

LITERATURE RESPONSE BLOGS AND SUMMER LITERACY:
EXPLORING SUMMER READING SETBACK AND READING MOTIVATION OF
3RD GRADE DEVELOPING READERS

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iii

i

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of Web 2.0-based literature response blogs on summer reading loss and student reading motivation. There is limited empirical research that connects summer reading and the use of social media as a means of maintaining reading levels of elementary aged students during out-of-school time. This study attempted to explore whether the use of blogging as a means of written response with summer reading curbed summer reading loss and influenced student motivation to read for students identified as developing readers.

The research took place in two small, suburban towns in the Northeast from May 2011 to September 2011. A purposeful sample of convenience comprised of rising third grade students who received literacy intervention instruction during the school year was selected. Through a qualitative method design, data was collected using field notes, a reflexive journal, and examination of student blogs. Additionally two post-study focus groups were held—one with parents and one with students; these focus groups were audio-taped and transcribed, then analyzed, along with other data, for the themes and patterns that emerged. A code/recode method was also used. The Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) and Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) assessment were used for additional information.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

My family, who supported me throughout this process.

My husband, George, my mother, Betty, and my children Michelle, Kaitlyn, and Michael, thank you for your support, understanding, and patience as I went to class, studied, read, wrote, and wrote more during this five year journey. I love you all!

Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract	i
Chapter One: Introduction to the Study	1
Rationale for Selecting the Topic	2
Statement of the Problem	3
Potential Benefits of the Research	5
Definition of Key Terms	7
Review of Related Literature	9
Theoretical Foundations	9
Summer Reading Loss	11
New Literacies	11
Methodology	12
Research Questions	12
Setting and Selection of Participants	13
Instrumentation	13
Design	14
Analysis	14
Data Collection Procedures and Timeline	14
Limitations	15
Summary of Chapter One	15
Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature	17
Theoretical Foundations	18

Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing	18
Theory of Literacy Learning	20
Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation	23
Relevant Literature	25
Engagement and Motivation	25
Summer Learning for Developing Readers	30
New Literacies	44
Summary of Chapter Two	50
Chapter Three: Methodology	51
Researcher's Biography	51
Description of Setting and Participants	53
Setting	53
Participants	57
Research Questions	58
Research Design	58
Instrumentation	59
Researcher Reflexive Journal with Field Notes	60
Reader Response Prompts for Blogging	60
Developmental Reading Assessment	61
Validity and Reliability	63
Degrees of Reading Power	64
Validity and Reliability	65
Motivation to Read Profile	66

Validity and Reliability	67
Student Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol	67
Caregiver Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol	68
Data Collection Procedures and Timeline	68
Phase One	69
Phase Two	71
Phase Three	72
Method of Analysis	72
Ethics Statement	75
Summary of Chapter Three	75
Chapter Four: Analysis of Data and Explanation of Findings	76
Research Questions	76
Description of Setting and Participants	77
Description of Milano Elementary School	77
Description of Parkway Elementary School	78
Description of the Participants	79
Student Narratives	82
Description of Summer Reading Web log	91
Findings	100
Themes and Supporting Literature	104
Theme One	107
Theme Two	111
Theme Three	114

Theme Four	120
Theme Five	124
Summary of Chapter Four	129
Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions	130
Summary of the Study	130
Research Questions	131
Review of Findings and Discussion	131
Implications for Educators	141
Limitations of the Study	144
Trustworthiness	145
Implications for Future Research	147
Summary	149

LIST OF APPENDICES

	Page
Appendix A: Reader Response Prompts (Sample Questions)	160
Appendix B: Student Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol	162
Appendix C: Caregiver Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol	164
Appendix D: Cover Letter and Consent Form (Superintendent)	166
Appendix E: Cover Letter and Consent Form (Assistant Superintendent)	168
Appendix F: Cover Letter and Consent Form (Principal)	170
Appendix G: Cover Letter and Consent Form (Parent)	172
Appendix H: Cover Letter and Assent Form (Student)	174
Appendix I: Directions for Summer Reading Blogs	178
Appendix J: Reflexive Journal Sample	180
Appendix K: Leveled Books Distributed to Participants	183
Appendix L: Table of Codes	193

TABLE OF TABLES

		Page
Table 3.1	Longitudinal Reading Comparison 2006-2011: Percentage At or Above Proficiency Level	56
Table 4.1	Student Information and School Identification	81
Table 4.2	Table of Participant Blogging Response to Sets of Researcher Posted Questions	99
Table 4.3	Number of Codes per Theme	102
Table 4.4	Research Questions, Themes, and Related Instruments	105
Table 4.5	Table of DRP Spring and Fall Scores	109
Table 4.6	Table of DRA2 Spring and Fall Scores	109
Table 4.7	Table of Participant Blogging Totals and Motivation to Read Profile Scores	115

TABLE OF FIGURES

	Page	
Figure 4.1	Welcome Blog for Introductory Lesson	92
Figure 4.2	Welcome Blog Used for Student Guided Response Practice	93
Figure 4.3	Week One Blog Questions	96
Figure 4.4	Week One Sample of Blog Responses	97
Figure 4.5	Pre and Post Mean Comparison of MRP Self-Concept	117
Figure 4.6	Pre and Post Mean Comparison of MRP Value of Reading	117

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Research has shown that reversing summer reading loss for developing readers can take several months of the next academic school year, perpetuating the reading gap documented between these readers and their grade level peers (Bracey, 2002; Mraz & Rasinski, 2007). The phenomenon of summer reading setback has been documented for developing readers of all socioeconomic groups. It has contributed to the cycle of in-school learning and out-of-school learning loss for struggling readers (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003; Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2001; Heyns, 1978). Various programs have been implemented over the years as attempts to curb the reading loss associated with summer setback. During summer months, the change in schedule and reading instruction often suspend growth and foster decline for readers. “Researchers have uncovered evidence to suggest that the impact of summer reading loss on students in general, and on at-risk students in particular, is significant” (Mraz & Rasinski, 2007, p. 785). Maintaining reading growth from year-to-year has been a challenge for developing readers and time outside the structured school day has contributed to these students not making grade level goals in reading.

Researchers studied reading growth from fall to spring and found that growth occurred for developing readers at a comparative level to non-struggling readers (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2001). Data examining reading growth from spring-to-spring indicated a different trend. When out-of-school summer months were considered the effect of summer setback was evident. Many developing readers were not making the same year-to-year progress as their peers. Encouraging children to read during out-of-school time as they would during school months presented a challenge. The expectancy-value theory of

motivation offered insights into an individual's choice to attempt and persevere on a task. Choice, persistence, and performance are strongly influenced by the expectation of success or failure at a task as well as the value the individual places on the task (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Students who struggled with reading were not likely to be motivated to read during out-of-school time.

Reading choice is dependent on reading materials available. During the school year children have books accessible to them through school resources. Adult support is available to assist with the selection of appropriately challenging books and other reading materials. When schools are closed these opportunities are not as easily presented. Quantitative studies have shown results that support providing books for students during the summer months (Allington & et al., 2010; Kim, 2006). The purpose of this qualitative study was to broaden this research to include authentic written response using the social medium of blogging and document reader self-concept and value of reading. I found no studies on blogging and summer setback. Qualitative case study was chosen for this research because of the insights it might provide on this aspect of student literacy development.

Rationale for Selecting the Topic

In the 1960s, the federal government initiated the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as an effort to equalize education for all students. Since that time, millions of dollars have been invested in reading programs and educational institutions across the country with the hope of closing achievement gaps linked to socioeconomic and special learning groups. Despite large monetary investments and reworking of programs studies continued to document achievement gaps for developing and at-risk readers.

In 2001, Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This federal education policy has been a driver behind numerous programs giving attention to reading instruction and reading progress. The accountability component of NCLB required districts to submit plans detailing how adequate yearly progress (AYP) was to be met. Annual assessments of all students in grades three through eight connected AYP goals to reading progress. Levels of reading proficiency were linked to state standards. Each state was charged with setting a schedule that would ensure that all children read at a targeted level by 2014. While there are other components of NCLB, the attention it focused on the reading development of all student groups created an urgency for schools to provide students identified as developing readers with extra reading instruction to close the gap between them and their non-struggling peers. The success of NCLB has been disputed. States have been negotiating agreements that would eliminate some of the requirements put in place by NCLB because its success has been marginal. Research on the continuing achievement gap consistently returned the focus to summer setback.

Statement of the Problem

The introduction of NCLB and increased mandatory student testing highlighted teacher accountability and student achievement in education. The need to break the forward then backward cycle of student learning and sustain literacy levels during out-of-school time was paramount as rewards and penalties came into play for districts evaluated on high-stakes testing results. Stanovich described the “Matthew Effect” (1986), illuminating the condition when students who struggle with reading choose to avoid opportunities to read and fall further behind. The irony of this situation speaks to the need to break the cycle and create an environment that sustains engagement in reading opportunities where students feel successful

as learners through their reading and related social responses. Simulating this type of interactive environment through the out-of-school summer months may be possible through the use of Web 2.0 social media.

Current education policies and a strained economic climate have contributed to the ongoing critical examination of school programs. Required reporting of annual progress and mandated monitoring of districts and student groups who fail to make progress as they move through the public school system prompt continued research. Teachers know children need to read outside of school. “Highly motivated students who see reading as a desirable activity will initiate and sustain their engagement in reading and thus become better readers” (Gambrell, 2011, p. 177). Students who struggle to read are less likely to engage in out-of-school reading. The lack of adequate reading practice coupled with limited book choices that children are able to read without experiencing frustration contribute to summer reading setback.

In a comparative analysis of expert opinion and current research, Reutzel and Smith (2004) collated a list of instructional recommendations for providing effective reading instruction. Increasing the amount of reading outside school, integrating reading with writing, and allowing students to select appropriately leveled independent reading materials were among the components identified as elements of effective reading instruction. This study proposed utilizing these three components as part of a summer reading experience with the intention of supporting readers who received literacy intervention instruction during the past school year.

With Common Core State Standards (CCSS) moving into implementation stages and the current state of standards-based reform and accountability, all students by the end of

grade three are expected to read and understand both informational and literary texts. Children who have difficulties when learning to read often experience the “Matthew Effect” (Stanovich, 1986). Rather than engaging in opportunities to grow as readers, these children avoid opportunities to participate in reading activities and fall further behind. “At a time when the policy climate is intensely focused on raising the achievement levels of all students, summer reading loss seems to have its greatest impact on low-achieving students and at-risk students-those who can least afford to fall further behind” (Mraz & Rasinski, 2007, p. 785).

Access to appropriately leveled reading materials during the summer months has been linked to prevention of summer reading loss. “Kids not only need to read a lot but they also need many books they can read accurately, fluently, and with comprehension right at their fingertips. They also need access to books that entice them to read” (Allington, 2012, p. 96). This study built upon and extended research on reading motivation and summer setback. Participants were provided appropriately leveled reading materials based upon interest expressed through the Motivation to Read interview survey (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). Using blogging as a tool to inspire authentic response to literature was a relatively new concept when utilized with elementary aged students. I found no research that considered the combined effects of engaging students with literature matched to their independent reading levels and response blogging during the summer months.

Potential Benefits of the Research

Districts are charged with the task of raising performance levels of all students on tightly trimmed budgets. This study considered the impact of a summer initiative that utilized leveled reading and blogging as an avenue to occasion authentic written response to reading for developing readers who might otherwise experience summer setback and loss of

motivation. It offered an opportunity to inform those responsible for program decisions about potential strategies that help developing readers maintain reading growth demonstrated during the school year.

Research has shown that developing readers have a greater potential for significant reading loss during the summer months than their non-struggling peers (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003, Bracey, 2002; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2001; Heyns, 1987; Mraz & Rasinski, 2007). Teachers use instructional time at the beginning of each school year to review and reteach skills from previous years. If students maintained levels of reading during the summer months this instructional time could be used more effectively. When considered cumulatively, summer setback has become a major factor in the long term academic success of developing readers.

This research addressed the potential benefit of combining elements of traditional literacy and digital literacies on summer reading setback and reading motivation. The ever expanding capabilities of digital media are second nature to many of today's students. As mentioned in the state standards, grade two student experiences should include the use of a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing in collaboration with peers. By grade three the emphasis on publishing and sharing requires the use of tools on the internet to share work; blogging is one such tool (Common Core State Standards, 2012). Integrating the known and new as a way to encourage reading and create student engagement through authentic readers' response may produce the level of reading motivation and thinking practice needed to combat summer setback for developing readers.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms will be used throughout this research study:

1. Blog, a term derived from Web log, is “an easily editable webpage with posts or entries organized in reverse chronological order” (Zawilinski, 2009, p. 650).
2. Developing readers, as defined by Miller (2009), refers to children who “For any number of reasons, including inadequate reading experiences or learning disabilities are not reading at grade level” (p. 24). This term will be used synonymously with struggling or striving reader (Fink, 2006).
3. Digital literacy “is used to describe the skills, expectations, and perspectives involved in living in a technological society” (Ohler, 2007, p. 9).
4. Focus groups are “group interviews that are structured to foster talk among the participants about particular issues” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 101).
5. Just Right Book is a “book that’s appropriate in terms of the child’s current needs and level of skill” (Atwell, 2007, p. 40).
6. Leveled books are books “organized in a gradient of difficulty so that you can use the collection as a foundation for moving children along in their development of a reading process. The books are carefully graded according to text features that offer challenge and support to particular readers at particular points in time” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1999, p. 11).
7. Literacy, as defined by Heath and Street (2008), refers to “literacy events, rather than a set of autonomous processes. Given this definition of literacy, individuals may acquire increasing communicative competence and acumen for participating in a type of literacy event...From this perspective, educational processes are

defined as ways of helping people acquire such acumen, including critical processes for critiquing the nature and consequences of extant literacy practices and inventing new practices...Such a view of literacy and literacy education focuses attention on people's participation in literacy events over time, within and across classrooms, community and institutional context; and defines literacy learning as a change in participation by an individual or group in a set of social practices over time" (p. 13).

8. Matthew Effect in reading refers to the phenomenon observed when students who fail to experience success in learning to read choose to avoid reading. This leads to less opportunities for success and implies greater struggles as these children fall further behind when compared to their peers and experience continued failure (Stanovich, 1986).
9. New Literacies "include the skills, strategies, and dispositions necessary to successfully use and adapt to the rapidly changing information and communication technologies and contexts that continuously emerge in our world and influence all areas of our personal and professional lives" (Leu, Kinzer, Corio, & Cammack, 2004, p. 1572).
10. Response to Intervention (RTI) is "the practice of providing scientific, research-based instruction and intervention matched to students' needs, with important educational decisions based on students' levels of performance and learning rates over time" (State Department of Education, 2008, p. 3).

11. Summer setback (summer reading loss) relates to the decline in student reading progress that may occur during summer vacation when students are not participating in formal literacy programs (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003).
12. Tier I refers to “general education core curriculums, instruction and social/behavioral supports for all students, with differentiation of instruction as a norm” (State Department of Education, 2008, p. 65).
13. Tier II refers to “short term interventions for students who have not responded adequately to the general education core curriculums of instruction; it is part of the general education system” (State Department of Education, 2008, p. 65).
14. Tier III refers to “more intensive individualized short-term interventions for students who fail to respond adequately to Tier I and/or Tier II interventions; it is also part of the general education system” (State Department of Education, 2008, p. 66).

Review of Related Literature

To create a context for this study, the review of literature was divided into three sections: theoretical foundations, summer reading loss, and New Literacies.

Theoretical Foundations

Louise Rosenblatt’s (1991) reader response transactional theory was one of several theories directly underlying this study. Central to this theory is the idea of an action, or event, that occurs between the text and the reader. Through this transaction readers construct meaning from text.

Cambourne’s (1995) theory of literacy learning aligned closely with this study. Modeled after his observations of how children learn oral language, this theory identifies

select conditions that contribute to successful learning outcomes for children as they learn to read. Engagement was found to be a key component in conditions that need to be met for effective literacy learning to transpire.

“Many motivation theorists propose that individual’s beliefs, values, and goals for achievement play a crucial role in their achievement related behavior” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997, p. 15). For readers, questions related to motivation might be “Can I be a good reader?” and “Do I want to be a good reader?” (p. 16). Constructs underlying this type of thinking relate to ability beliefs, expectancy beliefs, and self-efficacy. The thought process of “Can I succeed? Do I want to succeed? What do I need to succeed?” are all components of motivation that connect to reading. Individual interests play a role in reader motivation as well. Guthrie and Wigfield (1997) identified intrinsic and extrinsic motivations as influential dimensions when considering reading motivation.

Supporting and nurturing reading motivation and achievement is crucial to improving educational prospects for children who find learning to read difficult (Johnston & Allington, 1991). Students who read more have been identified as students who achieve more in reading.

This study explored the levels of interest and motivation as related to summer reading and blogging. The constructs of reader response, literacy learning, reader engagement and motivation were relevant to this study.

Summer Reading Loss

Access to books during summer months and motivating students to read are elements that researchers associate when considering summer reading loss (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003; Allington et al., 2010; Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996; Kim, 2004, 2006; White & Kim, 2008). In her 1987 article, Heyns described her landmark longitudinal study of the summer reading patterns of almost 3,000 fifth, sixth, and seventh grade urban students. Among other findings, her research identified students achieving in the bottom quartile of reading achievement as achieving less during the academic school year and losing a significant portion of those gains during each summer. The study linked availability of summer reading materials for developing readers and summer learning. Research consistently shows that less proficient readers regress in their overall reading comprehension during out-of-school summer months (Bracey, 2002; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2001; Heyns, 1978; Kim, 2004; Mraz & Rasinski, 2007).

New Literacies

“Being able to read and write multiple forms of media and integrate them into a meaningful whole is the new hallmark of literacy” (Ohler, 2007, p. 9). Leu, Kinzer, Corio, and Cammack (2004) articulated:

the ... appearance of the Internet in the workplace as well as in home and school contexts is one of the most powerful social revolutions taking place today. At the heart of this revolution are the new literacy skills and strategies demanded by the Internet and other ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies). (p. 1579)

These needed skills form the focus of discussion among educators wanting to take advantage of what technology offers and drive the need for development of practical projects that raise students who are prepared to contribute within a global environment.

The language of literacy has changed and vocabulary terms that were nonexistent 15 years ago have meaning and practice today. The ideas of using multimodal response strategies, online collaborative learning communities, and online blogging to promote critical thinking and reader interaction are a few examples of educators incorporating new literacies.

Methodology

This study explored the effects of blogging as a form of summer reading response on reading motivation and maintenance of reading achievement.

Research Questions

The following overarching questions were explored by this qualitative research study:

1. How does participation in a summer literacy initiative that combines a choice of leveled reading materials and blogging influence summer setback for developing third grade readers?
2. In what ways do summer reading and response blogging influence students' perceptions about the value of reading?
3. In what ways do summer reading and response blogging influence reader self-concept for developing third grade readers?
4. How does providing leveled reading materials and student inclusion in a blogging community influence observed habits of reading as reported by students and caregivers?

5. In what ways do social interactions while blogging about books influence students' reading and writing?

Setting and Selection of Participants

This qualitative study was based on data collected from rising third grade students in two elementary schools from medium-sized upper socioeconomic status suburban districts located in the Northeast.

Participants for this study were selected using purposeful sampling techniques (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). After receiving IRB and district approval, principals were contacted and permission was requested to carry out this study. Parents of rising third grade students identified as developing readers by district guidelines were contacted. Nine students were enlisted to participate in this exploratory study.

Instrumentation

Data used in this research included observations, document reviews, assessment data, surveys, and interviews. Data were collected through observations of orientation workshop meetings held in June and focus group meetings in September and October. The Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996) was administered to all students in the spring and six students in the fall. Interviews of participants and parents were performed. An ongoing researcher reflexive journal was kept throughout the study. A review of documents including student Web log entries and spring and fall Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2) (Beaver, 2006) or Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) (Questar, 2010) data collected from district assessments was conducted.

Design

The data collected for this exploratory study were qualitative. I hoped to gain insight into the experiences of students as they worked with blogging and the benefits of social interaction within this media when addressing summer setback and motivation.

Analysis

Qualitative analysis was applied to data collected. Data methods were triangulated to confirm the information gathered from all quantitative and qualitative data and attempt an interpretive understanding. Interview notes were transcribed and analyzed. Informational data were collected from the MRP (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996), DRP assessments (Questar, 2010), and DRA2 (Beaver, 2006) assessments. The three meetings at each school and data sources allowed sufficient time for identification of recurrent patterns and themes. In qualitative research the researcher is a part of the research. A reflexive journal was kept throughout the research process to assist me in recognizing biases and allow for reflexive analysis on the research process.

Data Collection Procedures and Timeline

Once permission was received from the IRB I met with personnel from both districts to discuss the research proposal. Permission was received from all parties and student assent forms were secured. Participant DRP or DRA2 data were collected to assist with leveled book selections. Introductory meetings were held in June to administer the MRP, familiarize students with the Web log I had created, and allow for leveled book selection. A school representative and I met with participants at the school location for all meetings.

During the 12-week, study I posted questions on the Web log for student responses. Email reminders were sent to parents of participating students advising them when questions

were posted. Students were asked to respond to a minimum of six questions over the course of the study. Responses to peer posts were encouraged, but not required. Posts were not scored for grading, but I considered responses for patterns and emerging themes. In an effort to strive for transparency in data gathering and interpretation I documented dates, contacts, observations, reflections, field notes, and other thoughts in a reflexive journal.

In September, I invited all participants to meet as part of a student focus group. Preplanned questions guided discussion related to the blog and student interviews were taken. The MRP was administered a second time to participants at before school meetings. As a final component, a caregiver focus group or phone interview was offered to gather adult perceptions about the study. In November, I collected DRP data or DRA2 data for each participant.

Limitations

There were several limitations to the study. Participant selection was purposeful and from a socioeconomic status district which limits the representative ability of the sample. Additionally, student self-reporting methods were used in gathering data. Whenever self-reporting measures are used it is difficult to determine if participants actually believe or do the things they report. My experience as a literacy specialist may have acted as a limitation by creating expectations for students' responses. Varying levels of students' technical skills may have inhibited blogging responses.

Summary of Chapter One

This chapter shared the background and rationale for this research study. It considered the problem and potential benefits that may result from this study. Definitions of key terms, the research questions that guided this study, and a brief description of

methodology have been included. The following chapter reviews the literature that supports this research.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to present an overview of related research that has been conducted and to establish a foundation for the exploration of summer programs that engage and motivate developing readers. The cycle of in-school learning and out-of-school learning loss is a documented educational concern (Alexander, Entwisle & Olson, 2007; Allington et al., 2010; Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Bracey, 2002; Downey, von Hippel, & Broh, 2004; Entwisle & Alexander, 1994; Heyns, 1978; Kim, 2006; Mraz & Rasinski, 2007). Students across the country return to school in the fall after summer vacation and teachers spend the first two to three months of the new school year reviewing skills. This study explores the use of literature response blogs as a means of authentic written response to address reader motivation and summer setback for developing readers. To create a context for this study, the review of literature is divided into four sections: theoretical foundations, motivation as a critical component of reading, summer learning, and new literacies. The theoretical basis of this research reflects the work of Louise Rosenblatt (1991, 1995, 2005) on transactional theory of reading and writing, Brian Cambourne's (1988) theory of natural learning and the acquisition of literacy, and the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation developed by Allan Wigfield and Jacquelynne Eccles (2000). An examination of several studies related to reading motivation and student engagement are considered. Next, research on reading and summer learning are included. The final section of the chapter examines recent research on New Literacies that encompass digital learning and the nature of Web 2.0 opportunities for students. These theories provide the basis for this study.

Theoretical Foundations

Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing

Louise Rosenblatt's (1991) reader response transactional theory is one of three theories underlying this study. Central to this theory is the idea of an action, or event, that occurs between the reader and a literary text. Through this interaction, or transaction, readers construct meaning. The reader has a responsibility to participate actively and evoke meaning from the text. Rosenblatt (1991) emphasized that each reader brings an individual reading to a specific text based on previous life experiences. The teacher's task when working with students is to promote rich transactions between readers and the individual literary works they read.

Rosenblatt (1991) further distinguished this action between reader and text as efferent or aesthetic in nature. Efferent reading is described as reading with a purpose; the reader is reading for information to retain after the reading has ended. The purpose of aesthetic reading is attached to emotion and personal engagement which can also be reading with a purpose—to enjoy, to engage in a world other than one's own. The reader attends to experiences and feelings during the reading (Rosenblatt, 1991). Through personal experiences, relationships, and memories the connections to texts are unique for each reader. Reading becomes a more active than passive experience as readers respond to text.

Rosenblatt (2005) suggested that rather than trying to isolate text as efferent or aesthetic, readers consider the text as written for a “particular predominant attitude or stance. Our present purpose and past experiences, as well as the text, are factors in our choice of stance” (p. 91). Reading is described as a personal experience for each reader that may be different under different circumstances. Readers make different meanings from the same text

read at different times. Different readers make their own defensible interpretations of the same text. Readers draw from their individual past experiences to make meaning as they read. As they connect to these experiences new meanings are produced in transaction with the text. Readers can experience an aesthetic and efferent stance on a continuum as they read dependent on their purposes, past experiences, and the text.

Reading experiences appeal to public and private components (Rosenblatt, 1991). Public components are what the words refer to; private components are feelings, ideas, and attitudes that the reader links through past experiences. Reader stance is determined by how much of each component the reader associates to the reading experience. Rosenblatt suggested the existence of a continuum that flexed with a reader's attention. Because all reading tends to have a mix of public and private components, it is important for readers to keep a focus on the primary purpose of their reading in order to get accurate information from the text.

Rosenblatt (2005) advocated that teachers clarify for children that there are different purposes for reading in order to effectively provide both efferent and aesthetic literacy experiences. Setting a purpose for reading allows students to determine their roles as readers. The use of text to teach grammar or skills does not allow time for readers to linger in personal thoughts and associations drawn from the text. If the purpose of a text is literary, readers need opportunities to savor and experience the text. She advocated that students be provided with time to reflect and ponder when reading literature, deepening comprehension through reflection and conversations about their reader experiences produced during transactions with the text.

Distinguishing between literary and nonliterary written responses Rosenblatt (2005), looked at the written transaction in a similar way that the reading transaction unfolds with a continuing “to-and-fro” transactional process. In describing the “triadic sign-object-interpretant relationship” of text (p. 17) she was careful to point out that reading and writing transactions are not exactly the same. The writer starts on a blank page with ideas or a loose framework that must come into the triadic definition before text can be written. When a reader writes in response to text a new text is produced. In this occurrence the starting point is with the meaning the reader applied to that text.

Through the selection of questions for my study the purpose of written response related to literary experiences. I was unfamiliar with students’ experiences with written response so I taught everyone how to respond to questions on the blog during our second meeting. I hoped that readers would interact with the texts they read and share a part of their experiences from their transactions with me and other Web log readers.

