FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH READING ACHIEVEMENT OF FIFTH GRADE SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS IN A REGIONAL AND A NATIONAL SETTING

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FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH READING ACHIEVEMENT OF FIFTH GRADE
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by

Stephanie Ann Newell

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

Approved:

December 2007
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ABSTRACT

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This research project measured teachers’ perspectives of both planning instruction and consultation/collaboration as they related to fifth grade special education students in both a regional and national setting. Data selected from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study of 1998-99 (ECLS-K), specifically the ECLS-K Fifth Grade Spring 2003-04 were used in the present study. The estimated number of fifth graders was 1,031. In the regional sample, 30 teachers participated in completing the ECLS-K Fifth Grade Spring 2003-04, Fifth Grade Teacher Questionnaire.

A one-sample t-Test was conducted to evaluate differences in Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 that specifically measured whether teachers’ perceptions of planning instruction and consultation/collaboration are perceived as important to fifth grade special education students in both the regional and national cohorts, with a significant difference noted in both samples; specifically the regional mean sample significantly higher for both planning instruction and consultation/collaboration.

A hierarchical regression was also conducted in the national sample. The linear combination of SES, race and gender primarily, and teachers’ instructional planning and consultation/collaboration secondarily, statistically significantly predicted the reading achievement of fifth grade special education students.
Recommendations for future research in the area of special education students with respects to reading and achievement could analyze other factors perceived by teachers as important in special education students; extending to a larger sample size that are diverse in their supportive services.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The author would also like to extended appreciation to the Harrison County School District Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Mitchell King, for granting permission to the author the use of questionnaires in the school district. Finally, appreciation is given to each teacher that took time out of their busy schedule to complete the questionnaire.
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CHAPTER I
PROBLEM

Introduction

State and federal legislation now requires students to achieve certain levels on assessments in the areas of reading, math, language, writing and science, grades 3-8 in order to be promoted to the next grade level. The current environment of standards-based reform and new requirements for accountability are the result of a series of national initiatives and legislative mandates that have evolved over the last twenty-five years (Thompson, Lazarus, Clapper, & Thurlow, 2004). Furthermore, Thompson et al., (2004) go on to emphasize how schools are accountable for the achievement of not only regular education students, but special education students and that teachers must now be “highly qualified” to teach in this era of accountability and achievement.

With the current federal mandates under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), as well as stringent accountability being placed on districts, schools, and educators alike, it is vital that all involved in a child’s educational life are both knowledgeable and currently using effective strategies that will support success for special education students in an inclusion classroom. NCLB presently calls for annual testing in all public schools in the areas of reading and mathematics for grades 3-8 and once in high school (Spradlin et al., 2005). This act is also the reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and has had a major presence in schools for over 40 years. Furthermore, with the reauthorization of ESEA in 1994, education drastically changed and redefined state and federal law of education policies concerning students with disabilities (McLaughlin, Embler, Hernandez, & Caron, 2005, p. 32). In addition, the federal law, Individuals with Disabilities Education
Act (IDEA) recently amended in 2004, also requires all public schools children in grades K-12 to not only be held to a higher accountability level with regards to the educating of each child, regardless of a disability, but to further ensure that public schools supply all necessary supports, services, testing modifications, and other educational accommodations to children with disabilities.

The new accountability standards placed on states present new challenges for educators striving to provide an inclusive educational experience for students with various disabilities (Ward, Montague, & Linton, 2003). Past research further suggests that effective strategies such as consultation and collaboration between the regular and special education teachers, as well as planning instruction together, are essential tools needed in an effort to provide an effective inclusion classroom. It is imperative, now, more than ever that educators read and implement research-based practices in a more serious and collaborative effort to assure that all children are provided an appropriate education. Finally, it is critical that this research be a springboard for future research that will continue to identify additional predictors that support positive perceptions of an effective inclusion classroom for all teachers and students involved.

**Statement of the Problem**

In conducting this study, the researcher planned to address factors associated with reading of fifth grade special education students in both inclusion and special education classrooms in a southeastern state school district and their cohorts from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K) classrooms. By analyzing specific variables from the ECLS-K fifth grade data sample as well as surveying a sample of teachers in a southeastern school, the researcher plans to address whether SES, race and gender,
primarily, and teachers' instructional planning and consultation/collaboration, secondarily, can predict reading achievement of special education students in both a regional and national sample. The researcher plans to analyze the perspectives of instructional planning and consultation/collaboration between the regional and national cohorts, as well as analyzing specific comparisons that may occur with both the regional and national sample.

Support for Study

This study is grounded in the conceptual framework that emphasized the features of a whole school approach to inclusion where children who have been diagnosed with a disability under specific state regulations and federal laws are afforded the same academic opportunities as their peers who are not disabled. It emphasizes the changes needed within our nation's public schools. The mandates for the "whole school" approach were derived largely from the reauthorized IDEA (Gartner & Lipsky, 2002). Identifying the experiences of the regular and special education teachers who teach children with disabilities will give this study a more personal and diverse view of what actually occurs in the inclusion setting. The inclusion education framework throughout the current research contends that changes in the organizational structure of schools are vital for actually meeting the diversity among all students regardless of a disability within the regular classroom. The development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) mandates to the general curriculum, implementation of supplementary aids and services, and the participation of all students of state and district-wide assessments are key components to the whole school approach (Gartner & Lipsky, 2002). Other important key components of building upon this inclusion framework are the use of common strategies of consultation and collaboration, as well as planning instruction
for the diverse classroom, which have been identified as significant factors contributing to an effective inclusion classroom (Barnes, 1999).

Inclusion has been given many definitions over the past decade by educators and researchers alike. It is not surprising that the word “inclusion” can be mistaken as something that it is not. The Center for Studies on Inclusive Education, defines inclusive education as all children and young people with and without disabilities or difficulties learning together in ordinary pre-school provision, schools, colleges, and universities with appropriate networks of support (Rustemier, 2004). The National Information Center for Children & Youth with Disabilities (1995) developed the following working definition of inclusive education:

Providing to all students, including those with significant disabilities, equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services, with the needed supplementary aids and support services, in age appropriate classrooms in their neighborhood schools, in order to prepare students for productive lives as full members of society. (NICCYD, p. 1)

Barnes (1999) suggests that inclusion is the fundamental belief that all children have strengths and abilities and can make a valuable contribution to the learning community. Children should not be excluded just because they are not strong in all areas and individual differences should be openly acknowledged and discussed in positive and informative ways. In order for inclusive education to be an effective aspect of public education, Rustemier (2004) notes that schools, districts, state and local governments, and local education authorities (LEAs) must support and maintain an effort of ensuring that the curriculum, support of all educators, funding sources and community must be an ongoing
endeavor; and further suggest that inclusion may also be seen as “a continuing process of breaking down barriers to learning and participation for all children and young people.”

For this study, inclusion will be considered as students who are in the regular education classroom the entire day for their instructional supports and services.

While the impact of inclusion is significant for students, the success of inclusion depends on the classroom teachers (Bahar, 2004). The role the regular education teacher shares with special education teacher is a vital part of the program. The regular education and special education teacher must collaborate and support each other to ensure the students success in an inclusive classroom. Forlin (1997) finds that due to the strong movement towards educating students with disabilities in regular classrooms, rather than segregated classes, more teachers have become involved in the education of students with disabilities, and this is likely to increase in the future in all countries. Areas that are predominately considered highly important topics continue to be a student’s least restrictive environment, class size, classroom management, appropriate hours and supportive services, socialization and academic achievement (Gaddis, 2005, p. 15). Gartner and Lipkey (1998) further contend that seven key factors necessary for successful inclusion consist of visionary leadership; collaboration between everyone involved; refocused use of assessment; support for staff and students; appropriate funding levels; parental involvement; effective program models; modifications and accommodations; and instructional practices.

A study by the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (1995) found that the majority of the districts implementing inclusive education reported cooperative learning as the most important instructional strategy supporting
inclusive education. Some of the other general educational theories and practices that have shown to effectively support inclusion are:

(a) Current theories of learning (multi-intelligences and constructivist learning), (b) Teaching practices that make subject matter more relevant and meaningful (partner, activity, or service learning), (c) A balanced approach to literacy development (whole-language and phonics instruction), (d) Thematic/interdisciplinary curriculum approaches (d) Use of technology for communication and access to the general education curriculum, and (e) Differentiated instruction. (Villa & Thousand, 2003, p. 2)

To understand the importance of inclusion, it is vital to understand what the law says concerning provision for students with disabilities. The legal mandate driving inclusive education in the United States is Public Law P.L. 105-17, now the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA). This act specifically emphasizes the "importance of providing access to the general curriculum, in order for students with disabilities to meet the educational standards that apply to all children" (Sharpe & Hawes, 2003, p. 3). This results in a nationwide challenge for regular and special education teachers to work together to consult, collaborate, and plan together to identify and implement skills and strategies for all students (Sharpe & Hawes, 2003).

In the early years of implementing P.L. 94-142, the least restrictive environment was expressed through the concept of mainstreaming. A term not found in the law, mainstreaming can be defined as an emphasis placed on the roles in which special education supported the educational social needs regarding students; it assumed the
existence of two separate systems—regular and special education—and was applicable to those students who were considered to be the most "normal" (Lipsky & Gartner, 1998).

Although the specific terms inclusion and inclusive education cannot be found in P.L. 94-142, the definition of least restrictive environment (LRE) is a key element of the law. It provided the initial legal impetus for creating inclusive education (Udvari-Solner, Villa, & Thousand, 2002). The least restrictive environment requirement is what is typically referred to as "inclusion" in practice. According to The United States Department of Education (1997) the law regarding LRE states:

Students with disabilities are to be educated, to the maximum extent appropriate with non disabled students, and that taking disabled students out of the regular classroom setting should only occur when it has been deemed inappropriate in meeting all the educational needs with supportive aids and services. (P.L. 94-142, § 1412 [5] [B])

After the mandate of IDEA, many of the federal courts decisions have worked together in an effort to specify placement issues of special education students that include academic and social issues, as well as placement that provides essential supportive services. In a landmark case, Daniel R. v. State Board of Education (1989), it was determined that students with disabilities had the same rights as non disabled students to both academic and extracurricular activities (Leal, Smith, Shank, Turnbull, A., & Turnbull, R., 2002).

Even after inclusion is operationally defined, it remains an elusive term. Part of the confusion arises from assumptions associated with inclusion—that it is a program or that it is a research-devised strategy. The underlying assumption, however, is that inclusion is a
way of life—a way of living together—that is based on a belief that each individual is valued and belongs (Villa & Thousand, 2005).

In addition to the longstanding requirements of IDEA and civil rights legislation, NCLB of 2001 has operationalized these “equal opportunity” requirements within the context of the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) mandates (Pisha & Stahl, 2005, p. 69). AYP is defined as the annual benchmarks from which schools are measured in achievement in the areas of reading/language, math, and either graduation rate or attendance. NCLB also mandates increased expectations and accountability for all students, including those with disabilities, to access, participate in, and progress in the general education classroom and curriculum. In addition to the achievement data requirement of AYP, it also requires school districts to analyze student achievement data by looking at economic background, race, ethnicity, English proficiency, and disability (Pisha & Stahl, 2005). As children and youth progress across the grade span, they are expected to meet teachers’ expectations regarding academic performance, behavioral decorum, and social interactions (Lane, Wehby, & Cooley, 2006). There is also some evidence that SES may influence how teachers view and rate children’s characteristics. Past research suggest that after controlling for Intelligence Quotient (IQ), teachers overestimated the academic skills of children who were living in higher SES situations and underestimated the ability of students who resided in lower socioeconomic situations (Lane et al., 2006). Similarly as Lane et al., (2006) noted in a study of inclusive teachers’ attitudes toward students with disabilities that teachers in high SES school districts were more likely to identify children with disabilities as needing more attention than teachers in lower SES schools, but less likely to include these students
within their classrooms. In contrast, teachers in lower SES school districts are more accepting and supportive of students with disabilities within their classrooms.

Issues related to race and special education have continued to be an overwhelming concern for the past thirty years, with researchers, policy makers, and school districts taking a more serious and focused look at this issue. The concern has been that the data clearly shows a disproportionate placement of racial minorities within special education (Cartledge, 2005). For the problem of disproportionality to be addressed, most teachers and administrators have to first become aware of the fact that this is actually occurring in schools, but that more than the occurrence, that this problem is discriminatory and potentially harmful in the long run. As Cartledge (2005) further states:

School districts need to periodically review pupil data relative to race and gender to determine the existence and extent of this situation within their schools. Educational restrictiveness has received some attention in the professional literature but there is little evidence that it is systematically being addressed in the schools. (Cartledge, 2005, p. 28).

