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Factors That are Associated with Students' Standardized Reading Achievement Scores

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The University of Southern Mississippi

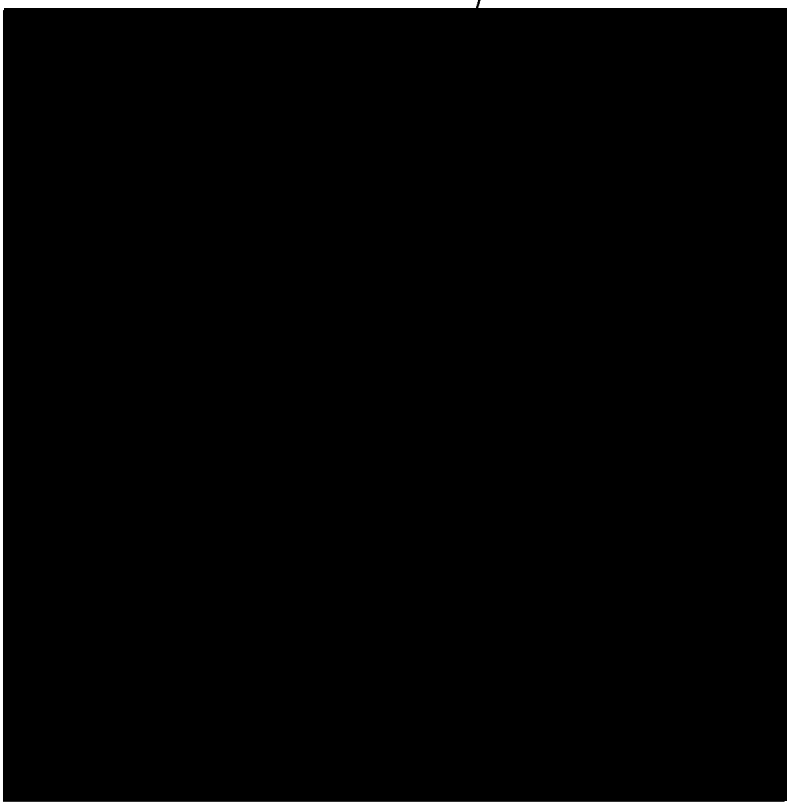
FACTORS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH STUDENTS' STANDARDIZED READING ACHIEVEMENT SCORES

by

Cherie Nichole Mothershead

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Approved:



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ABSTRACT

FACTORS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH STUDENTS' STANDARDIZED READING ACHIEVEMENT SCORES

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This study examined the factors that are associated with students' standardized reading achievement scores. The participants in this study were obtained from two sources: a national and a regional sample. The national participants were located throughout the United States of America, and the regional participants were from a school district in a southeastern state.

The data for the national sample were provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a division of the U.S. Department of Education, and the regional sample was provided by surveying all fifth grade teachers in a school district from a southeastern state. These two samples were analyzed within the context of the research hypotheses. The researcher used the ECLS-K's Public Use Data File and Electronic Codebook to request SPSS syntax for the variables used in the study. Composite variables were then created by summing the variables that represented classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, teachers' evaluations of their students, teachers' evaluations of school/staff activities, teachers' views on school climate/environment, teachers' background (education and teaching assignment), teachers' gender, and teachers' race in order to measure the factors that are associated with students' standardized reading achievement scores. A multiple linear regression was

conducted that showed the linear combination of predictors' significantly predicted reading scores, $F(6, 1044) = 45.14, p < .001$. Based on standardized beta coefficients, classroom instructional activities composite variable was the strongest while teachers' views on school/staff activities composite variable was the weakest. The squared multiple correlation coefficient, R^2 .03, was statistically significant $f(6, 1044) = 45.14, p < .001$. This indicated that 3% of the variance was accounted for by those variables. Lastly, an independent samples t test was conducted and proved to not be significant, $t(1.10) = 41.09, p = .28$; the results were counter to the research hypothesis: the national sample ($M = 74.92$, $SD = 11.46$) and the regional sample ($M = 78.67$, $SD = 22.11$). The equality of variance assumption was violated. However, it was noted that there was a numerical difference in the means but not a statistically significant difference. The contents of this dissertation further explain the results, and suggestions for future research are presented as well.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Philippians 4:13 is my favorite scripture—"I can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me." I have said this often throughout this process. Therefore, I must first and foremost thank God for the blessings in my life and for allowing me the opportunity to be here and complete this task. The writing of this dissertation has been one of the most significant academic challenges I have ever had to face.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter I, the researcher introduces the purpose of this study. Background information is presented along with the specific research questions that the study will investigate. In addition, the chapter provides definitions of important terms that are presented in the study. Delimitations of the study, assumptions, and justifications for the study are also presented in this chapter.

Learning to read is a necessary skill for children. However, with the many learning differences present among students, teaching reading has become increasingly difficult. *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (*NCLB*) addresses an increased focus on reading; one of the major foci of *NCLB* is learning to read well in the early grades. *NCLB* also indicates that state assessments (or testing) are key to improving the academic performance of all students.

The purpose of the study was to determine if there is a statistically significant relationship among reading achievement and selected predictors: classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, teachers' evaluations of their students, teachers' evaluations of school/staff activities, teachers' views on school climate/environment, teachers' background (education and teaching assignment), teachers' gender, and teachers' race, and whether the preceding predictors can statistically significantly predict reading achievement. Also, the study ascertained if there are statistically significant relationships among teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, evaluations of their students, evaluations of school/staff activities, views on school climate/environment, and teachers' background (education and

assignment), teachers' gender, and teachers' race, and fifth-grade standardized reading achievement scores. Additionally, the study ascertained if there is a statistically significant relationship in teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities between fifth-grade teachers in a national and regional sample.

Background

According to Adams (1990), learning to read actually begins the day a child is born. This is when the journey to becoming a reader starts, and it begins at home. Much of the process of learning to read takes place from birth through the end of third grade. It is at the end of this period that children typically transition from learning to read to reading in order to take advantage of their future learning opportunities.

Learning to read is hard work. However, when children become good readers in the early grades, they are more likely to become better readers and learners in later grades (National Center for Children with Learning Disabilities, 2007a). The focus in schools, especially in the early grades, is, therefore, on learning to read. Students are expected to read in order to learn new content. They are also asked to read important information on a daily basis no matter what the subject area. It is believed that throughout these critical early years accurate assessment of children's knowledge, skills, and dispositions in reading and writing will help teachers better match instruction with how and what children are learning. Reading is a skill that requires assessment as well.

NCLB addresses the need for continued assessment and annual assessment in the area of reading. It is interesting, therefore, that the International Reading Association (IRA) is opposed to high-stakes testing. In researching this opposition, it was found that IRA's definition of high stakes testing is:

> high stakes testing means that the consequences for good (high) or poor (low) performance on a test are substantial. In other words, some very important decisions, such as promotion or retention, entrance into an educational institution, teacher salary, or a school district's autonomy depends on a single test score. (International Reading Association, 1999, p. 3)

The IRA's stance is that testing has become a mechanism for controlling instruction rather than gathering information about the individual child. Research tends to indicate that testing will continue to be part of education, and it seems to be increasing at the state level. Children are being tested at younger ages and schools, districts, and states are using this testing to make decisions about students. The IRA states that testing is important to assess students' skills and knowledge, but it is only one of many kinds of assessment. It should be noted that different kinds of assessment produce different kinds of information (Heubert & Hauser, 1999).

Teachers need information specific to the content that they are teaching, and that type of information comes from assessment built around their daily tasks. Policymakers' needs are different. Their information needs to indicate whether school districts, schools, and the state are educating students effectively. This is where high-stakes testing pressure enters the education field. This type of testing allows them to gather information about many students and how they compare against other students in the United States. It also gives them the ability to compare students to specific standards set by the state. Hence, there are tests that are used to make educational decision for schools and school districts.

Statement of the Problem

With national legislation setting the goal of making sure that every child knows how to read at grade level by the third grade, the pressures are being felt by school

districts across the nation. In addition to meeting the goals set forth by national legislation, school districts must also meet goals that the individual states have mandated in regard to state accountability systems and accreditation. Reading opens doors to children who otherwise would struggle through school, lacking the skills to succeed and grow (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). There is a need for research that will aid the determination of factors/predictors that affect students' reading achievement. Specifically, this study ascertained ways in which administrators, teachers, and parents can improve reading achievement among students to assist them in meeting requirements set forth by state and national legislation. This study supported schools in determining factors/predictors that affect students' reading achievement and gave school staff knowledge of those factors.

Research Questions

With respect to the issues outlined previously, this study specifically explored the following research questions:

1. Do the following variables statistically significantly predict fifth-grade standardized reading achievement scores: (a) classroom instructional activities, (b) classroom resources, (c) teachers' evaluations of their students, (d) teachers' evaluations of school/staff activities, (e) teachers' views on school climate environment, (f) teachers' background (education and teaching assignment), (g) teachers' gender, and (h) teachers' race?

2. Are there statistically significant relationships among teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, evaluation of their students, evaluation of school/staff activities, views on school climate/environment,

teachers' background (education and teaching assignment), teachers' gender, teachers' race, and fifth-grade standardized reading achievement scores?

3. Is there a statistically significant relationship in teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities between fifth-grade teachers in a regional and a national sample?

Hypotheses

H1: Classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, and teachers' evaluations of their students will significantly predict students' reading achievement scores.

H2: There are statistically significant relationships among teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, evaluations of their students, views on school climate/environment, and fifth-grade standardized treading achievement scores.

H3: There is a statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities between fifth-grade teachers in a regional and national sample.

Definition of Terms

The terms that follow are used periodically during the presentation of this study. Their definitions within this context are provided.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) - "This is the term *No Child Left Behind* uses to explain that a child's school has met state reading and math goals. The school district's report card will indicate whether or not the child's school has made AYP" (Wright & Wright, 2007, n.p.).

Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) -

This is the term *No Child Left Behind* uses for a teacher who proves that he or she knows the subjects he or she is teaching, has a college degree, and is state-certified. *No Child Left Behind* requires that a child be taught by a highly qualified teacher in core academic subjects. (Wright & Wright, 2007, n.p.)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) -

formerly the Education of the Handicapped Act, includes Part B, the basic grants to States program. Originally enacted in 1975 as Public Law 94-142, Part B of IDEA provides Federal funds to assist States and school districts in making a free appropriate public education available to students with specified disabilities in mandated age ranges beginning at a student's third birthday and possibly lasting to a student's twenty-second birthday, depending on State law and practice. (Wright & Wright, 2007, n.p.)

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) - "The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a written document that is developed for each eligible child with a disability" (Wright & Wright, 2007, n.p.)

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) -

LRE means that, to the maximum extent appropriate, school districts must educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and supports, referred to as "supplementary aids and services," along with their non-disabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled. (Wright & Wright, 2007, n.p.)

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 -

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is the nation's major federal law related to education in grades pre-kindergarten through high school. In its most recent Congressional reauthorization, ESEA became known as the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001.* (Wright & Wright, 2007, n.p.)

School in Need of Improvement -

This is the term *No Child Left Behind* uses to refer to schools receiving Title I funds that have not met state reading and math goals (AYP) for at least 2 years. If a child's school is labeled a "school in need of improvement," it receives extra help to improve and the student has the option to transfer to another public school, including a public charter school. Also, the student may be eligible to receive free tutoring and extra help with schoolwork. (Wright & Wright, 2007, n.p.)

Supplemental Educational Services (SES) -

This is the term *No Child Left Behind* uses to refer to the tutoring and extra help with schoolwork in subjects such as reading and math that children from low-income families may be eligible to receive. This help is provided free of charge and generally takes place outside the regular school day, such as after school or during the summer. (Wright & Wright, 2007, n.p.)

State Assessments -

This refers to the tests developed by the state that children will take every year in grades 3 through 8 and at least once in high school. Using these tests, the state will be able to compare schools to each other and know which ones need extra

help to improve. Contact the child's school or school district to find out more details about the state tests. (Wright & Wright, 2007, n.p.)

Title I -

This is the part of *No Child Left Behind* that supports programs in schools and school districts to improve the learning of children from low-income families. The U.S. Department of Education provides Title I funds to states to give to school districts based on the number of children from low-income families in each district. (Wright & Wright, 2007, n.p.)

Delimitations

The present study was delimited to the fifth grade. Participants for the regional study consisted of fifth-grade teachers from a school district in a southeastern state and all fifth-grade students from that school district. The research population was small and representative of the population of teachers in a southeastern state who taught fifth-grade. Despite these delimitations, the study provided baseline data that may contribute to theory building.

Assumptions

Research like this will assist in determining teachers' perceptions of factors that contribute to higher reading scores in their students with and without learning disabilities. It was assumed that participants would answer survey questions honestly. It was also assumed that any correlations will be a product of an actual relationship between the variables. Data from this research aimed to assist in understanding the factors/predictors that affect fifth-grade students' reading achievement scores.

Justification

The researcher wants these research findings to be used in helping administrators, teachers, and parents understand factors/predictors that affect students' reading achievement scores. Information like this could affect how teachers teach reading and assist them in improving students' reading achievement scores. Furthermore, this type of information would aid administrators in understanding factors that influence reading achievement scores. Research from this study could prove beneficial in assisting schools in the goal of meeting assessment requirements set forth by the states and the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Most importantly, it may allow educators to obtain effective tools to teach students and aid them in learning the skill of reading. Data are provided by the research for understanding the factors/predictors that affect fifth-grade reading achievement scores and at the same time provide information that can be utilized in other grade levels to improve reading achievement.

Summary

Teachers, school administrators, state department of education staff, professional development groups, and parents are continually searching for techniques and methods to improve the reading achievement of students. Because of the demand in society,

> reading is more important today than ever; it is crucial to being an informed citizen, to succeed in one's chosen career, and to personal fulfillment. But first things first: Children who read well do better in other subjects and in all aspects of schooling and beyond. (Alexander, 2007, n.p.)

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In Chapter II, the review of the literature is presented. The researcher begins with the theoretical foundations for reading. Pressures for enhanced literacy and accountability are discussed. In addition, the related impact of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, state accountability systems, and pertinent assessment mandates are presented in this chapter.