Theory of Literacy Learning

Brian Cambourne’s (1995) theory of literacy learning is a second theory that aligns closely with this study. This theory identifies select conditions that contribute to successful learning outcomes for children as they learn to read. Cambourne (1988) observed:

Successful readers/writers have at least four things in common. Firstly, they are confident readers and writers – reading and writing tasks rarely intimidate them. Secondly, they display high degrees of control over the processes which underpin reading and writing. Thirdly, while they appreciate the communicative functions which reading and writing serve, they also know how to use reading and writing as a

media for enhancing thinking and learning. Fourthly, they continue to engage in and enjoy reading and writing long after formal instruction has ceased. (p. 1)

As a result of his research, Cambourne proposed a model of literacy learning based on the way people create meaning in language use. “Reading, writing, speaking, and listening, while different in many respects, are but parallel manifestations of the same vital human function – the mind’s effort to make meaning” (p. 29). His observations of how children developed the complexities of oral language encouraged him to consider the applicability of these conditions to teaching and the learning of literacy.

Cambourne’s model began with immersion. As he paralleled literacy learning to oral language development, he identified the importance of learners experiencing immersion in all kinds of text with multiple demonstrations teaching how texts are constructed and used. Engagement was found to be a key component in conditions that needed to be met for effective literacy learning to transpire. “If students didn’t engage with language, no learning would occur” (Cambourne, 1995, p. 186). Demonstration and immersion are elements that are interactive within engagement. The probability of engagement is increased when expectations of success are consistently communicated and when learners are permitted the responsibility of making their own decisions as part of a learning task. Cambourne explained responsibility as it related to oral language learning. There is no expected sequence of learning; the learner decides which particular convention to internalize first. There are strong expectations that the task will be successfully completed. Learners need to feel ownership as decision makers while they work to achieve the high positive expectations presented by the environment around them. They need time to practice and take risks as learners without anxiety about consequences. Feedback is the final critical component identified by

Cambourne. Response needs to be timely, relevant, appropriate for the learner, and non-threatening.

Further study led Cambourne and his co-researcher teacher colleagues to identify the “Principles of Engagement” (Cambourne, 1995, p. 186). They found learners are more likely to engage in lessons if they: (a) believe they are capable of learning or doing what is being modeled; (b) believe the learning had value, purpose, or a valid use for them; (c) are free from anxiety; and, (d) respect, admire, and trust the presenter (pp. 186-188).

When teachers employed these principles in the classroom Cambourne noted several effects. Accompanying the components of engagement were transformation, discussion/reflection, application, and evaluation. Cambourne described these as co-occurring, and processes that built within and upon each other. Transformation is the process a learner goes through in taking ownership of a concept. Discussion/reflection has the purpose of clarifying meaning for the learner through the social dimension of communicating with others as well as the contemplative piece of self-reflection. In explaining this he asserted, “learning, thinking, knowledge, and understanding are significantly enhanced when one is provided with opportunities for ‘talking one’s way to meaning,’ both with others and with oneself” (Cambourne, 1995, p. 188). Application is the use of new learning and Cambourne put emphasis on the way these processes of transformation, discussion/reflection, and application influence and revolve within literacy learning. He described evaluation as the “continuous thread” that runs through the teaching/learning process (p. 189). As learners apply these processes their continual checks of learning progress and self-evaluation are ongoing with important input from whomever acts in the teacher role.

Cambourne's theory of literacy learning was developed through years of research (Cambourne, 1988). His advocacy for a holistic perspective in literacy learning promoted the interconnectedness of language and language forms.

Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation

The expectancy-value theory of motivation as discussed by Allan Wigfield and Jacquelynne Eccles (2000) relates to student beliefs and expectancy of success. In earlier research, Eccles used children's beliefs about how well they would perform on upcoming tasks as a definition for expectancy of success. Activity beliefs focus on present ability for a given task while expectancy beliefs focus on upcoming tasks in the immediate or longer term future. Ability beliefs are defined as "the individual's perception of his or her competence at a given activity" (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000, p. 70). Ability beliefs play an important role in motivation and self-efficacy theories.

Wigfield and Eccles (2000) are credited with several longitudinal studies researching the development of ability beliefs, expectancies for success, and subjective values. A particular study that examined aspects of the Expectancy-Value model spanned 10-years beginning with groups of students in 1st, 2nd, and 4th grades. Eccles and her colleagues followed these students through high school and observed the change of achievement beliefs and values. Participants were European-American from low socioeconomic class to middle class backgrounds. The researchers considered the areas of math, reading, music, and sports while assessing students' ability beliefs and expectancies for success. Of note was the finding that children's ability-expectancy beliefs were domain specific. Using confirmatory factor analysis the researchers found that even in the early grades students as young as first graders had already developed clear beliefs of what they valued and what they were good at

in specific areas of achievement. The relationship of beliefs and task value influenced performance and choice for students. They observed a decrease in students' ability beliefs and found evidence that students' ability related beliefs and expectancy-values declined as they got older. The authors suggested two possible explanations for these changes: (a) students became more aware of evaluative feedback and how their work compared to their peers, and (b) the school environment became more competitive, lowering students' achievement beliefs. In his work Bandura (1993) noted that social comparison affected performance and contributed to discouraging personal efficacy.

Wigfield and Eccles's expectancy-value theory is based on Bandura's construct of self-efficacy and provides the basis for this study. Self-efficacy serves as a predictor of motivation and learning (Bandura, 1993; Bong, 2004; Margolis & McCabe, 2004). Children perceived as developing learners exhibit low self-efficacy when they demonstrate little effort or abandon tasks similar to those they have previously failed. Their persistence and performance on tasks are related to their levels of personal efficacy and self-regulation. Developing readers often experience frustration and avoid tasks that are similar to those they have struggled with earlier. Bandura (1993) stressed that "Efficacy beliefs influence how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave" (p. 118). How one perceives personal capabilities influences success. When ability is viewed as a skill that can be developed and difficulties in learning are anticipated as part of the process, personal efficacy is fostered. This thinking leads to a resilient sense of self-efficacy creating higher achievement (Bandura, 1993). Unfortunately, students who struggle with reading experience failure early, perceive themselves as less competent readers, and develop less efficacious attitudes than their successful peers.

Margolis and McCabe (2004) suggest that students' self-efficacy can be improved with scaffolded learning grounded in past successful experiences, explicit strategy instruction, peer modeling, realistic personal goals, and constructive feedback. Low self-efficacy "is a modifiable, task specific set of beliefs derived largely from frequent failures" (p. 248). By establishing individual intervention plans tailored to address specific academic tasks and carefully monitoring appropriate use of leveled materials and self-help instructional techniques students can strengthen self-efficacy. Children's beliefs in ability and expectancies for success relate to achievement motivation and can influence engagement in tasks.

Relevant Literature

Engagement and Motivation

Engaged readers are those who apply reading strategies for comprehension and conceptual knowledge, are motivated to learn and achieve, and are part of a supportive literate community. Engaged readers not only are able to decode and comprehend texts, but they value reading, believe they are good readers, and choose to read. Guthrie (2004) explains:

In our theoretical framework, reading engagement entails multiple perspectives on reading that consist of motivational dispositions, cognitive strategies, conceptual understanding, and social discourse. Possessing these attributes, engaged readers are typically higher achievers than less engaged readers, who show fewer of these qualities or less integration among them. (p. 1)

Disengaged readers demonstrate behaviors of distraction that prevent the development of reading stamina as well as cognitive practices that support reading. These

students rarely read outside of school and fail to accumulate enough reading experiences to support the growth of comprehension strategies that engage them with thinking deeply within and across texts. Over time these students fall behind as they are unable to maintain literacy development and meet grade level expectations.

Wigfield (1997) described motivation as the why of behavior and expressed that engagement encompassed both the motivational and cognitive aspects of reading. He saw motivation as multidimensional and a construct that served to influence children's engagement in reading and reading achievement. Motivational theorists advocate that beliefs, task value, and personal goals are aligned with achievement-related behavior. Ability beliefs relate to and predict achievement (Bandura, 1977; Chapman, Tunmer, & Prochnow, 2000; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997; Wigfield, 1997). Efficacy expectations are responsible for activity choice, effort, and persistence. People choose activities where they feel they will do well, thus students will engage in reading if they feel they are skilled and will be successful. The constructs of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation play a supporting role in task value. Finding personal meaning and losing oneself in the story is related to value construct. An occurrence where the participant loses track of time and self because of becoming completely involved in an activity or task is described as "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989). When readers are thoroughly engaged their experience becomes personal and they find themselves a participant within the story. This type of motivation is intrinsic; involvement and their curiosity about the text compels readers to continue reading. Their reading competency and expectancy for success are nurtured through this level of engaged reading. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are influential dimensions when considering reading motivation (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Students driven by extrinsic

motivation can also experience success as readers, but do not share the same level of involvement as the intrinsically motivated peers. Extrinsic motivations include reading for competition, rewards, recognition, compliance to adult requests, or for social reasons. Their levels of curiosity, desire for personal challenge, comprehension strategy use, and overall value of reading are lower than their intrinsically motivated peers (Wigfield, 1997). Sustained engagement is less likely to occur when readers are solely driven by extrinsic motivators (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Personal achievement goals also play an important role in efficacy and engagement (Bandura, 1977; Wigfield, 1997). This view of engagement emphasizes the critical importance of developing reading environments in school and at home that support experiences in reading. Engaged readers practice daily and develop their skills as readers. Through continuous positive reading experiences students develop lifelong habits that support and challenge them to grow as competent readers.

Guthrie and his colleagues (Guthrie et al., 2007) investigated reading motivation and its relation to reading comprehension growth. Their study included 31 fourth grade students in two mid-Atlantic state schools who were participating in a reading intervention program. Eight classes participated. Teachers were asked to select one student perceived as an above average reader, two students perceived as average readers, and one student perceived as a below average reader. Seven teachers nominated four students and one teacher nominated three students for the study. Fifty-eight percent of the students were European American, 23% were African American, 6.5 % were Asian American, 6.5% were of Latino descent, and 6.5% were classified as other.

The study built upon earlier work and considered how growth in reading motivation related to growth in reading comprehension. Narrative and informational reading were studied which provided the additional opportunity to investigate situational reading motivation, the relationship of a student's interest to their general motivation to read.

The Gates-MacGinitie Standardized Reading Comprehension Test and a researcher developed assessment were used to measure comprehension. A shortened 18-question version of the researcher created Motivation to Read Questionnaire (MRQ) (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997) was used to assess "curiosity, preference for challenge, involvement, and efficacy items" (p. 290). At the conclusion of the study, teachers completed surveys to assess "students' behavioral, cognitive, and motivational engagement" (p. 290). There were a combined total of 62 interviews done in September and December with the 31 students. The semi-structured interviews explored the reading motivation constructs of "interest, perceived control, collaboration in reading, self-efficacy, and involvement" (p. 289). A priori codes for each construct were developed by the researchers based on existing literature. Additional attributes for constructs were added by investigators from transcripts of interviews.

Of interest for my research, results of this study provided information that supported reading motivation as a predictor of reading comprehension growth. Five motivational variables were selected (a) interest; (b) involvement; (c) efficacy; (d) choice; and, (e) social. These variables were applied to general motivation. The Gates-MacGinitie pre and post scores were used with a multiple regression to establish a mean change that was positive $R^2=.56, p < .001$, representing the change as growth. The regression continued to examine each variable for significance of its relation to growth in reading comprehension. Three variables demonstrated significance: interest explained 12% of the variance in reading

comprehension growth ($p < .008$), choice explained 22% of the variance ($p < .001$), and involvement explained 12% of the variance ($p < .006$). Following a similar process the researchers further explored to determine if general reading motivation growth was more strongly predicted by situated motivation for informational texts or situated motivation for narrative texts. They found that students' motivation to read informational texts predicted growth in general reading motivation. The variable of situated motivation for informational texts accounted for 6% of the variance and was significant at $p < .05$. Motivation for reading narrative texts did not predict an increase in general reading motivation.

Supporting and nurturing reading motivation and achievement is crucial to improving educational prospects for children who find learning to read difficult (Johnston & Allington, 1991). Students who read more have been identified as students who achieve more in reading. In order to provide students with reading opportunities research studies over the years have explored reading instruction and extended literacy activities within and outside of the school year. The role of parental support in motivating developing readers is significant and supportive home environments have been shown to foster motivation in reading (Baker, 2003; Gambrell, 1996).

“Parents play a critical role in the literacy development of their children. What parents believe, say, and do does make a difference” (Baker, 2003, p. 87). The overlapping influences of home, school, and the individual student as significant parties in reading development and frequency link to reader self-concept and motivation. Baker shared results from an earlier study that concluded home environments that viewed literacy as entertainment, reading as fun, and offered varied experiences where literacy played a role supported advanced reading-related competencies when compared to home environments

that viewed literacy as a set of skills to be mastered. These findings pointed toward the importance of specific types of home literacy experiences in developing children who participate as readers, value reading, and continue to be readers as they grow older. Several studies, including work done by Rasinski and Fredericks (1991) support the value of embedding literacy in the home as a means to develop opportunities for children to experience and experiment in a literate home environment.

Summer Learning for Developing Readers

There are many reasons why students may struggle to develop as readers. Language development, phonemic awareness, appropriate instruction, reader engagement and motivation, availability of appropriate reading materials, community environment, and family socioeconomic status are some factors that impact the success of students as they learn to read (Allington, 2012; Baker, 2003; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2001; Fink, 2006; Gambrell, 1996; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991). In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized with a response to intervention (RTI) initiative aimed at providing students with appropriate instruction targeting specific learning needs and reducing the numbers of children identified as learning disabled. Many students identified with learning disabilities display reading difficulties that can be addressed through targeted instruction specific to their learning needs.

An intention of RTI was to provide students with specific research-based instruction through a tiered model meeting students' needs with graduating levels of intensive effective instruction. Specialized instruction for developing readers during the school year provides highly scaffolded teaching and address students' needs through teacher guided small group lessons. Progress monitoring at regular intervals allows educators to track student growth

over time to demonstrate progress and guide programming choices (State Department of Education, 2008). In addition, district benchmark assessment data documents student development during the school year.

In my experience as a classroom teacher and as a literacy specialist, students make gains during the school year when instruction and reading opportunities are scheduled and consistent. After summer vacation when children return to school, district fall reading assessments typically demonstrate a downward trend when compared to spring assessments for a number of students, particularly developing readers (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003; Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996; Downey, von Hippel, & Broh, 2004; Entwisle & Alexander, 1994; Heyns, 1978; Kim, 2006; Mraz & Rasinski, 2007).

An important in-depth study that examined summer learning was done by Barbara Heyns in 1972. This study was considered seminal because it was the first to conceptualize summer parameters. Heyns (1978) studied fifth, sixth, and seventh grade students' data through two school years and the intervening summer. Her study sought to document student achievement over time as it related to family background variables and summer learning. Two questions that drove her research were:

1. To what degree do the learning rates of children differ during the school year and the summer?
2. What differences exist among children from diverse backgrounds in the patterns of summer learning? (p. 44)

At the time of her research few schools kept longitudinal data. The Atlanta city public schools provided the large number of participants required for a study of this type, a

diverse socio-economic cross-section, and ample longitudinal data. After contacting 4866 student families, and determining the availability of desired test score data, 996 white sample students and 1982 black sample students were selected to participate in the study.

Interview surveys with adult caregivers were used to gather data about family background, economic status, and family/child summer activities. District data from the Metropolitan Achievement Tests (MAT) were used from fall of 1970 through spring of 1972 to establish at least three consecutive scores for participants. Based on the district assessment schedule, the study used May through October as the summer time interval.

The MAT consisted of nine subtests: word knowledge, reading, language, language study skills, arithmetic computation, arithmetic problem solving and concepts, social studies information, social studies study skills, and science. All subtests were not equally reliable based on published reliabilities. Heyns selected the 55-item word knowledge subtest, the most reliable subtest for both black and white students (published reliability .94) as the measure of achievement for her study (Heyns, 1978). The word knowledge subtest had high correlations between pretests and posttests for both school years and summer; the relationships were nearly linear. The word study subtest had the highest relationship to measures of family socioeconomic status and the strongest correlation with cognitive ability test scores.

Two independent longitudinal groups were compared using the word knowledge subtest of the MAT. Mean grade equivalent scores and gains by race and family income for the total sixth grade student sample from fall 1971 through fall 1972 showed an overall school gain of .62 and a summer gain of -.01. Black students experienced lower school gains and lower summer gains. During a similar time period, the seventh grade student sample

showed an overall school gain of .64 and a summer gain of .05. Black students in the lowest socioeconomic groups experienced the lowest school gains and summer gains. Black students in higher socioeconomic group experienced the highest gains for both in school and summer gains (Heyns, 1978, pp. 45-46).

Heyns observed that no group maintained the rate of cognitive growth during the school year through the summer. “Children of every income level, and within both racial groups, showed a slower rate of summer learning than they did when schools were open” (p. 47). She noted that poor children in particular were unable to maintain achievement and their growth rates often slowed or reversed during the summer months. When considering the cumulative effect of varying achievement over time the least advantaged students made gains that did not persist during time away from school. She compared the cognitive growth for these disadvantaged students to an accordion with children learning at rates equal to middle-class children while in school, only to have their achievement levels fall during out-of-school time when their learning was principally influenced by peers and family. These students returned to school in the fall demonstrating lower growth than their peers creating a pattern of learning that established cumulative learning gaps. Heyns’s study demonstrated the need for a second look at educational policies based on the premise that students accumulate achievement during the school year.

Heyns used a multiple regression model to estimate the effects of reading on summer achievement. The interview data collected by Heyns provided information that linked summer learning gains and reading. She suggested “the single summer activity that is most strongly and consistently related to summer learning is reading” (1978, p. 161). Her findings indicated that the effect of summer reading on achievement was independent of family

background. The study examined relationships between income and the following variables: (a) hours spent reading; (b) books read; and, (c) library use. An analysis of interview survey data provided information that indicated a linear relationship, for both black and white children, between reading and family income. Heyns concluded “Children in every income group who read six or more books during the summer consistently gained more than children who did not” (p. 169). Her research recognized the need for children to have access to books and opportunities for summer reading as a means to positively impact school achievement. An additional finding articulated through Heyns’s research suggested that students’ academic growth during the school year were similar regardless of socioeconomic backgrounds.

Monitoring student progress from grade one through age twenty-two ($n = 790$) as part of the Baltimore-based Beginning School Study (BSS) Entwisle and Alexander’s (1994) work on seasonal learning supported Heyns’s findings. They suggested that when operating concurrently during the school year home and school influences had a positive effect on cognitive growth in reading for all students. When schools were not in session and students’ home environments were the main contributors to learning children from disadvantaged socioeconomic groups typically experienced a learning loss. In a later project, Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson (2007) examined cumulative achievement and attributed elementary learning to in school learning and traced ninth grade achievement gaps to previous years of summer learning experiences.

A 1988 study by Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding considered the out-of-school activity habits of 155 fifth grade students during the school year. Their research required students to keep a daily record of activities outside school for periods ranging from 8 to 26 weeks. Students self-reported time spend on 14 different out-of-school activities. Reading

proficiency was measured twice using three reading tests. Reading assessments measured reading speed, vocabulary, and a reading comprehension score from the Metropolitan Achievement Tests (p. 290). Researchers examined the relationships between students' reading achievement and their out-of-school activity choices. Analysis of gathered data allowed the researchers to draw the conclusions that "time spent reading books was the best predictor of a child's growth as a reader from the second to fifth grade and reading as an out of school activity had the strongest association with reading proficiency" (p. 297). Student reported reading time varied greatly, but the researchers reported that reading comprehension rose sharply with reading amounts of just 10 minutes a day outside of school hours. In addition, teacher influence was found to be substantial on the amount of book reading children did outside of school. Acknowledging interventions associated with increased book reading as often having desirable effects, the researchers suggested a need for research at the individual or group level that examines the amount of student reading and related changes in reading achievement.

Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, and Greathouse (1996) examined 39 empirical studies that explored the concept of summer learning. Their comprehensive review of summer learning research was the first of its kind. Overall effects of summer vacation on math, spelling, and reading were examined through several lenses and provided a rich document that continues to be referenced in research of this topic.

In their review of data for 26 studies researched prior to 1965 summer learning loss was split with 7 of 17 comparisons identifying losses in reading test scores. Limited analysis was possible on these studies because of differences in the style of published data. They performed a meta-analysis of data from the 13 most recent studies dated 1975 through 1994.

Two methods were used to determine effects of summer learning on achievement. Cooper and his colleagues calculated a standardized mean difference and a difference in grade level equivalent scores. The overall standardized mean average effect size equaled $-.09$, one tenth of a standard deviation below the spring score. The average difference in grade level scores was $-.09$, about a one month loss. Data revealed that time away from school had a negative linear effect on students' reading achievement as students moved through school. Further analysis supported decline in reading comprehension for both middle and low income students during the summer months, with a higher decline evidenced for students from low income families. Neither race nor gender was found to have consistent influence on the effects of summer out-of-school time. This research added to existing data and supported the theory that home environments played a critical role influencing summer learning.

Downey, von Hippel, and Broh (2004) shifted the lens when examining seasonal learning. Their study confirmed learning gaps related to socioeconomic status and race, but also suggested that disadvantaged schools could be credited with serving as "important equalizers" (p. 613) for underprivileged students even though the schools may be considered low-quality schools. Their explanation pointed to the levels of disparity that can exist between the home environments of advantaged and disadvantaged students. They asserted that when the variations between school environments were less than the variations in non-school environments, it offered the opportunity for a disadvantaged child to experience greater cognitive growth attending a lower quality school than an advantaged child attending a high-quality school. Children's home environments influenced school success.

The researchers used survey data from approximately 20,000 children in 1000 schools gathered from the *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Kindergarten Cohort of 1998-99*

(Downey, vonHippel, & Broh, 2004, p. 617). Four sets of reading and math scores collected during fall and spring of kindergarten and first grade served as dependent variables. These scores allowed researchers to approximate three learning rates: (1) the kindergarten learning rate, (2) the summer learning rate, and, (3) the first grade learning rate (p. 619). In their analysis, school level and child level correlations led the researchers to conclude that the rate of summer learning was substantially lower than in-school learning rates for less advantaged children. A negative correlation between summer learning rates and first grade learning rates indicated that children who experience summer setback tend to catch up once they return to school. Advantaged children tended to experience growth during summer months at a greater rate than during the school year.

Schools can serve to equalize learning for students regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or gender and the link to summer learning (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007; Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996; Downey, von Hippel, & Broh, 2004; Entwisle & Alexander, 1994; Heyns, 1978) has prompted continued research for interventions that alleviate the learning loss associated with out-of-school time. Extending the school calendar, summer school programs, and extended daily hours are some interventions that have been initiated to combat summer learning loss with mixed success.

If we believe, as Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson (2007) assert, that “achievement scores at any level of schooling predict success at the next level” and “cognitive achievement scores at the individual level are moderately to highly correlated across time,” (p. 168) educators are obligated by our profession to search for alternative solutions to meet the needs of developing readers at early grade levels in order to set them on the path to success. The importance of out-of-school learning for students to maintain in-school growth is well-

documented. Alternative summer programs need to be available to all developing learners to keep them from slipping behind during school vacation times.

Kim's (2006) research on a voluntary summer reading intervention made interest based leveled reading material available to Grade 4 students on a regular basis throughout the summer. The sample of this experimental study involved 552 fourth grade students from a large multi-ethnic school district located in the mid-Atlantic region. Attrition during the summer reduced the final number to 486 participants. The study was designed to expand summer learning opportunities for children of low- and middle-income families.

Instruments utilized in the study included alternate forms A and B of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills assessment administered in June and September, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) oral fluency assessment administered in spring and fall, a 20-item Elementary Attitude Survey (ERAS) and a 25-item reading preferences survey, both administered in spring, and a five-item fall literacy habits survey that measured reading-related activities and access to books during the summer.

In June of 2005 teachers were trained to administer the reading assessments and received specific instruction on how to teach reading strategies for silent and oral reading. The five comprehension strategies modeled were: re-reading, questioning, predicting, summarizing, and making connections. The oral fluency strategy involved teaching students to read 100-word passages aloud to their parents or another family member twice, working to improve prosody. During the final weeks of school, teachers modeled the lessons in their classrooms. Group assignment was random and both treatment and control groups received classroom instruction and practice with these strategies. Children in the treatment group

received leveled books and postcard reminders to practice fluency during the summer months. Children in the control group received these materials after the fall posttests.

Kim conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to check if the intervention increased access to books and reading activities during the summer. This analysis showed a significant main effect of ethnicity for students who reported owning more than 100 books $F(3,467) = 16.492, p < .001$. and for students who reported owning 50 books $F(3,467) = 13.113, p < .001$. The mean for White students was significantly higher than the mean for Black, Latino, or Asian students. There was no significance by experimental condition or the interaction between the treatment and ethnicity.

An ordinary least squares regression model was used to estimate treatment effects for students and each of the four ethnic groups, and interactions between treatment and income status. Among all students the estimated treatment effect was not significant. Due to baseline differences in the gender composition of Asian students in the treatment and control groups, Kim ran a second analysis without Asian students and found that the estimated treatment effect on reading scores was significant ($B = .14, SE = .05, t = 2.89, p = .004$). There was no significance for interactions between treatment effect and income status.

Kim (2006) reported the results of his study as tentative, but promising. Possible limitations to the study included: (a) the use of measure for identification of family socioeconomic status (SES); (b) the length of the study; (c) the sample size; and, (d) the statistical power. He recommended that future studies employ more precise measures of SES inclusive of parental income, occupation, and education as well as a larger experiment group and a longitudinal design over multiple summers. In addition, he suggests future research include an experimental design.

In a follow-up study (White & Kim, 2008) third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students participated in a voluntary summer reading program. Participants were randomly grouped as: (a) a control group receiving no books; (b) a group receiving eight books during the summer; (c) a group receiving eight books over the summer and fluency instruction at the end of the school year; and, (d) a group receiving eight books over the summer and fluency and comprehension instruction at the end of the school year. Books distributed were matched to students' interests and reading levels. The researchers found students who received books with no extra instruction received similar spring-to-fall gains as students in the control group. Students who received books and both fluency and comprehension instruction at the end of the school year demonstrated significant growth ($M = 207.0$) when compared to the control group on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills ($M = 203.1$; $p < .03$).

White and Kim (2008) concluded that a successful summer intervention program for readers needed to provide interest-based and leveled books for students, as well as teacher and parent scaffolding that supported comprehension and fluency practices along with family interaction during the summer months. For future research they proposed including teacher scaffolding for students through the summer months and had a study underway in North Carolina.

Helf, Konrad, and Algozzine (2008) sought to examine the effects of summer learning for rising first and second grade students. The study was situated in the Southeastern region of the United States from schools in a federally funded behavior and reading improvement project. Students were identified as members of control or treatment schools for this project. The control group included 77 students and the treatment group consisted of 74 students. During the school year, all students received 90 minutes of reading

instruction each day. In the treatment school, students identified by district assessments as tier II or tier III received extra support beyond the 90 minutes. DIBELS Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), and Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assessments were administered in spring and fall. Students moving from Kindergarten to Grade One were assessed using LNF, PSF, and NWF in spring and fall. Students moving from Grade One to Grade Two were assessed using PSF, NWF, and ORF in spring and ORF in fall. Their results showed no evidence of setback across the 10-weeks for students, indicating that young children from disadvantaged environments did not experience a summer decline in early literacy skills.

