POVERTY, PERFORMANCE, AND PAYNE: IMPLEMENTING THE PAYNE SCHOOL MODEL

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by

Lisa Beth Karmacharya

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 Philosophy

Approved:

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The University of Southern Mississippi

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ABSTRACT

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In this study, the research examined the implementation of the Payne School Model and the effects of the comprehensive school reform model on student achievement. Two middle schools in the southern part of the state of Mississippi were included in the study. The middle schools were selected based on their similarities in terms of student population, school organization, poverty levels, and inconsistent performance with respect to scores on state achievement tests. Both schools served seventh and eighth grade students only and neither were configured using a traditional middle school concept, but rather were departmentalized.

Teachers in the treatment school were trained in the Payne's Framework for Understanding Poverty during the summer prior to the study. Teachers received the first 2 days of training but did not receive training in the third module, Meeting Standards and Raising Test Scores. Teachers in the treatment school had been trained using similar strategies for aligning curriculum and instruction and progress monitoring student achievement.

The Instructional Framework Observation Scale developed by aha! Process, Inc. was used to determine model fidelity in the treatment school. Observations were conducted in the treatment school by trainers certified in the Ruby Payne Framework for
Understanding Poverty. Interrater reliability and a range of fidelity were reported within an acceptable range.

Scores from the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) were used in the analysis to determine if using the Payne School Model made a statistically significant difference in student achievement. No statistically significant differences were found in grade 7 for reading, language, or math. No statistically significant differences were found for eighth grade students in language. Statistically significant differences were found for eighth grade students in math and reading.

Although statistically significant differences were found, there is not substantial evidence to support that the results are directly related to the implementation of the Payne School Model. These conclusions were based on the level of implementation and lack of sufficient evidence to support model fidelity. The results of this study support the need for continued research.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Education is a complex system operating not in isolation, but surrounded and
influenced by theory, research, philosophy, history, and the future. Political agendas,
belief systems, economics, and human behavior continue to impact education. As early as
1917 with the enactment of the Smith-Hughes Act and as recent as No Child Left Behind
(NCLB) in 2002, the federal government has attempted to improve educational outcomes
through policy making (Anyon, 2005). A review of the research regarding what works in
schools, according to Lagemann (2005), is both important and timely relative to concerns
of policy makers and scholars alike.

Throughout educational history, reform models have come in many shapes and
sizes. Comprehensive school reform models seek to influence change in educational
outcomes, often at the expense of students. Educators have embraced new theories, fads,
and trends time and again with little or no regard for the research related to teaching and
learning (Friedman, Harwell, & Schnepel, 2006). Many times, however, in the search for
a panacea, a system that provided equal access, equal opportunities, and ultimately
improved student achievement, two important variables have been left out of the
equation: the teacher and the student. According to Pollock (2007), although teachers
have been refining their skills during the past couple of decades, throughout the years
students have been left out.

The cynicism surrounding education reform initiatives is palpable not only among
teachers and administrators, but also among the general public. The failure of
public education is not a hypothesis, but a certainty, at least in the eyes of those
who believe that rhetorical condemnation of public education and evidence of its failure are the same thing. (Reeves, 2000, p. 7)

According to a meta-analysis conducted on comprehensive school reform (CSR), the U.S. Department of Education has identified 11 components specific to CSR: (a) employs proven methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that are based on scientifically based research and effective practices and have been replicated successfully in schools; (b) integrates instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, and school management; (c) provides high quality and continuous teacher and staff professional development and training; (d) includes measurable goals for student academic achievement and established benchmarks for meeting those goals; (e) is supported by teachers, principals, administrators, and other staff throughout the school; (f) provides support for teachers, principals, administrators, and other school staff by creating shared leaders and a broad base of responsibility for reform efforts; (g) provides for meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in planning, implementing, and evaluating school improvement activities; (h) uses high-quality external technical support and assistance from an entity that has experience and expertise in school-wide reform and improvement, which may include an institution of higher education; (i) includes a plan for the annual evaluation of the implementation of the school reforms and the student results achieved; (j) identifies federal, state, local, and private financial and other resources available that schools can use to coordinate services that support and sustain the school reform effort; and (k) meets all of the following requirements—the program has been found, through scientifically based research, to significantly improve the academic achievement of participating
students; or the program has been found to have strong evidence that it will significantly improve the academic achievement of participating children (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

With the many challenges facing educators and in particular those related to educating children from backgrounds of poverty, the goal of this study was to determine through research if using the comprehensive school reform model developed by Dr. Ruby K. Payne made a statistically significant difference in student performance on state assessments when compared to a comparable school not implementing the framework.

Political pressures to perform and a moral and ethical responsibility to improve the profession in terms of student achievement exist as never before (Fullan, 1995). Education is experiencing a revolution of sorts as federal mandates require that all children are provided an equal and adequate educational opportunity (Barr & Parrett, 2007). Schools and districts are held accountable for students' annual academic performance with a series of sanctions imposed on schools deemed underperforming. It is no longer acceptable to leave any child behind.

Although states such as Mississippi and North Carolina had enacted accountability systems prior to NCLB, the term accountability was unfamiliar to a majority of educators. Signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002, NCLB requires all students to be proficient on approved state assessments by 2014. Schools and districts must make adequate yearly progress (AYP). AYP measures the percentage of students performing at proficient and above on approved state assessments. Student performance data are reported at several levels: (a) state, (b) district, (c) school, (d) subgroups, and (e) individual. "This time," according to Payne (2005), "we are
assessing the system through state assessment and state accountability. State assessment is about excellence. State accountability is about equity." (p. 2).

No Child Left Behind established a comprehensive model for accountability to ensure equity for all children. The logic behind this system of accountability resulted from evidence that suggested that students from different groups were not being taught to the same high standards, resulting in notable achievement gaps (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2004). According to Elmore (2002), accountability is about the public’s perception that schools should be able to demonstrate over time a contribution to student learning as a result of improving practice and performance.

The accountability movement expresses society’s expectation that schools will face and solve persistent problems of teaching and learning that led to the academic failure of large numbers of students and the mediocre performance of many more. Over time, if schools improve, increased accountability will result in increased legitimacy for public education. Failure will lead to the erosion of public support and a loss of legitimacy. (Elmore, 2002, p. 3)

Reeves (2000) defined accountability as a tool for improving student achievement that was less about testing and more about accepting responsibility. Elmore (2007) agreed when he stated, "internal accountability precedes external accountability and is a precondition for any process of improvement" (p. 114). Successful schools have strong internal accountability as evidenced by a collective responsibility for teaching and learning (Elmore, 2007).

The system of education is becoming more demanding and complex, according to Elmore (2002). It is also an organization that Elmore (2002) has suggested is
dysfunctional and not designed for effectiveness, but is more likely to fail than succeed in its current state of existence and with the mounting pressures to perform that it is facing. The public school accepts challenges unlike any other social institution as educators make the effort to teach all students. Children with learning and physical disabilities, children whose primary language is not English, children from dysfunctional homes, and children living in extreme poverty are all a part of the public school system and expected to meet standards of proficiency defined by the state and approved by the federal government.

Background

By the late 1990s, one in five children (20%) lived below the poverty line, giving the United States the highest poverty rate of all industrialized countries (Payne & Biddle, 1999). According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), those numbers translate into 73 million children (NCCP, 2006). Research from NCCP (2006) has suggested that in order for families to meet even the most basic needs, an income of twice the poverty level is necessary.

The educational and occupational statistics of parents of children living in poverty vary. Millions of children live with parents who did not finish high school or with parents who have no educational experiences beyond high school (NCCP, 2006). Statistics such as these translate into a variety of risk factors not found in middle- or upper-class homes (Duncan, Yeung, Brooks-Gunn, & Smith, 1998). The statistics for urban, suburban, and rural poverty numbers vary: urban (49%) and rural (47%) statistics are comparable. Only 30% of suburban areas suffer from poverty (NCCP, 2006).

Poverty has impacted all races. Latino and Black children have higher rates of poverty in terms of percentages. White children make up the highest number, 11.1 million in 2005 (NCCP, 2006). With such staggering numbers of children from poverty attending
public schools, finding ways to organize the system for success has become a clear priority for educators and policy makers (Duncan et al., 1998).

Following the Coleman Report (1966), extensive research has been conducted on the relationship between poverty and student performance. According to Payne (1995), "One of the key correlations to students who don’t pass state assessments is their socioeconomic status" (p. 4). Students coming to school from a background of poverty are at significant risk for failure. Levin and Riffel (2000) agreed when they reported the socioeconomic status of children to be the strongest predictor of student achievement. "Economic deprivation has had a profound impact on educational outcomes, even though this relationship is very difficult to change and not all educators or policy makers fully recognize it" (Levin & Riffel, 2000, p. 194).

Other researchers have cautioned against making the poverty-performance connection without analyzing all variables related to student achievement (Edmonds, 1979). Recent results from the research have suggested that the strength of poverty as a predictor of school achievement can be greatly reduced when students are taught by highly qualified, high quality instructors (Haycock, 1999). Current literature has also suggested that schools and teachers can and do make a difference. According to Barr and Parrett (2007), all children can learn and achieve acceptable levels of proficiency, even the poor.

The risk factors for children in poverty are numerous, but to blame poor student performance on poverty alone based on the standard definition of poverty is hardly fair (Edmonds, 1979). "It appears to be easier for policy makers, leaders, and teachers to blame the student victims rather than to assign responsibility to the adults within the system" (Reeves, 2000, p. 11). Edmonds (1979) agreed, "Such a belief has the effect of
absolving educators of their professional responsibility to be instructionally effective" (p. 21). Although strong and convincing evidence has emerged to indicate that teacher efficacy plays a dramatic role in student success, the debate surrounding this issue continues.

The Payne School Model for school reform based on the book *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* provides educators with an outline for implementing school reform in high-poverty schools and districts. Both theoretical and instructional, the model is based on patterns found within classes. The model addresses the differences found between social classes and offers educators, policy makers, employers, and resource providers specific strategies to implement when working with students and adults in high-poverty situations, both situational and generational (Payne, 2005).

Implementing the Payne School Model in high-poverty districts provides educators with a framework from which to build a comprehensive school reform program. Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) is defined as more than curriculum, content, or strategies for improvement. According to Aladjem and Carlson Le Floch (2006), it includes professional development, relates to shared decision making, uses data and involves parents as well as providing educators and policy makers a framework for improving student achievement. According to McNulty (2007), comprehensive school reform requires at least two things: (a) the capacity to do the right work and (b) the development of internal accountability. The Payne School Model includes components for aligning curriculum and assessments, increasing parental involvement, improving instructional strategies, and assessing student progress. Each of these components have been identified through research and noted in the literature as having a strong correlation to improving student achievement (The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and
Improvement, 2006). Hundreds of models have been developed and thousands of schools have implemented comprehensive reform efforts, but the questions remain as to whether or not the reform models are effective when improving student achievement (RAND, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

Educators face the daunting task of teaching all students to the same high levels of proficiency regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or intellectual ability. The public at large expects the school to be successful in teaching all children (Jozefowicz-Simbeni & Allen-Meares, 2002). The federal government expects schools to perform at levels unheard of in the past; and recent legislation in the reauthorization of Title I, now referred to as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), requires all students to perform at proficient by the year 2014.

