Spring 2006

Standards Based Integrated Mathematics Activities: a Resource Guide for Second Grade Teachers

Angela Doty
Regis University

Regis University
School for Professional Studies Graduate Programs
Final Project/Thesis

Disclaimer

TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS

OF A SCIENTIFICALLY BASED READING PROGRAM

COMPARED TO AN OPTIONAL READING PROGRAM

by

Christine Donner

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

REGIS UNIVERSITY

December, 2006

ABSTRACT

Teacher's Perceptions of a Scientifically Based Reading Program Compared to an Optional Reading Program

While the methods of teaching reading are constantly changing due to advancements, the purpose of this research has been to determine the effectiveness of two particular reading methods that are currently being practiced. The "scientifically based" reading program demands explicit and systematic instructional strategies as outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act-Reading First Grant while the optional reading method allows the teacher to selected reading material, time allocations, and reading techniques based on local objectives and expectations (Nevada Reading First). Based on a questionnaire, which examines teacher's perceptions of their reading program, this project compares both advantages and disadvantages of a scientifically based reading program with that of an optional reading program. Results showed that neither program is more effective, but that each contains advantages and disadvantages to be considered. It is recommended that further research, investigating student test scores as well, be conducted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people supported me in completing my thesis. I would like to thank my professor, Dr. Martin Parks, for his encouragement and continuous editing. A special thank you to Beth Christian for assisting with the data collection for this project. Thanks also to all my fellow teachers who completed the questionnaire, for whom this thesis would not be possible.

Above all, the two people in my life who have encouraged and given me strength to get this far in my education should not be forgotten. Thank you to my mom, Judy Donner, who supports me in every discussion I make and urges me to go above and beyond. And, my loving soon-to-be husband, Jacob Kay, who has been my shoulder to cry on when I thought I could not get though it and shown endless patience.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter addressed the issues surrounding the currently mandated reading program (Nevada Department of Education, 2005) as opposed to optional reading approaches. In the following components of this chapter, the problem will be reviewed, the purpose of the project will be stated, and research questions will be provided to help to narrow the study. Finally, a proposed method to obtain data will be presented.

Background of the Problem

In 2002, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act became law and seeks "to improve the performance of America's primary and secondary schools by increasing the standards of accountability for states, school districts and schools" (Wikipedia, 2006). Under the NCLB Act, states can award subgrants to eligible schools to provide assistance and "establish research-based reading programs for students in kindergarten through grade three." The schools awarded a subgrant by the state are called Reading First schools. The Reading First sub-grant provides funds to train teachers, including special education teachers, in the essential components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) and to "select and administer assessments to identify those children who may be at risk of reading failure" (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2005).

The instructional program for the schools being served by the Reading First Grant is designed around the five essential reading components according to the Report of the

National Reading Panel and Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Readers (Nevada Department of Education, 2005). These five core components are phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. “Supported by a scientifically based research rationale each program selected is uniquely positioned to address the reading difficulties commonly experienced by at-risk readers” (Nevada Department of Education, 2005). Teaching with a “scientifically based reading program” requires that teachers go beyond the usual reading methods and focus on clear and systematic instructional strategies. This program expects teachers to provide effective instruction using the five elements of reading through a 90-minute uninterrupted block of reading, fast paced, strategic lessons with appropriate grouping, varied instructional formats, and ongoing assessment.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers in schools not being served by the grant are using reading methods in which they do not have to focus specifically on the five elements of reading for the required 90-minutes per day. These teachers may choose texts other than those used in a Reading First program. However, in Nevada, the Reading First Schools are mandated to “assure that planned activities and programs are coordinated and aligned with instructional materials” (Nevada Department of Education, 2005). Therefore, the Reading First School in this study must only use the Harcourt Trophies Reading Series during the 90-minute reading block. Harcourt Trophies Reading Series is one of only eight national reading series approved by the What Works Clearinghouse as meeting the No Child Left Behind requirements (Wikipedia, 2006).

Reading demands such as the 90-minute reading block, controlled texts, and constant assessment placed on teachers and children by the No Child Left Behind Act may be time consuming and not focused on specific student deficiencies. However, the techniques employed by the Reading First Grant may be making a difference in the reading abilities of children. The perceptions of teachers in the schools participating in the study helped to distinguish the effectiveness of one program (Reading First) over another (teacher-developed optional programs).

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to determine whether a scientifically based reading program is more effective than an optional reading program as perceived by teachers of the opposing programs at two participating schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions formed the basis of this project:

1. What constitutes a "scientifically based" reading program?
2. What constitutes an optional reading program?
3. How successful do the teachers in each program perceive their program to be?
4. How are the teacher's perceptions related to the strengths and weaknesses of each reading program?

Proposed Methods

The method for obtaining information was a questionnaire given to the teachers at two different school sites; one under a Reading First Grant and the other with an optional reading method. Each research question was addressed by a survey instrument

(questionnaire), completed by the teachers and returned anonymously. The responses were analyzed and the data has been reported in aggregate form.

List of Definitions

No Child Left Behind Act. (Public Law 107-110). The No Child Left Behind Act refers to Public Law 107-110, which "seeks to identify poorly performing public schools by requiring states to test students in grades three through eight annually in reading and math" (Encarta, 2001).

Reading First. (Public Law 107-110 Section 1221). "Reading First is a federal education program in the United States mandated under the No Child Left Behind Act and administered by the Department of Education which requires that schools funded by Reading First use "scientifically-based" reading instruction" (Wikipedia, 2006).

Optional Reading Program. An Optional Reading Program is a reading method used by teachers that grants teachers the option to use any materials desired, any technique they feel necessary, and for the amount of time they choose.

Summary

This chapter introduced the issue of effective reading programs, the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, and the purpose of the project. It focused on specific research questions to guide the study and addressed proposed methods for

obtaining information. It concluded with a list of definitions of key terms related to the project.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter investigated the information surrounding the benefits and disadvantages to a structured, scientifically-based reading program and other optional reading methods. The review of literature focused on the following three main areas of research: (a) the teacher's role as reading instructor, (b) reading program accountability, and (c) components of a reading program.

Teacher's Role as Reading Instructor

The role of the teacher in reading instruction is one of decision maker, mentor, and coach. The teacher plans and supports activities that allow children to do those things one naturally does with literature (Routman, 1991). This role includes planning themes, helping students activate the appropriate prior knowledge, and supporting students in reading and responding to the literature in appropriate ways (Martinez & Roser, 1991). In some instances the teacher plans and teaches mini-lessons using the literature as a model for helping students learn a needed strategy or skill (Trachtenberg, 1990). As a mentor, the teacher serves as a model for reading and writing. By reading aloud to students, the teacher models language for them. Through shared writing (McKenzie, 1985), the teacher models all aspects of writing -- grammar, usage, and spelling. By supporting students with such activities as shared reading, literature discussion circles, and response activities, the teacher plays the role of coach (Cooper, 1993).

Teachers are expected to serve as coaches, models, guides, advocates and instructors. They should engage in reflective practice, thoughtfully analyzing lessons with the intent of improving teaching methods and strategies. Effective teachers must manage classrooms so that instruction is student-centered with age-appropriate activities that promote active involvement. They must ask probing questions to stimulate students' critical and creative thinking and understand the developmental needs of students (IPS, 2003). When a teacher is an effective reading coach, students gain confidence and success in their reading abilities.

Accountability

No Child Left Behind Act

Three days after taking office, President Bush began a bipartisan effort for educational reform, which resulted in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB Act) of 2001. The NCLB Act requires each state to establish a system based on challenging state standards in reading and mathematics and annual testing for all students in grades 3-8. Over a 12-year period, statewide assessment must be conducted annually with analysis of progress objectives conducted to ensure that proficiency is reached by all groups of students. The groups include poverty, race, ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency with the intent that no child will be left behind. School districts and schools that fail to meet adequate yearly progress toward state established goals are "subject to improvement, corrective action, and restructuring measures aimed at getting them back on course. Schools that meet or exceed adequate yearly progress or close achievement gaps will be eligible for State Academic Achievement Awards " (U. S. Department of Education, 2001).

In October 2002, President Bush made the following comments concerning federal guidelines, which require student assessment at the state level in return for federal money:

> If you believe every child can learn to read, then it's logical to ask: Are the children succeeding? And you want to know that. You want to know that to determine whether or not your dreams are being met. You want to know that to determine whether the curriculum is working. I'm used to the testing debate. I've heard: "You test too much. You're teaching to the test." If you teach a child to read, you're teaching a child a skill, not teaching the test. And, the child will then be able to pass the test. (Caputo, 2002, 16A)

This statement emphasizes the importance that student success in reading holds in the political arena. Since state assessment of student's reading achievement is required in most states, the focus is on educators making certain the curriculum is working so that students learn to read, and that they read well enough to pass the state-mandated tests.

Nevada Reading First

The Reading First Program, established under The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, is meant to address the growing problem of the nation's children not developing the basic reading skills necessary to be successful in school. "Reading First provides substantial resources at both the state and local levels to help ensure that all children can read at or above grade level by the end of third grade by improving the quality of reading instruction—and thereby improve the reading skills and achievement of children in the primary grades" (ABT Associates Inc., 2006).

In 1997 the Nevada Legislature passed the Nevada Education Reform Act (NERA). Under this act the Council to Establish Academic Standards in Public Schools was appointed to write content and student performance standards in major core subjects;

public schools were classified along a continuum of achievement based on student performance on norm-referenced tests; and new criterion-referenced tests were projected for development (Nevada Department of Education, 2005).

A study was performed by ABT Associates on Reading First schools and found that reading First Schools are implementing the major elements of the program as intended by the legislation. The elements that teachers are providing in these schools are scientifically-based reading instruction in grades K-3 and interventions for struggling readers, increasing the use of classroom-based reading assessments, and increasing participation in professional development activities (ABT Associates Inc., 2006).