These findings are in conflict with previous studies that found regression in reading during out-of-school time (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003; Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, and Greathouse, 1996; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2007; Heyns, 1978). Helf, Konrad, and Algozzine (2008) offered several thoughts on their opposing results: (a) few studies have included young children, Grades 2-8 were more common to studies, (b) few studies have focused on early literacy skills, most have studied reading comprehension, not recognition, decoding or fluency, and, (c) few studies base their assessments on measures grounded in the same body of content for spring and fall. For future study they suggest continued research with similar aged children, content, and assessment measures.

Allington and McGill-Franzen (Allington et al., 2010) functioned as co-principal investigators during a three-year longitudinal experimental study testing the hypothesis that providing a collection of student self-selected books at the end of each school year to economically disadvantaged elementary school students would positively impact their voluntary summer reading activity and achievement. This study enrolled 1713 first and

second graders from 17 high-poverty elementary school districts in Florida. Treatment and control groups were randomly selected resulting in 1082 children assigned to the treatment group and 631 children assigned to the control group. After attrition, 852 students completed the study in the treatment group and 478 completed the study in the control group. The researchers intentionally selected a higher number of participants in the treatment group because they anticipated attrition rates higher than actually occurred. Participants were 89% African American or Hispanic and 5% were European American. Groups were considered equal on relevant demographic characteristics at the end of the study with no significant differences in treatment and control groups based on gender, free lunch status, or reading lexile level.

Researchers used the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT), administered annually to all Grade 3 through 8 students, as the standard measure of reading proficiency. The FCAT has demonstrated reliability with developmental scores ranging from 0 – 3000. End of study scores were compared for students in Grades 3, 4, and 5. Inclusion of Grade 3 was required due to retention of students. Survey data from treatment and control groups were collected at the end of each summer during this three year study using a short version of the Literacy Habits Survey (LH). Survey questions and response options were read to students outside the classroom. Student responses to items regarding summer reading activities, access to books, and access to home reading support were of particular interest to researchers.

All students in the treatment group were provided with 12 books they self-selected from an end of the school year book fair. Each year researchers selected books with consideration of text difficulty from four interest areas. Book interest categories included

pop culture, series books, culturally relevant books, and curriculum relevant books. They found pop culture and series books were selected most often.

After three consecutive summers of book distributions, researchers found that students in the treatment group exceeded the control students in achievement. T-tests performed found significant differences in achievement ($t = 2.434$, $df = 1328$, $p = .015$) between the groups. The effect size was moderate ($ES = .14$). LH survey results were examined between the treatment and control groups at the end of the treatment with a focus on two specific items that asked about frequency of reading during the summer and book sources. Correlations of these variables were $r = .09$ ($p = .02$) for frequency of reading and $r = .28$ ($p < .001$) for source of books from school or other places.

In discussing this study the researchers noted that their study differed from other research in several ways: (a) participants were younger than students in previous studies; (b) books were student self-selected, not experimenter selected; and, (c) the study spanned three consecutive years as compared to previous single year studies. Results from the survey indicated that students in the treatment group were more likely to read books they received from the book fair at school and that they engaged more often in reading activities. Considering that the students read more because they had books of interest readily available to them and their observed reading achievement scores, the researchers presumed this experiment had a positive impact on summer learning and may be a potential strategy to address summer reading setback.

Despite best intentions of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), research based on policy issues oftentimes drove decisions rather than theory-based research. NCLB promoted the use of annual standardized test measures as an effort to hold schools accountable to close

learning gaps for all students. Since the inception of NCLB districts have been responsible for showing annual yearly progress in academic areas in an effort to bring all students to proficient levels by 2014. Districts and educational experts have debated the level of reasonableness in these requirements and this thinking contributed to the selection of summer reading as the topic of my research.

New Literacies

In this section I explore multiliteracies as proposed by the New London Group, consider new literacies as an integral component of current education, and review studies related to Web 2.0 experiences at the elementary and middle levels.

In 1996, the New London Group articulated a theory of multiliteracies that embraced the atmosphere of social progression as it impacted students and teachers calling for a revised approach to literacy pedagogy. An educational shift was proposed:

If it were possible to define generally the mission of education, one could say that its fundamental purpose is to ensure that all students benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate fully in public, community, and economic life. (p. 60)

The projection of what was involved in this full participation guided the ideology of change embraced by the authors. The movement of society from the homogeneous expectations of nineteenth and twentieth century thinking to the desired state of blended cultural, economic, moral, and value based co-existence relied on understanding and acceptance of global differences in work, public, and private lives.

The broad thinking of this group was based on observations of change occurring first in work agencies as they shifted from controlled knowledge and leadership to a teamwork approach based on relationships and collective knowledge. This change was supported by

technology and the change of social relationships at work. The movement from a specialized area of expertise on the job to an integrated shared knowledge approach supported the shift. The value of teamwork and positive production that relied on “informal, oral, and interpersonal discourse” (p. 66) called for a new understanding of literacy pedagogy that prompted the need to transform educational approaches.

The group called for teachers to reframe processes and develop an environment that “...provides students the opportunity to develop skills for access to new forms of work through learning the new language of work” (p. 67). The currently shared message that teachers are educating students for jobs that don’t yet exist lends further credibility to this call to action. “Students need to develop the capacity to speak up, to negotiate, and to be able to engage critically with the conditions of their working lives” (p. 67). Valuing differences and embracing avenues that allow global cultural connections are skills students need to learn and experience so they are ready to sufficiently navigate the workplace they will one day join. Schools need to provide these developmental opportunities. The authors articulate that while schools cannot be expected to remake the world, opportunities for participation in curriculums planned to develop commitment, collaboration, and creativity through authentic experiences that integrate technology and inspire citizenship should be implemented.

They discussed the concept of “Designs, Designing, and The Redesigned” (pp. 73-77) with a lens of acknowledging and learning ideas (the design); the process of rethinking and reworking this information (designing); and finally refashioning this knowledge into something new that was redefined and unique in its own way as meaning emerged (redesigned). These elements staged the process of meaning-making as an active endeavor

noted for its fluidity, not defined by set rules that must be uniformly followed. The authors aligned this process to readers and listeners making meaning from texts based on their personal experiences and interests. Their design elements of different modes of meaning included multimodal experiences integrating electronic multimedia texts (p. 83).

Leu, Kinzer, Corio, and Cammack (2004) articulated:

... the appearance of the Internet in the workplace as well as in home and school contexts is one of the most powerful social revolutions taking place today. At the heart of this revolution are the new literacy skills and strategies demanded by the Internet and other ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies). (p. 1579)

The list of skills required by students to navigate ICT effectively may begin with an awareness of cognitive processes, but to take full advantage of electronic environments there is much more to consider. In order to recognize and meet the 21st century learning needs of students, educators are encouraged to continually move their technology skills forward.

Davies and Merchant (2009) articulated that “Web 2.0 and online social networking practices can be enjoyable – they motivate the young and can also be attractive to teachers” (p. 7).

Knobel and Wilber (2009) explain that Web 2.0 promotes participation, collaboration, and distribution. These practices combine to create interactions that extend beyond the earlier capabilities of the more static Web 1.0. This mindset shift transfers to literacy changing the role of teacher as the main deliverer of content and allows for students to become more involved and take the lead in learning.

Compton-Lilly (2009) considered what new literacies brought to the teaching of developing readers. She reminded us that as teachers we need to move beyond the skills-based approach when teaching readers and meet students armed with

knowledge of who and where they are as literacy learners. Cultural awareness with an understanding of children's technology literacies combined with new literacies practice provide the learning experiences developing literacy learners needed to succeed.

Gee (1999) described new literacies this way:

The New Literacy Studies (NLS) was one movement among many that took part in a larger "social turn" away from a focus on individuals and their "private" minds and towards interaction and social practice. The NLS ... are based on the view that reading and writing only make sense when studied in the context of social and cultural (and we can add historical, political, and economic) practices of which they are but a part. (p. 3)

Collaborative blogs are one tool that offer students opportunities for discussion, reflection, and sharing of resources. Blogging is well known and one of the most established Web 2.0 applications. The idea of using multimodal response strategies, online collaborative learning communities, and online blogging to promote critical thinking and reader interaction are a few examples of educators incorporating new literacies. Critical literacy entails both reading and writing in response to text. "Being able to read and write multiple forms of media and integrate them into a meaningful whole is the new hallmark of literacy" (Ohler, 2007, p. 9). Blogging allows for student composing, printing, and publishing. Through blogging students expand their interactive audiences increasing exchanges that serve to deepen meaning making as they reply to peers and develop responses to posted comments.

These needed skills form the focus of discussion among educators wanting to take advantage of what technology offers, and drives the need for development of practical

projects that raise students who are prepared to contribute within a global environment. Davies and Merchant (2009) suggested that at its most basic “Educational blogging can capture learning as it unfolds over time and this has obvious benefits for both learners and teachers” (p. 31) as this communication can serve as an online learning journal. They emphasize the read-write-think-link opportunities for learning often practiced by a community of bloggers. Through the use of technology, opportunities are created for students to grow as readers, writers, and thinkers.

Larson (2009) made use of online collaborative learning communities with fifth-grade students to explore how students socially construct learning when responding to literature. Transactional theory of reader response was central to the study as she employed technology as a means to engage students in online literature discussions. Her qualitative study took place in a Midwestern K-12 public school district serving about 5200. There were 26 students who participated in online literature discussions. The fifth-grade classroom teacher selected 10 students for data collection and analysis. Students were selected by the teacher based on the criteria of work ethic and communicative skill. An effort was made to include students representing different reading levels, technology levels, and diverse backgrounds.

Historical fiction was chosen as the genre for the online discussion project. Two e-book novels by Christopher Paul Curtis (1999, 1996), *Bud, Not Buddy* and *The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963*, were selected. Student choice and prior reading experience were considered in assigning five students to each group. The study considered how fifth-grade students socially constructed learning while using an online message board. Students participating in this study had some experience with email and chat rooms, but had no previous experience with electronic message board discussions. Larson provided group

instruction about log-in procedures, relevant vocabulary, and prompt responses. The study took place over 15 sessions. A typical session provided 30 minutes for reading and written response in an e-journal, then students had 15-20 minutes to respond on the message board. Laptops with Internet capabilities were available for student use during the study. Initially Larson requested that students respond to her series of posted prompts before replying to students' responses. She noted that this lasted only two days before students requested to learn how to write prompts. After instruction on how to write and post prompts, students took over this portion of the study. They posted their own prompts that initiated the online literature discussions for the rest of the study. Each week Larson analyzed the frequency and length of students' responses. The classroom teacher used the data to guide students to adjust the length or frequency of their responses.

Larson (2009) collected data from field notes, interviews, electronic journals, and message board transcripts. When analyzing the message board transcripts she grouped student generated prompts into five types: experiential, aesthetic, cognitive, interpretive, and clarification. Her analysis showed cognitive prompts that supported inferencing, predicting, and problem solving and interpretive prompts that encouraged higher level thinking accounted for 62% of the student constructed prompts. Findings from the study showed that students took more responsibility for the direction of conversations and discussion. "In this study, classroom observations and online discussion transcripts clearly support that engagement in an asynchronous online literature discussion encouraged students to respond deeply to the literature, share their ideas with others, and carefully consider multiple perspectives and thoughts" (p. 646).

The teaching was purposeful and the open-ended learning activities allowed students to direct their own learning. Students were exploring and using new thinking leading them to deeper expressions of their own points of view. The opportunity for authentic response and the engagement of students in deeper thinking were avenues I hoped to pursue as part of my study integrating blogging and summer reading.

Summary of Chapter Two

In this chapter the theories and studies described offered direction and guided the process of my study. The central focus of this research was to explore the combination of summer reading and response blogging as they related to reader motivation and achievement.

The literature review provided an understanding of this undertaking and clarified the relationships between reader response, engagement, reader self-concept and value of reading, out-of-school reading, and blogging as a Web 2.0 application. Much research has been conducted describing summer learning loss based on socioeconomic factors. I could find no research on the impact of blogging on summer setback. I chose to consider summer setback and developing readers in an attempt to explore alternate summer reading opportunities that might engage and entice developing readers to choose to read and interact with books during their summer vacation time.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The effects of summer reading and student achievement from different socioeconomic groups have been studied in the past (Allington et al., 2010; Heyns, 1978; Kim, 2004, 2006; White & Kim, 2008; Marz & Rasinski, 2007). Several of these studies that provided leveled interest-based books throughout the summer for students to read offered promising results. I found no summer reading studies that considered the combined effects of leveled interest-based reading with blogging and reader motivation.

It was the purpose of this case study to explore the summer reading experience of developing readers utilizing leveled reading and blogging. The use of leveled interest-based reading materials and student response blogging as a form of authentic writing were considered as they related to reading motivation and student achievement. I studied the interaction of these factors.

This chapter provides biographical information and a description of participants and the processes undertaken in this study. Setting, participants, and methods are explained and the research design, instrumentation, and procedures for collecting and analyzing data are described in detail. A statement of ethics is included.

Researcher's Biography

Researchers need to be insightful to personal connections that align with their research. Qualitative researchers need to consider potential biases and be aware of hidden prejudgments and prejudices in all aspects of research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba identified the importance of the researcher taking time to examine personal values as they related to the context of the research. In that light I reflected on personal experiences in relation to this study and tried to remain aware of personal biases that existed or developed.

My role as an educator has traversed various avenues as a parent, community volunteer, teacher, and school leader. Throughout this time I have been active in many different capacities. Relevant to my work as a researcher were my 18 years of experience as an elementary school educator, most recently as a literacy specialist supporting developing readers. These years taught me to value students as individuals. Vygotsky's (1978) "zone of proximal development" theory of cognition influenced my teaching practice. I found most students receptive and able to learn new information when presented with opportunities at their developmental level. As a long standing member of the Early Intervention Team (EIT) I learned to think outside the box when strategizing ways to assist teachers and students in need of academic and organizational support. Through these years of practice I experienced firsthand the importance of listening to, watching, and talking with children. I embrace the philosophy of differentiation and believe that fairness equates to what children need as individual learners. I observed my students and studied their challenges and successes. These observation skills were essential within the educational environment and served to support me in my research efforts.

As a researcher it was necessary for me to be wary of predispositions and expectations in the research setting. Because of my background as a third grade teacher, literacy specialist, and EIT member I needed to be open-minded and relinquish biases. In order to do this I kept a reflexive journal to monitor my thinking and allow for reflexive analysis on the research process.

I completed this research study as a requirement of my doctoral program at Western Connecticut State University. During my course of study, I experimented with technology and expanded my knowledge of available Web 2.0 learning tools. These experiences laid the

foundation for my research and piqued my interest in exploring the role of blogging and reader motivation as they related to summer reading setback.

Description of Setting and Participants

Setting

There were two host districts, Wilmont Public School District (pseudonym) and Billings Public School District (pseudonym) that participated in this research study. Both were medium-sized, upper socioeconomic suburban districts, located in the Northeastern region of the United States.

The local population of Wilmont was 16,452, as reported on the 2010 Demographic Profile. The town covered approximately 19.8 square miles. The school system included slightly fewer than 3000 students in one high school, one middle school, one elementary school, and one primary school. The majority of eligible students, 90.9%, attended district public schools. Free and reduced lunch programs were used by 4.6% of students compared to the state average of 32.6%. Three and four tenths percent of this district's students came from homes where English was not the primary language. Pre-school attendance was 71.8% compared to the state average of 80.5%. The district strategic school profile reported 0.1% American Indian students, 4.5% Asian students, 1.0% African American students, 3.8% Hispanic students, and 90.6% Caucasian students. The total percent of children of color reported was 9.4. The 2010 District Strategic School Profile reported mastery tests at the elementary and high school level, as well as Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) that were equal or above the state average and comparable to their reference group. Looking at reading scores, 74.2% of third graders scored at goal on state standardized assessments compared to 57% of state third graders. High school mastery test results for reading across the disciplines

showed tenth graders scored at goal 68.9% of the time, while the state averaged 45.9%. Descriptive statistics for the district also revealed that teachers were well-educated and experienced. The average teacher had more than 15 years experience in education compared to the state average of 13.8 years. More than 73% of teachers had at least a master's degree in education. At the elementary level in this district, there were 2.8 students per academic computer as compared to 3.2 students per academic computer for the state. The average grade 2 class size was 22.1 students for the district and 19.7 students for the state.

The village of Billings covered a total of 35 square miles and the local population was approximately 24,638, as reported on the 2010 Demographic Profile. The school system included slightly over 5000 students in a comprehensive high school, a small alternative high school, two middle schools, six elementary schools, and one pre-school. The majority of eligible students, 91.3%, attended district public schools. Free and reduced lunch programs were used by 2.0% of students compared to the state average of 32.6%. Six-tenths percent of this district's students came from homes where English was not the primary language. Pre-school attendance was 92.2% compared to the state average of 80.5%. Race and ethnicity data reveals the district to be less diverse than the average community in the same state. The district strategic school profile reported 0.1% American Indian students, 4.1% Asian American students, 0.8% African American students, 3.4% Hispanic students, and 91.7% Caucasian students. The total percent of children of color reported was 8.3. The district's strategic school profile reported mastery tests at the elementary and high school level that were above the state average and within the average of their reference group. Looking at reading scores, 79.9% of third graders scored at goal compared to 57% of state third graders. High school mastery test results for reading across the disciplines showed tenth graders

scored at goal 82.5% of the time, while the state averaged 45.9%. Descriptive statistics for the district also revealed that teachers were well-educated and experienced. The average teacher had more than 14 years experience in education compared to the state average of 13.8 years. More than 84% of teachers had at least a master's degree in education. At the elementary level in this district, there were 3.6 students per academic computer as compared to 3.2 students per academic computer for the state. The average grade 2 class size was 19.6 students for the district and 19.7 students for the state.

The accountability system for reporting standardized state test scores was based on a status model that compared the current grade level scores to the previous grade level scores. Since this model did not track the scores of students from one year to the next, district scores did not reflect gains or change over time for grade level cohorts. Table 3.1 shows the percentage of third grade students scoring at or above the proficient level in state standardized testing in the Wilmont and Billings Public School districts over the last six years.

Table 3.1

Longitudinal Reading Comparison 2006-2011: Percentage At or Above Proficiency Level

Year	Wilmington Public Schools	Billings Public Schools	State
2006	85.4	88.9	69.2
2007	85.3	89.5	69.3
2008	82.0	88.4	68.4
2009	89.9	90.3	71.1
2010	84.5	88.9	72.3
2011	88.0	90.5	73.9

Note. Adapted from Connecticut State Mastery Test: Score Summary Report

Participants

Purposive sampling was selected to suit the purpose of this research project. Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized that naturalistic inquiry relies on purposeful sampling rather than random or representative sampling in order to increase the scope of the type of data available and maximize insights. This qualitative case study considered developing readers, reading motivation, and summer setback. Researchers Mraz and Rasinski (2007) have identified developing readers as students who typically experience summer setback. Students identified as needing extra reading support were sought for this study. Second grade students who received intervention services during the school year were offered the opportunity to participate in this study. At Milano School in Wilmont, I provided 70 permission letters that were distributed to students who received reading and writing support. These students were identified as needing literacy intervention by teacher observation of student performance in class and had participated in a reading and writing support program throughout the school year. Nine unused permission letters were returned to me. Six students and parents expressed an interest in participating in the study. At Parkway School in Billings, four children identified as developing readers by district literacy assessments who had received tier two literacy services during the school year were invited to participate in the study. These students scored below the fall Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2) (Beaver, 2006) level 18 goal and winter DRA2 level 24 goal. Three students returned forms to participate. A total of nine students and parents returned permission slips and were selected to participate in this research study based on the information that they were developing readers. Three students discontinued participation during the summer for reasons discussed in chapter four.

Research Questions

This study explored the effects of blogging as a form of authentic summer reading response on reading motivation and maintenance of reading achievement. The following overarching questions were explored:

1. How does participation in a summer literacy initiative that combines a choice of leveled reading materials and blogging influence summer setback for developing third grade readers?
2. In what ways do summer reading and response blogging influence students' perceptions about the value of reading?
3. In what ways do summer reading and response blogging influence reader self-concept for developing third grade readers?
4. How does providing leveled reading materials and student inclusion in a blogging community influence observed habits of reading as reported by students and caregivers?
5. In what ways do social interactions while blogging about books influence students' reading and writing?

Research Design

Dyson and Genishi (2005) explained that a case is “constructed, not found, as researchers make decisions about how to angle their vision on places overflowing with potential stories of human experience” (p. 2). That was the design employed as this qualitative study developed. There is an important transition that takes place as children progress through elementary school. Through third grade, most students are learning to read. As students move beyond third grade the typical school expectation is that the reading focus

shifts from learning to read to reading to learn (Lesnick, Goerge, Smithgall, & Gwynne, 2010). Developing readers find this transition difficult. When students are challenged beyond their abilities and unable to achieve success, they become frustrated, losing motivation and engagement. The end result finds these developing students falling further and further behind their peers. Research has demonstrated that lack of engagement and summer setback play significant roles in the lives of developing readers.

The reason for initiating this qualitative case study design was that I hoped to gain insight into the experiences of students as they worked with blogging and how these experiences related to summer reading setback and reader motivation. Merriam (1998) explained:

A case study is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in the process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insight gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research. (p. 19)

Instrumentation

Data were collected through field note recordings of observations of four site-based group orientation workshop meetings, two held at each location held in June; an ongoing reflexive journal; student blog posts; district administered Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA2) (Beaver, 2006); district administered Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) assessments (QUESTAR Assessments, 2010); MRP surveys (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996); transcribed voice recordings of two September student focus group meetings; and, transcribed voice recordings of the fall adult caregiver interviews.

Researcher Reflexive Journal with Field Notes

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described reflexive journaling as a tool that allowed for discussion of decisions during the research process. Journaling provided an opportunity for me to log my schedule and record my research plans and actions. My reflexive journal acted as a personal diary where I could record my thoughts and actions as the project progressed. This instrument was primarily used to document my journey throughout this study. In an effort to strive for transparency in data gathering and interpretation, I documented dates, contacts, observations, reflections, and other thoughts in a journal. Using ideas presented by Bogdan and Biklen (2003), I attempted to document self-reflexive thoughts and observations.

The purpose of a field notes journal was to document researcher observations of participants, environments, conversations, and events. These narrative style notes recorded summaries and important details of meetings with participants and adult caregivers. Photographs and sketches of meeting locations were included in the field notes. This instrument was used to document parts of the study when qualitative data were gathered.

At the start of my study I kept two separate journals, however as the study progressed these two journals merged and field notes became part of my reflexive journal.

Reader Response Prompts for Blogging

The purpose of this instrument was to initiate and guide thinking on the part of reader participants. I used Class Press (classpress.com, 2011) to create a Web log site in May of 2011. A Web log is one of the most well-known Web 2.0 applications (Davies & Merchant, 2009). This social software functions as a networking tool that allows users to communicate through dated entries, with the most recent posting at the top. Class Press is a free site that is frequently used by educators. The site has several features available that make it user

friendly and thus an appropriate choice for young bloggers. As is typical of most blogging software, it provides ready-made templates making it easy to use, as well as a help option that provides user support when needed. In setting up the blog I activated security settings that kept the blog private, ensuring only invited participants were able to view or comment on the blog. I posted response prompts in the form of questions on the blog during the study (see Appendix A). Questions were adapted from *Encountering Children's Literature: An Arts Approach* (Gangi, 2004) and *The Schoolwide Enrichment Model Reading Framework* (Reis, 2008). I posed open-ended questions as a means of generating student reflection and deeper thinking. Students posted responses based on their personal reading.

Developmental Reading Assessment second edition (DRA2)

This instrument provided a performance-based reading assessment. The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), developed by Beaver and published in 1988, was piloted for grades K-3 in the late 1980s and provided an assessment that could be administered to all primary students by their classroom teacher. The DRA was modeled after Reading Recovery, but deliberately created to be administered to all students without the need for administration by specially trained individuals. The DRA was intended to be an assessment that matched the curriculum reading framework and served as a formative assessment to drive instruction. Along with leveled short stories the DRA provides an assessment tool to analyze what students are doing as they are reading. In the early 2000s, the DRA for grades 4-8 was developed and added to the DRA package.

In 2004-2006, the DRA, K-3 was revised and expanded (Beaver, 2006). The updated Developmental Reading Assessment Second Edition (DRA2) maintained the same overarching goals as the original version: “(1) to accurately and effectively assess students’

Reading Engagement, Oral Reading Fluency, and comprehension; and (2) to help identify students' strengths and weaknesses in order to inform future instruction" (Pearson, 2009, p. 2). The second edition was field-tested and renamed the DRA2, K-3 (Beaver, 2006) and DRA2, 4-8 (Beaver & Carter, 2003). Results of the DRA2 informed teachers of students' reading levels, strategies for future planning, and a focus for instructional interventions. Available for use multiple times a year, the DRA2 was designed as a tool that documented changes in students' reading development. Targeting fluency through oral reading of a selected text portion and comprehension through open-ended response questions, the assessment was scored using a rubric to determine frustration, instructional, independent, and advanced levels of reading.

DRA2 instructional level 28 is considered an appropriate benchmark target for beginning third grade students; this level corresponds to Fountas and Pinnell (F & P) level M reading materials. Assessed readers scoring one level below benchmark (DRA2 level 24; F & P level L) would be considered tier two by the Response to Intervention (RTI) guidelines and intervention would be provided. Students assessed two levels below the benchmark (DRA2 level 20; F & P level K) would be considered tier three readers in need of intensive intervention.

In 2005, a field study was conducted to compare the revised DRA2 student assessment books across levels and within levels (Pearson, 2009). Initial analyses determined appropriate differences across levels and that no significant differences existed between books at the same level. After these initial analyses, in-depth analyses on the validity and reliability, as well as passage equivalency were conducted.

Validity and reliability of the DRA2. Validity considers that the assessment actually measured what it was supposed to measure. When assessing the validity of the DRA2, researchers asked the questions: “Does this assessment truly measure reading ability? Can teachers make accurate inferences about true reading ability of a student based upon DRA2 assessment results?” (Pearson, 2009, p. 35). Content-related validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity were researched and measured.

The information regarding content validity of the DRA2 was initially addressed during the development process and again in 2008. The developers chose authentic texts and aligned genre specific questions. Reading experts were consulted and users of the DRA2 were involved in rating the reading and usefulness of the DRA2. The majority of participating teacher experts using the DRA2 reported that “the DRA2 accurately measures student growth, reflects important components of comprehension and fluency...” (Pearson, 2009, p. 36).

Huck (2008) explained the use of criterion-related validity as a means to assess the degree to which scores on new instruments compare to scores on a relevant criterion variable (p. 90). The DRA2 scores were correlated with other previously validated reading tests. Correlation coefficients ranged from 0.60 to 0.76, classified as large in Huck’s Effect Size Criteria for Correlations.

Construct validity considers the degree to which the assessment measures the traits it is designed to measure (Pearson, 2009, p. 39). The constructs intended for measurement by the DRA2 were fluency and comprehension. Inter-Item and subtest correlation results as well as factor analysis results supported construct validity for the DRA2. The results

presented in the K-8 Technical Manual presented results that indicated the assessment provided a valid measure of students' oral reading fluency and comprehension.