With the new accountability system in place under NCLB, individual school sites are accountable for student performance. Reporting data in the aggregate only is no longer acceptable under the law. Student performance outcomes are measured when data are analyzed by subgroups. NCLB requires subgroup reporting in the following categories:

1. students with disabilities
2. economically disadvantaged
3. limited English proficiency
4. Black
5. White
6. Asian
7. Hispanic
8. Native American
A significant burden has been placed on schools with large numbers of children from poverty who are often considered the most at risk in terms of academic failure. Closing the achievement gap between the subgroups requires a systemic effort on the part of educators (i.e., a comprehensive reform model addressing the needs of all children).

The approved state accountability model in Mississippi measures student achievement in grades 2 through 8 in reading, language, and math. Student performance is reported on the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) by four levels of proficiency. The levels are minimal, basic, proficient, and advanced and are detailed on assessment reports. The results are disaggregated by school and used in the state and federal accountability models.

As required by NCLB, the state of Mississippi reports student performance by subgroups. The minimal N-count required for subgroup reporting is 40 with respect to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). This value, according to the Mississippi Department of Education, will maximize the statistical reliability in the AYP calculations while holding schools accountable for the maximum number of students.

With poverty levels in Mississippi at extreme levels (SERVE, 2002), the majority of schools have large numbers of students from low socioeconomic (SES) homes influencing their performance. This study compared and analyzed student achievement results on the MCT in reading, language arts, and math from two high-poverty middle schools in Mississippi.

Purpose of the Study

Given the challenges facing educators to ensure academic proficiency for all students, the purpose of this study was to examine the instructional impact of implementing *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, the Payne School Model, in
high-poverty schools. Efficacy of the Payne School Model was studied using a control group and a treatment group in two high-poverty middle schools serving seventh and eighth grade students in southern Mississippi.

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed during the study:

1. Does implementing the *Framework for Understanding Poverty* (the Payne School Model) with model fidelity (implementation consistent with framework design) have a statistically significant impact on student achievement in reading at the middle school level (grades 7 and 8) as measured by scale scores on the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT)?

2. Does implementing the *Framework for Understanding Poverty* (the Payne School Model) with model fidelity (implementation consistent with framework design) have a statistically significant impact on student achievement in language arts at the middle school level (grades 7 and 8) as measured by scale scores on the Mississippi Curriculum test (MCT)?

3. Does implementing the *Framework for Understanding Poverty* (the Payne School Model) with model fidelity (implementation consistent with framework design) have a statistically significant impact on student achievement in math at the middle school level (grades 7 and 8) as measured by scale scores on the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT)?

Null Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses guided this study:
H1: There is no statistically significant difference in students’ scale scores between the treatment group and control group using pre- and posttest results in seventh grade reading as measured by the MCT.

H2: There is no statistically significant difference in students’ scale scores between the treatment group and control group using pre- and posttest results in seventh grade language as measured by the MCT.

H3: There is no statistically significant difference in students’ scale scores between the treatment group and control group using pre- and posttest results in seventh grade math as measured by the MCT.

H4: There is no statistically significant difference in students’ scale scores between the treatment group and control group using pre- and posttest results in eighth grade reading as measured by the MCT.

H5: There is no statistically significant difference in students’ scale scores between the treatment group and control group using pre- and posttest results in eighth grade language as measured by the MCT.

H6: There is no statistically significant difference in students’ scale scores between the treatment group and control group using pre- and posttest results in eighth grade math as measured by the MCT.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of the study, the following terms were clarified:

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) - a fixed set of annual performance standards for achievement on state assessments.


*Emotional resources* - the ability to choose and control emotional responses, particularly to negative situations, without engaging in self-destructive behavior. This is an internal resource and shows itself through stamina, perseverance, and choices (Payne).

*Financial resources* - the money to purchase goods and services (Payne).

*Knowledge of hidden rules* - the unspoken cues and habits of a group (Payne).

*Mental models* - a method for storing abstract information in the form of analogies, stories, and pictures (Payne).

*Mental resources* - the mental abilities and acquired skills necessary reading, writing, and computing) to deal with daily life (Payne).

*Middle schools* - seventh and eighth grade schools not organized into a middle school concept (i.e., these schools are departmentalized).

*Model fidelity* - implementation consistent with framework design (Swan).

*Payne’s school model* - a comprehensive school reform model that includes the following three components: Meeting Standards and Raising Test Scores, A Framework for Understanding Poverty, and Learning Structures.

*Physical resources* - physical health and mobility (Payne).

*Relationship/role models* - access to adults who are appropriate, who are nurturing to the child, and who do not engage in self-destructive behavior (Payne).

*Spiritual resources* - a belief in divine purpose and guidance (Payne).

*Support systems* - friends, family, and backup resources available to access in times of need. These are external resources (Payne).

Delimitations

This study was guided by the following delimitations:
1. The subjects of this study were delimited to students attending two high-poverty middle schools in the state of Mississippi.

2. Teachers serving in the treatment school were not provided on-going technical assistance in the model.

3. Teachers serving in the treatment school did not receive day 3 training for *Meeting Standards and Raising Test Scores*.

Assumptions

This study was guided by the following assumptions:

1. It is an assumption of this study that all data were entered correctly.

2. It is an assumption of this study that archival student data were retrieved correctly.

3. It is an assumption of this study that certified trainers conducted teacher observations with integrity.

Justification

Ben-Hur (2001) defined models for school reform as systemic efforts, comprehensive in nature, a process intended to change the overall system and outcomes. Many schools across the nation are experimenting with various reform models at the expense of children’s learning (Friedman et al., 2006). With the number of reform models available to the educator, research on the effectiveness of methods and framework remains important.

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and several of the federally supported regional research laboratories have called for continued research on school improvement models for reform. A meta-analysis conducted by Borman, Hewes, Overman, and Brown (2002) on the effects of 29 comprehensive reform models revealed
the need for further study, in particular, studies using control groups and treatment groups (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2002).

According to the guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Education reports on school reform (1998), successful school reform models have measurable goals for staff and students, including strategies for evaluation; have evidence of systemic support within the school; and the program provides high-quality, on-going professional development with external technical support. It is the intent of the researcher to review the literature related to comprehensive school reform models in an effort to compare characteristics and analyze the impact of implementing the Payne School Model in high-poverty schools.

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) began in the early 1960s as a federally-funded program intended to help ensure that all children have the opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach proficiency on challenging state academic standards and assessments. In essence, the law was intended to establish an equitable system of education for students across the nation. As reported by the U.S. Department of Education (2004), Title I is the largest federal commitment to schooling in terms of dollars. State and local educational agencies received over $12 billion in 2005 for supporting the academic needs of poor children across the nation (USDE, 2004).

With the reauthorization of Title I in 2001, the program changed considerably. Stringent accountability systems were created, grade specific annual assessments were established, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals were set, and teachers were required to be highly qualified. The components of Title I, now referred to as NCLB, were intended to increase the effectiveness of all schools, especially the schools with lower-achieving students; the goals were established with closing the achievement gap as a
central driving force. The achievement gap is evidenced by student achievement between and among various student groups. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAPE) reported evidence to suggest that the achievement gap is narrowing; however, debate regarding the law and current literature has suggested otherwise. A report prepared in 2004 by the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) pointed out the disparities in funding, support, staffing, and overall conditions of schooling between affluent schools and high-poverty schools. Disparities were noted in terms of input and output and recommendations from the report included accountability for public officials and the need for local, state, and federal leaders to commit to long-term school improvement.

Title I schools are likely to be the poorest of schools with the neediest of children and the highest number of teachers not highly qualified (Peske & Haycock, 2006). Failing to teach the poor has resulted in the inequities in today’s educational system. These inequities have been documented throughout the literature. Edmonds (1979) stated, "Equitable public schooling begins by teaching poor children what their parents want them to know and ends by teaching poor children at least as well as it teaches middle-class children" (p. 15). According to research by Borman et al. (2002), many students from low income homes continue to be placed in at-risk programs and receive low quality education. Mississippi is no exception—generations of poverty have impacted schools and student performance, particularly in the Delta region (SERVE, 2002).

Schools and districts are now required to use scientifically research-based instructional methods and programs when using Title I funds. While using scientifically research-based programs may have been established as a part of the law, educators often do not have access to sufficient and accurate information necessary to make quality
decisions about instruction and programming (Executive Summary, National Title I Interim Report, 2006). In response, the What Works Clearinghouse was established in 2002 by the federal government to assist educators in making reform, program, practice, and policy decisions.

Although a number of schools and districts over the past 10 years have implemented the Payne School Model, limited research has been conducted. Of the studies completed, recommendations were made to expand the body of research by researching the model to include pre- and post-student achievement data.

The researcher, while conducting the research, attempted to dispel educational myths about who can and cannot achieve academic excellence by providing evidence to show that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can be successful. In addition, the researcher continued the work of others in an effort to find "best practices" and/or an uncomplicated model for the practitioner beneficial for the student in terms of learning and, in particular, students from a background of poverty. The review of literature provided in Chapter II outlines for the reader the components related to comprehensive school reform as well as a detailed explanation of the Payne School Model.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Foundations

Comprehensive school reform models are complex and influenced by the underlying theories upon which they are based. Therefore, the researcher reviewed the following theories as a foundation for the research conducted: (a) cognitive psychology, (b) social cognitive theory, and (c) humanism. For the purpose of this study, the researcher explored the ways in which these theories work together rather than exploring them in isolation.

Each of the theories reviewed play a significant role in teaching and learning. Some are more popular with practitioners than others, and some are more highly debated; therefore, it was important that the researcher find the common thread tying these theories together and demonstrate how they work in concert to support higher levels of student achievement as related to school reform.

Proponents of the cognitive psychology theory place a heavy emphasis on what is known as the transfer of learning. The theory was that strategies used in the delivery of instruction were directly related to the success of the student. Early cognitive research had in its underpinnings such techniques as mnemonics devices and paid close attention to the role that prior knowledge played in learning. Marzano (2007) discussed the use of mnemonic devices and cautioned educators not to associate the use of these devices with lower level strategies, but rather suggested that the use of memory techniques assist not only in recall but in processing and understanding of new information.

Since the inception of cognitive psychology, a focus has emerged in the research surrounding metacognition or the process of thinking about thinking which attempts to
take the original learning theory of cognition to the next level. McLnerney (2005) suggested that with the advent of technology there has been a dramatic increase in research on instructional strategies with an emphasis on metacognition. A study conducted by Scientific Learning Corporation in the School District of Philadelphia during the 2004-2005 school year with students using *Fast Forword* software, a program designed to work on memory, attention, processing, and sequencing (cognitive skills), resulted in statistically significant differences between pre- and posttest scores and supported the use of technology as a means for improving cognition. Pollock (2007) has suggested that the advent of the computer and the significant shift from behaviorism to neuroscience has forced educators to plan and execute teaching differently.

In addition to technology supporting the expansion of cognitive psychology into metacognition, there is some evidence to suggest that learning may be enhanced by using deliberate or intentional instructional strategies such as graphic organizers that support the brain in processing information by identifying patterns (Jackson, 2007). Payne’s framework includes the work of Feurestein which is centered on the idea of metacognition and Instrumental Enrichment supported by the use of graphic organizers and thinking maps (Payne, 2005). Pollack (2007) agreed with Payne and Feurestein when she referred to the idea of metacognition and stated, "Essential to our students is that they learn to organize and reorganize the information in the curriculum in order to achieve a particular purpose. That is the essential reason why we teach students to think" (p. 88).