Scientifically-Based Reading Instruction

The National Reading Panel, composed of 14 researchers appointed by Congress, examined the growing body of reading research (Shanahan, 2003). The panel used the following guidelines to determine which studies met the scientific standard for evidence. First, research must address achievement in one or more skills in reading. Second, it must be generalizable to the larger population of students. Third, the research needs to examine the effectiveness of an approach by comparison with other types of instruction. Finally, other scholars from the field must review the research and consider it high quality (Reading First Support, 2006).

Scientifically based reading research has identified explicit and systematic instruction in five key areas as essential to effective early reading instruction. These five key areas are phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension (Reading First Support, 2006).

A scientifically or evidence-based instructional program should have been tested and shown to have a record of success. That is, reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence indicates that when that program or set of practices is used, children can be expected to make adequate gains in reading achievement (International Reading Association). However, the Reading Association is eager to point out "adoption of a program indicated as 'evidence based' does not guarantee reading success" (International Reading Association, p. 2).

Components of a Reading Program

Tivman and Hemphill (2005) conducted a study to compare the effectiveness of various reading programs on first grade achievement. In this study, four reading models were chosen and analyzed. Some emphasized explicit phonics teaching, while others followed a script and "explicitly presented phonics generalizations and drill children on word patterns" (p. 422). Despite the enormous debate over the quality of various approaches to instruction in literacy, all four of his models appeared to do an equally effective job in promoting growth in first grade word reading, word attack, and phonemic awareness (Tivman & Hemphill, 2005). However, when considering a sound reading program, there are a number of key concepts to consider, such as reading textbook use, use of literature circles and class libraries, parent involvement, professional development for preparing teachers, instructional time, assessments, and the five key components of reading.

Reading Textbook Use

The information regarding the way students learn is changing with current research and this has impacted the reading programs used in primary grade classrooms.

Hence, reading programs vary greatly in what and how concepts are taught (Foorman, 2003). Ideas in what makes an effective reading program also change with time. Routman (1999) believes that instruction should be determined by a teacher's professional judgment, and not by a published program. "A Comprehensive Literacy Program," she emphasizes that effective teachers integrate a variety of approaches for teaching reading, writing, and thinking that are "responsive to the students they are teaching" (Routman, 1999, p. 14). One of Routman's key points is that knowledgeable professionals can teach explicit and systematic phonics within a literacy framework, without using a separate, scripted, packaged program.

A survey conducted by Baumann and Heubach (1994), asking teachers whether or not they feel deskilled, presented a very different picture of teacher's use of basal reading materials than the image put forth by those who argue such materials direct teacher's decision-making skills. Instead of doing and saying what is put before them as the deskilling proponent describe, the research documents that teachers are informed, thoughtful, and discriminating users of a variety of materials from which they craft their lessons. In fact, rather than deskilling teachers, basal materials actually empower teachers by providing them instructional suggestions to draw from, adapt, or extend (Baumann & Heubach, 1994, p. 22). That is, assuming that the school, under the Reading First grant, is not mandating the sole use of the basal reading materials and ideas.

Literature Circles

Literature circles are a topic of interest to various literacy educators, and their use has been discussed in a variety of academic journals, conference papers, and workshops (Chia-Hui, 2002). All literature circles share the following three basic elements: diversity,

self-choice, and student initiative (Daniels, 2002). Based upon curriculum goals or particular themes students are studying, the teacher selects a set of texts which are either thematically related books of various genres or a body of work by a single author (Brabham & Villaume, 2000; Gilbert, 2000). Then, teachers either assign learners to a "circle" or they may form their own groups, based on students' reading interests or book titles they have selected (Burns, 1998). Within each circle, students are in charge of their own learning and have responsibilities, such as leading discussions and deciding the volume of material to be read for each meeting (Farinacci, 1998; Peralta-Nash & Dutch, 2000). Studies have identified some of the benefits of literature circles, such as stronger reader-text relationships, improved classroom climates, enhanced degrees of gender equity and understanding, and a learning environment more conducive to the needs and abilities of English language learners (Chia-Hui, 2002).

Instructional Time

"Time spent reading in the classroom contributes significantly to growth in reading achievement" (Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990, p. 358). It seems clear that one strategy for improving reading instruction would be to increase the amount of time students spend reading (Leinhardt, Zigmond, & Cooley, 1981, p. 357).

Over the last three decades, we have learned a great deal about time and how it unfolds in classrooms and schools. More importantly, during this era researchers have uncovered the strong connection between the allocation and use of time and reading achievement. We have also discovered that in many classrooms inadequate amounts of time are devoted to the critical task of helping students learn to read (Murphy, 2004).

Studies reveal how unevenly this essential learning ingredient is distributed in classrooms and how important it needs to become.

The 1961 study, conducted by Mankato State University, obtained data from 1,224 elementary schools, representing eight geographic areas of the country (21 states), and the 1985 study drew its sample from the same districts as the original study. Results showed an increase between 1961 and 1985 in amounts of time allocated both to basal reading instruction and other reading (Brekke, 1987). It is obvious that time spent on reading is increasing as time progresses, however exactly how much time spent on reading varies according to district, school, and classroom.

Assessments

Taberski (2000) repeats what teachers already knew. She points out that assessment leads to strategy demonstration during read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading, word-study groups, and one-to-one instruction.

However, assessment is changing for many reasons. Changes in the skills and knowledge needed for success, in our understanding of how students learn, and in the relationship between assessment and instruction are changing our learning goals for students and schools. Consequently, we must change our assessment strategies to tie assessment design and content to new outcomes and purposes for assessment (Bond, Herman, & Arter, 1994).

Many educators and policymakers believe that what gets assessed is what gets taught and that the format of assessment influences the format of instruction (O'Day & Smith, 1993). Nevada Reading First believes ongoing assessment will identify the need

for immediate and intensive intervention to be provided one-on-one and in small groups using existing intervention models (Nevada Reading First, October 8, 2006).

Contrary to our understanding of how students learn, many assessments - particularly traditional multiple-choice and true-false assessments - test facts and skills in isolation, seldom requiring students to apply what they know in real-life situations. Educators, policymakers, and parents are beginning to recognize that minimums and basics are no longer sufficient and are calling for a closer match between the skills students learn in school and the skills they will need upon leaving school (Winking & Bond, 1995).

Five Key Components of Reading

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds, or phonemes, in spoken words. Correlational studies have identified phonemic awareness and letter knowledge as the two best school-entry predictors of how well children will learn to read during the first two years of instruction (Nevada Reading First, October, 2006).

Coles (2000) makes clear his belief that progressive approaches such as whole language are more effective in teaching children to read than currently popular skills-oriented programs. He finds no evidence that kindergarten training in phonological awareness leads to significantly better reading achievement in later grades (Coles, 2000).

Phonics/Spelling

Phonics helps children learn the relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language. Programs of phonics instruction are most

effective when they are systematic and explicit. Adams's (1990) comprehensive review of decades of early reading research found that teaching phonics accelerates literacy acquisition, thus making it an important intervention for early at-risk readers. Similarly, the National Reading Panel found that systematic phonics instruction had significant effects in the early grades, indicating that such programs should be implemented in both kindergarten and first grade. While researchers disagree on the exact length of time phonics instruction should occur, or the single best sequence of phonics activities, systematic phonics instruction is essential to developing skilled readers (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Additionally, the practice of encouraging children to spell words as they sound (sometimes called invented or temporary spelling) has been shown to improve phonemic awareness and to accelerate their acquisition of conventional spelling when it is taught in first grade and up. Children's independent spellings yield direct evidence of their level of phonological sensitivity and orthographic knowledge, enabling the knowledgeable teacher to tailor instruction and respond to individual difficulties (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Vocabulary

Reading to children provides many opportunities to build comprehension through concept development and understanding of word meanings. Chall, Jacobs, and Baldwin (1990) colleagues showed an urgent need for direct vocabulary instruction for various children. The researchers pointed out that, even after strong phonics instruction, children who are not exposed to broad vocabulary outside of school declined in reading comprehension between grades three and seven because of their vocabulary limitations-

the limits of their language. However, research has also shown that those limits can be extended. Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) established that direct vocabulary instruction could significantly improve comprehension. In fact, vocabulary knowledge is the most important factor in reading comprehension (LaFlamme, 1997).

Fluency

Reading with children fosters the development of fluency, the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. Fluency and automaticity are the goals of advancing decoding abilities, including phonemic awareness, sequential decoding, recognition of word patterns, and word recognition. Even readers who have good word identification and decoding abilities cannot comprehend text easily without adequate fluency (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 2001). When word identification is fast and accurate, the reader can more effectively think about the meaning of the text (Moats, 1999).

Comprehension

As the purpose for reading, text comprehension is an active process that requires an intentional and thoughtful interaction between the reader and the text (National Reading Panel, 2000). Instruction in reading comprehension strategies is essential in ensuring the transition from beginning to skillful reading proficiency (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 2001). When used appropriately, comprehension techniques improve recall, question answering and formation, and summarization.

Summary

This chapter consisted of a review of literature on topics related to a scientifically-based reading program and an optional reading program. The review of literature focused on three main areas, the (a) teacher's role as reading instructor, (b) accountability, and (c)

components of a reading program. Additionally, literature was reviewed on such related topics as Nevada Reading First, instructional time, and assessments.