This literature review analyzes the structure for teaching reading, the qualities of and methods employed by teachers, and state and national assessment requirements. A review of the literature revealed a persistent emphasis and significant concern for students' reading achievement.

Theoretical Foundation

Children enter kindergarten with diverse literacy skills, and those skills have an important predictive relationship with later reading abilities. Regardless of students' individual differences upon entry, schools have a mission to promote reading achievement for all students (Lonigan, Burgess, & Anthony, 2000). Riley (1996) stated that this means some students will have the skills of a 3 year old and others may have the skills of an 8 year old. This is difficult when teachers are expected to produce the same outcome for all. It should also be remembered that there is no accounting for initial abilities, experiences, interests, and personalities of the individual child (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) indicates that early childhood teachers still take a maturationist or reading readiness view

of young children's development; however, there is much evidence to the contrary. A maturationist/reading readiness view assumes that there is a specific time in the early childhood years that the teaching of reading should begin (Adams, 1990). This theory also assumes that neurological and physical maturation alone prepares the child to take advantage of instruction in reading. It goes on to indicate that experiences from the early years to age 8 affect the acquisition of literacy. Failing to give children literacy experiences at an early age limits the reading levels they attain. Teaching practices associated with these views include extensive group instruction and practice on skills for groups or individual. This is not effective for early grade students and less effective for preschool children (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

Some believe that the ability to read occurs naturally or even magically, since most cannot remember how they learned to read unless they were struggling readers; however, this is not the case. Reading does not emerge in the same manner as oral language development. For most children, learning to read requires systematic and explicit instruction. The nature and degree of instruction needed varies by child. Reading is a lengthy process that should begin very early in a child's life. Before children show the production skills of reading and writing, they begin to develop basic understandings of the concept of reading and writing and their functions. Learning reading skills is much like playing with building blocks, and children create these skills in a variety of ways and formats. This can come from interactions with adults, other children, beginning words, etc. Reading and writing proficiency can be better defined as occurring on a developmental continuum rather than in an all-or-nothing fashion.

Many researchers take the stance that the ability to read does not develop without careful planning and instruction. No one teaching method or approach is likely to be the most effective for all children (Strickland, 1994). A variety of strategies that account for the differences of children are more effective, and good instruction utilizes prior knowledge and skills. Children should know technical skills, but, most importantly, they should know how to use the skill to improve their thinking and reasoning (Neuman, 1998).

Researchers have tested reading readiness, letter identification, and concepts of print to determine whether differences in these abilities can predict differences in future reading achievement. Research has found that reading readiness has been shown to have a high correlation with reading ability; children who lack reading readiness at school entry have a harder time learning to read in the primary grades. This has been found in prediction studies since 1950 (Durkin, 1966).

Children first use visual and physical cues to determine what something says. Researchers (Adams, 1990; Roberts, 1998) stated that to develop reading skills there needs to be an acquisition to phonemic awareness and phonological processing skills. Children also need the "alphabetic principle" to learn to read, meaning that they understand that written spellings represent the phonemes of spoke words. Anbar (1986) found that as children develop the understanding of the alphabet, they begin to process letters, translate sounds, and connect this information into meaning. These two skills are not all that children need to learn in order to read, but are an important start. Acquisition of these skills does not start at school, but in home and child care experiences.

As students' abilities become fluent, the teacher's focus is to have students become independent and productive readers. Accurate assessment of students' knowledge and skill is imperative. One must assess because of the requirements of *NCLB*, and one must also assess to allow teachers to tailor instruction to the student. Research offers up important caveats: reading cannot be measured by standardized tests alone, and tests are often not reliable or valid indicators of what children can do in typical practice (Shepard & Smith, 1988).

Pressures for Enhanced Literacy

In the competitive, knowledge-based world of the 21st century, the education of America's youth will be more important than ever. More responsibility will be placed on schools because of greater diversity among students in terms of languages, preparedness, and motivation. The dynamics of the future workplace place additional demands upon schools. Because of technological advances, there is more material that needs to be taught if students are to be competitive and productive in the future job market.

Education is becoming an increasingly important political issue in this country. In every election, no matter how large or small, education is always an important issue. According to a 1996 *Newsweek* survey, education is the most serious concern of Americans, above crime, the environment, and the economy (Smith, 1996).

Children should be taught to read and write competently, allowing them the opportunity to become productive citizens. The United States is currently enjoying one of the highest literacy rates in its history. However, society now wants everyone to function above just the minimum standards of literacy (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998). Reading is one of the foundations for success in society.

Communications in the workforce have changed drastically. What used to be done verbally, on the telephone or in person, is now done electronically through e-mail, the Internet, fax or other printed materials, thus increasing the need for individuals to read and write effectively. Another reason for teaching children to read and write competently is the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. This legislation was signed into law in January 2002. This law requires much attention because of the sweeping changes it has caused in the American education system.

No Child Left Behind

The elements of the No Child Left Behind Act adhere to four basic principles:

1. Accountability for results
2. An emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research
3. Expanded parental involvement and options
4. Expanded local control and flexibility (National Center for Children with Learning Disabilities, 2007, p. 4)

This act, like some previous standards-based reform efforts, seeks to:

1. Raise the academic achievement of all students
2. Close the achievement gap between groups of students (National Center for Children with Learning Disabilities, 2007, p. 4)

This is important legislation for students as well as schools. A major focus of *No Child Left Behind* is the accountability of schools for the performance of students who struggle with learning (Cortiella, 2003). *No Child Left Behind* provides federal funds to states and local school districts through its Title I grant program. In return, *No Child Left Behind* requires accountability and results from schools that accept these funds. *No Child Left*

Behind requires that all states that accept Title I funds bring all students to a proficient level in reading, math, and science by the year 2014. There are specific requirements to obtain this goal. They are as follows:

1. Develop high academic standards that are the same for every student.
2. Develop annual academic assessments for all students.
3. Ensure that there is a highly qualified teacher in every classroom.
4. Set annual yearly progress (AYP) targets and annual measurable objectives for student progress.
5. Define the amount of academic progress that school districts and schools must achieve each year in order to reach the proficiency goal by 2014, known as adequate yearly progress, or AYP.
6. Ensure that school districts assess at least 95% of students.
7. Determine a minimum size for required subgroups of students to be included in yearly progress calculations.
8. Ensure the availability of reasonable adaptations and accommodations for students with disabilities, and
9. Produce an annual statewide Report Card of performance and make the report available to the public. (National Center for Children with Learning Disabilities, 2007, p. 5)

No Child Left Behind requires assessment results for the overall school and requires that results must be disaggregated, by specific groups of students, including those who historically underachieve. These classifications are referred to as "subgroups," in the legislation. Students' performance data are reported for every applicable subgroup. The

subgroups are only reported if the size meets or exceeds the minimum set by the state (the minimum size varies greatly from state to state). The subgroups that must be included in the performance report are:

1. economically disadvantaged students,
2. students with disabilities (served under IDEA),
3. students with limited English Proficiency, and
4. students from major racial/ethnic groups. (National Center for Children with Learning Disabilities, 2007, p. 6)

No Child Left Behind requires that the vast majority of students are included in the assessment program, so schools have to test 95% of the students in grades assessed, as well as 95% of the students within each subgroup.

Accountability

Accountability is the centerpiece of *No Child Left Behind* and it is obtained through the use of annual statewide assessments. According to the principles of *No Child Left Behind*, testing is necessary to improving the academic performance of all students. These assessments along with other indicators are used to determine if schools are providing substantial and continuous academic improvement. This testing is also used to determine whether the schools and school districts meet the requirement of Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP. Schools that do not achieve AYP for 2 consecutive years in academic achievement or in the achievement of any subgroup are considered "in need of improvement." Title I schools must undertake an effort to improve achievement of students through a variety of activities, and those schools that continue to fall short must provide new options for parents, including transferring their child to a school that is

meeting AYP and/or obtaining supplemental services such as tutoring at no cost (Cortiella, 2003). Finally, such schools will be subjected to a variety of corrective actions to improve performance (National Center for Children with Learning Disabilities, 2007).

Teachers' Background and Perceptions on School/Staff Activities

No Child Left Behind not only addresses assessment and accountability, it also has provisions for better-trained teachers. *No Child Left Behind* requires that teachers and paraprofessionals be highly qualified to help ensure the academic success of the child. Under the law, all teachers had to be highly qualified, according to the statutory definition, by the end of the 2005-2006 school years. Highly qualified means that the teacher must have a bachelor's degree and full state certification or licensure. The teacher must also demonstrate mastery in each subject that he or she teaches. Special education teachers who provide direct instruction in core academic subjects must meet the same requirements. However, those providing consultation to regular education teachers do not have to show subject matter mastery. Paraprofessionals in Title I programs must also complete 2 years of college or pass a skills test by 2006. They may not provide instruction unless under direct supervision of a certified teacher.

The *No Child Left Behind Act* also states that student achievement and the quality of teachers are directly related. Therefore, to improve the quality of education that children receive, the nation must improve the ongoing professional development that it provides teachers through a national plan to upgrade the quality of teaching by keeping all educators, and all those who support these educators, learning throughout their careers (Sparks & Hirsh, 2001; Parker, 2003). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, it is believed that high quality professional development leads to changes in

teaching practice and to improved student performance (http:nces.ed.gov/pubs98/teaching9394/chapter6.asp). Parker (2003) stated, "Today, staff development should not only include high quality training programs with intensive follow-up and support, but also other growth-promoting processes such as study groups, action research, and peer coaching" (p. 15). NCES also supported the notion that the greater the participation of teachers, the more likely they are to think that their professional development experiences had an impact (http:nces.ed.gov/pubs98/teaching9394/chapter6.asp).

Teachers' Views on School/Climate/Environment

Although *No Child Left Behind* and its accountability requirements are important, it is also necessary to discuss the importance of state accountability and state accreditation requirements. In addition to the many requirements set forth in the *No Child Left Behind Act*, there are also important requirements for accountability that are set forth by individual states that school districts, administrators, and teachers must meet.

According to information from the Education Commission of the States (Pearson Education, 2007), accountability systems assume that educators, policymakers, and others know how to act on information to improve education. Policymakers must now determine whose performance should be judged, the level of performance expected, relevant measures of performance, what constitutes satisfactory progress toward established goals, and what consequences will be imposed for superior and adequate performance as well as for those failing to measure up to the standards (Pearson Education, 2007).

The Mississippi Public Schools Accountability Act of 2006 states that in new accountability systems, public school accreditation is two-fold: Each school district is

awarded an accreditation status based on compliance with process standards, and individual schools are assigned a school performance classification based on student achievement. Individual schools are held accountable for student growth and performance and receive an annual School Performance Classification. Those classifications are as follows:

Level 5	Superior-Performing School
Level 4	Exemplary School
Level 3	Successful School
Level 2	Under-Performing School
Level 1	Low-Performing School*

*Some Level I Low-Performing Schools may be designated as a Priority School (Mississippi Public Schools Accountability, 2006).

The school performance classifications are based on student assessment data. Students in grades 2 through 8 take the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) in the spring of each year. In the past, the MCT was used to assess students' knowledge and skills in reading, language, and mathematics. However, this year, the MCT will become the MCT2 and, in addition to the previous areas tested, it will also test students' knowledge in Science. Secondary students do not take the MCT but are assessed in the following subject areas: Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and U.S. History. To assist in ensuring that the accountability systems are equitable, a school is not held accountable for the performance of students who have not been enrolled in that school for at least 70% of the instructional year (Mississippi Department of Education, 2005).

Additionally, students are also held accountable for the academic achievement. Performance on the third-grade and seventh-grade MCT are part of an administrator's decision on whether to promote or retain a student. Students in grades 4 and 8 who did not reach the basic achievement level of grade 3 and grade 7 reading, language, and mathematics are provided with instructional interventions to strengthen their skills. Those students are retested in January of each year and their performance at that time is considered before making the decision to promote or retain them.

Each state is required to submit an accountability plan to the U.S. Department of Education. In 2005, all 50 states and the District of Columbia submitted their individual plans and are currently implementing these plans in their schools (Miss. Department of Education, 2005). A 2004 study by the Thomas Fordham Foundation and Accountability Works evaluated accountability systems in 30 states and gave them mediocre marks for the extent to which accountability systems were based on academic standards and tests that matched individual state standards (Cross, Rebarber, Torres, & Finn, 2004). Elmore (2002) said, "Furthermore, a capacity gap exists in states, districts, and schools. Low income schools are the least capable of turning themselves around" (p. 30). According to the Center on Education Policy (2003), "with the strict timelines and mandates some education policy experts are concerned that states will have incentives to lower standards and expectations for students in order to meet their prescribed goals" (p. 19).

For now, most state policymakers are committed to accountability agendas. This includes but is not limited to setting higher standards for students, measuring whether they are learning, and providing incentives in the form of rewards and punishments for schools to achieve. Public Agenda (2002) conducted an opinion poll that showed that the

public and educators continued to support the principles of high standards and accountability for results (Public Agenda, 2002).

Reading and No Child Left Behind

As was observed previously, one of the major foci of *No Child Left Behind* and schools is learning to read well in the early grades. The 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicated that between 1992 and 2005, there were no significant changes in the percentage of fourth graders performing at or above Basic (Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005). The scores for the nation's highest performing students improved over time, but those of its lowest performing students declined over time. It has been shown consistently that students who cannot read well are more likely to drop out of school and be limited to lower paying jobs. *No Child Left Behind* takes the stand that effective, research-based reading instruction in the early grades can prevent reading difficulties in many children. Under *No Chid Left Behind*, Title I funds must be used only for effective methods and instructional strategies that are grounded in scientific-based research. It is important that the *No Child Left Behind* definition of reading be understood. Reading is defined by this law as a complex system in which students derive meaning from print that requires the following:

1. The skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected in print
2. The ability to decode unfamiliar words
3. The ability to read fluently
4. Sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension

5. The development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print
6. The development and maintenance of a motivation to read. (International Reading Association, 1999, n.p.)