Learning theories derived from or combined from others are not unusual as is with the social cognitive theory, the blending of the cognitive with the behavioral. Much of the work around social development theory has been attributed to Vygotsky and his early research related to language acquisition. Vygotsky has suggested that there are two
primary variables associated with learning: (a) social interaction and (b) the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (McInerney, 2005). In blending the work of Vygotsky with Feurstein, Payne’s framework uses both as a foundation for a portion of the theoretical construct, in particular the focus on language development related to poverty and the need for students to be engaged in mediated learning experiences (Payne, 2005).

Maslow is best known for his work in the area of humanism as a theoretical construct developing what is referred to as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Educators often refer to this motivational theory in their practice. Maslow’s theory has impacted the classroom environment at the lowest level in terms of basic needs and in its influence at the highest level of the hierarchy in terms of self-actualization. Followers of Maslow’s theory believe that students cannot be successful unless their basic needs are met and they feel safe in their environment (Green, 2000). Often children attending schools in high-poverty areas are confronted with issues of well-being and survival. Payne (2005) contended that when adults build relationships of trust and create warm and nurturing environments, students are likely to perform better in academic settings. Other researchers agreed when findings were reported on a study conducted regarding teacher beliefs and student achievement in urban schools. The successful teachers created a relational and personal academic environment (Kruger & Love, 2005).

Poverty

Poverty continues to be a serious problem throughout the United States and the world (Levin & Riffel, 2000). The impact of poverty on education and student achievement can be devastating. Often children from poverty attend the poorest schools, have little options for choice, and are taught by teachers who are not highly qualified by any definition (Carroll, Fulton, Abercrombie, & Yoon, 2004). A significant body of
research during the past 30 to 40 years has revealed evidence linking poverty to poor school performance. "Poverty contributes to lower test scores, psychological stress, and lack of language acquisition" (Davis, 2006, p. 27).

Meanwhile, poverty rates in America are growing. The Children’s Defense Fund (1999) predicted that the number of children and families living in poverty will continue to increase, as will the gap between rich and poor people. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (2005), poverty rates have increased more than 2% in 2 years. For children under the age of 18, the poverty rate was 17.6%; for those children under 6 years of age it was 20.3%.

Poverty occurs across all racial and ethnic lines. The U.S. Census Bureau (2005) reported that the total number of families living in poverty is 7.6 million, staggering numbers for educators and policy makers to deal with. In 1990, nearly 40% of American children were living in poverty and were ultimately at-risk for school failure (Barr & Parrett, 2007). The children behind these numbers must be educated; the adults behind the children must be ready to accept the challenge (Davis, 2006).

At-risk students come in all shapes, colors, and sizes. They come to school hungry, from broken families, and from drug and gang infested neighborhoods (Comer, 2005). They come to school victims of child abuse, neglect, and language delayed. The children come to school in need of caring and skilled educators. As stated by Comer (cited by Payne, 2003), "No significant learning occurs without a significant relationships" (OHT 23).

Relationships

Relationships are embedded in culture; it is what group members think, believe, say, and do (Brown, 2004). Fullan (1995) agreed that relationships are a key part of a
teaching and learning process driven by a moral purpose. Reported by Fullan (1995), the results were particularly significant for students from lower socioeconomic situations. Empirical research has found evidence suggesting that the teacher-student relationship and the overall climate of the school community had positive impacts on student outcomes. Building relationships with students, according to Marzano (2007), is about teacher behaviors. Teachers who use eye contact, smile, encourage, touch, and praise establish an emotional component related to effective student-teacher relationships. Research reported by Marzano (2007) on the specific behaviors range in an average effect size from 0.10 to 1.07. In a study conducted by Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schops (1995), results supported findings from others suggesting negative impacts of poverty in terms of student achievement can be reduced when students are taught by caring adults. Nurtured children have a better chance of becoming successful learners, according to Comer (2005).

The Poverty, Race, and Research Action Council (PRRAC, 2001) included the need to build trusting relationships between families, staff, and students among the recommendations for ways to serve families and thus help students achieve support in related research. Johnson (2006) agreed that in high performing schools and districts, leaders work to build trust and positive relationships with parents and community groups and teachers care deeply about each student’s personal success and well-being. Delpit (1999) suggested that success in urban schools can be improved when teachers foster a sense of family and caring as well as respect students’ home and culture.

Research by Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement (TESA) and reported by Payne (2005) found 15 specific teacher behaviors that contributed positively to the academic achievement of low-achieving students. Among the strategies were "relation
like" interactions (i.e., the teacher showed personal interest and accepted the feelings of the student) (Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement, Los Angeles Department of Education, 1981). Schools can improve by building stronger relations between students and teachers (Pianta, Stuliman, & Hamre, 2002).

"Teacher warmth and support have unparalleled power to help children adjust and achieve," according to Hamre and Pianta and reported by Black (2006). A research project conducted by Hamre and Pianta followed 910 first-grade students identified as being at-risk through the first grade. At the end of the study, students receiving instruction from supportive and caring teachers performed as well as students not identified as at-risk, suggesting classroom support and positive teacher-student relationships had impacted the outcomes (Black, 2006). Black (2006) reported similar findings from other studies. The results implied that academic and social emotional learning were strongly related and significantly improved students’ academic performance (Black, 2006).

Stipek (2006) stated that when children from poor and urban backgrounds felt that teachers genuinely cared, students were more likely to engage in the learning process. Close relationships with teachers have been reported in the literature as playing an important role in the potential for success, especially for disadvantaged students (Stipek, 2006). High dropout rates across the nation have been attributed to several variables, one being the teacher-student relationship or lack thereof (Barr & Parrett, 2007).

Risk Factors

According to Barr and Parrett (2007), students from poverty have been left behind. A report prepared for the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) found similar conclusions. The study conducted by the Peter Harris Research Group analyzed survey results from over 3,000 public school teachers across the
nation. Inadequate conditions, inequities in funding, unqualified staff, and a lack of resources were cited as evidence indicating that low-income students were at greater risk for failure, implicating the system as a source for compounding risk factors.

Risk factors for students from poverty have been identified in numerous studies. Factors defining risk include race and ethnicity, poverty, single parent family structure, poorly educated families, and students whose primary language is not English. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are often assigned to remedial classes and retained more often than their middle-class peers, increasing the risk for failure (PRRAC, 2001). In addition, Jensen (2006) described children of poverty as more likely than their middle-class classmates to (a) live near toxic waste sites, (b) have more exposure to lead and pesticides, (c) have disabilities, (d) have less access to nutritional foods, and (e) suffer from 35% more daily stressors.

Recently, student risk factors have been more clearly defined and expanded based on research from the Center for Civic Innovation at the Manhattan Institute. School readiness, community, race, economics, health, and family were determined to have an impact on the whole child and the capacity to learn. Researchers conducting this study developed a "teachability index" analyzing in greater depth the student’s at-risk characteristics. The index allowed researchers to isolate and determine the effect of each factor. The more risk factors a child had the more likely he or she would endure academic challenges (Barr & Parrett, 2007). Jensen (2006) agreed, detailing risk factors and describing them as inconveniences in isolation and devastating when multiplied. Jensen (2006) outlined what the differences mean when related to risk factors, suggesting that students from households of poverty are less likely to receive appropriate medical care.
when suffering from depression, mental illness, physical disabilities, and behavior disorders, all factors which have negative impacts on schooling.

Devol (2005) described the life of poverty for families as intense and stressful. In addition, the economic conditions and frustrations of families are compounded by causes of poverty such as individual behaviors, human and social capital in the community, exploitation, and political and economic structures. Children from poverty suffer from more than economic depression. Too often the children live in communities without hope. Neighborhoods filled with gang activity and sales of illegal drugs are rampant. The fight for survival impacts students and families living in these conditions. Decision making and behavior are affected. Manifestations of the behaviors can be seen when adults and children are reactive as opposed to proactive (Devol, 2005).

Payne (2005) considered survival resources necessary for those living in poverty and suggested the following: physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, mental, support systems, role models, and the knowledge of middle-class hidden rules. Survival became important in poverty discussions related to the framework when Payne (2005) referred to poverty as more than a lack of finances and defined it as the extent to which one does without resources. According to Payne (2005), the driving forces behind a culture of poverty for those living in poverty are relationships, entertainment, and survival. Related to this concept, Jackson (2005) suggested that teachers in high-poverty, high-minority schools use African cultural themes such as resilience, rhythm, and spirituality when teaching African-American students in an effort to improve learning. Resiliency and survival, according to Payne (2005) and Jackson (2005), have improved the chances for school success among students from poverty.
Closing the Achievement Gap

Despite the concentrated efforts of educators with various philosophies and a plethora of strategies, according to Pogrow (2006), little progress has been made in closing the achievement gap. Over the years, policy makers and educators have sought to close the gap in a variety of ways (Levin & Riffel, 2000). From the War on Poverty, declared in the early 1960s, to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002, federal resources have played a significant role in the fight against poverty and poor student performance. The success or failure of programs funded by the government has been debated. In 2000, Borman reviewed the overall effectiveness of Title I, the largest federal funding source available to schools. As a result of the study, three policy recommendations emerged: national standards and accountability, continued research for replicable programs, and large-scale experiments of programs that had potential.

Educators and policy makers met during 2006 at the High-Poverty Schooling conference in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and continued the debate and provided additional recommendations for improving the chances of success for students attending high-poverty schools (Machtinger, 2007). Among the recommendations made, several were consistent with Borman’s (2000) study such as the need for continued research. However, new discourse arouse related to desegregation and the middle-class setting from which schools operate, emphasizing the need for culturally responsive teaching (Machtinger, 2007).

Accountability Systems

No Child Left Behind, signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002, holds states and districts accountable for student performance. The accountability system related to NCLB is complex. Included among the many
requirements within the law are two relatively new concepts: (a) schools must use scientifically research-based programs, and (b) teachers must be highly qualified. The underlying primary goal of NCLB is closing the achievement gap so that all children might enjoy success regardless of race, economics, or disability. Johnson’s (2006) research suggested that it is possible to close the achievement gap and possible to improve the changes of academic achievement for students at risk.

In reviewing accountability systems, Reeves (2000) defined diversity as more than culture, economics, and class and concluded that accountability systems that do not address diversity are inadequate.

Diverse learners need to know the reasons they are doing the class work and the need for it to be tied to their personal experience. Setting goals, giving students organizational tools, teaching them self-talk and giving them a rubric gives meaning to instruction. (Davis, 2006, p. 98)

With respect to teaching and accountability, Reeves (2000) remarked that "accountability systems that fail to recognize the importance of teaching (and the consequent obligation of the accountability system to serve the information needs of teachers) will fail to achieve their primary objective: the improvement of student learning" (p. 58).

A significant development in accountability known as the "value-added system" was noted by Reeves in 2000. "Value added research has proven that very good teaching can enhance student learning; that family background does not determine a student’s destiny; and that decisions made about teacher hiring, placement and training make a difference in academic achievement" (Babo & Mendro, 2003, p. 4). When summarizing results from value-added studies, Haycock (1999) reported average gains of 53 percentile
points for students having had effective teachers, suggesting that highly qualified teachers can help to close the achievement gap. Davis (2006) stated, "we now know that what schools do matters and that what teachers do may matter most of all" (p. 36). Johnson (2006) agreed. "We have indisputable evidence that when students of all races enter the same classroom and are taught to the same standards, children of color meet or exceed academic standards in numbers far greater than do their peers attending segregated schools" (p. 9).

