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A Study of the Correlation Between Sixth Grade Students' Attitudes Toward Reading and Their Performance on a Standardized Test

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**A Study of the Correlation Between Sixth Grade
Students' Attitudes Toward Reading and Their Performance
on a Standardized Test**

Thesis

**Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the
Department of Education and Human Development
State University of New York
College at Brockport
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education**

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a statistically significant correlation between sixth grade students' attitudes toward reading and their standardized test scores. More specifically, the area in question was whether a significant relationship existed between how well students scored on an exam and how much they enjoyed reading.

The subjects consisted of 75 sixth graders who had not repeated the grade nor were in Special Education. All of the subjects took the DRP exam in May of 1998 and were given the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey in September of 1998. Four teachers and their classes participated in the study. Each teacher administered the Survey; however, the researcher collected and tabulated all results.

A Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation was used to analyze the data. The results demonstrated that there was no statistically significant relationship between students' attitudes and their DRP scores.

For my husband,
without his support and understanding this would not
have been possible

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CHAPTER I

Statement of the Problem

Each year teachers complain that the students they receive are not adequately prepared. Oftentimes, this complaint is based on the teachers' use of standardized tests as a means of measurement. As an initial evaluation, many teachers use the previous year's standardized tests scores as predictors of students' achievement during the current school year. By doing this, teachers may be prejudging students and clouding their view of the students' true potential.

Some feel that standardized tests do not accurately reflect students' reading ability. Research suggests that the reading program or the teachers may also be factors. In their study on statewide reading assessment, Valencia, Pearson, Peters and Wixson (1989) have stated:

Current views of reading suggest prior knowledge is an important determinant of reading comprehension. Yet reading assessments fail to assess its impact on comprehension and try to mask its effects by using many short passages about unfamiliar topics. Current views of reading suggest reading requires the orchestration of many reading skills. Yet reading assessments often fragment reading into isolated skills for item development and reporting. (p. 58)

These views, among others suggested, are indicative of the fallibility of current standardized tests to reflect accurately students' reading abilities.

In this study, students' scores on their fifth grade DRP will be utilized. Additionally, many sixth grade students included in the study did not meet their district's desired level of performance (Kilmer, 1998).

Many presumptions have been made regarding these results.

However, there is another aspect which has not been considered. It is the premise of this researcher, in concert with many others, that students' attitudes toward reading may influence their achievement on standardized exams. Additionally, Valencia, Pearson, Peters and Wixson(1989) assert that:

Current views of reading suggest positive habits and attitudes affect reading achievement and are important goals of reading instruction. Yet reading assessments rarely include measures of these literacy experiences. (p.58)

It is not the intent of this study to suggest that failing a standardized exam should necessarily be indicative of a student's dislike for reading.

However, this aspect of reading has not received enough emphasis in the past. In addition, research clearly shows that attitudes do affect performance and therefore should be considered.

In order to empower students to become avid proficient readers, teachers need to be conscious of the fact that one indicator of reading ability may not necessarily preclude the next. In assessing students, educators need to view the reading process globally. All aspects of

students' reading abilities should be considered. Additionally, educators should not be so quick to categorize students' reading aptitude based on a single measurement tool. Rather, a comprehensive assessment, one which is in line with current reading research, should be implemented. Also, the importance of teacher observation should not be discounted.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a statistically significant correlation between students' attitudes and their performance on standardized tests. More specifically, the area in question is whether a significant relationship exists between how well students score on an exam and how much they enjoy reading. In order to better meet students' needs, their attitudes should be considered. These findings may make teachers aware that standardized tests may not be the sole predictors of students' capabilities and potential in reading.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Motivational Characteristics of Good Readers

"Good readers are those who have developed positive attitudes about reading and positive perceptions about themselves as readers" (Wixson, Peters, Weber & Roeber, 1987, p. 750). Furthermore, motivation is an essential element of reading instruction. Many studies have cited a connection between motivation and achievement (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling & Mazzoni, 1996; Gottfried, 1990; Gottfried 1985). In contrast, Gottfried demonstrated that although motivation was a predictor of achievement in report card grades and teachers' ratings, it was not a predictor for achievement on standardized tests.

