**Assessment 4- Summer Opportunity for Advancement in Reading Program (S.O.A.R)**

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Summer Opportunity for Advancement in Reading Program (S.O.A.R)

**Overview**

Summer school learning programs can help students improve their academics through small group early interventions to accelerate learning for at-risk students. This is especially true for children from low socio-economic families that may not have access to educational resources throughout the summer and for low-achieving students who require additional time to master academic content. Conversely, summer learning programs are often an afterthought of school districts or not offered at all, especially in restrictive funding environments (Johnston et al., 2015). Research indicates that summer break may have detrimental learning effects for many students. On average, all students lose skills at the end of the summer, particularly in literacy, emphasizing reading levels (McCombs et al., 2011).

Cury (2001) found that summer learning loss is cumulative and that, over time, these periods of differential learning rates between urban, low economic status districts vs. suburban, high achieving regions contribute to learning decay and summer learning loss, substantially to attainment. It may be that efforts to close the achievement gap during the school year alone are unsuccessful. Given the established connection between academic learning time achievement and the findings regarding summer learning loss, it is reasonable to suppose that a structured summer instruction program could help mitigate learning loss (Siddiqui et al., 2014). Similarly, general learning literature indicates that low-achieving students require additional time to master content material and that spacing learning out over time is an effective instructional technique (Johnston et al., 2015). Rigorous studies of voluntary summer programs, mandatory summer programs, and programs that encourage students to read at home during the summer have all found positive effects on student achievement. The collective evidence from the studies suggests that summer learning programs can mitigate summer learning losses and even lead to achievement gains (Johnston et al., 2015). Lastly, Shettell and Bower (2013) explain the importance of integrating technology in the classroom room thorough the school year, including summer school programs. This commitment allows teachers to be active participants in discovering the many ways that technology can revolutionize and transform learning in order to teach 21st-century learners effectively. Thus, the Summer Opportunity for Advancement in Reading Program (S.O.A.R) summer school proposal is designed to target K-3 students focusing on phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and reading comprehension through a small group balanced literacy approach utilizing a variety of technology platforms to increase student literacy skills.

**Rationale**

Summer setback is defined as a regression in academic achievement over the summer months (Parker & Reid, 2017). For students who struggle in specific content areas or demonstrate high academia in their core subjects, summer programs that focus on academic instruction allow students to enhance their cognitive skills and abilities (Chen, 2019). To provide students with academic, social, and personal enrichment opportunities year-round, many public schools have created unique and diverse summer programs. While these opportunities, in any subject area, provide students with differentiated intervention activities and lessons, many academic programs also help support personal and social development (Chen, 2019).

Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, school districts were quickly forced to arrange virtual schooling during which students received instruction that did not fully mirror the education they would have received in person. Kuhfeld and Tarasawa (2020) rationalize that by the time school returns to some semblance of normalcy, students globally will have endured either several months of full-remote learning, a modified or hybrid version of school, or a combination of both. This has resulted in a phenomenon known as the “COVID-19 slide” and can have severe consequences for many students. Thus, students must receive all the additional support needed to master the material they did not learn during the previous school year, reverse summer learning loss, and achieve learning gains. A summer school program must be of high quality, or the potential benefits of mitigating learning loss or achieving learning gains may not be realized. This is extremely important for youth as they must grasp and comprehend the foundational skills learned throughout the year to properly implement the strategies in context for the following year. If specific interventions are not in place, most learning will be lost.

Therefore, a successful summer school outline should be established with a clear focus and purpose for the program. The purpose should be aligned with the goals and implemented to measure student progress and attain individualized student achievement. The Summer Opportunity for Advancement in Reading Program (S.O.A.R) initiative will be a three-week summer reading program for students reading below their reading comprehension level for their grade or is failing English Language Arts. S.O.A.R will follow a balanced literacy approach that incorporates evidence-based reading fluency and comprehension strategies utilizing digital technology platforms. Shettell and Bower (2013) explain the importance of technology integration within a balanced literacy approach. This commitment allows teachers to be active participants in discovering the many ways that technology can revolutionize and transform learning in order to teach 21st-century learners effectively. Technology integration equals literacy without limits. The pedagogy of technology integration is growing exponentially, providing a basis for further exploration and new best teaching practices. When literacy learning in S.O.A.R is leveraged with technology education, a balanced literacy approach is delivered. The combination of whole language and phonemic awareness will aid in increasing student reading levels and comprehension skills.

**Systems-Based Proposal**

As the school year comes to an end, teachers closely examine student data such as running records, benchmarks, grades, and anecdotal notes to select students who are in danger of failing or require additional support prior to entering the next grade level. The Summer Opportunity for Advancement in Reading Program (S.O.A.R) is a free summer school program proposal that is designed to target K-3 students utilizing educational digital platforms that focus on phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and reading comprehension through a small group balanced literacy approach. With whole language, the idea is that children learn to read and write best by engaging in the language undividedly. Language is taught through a system that encompasses word recognition and their relation to one another in context (Duffy, 2001).