The reliability of a test refers to its consistency of results. A test cannot be valid unless it is reliable. For the DRA2 researchers tested passage equivalency, test-retest reliability, inter-rater and rater-expert reliabilities. Results demonstrated “moderate to high internal consistency reliability, parallel equivalency reliability, test-retest reliability, and inter-rater reliability” (p. 34). The DRA2 was deemed a reliable and valid instrument when administration and scoring guidelines were followed. This instrument was used as the literacy benchmark assessment tool in the Billings School district. I collected students' DRA2 scores from district assessments to determine the range of independent reading levels of participants and to compare spring and fall achievement levels as part of my study.

Degrees of Reading Power (DRP)

The DRP (QUESTAR Assessments, 2010) is a series of assessments designed to measure student progress in literacy comprehension and track student progress in reading comprehension across the grade levels.

DRP tests measure the process of reading through the use of nonfiction cloze passages. Words have been deleted from the passages and students must choose an answer from a pre-selected answer group of five word choices. The omitted word choices are selected so that the reader must demonstrate an understanding of the paragraph in order to select the correct choice. Test forms are designed according to grade level reading development and begin at the primary level once basic decoding skills have been mastered. In third grade, DRP tests switch from primary to standard. Both primary and standard DRP tests measure the same construct of meaning and provide criterion-referenced scores

indicating a specific level of what students are able to read at independent, instructional, and frustration levels. These scores provide a holistic measure that can be used to accurately identify a reader's level of comprehension and can be used to guide selection of instructional and independent reading materials at a student's appropriate reading level. This assessment is leveled and administered without time limits. DRP assessment scores 33-49 are within the third grade range. Scores 20-37 are considered within a second grade range.

Validity and reliability of the DRP. Developers of the DRP considered construct validity in selecting the test passages in that background knowledge of test content is not needed. Testing using a counter-balance design resulted in a correlation between the readability of passages and average difficulty of items embedded in them ($r = .95$). Content validity was also measured. Topics for nonfiction test passages came from a variety of areas and were compared with content text materials at the different reading levels. Criterion-related validity was established by using student responses to blanks in a test similar to a DRP test. This was used as a criterion measure of students' ability to read prose. It was shown that DRP scores correlated highly with the criterion measure reported as ($r = .90$). Alternate test-retest reliability was figured and correlations were between $r=.86$ and $r=.91$. Repeat testing over a short period of time confirmed alternate-form reliability.

Milano School used the DRP as its literacy district benchmark assessment tool for the end of second grade and beginning of third grade. I collected these scores to determine the range of independent reading levels of participants and to compare spring and fall achievement levels.

Motivation to Read Profile (MRP)

This instrument, developed by Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni (1996), provided a measure of student motivation using two instruments: a Reading Survey and a Conversational Interview. Through the use of quantitative and qualitative data, the MRP offers users an instrument that assesses reading motivation for use with elementary school students. The survey measures two aspects of motivation: self-concept as a reader and value of reading. The instrument includes open-ended interview questions that provide additional information about students' reading habits and interests. For the purpose of my study I selected several questions with an emphasis on general reading. Examples of the questions I asked are:

- (1) What did you read at home yesterday;
- (2) Tell me about your favorite author;
- (3) Do you know any just right books now that you'd like to read? Tell me about them;
- (4) How did you find out about these books;
- (5) What are some thing that get you really excited about books; and,
- (6) What do you like to read about?

(Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni, 1996, p. 524)

The purpose of the instrument is to provide information that assists teachers in understanding student reading motivation and data for instructional planning. The survey section of this instrument was used to collect information about student reading motivation before and after the summer reading blog experience. I administered the survey at before school meetings at each school in June and September. I conducted the conversational interviews at the first June meeting at each school, selecting questions that allowed me to gain an understanding of interest areas in an effort to provide interest-based reading choices.

Instructions directed that the survey be read aloud to students. Each of the 20 Likert-type items has a 4-point scale to avoid neutral response patterns. The most positive response was assigned a value of 4 while the least positive response was assigned a value of 1. A scoring sheet identified numbered items as self-concept or value indicators. The highest possible score for the full survey was 80 points. Each subscale was assigned an equal total value of 40 points. Authors of the instrument also indicated that scores can be reported as percentages for individual subscales or the total survey (p. 527).

Validity and reliability of the MRP. The reading survey and conversational interview were field tested to assess validity and reliability. To assess internal consistency of the Reading Survey researchers calculated a Cronbach's alpha statistic which indicated a moderately high reliability for both scales (self-concept = .75; value = .82). Further analysis confirmed moderately high reliability of the instrument when pre- and posttest reliability coefficients were calculated for each subscale (self-concept = .68; value = .70). Responses to the survey and interview were examined for consistency and inter-rater agreement of .87 was reported.

Student Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol

This instrument was used as a post-study student focus group meeting instrument and consisted of nine semi-structured questions which provided a framework to encourage conversations (see Appendix B). I met with students before school for approximately 45-50 minutes at each location in September to conduct the interviews. All participants were invited to attend; three students from Milano School and three children from Parkway School participated in these final meetings.

Caregiver Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol

This instrument was used as a post-study caregiver focus group meeting instrument and consisted of nine semi-structured questions which provided a framework to encourage conversations (see Appendix C). The purpose of this instrument was to offer caregivers an opportunity to share their personal perceptions of the study and gather their observations regarding participants' reading habits during the timeframe of this study. Parents from Milano School were invited to provide feedback on the study via phone interview as had been requested by parents at the onset of the study. Through an email request I asked parents to provide contact numbers and preferred contact times during the first week of October. Two parents provided this contact information. I followed up with additional emails and received one additional email response. At Parkway school I offered a before school meeting and met with three parents for approximately 35 minutes. All expressed appreciation and were thoughtful when sharing their responses about the summer experience for their children.

Data Collection Procedures and Timeline

There were three main phases to the timeline for this research project. The first involved securing permissions to execute the study, introduction of the study to participants and adult caregivers, and collection of initial MRP, DRA2, and DRP data. The second occurred during the summer months when students blogged their reading responses. The final phase was in September and October when student focus group meetings and parent interviews were conducted.

Prior to beginning this study I selected a group of three second grade developing readers from my school to determine if students this age could be successful using the Web log. These children were not considered for participation in my study. Each of the three

students practiced logging onto the computer, navigating a blog, word processing, and posting sample comments. All of the students were able to perform the tasks I requested. In his discussion of developmental stages Wood (2007) stated eight-year-olds are “gaining competence over the tools of their trade. At school this means industrious effort in such areas as ... computer skills” (p. 99). My sample experience supported this observation and I made the decision to proceed with my study as planned.

Phase One

In May 2011 permission was received from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Western Connecticut State University to conduct this research. Once this permission was granted I contacted the Wilmont Public School superintendent’s office and met with the assistant superintendent. After providing a description of the project approval was received to conduct the research at Milano Elementary School (see Appendices D and E). I met a second time with district personnel including the assistant superintendent and Milano School’s principal (see Appendix F). The project was discussed and it was decided that school personnel would distribute permission slips for me to second grade students who had received literacy support during the year. I delivered 70 permission slips that were distributed by school personnel to the selected students at Milano School (see Appendices G and H). I collected a total of six permission slips that were returned to the school office.

I then contacted Billings Public School superintendent’s office and met with the assistant superintendent. After providing a description of the project approval was received to conduct research at Parkway School. I then contacted the principal and requested permission to perform the study at her school. After permission was granted the literacy teacher distributed participation forms to second grade students who had received reading

support during the year. I collected permission slips as they were returned to the school office.

Two morning meetings of approximately 45-50 minutes each were conducted at students' schools in June. I secured meeting rooms at both school locations. The purpose of the first meeting was to introduce myself to the students, explain my study, and administer the MRP. I met with participants in groups of three at each school. I shared information about the study, answered questions, and administered the MRP. Typical time for administration of this survey style instrument is 15-20 minutes when administered to a group.

Participant DRP or DRA2 data were collected from school personnel for each of the participants. This information was used to determine the range of independent reading levels. I selected a mix of nonfiction and fiction reading materials based on students' independent reading levels and student interest responses identified through MRP survey results.

A second student meeting was held one week later in the school computer lab at Milano School and in the library at Parkway School. The purpose was to familiarize students with the blog site and allow for student leveled book selections. I brought book samples for browsing. Participants had the opportunity to select between six and eight just right leveled reading books for their summer reading. At this meeting I introduced students to the blog location, provided instructions for log-in, and explained expectations for use of the blog. I was unsure of students' experience with written responses so I modeled my expectations and provided student practice. Students logged into the Web log, answered three questions, and posted their responses. There were differences in student familiarity with computers. At Parkway School all three students seemed comfortable and were able to follow my directions

without much support. At Milano School, six children attended the introductory lesson and their level of computer experience required scaffolding and consistent support.

Class Press (classpress.com, 2011) was used to set up the private Web log site. In setting up the Web log I limited users to those involved in the study. Only parents, participants, and I had access. Participants were identified by pseudonyms they selected and all children had the option of selecting a clipart avatar as part of their blogger identification. Parents received instructions for accessing the Web log, but they were not enrolled as Web log members. As an additional control, all student posts were submitted through me and posted after I approved them. These measures allowed me to monitor the safety of all participants. This procedure was followed at both school locations.

During the final week of school I returned to each school and delivered the student selected reading materials along with detailed directions that reviewed accessing the Web log (see Appendix I). As case study research sometimes includes the researcher's students, it is important to note that no students receiving instruction from me participated in this study.

Phase Two

During this phase of the study I regularly posted questions on the Web log for student response. Eight sets of response prompts were posted during the 10-weeks of summer. Emails were sent to parents of participating students advising them when questions were posted. Students were requested to respond to a minimum of six questions during the summer study. Responses to peer posts were encouraged, but not required. During the study I responded to student posts in an attempt to connect with students and encourage additional comments. Posts were not scored for grading, but I did consider responses for patterns and emerging themes. I included all data posted by students as part of the analysis.

Phase Three

After the 10-week summer blogging session and the return to school in September, I reserved the school library at Milano School and the literacy room at Parkway School for a morning focus group meeting with students. All participants were invited to attend. Three students participated in each 45 minute student focus group meeting offered at both schools. In addition to student interviews the MRP was administered to participants. As a final component, phone conversations or group interviews were offered to gather adult perceptions about the study. Two parents from Milano School offered to participate in phone interviews; one returned my calls and provided feedback. Another parent emailed a letter as feedback describing reasons that her son ended participation on the Web log. Three parents from Parkway School participated in the 35 minute morning focus group meeting at their school.

In an effort to strive for transparency in data gathering and interpretation I documented dates, contacts, observations, reflections, field notes, and other thoughts in a reflexive journal. In October and November I collected fall district DRA2 or DRP data from school personnel for all participants.

Method of Analysis

Data analysis followed the three phases of my research. Data collection through field notes and my reflexive journal were ongoing throughout the study. During the first phase of my research I collected data through the MRP, DRA2, and DRP assessments. MRP survey data were gathered from nine participants in June. I used district administered literacy assessment data in an effort to monitor reading achievement from spring to fall. Parkway School provided district administered DRA2 scores for participants and Milano School offered district DRP assessment scores. Reader choice (Allington, 2012; Fink, 2006; Kim,

2006; White & Kim, 2008) and matching a child's level of reading development to text complexity (Allington, 2012; Betts, 1946; Miller, 2009) have been linked to achievement, engagement, and motivation to read. Fink (2006) described the importance of entry points for developing readers through topics of high personal interest. It was through these entry points that readers in her study became engaged in reading. In order to determine students' interests for this study I gathered data from the MRP Interview Survey. These data were coded and a list of topics of interest was used to create categories. Allington (2012) shared "the research has clearly demonstrated the need for students to have instructional texts that they can read accurately, fluently, and with good comprehension if we hope to foster academic achievement" (p. 73). DRA2 and DRP reading scores were analyzed and translated to Fountas and Pinnell reading levels. These levels and topics of interest guided the selection of books made available to students as summer reading choices.

During the second phase I collected data through student response blogs, my reflexive journal, and parent emails. My first, second, and third look at these data were reading, rereading and coding, then rereading and eliminating, combining and refining codes. I first looked at these data in chronological order and changed them from the Web log format into a four column word document (see Appendix J for a sample from my reflexive journal). Column one numbered the data; column two organized data line by line; column three allowed for initial coding annotations; and, column four acted as a synthesis column where I could group or summarize ideas. Then I began jotting ideas for codes. Saldaña (2009) suggested that beginning researchers need the experience of manually coding and manipulating the actual data. As a novice researcher I felt manual coding worked best for my study and experience level. After putting blog artifacts on index cards I puzzled through

the data using what Saldaña (2009) referred to as “tabletop categories” (p. 188). Based on Bernard and Ryan (2003) I looked for ways to categorize codes and color coded as categories emerged. Bernard and Ryan discussed eight observational techniques that could be applied to qualitative data: (1) Repetitions; (2) Categories; (3) Metaphors and analogies; (4) Transitions; (5) Similarities and differences; (6) Linguistic connectors; (7) Missing data; and, (8) Theory-related material (pp. 56-62). I sorted with these in mind noting repetitions; similar codes that could be grouped into categories; and, codes that related to theories and literature review.

I revisited my data and organized it by participant. Saldaña calls this coding “contrasting data” (p. 18). This allowed me to categorize data differently as I focused more deeply on each individual participant and considered the levels of their written responses. As Saldaña suggested I was influenced by subsequent data when I recoded previous participant’s data. Maintaining a reflexive journal throughout the process was helpful. It focused my thinking and prompted me to question my observations further.

The third phase of my study involved the student focus group and caregiver interviews. As in phase two I transcribed my data into a four column word document. I read and reread my notes and coded all data. Once I had gone through the data twice I sorted my codes into categories and coded topics and patterns with colors. As suggested by Bernard and Ryan (2010) I referenced my research questions and allowed them to guide some of the overarching categories as I looked to interpret the data. At the September focus group meeting I readministered the MRP. In November I requested fall DRA2 and DRP assessment data. I analyzed pre and post data for DRA2, DRP, and overall MRP scores.

Ethics Statement

Permission to participate in this research was sought from each district's superintendent, assistant superintendent, school principals, all participants and their adult caregivers. Participation in this study was completely voluntary and participants were free to remove themselves from this study at anytime. To assure confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned. Data were securely maintained by the researcher for the duration of the study.

Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter provided biographical information and the processes undertaken in this study. Setting, participants, and methods were explained. Design, instrumentation, and procedures for collecting and analyzing data were described in detail; a statement of ethics was included. The study was designed to consider the summer reading experiences of developing readers utilizing leveled reading and blogging. Steps taken to ensure trustworthiness are described in chapter five.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF DATA AND EXPLANATION OF FINDINGS

This research explored combining elements of traditional literacy with digital literacies and their impact on summer reading setback and reading motivation. The ever expanding capabilities of digital media are considered second nature to many of today's students. This study sought to integrate the known and new as a way to encourage reading and nurture student engagement by using blogging as a form of authentic readers' response for developing readers. Chapter four presents a discussion of the findings from the following: student Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996) survey responses; analysis of researcher observations, blog postings, and interviews; Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) (QUESTAR Assessments, 2010); and, Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2) (Beaver, 2006) scores.

Research Questions

Several research questions guided this study. While coding the data I used these questions as a means to ground my thinking and narrow the categories as I applied my data.

1. How does participation in a summer literacy initiative that combines a choice of leveled reading materials and blogging influence summer setback for developing third grade readers?
2. In what ways do summer reading and response blogging influence students' perceptions about the value of reading?
3. In what ways do summer reading and response blogging influence reader self-concept for developing third grade readers?

4. How does providing leveled reading materials and student inclusion in a blogging community influence observed habits of reading as reported by students and caregivers?
5. In what ways do social interactions while blogging about books influence students' reading and writing?

To answer these questions, I conducted my research in three phases over four months. I began my study in June meeting with students at their respective schools. During June, July, and August the blog was active for written responses and in September I held follow-up meetings at each of the site schools. These meetings were delayed due to a natural disaster that caused extensive storm damage to towns delaying the start of school for several days in each of the districts. Because the storm occurred during the last week of August, while the summer blog was active, it is possible that some students were unable to make final postings.

In this chapter I provide descriptions of the school sites as well as the Web log site I developed for this study. Narratives of the case study are included, introducing each of the students, followed by a presentation of themes generated from the data.

Descriptions of Setting and Participants

Description of Milano Elementary School

Milano Elementary School offered a warm and welcoming experience. The school was located on a large area of land set back from the road. Ample parking for staff and visitors was located in the front of the building. The facility seemed well kept with plantings surrounding the entrance area. The grassy areas and mature trees surrounding the building gave it a park-like setting. Five large decorative tile-like murals spanned a portion of the building front. Beyond the building there were grass covered child friendly play areas,

fields, several swing sets, fitness equipment, and a well-maintained colorful climbing playground. Behind the school there was a large garden that provided hands-on learning opportunities for students. Children planted and tended to vegetables and flowers during the school year. Produce from the garden may be used in the cafeteria or donated to the local food pantry. The presentation of Milano School was inviting and I expect visitors, staff, and students felt comfortable coming here.

A faculty of about 40 teachers and additional support staff served 604 students in second through fourth grades. School administration included a principal and assistant principal. The school's vision statement identified values that supported its expected standard as a child-centered learning community where children are respected, valued, and cared for as they grow as compassionate lifelong learners. An active Parent Teacher Organization supported teachers and the school community with activities and enrichment programs. Milano's literacy and library programs encouraged student participation in independent summer reading as well as the town's summer reading program at the local public library. Extracurricular opportunities included a chess club, science fair, school play, and school newspaper.

Description of Parkway Elementary School

The second school site for my study was Parkway Elementary School. This neighborhood school was located on an area of land set back off a quiet road. Parking for staff and visitors was located on the front and side areas of the building. A variety of plantings and mature trees surrounded the entrance area and a blacktop sidewalk area ran the length of the building front. One side of the building contained a fenced blacktop and mulch playground area for younger students with some climbing equipment and a few swings.

Beyond the building there were grass covered child friendly play areas, fields, two older swing sets, and a blacktop play area with two basketball hoops. In an open courtyard behind the school there was a garden that provided hands-on learning opportunities for students. Within the garden planting boxes were assigned to grade levels. Children planted and tended to vegetables during the school year. Produce from the garden was used in the cafeteria and sometimes taken home by students and staff. An outdoor bench by the front entrance provided a resting place for visitors and families.

A faculty of about 24 teachers and additional support staff served 348 students in kindergarten through fifth grades. A single administrator managed the school with the support of two office administrative assistants. An active Parent Teacher Association supported teachers and the school community with activities and enrichment programs. Parkway's literacy and library programs encouraged student participation in independent summer reading as well as the town's summer reading program at the local public library. Extracurricular opportunities included several before and after school activities including a language club, chess group, and student council.

Description of Participants

Seventy informational letters with consent forms were provided to Milano School for distribution to students identified by teachers as developing readers who had received literacy support during the current academic year. Nine unused consent packets were returned to me. A total of six students, an equal number of boys and girls, returned permission and consent slips from Milano School. Four students at Parkway School who were identified by district assessments as developing readers were invited to participate in the study. Three students, all girls, returned permission and consent forms from Parkway School. All students were

invited to participate in the study. To protect student privacy I assigned identification numbers on all survey and assessment information. Pseudonyms replaced actual student names for all discussion purposes and the children selected usernames and individual icons for blogging. In total, nine rising third grade students from two similar districts began the study (see Table 4.1). Student profiles sharing participant interests and literacy abilities as noted at the beginning of the study are provided.

Table 4.1

Student Information and School Identification

Student Pseudonyms	Gender	School
Alex	Male	Milano
Anna	Female	Parkway
Brandon	Male	Milano
Crystal	Female	Milano
Grace	Female	Milano
Kiley	Female	Parkway
Lucy	Female	Parkway
Max	Male	Milano
Rianna	Female	Milano

Student Narratives

Alex

Alex signed up to participate in the study after the initial permission form return date. He attended the second of my two orientation meetings. Alex is one of four children in his family; he presented as a child who needed consistent refocusing to keep to a task. We completed the MRP together and he seemed to be distracted easily by another child sitting next to him. Alex worked at a slower pace than his partner and used extended think time when responding. He liked trucks and expressed that he didn't really like reading. When completing the six open-ended questions on the survey he needed encouragement to write his ideas and gave limited one word responses with phonemic spelling. Phonemic spelling is the writing of each morpheme as it is pronounced phonemically. Developing readers often use one-to-one sound-symbol correlation when spelling.

When asked about his recent at home reading he mentioned he was reading about mega trucks. Despite his claims to not like reading he identified Tedd Arnold as his favorite author and indicated that *Fly Guy*, by Tedd Arnold, was a just right book he had at his house that he would like to read. This series is a good choice based on his DRP score of 25. When asked what gets him excited about books he responded, "New books." Alex identified monster trucks, cars, and trains as his choice for reading topics.

Alex's overall Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) score provided information on his self-concept and value of reading. His percentage score for the full survey was 66%; the self-concept raw score, which considers how he perceives himself as a reader as well as his self-perceived reading performance in comparison to his peers, was 25/40 and the value of reading score that considers the value placed on reading activities through the lens of

engagement and reading related activities was 28/40. As a literacy teacher and former classroom teacher, I was concerned that he was not an engaged reader and was anxious to connect him with books that would interest him and support him at his reading level.

Anna

Anna presented as a quiet student. Her eye contact was inconsistent and she was soft-spoken, sometimes needing to be prompted by name for a response. She is the middle child in her family with one sister two years older and another sister three years younger. Anna has participated in tier three literacy support for two years. Her class has recently finished a unit on series books and Anna has been reading Cam Jansen both at home and in school. She reported that she had recently finished *The Case of the Kidnapped Candy*, a DRA2 level 24 book that is approximately a mid-second grade reading level. In talking about the story she was able to name the main characters and included several events that were not sequenced or connected. It seemed that she had partially grasped the concept of this genre.

Anna reported that she likes to read books about animals and that in fact her favorite books have animals in them. She and her mother had recently purchased books in the Animal Ark series at the school book fair. These level 38 books that are typically an end of grade three level may not be the best match for her to read independently based on the current DRA2 level 24 score that was reported to me. The end of year grade two benchmark is DRA2 level 28.

Anna's mother shared that Anna and her older sister can be quite competitive, especially with sports. Both of them are skiers and race on ski teams. Anna and her family

vacation out of town for the summer, but her mother indicated that they will have Internet access and a computer available for her to use.

Anna does not typically read at home without encouragement from her parents. This description was supported by data I gathered from the initial MRP. Anna received a score of 34/40 on the self-concept portion of the MRP and 33/40 for value of reading. Her overall percent score was 83.75% on the survey. The value of reading survey indicated that she doesn't have conversations with friends about books she has read or spend much time at the library. Her self-concept as a reader indicated that she has trouble thinking of an answer when her teacher asks her about something she has read and that she doesn't view herself as a strong reader when she reads out loud.

Brandon

Brandon was quiet in both of our initial meetings and needed support with written responses. He has an older sister and one younger brother. His mother stayed with us during both group meetings and interjected several times as he thought about responses to the initial MRP questions in an effort to support his thinking and responses. Most times he responded to her encouragement and followed her suggestions.

Brandon's written open-ended survey responses were limited and not in sentence form. He identified Mark Teague as a favorite author. Depending on the title selected this may or may not be a just right book choice for Brandon as the author has several titles ranging from Fountas and Pinnell (F & P) levels I through M. F & P levels J through M are second grade equivalent levels. Brandon indicated *Key to the Treasure* as a just right book he would like to read, but shared no information about it. This book is a level N, above his end of year independent reading level based on the DRP score of 26 provided to me. DRP

scores 20-32 are considered the range for grade two. When asked how he found out about this book he responded, "I read it."

Brandon responded to additional survey questions with limited single or two word responses. When asked what gets him excited about books he wrote "fun stuff" with no further elaboration and when asked what do you like to read about his single word response was "mystery." His mother assisted him with spelling on both of these responses.

Brandon's MRP responses suggest that he has a high self-concept of himself as a reader and values reading. His overall score of 74/80 provided an equal score of 92.5% in each of the two categories. He rated himself the highest score for 16 of the 20 4-point Likert scale survey responses. For example, he indicated that reading can be hard for him and that he doesn't spend much time at the library. Additional responses indicated that his friends think reading is fun and that sometimes he is concerned about what others think of him as a reader.

Crystal

Crystal joined the study as a friend with Grace. She is an only child and her mother works fulltime outside the home. Her mother reported that Crystal will work on their home computer.

Crystal did not attend the first meeting so I met with her early on the day of our second meeting to review my study. Her MRP scores presented her as a child who valued reading but did not have a high self-concept of herself as a reader. Crystal's full survey score on the MRP was 81.5% with a self-concept score of 70%. Areas where she indicated a lack of confidence included reading aloud, responding to teacher's questions about what she had read, and figuring out unknown words. Her open-ended responses were not in sentence form

and indicated that she was reading different types of books. She was involved in reading books from a princess series, wanted to read Sponge Bob as a just right book, and indicated that she found out about books at home and in the library. She couldn't think of a favorite author but indicated *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. Crystal reported that she liked to read about "spots (sports), puppies, and dogs."

The different reading levels of the books she mentioned were within a range that she could comfortably read and understand based on her DRP reading score of 40 (an approximate mid-third grade reading level similar to F & P level O) with the exception of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. This book, a graphic novel very popular with students of varying ages, leans toward an older audience and has been assigned a F&P level S, a text more appropriate for an end of fourth grade or a fifth grade reader. The picture support provided through this genre may support her meaning making if she did select to read this book

Grace

Grace is a middle child with an older sister in middle school and a preschool-aged brother. Her mother described her as a reluctant reader who hasn't connected with reading. She enjoys swimming and is on a swim team for the summer. During the fall and spring she plays soccer. She was excited to participate in the blogging project.

Her mother reported that Grace's dad enjoyed and used technology for work and pleasure so they have two computers at home. Grace and her mother were outgoing and friendly at our first meeting. Grace stayed willingly with the group and exhibited a quiet nature during our first two meetings together.

When Grace completed the MRP her full survey score was 82.5%. Her value of reading was high, 95%, however the score of 28/40 for self-concept as a reader was quite low

at 70%. She viewed herself as an okay reader who had trouble thinking of an answer when asked about her reading, and indicated that she did not typically talk about her ideas when discussing stories in school.

When responding to open-ended questions Grace generally did not respond in sentence form. Her answers were phonetically spelled and she had some letter reversals. She identified two books that she had read at home yesterday and named “Susie Cline” (Suzy Kline) as her favorite author. Books by this author are typically end of grade two or beginning of grade three, comfortably within Grace’s independent level, and may be easy for her to read. When asked how she found out about these books she wrote that she “went to the lidiriy (library).” Grace indicated that she likes to read mystery books and books about “priceses” (princesses). Grace’s DRP score of 46 proposed a higher reading level range more typical of late third grade, although this did not match my observations of her spelling patterns or the books she self-selected for summer reading.

