



The Bridgeport Total Learning Initiative

TL Summer Camp- Summer 2014 Overview, Implementation, and Evaluation

The first Total Learning Summer Camp was held at Cesar Batalla School, from July 1st to July 25th, with a total of 18 days of instruction. The camp was designed for incoming Grade 3 children, since this will be a critical testing year. The goal of the camp was to prevent “summer slide” and provide a joyful learning experience with a combination of Total Learning strategies, whole group and independent practice, engaging teaching and learning, and a focus on literacy skills essential for success in Grade 3.

The Children:

We had 22 incoming Grade 3 children attending TL Camp voluntarily, with an average of 18 reporting daily. This fluctuation was due to the heat (air conditioning was not working in the school), vacation plans, and a few injuries/illnesses. The DRA levels for the children ranged from A to 34, which was the most challenging aspect. The children who came into the camp at a DRA level 18 or below also attended mandatory morning summer school in addition to TL camp.

The Evaluation:

The MCG evaluation plan for the TL Summer Camp looked at 3 aspects- Incoming and exiting DRA scores, student/adult interactions through the CLASS assessment (both for regular summer school and camp), and an attitudinal pre/post survey of the children based on their feelings about themselves as learners and readers. (See evaluation results at the end of this document)

The Schedule:

This is an example schedule of the daily camp. It was altered when needed to accommodate children’s needs, interest, and temperament.

12-12:30	Lunch
12:30-12:50	Outside free play (weather permitting)
12:50-1	Bathroom/water break
1-1:15	Gathering song/dance and Center review/choice
1:15-1:45	Discovery Centers (leaving 5 minutes for reporting out)
1:45-2	Snack
2-2:25	Whole Group Book Exploration (foreshadowing STUDIO Concept)
2:25-3	Guided Reading STUDIOS
3-3:30	Chapter Book Beach Read

The Academic Delivery Components:

The TL Summer Camp was designed for students to experience a wide range of learning opportunities. As an extension of the TL Professional Development K-4, we utilized multi-modal learning opportunities, independent practice, and engaging delivery of curricular (literacy/reading) content.

Main Daily Components:

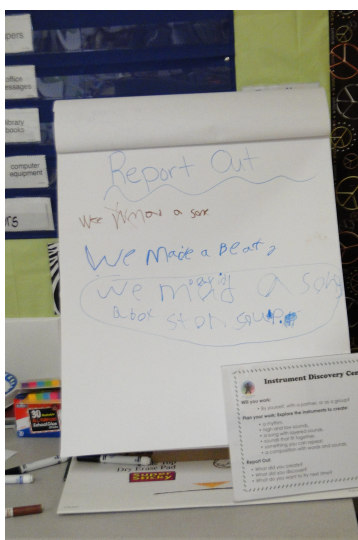
1. Discovery Centers

These centers are based around creative thinking, building independence, risk-taking, and the ability to have a voice in their own learning. The students must plan their own work going into the center (there is a chart posted with ideas to try at each center), discuss their work with their center peers or an adult, and report out what they created and what they discovered on large chart paper in each center. The Discovery Centers include:

- Blocks
- Clay
- Drama
- Collage
- Instruments

We discovered that when given freedom in centers like this (that the children have possibly not experienced since Preschool,) they were very tentative about what to do and how to even think of what to do. This is the whole point of doing discovery centers...to get their brains working! So we decided on day 4 to make each center have an open-ended task. (For example: we read the book Swimmy this week and they were tasked to create ocean characters from the story) This seemed to work much better, and the provided focus actually brought out their creativity. Our goal was to transition toward a freer discovery as we moved forward, however in the short 18 days, having the focus remaining on a specified task proved to be more beneficial for the children.

As the camp progressed, so did the children's skills at reporting out what they created and discovered in each center. At the outset, the children's statements read; "I made a house." At the end of camp they looked very different; "We made the jungle with a pathway to the ocean. We discovered that we could use the blue blocks for the water and the yellow blocks for the sand. We used all the blocks in our structure."