The balanced literacy approach works for many students, specifically those that are visual learners and acquire best through interaction. With the phonics approach, the theory is that students learn to read best by teaching letter and sound relationships. This is great for the auditory learner. The teacher is able to provide whole language learning opportunities through interactive read-alouds, shared reading, and explicit phonics instruction (Duffy, 2001). In the S.O.A.R program, students will follow a specific curriculum outline that incorporates word study, read aloud, mini-lessons (focus skill), independent reading/activity, and centers/guided reading. The program will take place on school grounds following the social distance guidelines and rules and regulations will be put in place to ensure that students are healthy and safe. Because much of learning is through digital platforms, the S.O.A.R program will also utilize specific technology platforms to increase student literacy skills. Reading A-Z will be utilized as the main reading platform. The books and resources available in this site correlate to the common core standards and have a variety of fiction and non-fiction leveled readers. Fluency passages, phonological awareness, phonics lessons, flashcards, and vocabulary sources are also provided. Fountas & Pinnell reading levels (commonly referred to as “Fountas & Pinnell”) will be utilized to identify students reading levels. The assessment will provide valuable information about reading accuracy, comprehension, and fluency (Building Momentum in Schools, 2018).

Additionally, iPads will be utilized for students in kindergarten and first grade to provide differentiation during literacy centers. While the teacher meets with a guided reading group, or one-on-one, students will be working in various digital learning applications including phonemic awareness, letter-sound-recognition, and reading. Students in second and third grade will utilize their chromebooks during centers and throughout the summer program. Nearpod will be one digital platform utilized where teachers have the option to upload existing lessons from Google Slides or PowerPoint. The teachers will be able to create videos, virtual trips, manipulatives, activities, practice assignments, and quizzes for their students. Quill will also be utilized to enhance writing skills. The activities that can be utilized can help students develop their sentence structure and grammar skills, and are designed as supplemental writing exercises that students complete over a short period of time. Lastly, GoGaurdian will be utilized as the software platform to help manage student devices. It enables teachers to monitor student activity online, can sync with Google Classroom, and helps struggling students stay focused. This will be utilized when the teacher is working on-on-one or in small groups in order to ensure students are working on the task at hand.

**Evaluation Plan**

The Summer Opportunity for Advancement in Reading Program (S.O.A.R) will be a free three-week enrichment program that provides small group and one-on-one whole language learning opportunities through interactive read-aloud, shared reading, interactive writing, and explicit phonics instruction during both word study and guided reading. A letter will be sent home via email to the specified students' primary parents' email addresses. Appendix A displays an example of a S.O.A.R parent letter. Letters must be signed by the primary parent(s) and returned to the school for program entry. Free snacks and cold lunch will be provided along with incentives for students with 90% attendance at the end of the program. To ensure that students receive personalized instruction tailored to their specific learning needs, the S.O.A.R program utilizes best teaching practices through a whole language approach and differentiated instruction. Students will be utilizing various digital learning applications focusing on specific phonemic awareness, letter-sound-recognition, and reading to strengthen their literacy skills.

The S.O.A. R’s three-week program is designed to help at-risk students from kindergarten to third grade improve their literacy skills. Students will be grouped into the classes based on their grade or reading levels (centered on the student's need), and early literacy interventions will be provided. There will be four teachers with approximately 6-10 students in each class. Appendix B displays a paradigm of the S.O.A.R program. Lastly, teachers will create lesson plans utilizing a S.O.A.R lesson planning template for each week grounded on the skill of the day, students reading levels, and literacy needs. Lesson plans will follow a balanced literacy approach: word study, read aloud, mini-lesson (focus skill of the day), independent reading/activity, and guided reading/centers. Table 1 provides an example of a one-week S.O.A.R lesson plan template. At the end of the summer program, students will be retested on their reading levels through running record data collection to ensure that the program's balanced literacy approach through digital educational platforms was indeed a success. The number of gift cards provided at the end of the program will specify data on attendance rates and illustrate if attending a summer program correlates to increased literacy skills.

**Table 1**

*S.O.A.R Lesson Plan Template*

**Teacher:         Class Name/Grade:                                       Week of:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date: | **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
| **Focus Skill (Examples)** | Main Character | Setting | Problem | Solution | Review |
| **Word Study**  8:30am-9:00am |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Read Aloud**  9:00am-9:15am |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Mini Lesson**  9:15am-9:30am |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Independent Reading/Activity**  9:30am-10:15am |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Guided Reading**  10:35am-12:00am |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Centers**  10:35am-12:00pm |  |  |  |  |  |

*\*Note- Strategic planning is critical when lesson planning as independent reading activities, guided reading, and centers must be differentiated based on the students reading levels and comprehension skills.*

**Reflection**

Despite the evidence supporting summer learning programs and the recent attention in the media and policy debates, many low-socioeconomic school districts are not offering summer programs to prevent learning loss. Longitudinal students indicate that the effects of summer learning programs endure for at least two years after participation (McCombs et al., 2011). Districts and communities must decide for themselves whether the potential value of these programs is worth their investments. However, existing research suggests that summer learning programs should be seriously considered within the context of student needs and available resources (McCombs et al., 2011). The cost of a summer program is one reason that school districts do not pursue them. This is because summer programming represents the additional cost in a time of severe shortfalls in state education budgets (McCombs et al., 2011). However, the Summer Opportunity for Advancement in Reading Program (S.O.A.R) will utilize funds from Title I funds and money saved from school fundraising in order to provide a free snack, lunch, iPads, chromebooks, digital educational literacy applications, and memberships to educational websites to support literacy proficiency for our kindergarten to third-grade students.