Kiley

Kiley has an older brother entering middle school and a younger sister who attends preschool. She was quiet and agreeable during our two initial meetings. Kiley plays sports and is a hardworking student who enjoys school. She is a methodical worker who typically uses extra time to complete her assignments in school. Her mother acknowledged that Kiley needs extra time and puts high effort into her work to be successful. Kiley has received literacy support since the middle of first grade and is just one DRA2 level below grade level expectations at this point in time.

Kiley was reserved at both of our training meetings and appeared to be concentrating hard as she thought through my questions. Her open-ended responses were not quite

complete responses and when a question had two parts she answered only the first portion. She worked methodically through each survey response as I read the questions out loud. The total score for her MRP survey was 81.25%. She indicated that she values reading with a score of 92.5%, but had a low self-concept as a reader with a score of 70%. Decoding skills, responding to questions about her reading, and reading out loud were all areas where she identified lower comfort levels.

Lucy

Lucy has a younger brother who will be starting kindergarten in the fall. As an older sibling, Lucy seemed to have a work ethic that exhibited responsibility beyond her years. She was careful when responding to questions and thoughtfully prepared her answers before responding. She received in school tier three literacy support during most of first grade and all of second grade. Lucy recently attained the end-of-year grade level goal of independent level 28. This means she has met the district benchmark for her grade and will no longer receive extra literacy support services outside the classroom.

Based on my observations of Lucy as she completed the survey and we engaged in conversation, her confidence was not yet secure and I sensed her need for validation as she responded to the open-ended survey questions. Her MRP scores presented her as a child who valued reading but did not have a high self-concept of herself as a reader. Lucy's full survey score on the MRP was 81.5% with a self-concept score of 28/40 and a value of reading score of 37/40. Areas where she indicated a lower self-concept included not reading as well as her friends, realizing that reading was hard, and decoding new words. Her open-ended responses were not in sentence form but indicated that she was reading different types of books in school and at home.

Max

Max was unable to attend our initial meeting so I invited him to come early on the morning of the second meeting to complete the MRP with me. He shared that he enjoyed computer games, his pets, and reading. During our meeting in the computer lab he was somewhat distractible and chatted regularly with a friend seated next to him. He tended to rush ahead and I needed to refocus him to the task several times. When trying to log on to the computer, after several attempts we determined that his school password and login did not work. He watched my demo screen until a school adult logged him on under her password. He was then able to select a login and symbol for the blog. I requested that his mother meet with me at a later date so he and I could go over the blog in more detail. Prior to the meeting she emailed that Max had finished reading most of the books and would appreciate more.

The following week I met separately with Max and his mother at the public library to review the study and practice instructions for using the blog. He was very talkative and confident, chatting easily about his hobbies, pets, and summer vacation plans. Max has no siblings and seemed very comfortable chatting with adults. His mother left us and I redid the blog lesson from the previous week. Max responded to the practice blog questions with my help. We opened the first weekly reader response blog and began to craft a response together based on a book he had completed. I gave Max another set of books for continued reading.

A review of his MRP indicated a child who scored himself at the highest level in most areas of self-concept except thinking of an answer when he is asked a question about his reading and talking about his ideas when discussing stories with his peers. Max's DRP score of 45 indicated he was in the reading range recommended for third grade. His overall MRP

survey was 35/40 or 87.5% for self-concept as a reader. A lower score of 31/40 or 77.5% was presented for value of reading. Max responded that he does not talk with his friends about books he has enjoyed reading. He further indicated that he felt people who read a lot were boring and while he rated himself as a very good reader, he responded that knowing how to read well was not that important. I found these results interesting as Max's mother had emailed that he needed new books as he had read most of what I had provided. During the time I met with Max at the library in addition to reviewing the practice lesson he missed because of technical problems with his school password we attempted to craft a response for week one. He had trouble recalling information to discuss a book he had read and I needed to strongly scaffold the response we developed. He looked back at the book for the character names and I needed to question each element of the story in order for him to retell the setting, events, and ending. This observation paralleled the ideas of not talking about books he had read and that reading was not really important to him, two comments obtained from the MRP survey.

Rianna

Rianna has one younger sibling. Her grandmother brought her to our morning meetings and explained that Rianna's mother worked so she was the morning caregiver. Rianna was quiet at our first meeting and sat next to Grace. They had been in class together and chose to be partners as they worked on the gathering word search activity at our first meeting.

Rianna's survey scores for self-concept and value of reading were relatively close. Her responses provided a score of 36/40 or 90% for self-concept and 35/40 or 87.5% for value of reading. Her open-ended responses were written as complete sentences without

punctuation and her spelling was mostly accurate. She did not indicate any books that she would like to read, but shared that she enjoyed reading Cam Jansen, specifying that mystery was a genre she liked to read. Cam Jansen is a mystery series with book levels ranging from end of second grade readability to early third grade readability. This series should be an easy and comfortable read for her based on the DRP score of 46 provided by the district assessments.

Description of Summer Reading Web log

I developed my Web log using software provided through Class Press (www.classpress.com). I set up profiles for all participants and created a welcome page with three questions that I used as an introductory lesson (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2). My intention for this Welcome Web log was to allow students an opportunity to experience using the Web log through the gradual release model (Fisher & Frey, 2008) provided by my instruction and supervision before they needed to access it at home and make comments independently. Following the gradual release continuum I allowed students to watch as I modeled the process using the blog on a full size projection of the Web log screen.

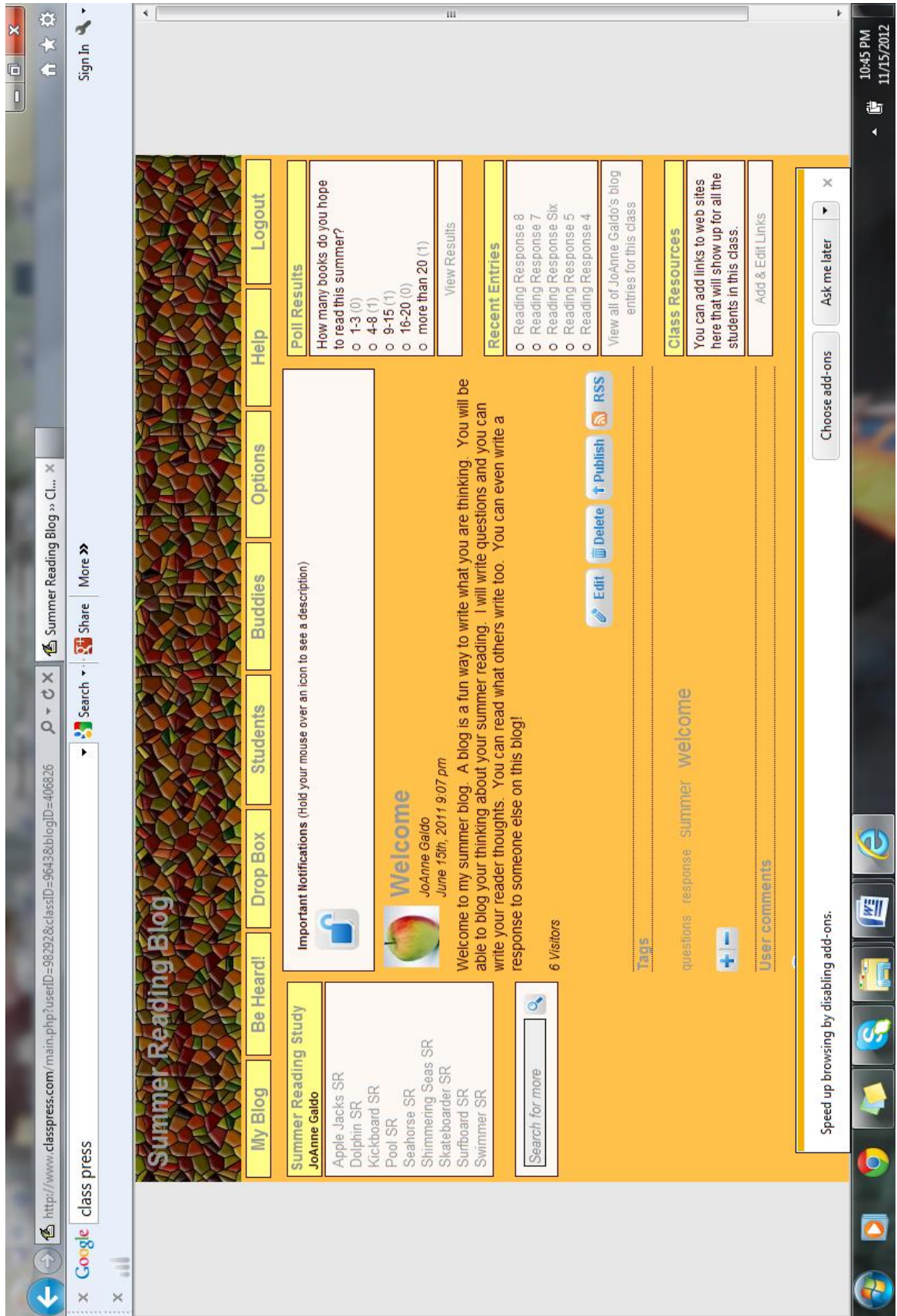


Figure 4.1. Welcome blog for introductory lesson.

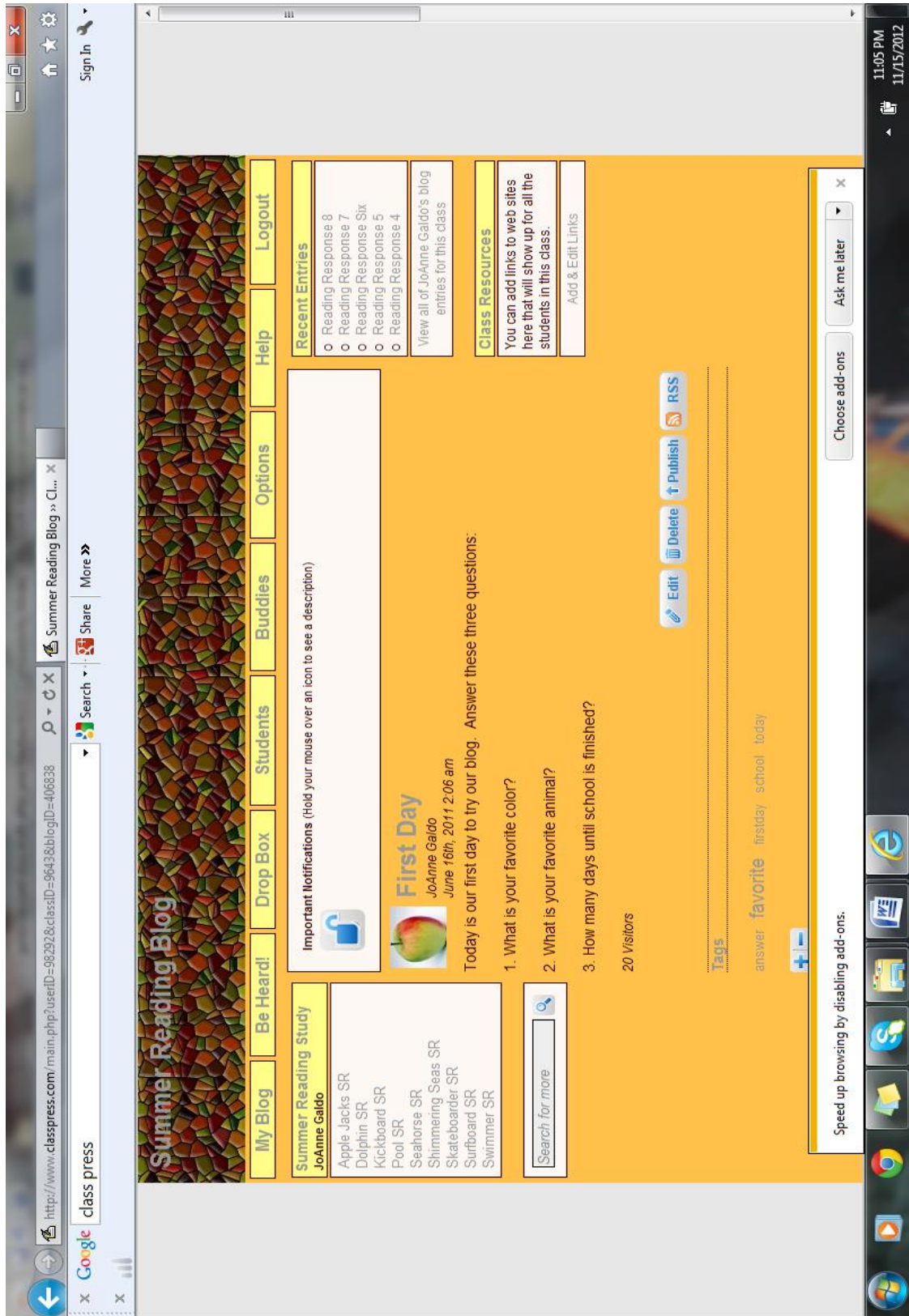


Figure 4.2. Welcome blog used for student guided response practice.

My intention for this Welcome Web log was to allow students an opportunity to experience using the Web log through the gradual release model (Fisher & Frey, 2008) provided by my instruction and supervision before they needed to access it at home and make comments independently. Following the gradual release continuum I allowed students to watch as I modeled the process using the blog on a full size projection of the Web log screen.

During the initial lesson I guided students as they chose usernames and Web log icon symbols. I utilized the projector and screen that was available in the computer lab at Milano School and the Smartboard available in the library at Parkway School. Most students were able to follow my steps to experience the blog and post responses to three generic questions. I included a survey question in a side bar asking students how many books they hoped to read this summer. I showed participants how to respond to the survey, how their response was recorded, and where they could look to view survey results. I planned to include survey questions during several of the summer blogging sessions so I wanted to be sure that students noticed where survey questions would be located and how to record a response.

At Milano School some students had trouble logging on through the school site so not everyone was able to complete the three questions. One student was eventually logged on under a teacher profile so he was able to experience part of the lesson. I made arrangements with his mother to meet at a later date in the public library to provide an opportunity for him to practice with my support.

When I repeated the process at Parkway School all participants were able to select user icon symbols, experience the blog login, complete the survey, and record Web log comments. The lesson was much smoother, perhaps because of the smaller group size, researcher experience, or a difference in student computer experience. These participants

needed less scaffolding on computer use and were able to follow verbal directions with the use of the Smartboard display as I guided them through the process. Students experienced each step of the process, ultimately posting their comments on the Web log independently.

The following week I delivered individual bags of leveled books that the students had selected (see Appendix K) to the schools. Each student's book bag included a copy of instructions for the blog. Office personnel distributed the book bags to students during the final two days of school. Grace left on June 17 for summer vacation, a few days before school ended, so I made an alternate plan for book delivery and met with her mother in Milano School's front parking lot on July 1.

The following week summer blogging began (Figures 4.3 and 4.4). All parents of participants were notified via email that the Web log was open. I attached a copy of Web log instructions with each email to ensure that all participants were prepared.

The screenshot displays a web browser window with the following elements:

- Browser Address Bar:** `http://www.classpress.com/main.php?userID=98292&classID=9643&blogID=407614`
- Page Title:** Summer Reading Blog
- Navigation Menu:** My Blog, Be Heard!, Drop Box, Students, Buddies, Options, Help, Logout
- Main Content Area:**
 - Important Notifications:** (Hold your mouse over an icon to see a description)
 - Reading Response 1:**
 - Author: JoAnne Galdo
 - Date: June 28th, 2011 8:18 am
 - Text: "Now that everyone is officially on summer vacation it's time to start our weekly blogging. Please pick one question that you want to use for your first reading response. During the week you can comment more than once if you want. The same questions will be posted until Tuesday, July 5th."
 - Question 1: "If you had to choose to be one of the characters in your book, who would you choose? Explain why."
 - Question 2: "Which character in your book faces the biggest problem? Explain why."
- Left Sidebar:**
 - Summer Reading Study:** JoAnne Galdo
 - Apple Jacks SR
 - Dolphin SR
 - Kickboard SR
 - Pool SR
 - Seahorse SR
 - Shimmering Seas SR
 - Skateboarder SR
 - Surfboard SR
 - Swimmer SR
 - Search for more:** [Search Input Field]
- Right Sidebar:**
 - Poll Results:** Minutes read June 21-Jun 28
 - 0-15 minutes (0)
 - 16-30 minutes (0)
 - 31-45 minutes (0)
 - 46-60 minutes (1)
 - more than 60 minutes (1)
 - Recent Entries:**
 - Reading Response 8
 - Reading Response 7
 - Reading Response Six
 - Reading Response 5
 - Reading Response 4
 - Class Resources:** You can add links to web sites here that will show up for all the students in this class. [Add & Edit Links]

Figure 4.3. Week one blog questions.

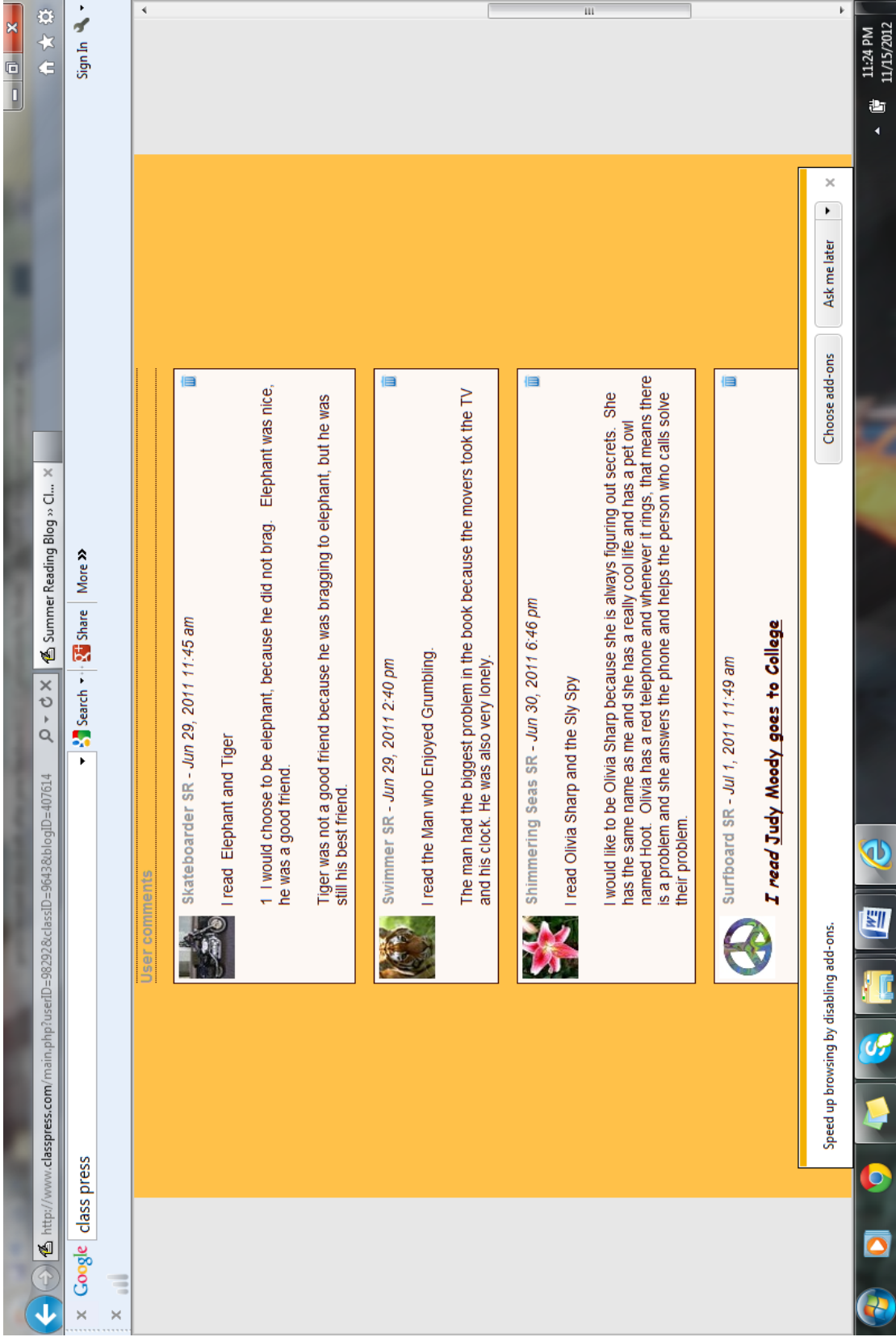


Figure 4.4. Week one sample of blog responses.

Throughout the summer I posted a total of eight sets of questions on the blog to guide response comments. Students were able to read each other's comments and were encouraged to leave multiple comments during the week. Nine students began the study in June. Three students left the study for varying reasons: one student stopped participating after two summer comments; a second student's parent reported that their home computer had crashed and her daughter was unable to post responses but was continuing to read; the third student was frustrated by the project and required greater support than his parent was able to provide. His mother emailed, "I ... am so busy with activities all the time, I sometimes have a hard time keeping up. Also, [REDACTED] has a really hard time taking self-responsibility for tasks such as your study b/c he has ADHD-- and reading and writing is a major challenge for him to begin with. He tries really hard to avoid things that make him concentrate that hard. Honestly, your reading study created a problem for us where we were fighting with him to get it done. I couldn't take it, and I had to let it go" (Parent email, October 20, 2011). No one contacted me regarding withdrawal from the study so I maintained email contact throughout the project, sending parent reminders to all participants through September, thus offering opportunities for students to participate at any time.

Student Web log response rates varied and while I initially requested a commitment of six blogs, in the end I included the six students who completed pre and post surveys and participated in the follow-up focal group meeting regardless of the number of comments they blogged. Table 4.2 shows an overview of the frequency of participant Web log comments.

Table 4.2

Table of Participant Blogging Response to Sets of Researcher Posted Questions

Student	# Blogs	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5	Set 6	Set 7	Set 8
Alex*	2		X	X					
Anna	6	X	2X		X	2X			
Brandon*	2	X	X						
Crystal*	2		2X						
Grace	10	X	2X	X	X	3X		X	X
Kiley	3		X	X	X				
Lucy	8	X	X	X	X	X	2X		X
Max	2	X			X				
Rianna	7	X	X	X	X	2X			X

*Note: These students did not complete the study.

Findings

In this section about findings I first explain my coding process, then codes and themes, followed by themes as they relate to research, including a description of themes. Each of four types of qualitative data were typed into separate Microsoft Word 2007 files in tables: Motivation to Read survey responses; reflexive journal and field notes; student artifact blogs; and, Interview transcriptions. Each table had four columns allowing the data to be numbered by line and coded through first and second cycle coding. Data were coded by chunk depending on ideas a data source. I then looked across codes, reviewed data and collapsed codes when possible based on related data.

Holistic Coding was used as a process of exploration in order to create an overview of data I had collected through Motivation to Read survey responses; my reflexive journal and field notes, student artifact blogs, and Interview transcriptions. For first cycle coding I relied on Descriptive Coding as a method recommended for beginning qualitative researchers by Saldaña (2009). “This method categorizes data at a basic level to provide the researcher an organizational grasp of the study” (p. 73). This coding method generated 185 codes (see Appendix L) and allowed me to further process and frame data I had collected. During the second coding phase, codes were collapsed or eliminated due to similarities or repetitions which resulted in 39 codes. In second coding, “The goal is not to ‘take you to the next level,’ but to cycle back to your first coding efforts so you can strategically cycle forward to additional coding and qualitative data analytic methods” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 340).

Of the eight observational techniques noted by Bernard and Ryan (2003), three applied to my study: repetitions; similarities and differences; and, theory-related materials guidelines. Additional combining and collapsing of several codes, allowed

11 categories to emerge. When combined with Bernard and Ryan's (2003) thematic analysis techniques these served to inform five themes (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Number of Codes per Theme

Theme	Number of Second Cycle Codes	Percentage of Total
One: Readers experienced summer learning in different ways	1. Assessments 2. Books 3. Motivation	8%
Two: Multiple levels of thinking were evidenced through discussions and written responses	4. Gradual release continuum 5. Developing readers 6. Expansion of ideas 7. Question choice 8. Social lenses 9. Text evidence 10. Writing conventions 11. Written response 12. Reading strategies	23%
Three: Students exhibited changes in value of reading and perceived reading competence	13. Appreciation 14. Reading plan 15. Value of reading 16. Work ethic 17. Competitiveness 18. Number of blogs 19. Parent involvements 20. Reading strategies 21. Self-concept	23%
Four: Variations in students' technology experiences influenced independence and participation	22. Computer experience 23. Developing confidence 24. Developmental stage 25. Distractions 26. Future planning 27. Gradual release continuum 28. New learning 29. Parent support 30. Word processing skills	23%

Theme	Number of Codes	Percentage of Total
Five: Students experienced different levels of engagement during the summer study	31. Student safety 32. Fostering connections through blog comments and responses 33. Gradual release 34. Parent influence 35. Reading habits 36. Thoughtful responses 37. Active participation 38. Engagement and motivation 39. Just right book choice	23%
Totals:	39	100%

Themes and Supporting Literature

This section is organized presenting each of the five themes as they are related to research questions, instruments, and supporting literature. Table 4.4 provides an overview of research questions, themes, and related instruments.

Table 4.4

Research Questions, Themes, and Related Instruments

Research Questions	Themes	Instruments
1. How does participation in a summer literacy initiative that combines a choice of leveled reading materials and blogging influence summer setback for developing third grade readers?	Theme One: Readers experienced summer learning in different ways. Theme Two: Multiple levels of thinking were evidenced through discussions and written responses.	1. DRA2 2. DRP
2. In what ways do summer reading and response blogging influence students' perceptions about the value of reading?	Theme Three: Students exhibited changes in value of reading and perceived reading competence.	1. MRP 2. Student interviews
3. In what ways do summer reading and response blogging influence reader self-concept for developing third grade readers?	Theme Three: Students exhibited changes in value of reading and perceived reading competence. Theme Four: Variations in students' technology experiences influenced independence and participation.	1. MRP 2. Student interviews

Table 4.4 (*continued*)

Research Questions, Themes, and Related Instruments

Research Questions	Themes	Instruments
4. How does providing leveled reading materials and student inclusion in a blogging community influence observed habits of reading as reported by students and caregivers?	Theme Five: Students experienced different levels of engagement during the summer study.	1. Student Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol 2. Parent Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol
5. In what ways do social interactions while blogging about books influence students' reading and writing?	Theme Four: Variations in students' technology experiences influenced independence and participation. Theme Five: Students experienced different levels of engagement during the summer study.	1. Researcher Reflexive Journal with Field Notes 2. Student Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol 3. Parent Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol

Theme One: Readers experienced summer learning in different ways

Three codes informed theme one: book choice, assessment scores, and motivation.

Theme one addresses research question one: How does participation in a summer literacy initiative that combines a choice of leveled reading materials and blogging influence summer setback for developing third grade readers? Offering interest-based books that are within a student's independent reading range and allowing interest-based choice have been identified as valuable practices in motivating students to read. Fink (2006) discussed developing readers in her research who overcame reading obstacles as children. She shared their experiences noting that immersion in a topic that engaged their interest was instrumental in their success.