Specific to this study, previous research by Gaddis (2005) has stated that “further research of an inclusive classroom setting is receiving much attention, both in school districts across the country and in the popular media; with most of that attention focused on how inclusion affects the students with disabilities” (Gaddis, 2005, p.7). But what about those students who do not have disabilities and what can we do to create a more supportive and effective classroom for all involved? In addition, previous research as Gaddis suggests (2005) has been relatively consistent in providing information on the fact that the regular
education teachers have shown less support for the inclusive classroom than the special education teachers. However, more recent research (Gaddis, 2005) suggest that due to the roles that both teachers play in the classroom, it is important to explore the negative attitudes and perspectives that exist and to try and provide each teacher the tools necessary to ensure an appropriate classroom environment.

Generally, more research is conducted on the social aspects of both disabled students with their non-disabled peers. Few studies exist that relate to the area of academic achievement of all students and educators involved in an inclusion classroom.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: Is there a statistically significant difference between the teachers' perspectives of instructional planning in the regional sample and their national cohort?

Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant difference between the teachers' perspectives of consultation/collaboration in the regional sample and their national cohorts?

Research Question 3: Can the students' SES, race and gender primarily and the teachers' instructional planning and consultation/collaboration secondarily, statistically significantly predict the standardized reading achievement scores of ECLS-K fifth grade special education students?
Definition of Terms

*Inclusion* - Inclusion is defined as the service delivery model in which students with disabilities have their special education needs met at the regular classroom to the maximum extent appropriate.

*Special education students* - A student who has been diagnosed as having one of the following disabling conditions: mental retardation, hearing impaired, speech/language impaired, visually impaired, traumatic brain injury, other health impaired, specific learning disabled, deaf-blindness, multiple disabled; these students need special education and related services; which does not include students who are gifted.

*Regular Education* - Regular education is described by Fontenot (2005) as being an educational experience that a child would receive in his/her school or school district where the child is eligible to enter school at kindergarten or first grade level, and proceeds through school without being in need of special services or being labeled disabled.

*Regular Education Teaching Experience* - For this study, regular teaching experience is the respondent’s self reported years served as a regular education classroom teacher.

*Special Education Teaching Experience* - For this study, special education teaching experience is the respondent’s self-reported years served as a special education classroom teacher.

*Consultation/collaboration* - For this study, consultation/collaboration will be the regular and special education teacher communicating together for the betterment of all students, including special education students.
**Planning Instruction** - For this study, planning instruction will be the regular and special education teacher planning instruction together for the betterment of all students, including special education students.

**Delimitations**

There were delimitations in this study, including:

- In the regional sample only, teachers must have a minimum current class A teaching certification;
- Fifth grade regular and special education teachers participated in the study;
- In the regional sample only, the completion of the questionnaire by the teachers was delimited to one school district.

**Assumptions**

It is assumed that all participants completed the questionnaire honestly and as accurate as possible. It is also assumed that the participants voluntarily completed the questionnaire.

**Justifications**

The purposes of this research project were to analyze reading achievement scores of fifth grade students in both an inclusion and special education classroom in a southeastern school district and their cohorts (fifth grade regular and special education teachers, and regular and special education students) from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K) in an effort to discern if SES, race and gender, primarily and teachers' instructional planning and consultation/collaboration, secondarily can effect achievement of special education students in both an inclusion and special education
classroom. In addition, the researcher plans to compare teachers’ perspectives of best teacher practices, including specifically instructional planning and consultation/collaboration in an effort to see if differences occur with the regional and national cohorts. It is imperative that educators carefully look at factors that may promote reading and achievement in the school setting in an effort to identify any factors or circumstances that may hinder, as well as promote success among students.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the following areas: (a) the historical perspectives of special education and inclusion, (b) the regular education initiative, (c) best teaching practices, (d) and SES, race, gender, and the roles that the teachers' instructional planning and consultation/collaboration play a role in student reading achievement scores between special education and regular education students.

Historical Perspective From the Last Decade

Educating students with disabilities prior to the 1800s was not considered part of our American educational school system's priority. Benjamin Rush, a physician, was one of the first Americans to rally toward educating students with disabilities. Bookhart (1999) found that "it was not until 1817 that the first school was opened by Thomas Gallaudet and was called the American Asylum for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb in Connecticut" (p.15).

In 1829, the New England Asylum for the Education of the Blind was founded in Watertown, Massachusetts, and the Experiential School for Teaching and Training Idiotic Children was found in 1846 in Barre, Massachusetts (Bookhart, 1999, p. 15). Regardless of the attempts to include all students in the regular education arena, students with disabilities still remained excluded from receiving an education.

Although compulsory attendance laws were passed in the early 1900s, these laws did not seem to change the status of how children with disabilities were educated (Correnty, 2005). According to Bookhart (1999) "almost all children who were
wheelchair-not toilet trained, or considered uneducable were excluded because of the problems schooling them would entail” (p. 3).

*The Index for Inclusion* (p.5) defines inclusion as ‘the processes of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools’ (Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, 2002). Barnes (1999) found that for educational initiatives of change to be successful, it must include support and trust for those who will be involved in putting them into practice (p. 234). The original special education rationale for inclusion in special education reforms that began in the 1970s seemed for many in the education and medical field to be full of hope and promise for a bright future for students with disabilities (Evans, 2004). The creation of an inclusion program would provide better instruction and a richer, more normal social experience for these students, by requiring special education students to remain in the regular education classroom settings if it is in their best interest of least restrictive environment. Inclusion would keep children from suffering the stigma of being segregated into special institutions and programs (Bookhart, 1999). Further, it would encourage students without disabilities to try and appreciate and understand vital life long lessons. Though inclusion seemed to be a clear approach to a positive classroom environment, thirty years later educators are still struggling with successfully implementing and integrating special education students within the regular education classroom.

Many key problems and issues have arisen with an effective inclusion classroom. One problem area is with an increasingly challenging student population. There are more premature, low birth weight babies who now survive; they are at high risk for physical,
cognitive, and psychiatric disabilities, and a substantial proportion of them require more attention throughout their childhood than age-mates who were full-term infants. Meanwhile, there has been a decline in parental support and structure. Classroom complexity is another area of concern. While more districts are now required to utilize inclusion for more seriously disabled students than in the past, districts are also expected to raise academic standards, which include challenging the areas where many special education students are the weakest. These areas include reading comprehension, fluency, math calculation, math computation and math reasoning. State-mandated guidelines and NCLB standards make it difficult for teachers to balance teaching requirements, create meaningful and authentic lessons, and complete the required documentation necessary for special education testing. Furthermore, funding shortcomings that are due to the added expenses districts are given, cause districts everywhere to have their regular education budgets cut to preserve special education services, which are mandated by law (Evans, 2004).

Gartner and Lipsky (1998) found that at various times in our nation’s history, “female children, children of color, children of particular religious persuasions, and children whose parents did not own property were excluded from public education” (p. 1). Gartner and Lipsky (1998) further report that it was not until 1975, with the passage of PL 94-142, which provided “all children the right to a free and appropriate education, regardless of the nature or severity of their disability...” that students were no longer excluded from public education (p. 78). This enabled schools and district alike an outline of what was necessary and in addition what could be changed in order to ensure the most effective school environment and education for all students. The idea behind the 1975
law is a least restrictive environment, requiring that students with disabilities be educated to the maximum extent with children who were not disabled, and that students with disabilities be removed from the regular education classroom only when they could not be educated in a regular setting with supplementary aids and support services (Gartner & Lipsky, 1998).

Educational asylums and residential institutions for students with disabilities remained a dominant force until the 1950s and 1960s (Correnty, 2005). He found that students with mild disabilities attended public schools with the preferred delivery model of self-contained classes, but students who were blind, deaf, and physically disabled were still educated in restricted institutions and special schools (p. 4).

Although there was continued growth of institutions for individuals with disabilities during the nineteenth century, another trend emerged and became known as the public "common school" where most students were educated (Bookhart, 1999). Public common schools became more popular once states mandated compulsory schooling in 1842 and 1918. This mandate also provided public schools with funds to encourage growth and development.

Teachers in general education classrooms perceived educators working in special education classes as having special preparation and a special capacity for the work (Bookhart, 1999). Special education teachers were viewed as different in the eyes of regular education teachers and were the only ones required to teach learning disabled students. Though students with disabilities and their teachers were in the same physical school setting as regular education students, they were still seen as a separate entity. As special classes increased in number, attitudes among regular education teachers and
special education teachers and the use of education models for specific education ensured that general and special education developed in parallel rather than converging lines (Bookhart, 1999).

For over two decades, researchers, policy-makers, parents, administrators, and educators have focused on educational restructuring as a means to address the poor performance of schools in the United States. Since the traditional education system has failed to provide the desired academic, behavioral and social outcomes for students, national, state, and local mandates have called for fundamental educational changes (National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, 1994). As Correnty (2005) reports, "policy-makers are emphasizing high standards for all students, greater flexibility in the use of education funds, and more authentic forms of assessment" (p.1).

The United States Department of Education (2003) reports that since the 1975 passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA, P.L. 94-142), it has collected data on the number of children served under the law. Early collections of data on the number of children with disabilities served under Part B of IDEA used nine disability categories. Through the subsequent years and multiple reauthorizations of the act, the disability categories have been revised and expanded to 13, and new data collections have been required by the United States Department of Education (p.42). Further data collected by the United States Department of Education (2003) shows that In 1997, the law was reauthorized with several major revisions (IDEA Amendments of 1997; P.L. 105-17), included in one revision was the requirement that race/ethnicity data be collected on the number of children served. The reauthorization also allowed states the
option of reporting children ages 6 through 9 under the developmental delay category.
As of December 1, 2001, The United Department of Education (2003) reported a total of 5,867,234 students with disabilities in the 6- through-21 age group were served under IDEA, 5,795,334 were served in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This number represented 8.9 percent of the general 6- through 21-year-old population living in the United States. The percentage of population was calculated using the July 1 population estimates for 2001 released October 2003. The number served in the 50 states and the District of Columbia was divided by the general U.S. population estimate for this age range (p.42).

Kluth, Villa, & Thousand (2002) found the following:

In 2000, the National Council on Disability discovered and reported that all states were out of compliance with IDEA, because no educational system or guidelines were implemented to investigate, support, or try to remedy compliance issues. Even today, schools sometimes place a student in a self-contained classroom as soon as they discover that the student has a disability. (p. 24)

They continue by saying that in some cases, districts may be making the step to inclusion extremely slow in order to phase regular education teachers into this mandate but not realizing that in some cases, as in a student coming from a different district that was in a regular education/inclusion classroom, that they are not in compliance with providing a student his/her necessary needs and services under IDEA. It is surprisingly apparent from observations of today’s schools that 25 years after the law was mandated
many educators and administrators still have little clarity or understanding of the law and how to implement it (Kluth, Villa, & Thousand, 2002).

Regular Education Initiative

The 1981 Education Act first placed legal responsibility on local education authorities (LEAs) by requiring them to integrate and include disabled students; which was to be enacted in regular education settings. This was replaced by the 1993, and later the 1996 Act which brought many legislative changes concerning disabled students with learning needs, including severe and challenging behaviors. Revisions to the act also provided schools with a process of how LEAs should identify, assess, record, meet and review special educational needs. It also included a new Code of Practice, a new independent Tribunal to hear appeals, and a new duty on school to prepare, publish, and report on their special educational needs policies (Rustemier, 2004). It was not until the 1990s, that the inclusive education movement was viewed as a separate initiative running parallel to education reform efforts. For the past 25 years, inclusion has been a goal of regular educators and special educators across the country; inclusion of special education students in regular education classrooms was not required until 1997 when IDEA was modified to strengthen the requirements of educating disabled students with non-disabled students. Although IDEA does not necessarily require inclusion, it does promote the idea that a significant effort be made to find an inclusive placement for the disabled student (Clearinghouse, 2003).

According to The Department of Education in 1997 approximately 95% of students with disabilities are served in the regular education classroom setting. In contrast, as Udvari-Solner, Villa, and Thousand (2002) have established, “emerging
general education theories actually emulate the principles and practices underpinning inclusive education” (p. 10). General education school reform initiatives that Udvari-Solner, Villa, and Thousand (2002) identified as offering great promise for facilitating inclusive education included multicultural education; outcome-based education; multiple intelligences theory; interdisciplinary curriculum; constructivist learning; authentic assessment of student learning; multiage groupings; use of technology in the classroom; forms of peer-mediated instruction such as cooperative group learning, teaching responsibility, and peacemaking and collaborative learning among adults and students (p. 9). In 1996, the Education Act stated that students should be educated in a regular classroom setting as long as the student’s needs are properly met, other children’s education is not adversely affected, resources are used efficiently, and parents are in agreement (Rustemier, 2004). The debate concerning special education and regular education students culminated in the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), 1990, 1992, and 1997. This mandate says that students are ensured an appropriate education that is created to not only meet the individual needs all of students, but to also educate each student to the maximum extent possible. The act included the concept of least restrictive environment (Heller, Holtzman, & Messick, 1982). Furthermore, Lipsky and Gartner (1998) state:

The concepts of least restrictive environment—a continuum of placements and a cascade of services were progressively developed but do not today promote the full inclusion of all persons with disabilities in all aspects of societal life. (p. 53)
In 1998 the Labour Government showed their support by providing more funds for inclusion. According to Rustemier (2004), there are now two main funding sources of Government funds for inclusion, the School Access Initiative and the special educational needs element of the Standards Fund with approximately 200 million dollars being earmarked and made available through the School Access Initiative in 2004-2006.