Chapter 3

METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the advantages and disadvantages of a research-based reading program and an optional reading program. As a result of surveying teachers regarding their perceptions of these reading programs, a better understanding of whether a research-based reading program is as effective as an optional reading program was presented. Further, recommendations for improving elementary school reading programs in Nevada were provided.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers in schools not being served by the Reading First Grant are using reading methods in which they are not mandated to focus specifically on the five elements of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension) for the required 90-minutes per day (Nevada Department of Education, 2006). These teachers may choose texts other than those used in a Reading First program. However, in Nevada, the Reading First Schools are mandated to "assure that planned activities and programs are coordinated and aligned with instructional materials" (Nevada Department of Education, 2005). Therefore, the Reading First School in this study must only use the Harcourt Trophies Reading Series during the 90-minute reading block. Harcourt Trophies Reading Series is one of only eight national reading series approved by the What Works Clearinghouse as meeting the No Child Left Behind requirements (Wikipedia, 2006).

Reading demands such as the 90-minute reading block, controlled texts, and constant assessment placed on teachers and children by the No Child Left Behind Act may be time consuming and not focused on specific student deficiencies. However, the techniques employed by the Reading First Grant may be making a difference in the reading abilities of children. The perceptions of teachers in the schools participating in the study helped to distinguish the effectiveness of one program (Reading First) over another (teacher-developed optional programs).

Research Questions

The following research questions formed the basis of this project:

1. What constitutes a "scientifically based" reading program?
2. What constitutes an optional reading program?
3. How successful do the teachers in each program believe their program to be?
4. How are the teachers' perceptions related to the strengths and weaknesses of each reading program?

Research Design

This research involved mixed methodologies: a combination of a qualitative methods (specifically phenomenology) and quantitative methods (survey research). A phenomenological study "attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular situation" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 139). By looking at multiple perspectives of the same situation, the researcher is able to make generalizations of how effective the phenomena under investigation (reading programs) are from an insider's perspective (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Survey research involves acquiring information about one or more groups of people by asking them questions and tabulating

their answers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 183). The basic goal is to make generalizations about a large population by surveying a sample of that population.

Procedures

Research procedures for this project were initiated by obtaining appropriate approvals from the two principals of the schools that participated in the study (see Appendix A). Questionnaires (see Appendix B) were then distributed to the teachers at the Reading First School and collected through an affiliate at that school. Likewise, questionnaires (see Appendix C) for the Optional Reading Method School were distributed and collected through an affiliate at that school.

The survey instrument opened with a question regarding level of teaching experience. This question was intended to show the response differences between a new and experienced teacher. However, in the Reading First School no teachers were in the "1-3 years" range and only one responded in the "1-3 years" range at the Optional Reading School.

Each response option to the Likert-scale items was assigned a number (1-4) from not implemented/no impact to significant implementation/impact in order to determine the mean, median, and mode scores. Adding up the number of responses for each level and dividing it by the total number of responses determined the mean score. Taking the number of responses to each Likert-type question and finding the middle position number determined the median. Taking the number of responses to each level occurring most often gave me the mode.

Procedures for Research Question One

The following procedures were employed to address research question number one: "What constitutes a scientifically based reading program?" This question was asked only of respondents of the Reading First School. Teachers (n=14) from the Reading First School were asked to respond to numerous questions (see Appendix B) regarding components relating to reading and responded according to their level of implementation. Specifically, the teacher's responses to level of implementation within the Likert-type questions according for phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, writing, Harcourt Trophies (Basal Reader), other reading materials, and literature circles were used to answer question number one. Mean, median, and mode scores of these areas calculated regarding level of implementation to clarify the components of a scientifically-based reading program.

Likewise, the teachers from the Reading First School were asked open-ended questions (see Appendix B) regarding their assessments, materials, time, advantages and disadvantages of their reading program. Specifically, questions number two, four, and seven:

2. What assessment(s) do you use to evaluate reading achievement?

4. What reading materials do you use currently in your program?

7. Approximately how long do you spend per day on reading instruction?

Analyzing their responses to these questions also contributed to the clarification of the components of a scientifically-based reading program. The analysis consisted of identifying subtle, yet meaningful cues in participants' responses. In the analysis, common themes were identified in teacher's descriptions of their reading program. The

relevant information was separated from the irrelevant information and the relevant information was analyzed for its support to the question being asked (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Further, the various ways in which different people experience their reading program was considered. Finally, various meanings were identified to develop an overall description of the reading program as it was experienced (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Procedures for Research Question Two

The following procedures were employed to address research question number two: "What constitutes an optional reading method?" This question was asked only of respondents of the Optional Reading School. The responding teachers (n=14) from the school with the optional reading method were asked numerous questions (see Appendix C) regarding certain topics relating to reading and responded according to their level of implementation. Specifically, the teacher's responses to level of implementation within the Likert-type questions according for phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, writing, Harcourt Trophies (Basal Reader), other reading materials, and literature circles were used to answer question number one. Calculating a mean, median, and mode level of implementation led to a clarification of the components of an optional reading method.

Likewise, the teachers from the school with the optional reading method were asked open-ended questions (see Appendix C) regarding their assessments, materials, time, advantages and disadvantages of their reading program. Analyzing their responses to these questions also contributed to the clarification of the components of an optional reading method. Specifically, questions number two, four, and seven:

2. What assessment(s) do you use to evaluate reading achievement?

4. What reading materials do you use currently in your program?

7. Approximately how long do you spend per day on reading instruction?

Analyzing their responses to these questions also contributed to the clarification of the components of a scientifically-based reading program. The analysis consisted of identifying subtle, yet meaningful cues in participants' responses. In the analysis, common themes were identified in teacher's descriptions of their reading program. The relevant information was separated from the irrelevant information and the relevant information was analyzed for its support to the question being asked (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Further, the various ways in which different people experience their reading program was considered. Finally, various meanings were identified to develop an overall description of the reading program as it was experienced (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Procedures for Research Question Three

The following procedures were used to address research question number three, "How successful do the teachers in each program believe their program to be?" All participating teachers from both the Reading First School and Optional Reading School (n=28) were given a questionnaire calling for responses on a Likert-type scale regarding the effectiveness of each component relating to reading. Scales were presented by level of implementation and impact. For each institution, the responses to the level of impact of each component were analyzed to answer research question three.

In addition, all the teachers were then asked to respond to open-ended questions. The questions on the questionnaire, which were analyzed to answer research question number three are as follows:

3. How effective do you feel these assessments are?

8. Do you feel more or less time should be spent on reading or is the time allocated sufficient? Please explain.
9. How important are reading materials to an effective reading program? Please explain.
10. Other Comments:

The teachers' responses and comments from each institution were used to determine their perceptions as to the success of their program. The analysis consisted of identifying subtle, yet meaningful cues in participants' responses. In the analysis, common themes were identified in teacher's descriptions of their reading program. The relevant information was separated from the irrelevant information and the relevant information was analyzed for its support to the question being asked (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Further, the various ways in which different people experience their reading program was considered. Finally, various meanings were identified to develop an overall description of the reading program as it was experienced (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Procedures for Research Question Four

The following procedures were employed to address research question number four, "How are the teachers' perceptions related to the strengths and weaknesses of each reading program?" All teachers' (n=28) perceptions were analyzed and compared using a qualitative method (specifically phenomenology) at the two participating schools. Specifically, the following questions were analyzed to assist in answering research question four:

5. What do you feel are the advantages of a scientifically-based reading program (see Appendix B) / an optional reading program (see Appendix C)?

6. What do you feel are the disadvantages of a scientifically-based reading program (see Appendix B) / an optional reading program (see Appendix C)?

The strengths and weaknesses of each program were determined by comparing the teachers' responses with the strengths and weaknesses of the program as identified in the literature. The analysis consisted of identifying subtle, yet meaningful cues in participants' responses. In the analysis, common themes were identified in teacher's descriptions of their reading program. The relevant information was separated from the irrelevant information and the relevant information was analyzed for its support to the question being asked (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Further, the various ways in which different people experience their reading program was considered. Finally, various meanings were identified to develop an overall description of the reading program as it was experienced (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Population

The participants in the research were teachers at two different school sites. At the Reading First School questionnaires were distributed to 26 teachers with 14 teachers responding (a response rate of 54%). At the Optional Reading Program School, 15 questionnaires were distributed and 14 teachers participated (a response rate of 93%). Teachers were not required to write their names on their questionnaires to preserve their anonymity and all data from the project are reported in aggregate form only.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to gather data for this study was a questionnaire (see Appendices B & C) administered at two different school sites. The questionnaire consisted of 19 questions seeking responses of implementation and impact to reading

components using a Likert-style format and nine open-ended questions seeking perceptions of their school's reading program. The questions used in this study originated from the literature related to scientifically-based reading and alternative programs. Some open-ended questions were included to promote reflecting perceptions of reading instruction.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for the quantitative items on the questionnaire consisted of calculating measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode) for each item. Frequency calculations were also performed and are displayed in Chapter Four (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

For the open-ended questions, the analysis consisted of identifying subtle, yet meaningful cues in participants' responses. In the analysis, common themes were identified in teacher's descriptions of their reading program. The relevant information was separated from the irrelevant information and the relevant information was analyzed for its support to the question being asked (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Further, the various ways in which different people experience their reading program was considered. Finally, various meanings were identified to develop an overall description of the reading program as it was experienced (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Summary

This chapter addressed the statement of the problem, the research questions and the research design. The measures for addressing the research questions were indicated as well as the population being addressed in the study. The instrumentation for use in this research project was reviewed, as were the procedures employed for data analysis.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the advantages and disadvantages of a research-based reading program and an optional reading program. The methodology chosen for this study was a combination of qualitative (specifically phenomenology) and quantitative (survey research) methods. The data was collected using a questionnaire and the subjects in the study were participating teachers at two separate school sites, a Reading First School and a school with an optional reading method. The following chapter will provide details on the results emerging from the investigation. To address the purposes of this study the findings of four research questions are presented in this chapter.