2. Whole Group Book Exploration

During the camp we explored picture books through many lenses- Auditory (music), Visual (art), Kinesthetic (movement) and Linguistic (drama). This idea of delving into a book deeply is something done often in the TL K-4 Lessons. During Summer Camp we explored:

The Perfect Square by Michael Hall

Mortimer by Robert Munsch

Stone Soup retold by Heather Forest

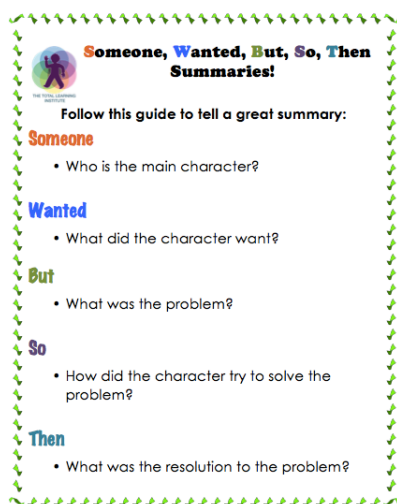
Swimmy by Leo Lionni

Bimwilli and the Zimwi by Verna Aardema

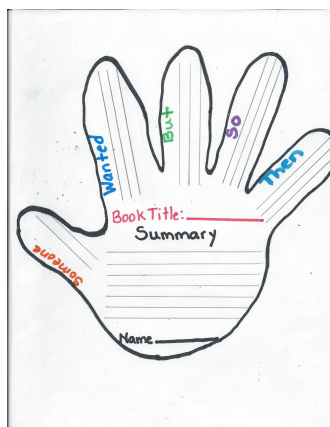
After reading the stories, we charted the characters, setting, problem and solution. As a group, the children were engaged in strategies that explored the stories on a deeper level:

- Moving through shared space like the characters
- Pantomiming story events
- Creating statues and tableaux of the characters and situations
- Using unpitched instruments to highlight text
- Using pitched instruments to accompany story sections
- Creating body percussion patterns using vocabulary/unknown words
- Creating original art using paint, collage and clay to represent characters and setting
- Retelling the story using dialogue

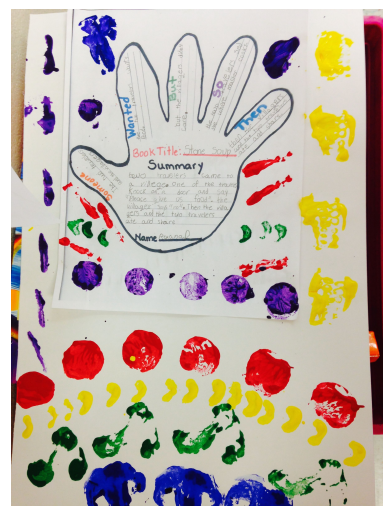
By Grade 3, children should be able to write a complete and detailed summary of a text they have read. Using the Someone/Wanted/But/So/Then model, we practiced writing a detailed summary for each of the books we explored. At first this was done as a group, taking ideas, ending up with a group “model” summary on chart paper. The children practiced writing their own summaries in the guided reading STUDIOS. The children enjoyed using this model and it gave them a tool to organize their thoughts.



Summary Guide



Helping Hand



Stone Soup- Vegetable prints/summary

3. Guided Reading STUDIOS

The Guided Reading STUDIOS are independent learning centers that have been successfully used throughout the K-4 PD component. They combine an arts-based strategy with a literacy focus, allowing the children to read and explore their guided reading books in an independent and engaging way. Since we are worked with such a wide range of reading levels during this camp, each studio had the same activity, however each individual group brought their leveled readers and was differentiated for their reading/development level. As part of the TL Camp, we monitored continuously to make sure the groups were accurate.

The students were divided into 4 reading groups based on their incoming DRA levels (A-34). At first, we noticed that a few children were reading at a more fluent rate than their peers in that group. We moved those children up to the next group and/or gave them more challenging material. In two instances, the children were so proud they were reading a higher leveled book than their Spring DRA, they told their parents and wanted to read the book to all the adults in the class. This confidence boost may possibly make a lasting impact for next year.