Best practices

Based on the research findings, one of the most common complaints heard from teachers about inclusion is that they feel children are often “dumped” into their classrooms with little or no support. The classroom teacher often feels torn between trying to meet the needs of the regular education students and those of the special-needs students.

It seems imperative that educators continue working together to redefine the roles of both the regular and special education teacher regarding the appropriate use of inclusion. Being creative within the classroom setting is the first step of the process of best teacher strategies in an inclusive classroom. The research further suggests that the special education teacher must become an integral part of the regular education classroom by integrating instruction for both regular and special education students during lessons. Furthermore, Dufour, Eaker & Dufour (2005) discuss one core standard from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards that suggests teachers must be members of “learning communities” (p. 8) who contribute to the effectiveness of their schools by collaborating with other professional educators on implementation of curriculum/instruction, and professional development.
Some of the most prominent supports or best practices that will be emphasized and discussed in this review of the literature shows two important aspects for successful inclusion classrooms are collaboration and consultation, as well as the regular and special education teacher planning instruction together for special education and regular education students. Teachers learning and working together to achieve common goals is considered by many educators to be a central element of major school reform efforts, including those aimed at improving the inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular education classroom (Brownell, Adams, Sindelar, & Waldron, 2006). The assumption is that when both the regular and special education teachers’ work together to achieve a common goal, they will be able to plan their instruction to meet the needs of each student within their classroom.

Barnes (1999) studied a collaborative inclusion model, which began as a combined effort by four educators. The teachers involved were extremely concerned about the effects of a pullout program on students and the typical inclusion programs mandated and developed by administrators in the Ohio School district. The teachers felt they were “not included in the decision-making process or that their input was not considered even though they are the ultimate providers of programs” (p. 233). A collaborative model created by Ohio administrators contended that inclusion should begin from the “bottom-up” where the individual needs of each student are meet based on teacher input and group decision making. This model, or best practice strategies, further suggests that all teachers involved will share the risks, successes, and responsibilities (p. 233). Additional research reported that some regular education teachers agreed that special education teachers should be allowed to teach in the regular classroom but
complained that "their (special educators') management style and work organization did not often fit a collaborative model" (Lopez, Monteiro, Sil, Ruterford, & Quinn, 2004, p. 396). Lopez et al. (2004) goes on to say that special education teachers felt as though they were expected to take their special education students and work in the back of the classroom, never being an equal part of all the students within the classroom and their academic needs. This type of classroom and thinking by most educators has been a typical public school's style. One of the problems associated with both the regular and special education teacher not being able to work collaboratively and planning instruction for all students' stems from the fact that both the regular and special education teachers have not been accurately trained in specialized training outside of their teacher programs (Lopez et al., 2004). Understanding what the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms means and how it can effect achievement of the students, as well as the perspectives, positive or negative of teachers, can be a daunting task to manage.

Inclusion education is most easily introduced in school communities that have already restructured to meet the needs of their increasingly diverse student populations in regular education. Villa and Thousand (2003) find that numerous initiatives and organizational best practices are essential to accomplish the transition of the special education students within the regular classroom setting. Some of the best practices include "trans-disciplinary teaming, block scheduling, multi-age student grouping and looping, school-wide positive behaviors support and a consistent discipline approached, as well as school-within-a-school family configurations of students and teachers" (p. 2). Another study conducted by the National Information Center for Youth with Disabilities (1995), discovered that the majority of the districts implementing inclusive education
reported cooperative learning as the most important instructional strategy supporting inclusive education.

School districts across the United States utilizing inclusive education programs report that instructional strategies and classroom best practices that support inclusion are, for the most part, similar to strategies that teachers have found to be effective for students in general (Lipsky & Gartner, 1998). With this said, it is also important to note that teachers are extremely affected by inclusion collaboration because this affects planning as well as the social and academic dynamics of the school environment. Each aspect of the school from teaching methodology, curriculum, the teacher’s professional relationships, to the teacher’s classroom experiences make up fundamental elements that need to be addressed when educating disabled students with non-disabled students (Ragland, 2005).

In addition to the strategies identified previously, Gartner and Lipsky (2002) show that many other supports that teachers have provided, as being the most effective strategies in the inclusive classroom are collaborative teaming and consultation.

“Collaboration is the practice that allows all staff in the school to share responsibility for meeting the needs of all students” (Gartner & Lipsky, 2002, p. 44). As Teynor (2005) discusses collaboration in the inclusive classrooms, he explains that as educators, we should look at collaboration as a sharing responsibility where not only school personnel are involved in a student’s educational life and special needs; but that other people within a community should be equally involved in the collaboration on behalf of the student’s future.
One of the most common types of collaboration in an inclusion classroom requires that both the regular and special education teacher co-teach in the regular education classroom to ensure individual needs are met. As Teynor (2005) further states, “colleagues help each other to become better teachers in order to develop young minds to the fullest potential extent possible” (p. 7). Historically, one challenge public schools face with this idea is that with our current model of education, regular and special education teachers typically maintain a high degree of autonomy in planning instruction within their classrooms. Regardless of how many professional development and training initiatives are implemented, a key factor in the establishment of a collaborative culture is “administrative support” (Sharpe & Hawes, 2003, p. 4).

One collaborative model discussed (2003) is one that provides for (a) collaborative strategies to increase communication and cooperation between regular and special education teachers; (b) instructional strategies are implemented in which the teachers learn about various teaching strategies (e.g., differentiated instruction, and shared classroom management) that are “practiced” in the regular classroom (Sharpe & Hawes, p. 5). This model is simple, but relies on a few effective, yet easily implemented collaborative and instructional strategies.

Cook and Friend (1995) suggest that the use of another collaborative or co-teaching model, in which two to three adults share the responsibility of meeting the diverse needs of all students, result in better academic and social outcomes for those students. They go on to say that while co-teaching and planning instruction together are not synonymous with inclusion, it can contribute to the support of an effective teaching strategy within the classroom. Furthermore, according to the National Study of Inclusive
Education, students in cooperatively taught inclusive classes were on-task more often, had more opportunities for one-on-one instruction, and were engaged in more individual work (1995). Special educators often discuss, collaborate, and plan for a student’s individual educational and physical needs. Successful inclusion for all involved will ensure that collaboration among all individuals involved is present in the everyday life of each student.

Further research by Sapon-Shevin (2003) shows that in addition to the use of adequate and appropriate resources, inclusive classrooms can “teach us important lessons that go beyond individual students and specific settings and can further help us in creating the inclusive, democratic society that we envision for our students and society” (p. 26).

These strategies have been identified as an effective way to ensure that both the special education and regular education teacher understand individual academic and behavioral needs of all students. Teachers teaming together to plan and teaching lessons can provide a significant support for students. In addition, teachers need to have a strong knowledge base of implementing varied instructional methods that should include differentiation of instruction, as well as accommodations and modifications that individual students require. Cooperative learning can provide students with the social skills needed in order to work together in a cooperative environment regardless of a student’s disability or level of learning. Peer tutoring has also been identified as another effective strategy that can provide a positive learning environment; this also helps to encourage the building of friendships. Finally, teachers must be able to adapt the curriculum to the needs of individual students understanding that heterogeneous grouping
of instruction is vital. Before any inclusion classroom can become effective, all educators must involved in a student’s instruction, must have inclusion training, as well as social skills training that will enable each teacher to effectively teach, plan and implement instruction for all students (p. 9).

Lipsky and Gartner (1998) further discussed how many school districts across the United States have been reexamining their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to determine how they can become more appropriate tools for inclusion classrooms with regards to strategies and teacher best practices. For example, one school district in San Antonio, Texas, developed an IEP checklist to include the following categories:

- Pacing of instruction to include extended time, allowable breaks, omission of assignments requiring copy in timed situations, and assignments allowed to be sent home.
- Environmental changes to include preferential seating, defined areas, and altering physical room arrangements.
- Presentation of content areas that may include teaching to student’s learning styles (e.g., linguistic, logical, spatial, kinesthetic, musical, inter or intrapersonal and model learning.)
- Materials being arranged in different formats (e.g., taped texts, supplementary materials, note-taking assistance, guides and resources, large print, Braille text, and any special equipment needed.)
- Assignments given in different ways (e.g., as in verbal directions given in small distinct steps, reduced paper and pencil tasks, use of tape recorded directions,
allow students to tape record their assignments, and avoid penalizing for spelling or sloppy penmanship.)

- Self-management (e.g., daily schedules and calendars, teach study skills, review and have students repeat directions before beginning an assignments, request parental reinforcement and communication, and plan, teach, and review in different settings)

- Social interaction support (e.g., peer advocacy, peer tutoring, plan opportunities for social interaction, shared experiences in school, cooperative learning and social skills learning)

- Motivation and reinforcement (e.g., verbal, nonverbal, positive and concrete reinforcement, offer choices and use strengths and interests often) (p. 155).

Student Achievement

It is important to understand what is meant by achievement in regards to students within the classroom. As Florian, Rouse, Black-Hawkins, and Jull (2004) suggest, “achievement is concerned with the progress that a student makes over a period of time” (p. 116). Today, more than any other period in the history of public K-12 education, schools are expected to increase student achievement for all students, regardless of a disability. With the NCLB mandates of 2001, achievement is added to the list for school reform efforts (Salinas, Kritsonis, & Herrington, 2006). The goal of the NCLB law is to ensure that all children are on grade level in reading and math by the year 2014 (Mantel, 2005). Mantel (2005) goes on to say that the law requires states to measure student achievement by testing children in grades 3-8 every year, and once in high school. As Salinas et al., (2006) contends “urban and rural school districts face significant challenges
related to the induction of teachers new to the profession with over 40% of the 3.2 million teachers teaching in just six states” (p.2). Based on the current state standards placed on states, a critical determinant in student achievement will be the end-of-the-year student assessment and state mandated tests that are placed on all districts (Salinas et al., 2006). Along with the mandates, disabled students are one of the sub-groups whose academic achievement will be monitored for adequate yearly progress on state academic achievement tests. Furthermore as Gaddis suggests (2005) with few testing exemptions allowed and accommodations being limited, the academic achievement of disabled students becomes a major concern for individual schools and districts. Besides the legal mandates placed on all students to achieve in public schools, Silva and Morgado (2004) discuss other factors that have shown to affect the academic success of disabled students with non-disabled students that include, (a) teacher’s relevance to change the way they teach and the practices they use, (b) the availability of technology, (c) teacher’s knowledge of students’ traits, characteristics, and educational needs, and (d) co-operative learning, collaboration/consultation between teachers in planning instruction (p.208).

There is a widespread perception that having high proportions of students identified as special education in the regular classroom setting lower performance standards (Florian et al., 2004). But as these authors further contend (2004), while little research has been conducted in this area and while these schools do show a lower performance level, data is not readily available that shows entry points for special education students or alternative performance levels that may have produced different results. To make matters more ambiguous, current national conversation about reading achievement says that all students will learn to read by third grade. Because special
education's charge is to provide an individualized education to each student with a disability, it recognizes and celebrates individual differences among students (Coyne, Kame'enui & Simmons, 2004, p. 231). There is evidence to support, however, that carefully designed, implemented, and planned instruction can support and enhance the reading achievement of students who have been identified as disabled and who are in need of supportive services (Coyne et al., 2004). Doug McQueen, (personal communication, February 9, 2007), "isolation is the enemy of student achievement." In short, the education of students with disabilities is to be part of a "unitary-not dual educational system" (Lipsky & Gartner, 1998, p. 128). Experience not only in the United States, but in other countries, demonstrates that the integration of our youth with special educational needs can best be achieved to the fullest educational progress and social integration within inclusive schools and classrooms that serve all children disabled and non-disabled within a community. Students with disabilities are to be full participants in the community and its educational system. In our age of testing and accountability within the public schools, we cannot afford to isolate any student within the doors of our schools.