1. What constitutes a "scientifically based" reading program?
2. What constitutes an optional reading program?
3. How successful do the teachers in each program believe their program to be?
4. How are the teachers' perceptions related to the strengths and weaknesses of each reading program?

Research Question Number One

Research question number one, "What constitutes a scientifically based reading program?" was addressed through the use of descriptive statistics and phenomenology. Teachers (n=14) from the Reading First School were asked to respond to numerous

questions (see Appendix B) regarding components relating to reading and responded according to their level of implementation. The Reading First teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of phonemic awareness and the mean score was 2.93 (near moderate implementation), the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of phonics and the mean, median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of vocabulary. The mean score was 3.29 (near moderate), the median score, as well as the mode, was 3(moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of fluency. The mean score was 3.21 (near moderate) and the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of comprehension. The mean score was 3.36 (near moderate) and the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of implementation of writing at their school. The mean score was 2.64 (near moderate) and the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of the basal reading series Harcourt Trophies. The mean score was 3.57 (near significant) and the median and mode scores were 4 (significant). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of other reading materials, excluding Harcourt Trophies. The mean score was 2.36 (near minimal), the median was 2.5 (near moderate) and mode score was 3 (moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding

the use of literature circles. The mean score was 2 (minimal), the median score was 1.5 (near minimal) and the mode score was 1 (not implemented).

The open-ended questions in the questionnaire provided further understanding of what constitutes a scientifically based reading program. Question number two of the questionnaire addressed the use of assessments and five main assessments were indicated on the responses. Ten out of 14 (71%) responded with the use of DIBELS, or Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, as an assessment tool. Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening (PALS) was indicated as an assessment on 10 out of the 14 responses (71%). Eight out of 14 responses (57%) indicated the use of STAR reading assessment. "Named as a top assessment in Reading First Schools," STAR is a computer reading assessment program (Renaissance Learning Inc., 2006). Six out of 14 responses (43%) in the scientifically based reading program indicated the use of the Harcourt Trophies Reading Series assessments. The last assessment most frequently used, was teacher observation, with five out of 14 responses (36%).

Question number four on the questionnaire (see Appendix B) asked teachers what reading materials they currently use in their scientifically-based reading program. One hundred percent (14 out of 14) of the teachers surveyed responded Harcourt Trophies. Four participants responded using other Harcourt materials (29%) and three responded using Passport Voyager (21%). Voyager Expanded Learning is a leading provider of in-school core reading programs, reading and math intervention programs, and professional development programs for school districts throughout the United States (Voyager Expanded Learning, n.d.).

Question number seven on the survey instrument asked the participants to respond approximately how long they spend per day on reading instruction. At the Reading First School three out of 14 participants responded 120 minutes. Two responded 90 minutes and two responded 90+voyager minutes. The highest amount of time spent on reading instruction was 145 minutes and the lowest was 80 minutes.

Research Question Number Two

Research question number two, "What constitutes an optional reading program?" was addressed through the use of descriptive statistics and phenomenology. Teachers (n=14) from the Optional Reading School were asked to respond to numerous questions (see Appendix C) regarding components relating to reading and responded according to their level of implementation. The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of phonemic awareness and the mean, median, and mode scores were 3 (moderate implementation). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of phonics and the mean was 3.21 (near moderate), the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of vocabulary. The mean score was 3.64 (near significant), the median score, as well as the mode, was 4 (significant). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of fluency. The mean, median, and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of comprehension. The mean score was 3.57 (near significant) and the median and mode scores were 4 (significant). The

Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of implementation of writing at their school. The mean score was 3.21 (near moderate) and the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of the basal reading series Harcourt Trophies. The mean score was 3.64 (near significant) and the median and mode scores were 4 (significant). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of other reading materials, excluding Harcourt Trophies. The mean score was 2.57 (near moderate), the median was 2.5 (near moderate) and mode score was 2 (minimal). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of implementation at their school regarding the use of literature circles. The mean score was 1.46 (minimal), the median score and the mode score were 1 (not implemented).

The open-ended questions in the questionnaire provided further understanding of what constitutes an optional reading program. Question number two of the questionnaire addressed the use of assessments and three main assessments were indicated on the responses. Five out of 14 (36%) responded with the use of DIBELS, or Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, as an assessment tool. Five out of 14 (36%) responded with the use of Harcourt Trophies Comprehension Tests. Accelerated Reader (A.R.) is a computerized program that assesses them on books they read. According to their website, “Accelerated Reader meets No Child Left Behind requirements for scientifically based research” (Renaissance Learning Inc., 2006). Four out of 14 (29%) of participants responded using A.R. assessments to evaluate reading achievement.

Question number four on the questionnaire (see Appendix B) asked teachers what reading materials they currently use in their optional reading program. Seventy-nine percent (11 out of 14) of the teachers surveyed responded Harcourt Trophies. Six participants responded using Leveled (A.R.) books (43%). Three responded using below, on, and advanced level books from Harcourt Trophies (21%). Three responded using as Passport Voyager materials (21%). Voyager Expanded Learning is a leading provider of in-school core reading programs, reading and math intervention programs, and professional development programs for school districts throughout the United States (Voyager Expanded Learning, n.d.).

Question number seven on the survey instrument asked the participants to respond approximately how long they spend per day on reading instruction. At the Optional Reading School five out of 14 participants responded 120 minutes (36%). The highest amount of time spent on reading instruction was all day (integration of every subject) and the lowest was 60-90 minutes.

Research Question Number Three

Research question number three, "How successful do the teachers in each program believe their program to be" was addressed through the use of descriptive statistics and phenomenology. Teachers (n=14) from the Reading First School and Optional Reading School were asked to respond to numerous Likert-type questions (see Appendix B & C) regarding components relating to reading and responded according to their level of impact. The Reading First results will be presented for both Likert-type questions and open-ended questions to answer the research question, followed by the Option Reading results.

The Reading First teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of phonemic awareness and the mean score was 3 (moderate impact), the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of phonics and the mean, median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of vocabulary. The mean score was 3.07 (near moderate), the median score, as well as the mode, was 3(moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of fluency. The mean score was 2.93 (near moderate) and the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of comprehension. The mean score was 3.21 (near moderate) and the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of impact of writing at their school. The mean score was 2.93 (near moderate) and the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of the basal reading series Harcourt Trophies. The mean score was 3.07 (near moderate) and the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of other reading materials, excluding Harcourt Trophies. The mean score was 2.43 (near minimal), the median was 2.5 (near moderate) and mode score was 3 (moderate). The Reading First teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of literature circles. The mean score was 2.5 (near moderate), the median score was 3 (moderate) and the mode score was 1 (no impact).

The open-ended questions in the questionnaire provided further understanding of how successful the teachers at the Reading First School believe their reading program to be. Question number three of the questionnaire asks the teachers to respond to how effective they feel their assessments to be. Feelings concerning the assessments were wide ranging, some felt they were minimally effective (1 person) and others believed they were very effective (1). However, the highest number of people felt it was moderately effective (2). Question number eight of the questionnaire asks if the teachers feel more or less time should be spent on reading or if the time allocated is sufficient. Five out of 14 (36%) responded that the time is sufficient for a structured and mandated program. Three respondents said they would like to be able to incorporate different materials beside Trophies to meet the needs of all. Three out of fourteen participants responded that they need extra time for science and social studies. Question number nine of the questionnaire asks participants to respond to how important reading materials are to an effective reading program. Seven out of 14 (50%) responded that they are very important. They need to be at the level and skill of the students. Six out of 14 (43%) responded teachers don't have to spend too much time searching and creating. Three out of 14 (21%) said that all materials are only as good as the teacher. Question number 10 of the questionnaire gave teachers the opportunity to add further comments to the study. The overall feeling (six out of seven) of the responses was that of negativity toward the scientifically based reading program.

Teachers using the Optional Reading Method responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of phonemic awareness and the mean was 3.08 (near moderate impact), the median was 3 (moderate), and the mode score was 4 (significant).

The Optional Reading teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of phonics and the mean was 3.23 (near moderate), the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of vocabulary. The mean score was 3.46 (near moderate), the median score, as well as the mode, was 3 (moderate). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of fluency. The mean was 2.77 (near moderate), the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of comprehension. The mean score was 3.23 (near moderate) and the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of impact of writing at their school. The mean score was 2.92 (near moderate) and the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of the basal reading series Harcourt Trophies. The mean score was 3.07 (near moderate) and the median and mode scores were 3 (moderate). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of other reading materials, excluding Harcourt Trophies. The mean score was 2.5 (near moderate), the median was 2 (minimal) and mode score was 2 (minimal). The Optional Reading Method teachers responded to the level of impact at their school regarding the use of literature circles. The mean score was 1.55 (near minimal), the median score and the mode score were 1 (no impact).

The open-ended questions in the questionnaire provided further understanding of how successful the teachers at the Reading First School believe their reading program to

be. Question number three of the questionnaire asks the teachers to respond to how effective they feel their assessments to be. Feelings concerning the assessments were wide ranging, some felt they were not very effective (1 person) and others believed they were good (1). However, the highest number of people felt Accelerated Reader (A.R.) would be useful if it were implemented and used as it is intended (2). Likewise two people responded that the assessments used at the Optional Reading School are somewhat effective (2). Question number eight of the questionnaire asks if the teachers feel more or less time should be spent on reading or if the time allocated is sufficient. Four out of 14 (29%) responded that if reading is implemented throughout the day, the whole day is about reading. Four respondents said time is sufficient. Three out of fourteen participants responded that more time would be great. Question number nine of the questionnaire asks participants to respond to how important reading materials are to an effective reading program. Ten out of 14 (71%) responded that reading materials are extremely important. Three out of 14 (21%) responded that having enough materials for everyone in your group as well as having a wide range of reading ability material to target everyone in your class. Two respondents think the most important thing to have is an effective teacher who can use anything as a resource. Question number 10 of the questionnaire gave teachers the opportunity to add further comments to the study. The responses given were more individual and did not have an overall feeling toward the optional reading program.