Gottfried attributed this discrepancy to several factors. First, in school students are able to exhibit motivated behaviors such as doing extra credit. This affects their report card grades. However, a test, "reflects a one time event of limited duration" (Gottfried, 1990, p. 536). Second, teachers account for students' motivation in their grades. Last, teachers' expectations may influence student performance. The fact that tests represent students' abilities during only one designated time span

should concern all field educators about the implications of using standardized tests as the sole means of evaluation and placement.

In April of 1987, Valencia and Pearson wrote, "Reading assessment has not kept pace with advances in reading theory, researcher practice" (p.726). Furthermore, Cordova and Lepper (1996) have concluded that the decontextualization of instruction plays an important role in maintaining students' academic intrinsic motivation. In addition, they contended, "By removing learning from the contexts in which both its practical utility and its links to everyday interests and activities would be obvious to children, teachers risk undermining children's intrinsic motivation for learning" (Cordova & Lepper, 1996, p. 720). In congruence with this belief, Pintrich and De Groot (1990) state that it is important for teachers to, "socialize students' intrinsic value for schoolwork," not to increase students' scores on standardized exams, but to recognize the global aspect of learning and to improve students', "cognitive engagement" in the classroom (p. 37).

Moreover, Cordova and Lepper (1996) determined that children who were taught through the utilization of activities which were motivationally enhanced (included fantasy, choice and personalization) exhibited higher levels of intrinsic motivation. As a result, their involvement in the activity increased and the students learned more than their counterparts in a fixed amount of time. These children also had increased levels of perceived competence and aspiration. Therefore, not

only should learning be purposeful and meaningful, but reading assessment should adequately reflect the manner in which students learn best. Standardized exams often require students to be placed in an artificial testing environment which enhances anxiety and detracts from the optimal learning environment.

Choosing the Correct Evaluative Tool

In 1992, Carver noted, in reference to the DRP (Degrees of Reading Power) standardized exam, that it was actually a good measure of, "individual differences in accuracy level" (pp. 354-355). These differences may be the result of students' test taking abilities. Additionally, he stated that many standardized exams evaluate more than how well students comprehend, they may actually be evaluating several other factors such as accuracy, rate or efficiency. His charge to educators is to determine which aspect of reading is most important and able to be influenced by instruction. After determining these aspects, educators should then choose an evaluative tool which will evaluate that particular aspect of reading. Educators should be selective and determine the best tool in order to measure the desired outcome.

However, Koretz (1988) warns that educators must be wary of artificially increasing students' standardized test scores by "teaching to the test." He states further that there are many new terms for this practice.

Some of the more current terms include "measurement-driven instruction" or "curriculum alignment". These terms, although worded much more subtly, still imply that scores can be improved by linking curriculum more closely with tests. His study continues to state that even if educators do not consider the aspect of increasing test scores, we should be alarmed by the fact that preparing for exams, "wastes instructional time that could be put to better use--a particularly serious cost, given that the United States provides its students with far less instructional time than do most other industrialized nations" (p.46). A good rule of thumb seems to be, "Teachers should not have to set aside good instruction to prepare students to take a test; instead, good instruction itself should be the best preparation" (Valencia, Pearson, Peters & Wixson, 1989, p.62).

Additionally, multiple choice tests are usually given for obvious reasons such as consistency, simplicity of administration, and cost efficiency. Contrary to these realistic reasons for usage, research shows that, "multiple choice tests represent a fairly narrow range of tasks" (Koretz, 1988, p.48). Koretz also stated that,

There is evidence, however, that as a class, multiple-choice tests are not well suited to assessing certain higher-order skills. Performance on such tests is often determined more by basic skills--such as factual recall-- than the designers of the test intend. (p. 48)

Considering this information, educators not only should be very selective

of the type of tool used to assess students, but also the information that they can obtain from the assessment tool.