**Socioeconomic Status**

While the role of the student's environment has been an ongoing point of debate over the past 30 years of more, research has suggested that the environment plays a significant role in how well a student achieves in the classroom. As Blair and Scott (2002) state:

Examination of the low SES contributions to LD (Learning Disabled) raises the possibility that the learning problems of a substantial number of
children with an LD placement has an origin that is at least partly environmental.  
(p.15)

Blair & Scott (2002) further suggest that while children with disabilities may have “an origin that is partly environmental,” other concerns may be in part associated with remediation strategies and practices that are provided within the classroom (p. 15). They go on to say that while it may be that reading problems or a lack of exposure in early literacy experiences contributes to excessive student placement, intensive reading intervention training and literacy training alone may not lead to less identification of special education students or eliminate the fact the SES does play a role in the achievement of students (2002). Even though research does suggest that SES can be a barrier to the academic achievement of students, having teachers that invest their time in their classroom and students and providing relevant instruction and support can outweigh the barriers that may exit.

Race and Gender

The terms race and gender have been discussed in books, articles, and with many people across our nation, as well as in other various contexts. Therefore it is not surprising that these two terms occur again in the realm of education and the classroom. According to Venkateswaran (2004) similarities and differences between female and male educational learning styles and achievements is an “intriguing and perplexing problem” (p. 501).

Children become aware of race and gender as social categories quite early. By 30 months of age, children label themselves and others as male and female and show some limited knowledge of gender stereotypes, and by three years, children reliably categorize
individuals according to race (Rowley, Kurtz-Costes, Mistry, & Feagans, 2007, p. 151). Within the domain of race, a constant stereotype in the U.S. has been that African-Americans are not as intelligent and do not do as well in school as their Caucasians peers and Asian-American counterparts (Rowley et al., 2007). Furthermore, Rowley et al. goes on to say (2007) that having an increase awareness of stereotypes regarding race differences in academic ability from the ages of 6 to 10, and children of stigmatized ethnic groups (i.e., African-Americans and Latinos) at all ages were more aware of the persistent stereotypes than those of non-stigmatized (i.e., Caucasian, Asian-Americans) ethnic groups. Unfortunately, there has been little research that has gone beyond race academic stereotypes of early adolescence. What is clear in the research is that despite increased high school completion rates, “African-Americans continue to lag substantially behind their Caucasian counterparts in school achievement” (Lundy, 2003, p.6). The corpus of literature that addresses African-Americans/Caucasian differences often take for granted the superior academic performance of Caucasians relative to African-Americans. The gender literature, in contrast, is defined by inconsistencies such that the superior performance of one gender can never be assumed. For example, Lundy proposes (2003) from related research that girls achieve in the area of reading, whereas boys are reported to excel in the area of math.

Past research that examined standardized test scores, have not been fully certain of the extent to which gender and race/ethnicity interact. Indeed research has shown that standardized tests scores may not be accurate predictors of academic performance for African-Americans. Some studies, in contrast have suggested that “female students on average score similar to or even higher than male students” (Lundy, 2003, p. 7).
With little research going beyond elementary age and pre-adolescence children and how race and gender can play a negative role in the academic achievement of students, teachers are faced with limited understanding of cultures other than their own and the possibility that this limitation will negatively affect their students’ ability to become successful learners (Montgomery, 2001). Teachers must take a stern look at how they interact with students within their classrooms, as well as how they view each student’s culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in all kinds of classrooms, but particularly in inclusive settings with general and special educators. Montgomery (2001) suggests guidelines for teachers that include some of the following:

- Understanding diversity as it is defined;
- Awareness of each student’s cultural backgrounds;
- Awareness of social relationships among students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds;
- Awareness of instructional programs responsive to the needs of the diversity of students;
- Perspectives and an awareness of information, skills, and resources teachers need to effectively teach in a multicultural classroom; and
- Understanding ways to collaborate with other teachers, family, and community groups to address the needs of all students (p. 4).
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used by the ECLS-K: 2003-2004 dataset and the significance of how this information will be utilized in the present study. The following subheadings will be used to discuss how the study will plan, implement, and analyze: (a) Research Design, (b) Participants, (c) Instrumentation, (d) Procedures, and (e) Data Analysis. Once permission is granted by the assistant superintendent (see Appendix A), four elementary schools in a southeastern school district will be included in this study. All teachers in each school will be requested to complete the questionnaire entitled “Spring Fifth Grade Teacher Questionnaire” (see Appendix C). Participation will be voluntary. One sample T-tests and a hierarchal multiple regression will be utilized to analyze the data.

Sample Design

The database for this study is the ECLS-K: 2003-2004 Fifth Grade follow-up from the base year of the Kindergarten class in 1998-99. It is available by Electronic Codebook for public use through either a Web-based version or CD-Rom (United States Department of Education, NCES, 2006). The ECLS-K strives to include all the materials and procedures necessary to maximize the inclusion of students whose primary language is not English and student’s with special needs. The ECLS-K has several major objectives and numerous potential applications (Tourangeau et al., 2006). The ECLS-K combines (1) a study of achievement in the elementary schools; (2) an assessment of the development status of children in the United States at the start of their formal schooling.
and at key points during the elementary school years; (3) cross-sectional studies of the
nature and quality of kindergarten programs in the United States; and (4) a study of the
relationship of family, preschool, and school experiences of children's development
status at school entry and their progress from kindergarten, through elementary school,
and into high school (Tourangeau et al., 2006). The ECLS-K has both descriptive and
analytic purposes. It provides descriptive data on children's status on school entry, their
transition into school, and their progress into high school. The ECLS-K also provides a
rich data set that enables researchers to analyze how a wide range of family, school,
community, and individual variables affect children's early success in school; explore
school readiness and the relationship between the kindergarten experience and later
elementary school performance; and record cognitive and academic growth of children as
they move through secondary school (Tourangeau et al., 2005). As a study of early
achievement, the ECLS-K allows researchers to examine how children's progress is
associated with such factors as placement in high or low ability groups, receipt of special
services or remedial instruction, grade retention, and frequent changes in schools
attended due to family moves (Tourangeau et al., 2005). The database also contains
measures of the children's physical health and growth, social development, and
emotional well-being, along with information on family background and the educational
quality of their home environments. The results of the spring fifth grade follow-up study
related to the following areas: (1) Reading achievement in fifth grade, (2) Math
achievement in fifth grade, and (3) Science achievement in the fifth grade. The ECLS-K
researchers gathered achievement data the related to similar sets of child, family and
school characteristics (Tourangeau et al., 2005). Some of the related characteristics
addressed in this study included the child's sex; race/ethnicity; poverty status of spring 2004; and grade level of child. Two distinct features of this study were that it is longitudinal, studying the same children over time, and that it encompasses many respondents—students, parents, teachers, and school administrators (Tourangeau et al., 2005). Selected findings on reading achievement in fifth grade provided an overall measure of reading achievement by which students from different subpopulations can be compared. In addition to an overall reading score, the ECLS-K provides information on student performance based on nine proficiency levels. This report focuses on five highest proficiency levels which reflect a progression of knowledge and skills at the fifth grade (from easiest to most difficult): (1) understanding words in context, (2) making inferences using cues that were directly stated with key words in the text (literal inference), (3) identifying clues used to make inferences (deriving meaning), (4) demonstrating understanding of author's craft and making connections between a problem in the narrative and similar life problems (interpreting beyond text), and (5) comprehending biographical and expository text (evaluating nonfiction) (Tourangeau et al., 2005). Because ECLS-K fifth grade data collection provides a sample of fifth grade data collection of ECLS-K presents a cohort of children who were in kindergarten in 1998-99 or in first grade in 1999-2000, it was not freshened after the first grade year with third or fifth graders who did not have a chance to be sampled in kindergarten or first grade (as was done in first grade), estimates from the ECLS-K third and fifth grade data are representative of the population cohort rather than all third graders in 2001-02 school year and in fifth grade in 2003-04 (Tourangeau et al., 2005). The estimated number of fifth graders is approximately 85% of all fifth graders. The teachers and schools are not
representative of all fifth grade teachers and schools in the country. For this reason, the 
only weights produced from the study are for providing important contextual information 
about the school environment for the sampled children and for making statements about 
students, as well as the teachers and schools of those children. The ECLS-K has both 
descriptive and analytic purposes. It provides descriptive data on children’s status at 
school entry, their transition into school, and their progress into high school, but 
identifiable assessments to promote achievement were not listed in the schools from 
which the sampled children came. Children participated in various activities to measure 
the extent to which they exhibit abilities and skills deemed important to success in 
schools. These assessments were designed to measure important cognitive (i.e., literacy, 
quantitative, and science) skills and not cognitive (fine and gross motor coordination [in 
kindergarten] and socioemotional) skills and knowledge (Tourangeau et al., 2005). Most 
of the cognitive skills assessed came from one-on-one assessments of the child. 
Beginning in the third grade data collection, children reported on their own perceptions of 
their abilities and achievement as well as their interest in and enjoyment of reading, math 
and other school subjects (Tourangeau et al., 2005).

The ECLS-K data presents many possibilities for studying cultural and ethnic 
differences in the educational preferences and literacy practices of families, the 
development patterns and learning styles of children, and the educational resources and 
opportunities that different groups are afforded in the United States (Tourangeau et al., 
2005).
Sample Selection

The present study will analyze data from the ECLS-K: 2003-2004 CD-ROM Electronic Codebook. Selected variables from the Spring 2004 fifth grade data set will be analyzed and the analysis is cross-sectional. The select variables (demographic data, instructional activities and focus, views on teaching, school climate, and environment, as well as answers to all questions on the teacher questionnaire) will be included in this study. In addition, sample student participants from the ECLS-K were selected if they were coded as receiving special education services. The regional study will be conducted on the elementary school level, exclusively fifth grade, in an effort to make it more comparable to the national cohort sample. The four elementary schools, specifically fifth grade, consisted of regular education teachers and special education teachers. Approximately 30 teachers will be requested to participate in the study. These schools were chosen because they represent unique characteristics found in the teaching field, including first year teachers and experienced teachers, bachelor’s, master’s, and specialist level degree teachers, and varied ages.
Data Collection

Specific variables developed from the ECLS-K Spring 2004 Fifth Grade Teacher Questionnaire will be used to collect data from teachers in a public school district in a southeastern state. The ECLS-K dataset is particularly well-suited for conducting this study, because it includes information that is nationally representative of all students (those with and without disabilities), as well as characteristics of the teachers’ background information and classroom environment.

Regional Sample

The ECLS-K Spring 2004 Fifth Grade Teacher Questionnaire will be distributed to four selected schools where permission to obtain data has been granted from the assistant superintendent of the district and Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Southern Mississippi (See Appendix B). These schools were also selected based on having fifth grade regular and special education teachers needed in order to gain data for this study. In addition, the selected schools provided self-contained and inclusion placement for students with disabilities. Questionnaires will be hand delivered by the researcher to these selected schools at a scheduled teacher meeting. The teachers will be informed that participation in this study is strictly voluntary and all individual results will be kept confidential. The teachers will be assured anonymity since their names are not placed on the questionnaire, or any type identifying number. The researcher will explain the reason for the study and remain at each school to answer any questions and to collect all questionnaires.
National Sample

National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) activities are designed to address high-priority educational data needs; provide consistent, reliable, complete, and accurate indicators of education status and trends; and report timely, useful, and highly-qualified data to the U.S. Department of Education, the Congress, the states, other education policymakers, practitioners, data users and the general public. Unless specifically noted, all information contained within NCES is in public domain (Princiotta, Flanagan, & Hausken, 2006).

The ECLS-K fifth grade data collection occurred in the spring of the 2003-04 school year. Although the spring-fifth grade data collection shared many similarities with earlier rounds of data collection, some modifications were made to capture important information relevant to fifth grade students (e.g., to capture information about student learning and other disabilities which are often diagnosed in school, questions were added about when diagnoses for specific disabilities were made (Tourangeau et al., 2006). In addition, because by the fifth grade there is more specialization in subject matter taught by teachers, the approach to collecting information from teachers was modified and questionnaires were given to sample children’s reading/language arts, math, and science teachers (Tourangeau et al., 2006). Self-administered teacher and special education teacher questionnaires were used to collect information from teachers (Tourangeau et al., 2006). Thus data collection for the spring-fifth grade was designed to ensure that the teachers most knowledgeable of the child’s performance in each of the core academic subjects (i.e., reading/language arts, mathematics, and science) provided data germane to
each child’s classroom environment, instruction in each of the core academic subjects, and the core academic teacher’s professional background (Tourangeau et al., 2005).

Student data on SES, race and gender, as well as reading scores was collected by (a) a limited set of child characteristics (e.g. age, sex, race/ethnicity), (b) teacher-level data from any fifth-grade teacher questionnaire without child-level teacher data, or (c) data from the school administrator questionnaire or school facilities checklist (Tourangeau et al., 2006).