No Child Left Behind gives five essential components of reading instruction which means explicit and systematic instruction in:

1. Phonemic awareness: the ability to hear, identify, and play with individual sounds—or phonemes—in spoken words.
2. Phonics: the relationship between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language.
3. Vocabulary development: the words students must know to communicate effectively.
4. Reading Fluency (including oral skills): the capacity to read text accurately and quickly.
5. Reading Comprehension: the ability to understand and gain meaning from what has been read. (Wendorf & Seagrave, 2005, p. 9)

Classroom Resources

Teachers over the years, across the United States, have indicated that scientifically-based reading instruction can and does work for children. *No Child Left Behind* is a law that asserts nationwide progress can be made when schools and parents bring together those methods and use them to make sure children are successful readers. The key reading initiatives devised under *No Child Left Behind* are titled Reading First and Early Reading First. Early Reading First supports preschool programs and requires

that preschool children, especially those from low-income families, be provided a high quality education (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Scientifically-based research, which is what *No Child Left Behind* requires of reading programs funded by the Act, stresses that early reading skills need to be developed and continually evaluated at this level. The Early Reading First program is based on the premise that early childhood is the best time to develop the pre-literacy skills necessary for success in kindergarten. Based on the scientific research, those reading skills for preschoolers are:

1. Oral Language: expressive and receptive language (vocabulary development)
2. Phonological Awareness: rhyming, blending, segmenting
3. Print Awareness
4. Alphabetic Knowledge: letter/sound knowledge. (National Center for Children with Learning Disabilities, 2007, n.p.)

It is estimated by researchers that, given these opportunities, as little as 5% of children may suffer serious reading difficulties (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). The Early Reading First program was designed to complement the Reading First program, which is an essential component of *No Child Left Behind.* This program seeks to ensure that every child becomes a successful reader. However, under *No Child Left Behind*, individual states and school districts will have to develop a method for comprehensive high quality reading instruction based on a proven scientific based method. Although there are highly prescriptive guidelines for selecting reading pedagogies, there is not a federally-prescribed reading program. Schools will receive funds to assist in finding a program that will work for kindergarten through third grade. It is probably important to note here that

funds are first given to schools and districts with the highest percentage of kindergarten through third graders reading below grade level and to schools and districts with large numbers of low income students (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). This initiative is supposed to be a nationwide effort focused on the classroom to help children become successful readers.

Reading First is based on the premise that learning to read typically occurs as a part of classroom learning and that this will help classroom teachers because most of a student's time in school is spent in the classroom. The funds dispersed are also to help teachers improve on the reading instruction they deliver to children. Remembering the key factor, instruction being given is to come from scientifically-based reading research. It will also ensure accountability through on-going assessment. Reading First expects students to become proficient readers by the end of the third grade. The initiative also expects educators to be provided with ongoing professional development and with support to make this program successful. The information required to make a judgment about the soundness of Reading First will come from individual states. Under *No Child Left Behind*, each state is required to: prepare an annual report showing gains in reading achievement, reductions in the number of children in grades 2 through 3 who are reading below grade level, and increases in the percentage of children overall who are reading at grade level or above. Success is contingent upon every child being successful in other subjects such as math, science, and social studies (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

Teachers' Evaluations of Their Students

No Child Left Behind addresses the need for annual assessment in the area of reading in order to demonstrate adequate academic progress and to avoid sanctions for

less than adequate progress. The International Reading Association (IRA) is opposed to testing for accountability attached to significant consequences. The IRA defines high-stakes testing as using one test to make important decisions about students, teachers, and schools. There is concern from the IRA about this trend. Their stance is that testing has become a mechanism for controlling instruction rather than gathering information about the individual child (International Reading Association, 1999). It is likely that testing will continue to be part of education, but it seems to be increasing at the state level. Children are being tested at younger ages and schools, districts, and states are using the results to make decisions about them. The International Reading Association states that standardized testing is important to assess students' skills and knowledge, but it is only one of many kinds of assessment. It should be noted that different kinds of assessment produce different kinds of information (Heubert & Hauser, 1999). Teachers need information specific to the content that they are teaching, and that kind of information comes from assessment built around their daily tasks. Policymakers' needs are different. They require information to indicate whether school districts, schools, and the state are educating students effectively. Standardized testing allows them to gather information about many students and how they compare against other students. It also gives them the ability to compare students to specific standards set by the state. Hence, there are tests that are used to make educational decisions for schools and school districts.

It is important to note that tests are not perfect, and basing judgments on tests alone can lead to bad decisions. Research indicates that with high stakes testing sometimes there is a narrowing of the curriculum, which inflates the importance of the test. Teachers feel pressured to raise test scores at all costs, meaning that the focus of

activities will be directed to improving that one score. It is believed that narrowing the curriculum will likely occur in high poverty areas that have the lowest test scores. Another response to pressures of "the test" is to focus attention on particular students. Attention is focused on those who score just below cut-off points; those far below or above the average may be ignored (International Reading Association, 1999).

Loss of instructional time is another potential negative result of this type of testing. Time used for instruction is spent preparing for and taking tests. The concern is that this type of testing takes away decision making at the local level and places it in the hands of policymakers, which may decrease the quality and relevance of the education that is provided to students.

High-stakes testing is often criticized, but there are positive aspects of high stakes tests. They are useful in making state level decision; this has provided the opportunity to give the public some idea of how schools are doing. The International Reading Association recognizes accountability as a necessary part of education and states that they do not blame policymakers for the current problems with high stakes testing (International Reading Association, 1999). In the area of testing it is best to remember the necessity of aligning the goals and purposes with the methods. The intent of state assessments is to determine how well students are learning the benchmarks in the state curriculum; researchers estimate that states will more than likely increase the number of assessments given over time to meet the requirements of *No Child Left Behind* and their own accountability systems.

Teachers' Gender and Race

A large body of research focuses on the gender of students; less research explores the impacts of a teacher's gender on students (Hopf & Hatzichristou, 1999). Krieg (2005) found that previous literature examined the effect of teacher and student gender on teacher-student interactions, yet little research investigated if these interactions influence student outcomes as measured by standardized tests. He also indicated that with the high-stakes nature of standardized tests under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (*NCLBA*), it is imperative that researchers better understand the impact of teacher-student interactions on standardized test performance.

Researchers have found that teachers interact differently with students of similar gender than they do with students of opposite gender. This includes evidence suggesting that disciplinary procedures and proclivity to discipline vary by both students and teacher gender. Evidence suggests that male teachers tend to be more authoritative whereas female teachers tend to be supportive and expressive (Meece, 1987). A survey of 20 teachers indicated that male teachers were likely to select a more aggressive disciplinary approach toward boys while teachers of either gender tended to ignore boys' disruptive behavior more than that of girls when the behavior was not aggressive (Rodriguez, 2002). What has yet to be determined is how these differences in discipline, perceptions of student ability, and interactions between student and teacher influence student outcomes as measured by standardized exams (Krieg, 2005).

It does not matter what school district is looked at, the faculty is considered the center and core of that learning institution. However, it is interesting that, according to Harris (2007), race has been used as a factor in achieving diversity in education for over

30 years not only in America but also across national and cultural borders, realizing that it has not been without strife and contention. In recent times, the United States has begun to oppose race-based policies, and there are now Supreme Court decisions that make it unconstitutional to use race to achieve diversity through students or faculty (Harris, 2007). There is limited research that supports hiring policies that give teachers' race primary consideration (Rockoff, 2004).

Classroom Instructional Activities

Methods for teaching reading have long been a subject for controversy; in general, research concludes that no one single method or combination of single methods can teach all children to read. Teachers need knowledge of multiple methods of teaching reading and a strong knowledge of their students to reach the children they teach (Darch, Miao, & Rabren, 2002). Researchers believe the controversy results because schools and parents are not teaching reading as well as they need to. Another reason is that studies of reading methods are difficult to conduct and results are difficult to interpret. Inconclusive results are believed to occur because some methods may work for some children but may not work for other children. If there is anything researchers have learned from methods studies, it is that children learn what they are taught.

Decades of research show that effective reading combines a phonics approach with whole language methods (Stoicheva, 1999). Only through more than one kind of instruction can children gain the skills they need to understand what they read. A variety of activities are necessary to give children the positive attitude toward reading and the strategies that they need to be successful readers.

Reading aloud is the single most important activity for building understanding and essential skills for reading success among young children (Bus, Van Ijzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995). Karweit and Wasik (1996) found that asking questions in small group settings appears to affect children's vocabulary and comprehension of stories. It is the talk that surrounds the storybook that gives it power, helping children to bridge the story and their own lives (Dickinson & Smith, 1994). This order of thinking assists teachers in moving what children see in front of them to what they can imagine.

During the preschool years, the goal is to enhance exposure to and concepts about print (Clay, 1991). Storybooks are not the only means to view print; children can also learn from reading labels, signs, and other forms of print. At the kindergarten level, the thought is for teachers to take every opportunity for developing children's vocabulary. One approach is from listening to stories (Feitelson, Kita, & Goldstein, 1986). Activities that can also help children identify/clarify the concept of words are also focused on in the kindergarten curriculum (Juel, 1991). It is believed that early literacy activities teach children a great deal about writing and reading but often times in ways that do not coincide with traditional school instruction.

As students enter the primary grades, instruction takes on a more formal structure. The first-grade studies project of 1967 was conducted to specifically examine the best approach to reading. It concluded that children learn by a variety of methods and approaches (Bond & Dykstra, 1967; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). It is a combination of approaches that is more effective. A combination of phonics and whole language approaches has often been referred to as a balanced reading approach. This approach has

been used as an alternative to pure phonics or whole language. It has also been used to accommodate different learning styles (Juel, 1991).

As noted above, a balanced reading approach usually means a combined approach of phonics and whole language. Researchers believe that children need training in both phonemic awareness and in cuing strategies (Lonigan, Burgess, & Anthony, 2000). Different stages of reading acquisition require different approaches. One of the signs of skilled reading is fluent, accurate word identification (Juel, Griffith, & Gough, 1986). According to the California Department of Education (1995, 1996), "the heart of a powerful reading program is the relationship between explicit, systematic skills instruction and literature, language and comprehension. While skills alone are insufficient to develop good readers, no reader can become proficient without these foundational skills" (n.p.). In research, it is clearly seen that curriculum and content need to be aligned and linked to research-based standards.

Along with the ability to read comes the need for the ability to comprehend what has been read. This ability seems to be based on several factors. Children need to be able to accurately and correctly apply decoding skills fluently and automatically so that more of their memory can be devoted to comprehending what they read (Pearson & Fielding, 1991). If this is difficult for a child, it impedes his or her ability to comprehend what is read. These skills must be reviewed in instruction and practiced repeatedly. As students' abilities become fluent, the teacher's focus is to have students become independent and productive readers. Opportunities will need to be provided for reading and writing with purposeful activities. Accurate assessment of students' knowledge and skill is imperative. First, one must assess because of the requirements of *No Child Left Behind*, but second, it

allows teachers to tailor instruction to the student. Research states that reading cannot be measured by standardized test alone, that they are often not reliable or valid indicators of what children can do in typical practice (Shepard & Smith, 1988). Standardized tests can be a valid and reliable measure of group performance but can be misleading about a child's individual performance. A sound assessment gives real-life writing and reading tasks. It also covers students' activities in a variety of situations. Reading teachers interact with individual children frequently during the day and in the course of their daily instructional activities; therefore, they know exactly where their children stand in reading development.

Children with reading disabilities pose unique instructional challenges and differ from one another. Children most "at-risk" for reading failure are those who enter school with limited understanding of concepts related to phonemic sensitivity, letter knowledge, print awareness, and vocabulary (skills listed in *No Child Left Behind*). Research states that some children are predisposed to difficulties in reading; these include those who are from homes in which there is limited proficiency in English, parents'/caregivers' reading levels are low, and children have speech or language impairments. Also, children with sub-average intellectual capabilities often times show greater difficulties in reading and reading comprehension. Prevention and early intervention are necessary in assisting children who are "at-risk" for reading failure. The same themes appear repeatedly in research: a call for direct and systematic instruction to develop phonic skills, fluency, and comprehension. For students with learning disabilities, identification and intervention is the key to success. Again, teachers need to be prepared to provide effective instruction to

students who are "at-risk" for reading failure and students who have learning disabilities (National Center for Children with Learning Disabilities, 2007).

Students who have special needs currently represent a large population in schools and are expected to make up an even larger portion in the future; it is important that their needs be met effectively (Bos, Vaughn, Levy, & Coleman, 2002). Inclusion is where students with special needs are assigned to the regular education classroom for instruction and are allowed to participate in all school activities. With the arrival of inclusion in most elementary schools, it is crucial that reading teachers have access to materials that will effectively help them teach and reinforce reading skills.

Inclusion first resulted from The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, or Public Law 94-142, now commonly referred to as the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA also addresses two procedural requirements that occurred originally as a result of P.L. 94-142. These are Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Students diagnosed with a learning disability have an Individualized Education Plan tailored to meet their needs. This is a legal document and must be followed in relation to the student and his or her education. The Individualized Education Plan is developed at a conference that consists of educators, other district personnel, and the parent. The Least Restrictive Environment is one of the most important things discussed at the meeting. This determines to what extent the student will be placed in the regular classrooms. Inclusion requires that as much as possible the student participate in the regular classroom. The Special Education Teacher then becomes a type of consultant. Teachers should receive support and assistance from the Inclusion, Special Education Teachers; however, they will most likely have to provide

some of the reading instruction and practice. Most of the students labeled with special needs can succeed with appropriate instruction and support (Greenman, Schmidt, & Rozendal, 2002).

