy by Don Freeman

Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear? By Bruce Degen

One Dark Night by Lisa Wheeler

Big Red Barn by Margaret Wise Brown

Cars adapted by Lisa Marsoli

Chugga-Chugga Choo-Choo by Kevin Lewis

Curious George Rides a Bike by H.A. Rey

Good Night, Gorilla by Peggy Rathmann

Jump, Frog, Jump! By Robert Kalan

Make Way for Ducklings by Robert McCloskey

Noisy Nora by Rosemary Wells

Animal Nursery Tales by Richard Scarry

Cows in the Kitchen illustrated by Airlie Anderson

The Little Red Hen Makes a Pizza retold by Philemon Sturges

Appendix F

Budget

Item	Cost	Payment Source
Storybooks	8,648.50	Every Child a Reader in Escambia (ECARE)
BRIGANCE CIBS-R	217.38	Researcher
Tote bags for books	Donated	Barnes & Noble, Pensacola, FL
Caregiver Travel Assistance	1500.00	ECARE
Materials for workshop	137.32	Researcher
Researcher Travel expenses	764.20	Researcher
Storage of Storybooks	290.00	Researcher
Total	11,557.40	

Appendix G

Institutional Review Board Approval

Institution Review Board

Sent: Monday, August 10, 2009 4:02 PM

To: M
    LaCour, Misty Mae; McDonald, Connie; Garzon, Fernando L.

Cc: M
    Institution Review Board

Dear Misty,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. Attached you'll find the forms for those cases.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project. We will be glad to send you a written memo from the Liberty IRB, as needed, upon request.
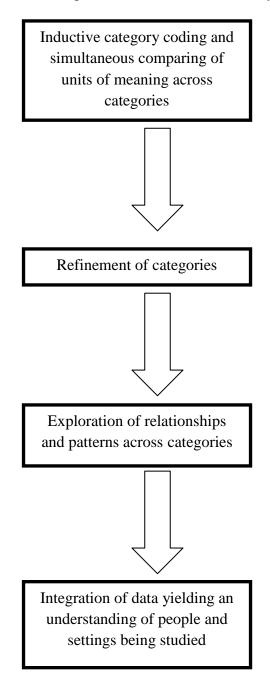
Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
IRB Chair, Liberty University
Center for Counseling and Family Studies Liberty University
1971 University Boulevard
Lynchburg, VA 24502-2269
(434) 592-4054
Fax: (434) 522-0477

Appendix H

Constant Comparative Method of Data Analysis

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Inductive category coding and
│  simultaneous comparing of
│  units of meaning across
│  categories
└─────────────────────────────┘
              ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Refinement of categories
└─────────────────────────────┘
              ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Exploration of relationships
│  and patterns across categories
└─────────────────────────────┘
              ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Integration of data yielding an
│  understanding of people and
│  settings being studied
└─────────────────────────────┘
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(Ary et al., 2006, p. 500)

Appendix I

Emergent Literacy Skills Alignment to the

BRIGANCE CIBS-R Readiness for Reading Assessment

Readiness for Reading Component	Emergent Literacy Skill Assessed
Gains information from books about real things by looking at pictures or being read to.	Internalization
Retells story from picture book with reasonable accuracy.	Internalization Semantics
Recognizes own name in print.	Concept of Print
Knows printed material on a page is read from top to bottom and from left to right.	Concept of Print
Recognizes at least 50% of the letters of the alphabet.	Concept of Print
Reads at least five words found in the environment (such as on signs).	Concept of Print
Reads at least five noun words.	Concept of Print Syntax
Reads at least five basic sight words.	Concept of Print Syntax
Attempts to read/decode words by using word-attack skills	Syntax Semantics
Chooses to look at or "read" books when given the opportunity and encouraged to do so.	Semantics Syntax Attitude

Finds requested page numbers in a "read-to-me" book.	Concept of print
Distinguishes between fantasy and reality in stories.	Internalization Semantics