Instrumentation

The regional cohorts completed the “Spring 2004 Fifth Grade Teacher Questionnaire” (see Appendix C). By analyzing specific questions from the ECLS-K teacher questionnaire, it provided the researcher with guidance from in depth research on the topic of special education students within the regular classroom, as well as the instructional planning and consultation/collaboration of regular and special education teachers and how reading achievement may play a role in these factors.

In the national cohorts, the researcher also reviewed instruments designed for the ECLS-K study that took place in the spring of 2003-04. These instruments were designed for students, parents, administrators, regular and special education teachers, math, reading, and science teachers. All instruments were designed with the guidelines set forth by NCES. NCES is located within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences, and in the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education. The ECLS-K assessment frameworks were derived from multiple sources. A review of national and state performance standards, comparison with state and commercial assessments, and the judgments of curriculum experts and teachers all
provided input to the ECLS-K specifications (Pollack, Atkins-Burnett, & Hausken, 2005). The fifth grade reading assessments emphasized reading comprehension, with the majority of the questions based on reading passages (Pollack et al., 2005). Children began the reading assessment with a routing test of 26 items, 7 of which were based on a short reading selection. The remaining 16 items were decoding words, administered in ascending order of difficulty. Discontinue rules were in place for the routing test: when a child was not able to read a specified number of the decoding words in each progressively more difficult 4-item cluster, subsequent clusters were not administered (Pollack et al., 2005). The score on the routing test was used to select one of three second-stage forms, of varying difficulty, each consisting of 4 (low and middle forms) or 5 (high form) reading passages, each with 4 to 8 associated questions (Pollack et al., 2005).

Within each subject area, children who had not responded to enough test items to receive a score were identified. "Too few items" were defined as answering fewer than 10 questions in the routing and second-stage forms combined (Pollack et al., 2005). For identifying unscoreable cases, codes for "I don't know" were not treated as valid responses; only items actually attempted by the child were counted toward score ability threshold (Pollack et al., 2005). Before being deleted from further analysis, each "Too few items" data record was reviewed visually to verify that not enough valid item responses were present (Pollack et al., 2005). The percentages taking the various second-stage forms in reading followed the expected distributions based on the cut points determined by simulations using field test item parameters and estimates of ability distributions. For example, in round 1 approximately three-quarters of the children were assigned the low second-stage form based on their routing test performance.
By spring-fifth grade assessments developed for rounds 5 and 6 were designed to route approximately 50 percent of children to the middle form, with the remaining children (Pollack et al., 2005). The main function of the routing test was to make a proper assignment to the correct second-stage form, and finally to have the children scored on the combination of their routing and second-stage items combined (Pollack et al., 2005). The fifth grade test forms were well matched to the ability levels of the tested children: only a fraction of 1 percent of test takers had a below-chance or perfect score on the routing and second-stage items combined (Pollack et al., 2005).

For the longitudinal assessments, proficiency levels were defined in certain rounds of the data collection. Levels 5-9 were used in fifth grade reading assessments. Levels 5: comprehension of words in context, level 6: literal inferences using cues, level 7: extrapolation which includes identifying clues used to make inferences, level 8: evaluation and level 9: evaluating nonfiction which includes critically evaluating, comparing and contrasting, and understanding the effect of features of expository and biographical texts (Pollack et al., 2005).

Reliability statistics for the scores of the fifth grade reading assessments were defined largely on the number of items a test had. Specifically, the more test items included, the greater variance in ability of test takers and the higher reliability is likely to be (Pollack et al., 2005). The alpha routing for rounds 1 through 6: school years 1998-99, 1999-2000, 2001-02, and 2003-04 included the following percents: round 1-.86, round 2-.88, round 3-.88, round 4-.86, round 5-.75, and round 6-.88. Statistics were unweighted, with approximately 90 percent of the round 6 children in the fifth grade during the 2003-04 school year, 9 percent in fourth grade, and about 1 percent in third or other grades.
(Pollack et al., 2005). Internal consistency (alpha) coefficients for fifth grade were comparable to those obtained for K-1 and third grade. The pattern of alpha coefficients for the routing tests was at least in part due to the number of tests items. For tests with similar characteristics, a larger number of items will result in a higher alpha coefficient.

The fifth grade reading routing test had 26 items, and the resulting reliabilities followed the same pattern (Pollack et al., 2005). The most appropriate estimate of the reliability of the reading assessment is the reliability of the overall item response theory (IRT) ability estimate, theta. This number was based on the variance of repeated estimates of theta, and applies to all the scores derived from the theta estimates, namely, the IRT scale scores, T-scores, and proficiency probabilities. Error variances was estimated as the within-person variance of repeated estimates of theta, averaged over all data cases (Pollack et al., 2005). Evidence of validity of the instruments were derived from various sources that included a review of national and state performance standards, comparison with state and commercial instruments, and the input of educators with expertise in the area of curriculum and instruction (Tourangeau et al., 2006).

Data Analysis

Once all questionnaires are completed, statistical analyses will be conducted to discern whether significant differences exist between teachers’ perspectives of instructional planning and consultation/collaboration in both the regional and national cohorts of this study; and if SES, race and gender primarily and instructional planning/consultation/collaboration secondarily can predict reading achievement of ECLS-K fifth grade special education students. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 13.0 for Windows and the .05 level of significance will be used.
One-sample t-Tests will be conducted to measure differences in teachers' perceptions of instructional planning and consultation/collaboration between the regional sub sample and their national cohorts. In addition a standard hierarchical regression analysis will be conducted to assess if SES, race, and gender primarily and teachers' instructional planning and consultation/collaboration secondarily statistically significantly predict the reading achievement of special education students.

The following research questions will be evaluated:

Research Question 1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the teachers’ perspectives in instructional planning between the regional sample and their national cohorts?

Data Analysis for Research Question 1:

A one-sample t-Test was conducted to assess whether statistical significant differences occurred in teachers' perception of planning instruction of fifth grade special education students in both a regional sample and their cohorts from the ECLS-K sub sample. In addition, a one-sample t-Test was also conducted to assess whether statistical significant differences occurred in teachers’ perception of consultation/collaboration of fifth grade special education students in both a regional sample and their cohorts from the ECLS-K fifth grade sub sample.

RQ 1: Teachers’ perspectives of instructional planning in the regional sample and their national cohorts will be measured with the dependent variable being the perspectives of instructional planning and the independent variable being the regional and national sample.
Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant difference in the teachers’ perspectives of consultation/collaboration between the regional sample and their national cohorts?

Data Analysis for Research Question 2:

A one-sample t-Test was also conducted to assess whether statistical significant differences occurred in teachers’ perception of consultation/collaboration of fifth grade special education students in both a regional sample and their national cohorts from the ECLS-K fifth grade sub sample.

RQ 2: Teachers’ perspectives of consultation/collaboration in the regional sample and their national cohorts will be measured with consultation/collaboration being the dependent variable and the independent variable being the regional and national sample.

Research Question 3: Can the student’s socioeconomic (SES), race and gender primarily, and the teachers’ instructional planning and consultative/collaboration secondarily, statistically significantly predict the reading achievement of fifth grade special education students?

Data Analysis for Research Question 3:

A standard hierarchical regression analysis will be conducted to assess if SES, race, and gender primarily, and teachers’ instructional planning and consultation/collaboration secondarily, statistically significantly predict the reading achievement of special education students.

RQ 3: Students’ socioeconomic status (SES), race and gender primarily, and the teachers’ instructional planning will be measured with SES, race and gender primarily, and consultation/collaboration secondarily, being the independent variable that will
statistically significantly predict the reading achievement of ECLS-K fifth grade special education students being the dependent variable.

Table I represents the variables that were used in the study. Table 1 shows the coding that was used to identify the responses by the teachers. The specified letter is the teacher response while the number preceded by the letter denotes the question that is being analyzed. Letters represent more than one response to that question.
Table I
Variables Used to Construct Base Year Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Variable Description</th>
<th>Value Labels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R6REGION “R6”</td>
<td>Census Region”</td>
<td>1 = Northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Midwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6URBAN “R6”</td>
<td>Location Type – 7 Categories”</td>
<td>1 = Large and med-size city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Large and mid-size suburb and large to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Small town and rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6GENDER “R6”</td>
<td>Child Composite Gender”</td>
<td>1 = Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6RACE “R6”</td>
<td>Child Composite Race”</td>
<td>1 = White, Non-Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Black or African American, Non-Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Hispanic, race specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Hispanic, race not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 = Native Hawaiian, other pacific islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 = American Indian or Alaska native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8 = More than one race, Non-Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Variable Description</td>
<td>Value Labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6AGE &quot;R6</td>
<td>Composite Child Assessment Age (M)</td>
<td>1 = 110 to less than 126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = 126 to less than 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = 132 to less than 138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = 138 to less than 144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = 144 to 166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W5SESQ5 &quot;W5</td>
<td>Categorical SES Measure</td>
<td>1 = First quintile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Second quintile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Third quintile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Fourth quintile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Fifth quintile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6GLVL &quot;T6</td>
<td>Grade Level of Child</td>
<td>0 = Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 = First grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Second grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Third grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Fourth grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Sixth grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 = Seventh grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 = Eighth grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8 = Upgraded classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Variable Description</th>
<th>Value Labels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPECS “F6”</td>
<td>Student participants</td>
<td>1 = Child got special ed. Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Child did not get special ed. Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6SCTYP “S6”</td>
<td>School type from the school admin Qt.</td>
<td>1 = Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Other religious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Other private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6ENRLS “S6”</td>
<td>Total school enrollment”</td>
<td>1 = 0 – 149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = 150 – 299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = 300 – 499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = 500 – 749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = 750 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6PUPRI “S6”</td>
<td>Public or private school”</td>
<td>1 = Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J61TOCLA “J61 Q13A”</td>
<td>Evaluation child relative to class”</td>
<td>1 = Not important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Somewhat important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Extremely important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0 = Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Variable Description</th>
<th>Value Labels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J61TOSTN &quot;J61 Q13B&quot;</td>
<td>Evaluation child relative to standard</td>
<td>1 = Not important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Somewhat important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Extremely important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0 = Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| J61IMPRV "J61 Q13C" | Evaluation child Improvement/Progress | 1 = Not important                 |
|                     |                                       | 2 = Somewhat important            |
|                     |                                       | 3 = Very important                |
|                     |                                       | 4 = Extremely important            |
|                     |                                       | 0 = Not applicable                 |

| J61EFFO "J61 Q13D" | Evaluation child’s effort | 1 = Not important                 |
|                     |                          | 2 = Somewhat important            |
|                     |                          | 3 = Very important                |
|                     |                          | 4 = Extremely important            |
|                     |                          | 0 = Not applicable                 |
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Variable Description</th>
<th>Value Labels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J61CLASP</td>
<td>&quot;J61 Q13E Evaluation child’s class participation&quot;</td>
<td>1 = Not important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Somewhat important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Extremely important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0 = Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J61BEHAV</td>
<td>&quot;J61 Q13F Evaluation child’s behavior&quot;</td>
<td>1 = Not important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Somewhat important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Extremely important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0 = Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J61CMPHW</td>
<td>&quot;J61 Q13C Evaluation completion of homework&quot;</td>
<td>1 = Not important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Somewhat important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Extremely important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0 = Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Variable Description</td>
<td>Value Labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J61LESPL</td>
<td>“J61 Q20A Times meet for lesson planning”</td>
<td>1 = Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Once a month or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Two or three times a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Once or twice a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Three or four times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 = Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J61CURRD</td>
<td>“J61 Q20B Times meet to discus curriculum”</td>
<td>1 = Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Once a month or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Two or three times a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Once or twice a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Three or four times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 = Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J61INDCH</td>
<td>“J61 Q20C Times meet to discuss a child”</td>
<td>1 = Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Once a month or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Two or three times a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Once or twice a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Three or four times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 = Daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Variable Description</th>
<th>Value Labels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J61DISCH</td>
<td>&quot;J61 Q20D Times meet with special ed teacher&quot;</td>
<td>1 = Never&lt;br&gt;2 = Once a month or less&lt;br&gt;3 = Two or three times a month&lt;br&gt;4 = Once or twice a week&lt;br&gt;5 = Three or four times a week&lt;br&gt;6 = Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J61MASSI</td>
<td>&quot;J61 Q41 Main assignment at school&quot;</td>
<td>1 = Regular classroom teacher&lt;br&gt;2 = Other teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J61CLORG</td>
<td>&quot;J61 Q42 How classes are organized&quot;</td>
<td>1 = Self - contained class&lt;br&gt;2 = Team teaching&lt;br&gt;3 = Departmentalized instruction/pull-out class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Overview

Chapter four presents the descriptive statistics for the national and regional samples. Also included are the results of the statistical analyses of the national and regional sample. Chapter four will also explain how NCES prepared the data from the ECLS-K Spring 2003-04 for public use. The data from this study are presented in relationship to the three research questions presented in Chapter 1.