In addition to the importance of locating the correct evaluative tool, an educator must be well aware of other factors which influence reading behaviors. Students' beliefs about themselves as readers yield a large impact on their performance abilities. Those who are confident in their abilities as readers outperform their counterparts who do not possess such feelings (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling & Mazzoni, 1996; Pokay & Blumenfeld, 1990).

Current Reading Research

In her 1992 study on motivating reluctant readers, Turner stated that, "Reading for pleasure and information are primary goals of reading instruction" (p.50). However, a significant problem is arising in America: aliteracy--the ability to read, but the unwillingness to do so (p.50). She determined that students were hesitant to read because of several factors including: lack of interest, few interesting materials, low ability to read or past negative experiences, inappropriate instruction, contrasting views of the importance of reading and/or a nonreading environment at home or in school (p.51).

McKenna(1995) quotes Alexander and Filler's (1976) definition of reading attitude as, "a system of feelings related to reading which causes

the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation" (p. 934). The most important factor influencing students' attitudes toward reading and learning are students' interests (Turner, 1992). Children who are motivated to read and to learn choose activities during their free time which reflect these attitudes. They are interested in reading and enjoy it, therefore they recognize it as a pleasant experience. They are intrinsically motivated to choose activities which will enhance their reading abilities. This internal motivation is the result of positive experiences in reading. Poor readers do not enjoy the task, develop negative attitudes and are viewed as "failures" (Turner, 1992).

Furthermore, reading must be taught as a global activity as opposed to individual subskills because the latter promotes disinterest and a decline in motivation (McKenna, 1995 ; Turner, 1992). Teachers need to demonstrate the importance of independent reading by modeling reading during SSR time, sharing a story they are reading, reading out loud to students every day and "communicate(ing) how favorite selections have provided personal pleasure and knowledge" (Turner, 1992, p.52). All of these aspects help develop a learning environment which values reading as not only a learning tool but also a pleasurable and sociable activity.

This premise is reinforced in Gambrell's study on classroom cultures. Gambrell (1996) cites Cambourne's (1988) model of literacy learning. This model dictates that motivation and reading development

are nurtured and strengthened by students' consumption into a classroom environment which is characterized by an abundance of books and various other reading materials. Additionally, Cambourne reinforces the belief that teachers need to model different uses of books, engage students in discussions about books and provide choice. The aforementioned ideas are some of the suggestions included for creating literacy rich classroom environments which can enhance reading motivation.

Additionally, Vorhees (1993) in her practicum paper encouraged teachers to read trade books which are related to the topic being discussed in class. She also suggested the incorporation of classroom libraries or reading corners where students could self-select materials. All of these aspects attempt to increase students' motivation to read and create classroom environments in which students will feel successful about reading. As previously stated, students who feel good about themselves as readers will perform better than those who have a poor self-concept with regard to their reading abilities.

Furthermore, according to the McKenna model, students' negative experiences in reading will lead to poorer attitudes toward reading. As these students progress through their school years, this effect will perpetuate and begin to spiral. Students' attitudes will continue to become more and more negative. Therefore, many students in the later grades appear to have more negative attitudes due to the fact that they

have had many unpleasant experiences with reading. Moreover, he asserts that there is much evidence to support the fact that reading attitude is related to ability. (McKenna, 1995). Additionally, Turner suggests that students who have had negative experiences in reading will not be as willing to participate in such activities in the future. Even more so, they are likely to develop a condition termed "learned helplessness." These students have, "low expectations, attribute success to factors beyond their control, and are generally apathetic towards reading" (Turner, 1992, p. 51).

Effects on Student Ability and Motivation

In an attempt to increase student learning, meet new standards and achieve a level of success designated by school districts, teachers must realize that there are many factors such as parents and prior knowledge that affect students' ability and motivation. Educators are not able to increase achievement significantly on their own (Walberg & Tsai, 1985). Considering such influential factors, educators need to reconsider the use of standardized tests as the sole determining factor of students' placements.

Many have called for a change in the assessment technique most often utilized for evaluation of students.