Research demonstrates that students can benefit in several ways from a summer learning program. Students can master material that they did not learn during the school year, reverse summer learning loss, prevent the "Covid-19" slide, and achieve learning gains (Siddiqui et al., 2014). Student achievement will be attained through a strategically planned summer program schedule/curriculum utilizing a balanced literacy approach for academic progress. The summer program will also motivate and engage students because of its focus, complementing the regular school year program. In addition, the curriculum will be aligned with student needs and the state standards. The small group sizes, structured curriculum, framework, and daily differentiated lesson plans will ensure every child's success and that no instructional time is lost throughout the program.

Lastly, the fusion of literacy and technology is no longer a "future-forward" idea. The future is now. With the Covid-19 pandemic changing education as a whole, schools began to lean highly towards digital learning platforms as their primary teaching source. The education field is at the threshold of this frontier, and there will be many lessons to learn about effective implementation along the way. Technology integration equals literacy without limits. The pedagogy of technology integration is growing exponentially, providing a basis for further exploration and the development of new best practices (Shettel & Bower, 2013). Thus, incorporating best teaching practices through small group and one-on-one support utilizing the balanced literacy approach through digital educational platforms that target differentiated literacy instruction will ensure that students reading level and comprehension skills show improvement.

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**Appendix A**

S.O.A.R Parent Letter

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The impact of Covid-19 began on March 16, 2020 when schools transitioned to remote learning. Even with the efforts of both staff and parents, it was inevitable that our students would experience learning loss. We closely examined student data such as running records, benchmarks exams, and teacher’s anecdotal notes. Based on this data, your child has been chosen to attend our Summer Opportunity for Advancement in Reading (S.O.A.R) enrichment program to strengthen their literacy skills.  Only a select number of students were chosen for the program this year. The S.O.A.R program will be a three-week program running from Monday August 9th - Friday August 20th at (Name of school.) There is no cost for this program. Students with 90% attendance (only 1 absence) will be given a $10 gift card at the end of the program to their choice of (Barnes and Noble, Pizza Hut, Dunkin Donuts, or Amazon).  If you are interested in enrolling your child, please complete the form below and send in by Friday, May 31, 2020. If you do not reply by this date, the spot will be offered to the next child on the list.

             Summer Enrichment Details

* Only students who receive an invitation may attend
* Dates: Monday, August 2-Friday, August 20, 2021
* Times: 9:00am-1:00pm
* Free snack and lunch will be provided
* Address: School Grounds

Sincerely,

Ms. Ismailoff

Assistant Principal



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I (Print name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_will allow my

child\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to attend the S.O.A.R Summer Enrichment Program.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_                         \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

   Parent/Guardian Name (Please Sign)     Cell Phone / Home Phone

\*My child \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is s allergic to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Appendix B**

S.O.A.R Daily Schedule and Outline

**Date:** Monday, August 2-Friday, August 20, 2021

**Where:** School Grounds

**Time:** 9:00am-1:00pm

**Grade levels:** K-3

**Number of students:** 26 students, approximately 6-10 from each grade

**Number of teachers:** 4

**Payment:** $30 per hour=$120 per day per teacher

**Length of program:** 15 days

**Payment per teacher:** $1,800

**Total payment:** $7,200

**Daily Schedule:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 9:00am-9:30am  30 min. | Word Study |
| 9:30am-9:45am  15 min. | Read Aloud |
| 9:45am-10:00am  15 min. | Mini Lesson (Focus Skill) |
| 10:00am-10:45am  15 min. | Independent Reading/Activity |
| 10:45am-11:00am  15 min. | Snack/Break |
| 11:00am-12:30pm  1hr30min | Centers/Guided Reading  (Peak of differentiation) |
| 12:30pm-1:00pm  30 min. | Lunch |
| 1:00pm | Dismissal |

**Program Logistics**

**Daisies: Kindergarten (Reading Levels AA-C)**

Teacher:

Number of Students:

Room Number:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Student Names** | **Reading Level** | **Comprehension** |
|  |  |  |

**Dandelions: First Grade (Levels E-G)**

Teacher:

Number of Students:

Room Number:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Student Names** | **Reading Level** | **Comprehension** |
|  |  |  |

**Lilacs: Second Grade (Levels I-M)**

Teacher:

Number of Students:

Room Number:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Student Names** | **Reading Level** | **Comprehension** |
|  |  |  |

**Lilies: Third Grade/Exiting (Levels O-Z)**

Teacher:

Number of Students:

Room Number:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Student Names** | **Reading Level** | **Comprehension** |
|  |  |  |

*Note-Student reading levels are retrieved from the end of the school year running record data utilizing Fountas and Pinnell reading levels. Students are retested on their reading level prior to the start of the program to ensure accurate reading levels.*