Data Preparation

In preparing for public-use files, NCES took appropriate steps to minimize the likelihood that any school, teacher, parent, or child could be identified. Some modifications contained in the restricted-data file have been made to the public-use file to ensure confidentiality (Tourangeau et al., 2006). The ECLS-K Spring fifth grade data collection was conducted in the Fall and Spring of 2003-04. Although the ECLS-K Spring fifth grade data collection had similarities to earlier rounds, some modifications were made in an effort to capture important features of fifth grade students. Specifically, new construct areas were included concerning students with learning and or other disabilities was included disability areas of learning disabilities, ADD (attention deficit disorder), ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), developmental delay, autism, and pervasive development disorder (Tourangeau et al., 2006).

During the Spring fifth grade data collection, each student’s teacher received a self-administered teacher questionnaire identifying a variety of topics that included instructional practices, classroom resources, views on teaching and the school. The types
of data collection used in the ECLS-K Spring fifth grade data collection included: direct child assessments, parent interviews, teacher/school questionnaires, student record abstract, and facilities checklist (Tourangeau et al., 2006). The mode of data collection was computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) for the child assessments; telephone and in-person computer assisted interviewing (CAI) was used in conducting the parent interview; self-administered questionnaires were used to gather information from teachers, school administrators, and school records. Facilities checklist was completed by field staff (Tourangeau et al., 2006). Several in-person training sessions were conducted to prepare the staff for the Spring fifth grade data collection. In the Spring of 2004, two trainings were conducted: one for supervisors and assessors. The assessors conducted the child assessments and parent interviews (Tourangeau et al., 2006).

Beginning in September 2003, all participating ECLS-K schools (i.e., schools that had participated in the third grade), were contacted by phone to participate in the Spring data collection. When children were identified to have moved to a new school, that school or district was recruited; in addition to contacting the participating schools, an advanced package was mailed via Federal Express to all participating schools asking them to prepare for the Fall, preassessment telephone call (Tourangeau et al., 2006). In order to ensure that most of the previously sampled children were contacted for fifth grade data collection, in June 2003 the entire household database was submitted to search vendors to obtain a current address and telephone number. Staff of the Westat’s Telephone Research Center (TRC) traced who could not be located in previous rounds of data collection. When the children or household were found, the new school and contacting information was entered into the computer database for fielding in the Spring.
(Tourangeau et al., 2006). By the end of December 2003, 75% of the households responded.

Planning instruction and consultation/collaboration were also included in this study in an effort to discern if both were perceived by teachers as important factors in the area of reading and achievement of fifth grade special education students in both the regional and national sample. The composite variables were created by the researcher reviewing questions from the national sample of the ECLS-K fifth grade archived public domain database from the ECLS-K Fifth Grade Teacher Questionnaire, administered in the Spring of 2003-04, as well as variables created from the NCES (National Center of Educational Statistics) dataset; specifically to instructional activities and views on teaching.

Description of National Sample

Of the ECLS-K Spring fifth grade sample, the population consisted of 1,031 students. Approximately 66.8% were males and 33.2% were females. The race/ethnicity designations of the sample as reported by the parents were white, non Hispanic 57.5%; black of African American 13.6%; Hispanic, race specified 9.0%; Hispanic, race not specified 9.8%; Asian 3.2%; native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander 1.8%; American Indian or Alaska native 3.1%; more than one race, non Hispanic 1.9%. The type of schools represented in the ECLS-K study, consisted of public, private, Catholic, other religious, and other private. Public schools participating were 95.5%, while private schools participating were 4.5%. Catholic schools represented 2.8% with other religions representing .4; and finally, other private represented 1.3%. Approximately 57.4% of teachers were regular education certified, and 38.2% were considered other teacher. The
SES sample category identified the first quintile at 24.5%, second quintile at 21.3%, third quintile at 18.6%, fourth quintile 14.9%, and the fourth quintile 11.5%.

Based on the census region variable, 22.8% were from the Northeast region; 25.4% from the Midwest region; 34.4% from the southern region; and 17.4% from the western region. Type of location variable identified 29.5% of students from a large/mid-size city; 37.0% as large/mid-size suburb; and 29.0% as small town and rural.

In analyzing the composite reading assessment, of the 110-126 students assessed, received .9% accuracy, 126-to less than 132 students assessed, received 24.7% accuracy; 132-to less than 138 students assessed received 42.8% accuracy; 138-to less than 144 students assessed, received 22.9% accuracy; and 144-166 students assessed received 8.7% accuracy. And finally, 100% was identified of the sample identified as child receiving special education services.

Description of Regional Sample

The regional sample consisted of four schools in a southeastern school district. These schools include grades kindergarten through eighth grade, although the researcher restricted data collection to only fifth grade regular and special education teachers. All 30 certified regular and special education teachers completed the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 100%. Of the 30 certified teachers, 6% were regular education certified, while 4% of the 30 certified teachers were special education certified.

Composite Variables

The composite variables were created by the researcher reviewing questions from the national sample of the ECLS-K fifth grade archived public domain database from the ECLS-K Fifth Grade Teacher Questionnaire, administered in the Spring of 2003-04, as
well as variables created from the NCES (National Center of Educational Statistics) dataset. The following composite variable descriptions were created for the current study:

- Planning Instruction
- Consultation/collaboration

In comparing these composite variables descriptions with the NCES variable descriptions, the following combinations were created for the present study:

- Planning Instruction- Q13a. Evaluation of child’s achievement relative to class, Q13b. Evaluation of child’s achievement relative to state standards, Q13c. Evaluation of child improvement/progress, Q13d. Evaluation of child’s effort, Q13e. Evaluation of child’s class participation, Q13f. Evaluation of child’s behavior, and Q13g. Evaluation of homework completion. And Q41. Main assignment at school

- Consultation/collaboration- Q20a. Times meet with lesson planning, Q20b. Times meet to discuss curriculum, Q20c. Times meet to discuss an individual child, and Q20d. Times meet with special education teacher. Q42. How classes are organized

In addition, the composite variables were developed from responses paired with the following four questions in the ECLS-K Spring 2004 Fifth Grade Teacher Questionnaire:

- How important is each of the following in evaluating the children in our class? Used with composite variable-Planning Instruction

- How do you classify your main assignment in this school, that is, the activity which you spend most of your time during this school year? Used with composite variable-Planning Instruction
How often have you participated in the following school-related activities since the beginning of the school year? Used with composite variable-Consultation/collaboration

What category best describes the way your class(es) at this school (is/are) organized? Used with composite variable-Consultation/collaboration

Data Results

Research Question 1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the teachers' perspectives in instructional planning in the regional sample and their national cohorts?

Results for Research Question 1: A one-sample t-Test was conducted to compare the perspectives teachers have concerning instructional planning practices among teachers in both the regional and national samples.

Table 2 presents a summary of the one-sample t-Test statistics.

Table II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Composite</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.962</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>1.7300</td>
<td>(.5356, 2.9244)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A one-sample t-Test was conducted on the Instructional_Composite scores to evaluate whether the regional mean was significantly different from 22.17, the national mean for the Instructional_Composite scores. The regional mean was 23.90 and the regional standard deviation was 3.20. The regional sample was significantly different from the national mean $t(29) = 2.96$, $p = .006$. The 95% CI of the Difference is (.5356,
2.9244). The effect size d is .5408 which is moderate. This regional sample is statistically higher than the national population from which it came.

Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant difference in the teachers’ perspectives of consultation/collaboration in the regional sample and their cohorts?

Results for Research Question 2: A one-sample t-Test was conducted to compare the perspectives of instructional planning in the regional sample and their cohorts. Table 3 presents a summary of the one-sample t-Test statistics.

Table III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultationl_Composite</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.4667</td>
<td>3.12645</td>
<td>.57081</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One Sample Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultationl_Composite</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.657</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>1.51667</td>
<td>.3492 - 2.6841</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A one-sample t-Test was conducted on the Consultation/Collaboration_Composite scores to evaluate whether the regional mean was significantly different from 11.47, the national mean for the Consultation/Collaboration_Composite. The national mean was 11.47 and the national standard deviation was 3.13. The national sample was significantly different from the regional sample t (29) = 2.66, p =.013. The 95% CI of the Difference is (.35, 2.70). The
effect size \( d \) is .49 which is moderate. This national sample is statistically lower than the regional population from which it came.

Research Question 3: Can the student’s socioeconomic (SES), race and gender primarily, and the teachers’ instructional planning and consultative/collaboration secondarily, statistically significantly predict the standardized reading achievement scores of fifth grade special education students?

Results for Research Question 3: A Hierarchical Multiple Regression was conducted to identify if SES, race and gender, primarily and the teachers’ instructional planning and consultation/collaboration secondarily statistically significantly predicted the reading achievement of fifth grade special education students.

Data inspection located outliers, however, since the data set was so large, the researcher decided to retain the outliers in the data. SES, race and gender were effect-coded since those variables were categorical. Evaluations of linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity showed that the assumptions were met within acceptable limits.

The regression results for the first stage of the analysis indicated that SES, race and gender primarily did significantly predict the dependent variable, \( R^2 = .26, F (11, 85) = 27.21, p < .001 \). The first model accounted for 26% of the variance in the dependent variable. The results of the second stage of the analysis indicated that the addition of teachers’ perceptions of instructional planning and consultation/collaboration predicted the dependent variable even more accurately, \( R^2 \) change = .85, \( F (13, 86) = 23.45, p < .001 \). The second model accounted for 27% of the variance of the dependent variable.
The standardized Beta coefficients in the final model showed that race/White variable, was the strongest predictor while the SES/poorest variable proving to be the weakest. The Asian was next in having a weak impact on the DV with second poorest having the next weakest variable to impact the DV negatively. The gender/male variable also proved to be weak. All levels of the poorest variable had a negative impact on the DV, along with the variable race/Asian. All levels of the race variables, White, Indian, and Black had the largest impact on the DV, along with Hawaiian and Hispanic. The SES variable of richest and second richest also had a positive impact on the DV.

Regression predictors were significant. Factors of (White, Black, Hispanic, Hawaiian, Indian, Second richest, and Richest) were considered positive factors in this study, contributing to promoting reading achievement of fifth grade special education students. Factors of (Male, Asian, Poorest, and Second Poorest), were identified as negative factors in this study, contributing to lowering reading achievement scores among fifth grade special education students. Teachers may moderate these negative factors by first understanding how SES, race and gender can play a part in student achievement. Community support, an awareness of these factors and a knowledge base of interventions that can guide a positive impact for these and other negative factors, will challenge and build achievement of all students.

In model 2 below, planning instruction and consultation/collaboration in the national sample was perceived by teachers as important factors in promoting reading achievement in fifth grade special education students.

Table 4 below presents a summary of the regression coefficients in both Models 1 and 2.
Table IV
Regression Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression Coefficients</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE_B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 (constant)</td>
<td>48.169</td>
<td>3.986</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-.313</td>
<td>.458</td>
<td>-.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6.510</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>.442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>5.673</td>
<td>.882</td>
<td>.263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1.981</td>
<td>.957</td>
<td>.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>-3.424</td>
<td>1.464</td>
<td>-.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian</td>
<td>2.833</td>
<td>1.808</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>5.877</td>
<td>1.355</td>
<td>.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorest</td>
<td>-3.754</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>-.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Poorest</td>
<td>-.866</td>
<td>.651</td>
<td>-.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Richest</td>
<td>.738</td>
<td>.710</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest</td>
<td>2.687</td>
<td>.766</td>
<td>.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation_Composite</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional_Planning_Composite</td>
<td>.293</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>.063</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Independent Variable-SES, race and gender, planning instruction, and consultation/collaboration

Dependent Variable-Reading Achievement scores of fifth grade special education students

Model 2 (constant) | 41.801 | 5.055 |
Male  
White  6.558  725  .445  
Black  5.580  .882  .259  
Hispanic  1.960  .956  .079  
Asian  -3.275  1.464  -.073  
Hawaiian  2.845  1.807  .050  
Indian  5.910  1.356  .145  
Poorest  -3.677  .641  -.224  
Second Poorest  .788  .710  .040  
Second Richest  .788  .710  .040  
Richest  2.683  .766  .124  
Consultation_Composite  .009  .148  .002  
Instructional_Planning_Composite  .293  .139  .063  

Ancillary Findings

It was surprising to see the positive impact White, Indians, Blacks, and Hispanics had on reading and achievement of fifth grade special education students. Further interest in the data results showed Asians as having a negative impact on reading and achievement. Contrary to most research that suggest higher reading and achievement of regular education Asian students and less special education identification of the Asian population, part of the results from this study may be due to the percentage of Asians as having been identified as disabled as having a negative impact on reading and achievement than that of their Black males, who surprisingly are the highest percentage
of race and gender being identified as disabled, yet showed a positive impact in reading and achievement of fifth grade students in the ECLS-K Spring Fifth grade cohorts in this study. All levels of poorest SES variable had a negative impact on reading and achievement, while all levels of richest SES had a positive impact on reading and achievement.