As long as reading research and instructional innovations

are based upon one view of the reading process while reading assessment instruments are based upon a contradictory point of view, we will nurture tension and confusion among those charged with the dual responsibility of instructional improvement and monitoring student achievement. (Valencia & Pearson, 1987, p. 727)

For years, there has been a gap between what teachers have felt to be best practice and what they have been forced to institute in their classrooms in order to better prepare students for upcoming standardized tests. Miller (1995) cited the fact that there is, "a growing concern that teachers are responding to test-driven accountability pressures in ways that are counterproductive to students' long-term educational needs" (p.333). Teachers are often faced with a curriculum that is motivated by testing instead of a curriculum focused on student needs. Not only does the importance placed on standardized exams cause tension and frustration for teachers, it also affects students.

Teacher Responses to an Increase in Standardized Exams

Darling-Hammond and Wise (1985), in their study of state standards and school improvement, categorized teacher responses to the increase in standardized testing. The five categories included: a change in curriculum priorities, teaching students how to take tests, preparing students for the tests, less time for teaching, and an awareness of underlying pressure. Some teachers respected the increased

significance placed upon standardized testing. They believed it created standards, expectations and pressure. Furthermore, they believed that these tests caused them to alter their classroom practices in a positive way (Darling-Hammond & Wise, 1985).

This view, however, was not held by the majority of the teachers surveyed. Most believed that test driven accountability narrowed the curriculum. More specifically, they felt that teachers were led to teach material exactly as it would appear on an exam instead of teaching the underlying concepts associated with the material. This also deemphasized the practical application of knowledge in real life situations (Darling-Hammond & Wise, 1985). In summary,

At the same time, policy tools that try to link these yardsticks closely to the teaching-learning process can have dysfunctional consequences when other valuable objectives are abandoned in favor of those that are measured. (p. 325)

It appears as though this study was foreshadowing the current trend in education toward the institution of real life experiences in learning. Much of what these educators were stating is now a major thrust in the current charge for education.

Ruddell (1985), in a study about professionals involved in the field of education and their knowledge of test data interpretation and terminology, noted that only 11 % of the teachers, 17 % of the principals, 37 % of district personnel and 17 % of legislators were able to demonstrate an understanding of the concept of standard error of

measurement. If only a small percentage of these professionals were able to demonstrate an understanding (these percentages do not reflect those who actually interpreted the data correctly), why is such a large emphasis placed upon such data? The results can not even be effectively utilized by the majority of the professionals. Furthermore, teachers involved in his study stated that they, "made the greatest use of individual diagnostic tests and informal observation in identifying reading problems" (Ruddell, 1985, p. 542).

In another study conducted by Miller, Hayes and Atkinson (1997), the effect of a state's efforts to improve third grade students' achievement in reading and language arts was reviewed. The researchers discovered that the state officials wanted to improve students' achievement. The officials began by creating new standards and curriculum guidelines. They created a new assessment and held workshops to inform educators of the new requirements. However, attendance at these workshops was limited to a few individuals from each district. These individuals were expected to provide turn key workshops for teachers from their respective districts.

To add to the confusion, these workshops focused on how to score the new exams rather than how teachers should alter their instructional practices. The officials realized that the students were not going to be successful, but decided to administer the exam anyway. The reasoning behind this implementation was that the officials felt that teachers would

not benefit from more training, instead they would benefit from experiencing the exam the first time. Moreover, the officials believed that the next year's scores would improve due to the teachers' familiarity with the assessment technique. "Officials viewed the assessment as their most critical catalyst: it outlined the reform's parameters and served as a stimulus for instructional change" (Miller, Hayes & Atkinson, 1997, p:281).

If such tests are going to be useful as diagnostic or evaluative tools, teachers and other field educators at all levels should be educated about the nature of such concepts as standard error of measurement and general interpretation of test data. In addition, teachers should be adequately informed of the purpose for the new assessments as well as what the assessments propose to test.