Not all students who have learning disabilities are identified in kindergarten; some are not even identified in first, second, or even third grade. Therefore, they go undiagnosed until most of the basic reading skills have been taught. This almost ensures that they will have difficulty reading later on. So, it is important that school districts develop reading programs that meet the needs of all children. They should also provide adequate professional development so that teachers can provide a balance approach to reading instruction because teachers are usually the ones who make a difference in children's reading achievement and motivation to read. In searching for effective methods to teach reading, it is probably best stated by remembering the call issued by Bond and Dykstra (1967) in their report on first-grade studies:

> Future research might well center on teacher and learning situation characteristics rather than method and materials. The tremendous range among classrooms within any method points out the importance of elements in the learning situation over and above the methods employed. To improve reading instruction, it is necessary to train better teachers of reading rather than to expect a panacea in the form of materials. (p. 123)

Summary

Dramatic changes have occurred in the teaching of reading for the nation's schools. This literature review examined the structure for teaching reading, the qualities of and methods employed by teachers, and state and national assessment requirements. A

review of the literature reveals a persistent emphasis and significant concern for students' reading achievement.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter III describes the methodology that was utilized in the study. The research design is introduced, including the research questions that were answered. Study participants are described, along with specification of the data gathering methodology. In addition, the proposed data analysis, data reporting procedures, and the methodological limitations are included.

The purpose of the study was to determine if there is a statistically significant relationship among reading achievement and selected predictors: classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, teachers' evaluations of their students, teachers' evaluations of school/staff activities, teachers' views on school climate/environment, teachers' background (education and teaching assignment), teachers' gender, and teachers' race, and whether the preceding predictors can statistically significantly predict reading achievement. Additionally, the study ascertained if statistically significant differences exist in teachers' perceptions of classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, evaluations of their students, evaluations of school/staff activities, views on school climate/environment, background (education and assignment), teachers' gender and teachers' race, and fifth grade standardized reading achievement scores.

Research Design

Through the use of statistical descriptive and correlational analyses, this study was conducted to ascertain whether the selected factors—classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, teachers' evaluations of their students, teachers' evaluations of

school/staff activities, teachers' views on school climate/environment, teachers' background (education and teaching assignment), teachers' gender, and teachers' race—are related to students' reading achievement scores. The participants for the regional study consisted of fifth-grade teachers from a school district in a southeastern state and all fifth-grade students from that school district.

With respect to the issues outlined previously, this study specifically explored the following research questions:

1. Do the following variables statistically significantly predict fifth-grade standardized reading achievement scores?

    a. classroom instructional activities

    b. classroom resources

    c. teachers' evaluations of their students

    d. teachers' evaluations of school/staff activities

    e. teachers' views on school climate/environment

    f. teachers' background (education and teaching assignment)

    g. teachers' gender

    h. teachers' race

2. Are there statistically significant relationships among teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, evaluation of their students, evaluation of school/staff activities, views on school climate/environment, background (education and teaching assignment), gender, race, and fifth-grade standardized reading achievement scores?

3. Is there a statistically significant difference in teacher's perceptions of their classroom instructional activities between fifth-grade teachers in a regional and a national sample?

Hypotheses

H1: Classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, and teachers' evaluations of their students will significantly predict students' reading achievement scores.

H2: There are statistically significant relationships among teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, evaluations of their students, views on school climate/environment, and fifth-grade standardized treading achievement scores.

H3: There is a statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities between fifth-grade teachers in a regional and national sample.

Participants

Two samples were used in this study. The first sample were data obtained from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study - Kindergarten (ECLS-K) using the fifth-grade cohort collected in the spring of 2004. The second sample was from a school district in a southeastern state using fifth-grade reading achievement scores. These two samples were analyzed within the context of the research hypotheses.

The national subsample for this study was from an existing data set drawn from a total of 1,280 schools from the ECLS-K, of which 934 were public and 346 were private schools (Tourangeau, Le, & Nord, 2005). The ECLS-K was comprised of a nationally

representative cohort of students from kindergarten through fifth grade. Teachers, like parents, represent a valuable source of information on themselves, the children in their classrooms, and the children's learning environment (i.e., the classroom). It should be noted that the unit of focus is the child in the ECLS-K data.

> Within the ECLS, teachers were not only asked to provide information about their own backgrounds, teaching practices, and experience, they were also called on to provide information on the classroom setting for the sampled children they teach and to evaluate each sampled child on a number of critical cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions. Special education teachers and service providers of sampled children with disabilities were also asked to provide information on the nature and types of services provided to the child. With the exception of the fall first-grade data collection, teachers completed self-administered questionnaires each time children were assessed. (Tourangeau et al., 2005, p. I-6)

The first-grade data collection targeted base year respondents, where a case was considered responding if there was a completed child assessment or parent interview in fall or spring-kindergarten. While all base-year respondents were eligible for the spring-first-grade data collection, fall-first grade was limited to a 30% subsample. The spring student sample was freshened to include current first graders who had not been enrolled in kindergarten in 1998-1999 and, therefore, had no chance of being included in the ECLS-K base year kindergarten sample. For both fall- and spring-first grade, only a subsample of students who had transferred from their kindergarten school was followed.

The third-grade data collection targeted base year respondents and children sampled in first grade through the freshening operation where the spring-first-grade

sample was freshened to include first graders who had not been enrolled in kindergarten in 1998-1999 and, therefore, had no chance of being included in the ECLS-K base year kindergarten sample. As in the first-grade data collection where only a subsample of students who had transferred from their kindergarten school was followed, a subsampling of movers was also used in third grade. In third grade, however, the subsampling rate applied to transferred children was slightly higher; children whose home langauge was non-English (also known as children belonging to the language minority group) who moved for the first time between kindergarten or first grade and third grade, were followed at 100%. In other words, children belonging to the language minority group who did not move in first grade but moved in third grade were all followed into their new third-grade schools. Children not in the language minority group continued to be subsampled for follow-up if they moved in third grade.

In fifth grade, the sample that was fielded was reduced by excluding certain special groups of children from data collection, and by setting differential sampling rates for movers in different categories. Specifically, children in four groups were not fielded for the fifth-grade survey, irrespective of other subsampling procedures that were implemented. They are children who became ineligible in an earlier round because they died or moved out of the country, children who were subsampled out in previous rounds because they were movers, children whose parents emphatically refused to cooperate (hard refusals), and children eligible for the third-grade data collection for whom there are neither first-grade nor third-grade data. Of the remaining children, those who move from their original schools during fifth grade or earlier were subsampled for follow up. Children whose home language is not English (language minority) continued to be a

special domain of analytic interest and were subsampled at higher rates. Children were subsampled at different rates depending on the longitudinal data available for those children (Tourangeau, Nord, Le, Pollack, & Atkins-Burnett, 2006).

Instrumentation

Reading Tests

The ECLS-K reading specifications were adapted from the 1992 and 1994 NAEP Reading Frameworks (Tourangeau et al., 2005). The NAEP framework is defined in terms of four types of reading comprehension skills: initial understanding, developing interpretation, personal reflection, and response demonstrating a critical stance. Because the NAEP framework begins with fourth grade, it had to be modified for the ECLS-K to accommodate adequately the basic skills typically emphasized beginning in kindergarten. Two skill categories were added to the NAEP framework: Basic Skills, which includes familiarity with print, recognition of letters and phonemes, and decoding, and Vocabulary. After first grade, the emphasis on basic skills in the ECLS-K reading framework was decreased so that the allocations for third and fifth grades are very close to that of the reading comprehension skills of fourth-grade NAEP. Literacy curriculum specialists and teachers contributed to development of the framework and reviewed item pools. Notably absent from the ECLS-K reading framework is any place for writing skills. This absence is a reflection of practical constraints associated with limited amount of testing time and the cost of scoring. Nevertheless, the ECLS-K asks teachers to provide information on each sampled child's writing abilities each year, and on the kinds of activities they use in their classrooms to provide writing skills, with the use of the Academic Rating Scale (Pollack, Atkins-Burnett, Najarian, & Rock, 2005). The fifth-

grade reading test emphasized reading comprehension, with the majority of questions based on one of several reading passages. Additional questions tapped basic skills, including decoding and vocabulary. Children began the reading assessment with a routing test of 26 items, 7 of which were based on a short reading selection. Three items tested understanding of vocabulary words in context. The remaining 16 items were decoding words, administered in ascending order of difficulty. Discontinue rules were in place for the routing test: when a child was not able to read a specified number of the decoding words in each progressively more difficulty 4-item cluster, subsequent clusters were not administered. The score on the routine test was used to select one of three second-stage forms of varying difficulty, each consisting of 4 (low and middle forms) or 5 (high form) reading passages, each with 4 to 8 associated questions. The low form also contained four individual word-in-context questions repeated from the earlier rounds (Pollack et al., 2005).

Validity of ECLS-K Fifth Grade Survey and Reading Assessment

In the ECLS-K Fifth Grade Methodology (2005) Report section 7.2, NCES consultants from Westat give details and information in reference to the discriminate convergent validity of the direct and indirect measures. Convergent validity means that two different measures of the same trait or skill should have relatively high correlations with each other. Contrastly, discriminate validity means that two measures that are designed to measure two different traits or skills should show lower correlations with each other than each does with its matching measure. The relationships among 12 fifth-grade measures were examined for evidence of validity (Pollack et al., 2005).

Reliability of ECLS-K Fifth Grade Survey and Reading Assessment

NCES took great measure to ensure reliability of direct and indirect measures mentioned earlier. Winsteps software was utilized to scale the ARS, using joint maximum likelihood estimation. The assumption of a normal distribution is assumed by PROX (Normal Approximation Estimation Algorithm) and does not take advantage of the ability of the Simple Rasch model to calibrate measures independent of the sample characteristics. For the final iterations, UCON (unconditional maximum) likelihood is used. UCON performs a simultaneous estimation of the person and item parameters. UCON does not assume that the distribution is normal. In collaboration with Winsteps, UCON is adjusted for the bias based on the length of the test (LI(L-I). Maximum scores are excluded for calibration of the items. Winsteps provides a variety of fit statistics and a factor analysis of the residuals. Differential Item Functioning (DIF) is utilized to ensure reliability of measures. DIF attempts to identify those items showing an unexpectedly robust difference in item performance between a focal group and a reference group when the two groups are "blocked" or matched on their total scores (Pollack et al., 2005).

Educational Testing Service (ETS) implements DIF procedure in an effort to detect test items with differential performance for subgroups defined by gender and ethnicity. Therefore, students who entered the sample with a lack of exposure would be administered items that fit certain characteristics. The goal of ETS in terms of reliability of ECLS-K's two-stage multiform design was to "assess with different set of items, so number-right scores are not based on items of comparable difficulty. Instead, the IRT ability estimate, theta used as the stratifying variable, divided into 41 equally spaced intervals" (Tourangeau et al., 2006, p. 5). Reliability estimates are applicable for item and

person parameters and represent the placement of the persons and items. The person reliability is analogous to Cronbach's alpha (Pollack et al., 2005).

Teacher Questionnaires

In fifth grade, a different approach from previous rounds was used to collect information from teachers (Tourangeau et al., 2005). The approach for administering teacher questionnaires differed from that of previous rounds because many fifth-grade children were expected to have different teachers for different subject areas. In earlier rounds, all questions pertaining to the core academic subjects were asked in a single questionnaire and given to teachers who had sample children in their homeroom class. In the fifth grade, however, separate questionnaires were given to sample children's reading/language arts, mathematics, and science teachers. During the spring-fifth-grade data collection, each child's teacher received a self-administered teacher-level questionnaire about a variety of topics, including instructional practices, classroom resources, views on teaching and the school, and teacher background. The instrument used with the regional sample in this research matched the teacher questionnaire used in the ECLS-K with only those fqactors relevant to the research being used (Tourangeau et al., 2006).

Members of the Institutional Review Board examined and approved pertinent elements of the study proposal prior to the research being conducted (Appendix A). There was a confidentiality statement that assured participants that their answers would not be used for any purposes other than this study. Participants were not asked to write their names on any part of the survey. In compliance with ethnical standards of research in education, it was not believed that there would be any harm to participants. Finally,

participants were asked to sign an informed consent document before completing the survey (Appendix B).

Procedures

The ECLS-K fifth-grade data collection occurred in the spring of the 2003-2004 school years. Data were collected using computer-assisted interviewing (CAI) for parent interviews and child assessments (Tourangeau et al., 2005). As part of the direct child assessments, children completed a short self-description questionnaire on their own and were interviewed using a food consumption questionnaire. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect information from teachers (teacher questionnaires, special education teacher questionnaires) and school administrators or their designees (school administrator questionnaire and student records abstract). Field staff completed the school facilities checklist. The fifth-grade data collection instruments, with some exceptions, are available on CD-ROM. The exceptions are the direct child assessment, the Social Rating Scale (SRS) in the teacher questionnaire, and the self-description questionnaire (SDQ). These latter measures contain copyright-protected materials and agreements with the test publishers that restrict their distribution.

Fall data collection included contacting with sampled schools to schedule appointments to conduct the child assessments in the spring of the school year, verify the parent consent procedures, link children to their teachers, identify children who had withdrawn from the school, and obtain locating information about their new schools of the latter students. Spring data collection included the administration of direct child assessments and parent interviews and the collection of teacher and school questionnaires, student record abstracts, and facilities checklists. The activities to locate

children and gain cooperation of the schools into which they transferred began in the fall and continued during the spring data collection. The mode of data collection was computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) for the child assessments; telephone and in-person computer-assisted interviewing (CAI) was the mode of data collection for the parent interview; and self-administered questionnaires were used to gather information from teachers, school administrators, and student records. Field staff completed the facilities checklist (Tourangeau et al., 2005).

The procedures for the regional component of this research included contacting the sampled schools in the district and scheduling an appointment to deliver the questionnaires to participating teachers (Appendix C). The principal was given a checklist of instructions for the completion and return of the surveys. All fifth-grade regular education and special education teachers in the district were given the questionnaire (Appendix D). The surveys were distributed to the teachers during a regularly scheduled faculty meeting. Completed surveys were collected from the principal one week from delivery, thereby giving any absent teachers an opportunity to complete the survey. Refreshments were provided at the meetings as a gesture of appreciation to the teachers for their participation. Additionally, a gift basket was given away from a random drawing at each of the schools.

Analyses and Statistical Procedures

Statistical calculations were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.0 for Windows. To analyze the data, the researcher used the following:

Research Question 1

Do the following variables statistically significantly predict fifth grade standardized reading achievement scores?