Research Question Number Four

Research question number four, "How are the teacher's perceptions related to the strengths and weaknesses of each reading program?" was addressed using questions number five and six of the questionnaire. Question number five of the questionnaire

asked what are the advantages of your reading program. This was asked of both the Reading First School as well as the Optional Reading School. Two respondents answered essential components for successful reading are taught in a systematic, spiraling, building program. Two respondents said it has been "researched" and "tested" (so we are made to believe). Two respondents said there is a structured, sequential and grade level appropriateness that they find helpful.

At the Optional Reading School, four out of 14 (29%) teachers said that students might respond more enthusiastically to a variety of instructional techniques. Four out of 14 (29%) participants responded that teachers are able to break down the needs of each student. Three out of 14 (21%) said that teachers would have more materials to choose from for their students.

Question number six also assists in answering research question number four: What are the disadvantages of your reading program. This question was asked of both the Reading First School and the Optional Reading School. At the Reading First School four out of 14 (29%) participants said that the Reading First reading program does not take into account any personality or different levels. Four out of 14 (29%) said there is not much room for creativity. Three participants said it was boring and students tune out.

At the Optional Reading School five out of 14 (36%) felt the disadvantages to their program is that some teachers do not know how to teach reading. Teachers who do not have a good foundation in reading or are lazy tend to rely too much on the basal and not on what students need. Three out of 14 (21%) felt that not all teachers use the same materials.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the four research questions under study, which are:

1. What constitutes a “scientifically based” reading program?
2. What constitutes an optional reading program?
3. How successful do the teachers in each program believe their program to be?
4. How are the teachers’ perceptions related to the strengths and weaknesses of each reading program?

Results were presented to each of the four research questions. Data were given regarding specific information provided by the questionnaires from the two participating schools.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter will provide discussion and recommendations related to this research project. More specifically, this chapter will consist of a summary of the study, a discussion of the four research questions and their results, limitations in the study, implications, and recommendations for educators. To address the purposes of this study the discussion of four research questions are presented in this chapter.

1. What constitutes a "scientifically based" reading program?
2. What constitutes an optional reading program?
3. How successful do the teachers in each program believe their program to be?
4. How are the teachers' perceptions related to the strengths and weaknesses of each reading program?

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a scientifically based reading program is more effective than an optional reading program as perceived by teachers of the opposing programs at two participating schools. A literature review examined the teacher's role as a reading instructor and accountability, including The No Child Left Behind Act and Nevada Reading First. The literature also explored the components of a reading program that consisted of many components, such as textbook use, literature circles, instructional time, assessments and the five key components of reading. The

methodology chosen for this study was a combination of qualitative (specifically phenomenology) and quantitative (survey research) methods. The data was collected using a questionnaire and the subjects in the study were participating teachers at two separate school sites, a Reading First School and a school with an optional reading method. The results were presented according to research question and reflected the teacher's responses regarding their perception of their reading program.

Discussion

In research question number one, "What constitutes a scientifically based reading program?" the results gathered from the questionnaires at the Reading First School provided interesting information. Referring to the Likert-type questions for the Reading First School, teachers viewed their program as implementing more than a moderate amount of vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension in their reading instruction. These are part of the five components of reading as mentioned in Chapter Three and part the Nevada Reading First mandates. The implementation of the reading series, Harcourt Trophies (Basal Reader), was the highest scored aspect of reading. Due to the mandates on the teachers by the Nevada Reading First Grant, the use of Harcourt Trophies is one of the most crucial components to their school's reading program. However, the lowest mean scores showed that the implementation of writing is one of three of their lowest implementations. The Harcourt Trophies Reading Series does not have a substantial writing program and thus they are not implementing it. Although, it is interesting to note that this is the only area that the participants' impact is ranked much higher than their implementation. Using other reading materials beside Harcourt Trophies and using literature circles had the two lowest mean scores. Teachers viewed their impact of

teaching with other reading materials as higher than their implementation of other materials. The participants also viewed their impact higher than implementation using literature circles. They are not implementing these areas but view them as important areas to reading instruction.

Questions two, four, and seven of the questionnaire assisted in clarifying what makes a scientifically based reading program. Question number two demonstrated the mandated assessments (DIBELS, PALS, STAR, and Trophies Tests) teachers are using based on the Nevada Reading First Grant. Question number four clarified which reading materials are used in a scientifically based reading program. It was noticeable based on a response rate of 100% that Harcourt Trophies materials are the mandated materials used by every teacher in the Reading First School. Question number seven showed that all but one teacher implemented the required 90-minute uninterrupted block mandated by Nevada Reading First, with the majority well exceeding 90 minutes.

In research question number two, "What constitutes an optional reading program?" the results gathered from the Likert-type questions of the questionnaires at the Optional Reading School provided interesting information. At the Optional Reading School, teachers viewed their program as implementing more than a moderate amount of phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and writing in their reading instruction. Comparing the Reading First results to the Optional Reading results it is obvious the teachers are using a supplemental writing program but it may not be having much impact. The implementation of fluency was one of the three lowest mean scores in the Likert-type questions. More significantly, their view on the impact of the reading component is much lower than that of implementation. This may be due to the use of the Accelerated Reader

(A.R.) program, which targets fluency skills and emphasizes that when word identification is fast and accurate, the reader can more effectively think about the meaning of the text (Moats, 1999). The implementation of the reading series, Harcourt Trophies (Basal Reader), and vocabulary were the highest scored aspect of reading. The teacher's use of the Trophies text was an alarming result because they are not mandated to use this program through a Reading First Grant. The implementation of vocabulary was reasonable because the teachers are probably teaching a great deal of vocabulary for their students to perform well on A.R tests.

Questions two, four, and seven of the questionnaire assisted in clarifying what makes an optional reading program. Question number two demonstrated the wide variety of assessments used by teachers at the Optional Reading School (see Appendix C). Teachers still use the DIBELS and Trophies Tests but it is not as widely used as the Reading First School. Accelerated Reader (A.R.) is a program used at the Optional Reading School that is not at the Reading First School; however, it does meet the No Child Left Behind requirements for scientifically based research (Renaissance Learning Inc., 2006). Question number four clarified which reading materials are used in an optional reading program. A very high response indicated that Harcourt Trophies materials are used by many of the teachers in the Optional Reading School. It is also obvious that Trophies is not mandated because the use of numerous other materials was listed. Question number seven showed that many more teachers, compared to the Reading First School, were teaching around 90 minutes.

In research question number three, "How successful do the teachers in each program believe their program to be?" the results gathered from the Likert-type questions

of the questionnaires at both the Reading First School and the Optional Reading School provided interesting information. For the Reading First School, writing is the only area that the participants' impact is ranked much higher than their implementation. This may be because the teachers feel writing to be more successful because they are implementing their own program as opposed to implementing a mandated program. Teachers viewed their impact of teaching with other reading materials as slightly higher than their implementation of other materials. Clearly, the teachers at the Reading First School are not using reading materials other than Harcourt Trophies but view using other texts as important areas of reading instruction.

The teachers at the Reading First School also answered open-ended questions, which assisted to an understanding of their perceptions of their reading program's success. In question three of the questionnaire, the participants held such a wide range of feelings toward the effectiveness of their assessments but overall they were moderately satisfied with them. In question seven of the questionnaire, the teachers believed the amount of time spent on reading was sufficient in their reading program but would also like to be able to use other materials besides Harcourt Trophies. According to question nine of the questionnaire, the teachers perceive reading materials as very important to an effective reading program.

For the Optional Reading School, the implementation of fluency was one of the three lowest mean scores in the Likert-type questions. More significantly, their view on the impact of the program is much lower than that of implementation. This may be due to the use of the Accelerated Reader (A.R.) program, which targets fluency skills and

emphasizes that when word identification is fast and accurate, the reader can more effectively think about the meaning of the text (Moats, 1999).

The teachers at the Optional Reading School also answered open-ended questions, which assisted to an understanding of their perceptions of their reading program's success. In question three of the questionnaire, the participants had such a wide range of feelings toward the effectiveness of their assessments but were only somewhat satisfied. In question seven of the questionnaire, the teachers believed the amount of time spent on reading was sufficient in their reading program but felt that if reading is implemented throughout the day, the whole day is about reading. According to question nine of the questionnaire, the majority of teachers perceive reading materials as extremely important to an effective reading program.

In research question number four, "How are the teacher's perceptions related to the strengths and weaknesses of each reading program?" the results gathered from open-ended questions number five and six of the questionnaires at both the Reading First School and the Optional Reading School provided interesting information. At the Reading First School, the advantages of the program were not very unified in response. Many of the comments were in favor of the scientifically based reading program being systematic, researched, and structured. However the disadvantages were clear. The teachers feel the scientifically based reading program does not take into account personality and levels of the students, leaves no room for creativity, and is boring. A different response was given for the Optional Reading School. The advantages were that students might respond more enthusiastically to a variety of instructional techniques. Another advantage opposite from the Reading First is that teachers are better able to

break down the needs of each student. The teachers at the Optional Reading Method School felt the disadvantages were that some teachers don't know how to teach reading and not all teachers teach the same. Therefore, just the opposite from the advantages of the Reading First School; an optional reading method is not systematic.