Additional Influences on Student Achievement

Additionally, many studies have noted that SES (Socioeconomic Status) heavily influences students' achievement (Kohn, 1998; Ruddell, 1985). Waxman and Huang (1996) concluded that students, " who live in economically disadvantaged...settings are at a great risk of academic underachievement" (p. 100). "Commenting on this issue, one legislator stated that test scores fostered 'misguidance' by perpetuating a system of stereotyping that 'pits the system against the pupil'" (Ruddell, 1985, p. 541). The research demonstrates that many are conscious of the impact

that SES has on standardized test results, but few have attempted to take steps toward improving the inadequacies.

Characteristics of Good Readers

"Good readers are not those who demonstrate mastery of a series of isolated skills, but those who can apply important skills flexibly for a variety of purposes in a variety of authentic reading situations" (Valencia, Pearson, Peters & Wixson, 1989, p.58). As has been previously stated, reading instruction should reflect a universal act. Students learn best within such a context. Furthermore, "good readers are not those who can read short pieces of text and answer literal comprehension questions, but those who can read longer, more complete, authentic texts about a variety of topics and respond to them thoughtfully and critically" (p.58). With this in mind, educators should consider whether our current assessment techniques adequately reflect what we know about good readers, and whether the scores accurately reflect students' true reading abilities. As Ruddell (1985) states:

Testing in public schools has increased dramatically in the United States over the past three decades. This increase is a result of public concern regarding basic skills achievement and the desire of educators and legislators to assess instructional gains more accurately and improve instructional decision making (p. 538).

Chapter III

Design of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a statistically significant correlation between students' attitudes and their performance on standardized tests. More specifically, the area in question is whether a significant relationship exists between how well students score on an exam and how much they enjoy reading.

Research Question

1. Is there a statistically significant correlation between students' fifth grade DRP score and their attitude toward reading, as measured by an attitude survey administered in the beginning of sixth grade?

Methodology

Subjects

The subjects are seventy-five urban, heterogeneously grouped, sixth grade students enrolled in a middle school. They have not repeated the current grade. The students' ages range from 11-13. These students are Title I funded and 85% receive free or reduced lunch. Additionally, the students included in this study have not been classified as Special Education students.

Instruments

In May of 1998, as fifth graders, the students took the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) exam. This test was mandated by New York State for all fifth graders. These tests were scored and the data were compiled by the district's central office (Kilmer, 1998). These scores were utilized as a means of comparison.

In addition, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) was utilized in September of 1998 in order to determine students' attitudes. This survey consists of 20 questions with a pictorial rating scale. The Survey is further divided into two subscales: recreational and academic. Students respond by circling the Garfield character which best represents their feelings about the question. These

responses range from negative to positive with the use of a Likert-type scale (McKenna, Kear & Ellsworth, 1995).

This Survey was created after revising questions from a variety of previously developed attitude surveys. Thirty-nine questions were reworded and administered to 499 students. These students ranged from first through sixth grade in a mid-sized school district in the Midwest. After the correlational coefficients among the items were determined, the 10 items for each subscale of the ERAS were chosen. The reliability of this survey was calculated at each grade level, and the reliability coefficients range from .74 to .89. In addition 16 out of the 18 coefficients calculated were at least .80 (McKenna, Kear & Ellsworth, 1995).

Procedures

The teachers involved were provided with the Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys. They explained to the students that the Survey would be used to help determine how they felt about (their attitudes toward) reading. The teacher also explained that it was very important for the students to be honest and sincere. They emphasized that the Surveys were not a test and reassured students that there were no "right" answers. Additionally, teachers informed the students that they would not be scoring the Surveys and that their responses would in no way affect their reading grade.

Teachers then placed the accompanying overhead transparency on their overhead projector. This transparency depicted the four different Garfield characters on the Survey. The teachers explained what each Garfield figure represented. They checked for understanding before distributing the Surveys.

Once teachers were certain that students understood the task, they instructed the students to write their names at the top and to begin working. Students worked independently. Due to their age and maturity level, the researcher did not feel that the students needed to have the questions read aloud. The Survey took approximately 10 minutes to administer. When students finished, their papers were collected and placed in a manila envelope with the corresponding teacher's name on it. All Surveys were collected and scored by the Instructional Support teacher.