Body Percussion Vocabulary

Do Now!

Tells the materials they will need and provides an introductory activity.

Do Now!

YOU NEED

- ✓ Leveled Reader
- ✓ Index cards
- ✓ Post-Its
- ✓ Marker
- ✓ Pencil
- ✓ Journal



- ✓ Read your book.
- ✓ Each take a turn reading a page.
- OR
- ✓ Read together as a group.

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Agenda

Children read and follow the directions. Here, they are reading vocabulary words fluently, while making *body percussion* patterns. (snap, clap, pat, stamp) The skill of *body percussion* was explored prior in the whole group activity.

AGENDA



- ✓ **Look** at the back page of your book.
- ✓ **Write** each vocabulary word on an index card.
- ✓ **Write** other words from the story that were hard to read or understand.
- ✓ **Make** a pattern of 4 words. (You can repeat words!)
- ✓ **Use** post-its to write body percussion.
- ✓ **Place** in a pattern under your word pattern.
- ✓ **Read** your word pattern and do the body percussion!
- ✓ **Take** Turns.

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Wrap It Up

Children respond daily in their journal, following the prompt. The **THINK** question is designed for the children to think critically and apply the learned concept to other areas. This can be a group discussion or individual reflection.

WRAP IT UP



Write a word and body percussion pattern you made today in your journal.

Write : The hardest part about my pattern was _____

THINK

- ✓ What other words do you have a hard time with you could practice with body percussion?

THEN...

- ✓ How did you do?
- ✓ Put things away.
- ✓ Read a book.



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SUMMER CAMP STUDIO 4

Self-Assessment

Children use a self-assessment rubric to determine how they performed as a group in the STUDIO setting. We kept this same assessment format for the camp, however in the K-4 STUDIOS, the self-assessments vary from a group check to individual rubric assessments as the year progresses.










SUMMER CAMP
STUDIO 4

6

SELF-ASSESSMENT

How Did We Do?

Point!

			We read directions in order.
			We followed directions in order.
			We helped our friends.

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SUMMER CAMP STUDIO 4

4. Chapter Book Beach Read

This was by far one of the favorites times of the day. I brought in my beach chair and the children brought in towels and pillows from home. We set up a beach scene and they listen to a read aloud of the chapter book Pippi Longstocking. This was our end to every camp day and it really seemed to unify the group as a learning community. During this time the students answered comprehension questions and joined in discussions about the book. It was a very relaxed and engaging time each day. We read all the way to the next to last chapter. At the end of camp, each child received their own copy of Pippi Longstocking to keep and read the last chapter themselves or with a family member. The excitement in the children was overwhelming to say the least!

Reflections/Observations:

Through this very short 18 day TL camp experience, I observed children completely engaged in their own learning. So much so, that they often did not want camp to end each day. The growth in their ability to be creative and independent thinkers was visibly evident in their work, peer interactions, and their reading.

Quotes from Children:

- *"Why can't we do reading like this all the time?"*
- *"Look! We reported out what we did AND what we discovered!"*
- *"Can we come back next summer?"*
- *"I can't wait to find out what happens to Pippi! I am going to read it as soon as I get home!"*
- *"I wish camp was longer. Can you ask Mr. Sanchez if we can stay the rest of the summer?"*

Quotes from Camp Staff:

- *"In the beginning the kids were looking like they didn't care or were interested in the idea of being at summer camp. But as time went by, they looked forward to attending."*
- *"They became a family and looked out, encouraged, and cheered and praised each other."*
- *"They were proud of themselves, which helped them to become a better reader. Their self-esteem was built up, no matter what reading group they were in."*
- *"Parents saw that their child was eager to come to summer camp and read."*
- *"I loved that the children we were teaching wanted to be there. This program would be beneficial at all grade levels and I hope the district grabs hold of it as a model."*
- *"Students came to camp with the eagerness to participate within studios and guided reading groups. Students gained confidence when reading and enhanced their reading comprehension and vocabulary. Overall, the students responded and interacted well with peers. As one student stated, "I wish regular school was like summer camp.....fun learning!"*
- *"I have been involved in TL since the beginning and providing guidance in the STUDIOS for the last several years. These STUDIOS, that focused directly on their guided reading books, were just the right combination of text/reading focus and TL strategies."*
- *"Reading improvement can be at it's highest if these models/ strategies are used daily."*