1. classroom instructional activities
2. classroom resources
3. teachers' evaluations of their students
4. teachers' evaluations of school/staff activities
5. Teachers' views on school climate/environment
6. Teachers' background (education and teaching assignment)
7. teachers' gender
8. Teachers' race

Data Analysis for Research Question 1

A multiple linear regression and effect size were used to analyze research question 1.

Research Question 2

Are there statistically significant relationships among teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, evaluation of their students, evaluation of school/staff activities, views on school climate/environment, background (education and teaching assignment), gender, race, and fifth grade standardized reading achievement scores?

Data Analysis for Research Question 2

A multiple correlation test and the Bonferroni correction were used to analyze research question 2.

Research Question 3

Is there a statistically significant relationship in teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities between fifth grade teachers in a regional and a national sample?

Data Analysis for Research Question 3

A *t* test was used to compare the means of two different groups and describe whether there is a significant difference.

Summary

This chapter introduced the ECLS-K data and described the methodology of the research conducted. The study used a *t* test, multiple linear regression, and multiple correlations to analyze the data that were obtained during the study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

Chapter IV describes the results of a study of Factors That Are Associated With Students' Standardized Reading Achievement Scores. The chapter is comprised of two major sections: a descriptive section and a statistical section. The descriptive section provides descriptive statistics for the variables used in the study. The statistical section reports the results of the statistical test for each hypothesis. The participants for the national sample were selected from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K) fifth grade Public Use Data file; the regional sample included all fifth grade teachers and students at 11 elementary schools from a school district in a southeastern state.

Description of ECLS-K Subsample and the Regional Sample

The national subsample for this study was from an existing data set drawn from a total of 1,280 schools from the ECLS-K, of which 934 were public and 346 were private schools (Tourangeau et al., 2005). The ECLS-K was comprised of a nationally representative cohort of students from kindergarten through fifth grade. Teachers, like parents, represent a valuable source of information on themselves, the children in their classrooms, and the children's learning environment (i.e., the classroom). It should be noted that the unit of focus is the child in the ECLS-K data.

Within the ECLS, teachers were not only asked to provide information about their own backgrounds, teaching practices, and experience, they were also called on to provide information on the classroom setting for the sampled children they teach

> and to evaluate each sampled child on a number of critical cognitive and noncognitive dimensions. Special education teachers and service providers of sampled children with disabilities were also asked to provide information on the nature and types of services provided to the child. With the exception of the fall-first grade data collection, teachers completed self-administered questionnaires each time children were assessed. (Tourangeau et al., 2005, pp. 1-6)

Participants for the regional sample consisted of fifth grade teachers and all fifth grade students from a school district in a southeastern state. The research population was small and representative of the population of teachers in a southeastern state who teach fifth grade. These two samples were analyzed within the context of the research hypotheses.

Tables 1-6 represent the variables that were used in the study. These tables show the variables that were tagged or selected for use in the ECLS-K electronic codebook, which is a CD ROM with data files of information from the National Center of Education Statistics for the fifth grade sample (2006) and their descriptions. These tables also show the composite variables that were created by combining the variables that represented classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, teachers' evaluations of their students, teachers' evaluations of school/staff activities, teachers' views on school climate/environment, teachers' background (education and teaching assignment), teachers' gender, and teachers' race.

SPSS syntax (instructions describing how the data value should be coded) was requested for these variables. The researcher then ran syntax to draw data from the ECLS-K data CD. The researcher cleaned the data by deleting missing statistics and by checking

Table 1

Instructional Activities

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
C5R3RTSC	Reading T-Scores	1 = never 2 = less than once a week 3 = once or twice a week 4 = three or more times a week 5 = daily
J61OFTRD	Q1A How Often Reading and Language Arts	1 = never 2 = less than once a week 3 = once or twice a week 4 = three or more times a week 5 = daily
J61OFTWR	Q1B1 How Often Writing	1 = never 2 = less than once a week 3 = once or twice a week 4 = three or more times a week 5 = daily
J61OFTMT	Q1C1 How Often Mathematics	1 = never 2 = less than once a week 3 = once or twice a week 4 = three or more times a week 5 = daily
J61OFTSO	Q1D1 How Often Social Studies	1 = never 2 = less than once a week 3 = once or twice a week 4 = three or more times a week 5 = daily
J61OFTSC	Q1E1 How Often Science	1 = never 2 = less than once a week 3 = once or twice a week 4 = three or more times a week 5 = daily
J61OFTMU	Q1F1 How Often Music	1 = never 2 = less than once a week 3 = once or twice a week 4 = three or more times a week 5 = daily

Table 1 - Continued

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61OFTAR	Q1G1 How Often Art	1 = never 2 = less than once a week 3 = once or twice a week 4 = three or more times a week 5 = daily
J61OFTFO	Q1H1 How Often Foreign Language	1 = never 2 = less than once a week 3 = once or twice a week 4 = three or more times a week 5 = daily
J61OFTRE	Q111 How Often Reference Skills	1 = never 2 = less than once a week 3 = once or twice a week 4 = three or more times a week 5 = daily
J61TIMER	Q2A Time on Reading Homework	0 = none 1 = 10 minutes 2 = 20 minutes 3 = 30 minutes 4 = more than 30 minutes 5 = I don't teach this daily
J61TIMEM	Q2B Time on Math Homework	0 = none 1 = 10 minutes 2 = 20 minutes 3 = 30 minutes 4 = more than 30 minutes 5 = I don't teach this daily
J61TIMSS	Q2C Time on Social Studies Homework	0 = none 1 = 10 minutes 2 = 20 minutes 3 = 30 minutes 4 = more than 30 minutes 5 = I don't teach this daily

Table 1 - Continued

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61TIMSC	Q2D Time on Science Homework	0 = none 1 = 10 minutes 2 = 20 minutes 3 = 30 minutes 4 = more than 30 minutes 5 = I don't teach this daily
J61COMMT	Q3 Integrate Two Curriculum Areas	1 = never 2 = occasionally 3 = usually 4 = all the time
J61TXPE	Q4 Times Per Week Physical Education	1 = never 2 = less than once a week 3 = once or twice a week 4 = three or four times a week 5 = daily
J61TXSPE	Q5 Time Per Day Physical Education	1 = do not participate 2 = 1-15 minutes per week 3 = 16-30 minutes per week 4 = 31-45 minutes 4 = longer than 45 minutes
J61DYREC	Q6 Days Per Week Have recess	
J61LUNCH	Q7A Time for Lunch	0 = none 1 = 1-15 minutes 2 = 16-30 minutes 3 = 31=45 minutes 4 = longer than 45 minutes
J61RECES	Q7B Time for Recess	0 = none 1 = 1-15 minutes 2 = 16-30 minutes 3 = 31-45 minutes 4 = longer than 45 minutes
J611NET	Q8A Number of Computers with Internet	
J61COMUS	Q8B Number of Computers Children Use	

Table 1 - Continued

Composite Variable Names	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61COMSO	Q9A Use Computers for Social Studies	1 = never 2 = once a month or less 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61COMKE	Q9B Use Computers for Keyboard Skills	1 = never 2 = once a month or less 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61COMAR	Q9C Use Computers to Create Art	1 = never 2 = once a month or less 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61COMMU	Q9D Use Computers for Music	1 = never 2 = once a month or less 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61COMEN	Q9E Use Computers for Enjoyment	1 = never 2 = once a month or less 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61COMIN	Q9F Use Computers for Information	1 = never 2 = once a month or less 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily

Table 2

Resources

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61REGIN	Q10A # reg paid aide work with/children	1 = less than high school 2 = high school diploma 3 = associate's degree 4 = bachelor's degree 5 = don't know 6 = no paid aides
J61SPEIN	Q10B # Sped paid aide work w/children	1 = less than high school 2 = high school diploma 3 = associate's degree 4 = bachelor's degree 5 = don't know 6 = no paid aides
J61ESLIN	Q10C #ESL paid aide work w/children	1 = less than high school 2 = high school diploma 3 = associate's degree 4 = bachelor's degree 5 = don't know 6 = no paid aides
J61EDLEV	Q11 Paid aide highest level education	1 = less than high school 2 = high school diploma 3 = associate's degree 4 = bachelor's degree 5 = don't know 6 = no paid aides
J61RDBOO	Q12A Frequency use variety books	0 = not available 1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily

Table 2 - Continued

Composite Variable Names	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61RDOTH	Q12B Frequency read other subjects	0 = not available 1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61CLDNP	Q12C Frequency use child newspaper/magazines	0 = not available 1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61RDKIT	Q12D Frequency use Reading kits	0 = not available 1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61SCKIT	Q12E Frequency use Science kits	0 = not available 1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61ARTMA	Q12 Frequency use Art materials	0 = not available 1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61MUSIC	Q12G Frequency use Music Instruments	0 = not available 1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily

Table 2 - Continued

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61VCR	Q12H Frequency use VCR	0 = not available 1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61TVWTC	Q121 Frequency use TV for educational programs	0 = not available 1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61PLAYE	Q12J Frequency use record/tape/CD	0 = not available 1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a month 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily

Table 3

Teachers' Evaluations of Their Students

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61TOCLA	Q13A Eval child relative to class	1 = not important 2 = somewhat important 3 = very important 4 = extremely important 0 = not applicable
J61TOSTN	Q13B Eval child relative to standard	1 = not important 2 = somewhat important 3 = very important 4 = extremely important 0 = not applicable
J611MPRV	Q13C Eval child improvement/progress	1 = not important 2 = somewhat important 3 = very important 4 = extremely important 0 = not applicable
J61EFFO	Q13D Eval child's effort	1 = not important 2 = somewhat important 3 = very important 4 = extremely important 0 = not applicable
J61CLASP	Q13E Eval child class participation	1 = not important 2 = somewhat important 3 = very important 4 = extremely important 0 = not applicable
J61BEHAV	Q13F Eval child's class behavior	1 = not important 2 = somewhat important 3 = very important 4 = extremely important 0 = not applicable
J61CMPHW	Q13G Eval completion of homework	1 = not important 2 = somewhat important 3 = very important 4 = extremely important 0 = not applicable

Table 3 - Continued

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61EVAL	Q14 Teacher's evaluation practices	1 = same standards 2 = different standards 3 = exactly the same standards
J61STNDR	Q15A State/local standardized tests	1 = never 2 = one or two times a year 3 = one or two times a month 4 = one or two times a week 5 = three or more times a week
J61TCHRM	Q15B Teacher-made tests or quizzes	1 = never 2 = one or two times a year 3 = one or two times a month 4 = one or two times a week 5 = three or more times a week
J61TXTBK	Q15C Textbook chapters-end tests	1 = never 2 = one or two times a year 3 = one or two times a month 4 = one or two times a week 5 = three or more times a week
J611GRPR	Q15D Individual or group projects	1 = never 2 = one or two times a year 3 = one or two times a month 4 = one or two times a week 5 = three or more times a week
J61WRKSH	Q15E Worksheets	1 = never 2 = one or two times a year 3 = one or two times a month 4 = one or two times a week 5 = three or more times a week
J61WRKSM	Q15F Work samples	1 = never 2 = one or two times a year 3 = one or two times a month 4 = one or two times a week 5 = three or more times a week
J61XSTDT	Q16 Check if not use standard tests	1 = Yes 2 = No
J61TSTSC	Q17 Access to STD test scores	1 = Yes 2 = No

Table 3 - Continued

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61TSTUS	Q18 how useful STD test scores	1 = not useful 2 = somewhat useful
J61TSTPR		3 = very useful 4 = extremely useful 5 = not applicable
	Q19 Hours spent in STD test prep	

Table 4

Teachers' Evaluations of School/Staff Activities

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61LESPL	Q20A Times meet for lesson planning	1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a week 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61CURRD	Q20B Times meet to discuss curriculum	1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a week 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61INDCH	Q20C Times meet to discuss a child	1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a week 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61DISCH	Q20D Times meet with special ed teacher	1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a week 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61RDWKS	Q21A1 Time Reading workshop	1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a week 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61MAWKS	Q21B1 Time Math workshop	1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a week 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily

Table 4 - Continued

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61SCWKS	Q21C1 Time Science workshop	1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a week 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61SSWKS	Q21D1 Time Social Studies workshop	1 = never 2 = once a month 3 = two or three times a week 4 = once or twice a week 5 = three or four times a week 6 = daily
J61RDUSE	Q21A2 How useful Reading activity	1 = not at all useful 2 = slightly useful 3 = moderately useful 4 = very useful
J61MAUSE	Q21B2 How useful Math activity	1 = not at all useful 2 = slightly useful 3 = moderately useful 4 = very useful
J61SCUSE	Q21C2 How useful Science activity	1 = not at all useful 2 = slightly useful 3 = moderately useful 4 = very useful
J61ISSUSE	Q21D2 How useful Social Studies activity	1 = not at all useful 2 = slightly useful 3 = moderately useful 4 = very useful

Table 5

Teachers' Views on School Climate/Environment

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61SCHSP	Q22A Staff have school spirit	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61MISBH	Q22B Child misbehavior affects teaching	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61NOTCA	Q22C Children incapable of learning	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61ACCPT	Q22D Staff accept me as colleague	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61CNTNL	Q22E Staff learn/seek new ideas	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61PAPRW	Q22F Paperwork interferes with teaching	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61PSUPP	Q22G Parents support school staff	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree

Table 5 - Continued

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61SCHPL	Q23 How much teachers impact policy	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61CNTRL	Q24 How much teachers control curriculum	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61STNDL	Q25A Academic standards too low	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61MISSI	Q25B Faculty on mission	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61ALLKN	Q25C School administration communicates vision	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61PRESS	Q25D School administration handles outside pressure	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61PRIOR	Q25E School administration prioritizes well	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61ENCOU	Q25F School administration encourages staff	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree

Table 5 - Continued

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61PHSCN	Q25G Phys conflicts serious problem	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61BULLY	Q25H Bullying serious problem	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61ENJOY	Q26A Teacher enjoys present teaching job	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61MKDIF	Q26B Teacher makes difference in children's lives	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61TEACH	Q26C Teacher would choose teaching again	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61CLSZO	Q26D Satisfied with class size	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61CLSZO	Q26E Job security state/local tests	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61PRREA	Q27A Adequate preparation to teach Reading	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree

Table 5 - Continued

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J61RDPRO	Q27B Adequate preparation to help with Reading problems	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61PRCOM	Q27C Adequate preparation to use computer with class	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61COMSU	Q27D Adequate support computer problems	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61ADTRN	Q27E Can teach disabled in my class	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61INCLU	Q27F Dis inclusion has worked well	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61LEPTR	Q27G Can teach LEP in my class	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
J61LEPIN	Q27H LEP inclusion has worked well	1 = strong disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree

Table 6

Teachers' Background: Education and Teaching Assignments

Composite Variable Name	Composite Variable Description	Value Labels
J1YRSTC	Number of years been school teacher	
J61YRSGR	Years taught this grade	
J61YRSCH	Years taught at this school	
J61HGHST	Highest level teacher achieved	1 = high school/associate's degree 2 = at least bachelor's degree 3 = master's degree 4 = education specialist's degree

to see what data has been suppressed. It was discovered that student gender and race data were suppressed and therefore could not be used to describe the national sample. Composite variables were created by combining the variables that represent classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, teachers' evaluations of their students, teachers' evaluations of school/staff activities, teachers' views on school climate/environment, teachers' background (education and teaching assignment), teachers' gender, and teachers' race. The same procedure as discussed above was followed for the regional sample.