Analysis of Data

The data were analyzed utilizing the Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation. The r value obtained must be between -1 and +1. This will determine if there is a statistically significant relationship between students' attitudes and their standardized test scores.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis of the Data

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a statistically significant correlation between students' attitudes and their performance on standardized tests. More specifically, the area in question is whether a significant relationship exists between how well students score on an exam and how much they enjoy reading.

Null Hypothesis

There is no statistically significant correlation between sixth grade students' attitudes as measured by the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and their fifth grade DRP standardized test scores.

Findings and Interpretations

After calculating the Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation, it was determined that $r = .125$. The critical r at the .01 level of significance with 73 degrees of freedom is .228. Therefore, the researcher has concluded that there is no statistically significant relationship between students' attitudes toward reading and their standardized test scores. Figure 1 graphically displays the results of this analysis. Although .125 is a positive number, it is very close to 0. Furthermore, a value of 0 indicates that there is no correlation. The closer r becomes to +1, the stronger the linear relationship. The obtained r of .125 approaches the point of no correlation.

Individual DRP scores for each subject can be found in Appendix A. Elementary Reading Attitude Survey scores are located in Appendix B.

Figure 1

Correlation of Student Scores on
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and
Fifth Grade DRP Scores

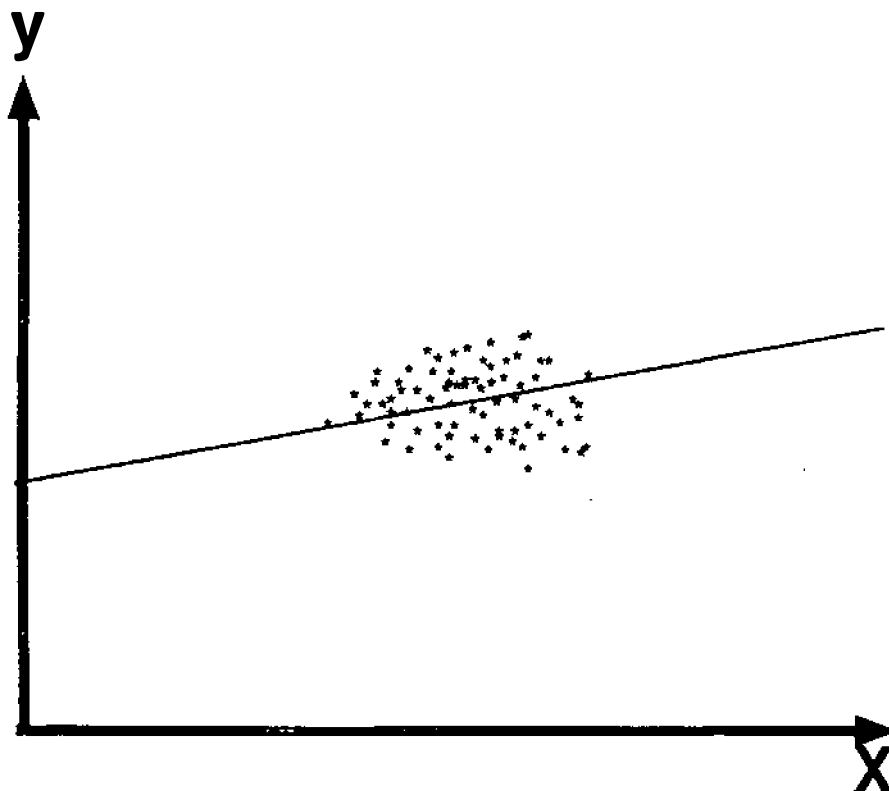
Line Regression

$$y = ax + b$$

$$a = .095829466$$

$$b = 35.06194411$$

$$r = .124745903$$



Upon further evaluation of the data, it became evident that the average raw score on the DRP was 40.56. According to the data, this is approximately the 42nd percentile. Therefore, the mean score was slightly below grade level. Keeping this in mind, the average raw score on the ERAS was 57.37. According to the ERAS scoring appendix, this is approximately the 66th percentile. On average, the students' attitudes were higher or more positive than their DRP scores. Moreover, it is possible to state that some students may enjoy reading or may be motivated readers, however, this motivation is not reflected in their standardized test scores.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Implications

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a statistically significant correlation between students' attitudes and their performance on standardized tests. More specifically, the area in question is whether a significant relationship exists between how well students score on an exam and how much they enjoy reading.