Limitations

Some of the limitations in this study, which can be changed in future studies to make the results more generalizable, included the following:

1. This study was only conducted in two schools.
2. Only 14 participants from each school (n=28) responded to the questionnaire for an overall response rate of 68%.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to determine the advantages and disadvantages of a research-based reading program and an optional reading program and, as a result, several implications for educators regarding these programs emerged:

1. As a Reading First School, it is important to understand that Harcourt Trophies may be advantageous because it is systematic (unlike other programs at optional method schools).
2. As a Reading First School, it is important for administration and governmental agencies to know that many of the programs, such as Harcourt Trophies, can become boring, rigid, and therefore may have a negative effect on students.
3. As an Optional Reading School, developing a systematic approach to teaching reading may be beneficial.

4. As an Optional Reading School, a more uniform assessment may be useful by creating a tool that teachers feel is effective for their reading instruction.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research are as follows:

1. It is recommended that a similar study be conducted in other schools on a larger scale.
2. It is recommended that the questionnaire used ask specifically what existing reading programs contain and what teachers' perceptions are regarding student learning.
3. It is recommended that a study be conducted using student outcome data to better assess which reading programs are more effective.

Summary

This chapter provided a discussion of the results of this study, which concluded that a scientifically based reading program is not necessarily more effective than an optional reading program. The advantages and disadvantages of each program are identified from the results and discussion. Continued research in this area is needed in regard to the effectiveness of one reading program over another.

REFERENCES

ABT Associates Inc. (2006). *Reading First Schools Receiving More Reading Instruction Than a Group of Comparable Schools.* Retrieved on October 8, 2006, from https://www.abtassociates.com/Page.cfm?PageID=40389

Adams, M. A. (October, 1990). Beginning Reading Instruction in the United States. *ERIC Digest.* ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills.

Baumann, J.F., Heubach, K.M. (Fall 1994). *National Reading Research Center.* Do basal readers deskill teachers? Reading Research Report No. 26.

Bond, L.A., Herman, J., & Arter, J**.** (1994). Rethinking assessment and its role in supporting educational reform. In Laboratory Network Program, *A tool kit for professional developers: Alternative assessment*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Brekke, G. (1987). How Does Time Spent in Elementary School Reading Today Compare with That of a Generation Ago? *Mankato Statement.* p3-5 Spr 1987 (ED291082).

Brabham, E.G., & Villaume, S.K. (2000). Questions and answers: Continuing conversations about literature circles. The Reading Teacher, 54(3), 278-280.

Burns, B. (1998). Changing the classroom climate with literature circles. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 42(2), 124-129.

Caputo, M. (2002, October 18). Bush brothers stump together, stressing education message. *The Palm Beach Post,* 16A. Retrieved on Oct 8, 2006, from http://www.elibrary.com/education

Chall, J.S., Jacobs, V.A., & Baldwin, L. E., (1990) *The Reading Crisis: Why Poor Children Fall Behind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Chia-Hui, L. (2002). Literature Circles. *ERIC Educational Reports.* October, 2002. Retrieved from FindArticles.com on October 8, 2006.

Cooper, J.D. (1993). Literacy: Helping children construct meaning (2nd ed.). Boston: Houghton M Company.

Daniels, H. (2002). *Literature circles: Voice and choice in book clubs and reading groups.* (2nd ed.). Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Farinacci, M. (1998). "We have so much to talk about": Implementing literature circles as an action-research project. The Ohio Reading Teacher, 32(2), 4-11.

Foorman, B. (2003). *Preventing and remediating reading difficulties*. Baltimore, MD: York Press.

Gerald C. (2000). *Misreading Reading: The Bad Science That Hurts Children.* Heinemann: Westport, CT.

Indianapolis Public Schools (2003). *Teachers Role in Literacy Instruction.* Retrieved on October 8, 2006, from http://www.literacyframework.ips.k12.in.us/about_literacy_framework/literacy_instruction/default.as

International Reading Association. (1996-2007). *What is evidence based reading instruction?* Retrieved from http://www.reading.org/downloads/positions/ps1055_evidence_based.pdf on October 8, 2006.

LaFlamme, J. G. (1997). *The effect of multiple exposure vocabulary method and the target reading/writing strategy on test scores*. Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 40, 372-381.

Leedy, P. D. & Ormrod, J. E. (2005). *Practical Research Planning and Design*. (8th Edition). Pearson: Columbus, Ohio.

Leinhardt, G., Zigmond, N., & Cooley, W.W. (1981, Fall). Reading instruction and its effects. A*merican Educational Research Journal*, 18(3), 343-361.

Martinez, M.G. & Roser, N.L. (1991). Children's responses to literature. In J. Flood, J.M. Jensen, D. Lapp & J.R. Squire (Eds.). *Handbook on research on teaching the English language arts (643-654).* New York: Macmillan Publishing company

McKenzie, M. (1985). Shared writing. Language matters. London: Inner London Educational Authority.

Moats, L. C. (1999). *Teaching reading is rocket science: What expert teachers of reading should know and be able to do.* Washington, D. C.: American Federation of Teachers.

Murphy, J. (2004). Leadership for Literacy: A Framework for Policy and Practice. School Effectiveness and School Improvement, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 65-96.

National Reading Panel (2000). National Reading Panel Reports Combination of Teaching Phonics, Word Sounds, Giving Feedback on Oral Reading Most Effective Way to Teach Reading. *National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.* Retrieved on October 8, 2006, from http:// www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Press/press_rel_4_13_00_1.htm

Nevada Department of Education (October 24, 2005). Link to Reading First Schools. *Current Initiatives: Nevada Education Reform Act.* Retrieved on October 8, 2006, from http://www.doe.nv.gov/schools/firstschools.html.

O'Day, J.A., & Smith, M. (1993). Systemic school reform and educational opportunity. In S. Fuhrman (Ed.), *Designing coherent educational policy: Improving the system* (pp. 250-311). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Peralta-Nash, C., & Dutch, J.A. (2000). Literature circles: Creating an environment for choice. Primary Voices K-6, 8(4), 29-37.

Reading First Support (2006). DataEast, LLC. Retrieved from http://readingfirstsupport.us on October 8, 2006.

Renaissance Learning Inc. (2006). *STAR Reading.* Retrieved from http://www.renlearn.com/starreading/default.htm on November 25, 2006.

Renaissance Learning Inc. (2006). *Accelerated Reader Enterprise.* Retrieved on December 6, 2006 from http://www.renlearn.com/ar/overview/default.htm

Routman, R. (1991). I*nvitations: Changing as teachers and learners K-12.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Routman, R. (1999). *Conversations: Strategies for Teaching, Learning, and Evaluating.* Heinemann: Westport, CT.

Shanahan, T. (2003). Research-based reading instruction: Myths about the National Reading Panel report. *The Reading Teacher,* 56, 646-655.

Snow, C. E., Burns, S., & Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children: Report of the Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Stahl, S.A., & Fairbanks, M. M., (1986). *The effects of vocabulary instruction*: A model-based meta-analysis. Review of Educational Research, 56, (1), 72-110.

Taberski, S. (2000). *On Solid Ground: Strategies for Teaching Reading K-3.* Heinemann: Westport, CT.

Taylor, B.M, Frye, B.J., & Maruyama, G.M. (1990, Spring). Time spent reading and reading growth. *American Education Research Journal*, 27(2), 351-362.

Tivman T., & Hemphill L. (2005). Comparing four literacy reform models in high-poverty schools: Patterns of first-grade achievement. *Elementary School Journal, 105*(5), 419-441.

Trachtenburg, P. (1990). Using children's literature to enhance phonics instruction. *The* Reading Teacher, 43, 648-654.

U.S. Department of Education. (2001). *No child left behind act of 2001: Executive summary.* Retrieved on October 8, 2006, from http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/execsumm.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2005). Internet. Retrieved September 25, 2006 from http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/applicant.html

Voyager Expanded Learning, L.P. (n.d.). Internet. Retrieved on December 6, 2006 from http://www.voyagerlearning.com/about/index.jsp

Wikipedia. (2006). Internet. Retrieved September 25, 2006 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_Child_Left_Behind

Winking, D., & Bond, L. (1995). *What you and your school should know about alternative assessment*. Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Principal Consent Form

Teacher's Perceptions of a "Scientifically Based Reading Program" as Opposed to an Optional Reading Method
Consent Form

Dear Principal,

I am a second grade teacher at Helen Jydstrup Elementary School and I am pursuing a Master's Degree in Elementary Education at Regis University. I would like to conduct an interview with your staff members to help fulfill the requirements of my Master's Degree.

I am requesting that I distribute a questionnaire to all of your staff members regarding their participation of your reading program.

No foreseeable risks or discomforts are associated with this study since the teachers will have a choice as to whether they fill it out and return it. The study will be used to help gain a better understanding of the perceived advantages and disadvantages of a "research based reading program" as opposed to an optional reading method.

The data collection will be kept confidential and will not be reported in a manner that personally identifies the participants or their school name.

You may choose to cancel school-wide participation at any time. There will not be any penalties for nonparticipation.