The same coding rules used in the kindergarten year were used to code all race/ethnicity variables for children. The SES status was computed at the household level using data from the set of parents who completed the parent interview in Spring-fifth grade. The SES variable reflects the socioeconomic status of the household at the time of data collection for Spring, 2004. Not all parents completed the interview; among those who did, not all responded to every question. This may also account for the negative impact SES had on the DV. The detailed income range accounted for 8.10% of missing data, which could possibly be an additional factor in the variable poorest having the most negative impact on whether SES could significantly statistically predict reading achievement scores of fifth grade special education students in the ECLS-K Spring Fifth grade cohorts of this study.

While research suggest that there are characteristics that pose major challenges under the high-stakes accountability demands on schools to provide an environment that supports the concept of providing all students, regardless of disability, an opportunity to be included in the regular classroom, as well as high expectations of reading and achievement; it is apparent that posed issues including funding in rural and urban schools, high-poverty versus high performing schools, teacher best practices, availability of
resources, and teacher shortages make up just a few of the many challenges facing educators today.

Summary

Chapter four presented a description of the regional and the national sample, reporting statistical results of both a one-sample t-Test and a hierarchical multiple regression statistics. In answering Research Question 1 and 2, a one-sample t-Test was conducted to measure whether the population mean of the national sample was equal to or different from the test mean of the regional sample. A one-sample t-Test was used to measure the mean score of the regional sample to the population mean of the national sample. There were significant differences in both the regional and national sample of teachers' perspectives of instructional planning and consultation/collaboration. The regional mean sample was higher for both planning instruction and consultation/collaboration.

Chapter four also presented a description of the regional and national sample. It reported statistical results of the standard hierarchical multiple regression. In answering Research Question 3, the linear combination of SES, race and gender primarily, and teachers' instructional planning and consultation/collaboration secondarily, did statistically significantly predict the reading achievement of the ECLS-K fifth grade special education students.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Overview

Chapter five provides a brief summary of the present study. Identifying factors that may promote reading achievement in special education students is one aspect of many issues involved in creating a positive learning environment for students with disabilities. It discusses conclusions based on the statistical analyses of the research questions. Finally, suggestions for further research are made.

Study Summary

The purpose of this study was to measure whether teachers' perspectives of instructional planning and consultation/collaboration were identified as important of fifth grade special education students in both a regional and national sample. Secondarily, SES, race and gender were also analyzed in an effort to see if these factors contributed to the reading achievement of fifth grade special education students in a national sample.

The archived public domain database used for this study was the ECLS-K Spring 2004 Fifth Grade, as well as the ECLS-K Spring 2004 Fifth Grade Teacher Questionnaire.

In the regional sample, 30 teachers in a southeastern school district were the regional subject of the study. Questions from the national sample of the ECLS-K fifth grade archived public domain database from the ECLS-K Fifth Grade Teacher Questionnaire, administered in the Spring of 2003-04 were also used to obtain data. These participants completed the Spring 2004 Fifth Grade Teacher Questionnaire.

In the regional sample, teacher's perceived instructional planning and consultation/collaboration as important of fifth grade special education students, whereas
in the national cohorts, both teachers’ perceptions of planning instruction and consultation/collaboration were not perceived as important of fifth grade special education students. More emphasis was placed on teachers’ perceptions of planning instruction and consultation/collaboration in the regional sample.

Four questions were used from this questionnaire to create the research questions and composite variables for this study pertaining to teachers’ perspectives of planning instruction and consultation/collaboration of fifth grade special education students.

A one-sample t-Test was used to measure the mean score of the regional sample to the population mean of the national sample in both planning instruction and consultation/collaboration for both Research Question 1 and Research Question 2. There were significant differences in both the regional and national sample in teachers’ perceptions of instructional planning and consultation/collaboration as important of fifth grade special education students. The regional mean sample was higher for both planning instruction and consultation/collaboration. In the regional sample, the teachers’ perspectives of instructional planning and consultation/collaboration were perceived as important of fifth grade special education students.

A hierarchical multiple regression compared SES, race and gender primarily, to predict reading achievement of fifth grade special education students and the teachers’ perception of instructional planning and consultation/collaboration secondarily, in the national sample. The linear combination of SES, race and gender primarily and the teachers’ instructional planning and consultation/collaboration secondarily, was found to statistically significantly predict reading achievement of ECLS-K fifth grade special
education students according to the analysis of a hierarchical multiple regression in answering Research Question 3.

Discussion

In the current study, a one-sample t-Test was conducted in research questions 1 and 2 to measure teachers’ perspectives of planning instruction and consultation/collaboration as important of fifth grade special education students in both a regional and national sample. Statistical differences were noted in both the regional and national sample. The regional sample perceived planning instruction, as well as consultation/collaboration as more important than the national cohorts of fifth grade special education students. The mean sample was higher in the regional sample, emphasizing how the teachers’ perceptions of planning instruction and consultation/collaboration in this southeastern school district were perceived as more important in comparison to their national cohorts.

In the national sample, both planning instruction and consultation/collaboration were not perceived by teachers as important of fifth grade special education students. The teachers in the national sample did not view either factor as important of fifth grade special education students.

A hierarchical multiple regression compared SES, race and gender primarily, to predict reading achievement in fifth grade special education students and the teachers’ perception of instructional planning and consultation/collaboration secondarily in the national sample. The linear combination of SES, race and gender primarily, and the teachers’ instructional planning and consultation/collaboration secondarily, was found to statistically significantly predict reading achievement of ECLS-K fifth grade special
education students according to the analysis of a hierarchical multiple regression in answering Research Question 3.

Although is it impossible to prevent all reading difficulties in special education students, previous research does suggest that these factors are important as discussed in a study by Coyne et al. (2004) that carefully designed and implemented classroom reading instruction can support and enhance the reading outcomes of special education students. They (2004) go on to say that individual teachers working independently can not realistically assume that they will provide these students with comprehensive reading instruction, but working together and combining creative ideas for individual students will be more effective in attaining achievement. It is the sharing of responsibility that will promote achievement. As Coyne et al. (2004) say “‘all’ becomes a symbolic term, representative of a common commitment and a shared responsibility for all students” (p. 233).

Since this study was limited to fifth grade special education students in a regional and national sample, it would be beneficial to conduct further research in all grade levels to identify if such factors as planning instruction and consultation/collaboration are perceived by other educators as important for all students, as well as other strategies related to assessment that may provide reliable and successful strategies for students with disabilities. While the regional study did identify both factors of planning instruction and consultation/collaboration perceived as important, these findings may suggest that issues such as school-wide commitment to building reading and achievement in all students is due to the district addressing achievement as one of the most important components of that district. Furthermore, in the case of the
regional sample, district-wide goals are in place that provides on-going training, set benchmarks for all children, as well as progressing monitoring for all children. One goal that is set in place within this district and that research suggests promotes reading and achievement is a reading assessment (DIBELS) that assesses students three times a year. Moreover, it is reliable and a valid indicator of skills highly associated with reading achievement (Coyne et al., 2004). The information is formative, as well as a continuous performance based type of feedback that allows schools to identify whether the current instructional program/planning is effective and if not, allows schools to intervene and alter a students’ reading trajectories and hopefully place students back on track by third grade.

Data on children’s perceptions of their abilities and achievement was not collected in the regional sample, which may account for the differences identified with the regional sample and their cohorts.

While SES, race and gender have shown to impact students both positively and negatively, it was found to be critical indicators of reading and achievement in fifth grade special education students in the national sample. A solid understanding of group differences is a crucial beginning point in identifying whether factors such as planning instruction and consultation/collaboration effect reading and achievement in students based on SES, race and gender. Venkateswaran (2004) suggests that these tests should evaluate accurately a student’s understanding of specific content matter. As Venkateswaran further suggest (2004) while there are similarities and differences in gender, understanding these differences in learning styles and achievements is perplexing. Several studies have documented girls having greater verbal abilities while
boys have stronger quantitative skills. African Americans, and Hispanic students scored higher on questions that were not related to skills concerning maps, graphs, and charts; and Asians scored higher on questions not dealing with cultural issues (Venkateswaran, 2004). The widening of the achievement gap of different groups over the past years has become disconcerting with little explanation provided in the current research. Again, this may account for little difference noted in SES, race and gender in the national sample in respects to their effect on achievement, specifically with fifth grade special education students.

Consequently, it may also be that teachers in more affluent schools with higher level students and few low-risk students may perceive factors of planning instruction and consultation/collaboration and other instructional opportunities as more important than less affluent schools. There is also evidence that SES may influence teachers’ perceptions of students with disabilities. Lane, Wehby and Cooley (2006) reported that teachers over estimated the academic achievement of students in high SES situations and underestimated the ability of students who lived in lower SES situations (Lane et al., 2006). With the emphasis on high accountability and achievement along with including all students in the regular classroom setting, it is imperative that all educators not just become voices for special education students, but become an active part in the continuum that focuses on effective instructional practices leading to high reading and achievement for all.

In a previous study by Florian et al. (2004) it has been argued that classroom teachers should take responsibility for providing the necessary support services to special education students in an effort to provide positive factors to academic achievement;
others believe that specialists should work directly with the learner. As a result, numerous approaches to provisions and positive factors contributing to the positive achievement of special education students continue to vary in what is perceived as important in the education of students with disabilities.

According to Ward, Montague & Linton (2003), “students with disabilities typically face barriers in their educational experience, but the attitudinal barriers of teachers often present the greatest challenges” (p. 6). They (2003) go on to say that the effort a school makes to include special education students may directly effect the standardized test achievement of these students. Today, all states are required to comply under IDEA. This means that all taxpayer supported schools are responsible for the costs of providing continued supportive services for special education students, regardless of severity of the disability. In addition, IDEA clearly requires that states include special education students in all state and district level assessments. The act further contends that all children must receive “free, appropriate public education.” Regular education classrooms are now the foundation for public schools that have the supplementary supportive services and are more often than not, the placement for special education students. As stated earlier in this study, IDEA does not necessarily require inclusion, but it does promote the idea that a significant effort be made to find an inclusive placement (Clearinghouse, 2003). Clearinghouse (2003) further discusses other studies that have shown a disproportionate number of minorities being identified and ruled as disabled or with a wrong disability causing IDEA to now require states and school districts to collect and report data on minorities with disabilities. The concern now is with minority students in the United States reaching their highest academic achievement while in the
past, boys and girls whose SES was poor and of racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity were identified as lowest in achievement. Although advances in special education continue to occur as Clearinghouse (2003) suggest, evidence still identifies flaws with special education and students with disabilities. One important factor that should be noted is that while identification is important in an effort to provide the supportive services for all students with disabilities, the community as a whole must be the integral component in motivating, encouraging, and supporting each student to maximize the achievement level of individual students. A study by Rheam and Bain (2005) suggests that evidence supports the concept of including special education students in early childhood education to be able to make significant gains in overall academic subjects. But, special education students left to their own resources in inclusive classrooms, young children with disabilities are more likely to engage in isolate non-interactive play and are chosen less frequently as their non-disabled peers.

Limitations

The following conditions may limit the validity of the study:

- Some regular education teachers may not be familiar with the special education students and their needs, specifically inclusion practices with special education teachers.
- An additional question specifically related to inclusion classrooms and best practices should have been included in the ECLS-K Spring 2004 Fifth Grade Teacher Questionnaire in an effort to identify more clearly special education students who have the opportunity of their education in a regular education classroom for the majority of the school day.
○ The study should have extended to include grades 6-12 in both the regional and national sample.

○ The researcher should have contacted other regular and special education teachers to conduct interviews to get a more diverse and rich data on a teachers' perception of planning instruction and consultation/collaboration practices.

○ The researcher should have included more schools other than the four schools in the southeastern area.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Limited empirical research has resulted in differences of opinion on the topic of best teacher practices for special education students and their achievement, as perceived by teachers. In light of recent mandates of unifying achievement and accountability standards, assessments pertaining to reading and achievement of all students, regardless of disability should take the necessary steps in determining the degree to which schools of differing risk status are consistent in their expectations (Lane et al., 2006). Despite the differences that encompass public and private schools across the United States in respect to accountability and achievement for regular and special education students, the underlying goal of the current educational system is successful achievement for all students. A community that establishes a school wide model for reading and achievement, beginning with early identification, an ongoing monitoring system and instructional remediation should be implemented. As Coyne et al., (2004) suggest one important benefit of an ongoing monitoring system is "the ability to compare individual
student performance to that of other students in the school as well as to benchmark goals that predict later reading achievement” (p. 231).