Conclusions

Although there was no statistically significant relationship between the students' attitudes, as measured by the ERAS, and their DRP scores, the study does demonstrate that there are students who enjoy reading but do not score well on standardized exams. This finding is very beneficial for educators who readily dismiss students with low test scores as being unmotivated. This may not be the case at all. In fact, there may be students who have poor attitudes toward reading, but are excellent test takers.

As the previously cited research demonstrates, educators must be careful in the selection of assessment tools. They must decide what they want to test and choose the best measurement tool. Many tests, however, actually measure students' test taking abilities. For example, the tests may measure the speed at which students can work on timed tests.

Educators must develop clear objectives and develop assessment tools which adequately reflect the reading process. Reading is not about isolated skills. Conversely, it is the culmination of and the simultaneous use of skills that is required for a successful reader. Current standardized exams do not reflect this knowledge. Additionally, many teachers do not utilize techniques which support these findings.

The premise behind the study was to determine if another aspect of students' reading ability, such as attitudes, should be considered. Even though there was no significant statistical evidence to support this, the data demonstrate that students who possess positive attitudes may not score well on standardized exams. Perhaps one of the biggest hurdles in reading instruction is getting students motivated to read. In this case, some students are motivated, but are not successful. Therefore, educators must examine their techniques and assessment tools to determine where the problem lies. The fault may not always be with the child. It may be that no assessment tool has provided them with the opportunity to demonstrate what they know.

Implications for Education

Based on the findings of this study, there are some very relevant conclusions which can be drawn. First, a positive attitude toward reading does not guarantee that a student will score well on an exam. Second, a negative attitude does not mean that a student will score poorly on an exam. Furthermore, this discrepancy may be the result of tests which do not adequately reflect students' abilities as readers. Additionally, teachers should be careful when attributing students' poor test scores to a lack of motivation. Also, poor test scores should not be the sole indicator for students' placements in reading. Teachers must consider all aspects involved in reading ability when analyzing their students. Even though a statistically significant relationship was not demonstrated to exist between students' attitudes and their DRP scores, teachers should not discount the impact that motivation has on students' overall reading ability.

New York State has begun the process of revising its standardized exams. The new ELA (English Language Arts) exam which is administered in grades 4 and 8 incorporates reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students must read extended passages and answer questions which require them to compare and contrast stories. They are required to utilize graphic organizers. Additionally, students must listen to stories read aloud, take notes and then compose an essay. Students are also required to answer some multiple choice questions, however,

the exam is not solely comprised of these items.

This switch demonstrates the state's recognition of the need for improvement in testing. Also, examples of "good" work are provided for students and teachers in order to impart clear expectations. Although test scores are expected to be lower during the initial phase-in, as students become more accustomed to the format and as good teaching practices become incorporated into the classrooms, scores will begin to rise. Students' abilities will be more accurately reflected by the incorporation of such exams.

This is just one step in the right direction. However, as Koretz (1988) warned, teachers must not sacrifice good teaching techniques and curriculum in order to better prepare students for upcoming standardized exams. Instead, teachers should be developing critical thinkers and problem solvers who are educationally well rounded. Students who are enveloped in such a learning environment will be successful learners and test takers.

Additionally, teachers need to connect the learning with their students. Teachers must spend time helping students make the connection between what they are learning and what is happening in their own lives. If teachers are capable of making such a connection, then learning becomes meaningful and students become more motivated to learn. Educators must find ways to better prepare students. The state has recognized the need for change, so must teachers.

Implications for Research

In their study about children's attitudes toward reading, McKenna, Kear and Ellsworth (1995), noted a significant decline in students' attitudes as they continued through school. In other words, the higher the grade the lower the attitude. It would be extremely interesting if the current study could be replicated but altered slightly to become a longitudinal study. For example, a group of students might be given the ERAS in third grade, and a correlational analysis would be carried out to compare their attitudes with their third grade PEP scores. In fifth grade, the ERAS would be administered again and the students' attitudes would be compared to their fifth grade DRP test scores in a second correlational study. It would be intriguing to see if there was a directional correlation between attitudes and test scores in the third grade and the degree of correlation as the students proceeded through school.