Data Analyses

This section examines the hypotheses tested for the current study. The procedures utilized to test the hypotheses are presented in this section, and the results of the statistical procedures are also described in this section.

Research Hypothesis 1

Classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, and teachers' evaluations of their students will significantly predict students' reading achievement scores.

Data Analysis for Research Hypothesis 1

A multiple linear regression was conducted to determine if the following composite variables statistically significantly predicted fifth grade reading achievement.

1. classroom instructional activities
2. classroom resources
3. teachers' evaluations of their students
4. teachers' evaluations of school/staff activities
5. teachers' views on school climate/environment

6. teachers' background (education and teaching assignment)
7. teachers' gender
8. teachers' race

Evaluations of linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity showed that assumptions were met within normal limits with the exception of the outliers. Because the sample was so large, the regression would be normal and robust enough to handle the outliers. Regression results showed that the linear combination of predictors significantly predicted reading scores, $F(6, 1044) = 45.14$, $p < .001$. Based on standardized beta coefficients, the classroom instructional activities composite variable was the strongest and school staff activities composite variable was the weakest. Classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, and teacher background positively predicted reading scores while teachers' evaluation of their students, school staff activities, and school climate/environment negatively predicted reading scores.

Research Hypothesis 2

There are statistically significant relationships among teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, evaluations of their students, views on school climate/environment, and fifth grade standardized reading achievement scores.

Data Analysis for Research Hypothesis 2

A multiple correlation was conducted to assess the relationships among the teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, evaluations of their students, evaluations of school/staff activities, views on school climate/environment, background (education and teaching assignment), gender, race, and

fifth grade reading achievement scores variables. The squared multiple correlation coefficient, R^2 .03 was statistically significant, $F(6, 1044) = 45.14, p < .001$. This indicates that 3% of the variance is accounted for by these variables. The R^2 is an estimate of the effect size, which, by analogy with the coefficient determination in bivariate regression, is the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that can be accounted for by the variance in the independent variables.

Research Hypothesis 3

There is a statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities between fifth grade teachers in a regional and national sample.

Data Analysis for Research Hypothesis 3

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities between fifth grade teachers in the regional and national samples. The test did not indicate a significant difference ($t(-1.10) = 41.09, p = .28$); thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. The means and standard deviations are as follows: ($M = 74.92$, SD = 11.46) and the regional sample ($M = 78.67$, SD = 22.11). The equality of variance assumption was violated. It should be noted that there was a numerical difference in the means, but not a statistically significant difference.

Summary

Chapter IV describes the statistical results of this study. The research analyses were also presented in this chapter. The results of the factors that predict the reading achievement of fifth graders of the 1998 ECLS-K Longitudinal Study were presented and

the teachers' perceptions of said factors were also delivered in this chapter. Chapter V offers a discussion of the results.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This study tested factors that are associated with students' standardized reading achievement scores. The ECLS-K Public Use and Data file was used to conduct the analysis for this study. In order to replicate the research with a regional sample, data were also obtained from all fifth grade teachers and students in 11 elementary schools in a district in a southeastern state. The literature of Riley (1996), Neuman (1998), and Adams (1990) contributed to the theoretical framework of this study. These theorists argued that the teaching of reading should begin early in life and that no one method or approach is likely to be right for all children. Neuman (1998) agreed with Riley (1996) and Adams (1990) when his research addressed methods for teaching reading skills. According to Neuman, children need to understand and apply the technical skills of reading but, more importantly, how to use these skills to improve their thinking and reasoning. When these technical skills and application are combined, a student is more likely to succeed in reading achievement.

Conclusions and Discussion

Teachers, school administrators, state department of education staff, professional development groups, and parents are continually searching for techniques and methods to improve the reading achievement of students. Because of the demand in society,

> reading is more important today than ever, it is crucial to being an informed citizen, to succeed in one's chosen career, and to personal fulfillment. But first

things first: Children who read well do better in other subjects and in all aspects of schooling and beyond. (Alexander, 2007, n.p.)

The premise for this study was that reading achievement, because of the requirements of *No Child Left Behind*, and the national goal of making sure that every child knows how to read at grade level by the third grade, is the source of pressures that are being felt by school districts across the nation. In addition to meeting the goals set forth by national legislation, school districts must also meet goals that the individual states have mandated through state accountability and accreditation systems. Reading opens doors to children who otherwise would struggle through school, lacking the skills to succeed and grow academically (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). There is a need for research that will aid the determination of factors/predictors that affect students' reading achievement.

Specifically, the study was undertaken to ascertain ways that reading achievement among students can be improved to assist them in meeting requirements set forth by state and national legislation. The researcher's intent was that the study would support schools in determining factors/predictors that affect students' reading achievement and provide school staff knowledge of those factors. The research findings compiled in this study describe factors that are associated with students' standardized reading achievement. This research study also took into account teachers' perceptions of factors that impact students' reading achievement. Lastly, the research study compared teachers' perceptions of classroom instructional activities between a regional and a national sample.

A multiple linear regression was conducted to determine if the following variables statistically significantly predicted fifth grade reading achievement.

1. classroom instructional activities
2. classroom resources
3. teachers' evaluations of their students
4. teachers' evaluations of school/staff activities
5. teachers' views on school climate/environment
6. teachers' background (education and teaching assignment)
7. teachers' gender
8. teachers' race

A multiple correlations test was conducted to assess the relationships among teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, evaluations of their students, evaluations of school/staff activities, views on school climate/environment, background (education and teaching assignment), gender, race, and fifth grade reading achievement scores.

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship in teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities between fifth grade teachers in a regional and national sample.

It should be noted again that gender and race variables were suppressed by ECLS-K: 1998. In reviewing the literature it was found that a large body of research focused on the gender of students; less research explored the impact of a teacher's gender on students (Hopf & Hatzichristou, 1999). Krieg (2005) found that previous literature examined the effect of teacher and student gender on teacher-student interactions, yet little research investigated if these interactions influence student outcomes as measured by standardized tests. Krieg also indicated that with the high-stakes nature of standardized tests under the

No Child Left Behind Act (*NCLBA*), it is imperative that researchers better understand the impact of teacher-student interactions on standardized test performance. Using the following variables—classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, teachers' evaluations of their students, teachers' evaluations of school/staff activities, teachers' views on school climate/environment, teachers' views on school climate/environment, and teachers' background (education and teaching assignment)—a multiple linear regression test was conducted. After conducting a multiple linear regression, the results showed that the linear combination of predictors significantly predicted reading scores. Based on standardized beta coefficients, the classroom instructional activities composite variable was the strongest while school staff activities variable was the weakest. Positive predictors of reading achievement were discovered in the areas of classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, and teacher background, while negative predictors of reading achievement were discovered in the areas of teachers' evaluation of their students, school/staff activities and school climate/environment.

The first study variable positively related to reading achievement to be discussed is classroom instructional activities. In the literature it was found that methods for teaching reading have long been a subject of controversy; in general, research concluded that no one single method or combination of single methods can teach all children to read. Teachers need knowledge of multiple methods of teaching reading and a strong knowledge of their students to reach the children they teach (Darch et al., 2002). Researchers believe the controversy results because schools and parents are not teaching reading adequately. Another reason is that studies of reading methods are difficult to

conduct and results are difficult to interpret. Inconclusive results are believed to occur because some methods may work for some children but may not work for other children.

Decades of research show that effective reading combines a phonics approach with whole language methods (Stoicheva, 1999). Children gain the skills they need to understand what they read through more than one kind of instruction. A variety of activities are necessary to give children the positive attitude toward reading and the strategies that they need to be successful readers. Different stages of reading acquisition require different approaches. One of the signs of skilled reading is fluent, accurate word identification (Juel et al., 1986). According to the California Department of Education (1995, 1996), "the heart of a powerful reading program is the relationship between explicit, systematic skills instruction and literature, language and comprehension. While skills alone are insufficient to develop good readers, no reader can become proficient without these foundational skills" (n.p.). In research, it is clearly seen that curriculum and content need to be aligned and linked to research-based standards. *No Child Left Behind* takes the stand that effective, research-based reading instruction in the early grades can prevent reading difficulties in many children. Under *No Child Left Behind*, Title I funds must be used only for effective methods and instructional strategies that are grounded in scientific-based research. The study concurs with the literature review in that it is important that teachers provide scientifically-based reading instruction to students. The study found that classroom instructional activities were a positive factor in predicting reading achievement.

This study indicated that classroom resources were positively related to reading achievement. According to the literature, teachers over the years and across the United

States have indicated that scientifically-based reading instruction can and does work for children. *No Child Left Behind* is a law that asserts that nationwide progress can be made when schools and parents bring together those methods and use them to make sure children are successful readers. The key reading initiatives devised under *No Child Left Behind* are titled Reading First and Early Reading First. Early Reading First supports preschool programs and requires that preschool children, especially those from low-income families, be provided a high quality education (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Scientifically-based research, which is what *No Child Left Behind* requires of reading programs funded by the act, stresses that early reading skills need to be developed and continually evaluated at this level. The Early Reading First program is based on the premise that early childhood is the best time to develop the pre-literacy skills necessary for success in kindergarten. Based on the scientific research, those reading skills for preschoolers are:

1. Oral Language; expressive and receptive language (vocabulary development)
2. Phonological Awareness: rhyming, blending, segmenting
3. Print Awareness
4. Alphabetic Knowledge: letter/sound knowledge (National Center for Children with Learning Disabilities, 2007)

It is estimated by researchers that, given these opportunities, as little as 5% of children may suffer serious reading difficulties (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). The Early Reading First program was designed to complement the Reading First program, which is an essential component of *No Child Left Behind.* This program seeks to ensure that every

child becomes a successful reader. However, under *No Child Left Behind*, individual states and school districts have had to develop a method for comprehensive high quality reading instruction based on a proven scientifically-based method. Although there are highly prescriptive guidelines for selecting reading pedagogies, there is not a federally-prescribed reading program. Schools will receive funds to assist in finding a program that will work for kindergarten through third grade. It is probably important to note that funds are first given to schools and districts with the highest percentage of kindergarten through third graders reading below grade level and to schools and districts with large numbers of low income students (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). This initiative is supposed to be a nationwide effort focused on the classroom to help children become successful readers. Classroom resources are positively correlated to reading achievement, which shows that (a) educators should continue reading instruction using scientifically-based instruction, and (b) schools need to provide teachers with those resources.

Teacher background is the next variable to be discussed. The *No Child Left Behind Act* also states that student achievement and the quality of teachers are directly related. Therefore, to improve the quality of education that children receive, the nation must improve the ongoing professional development that it provides teachers through a national plan to upgrade the quality of teaching by keeping all educators, and all those who support these educators, learning throughout their careers (Sparks & Hirsh, 2001; Parker, 2003). The results of the analysis of this question in the present study and in prior research consistently indicate that classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, and teacher background have a positive impact on student reading achievement.

In this study, teachers' evaluations of students were negatively correlated with reading achievement. It should be noted that different kinds of assessment produce different kinds of information (Heubert & Hauser, 1999). Teachers need information specific to the content that they are teaching and that kind of information comes from assessment built around their daily tasks. Policymakers' needs are different. They require information to indicate whether school districts, schools, and the state are educating students effectively. Standardized testing allows them to gather information about many students and how they compare to other students. It also gives them the ability to compare the performance of students to specific standards set by the state. Hence, there are tests that are used to make educational decisions for schools and school districts. It is important to note that tests are not perfect, and basing judgments on tests alone can lead to bad decisions. Research indicates that with high stakes testing there is sometimes a narrowing of the curriculum, which inflates the importance of the test. Teachers feel pressured to raise test scores which often means that the focus of activities will be directed to improving these scores. It is believed that narrowing the curriculum is more likely to occur in high poverty areas that have the lowest test scores. Another response to pressures of "the test" is to focus attention on particular students. Attention is focused on those who score just below cut-off points; those far below or above the average may be ignored (International Reading Association, 1999). Loss of instructional time is another potential negative result of this type of testing. Time used for instruction is spent preparing for and taking tests. The concern is that this type of testing takes away decision making at the local level and places it in the hands of policymakers, which may decrease the quality and relevance of the education that is provided to students. The literature

revealed that teachers' and policymakers' needs are different, and these different needs may have contributed to the negative correlation that was found in regards to teachers' evaluations of their students' reading achievement.