Several research studies (Allington et al., 2010; Kim, 2006; White & Kim, 2008) have shown that providing interest-based leveled reading materials to children from families of lower socioeconomic groups had a positive impact on summer learning. These findings did not transfer to students in my study. While students in this study received interest-based leveled books that offered at home summer reading and writing opportunities, six of the nine participants did not maintain reading levels as measured by the DRP and DRA2 fall assessments. Tables 4.5 and 4.6 identify DRP and DRA2 scores as reported by schools for spring and fall. In Table 4.5 the spring scores are from the district administered end of grade two primary DRP assessments at Milano School. The fall score reflects the results of the district administered beginning of grade three standard DRP assessments. These scores are from two different DRP levels, primary and standard, so a test/retest comparison could not be done. In Table 4.6, spring scores are from end of grade two DRA2 assessments and fall

scores are from beginning of grade three DRA2 assessments at Parkway School. DRA2 levels plus comprehension and fluency scores are shown for students.

Table 4.5

Table of DRP Spring and Fall Scores

Student	Spring DRP Score	Fall DRP Score	Change
Alex*	25	29	+1
Brandon*	26	27	+1
Crystal	40	37	-1
Grace	46	30	-16
Max	45	35	-11
Rianna	46	30	-16

*Note: Student score change reflected an increase in DRP level.

Table 4.6

Table of DRA2 Spring and Fall Scores

Student	DRA2 Level		Comprehension		Fluency	
	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall
Anna	24	16	17	22	11	9**
Kiley*	24	28	19	20	11	10**
Lucy	28	24	21	22	13	11**

*Note: Student DRA2 level increased.

**Note: Student fluency decreased.

These assessments show that while three students demonstrated marginal growth, most students experienced a decline in summer learning. Two students who left the study, Alex and Brandon, demonstrated slight increases in DRP scores. Alex's mother had emailed that Alex was working with a tutor during the summer so the one-to-one extra instruction may have contributed to his summer learning. Of interest was that of Alex's summer reading books, four of the 10 were informational texts (see Appendix K). Brandon's books had two of eight titles that were informational (see Appendix K). A 2007 study by Guthrie and his colleagues (Guthrie et al.) suggested that motivation for informational texts predicted growth in general reading motivation more than motivation for narrative texts. Allington (1991) emphasized that supporting and nurturing motivation and achievement was critical for the success of developing readers. Alex and Brandon's summer learning suggested support for the inclusion of informational texts as part of students' summer reading.

Kiley also demonstrated growth from spring to fall with the increase on her DRA2 level. In our conversations, Kiley's mother commented that she noticed Kiley was reading more this summer and liked the idea of having books available. In our September meeting Kiley commented about the study that, "It was fun because I had all my books to read and could just read" (Interview transcription, September 28, 2011). These three readers experienced growth during the summer out-of-school time.

Six of the nine original students experienced summer setback. Anna slipped back two levels in her reading moving from DRA2 level 24 to level 16. It is interesting to note that Anna seemed to be driven by external motivators such as reading on her mother's kindle and as compliance to my request to blog; as soon as she met the requested six blog entries she stopped responding. Grace and Rianna both demonstrated considerable drops in their DRP

scores. Their selected leveled book choices for summer reading through my study were fiction. The DRP assessment measured reading comprehension through nonfiction passages. The style of thinking and comprehension practices used with narrative reading are different than those utilized when reading informational text. Their summer reading materials through my study did not provide reading practice in support of the DRP assessment. Max, Crystal, and Lucy also exhibited summer setback, but not to such dramatic extents as Anna, Grace, and Rianna. Each of them had selected only fictional texts for their leveled summer reading choices.

Theme one, which considered different ways students experienced summer learning, addressed research question one discussing the study findings as they related to summer setback for developing third grade readers when blogging and leveled reading choice were employed as an at home summer reading program. Research over many years have shown that students typically score lower on fall reading assessments after summer vacation than previous spring assessments (Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson, 2007; Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Entwisle & Alexander, 1994; Heyns, 1978).

Theme Two: Multiple levels of thinking were evidenced through discussions and written responses

Nine codes contributed to this theme and its support of research question one: writing conventions; question choice; written response; reading strategies; level of response; use of text evidence; expansion of ideas; developing readers; and, social lenses.

Students' written work varied and use of sentence structure, conventional spelling, uppercase usage, and punctuation were influenced by parental support. When students posted comments without support they wrote to get their ideas down without worrying about

conventions. For example, a posted response was “Auther and the best coach ever what i like about this is that it teaches you learn a lot about soccer” (Web log comment, July 14, 2011).

Uppercase use in titles and the pronoun “I” were overlooked as was all punctuation. Spelling of the main character’s name and suffix spelling were overlooked as well. The thoughts were written as one sentence, even though she was attempting to convey several ideas.

Eight sets of questions were posted throughout the summer. Typically students could select from one of four questions to frame their response. Often students would select the same question. On July 12, 2011, I posted the fourth set of response questions. Four of the five responses posted for that week selected the same question for their response, “What do you like or dislike about this story?” Alex, Rianna, and Lucy expanded their responses with details to support their thinking. Kiley selected a different stem and responded “I am reading the Boxcar Kids and I think that Violet is like my sister. My sister helps me do things and she is older than me too. I think living in a boxcar might be fun but not so comfie as my house” (Web log comment, July 20, 2011).

Levels of student thinking developed as the study proceeded. The written responses for one student demonstrated growth in levels of thinking and writing during the summer months, as well as an increase in text evidence included in her response. For example, in early July a student posted “I read the book, Princess. The character that I would most like to be is Princess, because she is cute and gets whatever she wants. Also, I love dogs and think I know how to be a good one” (Web log comment, July 8, 2011). The same student posted “In the story I am reading, Goldie the Sunshine Fairy, Rachel and Kristy are like people I have known all my life. Rachel is like me. And Kristy is like my friend Evelyn. We both like fairies, sleeping outside, and solving mysteries” (Web log comment, July 25, 2011). About a

month later, on August 23, this student posted “I read, Pearl the Cloud Fairy. In this book Kristy changes into a fairy and then back to a human again. She does this because she needs to get a magic feather from the goblin. She is able to change back and forth from human to fairy with the help of fairy dust they carry in a locket” (Web log comment, August 23, 2011). Allington (2012) stressed that simply reading more develops readers more. He emphasized the important connection between reading and writing, noting the special relationship between comprehension and composing.

Struggling with social issues such as honesty and fairness are part of the thinking developing readers need to experience to deepen comprehension. Wood (2007) shared that children this age like to experience stories with themes of fairness and justice. Several readers commented on social issues encountered in their reading. “Me and the main character have in comnet (common) that we both like to tell the truth” (Web log comment, July 28, 2011). Another wrote “I didn’t like that people were stealing and taking candy even the teacher. In my book the case of the kidnapped Candy the teacher made a surprise for the class. It was chocolate kisses. When she uncovered it on Friday they were all gone. Jigsaw and Mila figured out almost everyone snuck kisses until they were all gone and didn’t tell the truth. I don’t think that is right and no one got in trouble so they might do it again” (Web log comment, July 27, 2011).

This theme lends partial support to question one which considered the effects of leveled book choice and blogging on summer learning for developing readers.

Theme Three: Students exhibited changes in value of reading and perceived reading competence

MRP survey data and nine codes informed this theme: value of reading; number of blogs; self-concept; work ethic; reading plan; parent involvement; reading strategies; appreciation; and, competitiveness. Theme three supports research questions two and three addressing the ways summer reading and response blogging influence students' perceptions about the value of reading and reader self-concept.

The MRP provided open-ended response information that supported my study. The open-ended questions I selected offered insight into the types of reading that interested students. The survey portion of the MRP allowed me to learn about students' self-concept as readers and the level to which they valued reading. I analyzed pre and post survey data for the six students who completed my study. In an effort to explore the relationship between blogging and motivation a test-retest exercise was conducted for self-concept and value of reading subcategories of the MRP survey. The paired samples test results indicated that there was no significant difference in the means for either self-concept or value of reading.

The MRP self-concept as a reader measures how a student personally views himself or herself as a reader. In research with her colleagues Gambrell (1996) found that "students' self-concepts as readers are linked to reading achievement, with less proficient readers having significantly lower self-concepts than their more proficient counterparts" (p. 19). Table 4.7 presents blogging and pre/post test MRP survey data for individual students. Grace and Lucy experienced a boost in their motivation to read self-concept that paralleled their high number of blog responses related to self-selected just right books. Wigfield and Guthrie's (1997) research in this area support that "...when children believe that they are

competent and self-efficacious at reading they should be more likely to engage in reading”
 (p. 421).

Table 4.7

Table of Participant Blogging Totals and Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) Scores

Student	# Blogs	Pre MRP Self-Concept as a Reader	Post MRP Self-Concept as a Reader	Pre MRP Value of Reading	Post MRP Value of Reading
Anna	6	85.0%	85.0%	83.5%	70.0%
Grace	10	70.0%	97.5%	95.0%	95.0%
Kiley	3	70.0%	72.5%	92.5%	77.5%
Lucy	8	70.0%	87.5%	92.5%	90.0%
Max	2	87.5%	85.0%	77.5%	47.5%
Rianna	7	90.0%	87.5%	87.5%	85.0%

MRP survey questions offered four answer choices that were scored with a value of one through four. Figure 4.5 shows pre and post self-concept scores for each of the six participants. Grace and Lucy posted the highest number of blog response comments during the summer. Their self-concept scores reflected lower self-concepts at the initiation of the study. Grace recorded 10 response comments on the blog during the summer and her post self-concept score increased by 27.5% as measured by the MRP. Lucy recorded eight response comments on the summer blog and her post self-concept score represented an increase of 17.5%. Other students who blogged lesser amounts did not demonstrate such shifts.

When comparing pre and post value of reading scores, which consider perceptions of how much children like to read, all but one score set declined over the summer. Figure 4.6 shows pre and post value of reading scores for each of the six participants. Max and Kiley, students who utilized the blog two and three times respectively, demonstrated the largest differences in pre and post value of reading scores. Both Max and Kiley reported reading their books, but did not actively participate in the written response component of the study. Students who posted six or more Web log comments showed lesser differences in their pre and post value of reading scores. Grace, who posted 10 blog responses during the summer, maintained her value of reading from the end of school probe to the beginning of school probe as measured by the MRP. These results support existing research that speak to the connectedness of reading and writing (Allington, 2012). When reading and writing are partnered it demands a deeper interaction with the text. Grace reported that blogging “helped you learn more and it helped you think through a little bit. To think about what you’re going to type you have to go back in the book (Interview transcription, September 27, 2011).

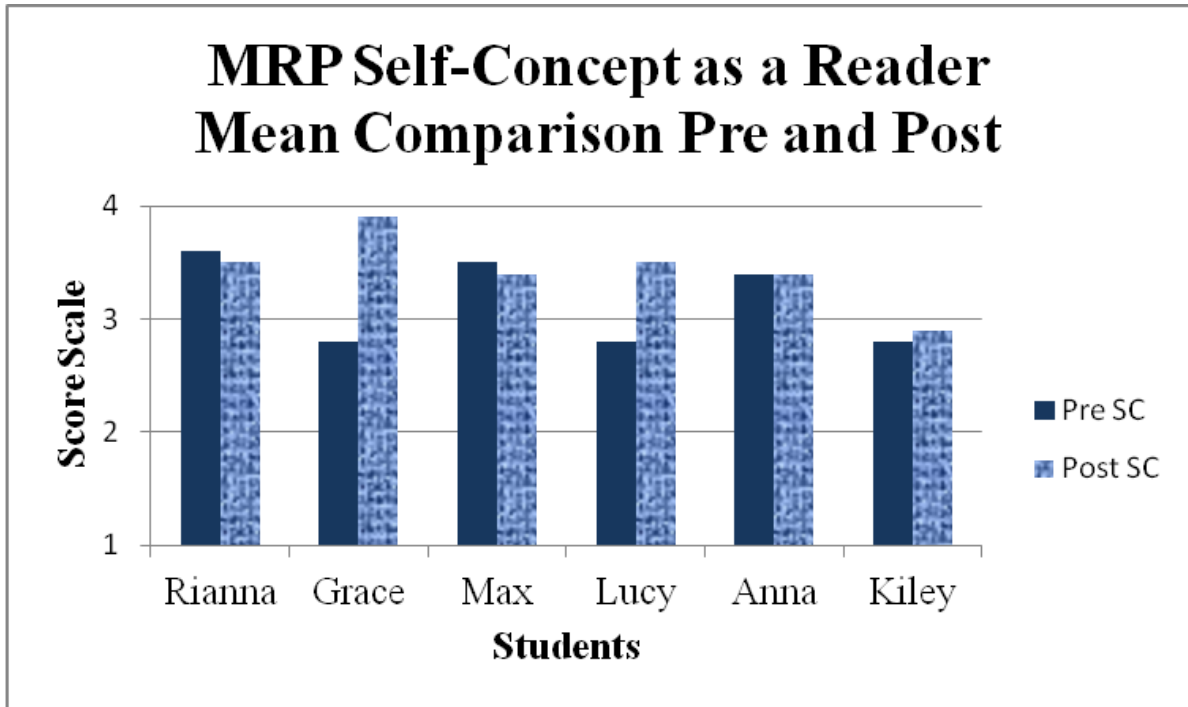


Figure 4.5. Pre and post mean comparison of MRP self-concept.

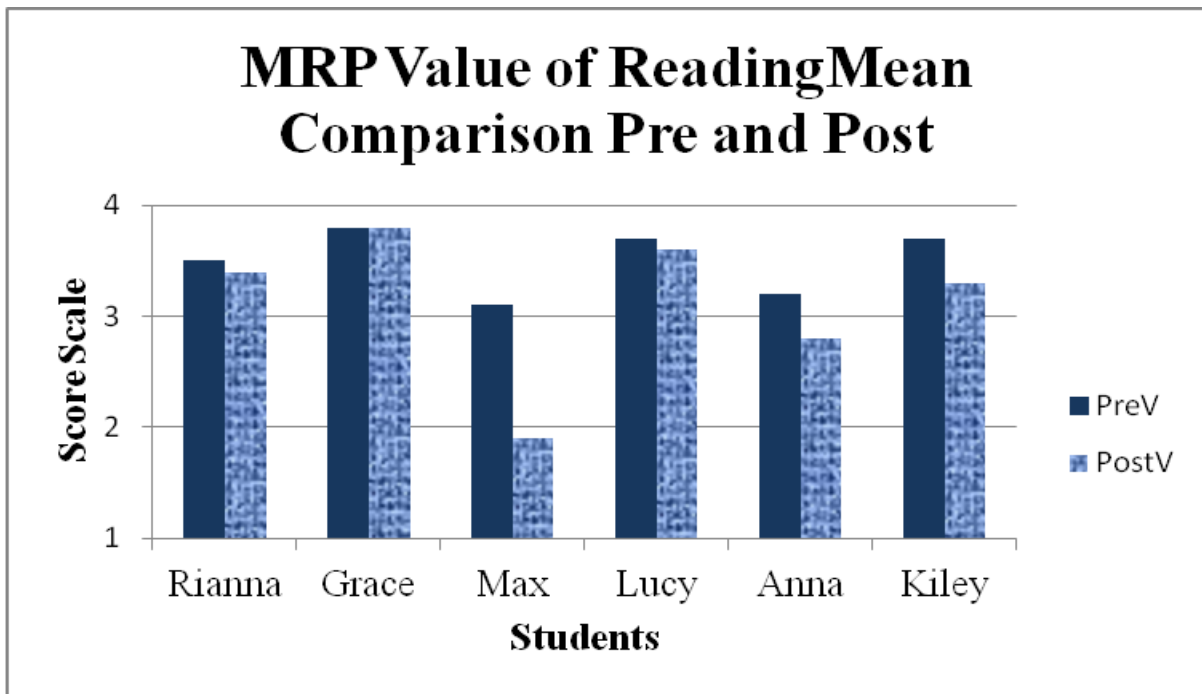


Figure 4.6. Pre and post mean comparison of MRP value of reading.

Rianna, Lucy, and Grace evidenced their strong work ethic through responding somewhat consistently to the eight sets of questions posted throughout the summer. Anna responded regularly during the first five sets of questions, however, her mother reported that she was largely responsible for Anna's reading and participation offering frequent reminders and extrinsic motivations such as having Anna read on a kindle. Levels of reading involvement differ for students who are motivated extrinsically and sustained engagement is less likely to occur for these readers than their intrinsically motivated peers (Wigfield, 1997). Students driven by extrinsic motivation can experience success as readers, but do not share the same level of involvement as their intrinsically motivated peers. In Anna's case she stopped blogging after meeting my requested six reader response comments. It's possible that Anna did not demonstrate intrinsic motivation during the summer project. Her mother prompted her to read at home, and during the September interview when discussing the blog Anna commented that the blog was good because students got to read it and the teacher got to see that the students actually read the book because they were able write about it. Perhaps only the need she felt to comply with adult requests served to motivate her reading.

Max's mother requested additional books at the beginning of the study. When we met and I replenished his summer supply he was anxious to start reading. He commented that he was almost done with the books I had given him and that he reads fast (Field notes, June 29, 2011). When I had met with the group to complete the MRP survey Max had rushed to get through despite my asking him to slow down and answer when I read the questions (Field notes, June 16, 2011). Readers who rush miss the opportunity to interact deeply with the text. Rosenblatt (1991) shared that the reader has a responsibility to participate actively and evoke meaning from the text. In my conversation with Max prepping

him for his first response, he had difficulty remembering the characters and basic plot of a story he had read. I wondered if his idea that “fast is good” sacrificed meaning making for him as a reader.

Open-ended responses from MRP surveys asked students to share book titles they would like to read next. All but one student reflected on a plan for reading a specific book over the summer. As part of the study students self-selected books and named titles of books that they wanted to read during the summer months. I considered these selections when I provided students with just right books for summer reading.

Baker (2003) emphasized the importance of parental influence and the home literacy environment, noting the link between home, school, and student as a significant contributor to reading development, self-concept, and motivation. For many students parent support influenced their level of activity in reading and blogging. As mentioned earlier, Alex’s mother was unable to support him and since he did not take ownership of the project, he stopped participating. Anna’s mother was candid in sharing her ideas “In all honesty it was a little more than what I anticipated. Even though the schedule was not so packed, like during the school year, things were still busy and it was hard to get to sometimes” (Interview transcription, October 6, 2012). Crystal’s mother reported (Email, August 11, 2011) that her computer crashed. While she wrote that she hoped to get it repaired quickly, Crystal did not blog for the duration of the study. Lucy’s mother made a comment of having her participate in this summer project so she would learn about blogging. Brandon’s mother shared at our first meeting that she enrolled Brandon so she could learn how to blog. Research encouraging literate home environments and parent involvement is not new. The home school connection is important in all areas, but especially reading. Wigfield’s (1997) work

with engagement encouraged both school and home reading environments to support positive experiences in reading.

These data respond to research questions two and three which asked how summer reading and response blogging influenced students' value of reading and self-concept for developing readers.

Theme Four: Variations in students' technology experiences influenced independence and participation

Nine codes informed the development of theme four: new learning; gradual release continuum; computer experience; parent support; word-processing skills; distraction; developing confidence; developmental stage; and, future planning. Theme four informed research questions three, which addressed self-concept, and research question five, which considered how social interactions while blogging might influence students' reading and writing.

Using a Web log was a new experience for all students who participated in the study and most seemed excited to learn about it at our June meeting. The idea of using the computers for reader response seemed logical based on my previous experience with second graders. Prior to implementing my study I had selected a small group of three students from my school to assess computer skills and determined a project like this was within their capabilities. Wood (2007) described students of this age as "beginning to master handwriting, handcrafts, computers, and drawing" (p. 101). Students who posted Web log comments on a regular basis throughout the summer increased their word processing skills and self-confidence. Grace shared, "Blogging was good for me. Like I got to typing better..." (Interview transcription, September 27, 2011).

Teaching students to access the blog and post comments involved high scaffolding as several students from Wilmont School were not independent and demonstrated a need for support with computer basics such as logging in with their passwords. Step-by-step modeling and one-to-one support allowed most students to experience success generating a username and selecting a blog icon. One student needed to meet with me at a later date to review (Field notes, June 16, 2011). At Parkway School students were more comfortable with computer basics and "...I could give a direction and they were able to follow along with limited support" (Reflexive journal note, June 17, 2011).

Baker (2003) discussed the significance of parental influence on literacy development for their children. Parent behaviors signal their value of literacy related activities and contribute to motivation in reading. Parents supported students by assisting with the typing part of blogging as this was a challenge for some children. Anna's mother reported, "She wasn't used to typing and it took her awhile to get her ideas down, she did it, but sometimes I helped her just to get it done" (Interview transcription October 6, 2011). Kiley's mother agreed, "The blogging was a challenge for our schedule too." I asked Kiley's mother if she felt that it would have been different if Kiley was more independent with the computer. She responded, "Yes, then it's not reliant on my time or schedule" (Interview transcription October 6, 2011). Rianna felt that the typing was hard and shared, "I told my mother what, then my mother typed it in because I'm not good at using typing" (Interview transcription, September 27, 2011). Grace also accepted support one evening from her sister who typed for her so she could get done quickly and go out for some fun. The at home support during this summer project reflected a value of reading and writing activities.

Even though my sample trial indicated that end-of-year second grade students could respond proficiently on the computer to school writing activities with little support from me, this was not the case for all students participating in my study. Max shared that he would rather play games on the computer, declaring, “If I’m going to go on the computer I’m going to play video games on it” (Interview transcription, September 27, 2011). His issue may have been more of getting distracted than needing support, but I did note that when we met at the library he needed help locating letters on the keyboard and used one finger on each hand when typing (Field notes, June 29, 2011). Parent support was needed for many of the students. In a conversation with one of my advisors we discussed the quantity of responses and wondered if the students’ actual experience with computers was part of the issue, thinking that perhaps this task may be too challenging for students this age (Reflexive journal notes, July 26, 2011).

Grace and Lucy gained confidence in their computer skills. Grace shared, “Like I got to typing better...” (Interview transcription, September 27, 2011). When asked if she wrote her blogs or needed someone to help, Lucy responded, “In the beginning I needed more help, but in the end I was pretty good,” and later shared, “It was kind of hard, but not too much, and I got better every time I did it” (Interview transcription, September 28, 2011). Grace and Lucy blogged more responses than other students in the study.

I was curious about students choosing not to respond to each other on the blog. I asked about it and Lucy made the comment that it seemed “kinda weird” because they were writing to me. We talked about ideas that would make it seem less weird to write back to others on the blog and discussed the idea of blogging in school so they could practice. Anna suggested two things, first she commented, “It seemed kinda weird because I would write to

you” and then about blogging in class prior to the summer “I think it would be a good idea because then we would have more practice” (Interview transcription, September 28, 2011). Lucy agreed responding, “... it was hard sometimes because it was new, but it was fun and I got good at it at the end.” My journal notes from August 11 had me pondering if the children were indeed too young to respond to each other, and this discussion made me think it was more than that; perhaps this was too new an experience and they needed both scaffolding and more teacher modeling for success (Reflexive journal notes, August 11, 2011 and September 28, 2011). Another possibility was that perhaps it could have been a function of how the study was set up. Some children knew each other before hand, maybe more time with guided practice would allow enough practice so students would feel comfortable responding to each other through the blog.

Wood (2007) articulated:

A key developmental struggle for eight-year-olds is gaining competence over the tools of their trade.....But when accomplishments don't come easily or quickly, the children feel a strong sense of inferiority. Patience is not common in eight-year-olds. (p. 98)

Greater scaffolding with the blogging experience rather than computer experience may have been needed to engage students in peer to peer responses.

Research questions three and five were considered through theme four. Self-concept was influenced for readers who felt they grew as readers through their blogging experiences. Some students identified improved technology skills because of the summer experience. Both student focal groups thought blogging in school would be a good way to experience peer interactions.

Theme Five: Students experienced different levels of engagement during the summer study

Theme five informed research questions four and five. There were nine codes that supported the development of theme five: student safety; active participation; reading habits; gradual release; just right book choices as independent leveled reading; fostering connections through Web log comments and responses; thoughtful responses; engagement and motivation; and, parent influence.

Student safety was paramount during the study. Research protocol at the university level ensured the study was not harmful to students prior to its approval. At the district and school levels student safety and privacy concerns were addressed through several steps. It was requested that I add an overview letter to be distributed with permission letters and that I modify my student consent letter so that children would more easily understand the project. Participation letters were delivered without my involvement. I provided 70 envelopes of information that were distributed within the schools by school staff. Once permission forms were returned I contacted parents via the email address they provided to set up meetings. Children's MRP surveys were identified by code, blog names were self-selected by participants, and pseudonyms were used in all other situations. The Web log was set up to be private, meaning that only students I invited could participate. In addition, I set controls that allowed students to upload comments, but all responses needed approval by me before they would be posted for others to read. Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs advocated that certain requirements, including safety, needed to be in place before individuals would be able to achieve their potentials through esteem and self-actualization. It was important that students felt respected and safe while participating in my study.

Throughout the study levels of participation and reading habits fluctuated with the number of student blog responses ranging from 2 to 10 over the course of the summer. Alex, Brandon, Crystal, and Max each posted two responses during the first half of the study and then nothing more after week four. Alex's mother emailed that she had given up on the study and hired a tutor instead. Brandon read and blogged about two of his books, but never responded to further emails. Max reported reading all of his books, even the extra titles I provided. Crystal had computer trouble part way through the study, but her mother emailed "She is, however, still reading her books" (Parent email, August 11, 2011). Other students reported reading regularly and several read and responded consistently throughout the summer.

When asked if blogging changed her thinking about reading, Rianna shared, "It helped you learn about it." She continued explaining, "When I was reading *Olivia Sharp* and the *Pizza Monster* I was reading so carefully that I felt like I was actually in the book" (Interview transcription, September, 27, 2011). Rosenblatt (1991) referred to this personal engagement of getting lost in a book as aesthetic reading. Grace added, "Like, my book was so describing I could picture it like a movie" (Interview transcription, September 27, 2011). When I asked if this was something they did as readers prior to the study both confirmed that they started using these comprehension strategies during the summer study. Grace continued, "Yeah, and I would make the movie and then see what might happen next." Her comments demonstrated that she was practicing thinking that supported comprehension while reading during the summer study. Lucy reported, "I think I got better at reading. I was reading more because I needed to blog" (Interview transcription, September 28, 2011). Kiley responded, "It was fun because I had all my books to read and could just read. And then

when I had a chance I would do the blog. I kept my books in my bag so it was easy to have a new book to read so I could read without having to go find a book...I had more books to think about.”

A gradual release continuum was employed throughout the study. Introduction to the project was scaffolded over two meetings and continued through the summer with periodic parent communication emails. Administration of the MRP survey was clearly scaffolded. The directions stipulated that the untimed survey questions be read aloud to all students, thereby eliminating concerns due to fluency or decoding. Lessons on the blog were scaffolded for students and detailed information was provided for students and parents during the summer. In addition to my small group and one-to-one support all students and parents received detailed directions on how to use the blog and regular email updates. The questions I posted on the blog that served as response prompts were varied and developmentally appropriate allowing students choice when responding.