An additional study could be completed to determine if a difference exists between the correlation of attitudes and test scores in boys as opposed to girls. Furthermore, the study could have viewed each subscale of the ERAS, recreational and academic, separately to determine if one aspect has a higher positive correlation than the other.

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Appendix A**Students' DRP Scores**

Student #	Raw	%ile	STN
1	43	45	5
2	52	73	6
3	36	27	4
4	42	45	5
5	46	54	5
6	52	73	6
7	30	14	3
8	52	73	6
9	26	8	2
10	45	51	5
11	44	48	5
12	45	51	5
13	46	54	5
14	40	38	4
15	36	27	4
16	32	18	3
17	28	10	2
18	47	57	5
19	40	38	4
20	44	48	5
21	48	61	6
22	34	21	3
23	36	27	4
24	47	57	5
25	38	32	4
26	40	38	4
27	32	18	3
28	42	45	5
29	28	10	2

Students' DRP Scores

Student #	Raw	%ile	STN
30	37	29	4
31	36	27	4
32	28	10	2
33	50	67	6
34	27	9	2
35	49	64	6
36	47	57	5
37	52	73	6
38	49	64	6
39	43	45	5
40	44	48	5
41	33	21	3
42	46	54	5
43	47	57	5
44	47	57	5
45	36	27	4
46	29	12	3
47	41	42	5
48	42	45	5
49	45	51	5
50	40	38	4
51	36	27	4
52	41	42	5
53	56	85	7
54	47	57	5
55	39	35	4
56	50	67	6
57	32	18	3
58	33	21	3
59	34	21	3
60	52	73	6
61	36	27	4
62	29	12	3

Students' DRP Scores

Student #	Raw	%ile	STN
63	31	16	3
64	33	21	3
65	41	42	5
66	51	70	6
67	25	7	2
68	35	24	4
69	50	67	6
70	38	32	4
71	46	54	5
72	39	35	4
73	40	38	4
74	39	35	4
75	50	67	6

Appendix B**Students' ERAS Raw Scores**

Student #	Full Scale	Recreational	Academic
1	37	19	18
2	56	30	26
3	64	32	32
4	51	29	22
5	71	34	37
6	50	24	26
7	62	27	35
8	73	34	39
9	57	25	32
10	58	28	30
11	65	30	35
12	57	33	24
13	40	18	22
14	55	27	28
15	52	24	28
16	58	26	32
17	50	32	18
18	63	31	32
19	29	16	13
20	66	30	36
21	67	37	30
22	56	24	32
23	49	24	25
24	41	23	18
25	69	36	33
26	60	30	30
27	43	20	23
28	42	21	21
29	43	13	30
30	48	21	27

Students' ERAS Raw Scores

Student #	Full Scale	Recreational	Academic
31	65	28	37
32	51	22	29
33	59	29	30
34	49	20	29
35	54	27	27
36	54	29	25
37	64	38	26
38	69	32	37
39	49	21	28
40	61	32	29
41	64	31	33
42	79	30	40
43	54	28	26
44	64	31	33
45	62	32	30
46	59	29	30
47	74	39	35
48	48	21	27
49	68	34	34
50	50	27	23
51	62	30	32
52	71	35	36
53	67	35	32
54	46	21	25
55	62	25	37
56	53	26	27
57	63	28	35
58	70	36	34
59	44	23	21
60	76	38	38
61	74	35	39
62	73	35	38
63	58	30	28
64	59	29	30

Students' ERAS Raw Scores

Student #	Full Scale	Recreational	Academic
65	58	27	31
66	50	25	25
67	55	24	31
68	53	26	27
69	57	25	32
70	55	27	28
71	59	24	35
72	53	25	28
73	43	16	27
74	59	26	33
75	54	24	30