Teacher Quality

Nothing impacts student achievement of low-income students more than teacher quality and the quality of instruction delivered in the classroom. Whatever reforms are put in place, whatever curriculum is adopted, student achievement depends upon the value of the instruction and the quality of the instructor (PRRAC, 2001). Although there is clear evidence to support the difference that a teacher can make in student performance, educators and policy makers often have different opinions. Recent research by Haycock (1999) and others have determined that the single most important factor contributing to the success of students is the classroom teacher, adding fodder to the continued debate.

Following the release of the Coleman Report in 1966, Edmonds (1979) concluded that no stronger beliefs exist to the extent that the public has been convinced that family structure and income determine student outcome. Although Coleman's conclusions were later disproved, there have been and continue to be beliefs and practices detrimental to students from poverty. Johnson (2006) and Kruger and Love (2005) agreed when both reported that teachers in high-poverty schools did not believe that their students could achieve and master high state standards. Reeves (2000) reported the same results when working with teachers who believed that poverty caused poor student achievement.
Reeves (2000) warned educators against making this single cause and effect connection with respect to poverty and school achievement when he discussed the other variables that contributed to student performance. He referred to the immediate assumption that poverty alone caused poor student performance as a "bivariate fallacy" or drawing a correlation between poverty and low performance without recognizing the multivariate nature of education.

Students of poverty have suffered inequalities in education in a variety of ways. Too often these inequities have been played out in the classroom (Edmonds, 1979). Following a large-scale study in 2006, Peske and Haycock reported significant differences between the qualifications of teachers teaching in high-poverty districts to those teaching in schools serving fewer low-income and minority students. "The research has shown that when it comes to the distribution of the best teachers, poor and minority students do not get their fair share" (Peske & Haycock, 2006, p. 1). A majority of students living in poverty have been served by teachers who are not highly qualified (Peske & Haycock, 2006). Jensen (2006) reported a 16 point discrepancy in highly-qualified math teachers when comparing the qualifications of those teaching in low-income districts to those teaching in middle- or upper-class schools.

Poor and minority children face greater academic challenges than their middle-class counterparts, and research has established that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds have been served disproportionately, at least twice as often, by unskilled and novice teachers (Peske & Haycock, 2006). NCTAF (1996) reported similar findings with respect to teacher quality and teacher turnover. Numerous studies confirmed the disproportionate rates in which students from poverty are served by teachers not qualified by any definition (PRRAC, 2001).
Consistent with others, Barr and Parrett's (2007) research continues to demonstrate the impact that the teacher has on student achievement and the devastation that can result when students are served by unskilled teachers. Ineffective teaching practices and unskilled and unqualified teachers have had negative impacts on student performance (Marzano, 2007). Additional studies reported by PRRAC (2001) have found that teacher expertise accounted for more variation in student achievement than any other factor and, according to the report, students taught by ineffective teachers consecutively for 3 years are less likely to be successful in school.

Although there remains much dialogue and discussion surrounding the poverty versus performance debate, the evidence suggests that educators must rise to the challenge of an ethical responsibility to educate all children regardless of background. Fullan (1995) referred to this responsibility as moral purpose—"a front and center commitment to making a difference in the lives of all students, especially the disadvantaged" (p. 234).

The Payne School Model

In understanding the culture of poverty, Payne sought to provide educators, employers, policy makers, and service providers with a framework from which to work, addressing the major components needed for comprehensive school-wide reform. The difference between the Payne School Model and others is the foundational theoretical research on class. The framework is not descriptive or statistical, but rather analytical. The Payne Model for school reform is built on 12 key concepts:

1. poverty is relative;
2. poverty occurs in all races and in all countries;
3. economic class is a continuous line, not a clear-cut distinction;
4. generational poverty and situational poverty are different;

5. the work is based on patterns and all patterns have exceptions;

6. an individual brings with him/her the hidden rules of the class in which he/she was raised;

7. schools and businesses operate from middle-class norms and use the hidden rules of middle class;

8. for our students to be successful, we must understand the hidden rules and teach them the rules that will make them successful at school and work;

9. we can neither excuse students nor scold them for not knowing: as educators we must teach them and provide support, insistence and expectations;

10. an individual must give up relationships for achievement at least for some period of time in order to move from poverty to middle class or middle class to wealth;

11. two things that help one move out of poverty are education and relationships; and, lastly,

12. four reasons one leaves poverty are: it’s too painful to stay, a vision or a goal, a key relationship, or a special talent or skills. (pp. 2-3)

The key points lay the foundation for the framework and training in the model (Payne, 2005).

Schools or districts having elected to implement the Payne School Model must have provided training for employees. Training must have been conducted by certified trainers in the model. Certified trainers must have received 5 days of training, completed a take-home test, and developed a plan. After 2 years, trainers must be decertified. The
district or school plan must have been approved by the aha! Process team before implementation may begin. Training and model implementation fidelity was expected.

Training in the Framework

Day 1

Day 1 of the training began with an overview of poverty, including a definition and statistics. The session, entitled *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, was based on Payne’s book titled the same. A significant amount of time was dedicated to helping participants understand the culture of poverty and how the pieces of poverty work together to impact the educational outcomes of children.

According to Payne (2005), the five reasons for poverty are: (a) the educational attainment of the adult, (b) family structure, (c) immigration, (d) language, and (e) addiction issues in the home. Situational and generational poverty were defined during the training. Generational poverty exists when families have been living in poverty for two generations or more. Situational poverty was explained as being directly related to an event such as a death, divorce, loss of a job, or a natural disaster.

Payne’s (2005) definition of poverty, "the extent to which an individual does without resources" (p. 16), led the related training. Jensen (2006) agreed with Payne’s definition, suggesting that lower socioeconomic status impacts children at a variety of levels and describing poverty as not about the money in the bank, but as a complex array of factors with compounding effects. "In a nutshell, poverty is about chronically limited access to resources with a likely negative synergistic result" (Jensen, 2006, p. 20).

Throughout the training, participants were taught to analyze the eight resources of individuals and to suggest interventions based on the availability or lack of resources present. Payne (2005) cautioned against stereotyping and responding to student needs...
from a middle-class point of view without knowing the details of available resources. Cultural gaps between teachers and students are widening. According to Bartolome (2001), with 44% of African Americans and 36% of Latinos living in poverty and the majority of classroom teachers coming from suburbia, stereotyping and racism continue to permeate the educational environment.

Language, discourse patterns, story structure, and cognition were covered during module 3 of day 1. Reported by Payne (2005), there are five registers common to all languages: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate. The information provided on the registers of language was adapted from language research conducted and reported by Payne (2005). School language is formal and students from generational poverty are accustomed to speaking in casual language; therefore, the assumption has been that students from low-income homes are immediately at a disadvantage in a school set operating under middle-class norms.

Payne (2005) suggested using this barrier to students’ advantage by direct teaching of the differences and having students translate from one level to another in order to gain meaning from the language. Teachers were taught how to engage students in translating between levels of language.

During the training, a significant amount of time was dedicated to the discussion of language development. The direct link between language development and student achievement was acknowledged during the training with references to Hart and Risley’s (1995) research on language acquisition. According to Sousa (2005), "vocabulary refers to the words we know that allow us to communicate effectively" (p. 90). The words are used for speech, recognized in listening and in print and become the basis for reading comprehension (Sousa, 2005). In Building Academic Vocabulary, researchers reported
that the most important service that teachers can provide for students who do not come from academically advantaged backgrounds is systematic instruction and although not directly related to language acquisition, the direct instruction of content vocabulary has positive effects on student achievement.

Statistics on word exposure (Hart & Risley, 1995) based on economic status in children ages 1 to 3 were provided to participants. Students from poverty were exposed to 20 million less words when compared to children in professional households. The lack of exposure to vocabulary at an early age is directly related to student achievement (Hart & Risley, 1995). Jensen (2006) reported children of poverty to have parents who are less likely by three to four times to start conversations for social contact, teach vocabulary, or read aloud to them.

A substantial body of research has evidenced the relationship between early language acquisition and school achievement (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). The lack of early vocabulary development has been cited as contributing to the failure of many students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. There are profound differences in vocabulary knowledge among learners from different ability or socioeconomic (SES) groups from toddlers through high school, according to Beck et al. (2002) who reported that children in the first grade who came from middle-class homes knew about twice the amount of vocabulary words as first graders from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, other researchers have demonstrated similar findings highlighting the large gaps in vocabulary between socioeconomic status.

The research conducted by Hart and Risley (1995) and reported in *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experiences of Young American Children* found that 3-year-old children in middle-income homes had larger vocabulary than adults in homes of
poverty. The infrequency and quality of family conversations in lower-income homes has negatively impacted the school readiness of children (Raph, 1965). Hart and Risley (1995) reported similar findings with respect to frequency of conversations stating that children in middle income homes were spoken to more often than children from poverty. Differences in the amount of conversation was associated with economic status (Hart & Risley, 1995).

Family Structure

The impact of family structure on children and school performance was outlined in module 4. Students living in generational poverty have often suffered from abuse, tended not to trust adults, survived by manipulation, and moved frequently, having had negative impacts on student achievement (Payne, 2005). Jensen (2006) reported that students living in poverty move twice as often as their middle-class peers and get evicted from their homes five times as much. Astone and McLanahan (1991) found that children living in nontraditional family settings received less support and supervision conditions, to a certain degree, explaining poor school achievement.

Divorce has been associated with both situational and generational poverty. Evidence from the research suggested that women and children have suffered more from the loss of income when impacted by the breakdown of the family (Levin & Riffel, 2000). Jensen (2006) reported that boys living in single-parent families of poverty were more likely to suffer from mental disorders and drug addictions. Loh (1996) agreed when reporting statistical findings on the relationships between early family change, schooling, and adult poverty levels. Additional studies have found similar results, indicating that economic pressures contributed to the dysfunction of families and unstable living
conditions negatively impacting school performance (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, Yeung, & Smith, 1998).

The hidden rules of class are the unspoken cues and habits of a group (Payne, 2005). Schools have operated from a middle-class mindset; therefore, teachers were trained to: (a) understand the hidden rules of class, (b) direct-teach middle-class rules to students, and (c) teach students that there are two sets of rules. Discipline interventions were taught to participants with the understanding that middle-class and poverty view discipline from two different angles. Research conducted by Ackerman, Brown, and Izard (2004) on the relations between persistent poverty and behavior had mixed results. Adversity experienced at different times and varying in duration affected children differently with respect to classroom behavior.

The research conducted on discipline interventions has been quite consistent in terms of results. Effect sizes reported in the research conducted by Stage and Quiroz (1997) indicated disciplinary techniques to be effective at all grade levels. Effect sizes ranged from 0.64 to 0.97 with punishment and reinforcement having the strongest relationship and no immediate consequence having the weakest. The techniques analyzed during the study included reinforcement (recognition or reward), punishment (negative consequence), no immediate consequence (reminder of the inappropriateness of the behavior), and combined punishment and reinforcement.