This study also disclosed that views on school/staff activities were negatively correlated with reading achievement. This negative relationship may result from pressures that teachers feel in the weeks prior to testing. Regression results show that based on standardized beta coefficients this variable proved to be the weakest predictor of students' reading achievement, indicating that teachers' views on school/staff activities' negative correlation with reading achievement is evident but not the strongest predictor. This is ironic given that the literature revealed that the *No Child Left Behind Act* states that student achievement and the quality of teachers are directly related. Therefore, some assert that to improve the quality of education children receive, the nation must improve the ongoing professional development that it provides teachers through a national plan to upgrade the quality of teaching by keeping all educators, and all those who support these educators, learning throughout their careers (Sparks & Hirsh, 2001; Parker, 2003). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, it is believed that high-quality professional development leads to changes in teaching practice and to improved student performance (http:nces.ed.gov/pubs98/teaching9394/chapter6.asp). Parker (2003) stated, "Today, staff development should not only include high quality training programs with intensive follow-up and support, but also other growth-promoting processes such as study groups, action research, and peer coaching" (p. 15). The NECES teacher follow-up survey of 1994-95 also supported the notion that the greater the participation of teachers, the more likely they are to think that their professional development experiences had an

impact (http:nces.ed.ov/pubs98/teaching9394/chatper6.asp). The present study disclosed that teachers' views on school/staff activities were negatively correlated with reading achievement. The literature supported this finding and suggested that allowing the teachers to become active participants in school/staff activities increases the chances of changing teachers' negative perceptions about school/staff activities.

Teachers' views on school climate were negatively related to reading achievement. According to information from the Education Commission of the States (Pearson Education, 2007), accountability systems assume that educators, policymakers, and others know how to act on information to improve education. Policymakers must now determine whose performance should be judged, the level of performance expected, relevant measures of performance, what constitutes satisfactory progress toward established goals, and what consequences will be imposed for superior and adequate performance as well as for those failing to measure up to the standards (Pearson Education, 2007).

A multiple correlation was conducted to assess the relationships among teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, evaluations of their students, evaluations of school/staff activities, views on school climate/environment, background (education and teaching assignment), gender, race, and fifth grade reading achievement scores. The squared multiple correlation coefficient was statistically significant, indicating that 3% of the variance is accounted for by these variables. This study found that the analysis was highly statistically significant ($p < .001$) yet not practically significant since 3% of 100% is weak. The variables in this correlation overlap, and the 3% represents the shared variance among teachers' perceptions of their

classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, evaluations of their students, evaluations of school/staff activities, views on school climate/environment, background (education and teaching assignment), gender, and race in relation to reading achievement scores.

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of their classroom instructional activities between fifth grade teachers in a regional and a national sample. The test results did not reveal a significant difference. Thus, the study indicated that between a national and regional sample of fifth grade teachers there was not a statistical difference in their perceptions of their classroom instructional activities. However, there was a numerical difference due to the limitation of the regional sample's size.

Limitations

1. The study examined specific variables from the ECLS-K: 1998 defining classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, teachers' evaluations of their students, teachers' evaluations of school/staff activities, teachers' views on school climate/environment, teachers' background (education and teaching assignment), teachers' gender, and teachers' race. If different ECLS-K: 1998 variables were chosen, the study results could deviate.

2. The data were collected by NCES and, therefore, the analysis was limited to the data made available through the ECLS-K: 1998 database (i.e, suppression of race and gender).

3. The regional sample was limited to fifth grade teachers in 11 elementary schools in one school district in a southeastern states.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Children should be taught to read and write competently, allowing them the opportunity to become productive citizens. The United States is currently enjoying one of the highest literacy rates in its history. However, society now wants everyone to function above just the minimum standards of literacy (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998). Reading is one of the foundations for success in society. Communications in the workforce have changed drastically. What used to be done verbally, on the phone, or in person, is now done electronically through e-mail, the Internet, fax, or other printed materials, thus increasing the need for individuals to read and write effectively. Another reason for teaching children to read and write competently is the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. This legislation was signed into law in January 2002. This law requires much attention because of the sweeping changes it has caused in the American education system. Accountability is the centerpiece of *No Child Left Behind* and it is implemented through the use of annual statewide assessments. According to the principles of No Child Left Behind, testing is necessary to improve the academic performance of all students. These assessments, along with other indicators, are used to determine if schools are providing substantial and continuous academic improvement.

The purpose of this study was to provide information about factors that are associated with students' standardized reading achievement from the teachers' perspective. The research discloses factors that predict the reading achievement of fifth grade students. The results of this research further confirm the relationship that teachers' perceptions have on successful student achievement in the area of reading. Thomas (2006) said, "research has held true for decades that reading is a contributing factor to

academic and social outcomes. Reading not only impacts academics, but it also impacts the culture of the school as well." (p. 74).

Recommendations for policy and practice arising from this study include but are not limited to the following:

1. Present staff development on the effects of school-wide motivation and its association to school improvement and student achievement.

2. Design teacher education programs that implement reading intervention courses and techniques for preservice educators.

3. Implement academic institutes for educators that specifically address the needs of students who cannot read.

4. Make reading practices an instructional focus.

5. Offer staff development that focuses on reading learning styles.

6. Implement early intervention strategies in the area of reading.

7. Create grant opportunities to aid in reading interventions and achievement for sites and districts.

8. Implement rigorous curricula that are aligned to achievement measures.

9. Implement reading tutorials and other one-on-one techniques to assist struggling readers.

Research has held for decades that reading is a contributing factor to academic and social outcomes. Reading does not only impact these areas, but it impacts the culture of the school as well.

This study provided factors that are associated with fifth grade students' standardized reading achievement scores.

The specific implications for K-12 administrators are:

1. Search for and provide reading intervention programs that have a positive impact on reading achievement.

2. Create a climate that promotes school-wide reading achievement.

3. This study indicated that teachers' evaluations of their students, school/staff activities, and school climate/environment are negatively related to reading achievement. Use this information to better understand and change current practices.

4. The fact that classroom instructional activities, classroom resources, and teacher background had a positive influence on reading achievement should encourage administrators to continue creating avenues in which they can offer resources and instructional practices to support reading achievement and to continue holding their staff and faculty accountable for continued professional growth.

5. Create learning environments that enhance reading achievement.

6. Implement rigorous and meaningful curricula that are aligned to state curriculum standards for reading achievement.

7. Utilize teacher support teams effectively to assist in implementing reading interventions.

The next section offers recommendations for future research.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research in reference to factors that are associated with students' reading achievement should include the following questions:

1. How do home factors affect reading achievement scores?

2. What impact does parental involvement in schools have on students' reading achievement scores, self-esteem, and behavior?, and Does parental involvement improve teacher morale?

3. How does lack of student motivation of academics impact reading achievement?

These questions arise from the review of information, laws, and practices related to reading which suggested that the support of family members and friends as well as students' motivational level for reading achievement should also be taken into consideration. In the 1940s and 1950s, parents were discouraged from teaching their children reading at home for fear that they might do more harm than good. In the 1960s and 1970s, it was considered appropriate to teach some reading skills in the home. By the 1990s and early 2000s, family members began trying to teach and review reading skills more often in the home. In 1984, the classic report *A Nation at Risk* motivated many reading teachers to seek family members' help. Title I programs also call for the involvement of families in their children's education. Due to increased demands on families, educators are also seeking the help of other family members such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles as well as other community members to support school reading programs. Involving family members in their child 's reading program may require lots of patience, tact, and time, but if teachers are to meet the requirements that are being set for them it is essential support. Under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, parents will receive information about their child that is not made public. This should give them an accurate idea about where their child stands academically in the critical areas of reading and math. All of these results are provided in writing with an explanation of what

those test results mean. Ultimately, teachers and parents share a common interest—children. Therefore, educators should strive to foster positive bonds with the "other people" who are important in the lives of their students—their parents.

Few things are more important than the active interest that parents take in their children's education. Policymakers believe that parents are a key ingredient in improving student and school performance. Several decades of research support the assertion that parental involvement increases a child's success in school, including success in reading. Additionally, increased parental participation has been seen to improve students' grades, self-esteem, and behavior. Parent involvement also increases teacher morale and improves school climate. The connection between parent involvement and student success has been repeatedly asserted through research. *No Child Left Behind* also calls for increased parent involvement and most educators will agree that one of the most valuable assets to a school is a parent, specifically an involved parent.

Sussman (2006) stated that schools and classrooms have been dubbed as "home away from home" and for most students it is the most stabilized and controlled environment in which they interact. This indicates that teachers' perceptions play an important role in the motivation of students. Students' motivation level, self-esteem, and self-actualization soar when they are greeted with positive interactions on a daily basis (Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Maslow, http://www.acel-team/com/maslow-nds.03.html). Black and Puckett (2001) also indicated that all systems or infrastructures negatively or positively influence students and their success in all areas of life. The researcher contends that because of the pressures for enhanced literacy, the education of America's youth will be more important than ever. The researcher also believes that more responsibility will

continue to be placed on schools because of greater diversity in terms of languages, preparedness, and motivation.

Summary

This study addressed factors that are associated with students' standardized reading achievement. It is hoped that it will offer insight for educators and administrators regarding the manner in which teachers' perceptions of these factors influence students' reading achievement, therefore allowing for necessary changes/improvements in reading instruction in their individual districts. Education, educational laws, and instructional practice are ever-changing, and it is the hope of this researcher that educators will make use of these findings in order to continue the pursuit of increasing their students' reading achievement.

APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Tel: 601.266.6820
Fax: 601.266.5509
www.usm.edu/irb

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: **27111207**
PROJECT TITLE: **Factors That Are Associated With Students' Standardized Readding Achievement Scores**
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: **11/12/07 to 11/11/08**
PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation or Thesis**
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **Cherie' Nicole Crawford Mothershead**
COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education & Psychology**
DEPARTMENT: **Educational Leadership & Research**
FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **11/26/07 to 11/25/08**

Lawrence A. Hosman
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair

11-27-07
Date

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Participant's Name: _____

Consent is hereby given to participate in the research project entitled "FACTORS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH STUDENTS' STANDARDIZED READING ACHIEVEMENT SCORES". All procedures and/or investigations to be followed and their purpose, including any experimental procedures, were explained by Cherie' Mothershead. Information was given about all benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that might be expected.

The opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and procedures was given. Participation in the project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. All personal information is strictly confidential, and no names will be disclosed. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided if that information may affect the willingness to continue participation in the project.

Questions concerning the research, at any time during or after the project, should be directed to Cherie' Mothershead at 228-990-5129. This project and consent form have been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Dr. #5147, Hattiesburg, Ms. 39406-0001, (601)266-6820.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____

Signature of person explaining the study Date

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUPERIOR
EXPECT IT!

PASCAGOULA SCHOOL DISTRICT

OPPORTUNITY CENTER
1520 Tucker Avenue
Pascagoula, Mississippi 39567
Office 228-938-6222
Fax 228-938-6210
Website http://psd.k12.ms.us

Mr. Rodolfich,

As a doctoral student in Educational Administration at the University of Southern Mississippi and a teacher for ten years in your district. I am currently working to complete my dissertation. This is the last requirement before obtaining my degree. I am conducting a study to determine factors that are associated with students standardized reading achievement scores, which will be the research component of my dissertation. I am writing to you to request your permission to administer a survey, which will be approved by the University of Southern Mississippi's Institutional Review Board, to a select group of teachers in the district.

I plan with your permission to have all fifth grade teachers in the district complete the questionnaire. My plan is to present the survey at a regular scheduled faculty meeting with an explanation of its purpose, and provide refreshments. In addition I will provide the information for returning the questionnaire once it is completed. The questionnaire should not take more than 20-30 minutes to complete. Although the content and substance of the questionnaires is confidential once they are filled out, I would be pleased, upon request, to share the results of my research.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and your time.

Sincerely,

Cherie' Mothershead, Ed.S

Cherie' Mothershead, Ed. S
228-938-6222 (work)
228-696-8843 (home)
228-990-5129 (cell)

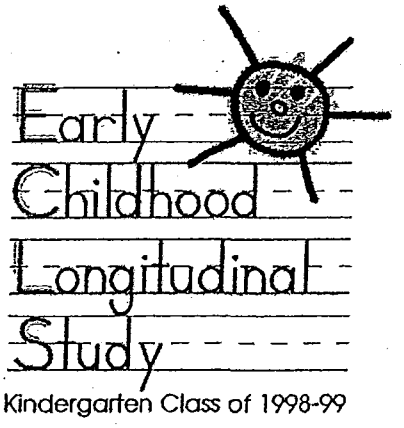
Serving Pascagoula and Gautier

APPENDIX D

SPRING 2005 FIFTH GRADE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

OMB No. 1850-0750
App. Exp.: 2/2005

SPRING 2004 FIFTH GRADE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE



Prepared for the U.S. Department of Education
National Center for Education Statistics

Assurance of Confidentiality

The collection of information in this survey is authorized by Public Law 107-279 Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part C, Sec. 151(b) and Sec. 153(a). Participation is voluntary. You may skip questions you do not wish to answer; however, we hope that you will answer as many questions as you can. Your responses are protected from disclosure by federal statute (PL 107-279, Title I, Part C, Sec. 183). All responses that relate to or describe identifiable characteristics of individuals may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose, unless otherwise compelled by law. Data will be combined to produce statistical reports. No individual data that links your name, address, telephone number, or identification number with your responses will be included in the statistical reports.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND FOCUS

1. How often and how much time do children in your class(es) usually work on lessons or projects in the following general topic areas, whether as a whole class, in small groups, or in individualized arrangements? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN PART 1 OF EACH LINE. IF APPLICABLE, ALSO CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN PART 2 OF EACH LINE.

	1. How Often					2. How Much Time			
	Never	Less than once a week	1-2 times a week	3-4 times a week	Daily	1-30 minutes a day	31-60 minutes a day	61-90 minutes a day	More than 90 minutes a day
a. Reading and language arts	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
b. Writing	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
c. Mathematics	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
d. Social studies	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
e. Science	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
f. Music	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
g. Art	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
h. Foreign language	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
i. Reference skills (e.g., searching for information in books, on the computer/ Internet)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4

2. For subjects you teach, about how much time do you expect children to spend on homework in each of the following areas on a typical evening? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE. CIRCLE N/A IF YOU DO NOT TEACH THE SUBJECT.