MCG Research Overview

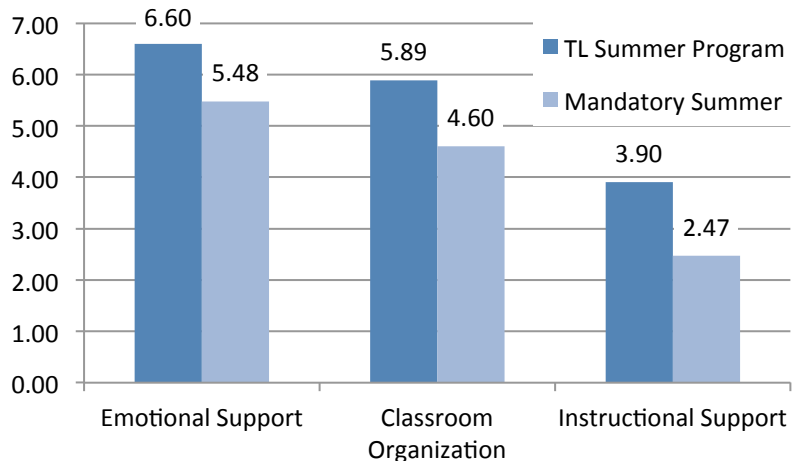
Classroom Quality and Teacher-Student Interactions

In order to evaluate the classroom structure and quality of teacher-student interactions in the Total Learning Summer School Program, structured observations were conducted using the *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)*. The CLASS is a widely-used, valid, and reliable measure of classroom quality and teacher-student interactions (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008¹). CLASS observations were conducted during the TL Summer Program and compared to one session of the mandatory morning summer school program for students in the same age group.

Each classroom was observed twice, on two separate days by an MCG observer trained in CLASS observations. Each observer visited both classrooms on the same day, allowing multiple independent observations to be compared, thereby reducing individual bias. Observations lasted between 87 and 119 minutes, with an average observation time of 96.75 minutes.

When the both observations were averaged together, **the Total Learning group displayed higher scores on all three subscales of the CLASS observation** compared to the mandatory classroom. **The TL classroom also had a higher overall score on the CLASS (5.58) compared to the mandatory classroom (4.31).** The sample is too small for a meaningful test of statistical significance.

Table 1 - Average CLASS Subscales



Reading Levels

In order to evaluate the impact of the Total Learning Summer program on student's reading levels, each student completed the *Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)* during the final week of the program. These scores were compared to student's score on the spring DRA, which were collected as part of the state of Connecticut's mandatory assessment. **There was a statistically significant increase in children's DRA scores from the spring (Mean=20.21) to the summer (Mean=22.14), $t(19)=-3.950, p=.001$.** This difference translates into an average increase in .71 reading levels per student. **Further, none of the children's DRA scores declined from the spring to the summer.**

¹ Pianta, R. C., La Paro, K. M., & Hamre, B. K. (2008). Classroom assessment scoring system. *Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.*

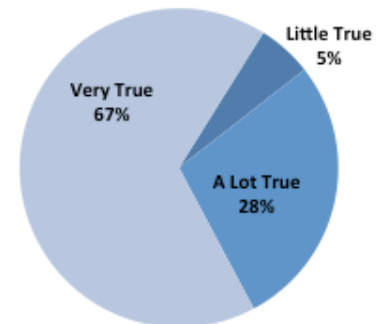
Perception of the Total Learning Summer Program

During the final week of the summer program, students (N=19) were asked to respond whether they believe it was true that they "enjoyed the Total Learning School."