Opportunities to select books, having reading materials accessible, and interacting with others about books are recognized as methods to engage students and foster reading (Allington, 2010; Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Fink, 2006; Miller, 2009). Book choice supports student engagement in independent reading and encourages developing readers (Allington, 2010; Kim, 2006; White & Kim, 2008). Student DRA2 and DRP information provided a reading range for each participant that allowed me to offer leveled books of interest to students. Leveled reading should allow students to read fluently within books they can both decode and comprehend deeply (Allington, 2012; Atwell, 2007; Betts, 1946; Clay, 1993; Fountas & Pinnell, 1999). The amount of challenge in just right books offered readers opportunities for engagement through successful interaction with text. Kiley’s mother

reported that "...I think having the bag of books all prepared was a great idea for Kiley, and she read them all. I was surprised that I saw her so often with a book" (Interview transcription October 6, 2011).

The students actively participated through writing on the blog and reading blog responses. When asked if there was a book she wanted to read after reading what had been written on the blog Kiley responded, "I liked reading the stuff kids wrote. Like Olivia Sharp. I had that in my classroom last year and somebody wrote it on the blog" (Interview transcription, September 28, 2011). She planned to check with her teacher to see if her class this year has the book. Max had a different experience and reported, "...when I am on the computer I like playing on things. So I basically forgot all about reading" (Interview transcription, September 27, 2011). He played his computer video games instead of blogging his reading responses.

Connections in the form of communications and feedback with parents, participants, and the researcher were important. Wood (2007) described children this age as needing to experience "incremental success ... so they will continue feeling motivated and excited" (p. 98). Students demonstrating less engagement and a need for greater support in the early components of the project participated less or discontinued the summer blogging experience. Wood suggests eight-year-olds "enjoy responsibility, but do not always successfully complete tasks" (p. 102).

Reading published responses on the blog served to engage participants and fostered teacher/student connections for some students. For example, Lucy's mother shared, "Actually she did a good job with the reading and also loved the blogging. She really liked

when you would write to her and she read everything. She told me to ask you to do it again” (Interview transcription, October 6, 2011).

I tried to connect with students through the blog in an effort to engage students in responding further. For example, on July 6th Grace wrote about her book *Expedition Down Under*: “The author did a good job making this story insering (interesting) because she/he did not just say it is spicky (spikey) they said it is spicky and small. If you camp in Australia you might see kangaroos.” I responded: “It sounds like the author used details to help you get a picture in your mind. That does make a story more interesting for the reader. I am wondering what was spicky and small? Can you tell me more? At my old school the principal was from Australia. He arranged to have a kangaroo and some other animals visit our school. I think the kangaroo was named Joey. His owner had him on a leash and walked him the way I would walk my dog. Joey was very well behaved. As you can imagine, the students really liked having a kangaroo at school!” (Web log comment, July 6 and 7, 2011). Although my hope was that she would respond to me after reading my comment, she didn’t. In fact, only one student responded to any of my comments during the summer blog project. In conversations with two of my advisors the idea of being a stranger to these students has surfaced as a potential reason why students have not engaged with me, or even each other, through the blog.

Even though students overall chose not to respond beyond their original comments, many did engage with the blog. In a conversation about response comments Rianna and Grace had a side conversation where Grace commented to Rianna that she had read her comment about Olivia Sharp. Rianna asked Grace if she had read what she wrote about the pizza. Grace acknowledged that had read that one too.

As a response to my statement requesting student information about participating in the summer reading project Grace responded, “Awesome!” (Interview transcription, September 27, 2011). Later when I inquired about what they would say to other kids who might consider participating in this project next year “Rianna shared, “The summer program was so fun for me that I think I want to do it all over again!”

Theme five served to support question four in that habits of reading were supported through students’ reading of leveled interest-based books and observed through student engagement and blog responses. Question five, in what ways do social interactions while blogging influence students’ reading and writing, was partially supported by theme five. Students did not interact socially on the blog through written responses with each other, however, at the fall interview sessions students had discussions about each other’s blogs. Additionally, two parents reported their children read blog entries at home.

Summary of Chapter Four

This chapter provided the description of settings and narratives of each student involved in this study. A review of the researcher created Web log and description of its application were made. Study findings were discussed through the lenses of five themes that emerged from assessment and survey data, researcher observations, student blog artifacts, student interviews, and parent interviews and emails.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapter five provides an overview of the research and offers a discussion of major findings as they related to my literature review in chapter two. Implications for educators are considered and limitations of the study are addressed. The final section considers opportunities for future research.

Summary of the Study

This study addressed the potential benefits of combining elements of traditional literacy and digital literacies on summer reading setback and reading motivation for developing readers. My research took place in two upper socioeconomic communities located in the Northeastern region of the United States. The study commenced in June, 2011, after all approvals and permissions were received. I met with students twice at their schools to review the study and introduced them to the summer Web log that I had created. I collected information from spring district reading assessments and a Motivation to Read (MRP) survey (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996).

Once student assessment and survey information were collected and reviewed, leveled books were offered and students received a collection of books of their choice for the summer. Over the 10-week summer period students had opportunities to respond on the blog to eight sets of researcher posted questions. At the end of the summer students were invited to attend focus group meetings. Parents were offered the opportunity to provide feedback through phone interviews or a small group morning meeting. Student reading assessment and survey information were collected in the fall and the study came to a close.

Research Questions

The following overarching questions guided this qualitative study:

1. How does participation in a summer literacy initiative that combines a choice of leveled reading materials and blogging influence summer setback for developing third grade readers?
2. In what ways do summer reading and response blogging influence students' perceptions about the value of reading?
3. In what ways do summer reading and response blogging influence reader self-concept for developing third grade readers?
4. How does providing leveled reading materials and student inclusion in a blogging community influence observed habits of reading as reported by students and caregivers?
5. In what ways do social interactions while blogging about books influence students' reading and writing?

Review of Findings and Discussion

Through a case study method I gathered information from participants with a focus on blogging as a means of independent reader response. District reading achievement data as well as motivation survey results were analyzed. Field notes and a reflexive journal were maintained throughout the study as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Five major themes emerged as data were analyzed:

1. Readers experienced summer learning in different ways.
2. Multiple levels of thinking were evidenced through discussions and written responses.

3. Students exhibited changes in value of reading and perceived reading competence.
4. Variations in students' technology experiences influenced independence and participation.
5. Students experienced different levels of engagement during the summer study.

The review of literature in chapter two included the theoretical foundations for this research as well as studies related to engagement, summer learning, and new literacies. In searching through the literature I was unable to find previous research that considered the effects of interest-based leveled reading and blogging on summer setback and reader motivation.

Theme one supported research question one which considered how participation in this study influenced summer setback for developing third grade readers. This theme suggested that readers experienced different levels of learning through participation in this summer reading and blogging initiative. Spring and fall scores for the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) and the Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2) district assessments indicated a drop in assessed comprehension levels for six of the nine students participating in the study. Summer setback was evidenced for these students who started the school year demonstrating lower comprehension levels than where they ended the previous school year based on district assessments.

Summer setback has been a recurring area of interest for many years. Research confirms a learning loss throughout the summer months as typical for developing readers (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007; Cooper et al., 1996; Downey, von Hippel, & Broh, 2004; Entwisle & Alexander, 1994). Heyns's research (1978) served as a foundational

summer learning study identifying reading as the single most important activity for students regardless of family background or income. She found that students who read six or more books over the summer gained more than children who did not read. Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) reported that reading comprehension increased with just 10 minutes of reading outside the school day. Allington (2012) states, “There is no evidence that suggests precisely how much or how often children need to read to develop high levels of reading proficiency” (p. 44). Students in my study received interest-based leveled books to read; I did not suggest or set a schedule for daily reading. Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) also noted teacher influence to be an important factor in the amount of reading students did outside the school day. While I tried to connect with students through my blog responses and comments, not having familiarity with the students in my study hindered my ability to influence readers in this way.

In recent studies, Allington and his colleagues (2010) and White and Kim (2008) explored summer reading experiences with disadvantaged developing readers that provided leveled books for students and found positive results with students maintaining and sometimes improving reading scores from spring to fall. For their summer reading students in my study received between six-to-ten interest-based leveled books and participated in a private blog during the summer months. Results were mixed for achievement when students returned to school in the fall. Two of six students maintained or improved achievement levels as measured by the district administered DRP assessment and one out of three improved levels as measured by the district administered DRA2. These results differed from expectations based on recent summer learning studies.

One possible explanation for the lack of student comprehension growth as measured by the DRP could be related to genre as the DRP is an informational text based assessment. Most students in the study selected fiction titles. The style of thinking and comprehension practices used with literary reading are different than those utilized when reading informational text. Alex and Max, students who maintained their DRP scores, selected a mix of fiction and nonfiction books for summer reading. A second consideration would be the single summer timeframe of my study combined with the small number of participants. A third possibility that should be considered to justify this difference was the change in district administered DRP levels from primary to standard (QUESTAR Assessments, 2010) as students moved from second grade to third grade. Had students taken the same or an alternate form of the original test results may have differed.

In theme two the different levels of thinking that occurred over the course of the study were noted, informing research question one which considered how participation in a summer literacy initiative that combined a choice of leveled reading materials and blogging influenced summer setback for developing third grade readers. Participation in the project provided leveled books of choice for students. Through blog responses and discussion during fall focal groups students offered evidence of predicting, visualizing, looking back in the book to clarify information, and use of decoding strategies. Students struggled with social issues such as honesty and fairness as they encountered story plots that prompted them to disagree and challenge character actions.

Miller (2009) emphasized “Embracing their inner reader starts with students selecting their own books to read” (p. 23). By providing students with interest-based books I hoped to empower students as readers and offer an avenue of reading that was pleasurable and

engaging. My hope was that through these reading experiences students would experience summer learning that contributed to their growth as readers.

Students who read more become better readers (Allington, 2012). Providing successful reading experiences for students in the early grades is important. Wigfield and Eccles (2000) presented findings that even at a young age, children have developed clear beliefs about what they were good at and what they valued in specific areas of achievement. Students need to experience reading success in order to be encouraged to read more. Thinking like a reader and practicing reading strategies support comprehension and meaning making from texts. Thoughtful literacy experiences, such as Kiley taking issue with the characters who didn't tell the truth when they took the chocolate kisses and Grace relating to the main character because they both try to tell the truth, are the deeper literary interactions developing readers need to have in order to participate in the active reading experiences Rosenblatt (1991) discussed in her transactional theory of reading and writing. The feelings, ideas, and attitudes that readers associate with past experiences are the private components that contribute to reader stance.

Theme three considered the influence of summer reading and response blogging on students' perceptions about the value of reading and their perceived reading competence. Research questions three and four, which addressed the value of reading and reader self-concept, were supported through theme three. Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996) developed the Motivation to Read Profile as a motivational assessment instrument used to measure both value of reading and self-concept perceptions when used with elementary aged children.

Spring to fall value of reading scores were maintained for three of the six students who posted responses consistently throughout the summer. Value of reading scores dropped considerably for other students who spent lesser amounts of time blogging with less consistency. Max, who blogged twice and demonstrated distractibility during our meetings, dropped 30 percentage points on his post value of reading survey. He was not a consistent participant in the study even though he did report that he read his summer book collection. Disengaged readers demonstrate behaviors of distraction that prevent the development of reading stamina as well as cognitive practices that support reading (Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, and Cox, 1999). For these students it seemed that the school setting provided the experiences that made reading enjoyable and something they liked to experience.

Guthrie (2004) relayed that students' values of reading were related to reading engagement. Engaged readers not only are able to decode and comprehend texts, but they value reading. Two students, Grace and Lucy, who blogged totals of 10 and 8 times during the summer, maintained their value of reading throughout the study. Finding personal meaning and losing oneself in the story were related to value construct. During the fall student interviews, two students, Grace and Rianna, explained how they were able to visualize the stories they were reading and read with predictions to anticipate what would happen next. These students experienced little change in their value of reading. Allington (2012) believes supporting and nurturing reading motivation and achievement is crucial for developing readers.

Four of the six students who completed the study demonstrated similar self-concept scores based on pre and post survey responses. Two students exhibited substantial changes. Grace, who posted 10 web blog responses, showed an increase of 27.5% from her spring to

fall self-concept profile scores. Lucy posted 8 blog responses during the summer and her self-concept score rose by 17.5%. These students read and entered Web log comments consistently throughout the summer. Participation in summer reading and response blogging provided a positive influence on self-concept for these two readers. Because motivation has been linked to achievement (Baker, 2003; Baker and Wigfield, 1999; Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996) the demonstrated relationship between blogging and self-concept for Grace and Lucy may be encouraging news. Even though Grace demonstrated strong participation in blogging reading responses and increased her reading motivation, her DRP scores declined and she experienced a summer learning loss. The majority of Grace's summer reading books were fiction. In their work with reading motivation and comprehension Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, and Cox (1999) suggested that reading motivation predicted text comprehension. It is possible that if a different assessment tool was used a different result may have been obtained.

Baker (2003) identified the influences of home, school, and student as significant when reading development and frequency were linked to reader self-concept and motivation. Supportive parents contributed to student participation at home. Students participating in the study each had a goal of posting at least six responses. Personal achievement goals play an important role in efficacy and engagement (Bandura, 1977; Wigfield, 1997). This may explain some of my findings as students demonstrated changes in reading motivation from spring to fall.

Theme four evidenced differences in computer competence and was used to consider how this may have influenced students' independence and participation. This theme supported research question five that sought to examine social interactions and Web log

dialogue. Computer experience influenced students' independence with this project and parent support was utilized as needed for word processing support. Prior to the study, parents were informed that computers and internet access would be needed for participation. Even with parent support, students did not engage in Web log conversations as I had hoped.

New literacies consider the social interactiveness of literacy activities. One objective is to involve students in learning opportunities that allow them to participate in broad experiences that stretch their thinking and learning. Collaborative blogging is an interactive tool that students can experience as they participate in multimedia activities in and out of school. Exposing students to Web logs as a communication forum built on this idea. Through my emails and Web log comments I tried to build connections with students and engage them in responding to other students using the blog. On one occasion a student responded to me, but there were no student-to-student blogging interactions.

Students and parents reported that Web log comments were read and enjoyed, but no one felt comfortable taking the next steps of responding to other bloggers. Students responded to peer comments verbally in the post study focal group meeting, but did not take my encouragement to respond to their peers on the blog. This was surprising as eight-year-olds typically enjoy group interactions and cooperative talk (Wood, 2007). It is possible that more familiarity was needed for students to feel safe responding to me and others on the blog. Perhaps since pseudonyms were used, students felt less engaged to respond to someone unknown. While used for safety, pseudonyms may have acted to inhibit interactions. Another reason may have been because blogging was too new for these children; it was also possible they needed more practice to be confident in their skill set. Wood (2007) describes students of this age as having a need to experience incremental success and cognitively

beginning to master computers. Prior to the study I sampled computer skills for rising third graders in the school where I taught to ensure that using the Web log was not beyond the capabilities of students this age. These children performed well and I proceeded with my plan.

In the June meeting with students from Milano School children needed support logging onto computers and following basic computer instructions. More time than I had planned was needed to get everyone set with the blog and it was evident that technology was an area that was developing for these students. In the September meeting students from Milano School shared with me that computer instruction in keyboarding was part of the third grade experience, which clarified for me the variations I observed in computer experience. Students at Parkway School exhibited greater competence in their skills when following basic computer applications. They were able to follow instructions in accessing the Web log under my guidance and demonstrated confidence while setting up usernames, selecting icons, and responding to questions. At Parkway School assured technology projects were planned at each grade level starting at kindergarten. As I had noticed with the students at Milano School, children used one or two fingers as they typed on the keyboard. More instruction and practice were needed for students as several parents reported they needed to support their children through typing for them. Grace and Lucy self-reported that they felt their computer skills improved due to participation in the study.

Theme five provided verification for the construct of engagement and addressed research questions four and five. Question four considered how leveled reading materials and student inclusion in a blogging community influenced observed habits of reading

reported by students and caregivers and question five asked in what ways did social interactions while blogging about books influence students' reading and writing.

Because this was an online project I needed to rely on home support. In my initial permission letter, parents were advised that students would be asked to read and blog reading responses. I stated that as part of the study I would send them email notifications so they could support their children. I clarified that I was suggesting at least six responses during the summer months. This information set the parameters of the study so parents were clear about participation expectations prior to enlisting in my study. Home environments that support experiences in reading are important in encouraging reading engagement (Baker, 2003). Parents who reported helping their students with blogging encouraged reading engagement through their support and students posted the six requested blog responses. Alex's mother reported that she was unable to support him at home so he stopped participating. Crystal's mother reported that the computer broke and this impacted Crystal's participation. These two examples support Baker's research and suggest that students this age need parent involvement for at home blogging to be successful.

Students participating in the study each had a goal of posting at least six responses. Personal achievement goals play an important role in efficacy and engagement (Bandura, 1977; Wigfield, 1997). Students who met that goal demonstrated engagement and maintained or increased their feelings of self-concept and value of reading.

Cambourne (1995) discussed engagement as a key component in conditions that were needed for effective literacy learning to occur. He continued by sharing the concept that engagement is increased when expectations of success are consistently communicated and when learners are permitted the responsibility of making their own decisions as part of a

learning task. Through my study this environment was fostered by my regular email communications and blog responses to students. Students were able to decide which questions to use when responding on the blog and my comments were positive and supportive of student thinking.

During the fall meeting Grace and Rianna shared specific comprehension strategies that they practiced during their summer reading. Examples of predicting, visualizing, and checking text evidence were shared. When asked if using the blog changed their thinking about reading, Grace shared, “It helped you learn more and it helped you think through a little bit. To think about what you’re going to type you have to go back in the book” (Interview transcription, September 27, 2011). Rianna shared the experience of “reading so carefully that I felt like I was actually in the book” (Interview transcription, September 27, 2011). When asked what they would say to students if I tried the program again the following summer, Lucy shared, “I would say that it is something you should do. It makes you have to think more about your reading because you know you are going to need to write a blog about it” (Interview transcription, September 28, 2012).

Implications for Educators

Students who read more have been identified as students who achieve more in reading (Fink, 2006; Gambrell, 1996; Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, & Cox, 1999; Miller, 2009). Recent literature and research have clearly evidenced the impact of reading on summer learning (Allington et al., 2010; Kim, 2006; White & Kim, 2008). Instructional leaders can be proactive in anticipating the various needs of their students when preparing them for summer vacation time.

As developing readers, students in my study needed to practice and experience thoughtful reading and responding for extended periods of time. Through reading and responding over the 10-weeks of summer, students had opportunities to maintain reading development. Studies that provided interest-based leveled reading materials to students were found to help curb summer reading loss (Allington et al., 2010; White & Kim, 2008). In my study, students self-selected books of interest for their summer reading. In order to help students prepare for summer reading teachers could work with students to create summer reading plans that included both literary and informational materials to read; a semi-structured schedule for reading; and, perhaps a plan for summer communications about their reading. Research has indicated that keeping a connection with readers throughout the summer contributes to reading occurrences (Kim, 2006).

As part of my follow up discussions with participants, several students reported that the word processing component of blogging was hard for them while other students shared that they improved and gained confidence in their computer skills. Grace shared that she got better at typing the more she did it. Some of the other students relied on an adult for help. This mixed review indicates that another form of summer communication or earlier introduction to word processing skills could be considered. The gradual release continuum suggests that new material is best learned through decreasing levels of scaffolded instruction and modeling until the learner demonstrates independence. Shared school/home projects utilizing word processing and other computer activities would provide repeated experiences as practice to support students in developing both confidence and competence in technological skills. Smolin and Lawless (2003) articulated “The students don’t learn these

technology skills in isolation but rather in the context of a rich curriculum project aimed at developing their literacy” (p. 571).

Engagement and motivation play critical roles in keeping students reading during out-of-school time. This Web log project served to engage six students with various levels of reading and responding throughout the summer. The results of my study demonstrated that the two students, Lucy and Grace, who engaged in out-of-school reading and blogged between 8-10 times during the summer increased their self-concept 17.5% and 27.5% as measured by the Motivation to Read Profile (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996) from spring to fall. The quality of written responses improved for students who evidenced the use of story text to defend their thinking. In future work, primary teachers might consider incorporating more technology opportunities into their curriculum.

It was clear from focus group discussions after the study that students were reading the comments posted, yet no one followed my prompting to engage in an online conversation through the blog. Including experiences with multiliteracies such as Web 2.0 interactive reading and writing activities in the primary grades will provide needed technology foundational skills. If students had participated in blogging communities within their classroom and the practice of responding to each other was established, this interaction may have occurred in the summer blog project. Providing such opportunities within the early grades would present authentic experiences that set the ground work for students to develop lifelong literacy practices that will serve them through their educational years and beyond.

During my initial meeting at Milano School as I discussed my study a parent commented that the reason she enrolled her son as a participant was so that she could learn to blog. This comment suggests that parents may be interested in technology courses.

Instructional leaders within the school community may consider offering adults opportunities to participate in technology workshops. This would contribute to the home support network within the district and serve to strengthen the levels of parental support available to students.

As educators we need to be aware that students have different levels of comfort and expertise when it comes to technology. Educators need to develop a greater emphasis not only on new literacies, but also toward making opportunities available for students of all ages to practice various technologies as part of their educational experiences. As this happens more research will be needed to explore the possibilities that Web 2.0 offers developing readers during in and out-of-school times.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to the study. Participant selection was purposeful and from socioeconomic status districts that limit the representative ability of the sample. Nine children returned consent and permission forms, making the number of study participants low; due to attrition six completed the study. Additionally, student self-reporting methods were used in gathering data. Whenever self-reporting measures are used it is difficult to determine if participants actually believe or do the things they report.

The achievement data I used were provided through district administered assessments and were not comparable. One school site used DRA2 (Beaver, 2006) data and the other offered DRP (QUESTAR Assessments, 2008) data. The DRP data were gathered from two different leveled assessments, primary and standard. While the tests measured the same constructs, the change in levels made this a limitation when applying DRP scores as pre/post achievement assessments in this study. Additionally, in offering students reading choices I provided leveled informational and literary books, but did not require students to select a

balance of informational and literary reading choices for their summer reading. Setting a range of book selections that included both types of text would have ensured students' exposure to a more balanced summer reading experience.

Web log applications required students to have some familiarity with technology. In this study the level of word processing skills was challenging for some students. Parents assisted students with this part of blogging at different times during the study.

It was difficult for me to engage students because of the nature of an online project and because the students in this study were not familiar to me. Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) executed a study examining the relationship of students' out-of-school activity choices and their reading achievement. As part of this study they determined that teacher influence on the amount of reading children did outside school was substantial. It may have been possible for me to overcome this obstacle by involving teachers familiar with students as part of my study.

Trustworthiness

Krefting (1991) discussed strategies to increase trustworthiness in qualitative studies based on Lincoln and Guba's four criteria of (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability.

Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability

The trustworthiness of this study was based upon purposeful sampling, my efforts to provide thick description, prolonged engagement, researcher self-reflection, triangulation of data, and auditing of the study, (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Prolonged Engagement. This study was initiated in May and concluded in September of 2011. Data were collected over a 12-week period. The study began in May

when I contacted and met with school personnel. Two June student meetings at each school location allowed me to meet participants and initiate a teacher-student connection. During the following weeks I met with a parent to provide books and a participant and parent team to offer one-to-one instruction on the Web log site. These meetings allowed for extended conversations and enabled me to learn more about both student participants. During the summer I checked the Web log multiple times a week to monitor students' participation and post comments. Student responses through blogging provided opportunities for me to interact with participants. In addition to my welcome and instructional blogs, eight response prompt sets were posted throughout the summer. I posted 18 comments to students as feedback to blogs. I contacted parents through email each time I posted new responses and replied to all inquiries.

Reflection. A reflexive journal was maintained throughout the project. Thoughts on the overall study as well as specific concerns and reactions were recorded. It served as a sounding board for my experiences and provided a clear recollection of my study's process. It served as a place for me to think through my biases that arose during the study and consider alternative ideas. Analytic memos suggested by Saldaña (2009) expanded my thinking and added to the quality of my reflections.

Triangulation of Data. Data methods were triangulated (student and caregiver focus groups; MRP surveys and DRP or DRA2 assessments; and student blog artifacts, field notes and researcher reflexive notes) to confirm the information gathered and attempt an interpretive understanding. Field notes were taken from focus group meetings and voice recordings from interviews were transcribed and analyzed for recurring patterns and themes.

Informational data were collected from DRA2 or DRP assessments, and MRP surveys administered in spring and fall.

Thick Description. The field notes and reflexive journal, transcriptions of interviews, and analyses of student blogs offered detailed descriptions of data in context with the study. My field notes were a combination of descriptions, details, and summaries of what I observed in each of the six group meetings and two additional meetings outside the school settings. Group meetings occurred at the beginning and end of the study to provide instruction and collect data.

Purposeful Sampling. Guba and Lincoln (1985) note that while transferability is not the task of the researcher, the inquirer has the responsibility of providing a solid data base that makes transferability judgments possible; for that reason purposeful sampling is preferred (p. 316). My sample was selected from students who were developing readers identified as in need of literacy support through classroom teacher observation in relation to peers or district data assessments.

Implications for Future Research

In preparing this study I considered the value of peer interactions and teacher-student conferences in fostering positive student attitudes toward reading and proposed that blogging interactions might influence students' motivation to read and summer learning for developing primary grade readers. For researchers interested in pursuing future studies in this area several suggestions follow:

1. A scaffold that I did not provide in my study but may be helpful in future studies is teaching students how to choose books. Basing my work on the strategies I had taught my readers as a literacy interventionist and former classroom teacher, I did

not review what good readers do when they independently select books to read. Perhaps these developing readers would have benefited from a quick review on selecting just right books for reading levels and interest. For example, a mini-lesson using a chart or quick whole group discussion on what to consider when selecting independent books: reading the titles; clarifying genre; reading the book summary; print size; and the five-finger rule that tracks unknown vocabulary on a page to approximate if a book is a good fit for a reader.

2. I had limited personal contact with children participating in the study which made it difficult to establish a relationship or influence readers to respond to me or each other though the Web log. Considerations to address this may be that future researchers establish a schedule that provides greater contact with opportunities for interim meetings or an increase in the number of pre-study meetings engaging student conversation and blogging experiences, a shared book club experience to begin the study might offer opportunities for students to participate in blogging conversations before leaving for summer vacation and independent blogging, or perhaps for this type of study participatory action research would be more useful with researchers working with their own students.
3. Book choice options for each student should require a mix of informational and literary interest-based books. Exposing children to a variety of genres for reading and ensuring informational reading constitutes a balance of their summer reading should be considered.
4. Assessment selection that measures summer learning should be consistent. Selection of an alternative pre/post assessment may be a consideration.

Summary

The phenomenon of summer reading setback has been documented for developing readers of all socioeconomic groups. This study considered blogging as an avenue of authentic written response for developing readers through the lenses of motivation and achievement.

Johnston and Allington (1991) emphasized supporting and nurturing reading motivation as crucial to improving educational prospects for children who find learning to read difficult. Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, and Cox (1999) discussed the positive relationships between motivation, reading amount, and growth in comprehension. While the number of students participating in the study was small, three of the six students who blogged consistently throughout the summer maintained or increased their motivation to read as measured through the MRP. This study explored a familiar Web 2.0 application as a summer project in an effort to support summer learning. Rianna summed up her experience when she shared, “The summer program was so fun for me I think I want to do it all over again!”