	I don't teach this subject	None	10 min.	20 min.	30 min.	More than 30 min.
a. Reading and language arts	N/A	0	1	2	3	4
b. Math	N/A	0	1	2	3	4
c. Social studies	N/A	0	1	2	3	4
d. Science	N/A	0	1	2	3	4

3. To what extent do you integrate curriculum areas around common or unifying themes? (e.g., using math and science concepts in the same unit of study or using arts and social studies in the same unit of study)? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. Never 1
b. Occasionally 2
c. Usually 3
d. All the time 4

4. How many times **each week** do children in your class usually have physical education? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. Never ..... 1 **(GO TO Q6)**
b. Less than once a week 2
c. Once or twice a week 3
d. Three or four times a week 4
e. Daily 5

5. How much time **each day** do children in your class usually spend when they participate in physical education? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. Do not participate in physical education 1
b. 1 to 15 minutes/day 2
c. 16 to 30 minutes/day 3
d. 31 to 60 minutes/day 4
e. More than 60 minutes/day 5

6. How many days a week do children have recess? WRITE NUMBER ON LINE.

____ Days

7. In a typical day, how much time does your class spend in the following activities? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	None	1-15 minutes	16-30 minutes	31-45 minutes	Longer than 45 minutes
a. Lunch	0	1	2	3	4
b. Recess	0	1	2	3	4

8. How many computers of the following types do you have in your classroom? WRITE IN NUMBERS BELOW. IF NONE, WRITE "0."

	Number of computers
a. How many computers in your classroom have access to the Internet?	____
b. How many computers in your classroom are the children in your class allowed to use?	____

9. How often do your children use computers for the following purposes? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	Never	Once a month or less	Two or three times a month	Once or twice a week	Three or four times a week	Daily
a. To learn social studies concepts	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. To learn keyboarding skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. To create art	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. To compose and/or to perform music	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. For enjoyment (e.g., games)	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. To access information (e.g., to connect to the Internet or local network)	1	2	3	4	5	6

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

10. In a typical week, how many paid aides usually assist in your class by working directly with children on instructional tasks? WRITE THE NUMBER OF PAID AIDE(S) ON THE APPROPRIATE LINES BELOW. IF STATEMENT DOES NOT APPLY TO YOUR CLASS, ENTER "0" ON THAT LINE.

____ Number of regular aides

____ Number of special education aides

____ Number of ESL or bilingual education aides

11. What is the **highest** level of education completed for the paid aide who spends the most time in your class? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. Less than high school 1
b. High school diploma or GED 2
c. Associate's degree 3
d. Bachelor's degree or above 4
e. Don't know 8
f. No paid aides assist in my classroom 9

12. How often do your children use the following materials or resources in your class? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	Not available	Never	Once a month or less	Two or three times a month	Once or twice a week	Three or four times a week	Daily
a. A variety of books for reading (e.g., novels, collections of poetry, nonfiction)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Reading materials drawn from other subject areas	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Children's newspapers and/or magazines	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Reading kits	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Science kits	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Art materials	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Musical instruments	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. VCR	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. TV for watching broadcast programs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. Record, tape, or CD player	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

STUDENT EVALUATION

13. How important is each of the following in evaluating the children in your class? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important	Not applicable
a. Individual child's achievement relative to the rest of the class	1	2	3	4	0
b. Individual child's achievement relative to local or state standards	1	2	3	4	0
c. Individual improvement or progress over past performance	1	2	3	4	0
d. Effort	1	2	3	4	0
e. Class participation	1	2	3	4	0
f. Classroom behavior or conduct	1	2	3	4	0
g. Completion of homework	1	2	3	4	0

14. Which of the following best describes your evaluation and grading practices for different types of children? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. I hold the same standards for most children, but I make exceptions for children with special needs (e.g., children with disabilities, children with limited English proficiency) 1

b. I hold different standards for different children based on what I think they are capable of 2

c. I hold the same standards for everyone in my class 3

15. How often do you use the following to assess your children? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	Never	One or two times a year	One or two times a month	One or two times a week	Three or more times a week
a. State or local standardized tests	1	2	3	4	5
b. Teacher-made tests or quizzes	1	2	3	4	5
c. Tests from textbook series (e.g., end-of-unit or chapter)	1	2	3	4	5
d. Individual or group projects	1	2	3	4	5
e. Worksheets	1	2	3	4	5
f. Work samples	1	2	3	4	5

16. Does your school use school-wide standardized tests to assess your children? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER

a. Yes 1
b. No ..... 2 **(GO TO Q20)**

17. Do you have access to the standardized test scores of the children in your class? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. Yes 1
b. No ..... 2 **(GO TO Q19)**

18. How useful do you find the standardized test scores of the children in your class for the purpose of guiding decisions about instruction? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. Not useful 1
b. Somewhat useful 2
c. Very useful 3
d. Extremely useful 4

19. About how many hours do you usually spend preparing your class to take school-wide standardized tests? For example, taking practice tests, etc. WRITE NUMBER ON LINE.

_____ Number of hours

SCHOOL and STAFF ACTIVITIES

20. How often have you participated in the following school-related activities since the beginning of the school year? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	Never	Once a month or less	Two or three times a month	Once or twice a week	Three or four times a week	Daily
a. Meeting with other teachers to discuss lesson planning	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Meeting with other teachers to discuss curriculum development	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Meeting with other teachers or specialists to discuss individual children	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Meeting with the special education teacher or service providers to discuss and plan for the children with disabilities in my class	1	2	3	4	5	6

21. During the past year, how many hours in total have you spent in staff development workshops or seminars in the following content areas? Include attendance at professional meetings, conferences, workshops, and college or university courses. WRITE IN THE NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT IN EACH CONTENT AREA. IF YOU DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN A PARTICULAR CONTENT AREA, WRITE IN "0" AND SKIP TO THE NEXT CONTENT AREA.

Overall, how useful were these activities to you? FOR EACH CONTENT AREA, CIRCLE ONE NUMBER INDICATING HOW USEFUL THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES WERE.

Content Area	Total number of hours	Not at all useful	Slightly useful	Moderately useful	Very useful
a. Reading/language arts or teaching of reading/ language arts	_____ Hours	1	2	3	4
b. Mathematics or teaching of mathematics	_____ Hours	1	2	3	4
c. Science or teaching of science	_____ Hours	1	2	3	4
d. Social studies or teaching of social studies	_____ Hours	1	2	3	4

VIEWS ON TEACHING, SCHOOL CLIMATE, AND ENVIRONMENT

22. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements about your school's climate. CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Staff members in this school generally have school spirit	1	2	3	4	5
b. The level of child misbehavior (for example, noise, horseplay, or fighting in the halls or cafeteria) in this school interferes with my teaching	1	2	3	4	5
c. Many of the children I teach are not capable of learning the material I am supposed to teach them	1	2	3	4	5
d. I feel accepted and respected as a colleague by most staff members	1	2	3	4	5
e. Teachers in this school are continually learning and seeking new ideas	1	2	3	4	5
f. Routine administrative duties and paperwork interfere with my job of teaching	1	2	3	4	5
g. Parents are supportive of school staff	1	2	3	4	5

23. At your school, how much influence do you think teachers have over school policy in areas such as determining discipline policy, deciding how some school funds will be spent, and assigning children to classes? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. No influence 1
b. Slight influence 2
c. Some influence 3
d. Moderate influence 4
e. A great deal of influence 5

24. How much control do you feel you have IN YOUR CLASSROOM over such areas as selecting skills to be taught, deciding about teaching techniques, and disciplining children? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. No control 1
b. Slight control 2
c. Some control 3
d. Moderate control 4
e. A great deal of control 5

25. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements about your school's environment. CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. The academic standards at this school are too low	1	2	3	4	5
b. There is broad agreement among the entire school faculty about the central mission of the school	1	2	3	4	5
c. The school administrator knows what kind of school he/she wants and has communicated it to the staff	1	2	3	4	5
d. The school administrator deals effectively with pressures from outside the school (for example, budget, parents, school board) that might otherwise affect my teaching	1	2	3	4	5
e. The school administrator sets priorities, makes plans, and sees that they are carried out	1	2	3	4	5
f. The school administration's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging	1	2	3	4	5
g. Physical conflicts among children are a serious problem in this school	1	2	3	4	5
h. Children bullying other children is a serious problem in this school	1	2	3	4	5

26. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements on teaching. CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I really enjoy my present teaching job	1	2	3	4	5
b. I am certain I am making a difference in the lives of the children I teach	1	2	3	4	5
c. If I could start over, I would choose teaching again as my career	1	2	3	4	5
d. I am satisfied with my class size	1	2	3	4	5
e. I worry about the security of my job because of the performance of the children in my class(es) on state or local tests	1	2	3	4	5

27. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
a. I am adequately prepared to teach reading to the children who are in my class	1	2	3	4	5	0
b. I am adequately prepared to assist children who are experiencing difficulties in reading	1	2	3	4	5	0
c. I am adequately prepared to use computers for instruction in my class	1	2	3	4	5	0
d. In this school, I am able to get sufficient support to solve any computer problems I have	1	2	3	4	5	0
e. I am adequately trained to teach the children with disabilities who are in my class	1	2	3	4	5	0
f. Inclusion of children with disabilities in my class has worked well	1	2	3	4	5	0
g. I am adequately trained to teach children in my class who have limited English proficiency (LEP).	1	2	3	4	5	0
h. Inclusion of limited English proficient children in my class has worked well	1	2	3	4	5	0

YOUR BACKGROUND

28. What is your gender? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. Male 1
b. Female 2

29. In what year were you born?

19____

30. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. Yes 1
b. No 2

31. Which best describes your race? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	Yes	No
a. American Indian or Alaska Native	1	2
b. Asian	1	2
c. Black or African American	1	2
d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	2
e. White	1	2

32. Counting this school year, how many years have you been a school teacher, including part-time teaching? WRITE NUMBER ON LINE.

_____ Years

33. Counting this school year, how many years have you taught this grade, including part-time teaching? WRITE NUMBER ON LINE.

_____ Years

34. Counting this school year, how many years have you taught in your **current school**, including part-time teaching? WRITE NUMBER OF LINE.

_____ Years

35. What is the **highest** level of education you have completed? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a.	High school diploma or GED	1 **(GO TO Q41)**
b.	Associate's degree	2
c.	Bachelor's degree	3
d.	At least one year of course work beyond a Bachelor's degree but not a graduate degree	4
e.	Master's degree	5
f.	Education specialist or professional diploma based on at least one year of course work past a Master's degree level	6
g.	Doctorate	7

36. If you have **an associate's or bachelor's degree**, indicate your undergraduate major field of study. CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

		Yes	No
a.	Early Childhood Education	1	2
b.	Elementary Education	1	2
c.	English	1	2
d.	Reading and/or Language Arts	1	2
e.	Curriculum and Instruction	1	2
f.	Mathematics Education	1	2
g.	Mathematics	1	2
h.	Science Education	1	2
i.	Life Science	1	2
j.	Physical Science	1	2
k.	Earth Science	1	2
l.	Special Education	1	2
m.	Other Education-related Major (such as secondary ed., ed. psych., administration, music education, etc.)	1	2
n.	Non-Education Major (such as history, etc.)	1	2

37. If you have a **graduate degree**, indicate the major field of study of your highest level graduate degree. CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	Yes	No
a. Early Childhood Education	1	2
b. Elementary Education	1	2
c. English	1	2
d. Reading and/or Language Arts	1	2
e. Curriculum and Instruction	1	2
f. Mathematics Education	1	2
g. Mathematics	1	2
h. Science Education	1	2
i. Life Science	1	2
j. Physical Science	1	2
k. Earth Science	1	2
l. Special Education	1	2
m. Other Education-related Major (such as secondary ed., ed. psych., administration, music education, etc.)	1	2
n. Non-Education Major (such as history, etc.)	1	2

38. How many college courses have you completed in the following areas? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

a. Early childhood education ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 ..... 6+
b. Elementary education ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 ..... 6+
c. Special education ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 ..... 6+
d. English as a Second Language (ESL) ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 ..... 6+
e. Child development ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 ..... 6+
f. Methods of teaching reading ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 ..... 6+
g. Methods of teaching language arts (writing, grammar, research skills) ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 ..... 6+
h. Methods of teaching mathematics ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 ..... 6+
i. Methods of teaching science ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 ..... 6+
j. Classroom management ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 ..... 6+

39. What type of teaching certification do you have? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. Regular or standard state certificate or advanced professional certificate..... 1
b. Probationary certificate (the initial certificate issued after satisfying all requirements except the completion of a probationary period)..... 2
c. Provisional or other type given to persons who are still participating in what the state calls an "alternative certification program" 3
d. Temporary certificate (requires some additional college coursework and/or student teaching before regular certification can be obtained)..... 4
e. Emergency certificate or waiver (issued to persons with insufficient teacher preparation who must complete a regular certification program in order to continue teaching)..... 5

40. Are you certified in these areas? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	Yes	No
a. Early childhood education	1	2
b. Elementary education	1	2
c. Secondary education	1	2
d. Reading specialist certification	1	2
e. Elementary mathematics	1	2
f. Middle/junior high school or secondary mathematics	1	2
g. Elementary science	1	2
h. Middle/junior high school or secondary science	1	2
i. ESL certification	1	2
j. Special education	1	2

TEACHING ASSIGNMENT

41. How do you classify your main assignment at this school, that is, the activity at which you spend most of your time during this school year? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. Regular classroom teacher 1
b. Special education classroom teacher 2
c. Itinerant teacher (i.e., your assignment requires you to provide instruction/related services at more than one school)..... 3
d. Long-term substitute (i.e., your assignment requires that you fill the role of a teacher on a long-term basis, but you are still considered a substitute)..... 4
e. Teacher aide 5
f. Other (Please specify) _____ 6

42. Which category best describes the way your class(es) at this school (is/are) organized? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

a. Self-contained class – You teach multiple subjects to the same class of children all or most of the day 1

b. Team teaching – You collaborate with one or more teachers in teaching multiple subjects to the same class of children 2

c. Departmentalized Instruction – You teach subject matter courses (e.g., language arts, mathematics, science) to several classes of different children all or most of the day 3

d. "Pull-Out" Class – You provide instruction (e.g., special education, reading) to certain students who are released from their regular classes 4

Date questionnaire completed:

____ / ____ / ____
MONTH DAY YEAR

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

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