Please address any questions you may have about this project to me, Christine L. Donner at Helen Jydstrup Elementary School, 799-8140. Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Christine L. Donner

I have read and understand the above information and agree to allow my staff to participate in the study on our reading program. I am also aware that I may withdraw at any time.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant (print)	Signature of Participant	Date

Appendix B

Reading First School Questionnaire and Results

Please answer the following questions by circling **one answer.**

Level of Teaching Experience

1-3 years (n=0)	4-6 years (n=6)	7-9 years (n=2)	10 years or over (n=6)

Phonemic Awareness

(The ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds, phonemes, in spoken words)

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=2.93 (moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. Not implemented (n=1)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=3)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=6)	4. Significant Implementation (n=4)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=2.86 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=1)	2. Minimal Impact (n=4)	3. Moderate Impact (n=5)	4. Significant Impact (n=4)

Phonics

(Phonological structure of oral language and its representation in written language)

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=3 (moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. Not implemented (n=1)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=3)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=5)	4. Significant Implementation (n=5)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=3 (moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=1)	2. Minimal Impact (n=3)	3. Moderate Impact (n=5)	4. Significant Impact (n=5)

Vocabulary

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=3.29 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. Not implemented (n=0)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=1)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=8)	4. Significant Implementation (n=5)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=3.07 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=0)	2. Minimal Impact (n=3)	3. Moderate Impact (n=7)	4. Significant Impact (n=4)

Fluency

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=3.21 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. Not implemented (n=0)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=1)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=9)	4. Significant Implementation (n=4)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=2.93 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=0)	2. Minimal Impact (n=3)	3. Moderate Impact (n=9)	4. Significant Impact (n=2)

Comprehension

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=3.36 (near moderate) median=3.5 (near significant) mode=4 (significant)			
1. Not implemented (n=0)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=2)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=5)	4. Significant Implementation (n=7)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=3.21 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=0)	2. Minimal Impact (n=1)	3. Moderate Impact (n=9)	4. Significant Impact (n=4)

Writing

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=2.64 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. Not implemented (n=1)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=4)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=8)	4. Significant Implementation (n=1)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=2.93 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=0)	2. Minimal Impact (n=4)	3. Moderate Impact (n=7)	4. Significant Impact (n=3)

Harcourt Trophies (Basal Reader)

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=3.57 (near significant) median=4 (significant) mode=4 (significant)			
1. Not implemented (n=0)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=0)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=6)	4. Significant Implementation (n=8)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=3.07 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=0)	2. Minimal Impact (n=2)	3. Moderate Impact (n=9)	4. Significant Impact (n=3)

Other Reading Materials

(Excluding Harcourt Trophies)

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=2.36 (near minimal) median=2.5 (near moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. Not implemented (n=2)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=5)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=7)	4. Significant Implementation (n=0)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=2.43 (near minimal) median=2.5 (near moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=2)	2. Minimal Impact (n=5)	3. Moderate Impact (n=6)	4. Significant Impact (n=1)

Literature Circles

(Students choose their own reading material and meet in small, temporary groups with other students who are reading the same book)

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=2 (minimal) median=1.5 (near minimal) mode=1 (not implemented)			
1. Not implemented (n=7)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=2)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=3)	4. Significant Implementation (n=2)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=2.5 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=1 (no impact)			
1. No Impact (n=5)	2. Minimal Impact (n=1)	3. Moderate Impact (n=4)	4. Significant Impact (n=4)

2. **What assessment(s) do you use to evaluate reading achievement?**
   (responses are summarized by number of respondents)
   a. DIBELS-required(10)
   b. PALS- required(10)
   c. STAR Reading Computer Tests (8)
   d. Trophies comprehension tests (6)
   e. Teacher Observation (5)
   f. Voyager (2)
   g. Besides Trophies- Every week students write about the best book they read that week.(1)
   h. classroom participation(1)
   i. classwork(1)
   j. comprehension questions (open-ended)(1)
   k. IDMS Assessments(1)
   l. mapping, diagramming, re-enactment, etc.(1)
   m. Pre and Post language skills assessments of Trophies themes(1)
   n. running records(timed)(1)
   o. various other assessments that are more like an activity and less like a "test."(1)

3. How effective do you feel these assessments are?

a. moderate(2)
b. Authentic assessments tell you how students are progressing, what they use but confuse.(1)
c. I feel that truly the Reading Comprehension tests are the only test comprehension! Maybe STARS a little!!!(1)
d. Minimal(1)
e. Not very, more accurate measure allows me to narrow my focus(1)
f. PALS seems to be the most helpful, giving more information and informal observations. (1)
g. STARS-Doesn't assess comprehension, DIBELS & PALS- Doesn't assess comprehension, only fluency/word knowledge
h. STARS-not very, DIBELS- no comprehension, PALS-ok, but takes a long time. This is ok if used *without* all the other tests. DIBELS and STARS we are required to do.(1)
i. These assessment tools are valuable for planning, grouping, parent conferences, etc. (1)
j. They are fairly effective(1)
k. Trophies is useful for grading purposes(1)
l. Used together, I feel it's very affective(1)Very effective(1)
m. With exception of PALS they are very effective(1)

4. What reading materials do you use currently in your program?

a. Harcourt Trophies(14)
b. Other Harcourt Materials(4)
c. Voyager Passport(3)
d. About 500 books(1)Library books,
e. Fran Parker(1)
f. Rigby Reading-word families(1)
g. Scholastic News, newspapers (1)

5. What do you feel are the *advantages* of a scientifically-based reading program?

a. Essential components for successful reading are taught in a systematic, spiraling, building program.(2)
b. That it has been "researched" and "tested" (so we're made to believe).(2)
c. There is a structured, sequential and grade level appropriateness that I find helpful.(2)
d. First, it would really have to be "scientifically-based" and then I don't really know what the advantages would be.(1)
e. It's all written out for you, so if you want to be a robot you can!!!(1)
f. Lots of materials(1)

g. Minimal advantages due to diversity.(1)
h. New teachers would have some place to start.(1)
i. Past success leads to current success(1)
j. Very little(1)
k. What scientifically based program is being used? I guess if it were scientific we could view results that shows the program works.(1)

6. What do you feel are the *disadvantages* of a scientifically-based reading program?

a. It doesn't take into account any personality or different levels, etc.(4)
b. Not much room for creativity.(4)
c. It is boring and students tune out!!(3)
d. I don't feel there is any disadvantages to a scientifically based reading program.(2)
e. Not enough repetition of basic vocabulary.(2)
f. Evaluators must see the core reading activities as guides and not something that teachers MUST use. (1)
g. It is hard to find time for remediation and still cover all the material.(1)
h. Structure, assumes a higher level of knowledge or skills than students have, relentless pace doesn't teach reading in real life context, lack of flexibility to do program correctly.(1)
i. The programs may work for previous classes, but times change.(1)
j. The students are reading less(1)
k. This disadvantage of any program is to know that no one program will meet all the needs of students and teachers.(1)

7. Approximately how long do you spend per day on reading instruction?

a. 120 minutes (3)
b. 90 minutes (2)
c. 90 + voyager minutes (2)
d. 145 minutes (1)
e. 140 minutes (1)
f. 130 minutes (1)
g. 105 minutes (1)
h. 100 minutes (1)
i. 90-120 minutes (1)
j. 80 minutes (1)

8. Do you feel more or less time should be spent on reading or is the time allocated sufficient? Please explain.

a. The time is sufficient for a structured and mandated program. (5)

b. I would like to be able to incorporate different materials beside Trophies to meet the needs of all.(3)
c. We need the extra time for science/social studies.(3)
d. Less time (2)
e. More time to supplement according to the needs of her own group.(2)
f. Reading is continuously taught in other subjects.(2)
g. We need to teach reading in all content areas.(2)
h. I think a 30-minute longer school day would be perfect.(1)
i. Less on instruction. The amount of time is spent mostly on instruction, more time should be spent on the students actually reading. (1)
j. More than enough.(1)
k. Our student population necessitates that we spend an extra amount of time to bring them closer to expected levels(1)

9. How important are reading materials to an effective reading program? Please explain.

a. They are very important. They need to be at the level and skill of the students.(7)
b. Teachers don't have to spend too much time searching and creating.(6)
c. All materials are only as good as the teacher. (3)
d. Materials are crucial.(1)
e. Students need to make choices and take ownership of the books. Effective programs would give students a lot of choices.(1)
f. Too many reading materials are REQUIRED. "If they buy them, you must use them."(1)
g. We need enough materials for every student.(1)
h. You need them to consistently cover all the components of reading.(1)

10. Other Comments (use back if necessary):

a. At higher grade levels, I find most scientifically based programs seriously lacking any practical, real world context. This makes it difficult for students to get excited about or stay interested in reading.

   In addition, it is extremely degrading to a teacher's sense of professionalism to be required to teach a program that makes no allowances for individuality or customization. So much more can be accomplished using real reading materials over a prepackaged program.(1)
b. I am impressed with our core reading program.(1)
c. I don't enjoy teaching reading any more. I also believe that our reading scores may be getting better because of the time we spend on reading and not necessarily the reading series.(1)
d. I have several concerns. One is that so much attention is focused on reading that other important areas such as writing, science, geography, and history are being neglected. Also, I think so much focus is put on the

children who are below level that children who are at or above grade level are getting short shift. Time which could be spent in challenge or enrichment must go to the fewer who are behind. I think several things could be done.

Students who are not at grade level should not be promoted.

Remedial reading should be done as a pull out by reading specialists, et.al. (especially at the lower grades when the at-grade-level students are not yet able to work constructively and independently for any length of time)

You should have 2 strands of kindergarten. ONE for students who are ready academically and socially. TWO Kindergarden for kids who need another year either for academics, socially (late birthday, etc.) or ELL.(1)

e. I think Reading First forgets that not all children learn in a structured sequential manner. Some children are more impacted by desire and interest. This can be stimulated by using Science and Social Studies vehicles for reading. Unfortunately, we are left with no time for these avenues with all of the mandated lessons for whole group.

   I also feel blanketing whole group for such a large part of our day limits our ability to meet individual levels. We only hit the broad middle.