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Appendix A: Reader Response Prompts (Sample Questions)

Reader Response Prompts (Sample Questions)

The following are representative of the style prompts that were used:

- What do you like and/or dislike about this story?
- What does the story remind you of—in your own life, in other books you've read?
- What thoughts and feelings do you have as you read?
- Write about a time when you were in a similar situation.
- What does the literature make you wonder about?
- What surprises you while you are reading?
- Describe something in the book you have never thought about.
- Which characters in the story are like people you have known? Tell how or why.
- What things are you confused by?
- Now that you have finished reading, what questions do you have about...?
- What things you would do differently if you were one of the characters?
- Describe the advice you would give to others if you were one of the minor characters?
- What would happen if you could step into one of the illustrations in this book?
- What changes would you make if you were the author?

Adapted from *Encountering Children's Literature: An Arts Approach* by Jane M. Gangi, which is based on Louise Rosenblatt

Appendix B: Student Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol

Student Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol

Welcome. Thank you for participating in my study. I'd like to get your feedback and on the summer blogging project. Please feel comfortable expressing your ideas and asking questions as we go along.

Sample questions:

1. How did you feel about this summer project?
2. Tell me about your reading habits during the study; after?
3. About how often did you read each week?
4. Describe your experience with blogging.
5. What changes, if any, did you notice in the reading habits while participating in the blogging project?
6. Did you need help with the blogging part of this project? If so, how much?
7. How did you feel about reading and responding through blogging?
8. Would you suggest this as a summer reading program for other families next year?
9. Are there other thoughts/ideas you have that you want to share?

Appendix C: Caregiver Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol

Caregiver Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol

Welcome. Thank you for participating in my study. I'd like to get your feedback and observations about your child as a reader and the summer blogging project. Please feel comfortable expressing your ideas and asking questions as we go along.

Sample questions:

1. How did you feel about this summer project?
2. Tell me about your child's reading habits before the study; during the study; after?
3. About how often did your child read each week?
4. Describe your experience with blogging.
5. What changes, if any, did you notice in the reading habits of your child while participating in the blogging project?
6. Did your child require your assistance with the project? If so, how much?
7. How do you think your child felt about reading and responding through blogging?
8. Would you suggest this as a summer reading program for other families next year?
9. Are there other thoughts/ideas you have that you want to share?

Appendix D: Cover Letter and Consent Form (Superintendent)



181 White Street
Danbury, CT 06810

May 16, 2011

Dear Superintendent,

I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University. This program requires that I design and implement a dissertation research study. The purpose of this 12-week study is to examine the experiences of students who participate in summer reading and use blogging as a method of reading response.

District reading assessment scores for the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) will be collected from student data files. In June, I will meet with participants as a group in school to administer a reading motivation survey. The motivation survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. I will examine survey responses and DRA2 scores to determine students' reading interests and approximate independent reading levels. This information will be used to guide the selection of books that I will make available for participants to choose for summer reading.

I will meet again with participants to teach them how to use my blog. At that meeting they will book browse and choose 6-8 books for summer reading. Participants will bring home books and directions for using my blog to write their reader response. Participants will be asked to read the books during the summer and blog reading responses to my posted questions. I ask that participants write at least 6 responses during the 8 weeks of summer. In addition, they can post a response to other students' blogs if they wish. All responses will be submitted through me for review before being posted for everyone to read and students will not use their actual names for the blog. In September I will return to school and invite students to meet with me to talk about their experiences. I will ask participants to complete the reading survey a second time. While my blog is set up as a closed secure blog site, parents will be advised that students should never use the Internet unattended.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by Western Connecticut State University's Institutional Review Board (#1011-175). Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Individuals may withdraw from the project at any time. Volunteer participants will submit all information to the researcher. In reporting results, all participants will be given pseudonyms and identities will be maintained in a secure location to protect confidentiality.

It is hoped that results of this investigation will provide data that may support future summer reading initiatives. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

JoAnne Galdo

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Jane M. Gangi, PhD

Associate Professor, EdD in Instructional Leadership

gangij@wcsu.edu

I agree that the study described above can be conducted in [redacted] Public Schools.

Please Print Name

Signature

Date

Appendix E: Cover Letter and Consent Form (Assistant Superintendent)



Department of Education and Educational Psychology
181 White Street
Danbury, CT 06810
May 16, 2011

Dear Assistant Superintendent,

I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University. This program requires that I design and implement a dissertation research study. The purpose of this 12-week study is to examine the experiences of students who participate in summer reading and use blogging as a method of reading response.

District reading assessment scores for the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) will be collected from student data files. In June, I will meet with participants as a group in school to administer a reading motivation survey. The motivation survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. I will examine survey responses and DRP scores to determine students' reading interests and approximate independent reading levels. This information will be used to guide the selection of books that I will make available for participants to choose for summer reading.

I will meet again with participants to teach them how to use my blog. At that meeting they will book browse and choose 5-7 books for summer reading. Participants will bring home books and directions for using my blog to write their reader response. Participants will be asked to read the books during the summer and blog reading responses to my posted questions. I ask that participants write at least 6 responses during the 8 weeks of summer. In addition, they can post a response to other students' blogs if they wish. All responses will be submitted through me for review before being posted for everyone to read and students will not use their actual names for the blog. In September I will return to school and invite students to meet with me to talk about their experiences. I will ask participants to complete the reading survey a second time. While my blog is set up as a closed secure blog site, parents will be advised that students should never use the Internet unattended.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by Western Connecticut State University's Institutional Review Board (# 1011-175). Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Individuals may withdraw from the project at any time. Volunteer participants will submit all information to the researcher. In reporting results, all participants will be given pseudonyms and identities will be maintained in a secure location to protect confidentiality.

I wish to thank administrators in the [redacted] Public School district for participating in this study. It is hoped that results of this investigation will provide data that may support future summer reading initiatives. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

- JoAnne Galdo
- galdo001@connect.wcsu.edu
- Jane M. Gangi, PhD
- Associate Professor, EdD in Instructional Leadership
- gangij@wcsu.edu

I agree that the study described above can be conducted in [redacted] Public Schools.

Please Print Name

Signature

Date

Appendix F: Cover Letter and Consent Form (Principal)



May 16, 2011

Dear Principal,

I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University. This program requires that I design and implement a dissertation research study. The purpose of this 12-week study is to examine the experiences of students who participate in summer reading and use blogging as a method of reading response.

District reading assessment scores for the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) will be collected from student data files. In June, I will meet with participants as a group in school to administer a reading motivation survey. The motivation survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. I will examine survey responses and DRP scores to determine students' reading interests and approximate independent reading levels. This information will be used to guide the selection of books that I will make available for participants to choose for summer reading.

I will meet again with participants to teach them how to use my blog. At that meeting they will book browse and choose 5-7 books for summer reading. Participants will bring home books and directions for using my blog to write their reader response. Participants will be asked to read the books during the summer and blog reading responses to my posted questions. I ask that participants write at least 6 responses during the 8 weeks of summer. In addition, they can post a response to other students' blogs if they wish. All responses will be submitted through me for review before being posted for everyone to read and students will not use their actual names for the blog. In September I will return to school and invite students to meet with me to talk about their experiences. I will ask participants to complete the reading survey a second time. While my blog is set up as a closed secure blog site, parents will be advised that students should never use the Internet unattended.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by Western Connecticut State University's Institutional Review Board (#1011-175). Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Individuals may withdraw from the project at any time. Volunteer participants will submit all information to the researcher. In reporting results, all participants will be given pseudonyms and identities will be maintained in a secure location to protect confidentiality.

I wish to thank administrators in the [redacted] Public School district for participating in this study. It is hoped that results of this investigation will provide data that may support future summer reading initiatives. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

JoAnne Galdo

galdo001@connect.wcsu.edu

Jane M. Gangi, PhD

Associate Professor, EdD in Instructional Leadership

gangij@wcsu.edu

I agree that the study described above can be conducted in [redacted] Elementary School.

Please Print Name

Signature

Date

Appendix G: Cover Letter and Consent Form (Parent)



Department of Education and Educational Psychology
181 White Street
Danbury, CT 06810

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University. This program requires that I design and implement a dissertation research study. The purpose of this 12-week study is to examine the experiences of students who participate in summer reading and use blogging as a method of reading response. In order to participate, students will need to have access to a computer and the Internet.

District reading assessment scores for the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) will be collected from student data files. In June, I will meet with participants as a group in school to administer a reading motivation survey and teach students to use my blog. The meeting will take place before school so students will need transportation. At that meeting they will book browse book choices for summer reading.

The following week participants will bring home books and directions for using my blog to write their reader response. Participants will be asked to read the books during the summer and blog reading responses to my posted questions. I will send email notifications when my weekly questions are posted so you can support your child's computer access. In addition, they can post a response to other students' blogs if they wish. I ask that participants write at least 6 responses during the 8 weeks of summer. While my blog is set up as a closed secure blog site, students should never use the Internet unattended. All responses will be submitted through me for review before being posted for everyone to read and students will not use their actual names for the blog. In September I will return to school and invite parents and students to meet with me to talk about their experiences in my study. I will ask participants to complete the reading survey a second time and request fall DRA scores.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by Western Connecticut State University's Institutional Review Board (#1011-175). Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Individuals may withdraw from the project at any time. Volunteer participants will submit all information to the researcher. In reporting results, all participants will be given pseudonyms and identities will be maintained in a secure location to protect confidentiality.

I wish to thank administrators in the [redacted] Public School district for participating in this study. It is hoped that results of this investigation will provide data that may support future summer reading initiatives. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
JoAnne Galdo

Jane M. Gangi, PhD
Associate Professor, EdD in Instructional Leadership
gangij@wcsu.edu

galdo001@connect.wcsu.edu

I agree that my child _____ can participate in the summer study.

I am at least 18 years of age or older. **Email contact address:** _____

Print name

Signature

Date

Appendix H: Cover Letter and Assent Form (Student)

Summer Reading Study

I am a doctoral student at Western Connecticut State University. One of my graduation requirements is a research project. Enclosed are two letters that describe my project and offer an opportunity for you and your student to participate.

Parents, please read and explain the student letter to your child. If you and your child would like to participate in my study please sign and return both letters in the envelope provided by Thursday, June 2nd. Please be sure to include your email address. Only students who return both signed letters will be able to join my study.

Once I have received the signed permission letters I will contact participants with morning meeting dates and the meeting room location. Since meetings will be before school you will need to provide transportation to school on those days.

██████████ from ██████████ School will attend the morning meetings. Your student's participation is completely voluntary and students are free to withdraw at any time during the study. My email address is on each letter and you can contact me with any questions.

Thank you for your consideration,
JoAnne Galdo



*Department of Education and Educational Psychology
181 White Street
Danbury, CT 06810*

May 2011
Dear Student,

I am a student at Western Connecticut State University. I am doing an exciting research project about reading during the summer and writing on a blog.

Let me tell you about my research. In June I will meet with you and other students at your school. You'll need to get a ride that day because we will meet around 8 o'clock before school starts. I will ask you to complete a survey about reading that I will read to you.

I will come back again the following week to meet with you in the computer lab. Just like the first time, we will meet around 8 o'clock so you will need a ride to school. I will teach you how to use my blog. I will also bring some books. I'll give you a chance to look through the books and tell me which ones you would like to read. Before summer vacation starts I'll bring you a bag of books that you will take home to read.

During the summer I will send you an email each week so you will know when it's time to write on the blog. You will get to write about your reading on my special blog 6 times during the summer. You can write more if you want.

In September I will return to your school and invite you to meet with me to talk about your experiences reading and blogging. I will ask you to complete the reading survey a second time when we meet. Just like in June, you will need a ride because we will meet before or after school.

I will not use your real name in my study; I will use made-up names. All of the information will be kept private. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time. This means it is up to you if you want to join us and you can stop participating at any time. If you have any questions, please ask me.

In order to be a part of my study, you will need to use a computer that lets you work on the Internet.

If you would like to be in my study, please write your name below and return this paper to school by Thursday, June 2, 2011.

X _____

Print student name (first and last name)

Thank you,

Mrs. Galdo

galdo001@connect.wcsu.edu



Appendix I: Directions for Summer Reading Blog

Directions for Summer Reading Blog ☺

Always check with mom or dad for permission and help before you go on the blog.

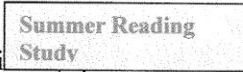
Step 1: In URL (top bar) type in www.classpress.com

Step 2: Type in your username: _____

Step 3: Type in your password: _____

Step 4: Click Login

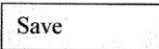
You should now be on the blog site. On the left side is the list of blog members. You should see your made up name in the box.

Step 5: Click in the box that says:  This will bring you to the page with

Step 6: Read the questions. Pick one that you want to use to write about your reading.

Step 7: At the bottom of the page click: **Post a comment** (You may need to use the bar on the side to move the page down.)

When you press **Post a comment** a white box will open. Type your response inside the white box. When you are finished read your answer.

Step 8: When you are ready to send your response click on  and your response will be saved.

I will read your response and post it to the blog. As the days go by you should be able to read everyone's responses. You can make a comment to them too!

We are not using the **Be Heard! box. *You already used options when you selected your avatar symbol on Thursday.***

On the right side of the blog page you can click on Recent Entries to see my messages. The newest one will be at the top. If you click on *Welcome* you will see a poll asking how many books you would like to read this summer. If you click on the number your answer will be recorded. You can give it a try. ☺

When you are finished click on Logout.

I will write some questions each Tuesday so you can log in anytime to write a response and read comments written by our other summer readers.

I am looking forward to reading your responses about your summer reading!

Appendix J: Reflexive Journal Sample

Reflexive Journal

7/22	<p>1 Posted the new questions this week.</p> <p>2 Last week was disappointing as just a few</p> <p>3 students responded. This week may be slow as</p> <p>4 well - so far only <u>2 students</u> made comments.</p> <p>5 Maybe it's vacation week for some. Still no</p> <p>6 response from one participant so I will most</p> <p>7 likely need to drop him from my study. It is</p> <p>8 disappointing, but out of my control.</p> <p>9 Looking through the responses so far most</p> <p>10 participants choose the <u>lower level thinking</u></p> <p>11 questions or respond with <u>minimal detail</u>. This</p> <p>12 could be the age and level of reader. It's hard for</p> <p>13 me to know the level of instruction they</p> <p>14 Have received for responding to open-ended</p> <p>15 questions. It's possible that they focus more on</p> <p>16 discussion in class than written response.</p> <p>17 Later the day</p> <p>18 Good news - my missing responder has logged a</p> <p>19 comment with a note that they were away on</p> <p>20 vacation. True to what he shared on his reading</p> <p>21 survey, he read and wrote about one of the</p>	<p>Participation</p> <p># comments</p> <p>may drop him/ reflection</p> <p>level of response</p> <p>developmental</p> <p>unknown @ o-e</p> <p>possible in class ↑ discussion than written response</p> <p>engagement!</p>	<p>consistency</p> <p>experience</p>
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Reflexive Journal (continued)

22	mystery books. Penny and the Pizza Mystery.	mystery	genre
7/26	Phone conversation with [REDACTED]		
1	had several questions that I needed clarified.		
2	Participants are not responding as I had hoped.	engagement	
3	[REDACTED] and I discussed that we teach our		
4	children not to talk to strangers and by blogging	stranger danger idea	safety
5	I am encouraging them to do that. Perhaps this		
6	is part of the situation. I don't know, but it could		
7	be - something to consider. We talked about my		
8	choice to respond to each blogger and		
9	encourage response to others so I'll try that and	feedback	Ⓟ connecting with Ⓢ
10	see how it works. Another thing is the <u>age</u> of the	developmental	
11	students participating and their actual		
12	<u>experience with computers</u> - this may be part of	computer experience	technology
13	the issue, it could be too challenging. She		
14	answered my question about journaling and this		
15	seems to be right so I'll continue. I had called	U/Conn support	professionalism
16	about meeting with [REDACTED] and using the		
17	computer program to analyze my data but I will		
18	go through [REDACTED] and get guidance that way.		

Appendix K: Leveled Books Distributed to Participants

Books provided for summer reading to Alex with Fountas & Pinnell Reading Level

- *A Trip to the Laundromutt* by Charlot Wilson (Level H)
- *Footprints* by Sharon Fear (Level H)
- *All About Honeybees* by Jerry Albert (Level I)
- *Cranes* by David Earl (Level I)
- *Road Builders* by David Earl (Level I)
- *The Wise Blackbird* by Ann Gadzikowski (Level I)
- *All About Dinosaurs* by Stanley Francis (Level J)
- *Newt* by Matt Novak (Level J)

Fly Guy series:

- *Fly Guy Meets Fly Girl* by Tedd Arnold (estimated level J)
- *Hi! Fly Guy* by Tedd Arnold (estimated Level J)

Books provided for summer reading to Anna with Fountas & Pinnell Reading Level

- *Mercy Watson to the Rescue* by Kate DiCamillo (Level K)
- *The Candy Corn Contest* Patricia Reilly Giff (Level L)
- *December Secrets* Patricia Reilly Giff (Level L)
- *Young Cam Jansen and the Ice Skate Mystery* by David Adler (Level J)
- *The Littles* by John Peterson (DRA Level 24)
- *The Littles Make a Friend* by John Peterson (Level K)
- *Big Al* by Andrew Clements (Level L)

Books provided for summer reading to Brandon with Fountas & Pinnell Reading Level

- *Elephant and Tiger* Elephant and Tiger (Level J)
- *All About Bats* by Donna Latham (Level J)
- *The Wise Blackbird* by Ann Gadzikowski (Level I)
- *The Singing Duck* by Luka Berman (Level I)
- *Too Tall* by Gail Blasser Riley (Level J)
- *All About Dolphins* by Katacha (Level J)
- *Chester* by Sydney Hoff (Level J)
- *Days with Frog and Toad* by Arnold Lobel (Level K)

Books provided for summer reading to Crystal with Fountas & Pinnell Reading Level

Puppy Place series:

- *Goldie by Ellen Miles* (Level M)
- *Scout by Ellen Miles* (Level M)

Olivia Sharp Nate the Great's Cousin series:

- *The Green Toenails Gang* by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat, Mitchell Sharmat, and Denise Brunkus (approximate level M/N)
- *The Princess of Fillmore Street School* by Marjorie Sharmat (approximate Level M)

Rainbow Magic, Petal Fairies series:

- *Charlotte the Sunflower Fairy* by Daisy Meadows (approximate level M)
- *Pippa the Poppy Fairy* by Daisy Meadows (approximate level M)
- *Tia the Tulip Fairy* by Daisy Meadows (approximate level M)

Books provided for summer reading to Grace with Fountas & Pinnell Reading Level

Arthur series:

- *Arthur and the Best Coach Ever* by Marc Brown (Level M)
- *Mystery of the Stolen Bike* by Marc Brown (Level M)

Calendar Mysteries series:

- *February Friend* by Ron Roy (approximate Level M)
- *April Adventure* by Ron Roy (approximate Level M)
- *Case of the Missing Trophy* by Angela Medearis (Level N)

Pete and Penny's Pizza Puzzles series:

- *Case of the Secret Sauce* by Aaron Rosenberg (approximate Level N)

Magic School Bus Chapter Books

- *Amazing Magnetism* by Rebecca Carmi (Level P)
- *Expedition Down Under* by Rebecca Carmi (Level P)

Books provided for summer reading to Kiley with Fountas & Pinnell Reading Level

Arthur series:

- *Locked in the Library* (Level M)
- *Mystery of the Stolen Bike* (Level M)

Calendar Mysteries series:

- *January Joker* by Ron Roy (approximate Level M)
- *May Magic* by Ron Roy (approximate Level M)

Puppy Place series:

- *Buddy* by Ellen Miles (Level M)
- *Snowball* by Ellen Miles (Level M)

Books provided for summer reading to Lucy with Fountas & Pinnell Reading Level

Rainbow Magic

- *Goldie the Sunshine Fairy* by Daisy Meadows (approximate Level M)
- *Pearl the Cloud Fairy* by Daisy Meadows (approximate Level M)

Puppy Place series:

- *Rascal* by Ellen Miles (Level M)
- *Snowball* by Ellen Miles (Level M)

Magic Treehouse Series

- *Dolphins at Day Break* by Mary Pope Osborne (Level M)
- *Polar Bears Past Bedtime* by Mary Pope Osborne (Level M)
- *High Tide in Hawaii* by Mary Pope Osborne (Level M)

Books provided for summer reading to Max with Fountas & Pinnell Reading Level

Jigsaw Jones

- *Case of the Frog Jumping Contest* by James Preller (Level N)
- *The Case of the Vanishing Painting* by James Preller and Jamie Smith (Level N)

A-Z Mysteries:

- *The Absent Author* by Ron Roy (Level N)
- *The Runaway Race Horse* by Ron Roy (Level N)

Calendar Mysteries series:

- *March Mischief* by Ron Roy (approximate Level M)
- *May Magic* by Ron Roy (approximate Level M)
- *January Joker* by Ron Roy (approximate Level M)

Pete and Penny's Pizza Puzzles series:

- *Case of the Secret Sauce* by Aaron Rosenberg (approximate Level N)

Books provided for summer reading to Rianna with Fountas & Pinnell Reading Level

Puppy Place series:

- *Shadow* by Ellen Miles (Level M)
- *Goldie* by Ellen Miles (Level M)
- *Maggie and Max* by Ellen Miles (Level M)
- *Princess* by Ellen Miles (Level M)

Calendar Mysteries series:

- *June Jam* by Ron Roy (approximate Level M)

Olivia Sharp series:

- *The Sly Spy* by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat, Mitchell Sharmat, and Denise Brunkus (Level L)
- *The Pizza Monster* by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat, Mitchell Sharmat, and Denise Brunkus (Level L)

Rainbow Magic

- *Abigail the Breeze Fairy* by Daisy Meadows (approximate Level M)
- *Ruby the Red Fairy* by Daisy Meadows (approximate Level M)

Appendix L: Table of Codes

Table of Codes

Themes	Categories	Second Cycle Coding	First Cycle Coding
One: Readers experienced summer learning in different ways	Summer learning	1. Assessments 2. Books 3. Motivation	Book choice Book levels Book samples Books available Delivery of books Differentiation-used data to provide reading levels DRA2 fall DRA2 spring DRP fall DRP spring Extrinsic motivation Fiction Interest -based Leveled books Nonfiction Readily available reading material Reading at home Summer learning Summer setback Sustain in-school reading progress
Two: Multiple levels of thinking were evidenced through discussions and written responses	Gradual Release	4. Gradual release continuum	Clarify Face-to-face time Independent Less support Modeling Need external structure New learning One-to-one instruction Practicing response Rehearsal (oral) Scaffold Too big a step w/o support

Themes	Categories	Second Cycle Coding	First Cycle Coding
Two: Multiple levels of thinking were evidenced through discussions and written responses	Students as learners	5. Developing readers 6. Expansion of ideas 7. Question choice 8. Social lenses 9. Text evidence 10. Writing conventions 11. Written response 12. Reading strategies	Authentic Author's message Bloom's updated level of responses Challenging Check decoding Compare/contrast Connections Developmental expectations Distracted Encouraging/need to grow responses Identify w/main character Impulsivity Informal assessment Opinion Organization Sentence response Sequencing ideas Single word respons Social issues Spelling Summarizing Text evidence Thinking @ theme Tier 3 Time Underdeveloped response Uppercase usage Wonder @ prior instruction w/open-ended responses

Themes	Categories	Second Cycle Coding	First Cycle Coding
Three: Students exhibited changes in value of reading and perceived reading competence	Value of Reading Activities	13. Appreciation 14. Reading plan 15. Value of reading 16. Work ethic	Appreciation expressed- “enjoying my reading” Appreciation of read alouds Appreciation of silent reading Books on deck Challenge to focus Discourse @ reading Distracting self and others Favorite genres Late hours when posting Motivated to read MRP value of reading Reading at home Reading habits Reading plan Rushing Too independent Value of reading Work ethic
Three: Students exhibited changes in value of reading and perceived reading competence	Perceived competence and performance	17. Competitiveness 18. Number of blogs 19. Parent involvement 20. Reading strategies 21. Self-concept	Fast is good Favorite genres Humor-may be distractor Number of blog comments Parent involvement Predict Self-concept Self-concept R. he believes he can do it Text evidence Visualize Wonder @ competitiveness

Themes	Categories	Second Cycle Coding	First Cycle Coding
Four: Variations in students' technology experiences influenced independence and participation	Perception of technology	22. Computer experience 23. Developing confidence 24. Developmental stage 25. Distractions 26. Future planning 27. Gradual release continuum 28. New learning 29. Parent support 30. Word processing skills	One finger typing Computer competence Proficient with computer Clear communication- directions for blog Gradual release continuum Parent support w/word processing Challenge to focus on computer/play games Improved word process skills Exploring sites Future planning Enjoyment Practice allowed for improvement New learning Developing expertise Developing confidence Developmental stages Scaffolding One-to-one support Practicing Not responding
Five: Students experienced different levels of engagement during the summer study	Student safety	31. Student safety	Blog usernames and passwords Connecting w/researcher(me) District contact distribute list Explanation of project IRB-script meetings Kid friendly language Number coded MRP Parent accompany student Parent permission Private blog site Stranger Student consent Student privacy Trust factor

Themes	Categories	Second Cycle Coding	First Cycle Coding
Five: Students experienced different levels of engagement during the summer study	Social Interactions While Blogging	32. Fostering connections through blog comments and responses 33. Gradual release	Not responding to each other R. encouraging peer responses Read peer comments S. discussion w/R @ more instruction in class School /class experience and practice
Five: Students experienced different levels of engagement during the summer study	Parent Participation/Influence	34. Parent influence	Clear directions for blog Communication Dependent Email contact Kindle (external motivator) Mom values daughter's reading Parent concern @ value of reading Parent control-read your books Parent support w/word processing Schedules: compete w/reading/parent obligations/over committed kids Tech difficulties/ broken computer

Themes	Categories	Second Cycle Coding	First Cycle Coding
Five: Students experienced different levels of engagement during the summer study	Observed Habits of Reading (reported by students and parents)	35. Reading habits 36. Thoughtful responses	Applying comprehension strategies (articulated) Continuing to read Finding evidence More books Need to write so think more Reading increased
Five: Students experienced different levels of engagement during the summer study	Engagement	37. Active participation 38. Engagement and motivation 39. Just right book choice	Active participation Books on deck Confirmation Connecting w/students Discourse Encouraging peer responses Enjoyed summer reading Extrinsic T. writes back Favorite books Lost interest More books Motivated to read Positive feedback Read peer comments Reading plan Recommend to others Re-engage students T. communication

Themes	Categories	Second Cycle Coding	First Cycle Coding
		Attribute codes were eliminated or combined during second coding.	Administrative support Collegial support Communication District values S. work Environment(rooms/buildings) Flexibility Higher education level of district admin. Interactive with students IRB Kids friendly language Managing materials Noticing trust factor/trust school (educators) Organization/management Permission letters Polite conversation Procedural explanation Professional courtesy Relief to be progressing Student safety Supportive and friendly Time management Typical procedures