Recommendations for Future Research

Though substantial scientific knowledge exists concerning students with various disabilities over the past 30 years, we are only beginning to seriously understand the challenges of the research as it relates to effective instructional practices. As Coyne, et al., (2004) further explain, “developing and sustaining the use of research-based classroom practices is far more complicated than announcing the existence of a knowledge base and requiring teachers to use it” (p. 232).

Research in the area of teacher best practices to help special education students achieve in a regular education classroom must continue. It is paramount that on-going strategies be evaluated and discussed by all stakeholders of the community, which include not only the regular and special education teacher, but parents and taxpayers. It is important to gather input and feedback on the perceptions of varied factors that have shown to be successful in promoting achievement. The school district must provide training that is continual which incorporates current empirical research in this area of study. Further, the school district must commit to ensuring that special education students are not just a warm body, but that each student’s achievement is vital and essential to the concept of the “whole child” approach.

Teachers planning instruction together, as well as collaborating on what is effective for individual students and classrooms will not cause financial constraints. As with the federal mandates that stress “free and appropriate,” working together as a team...
for the success of individual students has no cost, but giving all students the opportunities to achieve at their potential is priceless.

Understanding factors that contribute to reading and achievement, not only in the area of reading, but in all academic subjects for special education students, should continue to drive teachers to search for success for their individual students’ needs. In a study by Sharpe and Hawes (2003), it is suggested that as states develop and implement a standards-based curriculum for all students, educators of all types must develop a wider range of collaboration skills to help facilitate consultation/collaboration and planning instruction between both the special and regular education teacher. This can only be achieved if a long-term commitment is made by both the special education and regular education teacher. The special and regular education teacher must first apply the essential factors of consultation/collaboration as well as instructional planning to their daily strategies in the classroom.

The focus of IDEA on the needs of individual students has caused much tension among both regular and special education teachers as a whole. With federal mandates stipulating that individualized instruction for special education student must be provided, schools grapple with trying to make it all come together, causing districts across this country to “hit and miss” with what is essential for the cause of accountability and achievement. A school wide mission to design flexible instruction to support individual student needs may optimize reading achievement in special education students. However, as research suggest, revamping programs, goals and polices does not ensure accountability and achievement for all; but educational reform that advocates school wide reading and instructional practices that support both individual needs and all needs
can cause a chain reaction of achievement that will bring our schools into a new realm of inclusion for the child.
APPENDIX A

PERMISSION LETTER

To: Harrison County Public School District.
From: Stephanie A. Newell, Doctor of Education Degree Candidate
Re: Consent to Conduct Research

In partial fulfillment of the doctor of education degree in educational administration, I will be conducting a study of fifth grade special education students, regular and special education teachers who participate in teaching students in either a special education or inclusion classroom setting. The purpose of this study is to analyze factors associated with reading achievement of fifth grade special education students in both a regional and national setting and the perspectives of effective teacher strategies.

Data will be gathered from a questionnaire created by from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K) of the fifth grade spring sample of 2003-2004 public data file. My research project will also be inclusive to a perception of special education students among regular and special education teachers in both the regional and national setting.

This letter will serve as verification that the Harrison County Public School District will allow me to retrieve data regarding students and teacher perspectives on factors associated with reading achievement and effective classroom strategies. This letter also serves as a confirmation that the district is allowing me to conduct a perception study.

Participation in this study is voluntary and results are confidential. Teachers are assured anonymity by not placing their names or identifying numbers on the questionnaires.

Data gathered will be used inclusively for the completion of my research project. This letter will be sent to the Human Subjects Protection Committee for review to ensure

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that this project follows all guidelines and federal regulations. Questions regarding the
rights of research should be directed to the following:

APPENDIX A (continued)

Chair of Institutional Relations Review Board
The University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive, #5247
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
601-266-6820

Please feel free to contact me at 228-669-9029 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Newell
Principal
Specialized Treatment Facility

My signature below authorizes Stephanie A. Newell to gather the necessary information
specific to the research discussed above from the Harrison County Public School District.

Administrative Signature: Mitchell King Date: 5/20/07

Title: Assistant Superintendent
APPENDIX B

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION
The University of Southern Mississippi 118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001 Tel: 601.266.682 Fax: 601.226.5509
www.usm.edu/irb

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 36), and university guidelines to ensure adherence of the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated documented.
- 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 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 of contribution.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 27032703
PROJECT TITLE: Factors Associated with Reading Achievement of Fifth Grade Special Education Students in a Regional and National Setting
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 03/20/07 TO 08/31/07
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation or Thesis
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Stephanie Newell
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership & Research
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 05/15/07 to 05/14/08

[Signature]
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D
HSPRC Chair

5-16-07 Date
APPENDIX C

Spring 2004 Fifth Grade Teacher Questionnaire

OMB No. 1850-0750

App. Exp.: 2/2005

Spring 2004
SPRING 2004 FIFTH GRADE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

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

By: Westat
1650 Research Boulevard
Rockville, Maryland 20850
(301) 251-1500

Assurance of Confidentiality

The collection of information in this survey is authorized by Public Law 100-297 and continued under the auspices of Section 404(a) of the National Education Statistics Act of 1994, Title IV of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, Public Law 103-382. Participation is voluntary. You may skip questions you do not wish to answer; however, we hope that you will answer as many questions as you can. No information collected under this authority may be used for any purpose other than the purpose for which it was supplied. Information will be protected from disclosure by federal statute (42 US Code 242m, section 308d). Data will be combined to produce statistical reports. No individual data that links your name, address, telephone number, or identification number with your response will be reported.
INTRODUCTION

Dear Teacher,

This questionnaire is an important part of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K), a major longitudinal study of children’s early educational experiences beginning with kindergarten and continuing through grade 5.

This questionnaire is directed to the fifth grade teachers in schools attended in 2003-2004 by one or more children participating in the study. The questionnaire is divided into 7 sections which include the following:

a.) Instructional Activities;
b.) Classroom Resources;
c.) Student Evaluation;
d.) School and Staff Activities;
e.) Views on Teaching, School Climate and Environment;
f.) Your Background; and
g.) Your Teaching Assignment.

Please answer directly on the questionnaire by circling the appropriate number or by writing your response in the space provided.

Thank you very much for your help. It will be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purposes unless permission is otherwise granted by you the participant. Please record your answers directly on the questionnaire by circling the appropriate number.

Thank you very much for your help.

Stephanie A. Newell, University of Southern Mississippi
### Instructional Activities and Focus

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Less than once a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Reading and language arts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Writing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Mathematics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Social studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Art</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Reference skills (e.g., searching for information in books, on the computer/internet)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Area</th>
<th>I don't teach this subject</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>10 min.</th>
<th>20 min.</th>
<th>30 min.</th>
<th>More than 30 min.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Reading and language arts</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Math</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Social studies</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Science</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. To what extent do you integrate curriculum areas around common or unifying themes? (e.g., using math and science concepts in the same unit of study or using arts and social studies in the same unit of study)? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.
   a. Never ..................................................................................... 1
   b. Occasionally ........................................................................... 2
   c. Usually ................................................................................... 3
   d. All the time ............................................................................ 4

4. How many times each week do children in your class usually have physical education? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.
   a. Never ..................................................................................... 1 (GO TO Q6)
   b. Less than once a week ......................................................... 2
   c. Once or twice a week .......................................................... 3
   d. Three or four times a week ................................................... 4
   e. Daily ....................................................................................... 5

5. How much time each day do children in your class usually spend when they participate in physical education? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.
   a. Do not participate in physical education ................................. 1
   b. 1 to 15 minutes/day .............................................................. 2
   c. 16 to 30 minutes/day ............................................................ 3
   d. 31 to 60 minutes/day ........................................................... 4
   e. More than 60 minutes/day ..................................................... 5

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>1-15 minutes</th>
<th>16-30 minutes</th>
<th>31-45 minutes</th>
<th>Longer than 45 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Lunch</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Recess</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. How many computers of the following types do you have in your classroom? WRITE IN NUMBERS BELOW. IF NONE, WRITE "0."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of computers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. How many computers in your classroom have access to the Internet?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. How many computers in your classroom are the children in your class allowed to use?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

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

   ____ Number of regular aides
   ____ Number of special education aides
   ____ Number of ESL or bilingual education aides
11. What is the **highest** level of education completed for the paid aide who spends the most time in your class? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

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

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

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

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

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

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

a. I hold the same standards for most children, but I make exceptions for children with special needs (e.g., children with disabilities, children with limited English proficiency) 1
b. I hold different standards for different children based on what I think they are capable of 2

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

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

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

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16. Does your school use school-wide standardized tests to assess your children? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.
   a. Yes ................................................................. 1
   b. No ........................................................................ 2 (GO TO Q20)

17. Do you have access to the standardized test scores of the children in your class? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.
   a. Yes ................................................................. 1
   b. No ........................................................................ 2 (GO TO Q19)

18. How useful do you find the standardized test scores of the children in your class for the purpose of guiding decisions about instruction? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.
   a. Not useful ......................................................... 1
   b. Somewhat useful ............................................... 2
   c. Very useful ........................................................ 3
   d. Extremely useful ................................................. 4

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

   _________ Number of hours
SCHOOL and STAFF ACTIVITIES

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once a month or less</th>
<th>Two or three times a month</th>
<th>Once or twice a week</th>
<th>Three or four times a week</th>
<th>Daily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with other teachers to discuss lesson planning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with other teachers to discuss curriculum development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with other teachers or specialists to discuss individual children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with the special education teacher or service providers to discuss and plan for the children with disabilities in my class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Total number of hours</th>
<th>Not at all useful</th>
<th>Slightly useful</th>
<th>Moderately useful</th>
<th>Very useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Reading/language arts or teaching of reading/language arts</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Mathematics or teaching of mathematics</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Science or teaching of science</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Social studies or teaching of social studies</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24. How much control do you feel you have IN YOUR CLASSROOM over such areas as selecting skills to be taught, deciding about teaching techniques, and disciplining children? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28. What is your gender? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.
   a. Male ............................................ 1
   b. Female ........................................... 2

29. In what year were you born?
   19 ___

30. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.
   a. Yes ........................................ 1
   b. No ........................................... 2

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

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

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

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

34. Counting this school year, how many years have you taught in your current school, including part-time teaching?
   WRITE NUMBER OF LINE.
   ________ Years
35. What is the **highest** level of education you have completed? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Field of Study</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Elementary Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Reading and/or Language Arts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Curriculum and Instruction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Mathematics Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Mathematics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Science Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Life Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Physical Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Earth Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Special Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Other Education-related Major (such as secondary ed., ed. psych., administration, music education, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Non-Education Major (such as history, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
37. If you have a **graduate degree**, indicate the major field of study of your highest level graduate degree. 

CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Early Childhood Education .............................................. 1  2
b. Elementary Education .................................................. 1  2
c. English ........................................................................... 1  2
d. Reading and/or Language Arts ......................................... 1  2
e. Curriculum and Instruction ............................................. 1  2
f. Mathematics Education .................................................. 1  2
g. Mathematics ..................................................................... 1  2
h. Science Education .......................................................... 1  2
i. Life Science ..................................................................... 1  2
j. Physical Science .................................................................. 1  2
k. Earth Science ..................................................................... 1  2
l. Special Education ............................................................ 1  2
m. Other Education-related Major (such as secondary ed., 
ed. psych., administration, music education, etc.) ................. 1  2
n. Non-Education Major (such as history, etc.) ......................... 1  2

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

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

   a. Early childhood education ........................................... 1  2
   b. Elementary education ......................................................... 1  2
   c. Secondary education ........................................................... 1  2
   d. Reading specialist certification ................................................. 1  2
   e. Elementary mathematics ................................................... 1  2
   f. Middle/junior high school or secondary mathematics ........................................ 1  2
   g. Elementary science ........................................................... 1  2
   h. Middle/junior high school or secondary science ........................................ 1  2
   i. ESL certification ............................................................... 1  2
   j. Special education ............................................................. 1  2

TEACHING ASSIGNMENT

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

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

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

a. Self-contained class – You teach multiple subjects to the same class of children all or most of the day .......................... 1
b. Team teaching – You collaborate with one or more teachers in teaching multiple subjects to the same class of children .... 2
c. Departmentalized Instruction – You teach subject matter courses (e.g., language arts, mathematics, science) to several classes of different children all or most of the day .... 3
d. "Pull-Out" Class – You provide instruction (e.g., special education, reading) to certain students who are released from their regular classes ............................................. 4

Date questionnaire completed:

___ / ___ / ___
MONTH  DAY  YEAR

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION
REFERENCES


Fontenot, C. (2005). The attitudes of elementary school principals in rural, suburban, and urban school districts regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms. (Doctoral dissertation, Sam Houston...


McQueen, D (personal communication, February 9, 2007).