   I am not advocating a totally independent or whole language approach, because I feel then that there is not enough continuity between classes and grades. An adopted program for use by all is essential for a school like ours- but allow us as professionals to use it to our children's best advantage.(1)

f. It doesn't matter what materials one has if the person is not using them to the best of their ability or is not trained properly. On the other hand, we need to trust in the expertise of qualified teachers to incorporate materials (not ones that are Mandated) that they feel are beneficial and that enrich their students' learning.(1)

g. Trophies is a good reading program but when we are required to follow it like a script it becomes tedious not only for the students but teachers as well. If we are scripted does that mean "they" feel we don't know how to teach? In addition, using other materials beside Trophies would be a huge plus in teaching reading.(1)

Appendix C

Optional Reading School Questionnaire and Results

Please answer the following questions by circling **one answer.**

Level of Teaching Experience

1-3 years (n=2)	4-6 years (n=6)	7-9 years (n=2)	10 years or over (n=3)

Phonemic Awareness

(The ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds, phonemes, in spoken words)

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=3 (moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. Not implemented (n=1)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=3)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=5)	4. Significant Implementation (n=5)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=3.08 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=4 (significant)			
1. No Impact (n=0)	2. Minimal Impact (n=5)	3. Moderate Impact (n=5)	4. Significant Impact (n=5)

Phonics

(Phonological structure of oral language and its representation in written language)

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=3.21 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. Not implemented (n=0)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=1)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=9)	4. Significant Implementation (n=4)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=3.23 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=0)	2. Minimal Impact (n=3)	3. Moderate Impact (n=7)	4. Significant Impact (n=5)

Vocabulary

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=3.64 (near significant) median=4 (significant) mode=4 (significant)			
1. Not implemented (n=0)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=0)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=5)	4. Significant Implementation (n=9)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=3.46 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=0)	2. Minimal Impact (n=0)	3. Moderate Impact (n=7)	4. Significant Impact (n=6)

Fluency

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=3 (moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. Not implemented (n=0)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=2)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=10)	4. Significant Implementation (n=2)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=2.77 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=0)	2. Minimal Impact (n=4)	3. Moderate Impact (n=8)	4. Significant Impact (n=1)

Comprehension

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=3.57 (near significant) median=4 (significant) mode=4 (significant)			
1. Not implemented (n=0)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=0)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=6)	4. Significant Implementation (n=8)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=3.23 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=0)	2. Minimal Impact (n=1)	3. Moderate Impact (n=8)	4. Significant Impact (n=4)

Writing

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=3.21 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. Not implemented (n=1)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=1)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=6)	4. Significant Implementation (n=6)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=2.92 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=1)	2. Minimal Impact (n=3)	3. Moderate Impact (n=8)	4. Significant Impact (n=3)

Harcourt Trophies (Basal Reader)

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=3.64 (near significant) median=4 (significant) mode=4 (significant)			
1. Not implemented (n=0)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=1)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=3)	4. Significant Implementation (n=10)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=3.07 (near moderate) median=3 (moderate) mode=3 (moderate)			
1. No Impact (n=0)	2. Minimal Impact (n=3)	3. Moderate Impact (n=7)	4. Significant Impact (n=4)

Other Reading Materials

(Excluding Trophies)

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=2.57 (near moderate) median=2.5 (near moderate) mode=2 (minimal)			
1. Not implemented (n=1)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=6)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=5)	4. Significant Implementation (n=2)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=2.5 (near moderate) median=2 (minimal) mode=2 (minimal)			
1. No Impact (n=1)	2. Minimal Impact (n=7)	3. Moderate Impact (n=4)	4. Significant Impact (n=2)

Literature Circles

(Students choose their own reading material and meet in small, temporary groups with other students who are reading the same book)

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION mean=1.46 (minimal) median=1 (not implemented) mode=1 (not implemented)			
1. Not implemented (n=8)	2. Minimal Implementation (n=4)	3. Moderate Implementation (n=1)	4. Significant Implementation (n=0)
LEVEL OF IMPACT mean=1.55 (near minimal) median=1 (no impact) mode=1 (no impact)			
1. No Impact (n=6)	2. Minimal Impact (n=4)	3. Moderate Impact (n=1)	4. Significant Impact (n=0)

2. What assessment(s) do you use to evaluate reading achievement?

(responses are summarized by number of respondents)

a. DIBELS(5)
b. Trophies Comprehension test(5)
c. Accelerated Reader (A.R.) Tests(4)
d. DRA(3)
e. Running Records(3)
f. Vocabulary & Grammar pages in Trophies practice book(3)
g. STAR assessment(2)
h. An ancient Informal Reading Inventory(1)
i. DOLCH word list(1)
j. DRA Jerry Johns Reading Assessment(1)
k. Grammar tests(1)
l. Observation (reading in small groups)(1)
m. Oral Reading from Passport program(1)
n. PALS(1)
o. Phonemic awareness assessments(1)
p. Phonics sheet(1)
q. San Diego Quick Assessment(1)
r. Sight word test(1)

s. Spelling tests(1)
t. Writing portfolios(1)

3. How effective do you feel these assessments are?

a. AR would be useful if it were implemented and used as it is intended. 1)For independent readers 2)Recall story without using book 3)Expect readers to read AR books just right for them ie-5th graders should not be taking 1st grade levels just to get points to win prizes.(2)
b. Somewhat effective.(2)
c. DRA is good for a basic level, I have noticed that most students read the text but are often shy about retelling the story. Running Record is good and follows Trophies lessons. San Diego Quick Assessment (SDQ) is good also. (1)
d. Good(1)
e. I believe that both programs are moderately effective.(1)
f. I feel DIBELS and DRA are more effective than the STAR reading test.(1)
g. I think the IRI and DOLCH lists have close to the same results. DIBELS is good with low students(1)
h. My favorite is the phonemic awareness tests and running records. I teach strategies to use context clues and running records help assess their understanding.(1)
i. Not very(1)
j. The assessment is effective enough for what it is testing on.(1)
k. They are as effective as the teacher who has reviewed the materials ahead of time and made sure all aspects are covered!(1)
l. They are too hard for my low level students so they give up.(1)
m. They can often memorize the story by the end of the week. The Running Records is thus somewhat effective.(1)
n. Used together more effective, individually not very effective.(1)
o. When you combine the results from all the assessments and teacher observation, I believe they are very effective.(1)

4. What reading materials do you use currently in your program?

a. Trophies(11)
b. Leveled books (A.R. books)(6)
c. Below-on-Advanced level books(3)
d. Voyager/Passport(3)
e. Decodable books (2)
f. Trade books(2)
g. Big books *if* they were available (1)
h. Chapter books, genuine literature(1)
i. Further integration of certain topics through other picture books.(1)
j. I also use Vowel Power with my low reading group.(1)

k. I use word family paper books, sight word paper books, 3000 book labeled library, journals, manipulative little letters for making words.(1)
l. Listening comprehension books, science & social studies textbooks(1)
m. Novel sets(1)
n. Phonics workbook, fluency timed tests, vocabulary-picture worksheets.(1)
o. Various activities instead of using just worksheets.(1)

5. What do you feel are the *advantages* of an optional reading program?

a. Students may respond more enthusiastically to a variety of instructional techniques.(4)
b. Teachers are able to break down the needs of each student(4)
c. You would have more materials to choose from for your students.(3)
d. Teachers can focus on the particular skills that their students need, not what the program says. Teachers can also include students interests into the materials selected.(2)
e. Chant charts, big books, poetry, and other optional materials would be useful.(1)
f. I do like to add some things like songs- but I really like Trophies Series.(1)
g. Not everyone has to do the same activity or worksheet the same way.(1)

6. What do you feel are the *disadvantages* of an optional reading program?

a. Some teachers don't know how to teach reading. I think teachers who don't have a good foundation in reading instruction or lazy tend to rely too much on the basal and not on what students need. (5)
b. Not all teachers use the same(3)
c. It would be more work for the teacher.(2)
d. Teachers often use only fiction books and don't use materials for all levels.(2)
e. Everyone is required to use the same assessments for every student.(1)
f. Some may not be research based.(1)

7. Approximately how long do you spend per day on reading instruction?

a. 120 minutes(5)
b. all day (integration of every subject)(1)
c. 180-200 minutes –integrated with other subjects (1)
d. 115 minutes (1)
e. 90-120 minutes (1)
f. 90+ minutes (1)
g. 90 minutes (1)
h. 80-90 minutes (1)

i. 60-90 minutes (1)
j. 25 (90 min. block for Language Arts) minutes (1)

8. Do you feel more or less time should be spent on reading or is the time allocated sufficient? Please explain.

a. If reading is implemented throughout the day, the whole day is about reading.(4)
b. Time is sufficient(4)
c. More time would be great(3)
d. For most students, the time is sufficient. My lower level readers need to also work on reading at home.(1)
e. I spend more time on reading then what is allocated because if you can catch/help the students in the younger grades then they have a better chance in the upper grades.(1)
f. It depends on the student(1)
g. Time isn't the problem, class size and ability to spend time one-on-one with students is outrageous.(1)

9. How important are reading materials to an effective reading program? Please explain.

a. Reading materials are extremely important.(10)
b. Having enough materials for everyone in your group as well as having a wide range of reading ability material to target everyone in your class(3)
c. I think the most important thing to have is an effective teacher who can use anything as a resource.(2)
d. It is effective when all materials are correlated and cover same skills.(1)

10. Other Comments (use back if necessary):

a. A phonics book would be great, charts with reading strategies listed, and stories/books with regional topics would be a bonus for these students.(1)
b. I'm an old whole language teacher. I teach reading all day long in all content areas. I implement whatever program I'm required to by the district but my technique is to teach reading all day. I'm also a former resource teacher- so I'm an awesome remedial reading teacher.

   This is my 22nd year in CCSD, so I've done/tried most everything out there. As long as parental involvement with their child decreases, so will their child's success.(1)
c. I think that the Trophies reading program covers most components for an effective reading program. The one component I don't like is the writing, but we also do Step Up to Writing.(1)
d. Teachers' abilities to help students with reading is a must. It doesn't matter how good a program is. If the teacher is poor it will show/impact the students.(1)

e. Trophies is the only program I have used-During student teaching they had it but never really used it.(1)