Payne's (2005) research concluded that students from poverty live in the present and are unable to plan. If students cannot plan, according to Payne (2003), they cannot predict, sequence, determine cause and effect, and are unable to make rational decisions about consequences. For that reason, Payne (2003) identified challenging student behaviors and provided participants with clear and specific strategies for interventions.
Payne (2006) has provided educators with discipline strategies to use in the classroom for all grade levels. Using the analogy of classrooms as highway systems, Payne's book *Discipline Strategies for the Classroom, Working with Students* expanded the strategies provided in the *Framework* providing schools with additional resources to compliment the program.

**Day 2**

Day 2 of the training is devoted to the teaching and learning process as participants work through Payne's book *Understanding Learning: The How, The What, The Why*. Emphasis during this training was placed on the cognitive processes necessary for children to learn, in particular, reading and language.

Teaching children from backgrounds of poverty, the educationally vulnerable, to read has proven to be a challenge over the years. Sousa (2005) acknowledged social and cultural causes of reading problems but suggested that inadequate instruction in reading and limited teacher training were not to be ignored when making programmatic decisions. Sousa (2005) referred to the mismatch in what was being taught in school and what children were bringing to school in terms of mental lexicons as social and cultural problems recommending, as Payne (2005) does, that the system change instruction to emphasize process.

Participants were taught the definition of mental models and how to use mental models in the classroom as an instructional tool for translating the abstract into the concrete. Chermack (2003) described mental models as being important foundational pieces for building and defining some of the cognitive processes that support change and learning. Jensen (2006) suggested that the use of mental models and graphic organizers adds depth to the content and provides visual hierarchies for the learner. Payne's (2002)
premise with respect to mental models is described by two statements: (a) mental models are the abstract construct of disciplines and occupations; each has specific mental models necessary for shared understanding and communication; and (b) directly teaching mental models and abstract processes with content can improve achievement. Mental models have been defined in relation to prior experience. Student background knowledge and previous experience improve language and comprehension (Sousa, 2005).

Participants received training in five different types of mental models: space, time, part to whole, decoding, and formal register. Recent research by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) has supported the use of mental models in instruction. Mental models, graphic organizers, and nonlinguistic representations were proven to be effective in the meta-analysis conducted by Mid-Continent Research Education Lab and reported by Marzano et al. (2001) in Classroom Instruction that Works. Research results reported by Marzano (2007) in The Art and Science of Teaching from eight separate studies conducted on the effect of nonlinguistic representations supported earlier results. Effect sizes on the use of nonlinguistic representations ranged from 0.17 to 1.47 with average percentile gains near 30 points. According to Sousa (2003), "Concept mapping is an effective strategy for remembering details because it requires student engagement, rehearsal, and the association of factual information to a pattern" (p. 122).

Friedman et al. (2006), in their book Effective Instruction: A Handbook of Evidence-Based Strategies, reported similar findings. Students provided with nonlinguistic, schema-based, and concrete representations were found to have positive impacts on student performance across grade levels and subject matter. According to Pressley, Johnson, Symons, McGoldrick, and Kurita (1989), "There is consistent evidence that construction of representational images facilitates children’s learning of text, at least
after the age of 8, when children process concrete stories (i.e., like the narratives in many basal readers)" (p. 9). Sousa (2003) reported the following:

Comprehension of text occurs when readers derive meaning from interacting with the text. Good readers are active in that they get the most out of their reading by using their experiences and knowledge about the world, their understanding of vocabulary and language structure, and their knowledge of reading strategies. (pp. 96-97)

In *How the Brain Learns to Read*, Sousa (2005) detailed several strategies consistent with other researchers as effective in teaching reading. Direct and explicit instruction, the use of mental lexicons, graphic and semantic organizers, summarizing, and recognizing story structure were noted as powerful aids for developing comprehension (Sousa, 2005). Story structure, a component of the Payne School Model, provided strategies for telling and re-telling of stories and translating from casual to formal for improving comprehension (Payne, 2005). Teaching about story structure, according to Sousa (2003), helps students to learn to sort information in order to categorize content.

During the training, participants were introduced to Feurestein’s theory of cognitive modifiability. Feurestein, a student of Piaget, expanded Piaget’s research to include the role of the mediator in instruction. Feurestein’s theory suggests that the mediated learning experience (MLE) combined with instrumental enrichment (IE) has had positive outcomes for children of all ability levels (Sharron & Coulter, 2004). The input-elaboration-output model developed by Feurestein was presented in detail during the training. The model outlines cognitive skills at each level important for data input and
analysis; a thinking skills approach focused more on process (the how to) than product (Head & O’Neill, 1999).

Instrumental Enrichment (IE) and the theory of structural cognitive modifiability has an underlying foundational premise that is fluid and, therefore, can be modified. It is the transfer of learning, as students are taught to use strategies systematically to improve levels of cognitive modifiability, or learning how to learn. Culturally deprived children, according to Feurestein and reported by Sharron and Coulter (2004), have not had the mediated learning experiences necessary for them to discriminate and sort information. It is important to note Feurestein’s definition of cultural deprivation does not include those who live in a culturally deprived situation, but those who are deprived of their culture, whatever that culture may be (Feurestein, Miller, Hoffman, Rand, Mintzker, & Jensen, 2001).

Results from a study conducted in Israel on adolescent students with mental retardation indicated that the use of Instrumental Enrichment (IE) produced significant gains in performance on both cognitive and intellectual tasks. Follow-up studies after 2 years resulted in highly significant differences between the control group and the IE group on intelligence scores; ANCOVA results were as follows: IE (M = 52.52) and control group (M = 45.28), (F = 28.8, p = .001). The Payne School Model has incorporated into the framework several strategies used in Feurestein’s IE program. The strategies are explained during day 2 of the training and found in adapted forms throughout the workbook Learning Structures.

According to Payne (2005), schools have often provided instruction beginning at the elaboration level, rather than input, immediately putting students at-risk for academic failure. The prerequisite cognitive processes found at the input level of the model must be
direct taught in order for children to enjoy academic success (Payne, 2005). The 12 abstract processes in the input phase of instruction included the following:

1. use of planning behaviors
2. focus perception on specific stimulus
3. control impulsivity
4. explore data systematically
5. use of appropriate and accurate labels
6. organize space with stable systems of reference
7. orient data in time
8. identify constancies across variations
9. gather precise and accurate data
10. consider two sources of information at once
11. organize data (part to whole)

The Payne School Model training and implementation materials provided teachers with tools necessary to instruct students at each level of Feurstein’s model. Davis (2006), in *How to Teach Students Who Don’t Look Like You*, suggested that teachers use *Understanding Learning: The How, The What, The Why* as a reference during instruction to ensure teaching at the input and elaboration level. Participants were taught lesson planning using a mental model, the chef analogy. An emphasis during training was placed on designing and implementing lessons focused on the how and the why, with less weight placed on the what.

Payne’s instructional design stressed the use of planning, labeling, classifying, and sorting when teaching students the how portion of the lesson (Payne, 2005). Payne (2005)
has suggested that students from poverty have a difficult time planning and organizing
due to life in a chaotic environment where decisions are made in the present; therefore,
direct teaching students planning strategies were specifically included in the lesson
design. The format of Payne’s plan reflected the work of others such as Hunter (1984)
with input as a specific component. Marzano (2003) described Hunter’s (1984) program
for effective teaching and the input experiences as “input oriented” by providing studies
with opportunities to organize the information before having students synthesize what
was learned. Organizing information is not only important for student learning, but also
for teacher planning. According to Payne (2005), teachers must clearly understand the
content to be taught and its relation to the basic processes or often they will experience
challenges when determining the key concepts for students to master.

Summarizing and the use of representational imagery were found to be effective
text-related strategies in research conducted by Pressley et al. (1989). A substantial body
of research supports the findings. When demonstrating learning, according to Marzano
(2003), students are engaged in note taking, summarizing, creating mental images, and
constructing graphic representations in the form of pictographs, symbols, and drawings.
Delpit (1999), too, has suggested that teachers use familiar metaphors and experiences
when teaching students from poverty to ensure connections to text and content. The
instructional component of Payne’s model encompassed much of what is often referred to
as "best practices" in instruction. Many of the categories identified by Marzano (2003) as
effective instructional strategies are embedded throughout the Payne framework.

Day 3

The third day of training addressed the systemic processes necessary for progress
monitoring at the school level (Magee, 2005). Assessment guides, identifying students by
quartile, assigning time, aligning instruction, measuring student growth, selection of systemic interventions, and the school calendar were all addressed during day 3. Other researchers have found the same and similar elements to be critical factors in systemic school reform (Marzano, 2003). School-level factors reported in *What Works in Schools, Translating the Research Into Action* included the following:

1. opportunity to learn,
2. time,
3. monitoring,
4. pressure to achieve,
5. parental involvement,
6. school climate,
7. leaders, and
8. cooperation,

Researchers have often referred to the school-level factors in using slightly different terminology; however, the results are clear, the school-level factors significantly impacted student achievement (Marzano, 2003). Fullan (1995) and Reeves (2000) stressed the importance of teacher skill in measuring student progress to improve overall performance and found substantial evidence to support the use of data to improve the process of teaching and learning. Monitoring, feedback, and support that is systematic, frequent, uses multiple measures, and is centered around the elements of curriculum, instruction, and the opportunity to learn will, according to research conducted by Educational Resources, Inc. (ERI) increase the chances of success in school reform (2004).
Time

Research on high-performing effective schools has supported the need for additional instructional time. Focused resources are increasing recognized as playing an important role in successful reform. According to PRRAC, time and the allocation of teaching staff are perhaps the resources most easy to organize and reorganize for success. In order for the system to help children from poverty achieve proficiency, additional instructional time must be provided (Barr & Parrett, 2007). Schools participating in school-wide Title I programs are encouraged to use time to students’ advantage by offering a variety of learning opportunities such as before-and-after school programs. Extended days, extended years, and smaller learning communities were listed as effective strategies for providing students with more time to learn (Barr & Parrett, 2007).

Time, according to ERI (2004), and research conducted and reported by Northwest Regional Educational Lab (NWREL) in 1984 and 1995 is an element directly related to student achievement. Planning instructional time, time on task, and allocating learning time can be translated into additional learning time equivalent to 95 days of instruction. Schools, however, have continued to operate under old organizational frameworks and time constraints.

Goldberg and Cross (as cited in Barr & Parrett, 2007) suggested that the system itself is flawed, referring to the traditional hours and calendars used by schools. The system is based on false assumptions such as all children come to school ready to learn, time dedicated to noninstructional activities has no impact on learning, the old school calendar worked, so why change it, schools can be transformed without giving teachers time to learn and change, and it is reasonable to expect 21st century outcomes in a 20th century system.
Student achievement has always been the primary goal of education. Improving student achievement across cultural and economic lines is not easy. The Payne School Model addressed student success from several vantage points and pulled heavily from the research of others. The model provided educators with the tools and direction needed to ensure student success in high-poverty schools.

Since the early 1980s, sufficient research has shown high-poverty schools can be successful in terms of student academic performance. The Louisiana School Effectiveness Study, beginning in 1980 and lasting for over 10 years, found that schools did make a difference in student learning regardless of the socioeconomic level of the children. As a follow up to the study, Teddlie, Kirby, and Stringfield (1989) conducted additional research on observable behaviors of teachers in effective versus ineffective schools.