Students were overwhelmingly positive about their experience with the program (see Table 2). Only one student responded "a little true" (5%), while 5 replied and "a lot true" (28%) and 12 "very true" (67%).

When asked why students enjoyed the program, **the most common response was that they enjoyed "reading" (N=9, 42.9%),** followed by "recess/going outside" (N=7, 33%) and playing with "clay" (N=6, 28.6%). The child that responded "a little true" said he enjoyed that there wasn't homework, but he didn't like Total Learning because, *"first I don't like the centers we have because you have to work, and second, it's too long."*

Table 2 - "I Enjoyed the Total Learning Summer School..."



Social Skills

In order to assess the program's impact on children's social skills, each student completed the *Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS)* measure, a valid and reliable measure of social skills and problem behaviors (Gresham & Elliot, 2008²). The full SSIS measure has 75 likert-type statements, to which students indicate the extent they believe each statement to be true on a scale from 1 to 4 ("not true", "a little true", "a lot true", and "very true"). In order to reduce the testing burden on each student and the interference with the summer program

Table 3 - Student's reasons for enjoying the Total Learning program

Response	N	%
Reading	9	42.9%
Recess	7	33.3%
Clay	6	28.6%
Centers	5	23.8%
Music	4	19.0%
Friends	3	14.3%
Collage	2	9.5%

curriculum, only four sub-scales were administered: *Cooperation, Responsibility, Engagement, and Self-Control*. Pre-tests were completed at the beginning of the first week and post-tests were completed at the end of the fourth and final week. Complete data was obtained from a total of 19 students.

Scores on each of the four subscales remained constant between the pre- and post-test assessment (see Table 4 on next page). There were no significant differences between any of the scores from pre to post. It is not surprising that a brief and non-intensive program did not have a lasting effect on children's social skills and behaviors, as these goals were secondary to impacting reading skills. Perhaps in a longer program, the Total Learning approach would make a statistically significant impact.

² Gresham, F., & Elliott, S. N. (2008). *Social skills improvement system (SSIS) rating scales*. Bloomington, MN: Pearson Assessments.

Table 4 - Student's average SSIS responses

	Pre	Post	Difference
SSIS Responsibility	3.20	3.14	-0.06
SSIS Cooperation	3.26	3.16	-0.11
SSIS Engagement	3.02	3.13	0.10
SSIS Self-Control	2.55	2.54	-0.01

Attitudes Towards Reading

In order to assess the program's impact on children's attitudes towards reading, each student completed the *Elementary Reading Attitudes Survey (ERAS)*, a valid and reliable measure of reading attitudes.³ Students are read statements about reading and asked to respond, on a scale from 1 to 4, whether it makes them "very upset", a little upset", "a little happy", or "very happy." Questions measure student's attitude towards academic and recreational reading. Complete data was obtained from a total of 19 students.

Student's scores on both the recreational and academic reading subscales remained constant between the pre- and post-test. While there were no statistically significant improvements, the purpose of the TL summer program was to combat the summer reading slump, and scores did not drop.

Table 5: Student's attitude towards reading

	Pre	Post	Difference
Recreational Reading	3.06	2.95	-0.11
Academic Reading	2.98	2.98	-0.00

Overview

The objective of the Total Learning Summer program was to prevent the "summer slide" and provide a joyful learning experience for students entering 3rd grade. The evidence provided by this small pilot study suggests that the program was successful in achieving this goal. Measures of attitudes towards reading remained relatively high from the beginning to the end of the program, and **statistically significant gains were observed in student's DRA scores after the program was completed.** Further, CLASS observations and student reports showed that the learning environment was warm, rich, engaging, productive, and highly conducive to student learning.

An obvious limitation to this pilot study is the small sample and lack of a control group. Additional research is needed to confirm the positive results obtained in this study.

³ McKenna, M. C., & Kear, D. J. (1990). Measuring attitude toward reading: A new tool for teachers. *The Reading Teacher*, 626-639.