The results of the study were comparable to other research findings in that there are specific classroom, school, and adult behaviors leading to the overall effectiveness of schools (Teddlie et al., 1989). Time on task, high expectations friendly ambience, and classroom management were the strongest predictors of effectiveness in the study. Although this particular study did not include all urban and poor schools, approximately one-third of the results came from high-poverty schools.

Often successful high-poverty, high minority schools are referred to as 90-90-90 schools—90% poverty, 90% minority, and 90% proficient (Reeves, 2000). Davis (2006) suggested that "If you want to understand the impact of generational poverty upon student behaviors and achievement, examine the schools of high-poverty that are closing the achievement gap" (p. 29). Research conducted at the Center for Performance Assessment on 90-90-90 schools and reported by Reeves (2000) revealed data on more than 130,000 students in a variety of locations with three things in common: (a) high-poverty, (b) high
ethnicity, and (c) high performance. Noted from the studies were not cause and effect relationships or specific programs of interventions, but common philosophies and approaches to teaching that were focused on learning (Reeves, 2000). Barr and Parrett (2007) reported similar findings to the studies cited by Reeves (2000). High performing schools serving high numbers of children from poverty demonstrated comparable characteristics when organizing and planning for success. Among the common strategies reported by Barr and Parrett (2007), successful schools engaged in the following:

1. high expectations from student learning;
2. made teaching and learning the priority;
3. systemic focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
4. aligned curriculums;
5. provided nurturing and caring environments;
6. student progress monitoring;
7. positive school-wide discipline efforts; and
8. adults had a sense of collective responsibility for the children and their success.

Specific strategies for success used in New York City’s Community District 2 have provided the school system with the formula needed to move from the lowest of performing schools to one of the highest based on student test score results (PRRAC, 2001). Among the specific strategies used during the past 10 years, several are common to Payne’s Model such as a strong focus on literacy and math, professional growth centered on classroom instruction, and accountability for all. These strategies are not unlike those found in 90-90-90 schools. Reeves (2000) reported the techniques used by successful schools of poverty included a commitment to teaching reading, writing, and
math while making wise choices about the selection of curriculum, opting not to cover the content in a frenzied manner, but rather making deliberate and intentional decisions about scope and sequence. Sousa (2005) recommended similar strategies to close the achievement gap. Included in the recommendations were the following:

1. establish and maintain high standards and expect all students to meet them,
2. design a challenging reading curriculum that is aligned with the standards,
3. provide systemic research-based additional help for struggling readers,
4. ensure that teachers thoroughly know the subjects they are teaching.

There is evidence to suggest that students from poverty learn differently than students from middle class and, therefore, must be taught differently. According to Barr and Parrett (2007), "Research has identified very specific classroom strategies that will significantly increase student achievement for poor and minority students when used correctly" (p. 9). Students who need a different method of instruction based on diversity such as socioeconomic status and cognitive development benefit from specific instructional strategies targeted to individual needs (Davis, 2006). The need for high quality teaching and a synergistic approach to instruction is demonstrated by dramatic differences in skill level that students from poverty exhibit (Pogrow, 2006). Other researchers have suggested that when teaching students from poverty the demand for critical thinking and going beyond the basics is essential to improving student outcomes (Delpit, 1999).

According to Fullan (1995), the skill set needed for teachers is extensive and includes the need to "understand how diverse, multi-ethnic students learn and develop and must draw on a repertoire of teaching strategies to meet a wide range of individual
needs" (p. 233). Effective instruction matters; students taught by effective teachers for 3 consecutive years outscore those taught by ineffective teachers. The director of research for the Dallas Independent School District put it this way, "It [effective instruction] outweighs anything else you can think of" (Mendro, 1998, p. 1).

The Payne School Model provides teachers with instructional strategies, curriculum planning tools, lesson planning, and assessment guides to address the learning needs of the children and the teaching needs of the teachers. Research on schools implementing the Payne Model is limited. There are, however, first year reports available from several different schools and/or districts implementing the program.

Overall research results indicated positive student achievement when there was evidence of model fidelity. According to Swan (2005), the results found when comparing two schools in Wisconsin suggested that "There is strong and convincing evidence the Payne School Model increased student achievement across multiple grades and multiple disaggregations" (p. 1). Statistically significant results were found in favor of the "high model fidelity" group when two groups of students were studied (Swan, 2005).

Studies on other schools implementing the Payne School Model have shown similar results. Seven schools in Tennessee implemented the Payne School Model during the 2004-2005 school year. Statistically significant differences were found when adjusting for means on 8 of the 12. Results favored the students instructed in the "high model fidelity" group. Swan (2005) reported that first-year model fidelity was expected to be 50% and was used as the criterion to differentiate the two groups for the study. The results of the study were limited due to first-year implementation and no comparison school.
A study of the impact on student achievement when implementing the Payne School Model was conducted in a high-poverty middle school in New York. The researcher reported using an ANCOVA with no statistically significant results noted. However, again when adjusting for mean scale scores on the New York standardized assessment, students in classrooms where model fidelity was higher outperformed the students in classrooms with lower levels of implementation (Swan, Magee, Montgomery, & Chapman, 2005). In a comparative study using a posttest only design conducted in Arkansas between two middle schools, results supported other studies, concluding that implementing the Payne School Model with high model fidelity has a positive impact on student achievement (Swan, 2005). According to the results of a study conducted on the impact of using the Payne School Model, schools in Indiana reported significant gains across all cohort groups in all tested areas. The results were statistically significant at the $p > .01$ level (Swan, 2004).

Model Fidelity

Model fidelity, or program integrity, appears to have an impact on outcomes. Externally developed comprehensive reform models implemented with model integrity and on-going professional development were more likely to have positive impacts on student achievement, according to research conducted by the Borman et al. (2002). The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) (1999) recommended professional development be school based, data driven, involve teachers in identifying needs, and focused solely on maximizing opportunities for student achievement.

The Payne School Model, according to Magee (2005), offers professional development that addresses the need for systemic reform. The technical assistance included in the model provides the opportunity for teacher
collaboration. It is designed to be embedded, continuous, and occurring over a
deriod of time. It is related to teacher practice and focuses on specific strategies.
(p. 37)

As reported by Reeves (2000), there is substantial research to support specific
components of the teaching process when applied with integrity are linked to student
achievement. Research on Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) results have also
established model fidelity and integrity as linked to student achievement as well as the
specific strategies within the program. A recent study conducted by the American
Institutes for Research concluded that CSR models when implemented with high fidelity
over time have considerable impact on student performance (Aladjem & Carlson Le
Floch, 2006). According to research by Educational Resources Inc. (ERI) (2004), in order
to improve educational outcomes the learning environment must be established to include
the following:

1. an academic mission;
2. the mission is monitored and responded to;
3. the staff development agenda: (a) curriculum, (b) instruction, and (c) classroom management; and
4. the accountability agenda: (a) effectiveness, (b) efficiency, and (c) consistency.

aha! Process has established a minimum criterion of 80% for model fidelity and
has determined that the average school takes a minimum of 2 years to achieve that level at
which statistically significant results can be expected. The implication from the review of
the literature is this: When schools implement the Payne School Model with fidelity and
quality technical assistance, children from poverty are more likely to succeed.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The intent of this study was to determine the efficacy of the Payne School Model when implemented in a high-poverty middle school.

Design

Teacher training in the Frameworks for Understanding Poverty began in May 2006 for teachers working in the school identified as the experimental group. Trainings were strategically delivered during 2-day workshops using various methods—large and small groups. The goals of the training were to:

1. create a climate of awareness and an understanding of the hidden rules of economic class and their effects on student performance;
2. establish, build, maintain, and strengthen relationships;
3. empower teachers to implement the Framework for Understanding Poverty; and
4. provide teachers with the necessary tools to implement faithfully the strategies learned.

The experimental school had three certified Ruby Payne trainers on staff. Teachers in the comparison school were not trained in the model. The comparison school was not using the Payne School Model. The comparison school had used a model for school reform during the year prior to the study. Teachers in the comparison school had not been trained in that model. The school was not implementing the model during the year of research. The control school had been in school improvement during the year...
prior to the study and used the model for reform in an effort to improve student
achievement. The model was a state-approved model, America's Choice.

Participants

The target population for this study included 400 students from two middle
schools in southern Mississippi. One hundred seventh grade students from each school
and 100 eighth grade students from each school were randomly selected to participate in
the study. The students attended schools in high-poverty districts, and each school had a
minimum of 75% of the student population eligible for free and reduced lunch. The
comparison school was selected based on geographical location and demographical data.
The control school is located in the southern portion of Mississippi as is the treatment
school. Demographic data for both schools are comparable in terms of student
enrollment, gender, teacher qualifications, racial make-up, and level of poverty. Both
schools in the study faced similar challenges such as teacher retention rates, student
discipline, and community perception. Student-teacher ratios at both schools are
comparable. Both schools have had inconsistent success with the implementation of
NCLB and the state accountability model. School rankings have not stabilized or
improved consistently during the past 5 years.

Model Fidelity

This study examined model fidelity using the Instructional Framework
Scale—Observation developed in 2003 by expert consultants with aha! Process. Inter­
rater reliability and total component reliability were used to determine the reliability of
the instrument. Pearson coefficient results ranged from 66% to 98% with a median of
85%. Content validity of the Instructional Framework Scale—Observation (Appendix A)
was determined by an expert team. Fifteen observations were conducted by certified
trainers to determine model fidelity for this study. Of the observations conducted in the treatment school model, fidelity ratings ranged from a low of 28% to a high of 80%, with the majority of ratings above 50%. Only the standards observed and met were included in the fidelity count; standards not observed, but apparent, were not included. In addition to the observations conducted individually by the certified trainers, common observations were made of three teachers to determine if inter-rater consistency existed between two of the trainers. Consistent ratings on the 47 indicators ranged from 36% to 58%.

Instrument

Student achievement in this study was defined by a scale score on the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT), a criterion-referenced assessment. Each tested area (reading, language, and mathematics) had a range of scale scores correlated to reporting proficiency levels. The proficiency levels were minimal, basic, proficient, and advanced and were defined by the Mississippi State Department of Education.

Procedures

The purpose of the study was to determine if implementing the Payne School Model for reform in high-poverty schools had an impact on student achievement. The researcher selected two middle schools in the state of Mississippi. The schools were defined as high-poverty schools by the proportion of students who qualified for free and reduced lunch. Schools must have met the threshold of 75% of the student population eligible for free and reduced lunch in order to participate in the study. The middle school was defined as serving only grades 7 and 8.

Following permission by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of Southern Mississippi to conduct the study (Appendix B), a random number generator was used to select students for participation in the study. Permission was obtained from
both districts to use student archival data in the study (Appendix C). The number of
students selected for the study included 100 seventh grade students and 100 eighth grade
students from each school who were matched for pre- and posttest analysis of scale score
results in reading, language, and mathematics on the MCT.

Analysis

A mixed model method using an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to
analyze student results on pre- and posttest scores using a matched cohort group of 100
seventh graders and 100 eighth graders at each school. Student pretest and posttest scale
scores were entered into SPSS. All hypotheses were tested using the ANCOVA.
Statistical Package for Social Sciences was utilized to examine the hypotheses.
Significance was set at $p < .05$. 

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CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine if implementing the Ruby Payne Framework for Poverty, a comprehensive school reform model, made a statistically significant difference in student achievement on MCT scores in reading, language, and mathematics. The study compared two high-poverty middle schools serving seventh and eighth grade students in the state of Mississippi. The study involved one treatment school and one control school and included MCT scores on a total of 400 matched students. The number of student scores included in the study was as follows: 100 seventh graders and 100 eighth graders from the treatment school and 100 seventh graders and 100 eighth graders from the control school.

Descriptive statistics are highlighted in Table 1 for seventh grade pre- and posttest comparisons. Table 1 includes both treatment and control groups. Descriptive statistics are highlighted in Table 2 for seventh grade pre- and posttest comparisons and include data for both the treatment and control groups.

Mean scale scores for reading and language were slightly higher at pre- and posttest comparisons for the control group. Math scale scores were slightly higher for the treatment group at both pre- and posttest comparisons. Missing student data were noted for one student in language and two students in math.

Mean scale scores for reading and language were slightly higher at pre- and posttest comparisons for the control group. Math scale scores were slightly higher for the treatment group at both pre- and posttest comparisons. Missing student data were noted for one student in language and two students in math.
Table 1

*Descriptive Pre- and Posttest Data Grade 7*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Control Group</th>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading (n = 100)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>521.66</td>
<td>35.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>520.53</td>
<td>36.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language (n = 99)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>530.70</td>
<td>41.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>536.75</td>
<td>40.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math (n = 98)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>534.74</td>
<td>44.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>556.49</td>
<td>41.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 2

*Descriptive Pre- and Posttest Data Grade 8*

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Control Group</th>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading (n = 99)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>528.29</td>
<td>39.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>540.38</td>
<td>32.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language (n = 100)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>539.19</td>
<td>35.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>551.18</td>
<td>37.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math (n = 100)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>559.65</td>
<td>43.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>564.53</td>
<td>59.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Mean scores for reading at the control school were higher for pre- and posttests. Missing data are minimal as only one score is missing when comparing the matched groups between treatment and control for pre- and posttest analysis in reading for eighth grade. Language mean scale scores for the control group were higher than the treatment group at both pre- and posttest comparisons. No student data were missing for the language comparison. When comparing math scores pre- and posttest, the control school had slightly higher scores for the pretest. Lower mean scores are noted from the posttest comparison for the control group. No student data are missing for the math analysis.

Hypotheses were tested using an analysis of covariance, ANCOVA, to analyze results for pre- and posttest scores. For each analysis the assumptions were met. The basic research question addressed in the study was to determine if using the Payne School Model with model fidelity (implementation consistent with the framework design) had a statistically significant impact on student achievement in reading, language, and math, grades 7 and 8, as measured by scale scores on the MCT.

Hypothesis 1 stated that there is no statistically significant difference in student scale scores between the treatment and control groups comparing pre- and posttest results for seventh graders in reading as measured by the MCT. There was no significant difference \[ F(1, 196) = .002, p = .961 \]. The null hypothesis was supported.

Hypothesis 2 stated that there is no statistically significant difference in student scale scores between the treatment and control groups comparing pre- and posttest results for seventh graders in language as measured by the MCT. There were no significant differences found: \[ F(1, 197) = 1.187, p = .28 \]. The null hypothesis was supported.
Hypothesis 3 stated that there is no statistically significant difference in student scale scores between the treatment and control groups when comparing pre- and posttest results for seventh graders in math as measured by the MCT. The null hypothesis was supported with no significant difference found when data were compared \([F(1, 197) = .75, p = .39]\). Math scores for the treatment school were slightly higher both pre- and posttest than the control group.

Hypothesis 4 stated that there is no statistically significant difference in student scale scores between the treatment and control groups when comparing pre- and posttest data for reading in the eighth grade as measured by the MCT. Hypothesis 4 was rejected when significant results were found \([F(1, 197) = 7.36, p < .007]\). Reading scores for the treatment school were lower at pretest and higher at posttest comparisons. Adjusted means for posttest reading scores for eighth grade students resulted in greater mean scores for the treatment group than the control group. Adjusted mean scores for the treatment group were 548.72 and adjusted mean scores for the control group were 537.45.

Hypothesis 5 stated that there is no statistically significant difference in student scale scores between the treatment and control groups when comparing pre- and posttest data for language in the eighth grade as measured by the MCT. The results were not significant \([F(1, 196) = .355, p = .552]\). Null Hypothesis 5 was supported.

Hypothesis 6 stated that there is no statistically significant difference in student scale scores between the treatment and control groups when comparing pre- and posttest data for math in the eighth grade as measured by the MCT. Hypothesis 6 was rejected. Significant results were found \([F(1, 193) = 11.70, p < .001]\). Pretest scores for the treatment and control school were comparable with mean scores of 558 and 559,
respectively. Adjusted mean scores for the treatment group were 582.48 and 564.45 for the control group.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Summary

The intent of the research study was to determine if implementing the Ruby Payne Framework for Understanding Poverty (Payne School Model) with model fidelity made a statistically significant difference in student achievement as measured by the state assessment, the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT). The study included two middle schools serving seventh and eighth grade students in southern Mississippi. The two middle schools were selected based on their comparability in student enrollment, percentage of free and reduced lunch, and continued challenges in meeting state and federal standards. Both schools in the study had a history of implementing a variety of comprehensive school reform models.

The purpose of the study was to examine the implementation of the Payne School Model. The researcher was provided with observations conducted by trainers certified in the Ruby Payne Model. Observers used the Instructional Framework Scale—Observation designed by aha! Process, Inc. The Instructional Framework Scale—Observation includes 47 critical indicators organized by area. Interrater reliability is reported in Chapter III. The researcher did not conduct observations in order to eliminate researcher bias. The Instructional Framework Scale—Observation was also used to determine model fidelity for each individual teacher observed during the study.

The researcher visited the treatment school several times during the study. In addition, comfort levels in implementing the framework were measured using informal
surveys related to staff development as required by annual needs assessments. The researcher had access to that information.

The researcher visited the control school on three separate occasions but did not visit during the study. Visits were made in the year prior to the study. The purpose of the researcher’s visits to the school was unrelated to the study but provided background knowledge of the organization and climate of the school. The visits also provided the researcher with opportunities to experience classrooms and make first-hand observations of the teaching and learning environment within the control school. These opportunities for observations took place during which time the learning taking place would ultimately be reflected on pretest scores in the study.

Conclusions and Discussion

This study was conducted based on hypotheses that suggested that there would be no statistically significant differences in student achievement as measured by the MCT using pre- and posttest data between the treatment school and the control school. Each null hypothesis in reading, language, and math for seventh graders was supported with no statistically significant differences found. However, statistical differences were found for eighth grades in reading and math.

The results of this study were inconsistent with the results of a similar study conducted with middle school students attending high-poverty schools. The posttest-only Arkansas study resulted in statistically significant differences for the seventh grade group and no statistically significant difference for eighth graders (Swan, 2005), opposite from this study.
Results from a study of New York middle school students attending a school implementing the Payne School Model found no statistically significant differences in student test scores in literacy and math supporting the seventh grade results in this study (Swan, 2005). Additionally, outcomes from a study conducted on students in grades 2-8 in Tennessee were similar in that no statistically significant differences were found for grade 7 (Swan, 2005). No control schools were available for comparisons in the Tennessee study.

Statistically significant differences were reported at the $p < .05$ level in both reading and math for eighth grade students in this study. These results are consistent with the results reported by Swan (2005) for students in eighth grade reading when adjusted mean comparisons were made. In addition, and in line with the results of this study, statistically significant results were found for students in eighth grade math. Student-teacher ratio and poverty rates for the Wisconsin study were lower than for this study conducted in Mississippi. Average student-teacher ratios in this study were 1:28.

"Comprehensive school reform is only as effective as its implementation" (Kurki, Boyle, & Aladjem, 2006, p. 255). In recent studies conducted on comprehensive school reform models, results have suggested coherent implementation or model integrity to be an integral part of the success or failure of such programs (Borman et al., 2002). The importance of model fidelity with respect to comprehensive school reform models continues to be referenced in studies such as those conducted by the American Institutes for Research, Washington, D.C., and reported in *The Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk*. 

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Only 12 reform models were supported by five or more studies of their achievement effects, according to research conducted by Borman et al. (2002); and researchers reported substantial variance in the number of studies conducted by external reviewers as opposed to program developers.

Several limitations were noted in the Borman et al. (2002) study such as inadequate detail for replication of findings and little to no information on student sample sizes. Explaining the differences in the variability regarding the effects of comprehensive school reform was not linked to the specific components of the model or the amount of buy-in from stakeholders; however, consistent with research that has linked successes to quality implementation, the researchers in this study noted "knowing more about these largely unmeasured and unreported differences in implementation, across both schools and CSR models, would also enrich our understanding of the variability in the CSR effects" (Borman et al., 2002, p. 36).

The limitations for this project are noted below and followed by a summary.

Limitations

Several limitations are noted for this project:

1. Teacher turnover at the treatment school occurred during the implementation of the project.

2. Teachers in the treatment school taught seventh and eighth grade students.

3. Some students received additional support in math and reading based on student progress monitoring during the study.

4. Some students received a "double dose" of instruction during the study, taking two reading or math classes.
5. Teachers in the treatment school used a different improvement model the year prior to the study; although not a comprehensive model, the teachers received coaching and feedback from external consultants during that time.

6. Math teachers in the treatment school were trained in another school reform model during the summer prior to the study.

7. Reading and language teachers in the treatment school were trained in another reform model during the summer prior to the study.

8. No measures for control were accounted for with respect to the other model implemented during the study.

9. No measure of fidelity was determined for the other model implemented during the study; however, Academic Coaches in the treatment school reported that the other model used "modified versions" were used in reading and language.

10. Teachers who were replaced during the year did not receive training in the Payne School Model.

11. The treatment school was in the first year of implementing the Payne School Model.

12. Teachers in the treatment school received only periodic feedback from the certified trainers in the school.

The number of variables listed above in the limitations provide evidence to suggest the difficulty schools have when implementing school reform models and the challenges to remaining consistent with the expectations of the framework. Although not listed as a limitation to the study, the time needed for change to occur in adult teaching behaviors and student performance certainly played a role in the outcomes of this project.
Successful school reform, according to most researchers, takes a minimum of 3 years and often during the first year student achievement scores will dip. Fullan (2006) referred to the phenomenon as an implementation dip, and in his work *Turnaround Leadership* provides school reformers several strategies which are likely to increase the chances of success. Among the strategies that Fullan (2007) recommended are to (a) define closing the achievement gap as the overarching goal, (b) stay the course, and (c) build internal accountability that is linked to the external.

The treatment school lost approximately seven teachers during the implementation year and new teachers hired as replacements were not trained. The teachers who left during the year were teachers in core content areas as included in this study. The loss of trained faculty and hiring new teachers who did not receive training in the program impacted the collective capacity of the school to be successful in the Payne School Model.

Students who received additional support in reading, math, and language had the advantage of increased instruction and additional time for mastering concepts. This strategy may have positively impacted student achievement scores in reading, language, and math. Researchers have suggested that additional time is an important component for improving student achievement, especially for those students coming from a background of poverty. This additional time was provided for students at both grade levels. The inconsistency in outcomes of the study by grade and subject level is not explained since students at both grade levels received additional time in instruction.

Math teachers in the treatment school were implementing a program from another model for reform during the same time that they were implementing the Payne School
Model. The programs, although compatible in terms of basic components, were somewhat different in terms of specifics. The alternate program did not have a direct teaching component and did not address cognitive skills in the same manner as does the Payne School Model. However, because the alternate program provided a curriculum for teachers to use in delivering instruction, the strategies found in the Payne School Model were less likely to be used consistently. English and reading teachers had also received training in the alternate model. Outcomes of this study were likely impacted by the overall influence of another model either at the foundational level or the implementation level. Research on school reform supports the assumption that when too many initiatives are present at the same time the probability of the success for any of the models diminishes (Kurki et al., 2006).

Implications for Educational Leaders

The findings of this study have important implications for schools implementing a comprehensive school reform model. In reviewing the literature and conducting the research, model fidelity has emerged as the most critical component. Supported by research reported in the review of literature, any changes that can be expected in student outcomes are not directly linked to the mere presence of a program, often with which a program is delivered. In addition, schools implementing conflicting or competing models at the same time are less likely to be successful than those remaining true to the program. Programs with unclear objectives or less detail related to the curriculum and instruction are also less likely to be implemented with any degree of fidelity and, therefore, less successful (Kurki et al., 2006).
Study findings suggest that results are unlikely to be directly associated with the Payne School Model. The inconsistency with which the program was implemented at the treatment school and the lack of follow up and follow through with training and support likely impacted the results. Additional studies should be conducted when model fidelity ratings are 80% or better, schools are receiving technical support, and have been implementing for more than one year.

In addition, teachers in the treatment school had received mixed messages from a variety of external consults over a period of 2 years—the year prior to and the year of implementation. A variety of beliefs and underlying philosophies with respect to school improvement and instruction was apparent at the treatment school. The variance among teacher beliefs was evidenced during informal conversations with teachers held by the researcher as a part of her job responsibilities within the school district where the study took place.

Although there was some degree of model fidelity with the average fidelity rating above 50%, the low number of observations and the skill level of the trainers may have impacted the outcomes resulting in a halo effect. In addition, a lack of understanding the commitment to the model by the school-level administrator may have negatively impacted the level of implementation. Consistent with the literature, administrator commitment and leadership are significant in predicting the success or failure of a program. In this study, it is probable that the role of the administrator led to lower fidelity ratings and the lack of integrity with which the model was implemented.

Administrators should consider the many variables and limitations noted in the study before implementing the Payne School Model. The model is comprehensive and is...
delivered through a series of training over a 3-day period. The amount of information provided to teachers during the training would likely have more impact if delivered over time with consistent follow up using an outline that addresses specific model components. Well implemented reforms provide teachers with follow up and consistent feedback that is planned, deliberate, and specific.

The internal language of the model and the vocabulary related to the framework are difficult to internalize. Providing teachers with additional support on the language of the model on a monthly basis or more frequently, and placing an emphasis on the related components would be an effective method to use in building teacher capacity. By reviewing the hidden rules of poverty, middle class, and wealth and the 12 key points related to poverty on a regular basis, the language of the program would be internalized by teachers and levels of fidelity in the model would likely increase.

In addition, schools electing to implement the framework may consider having several certified trainers on staff. Although the treatment school had three trainers on staff at the school, on-going training in the model did not take place. A process should be established to ensure that on-going support is provided to teachers using formal and informal methods of support. Formal methods could include developing a school calendar for training on the components of the framework on a bi-monthly or monthly basis. Informal methods may be in the form of side-by-side coaching or modeling in the classroom. Schools and districts may also consider using external consultants from aha! Process, Inc. to provide internal trainers and teachers with continued support.

In addition to consistent follow up and support in the implementation of the model, administrators should plan for training new teachers who may come on board.
during the year. This plan should be developed prior to the beginning of the year. If the school has certified trainers on staff, those resources should be used. In the event that the school does not employ certified trainers, provisions should be made for sending new teachers to training with aha! Process, Inc. or employing trainers to train on site. All teachers should have adequate time set aside for collaboration in planning and implementing the model which will lead to higher levels of fidelity. Common planning times would provide opportunities for teachers to work together. Teacher skill level in implementing the model with fidelity should increase over time and with support.

In planning and organizing for the effective implementation of a school reform model, some researchers suggest an all or nothing approach meaning everyone is on board with the mission or they are not. Those who are not become what Schlecty (2006) referred to as strategically compliant and do not believe in the mission. It is, therefore, important for those who wish to implement and ultimately sustain change to recognize that outcomes influence beliefs. When teachers experience success for themselves and the children, the shared vision or mission has become more of an outcome than what some reformers refer to as a precondition.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study addresses the continued desire for policy makers and educators to improve student achievement using comprehensive reform models that meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind. Comprehensive school reform programs should provide students with the educational opportunities to which they are entitled, regardless of race or socioeconomic status.
Further studies on implementing the *Ruby Payne Framework for Understanding Poverty* are needed. Specific research topics for the Payne School Model could include specific component research. No significant results were found in language at either grade level for this study, and since the program is largely focused on language and story structure, organizing a study around the element of language could provide additional information for program developers.

Isolating the framework into two parts, (a) theory or foundations related to poverty, and (b) the teaching and learning modules, could also provide program developers and ultimately school policy makers with additional information linked to model implementation. Repeating this study with schools not engaged in conflicting models would provide program developers, educators, and policy makers with more concise information on which to make instructional and programmatic decisions.

Finally, an analysis of the results of this research indicates the need for continued research in comprehensive school reform models. Considering the likelihood that schools have been implementing their own variety of reform models over the years based on "best practices," it remains a challenge for educators to identify "programs" that work.
APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK SCALE—OBSERVATION

INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK SCALE VERSION 1.0—OBSERVATION

Date: ___/___ School: __________________ Teacher: ______________ Rater: ___________

INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK SCALE—OBSERVATION

(Ruby Payne/aha! Process, Inc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Indicators by Area</th>
<th>Ratings of Fidelity of Model Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did Not Observe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Calls students by name.</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provides coping strategies for students.</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language, Story Structure, Cognition</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Uses formal language register to teach content.</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Uses casual register to build relationships.</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Uses casual register to clarify content.</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provides translation tools between two story structures (sensory and abstract realities/words).</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Structure</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Uses body language to build relationships.</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Uses non-verbs to build relationships and indicate respect.</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Responds to challenges to authority in a respectful way.</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Rules</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Teaches two sets of rules concept for behaviors (if applicable).</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Teaches hidden rules as part of discipline intervention (if applicable).</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Expects required behaviors of all students (if applicable).</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Varies approaches to teach the behaviors based on using the hidden rule information (if applicable).</td>
<td>O O O O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Ratings of Fidelity of Model Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Indicators by Area</th>
<th>Did Not Observe But Needed</th>
<th>Observe But Did Not Meet Standard</th>
<th>Didn't Observe But Met Apparent Standard</th>
<th>Observed Met Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Discipline Interventions

14. Uses adult voice the majority of the time in discipline interactions.  
15. Teaches reframing to help change student behaviors.  
16. Uses positive parent voice to stop behavior.  
17. Does not argue with students.  
18. Uses discipline interventions to teach choices, not to punish.  
19. Uses discipline interventions to teach consequences, not to punish.  
20. Uses discipline interventions to teach parameters (non-negotiables), not to punish.  
21. Uses humor, not sarcasm, as a tool in discipline.  
22. Uses relationships with rules to minimize rebellion.  
23. Teaches processes and procedures for the classroom.  
24. Teaches processes and procedures for the facility.

#### Building Relationships

25. Teaches, insists upon, and reciprocates mutual respect from students to teacher and teacher to students.  
26. Is courteous to students.  
27. Gets within arm’s reach.  
28. Interacts with individual students equitably.  
29. Interacts with groups of students equitably.  

#### Learning Structures: the What, the Why, the How

30. Teaches the what.  
31. Teaches the why.  
32. Teaches the how.  
33. Direct teaches cognitive strategies as needed  
34. Varies teaching methods to reach students’ abilities as needed.
### Mental Models Help Understand the Why and Translate from the Concrete to the Abstract

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Indicators by Area</th>
<th>Did Not Observe</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Didn’t Observe But Did Observe</th>
<th>Needed</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Apparent</th>
<th>Met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35. Uses mental models to translate between sensory and abstract.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Teaches students to create mental models.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Ties mental models to the purpose, structure, or patterns of the discipline.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Directly teaches planning behavior for academic tasks.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Directly teaches planning behavior for behavioral tasks.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Requires written plan from each student for completion of task including time, steps to the task, and deadlines.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Strategies for Teaching the What

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Indicators by Area</th>
<th>Did Not Observe</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Didn’t Observe But Did Observe</th>
<th>Needed</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Apparent</th>
<th>Met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41. Identifies, teaches, and requires student use of content vocabulary.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Strategies for Teaching the How

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Indicators by Area</th>
<th>Did Not Observe</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Didn’t Observe But Did Observe</th>
<th>Needed</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Apparent</th>
<th>Met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42. Teaches and requires student use of labeling.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Teaches and requires students to develop questions over content.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Teaches students how to evaluate and analyze questions.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Teaches identification of characteristics as the basics of sorting (e.g., like/unlike, important/unimportant).</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Teaches students how to sort against the purpose, structure, or pattern of content.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Provides models for sorting text.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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: 27080601
PROJECT TITLE: Poverty, Performance, and Payne: Implementing the Payne School Model
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 01/08/07 to 10/01/07
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation or Thesis
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Lisa Smith
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership & Research
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 08/06/07 to 08/05/08

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair

Date

8-10-07
Hi Lisa,
Yes, we will gladly share the data with you. Do we have to have parent approval?

Ann

Hi, Annie, can you just give me an “ok” for this so I might include this in my appendices? I need to get it to Jacque to include...thanks! Lisa
Hey Annie,

I am going to need access to some student level data for my dissertation. I will need the following:

1. 100 randomly selected 6th grade MCT scores on our children from 2006 to compare to 100 randomly selected 2007 7th grade scores (as a pre and post with Ruby Payne).
2. 100 randomly selected 7th grade MCT scores on our children from 2006 to compare to 100 randomly selected 2007 8th grade scores (again as a pre/post treatment).

I will be comparing our scores to Natchez Middle School 7th and 8th graders who are demographically similar to us! I am anxious to get our results for this year....

Dr. Wimbish, if you will give us the blessing, I would like to begin gathering some of that information soon as my defense for the proposal is this month.

Many thanks! Lisa

Cc: Dr. Wimbish
Hi Lisa,

I think we can work with you on that.

Dr. Morris,

Good morning. Hope all is well in Natchez and that school has gotten off to a great start. We are super busy in Hattiesburg but having a great start to the year.

The reason for my email is this...as you may or may not remember, I am working on my dissertation at USM with Dr. David Lee as my chair. My research includes comparing our middle school scores, implementing the Ruby Payne Framework, to Robert Lewis Middle school, not implementing the framework.

I am seeking permission to use pre and post test scores of your middle school students using a randomly selected method with a matched cohort of students. Certainly all of the student information will remain anonymous and confidential.

I will of course put all of this in writing formally, but wanted to get at least an informal ok before I meet with my statistician next Monday. I am looking forward to visiting Natchez again within the next few weeks as my goal is graduate in December!
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