

Spring 5-2010

Third Grade Reading Performance and Teacher Perceptions of the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program in Title I Schools in South Mobile County

Jamie Ladhier Hicks
University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#), [Educational Methods Commons](#), and the [Elementary and Middle and Secondary Education Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hicks, Jamie Ladhier, "Third Grade Reading Performance and Teacher Perceptions of the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program in Title I Schools in South Mobile County" (2010). *Dissertations*. 947.
<https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/947>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

The University of Southern Mississippi

THIRD GRADE READING PERFORMANCE AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS
OF THE SCOTT FORESMAN *READING STREET* PROGRAM
IN TITLE I SCHOOLS IN SOUTH MOBILE COUNTY

by

Jamie Ladnier-Hicks

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2010

ABSTRACT

THIRD GRADE READING PERFORMANCE AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE SCOTT FORESMAN *READING STREET* PROGRAM IN TITLE I SCHOOLS IN SOUTH MOBILE COUNTY

by Jamie Ladnier-Hicks

May 2010

The purpose of this study was to determine if third grade reading performance of students enrolled in south Mobile County Title I schools improved as a result of the first year implementation of the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program. Attempts were also made to identify predictors that may improve future reading performance and data were obtained regarding the perceptions and overall satisfaction of the certified instructional personnel in grades K-5 employed in the Mobile County Public School System during the 2009-2010 school year, the first school year following the initial full year of program implementation. Reading performance was measured using the *Stanford Achievement Test-10th Edition*. Independent variables included scores from the *Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test*, *OLSAT School Ability Index*, *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*, and annual absences.

Research findings indicated no significant differences between the performance of third grade participants before and after the implementation of the *Reading Street* curriculum. A review of the literature revealed that generally speaking, reading achievement outcomes did not immediately increase following the first or second year of curriculum change and implementation. It is suspected that the findings of this study may

be characteristic of the curvilinear nature of reading curriculum implementation which has been reported in the literature.

Statistical analyses revealed no specific predictors within the data that may improve future student performance within the participating population. In addition, the questionnaire data indicated that certified instructional personnel overall were very satisfied with the new program.



COPYRIGHT BY
JAMIE LADNIER-HICKS

2010

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the Lord Jesus Christ for loving me and blessing my life daily, especially for giving me the intelligence and ability to accomplish this task. I would also like to thank my family and friends for supporting me and tolerating me throughout this endeavor. To my husband Steve, thank you for becoming that supportive husband and father that our family needed to survive this 3-year process. To my 9-year-old daughter Caroline, thank you for allowing me to be gone so much in spite of the fact that you cried or either felt like crying when I was not home. Thank you for entertaining yourself so that I could complete a great deal of my research and writing at home. You are a precious daughter. To my 19-year-old son Jared, thank you for being such a great teenager and modeling for me the extraordinary perseverance and attitude of never, ever giving up on our dreams. One day your dreams will be realized as well. To my parents, Lavert and Eula Ladnier, thank you for always being there and teaching me how to work hard and always do my best. You taught me to give above and beyond what I thought I was capable of doing. To my siblings (Royce, Amanda, and John) and other family members, thank you for being you and making my life full of joy and happiness.

I truly appreciate the support of my committee members, Dr. Rose McNeese (Chair), Dr. J. T. Johnson, Dr. Gaylynn Parker, and Dr. Gary Peters. I recognize that they sacrificed in helping me create, develop, and complete my dissertation. They possessed the patience of Job and kindly guided and directed this very overwhelming process. I would also like to acknowledge additional USM faculty, specifically Dr. Shelley, Dr. Liu, and Dr. Mohn, who, in conjunction with my committee members, awakened the love of

learning that I did not realize I missed so terribly. Thank you to the USM students for accepting me and encouraging me in spite of the tremendous fear and intimidation I experienced when I decided to return to school following a 16-year absence and a deficit in self-confidence. Without your kindness and support, I may have walked away from that first class and never returned.

The Lord has blessed me with an extraordinary group of very dear friends. I could never name them all and will not even attempt to because it would be an impossible task. Each of you know who you are and what a special place you have in my heart. Your prayers, encouragement, assistance, and smiles were priceless to me.

Special thanks are extended to the following employees of the Mobile County Public School System and friends for their help: (data collection) Jerry Long, Sandra Morris, Rhonda Winhauer, Marilyn Howell, and David Akridge; (questionnaire development and piloting) Stefanie Blackwell, Laura Dickens, and the district reading coaches; (survey process) Myrtle Downey, Rhonda Cauley, Jenny Munday, Mary Bark, Anita Dunnam, Emory Sisty, Susie Pape; the south Mobile County principals Pam Adams, Cathy Rogers, Cynthia Saliba, Lisa Williams, Deborah Fletcher, and Katherine Gallop; and (proofing and preparation) Nancy Gazzier and Jacquelyn James. Special thanks to Pam Adams, my principal, who has inspired me to become a better educator and person. You are my mentor and will always be my friend.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	viii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Background Information	
Hypotheses	
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	5
Theoretical Framework	
History of Reading Instruction	
Effective Reading Instruction	
Accountability in Education	
Alabama's Expert Review of Core Reading Programs	
Summary	
III. METHODOLOGY	49
Design	
Role of the Researcher	
Participants	
Reading Instruction Before and After <i>Reading Street</i> Implementation	
Instrumentation	
Procedures	
IV. RESULTS	62
Introduction	
Descriptive Data	
Statistical Results	
V. DISCUSSION	77
Background Information	
Conclusions and Discussion	

Limitations of the Study
Recommendations for Policy or Practice
Recommendations for Future Research

APPENDIXES 97
REFERENCES 107

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1.	Percentage of Students by School Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch During the 2007-2008 School Year	63
2.	Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Variables of Questionnaire Response	66
3.	Descriptive Statistics	67
4.	Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis	73
5.	Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis (Overall Questionnaire Results) . .	76

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

In August 2008, the Mobile County Public School System (MCPSS) implemented a district-wide reading curriculum for elementary students. Prior to implementation, the district had evaluated and critiqued a variety of reading programs before selecting Scott Foresman's *Reading Street* program. In the summer of 2008, the district provided grade-level training to K-5 teachers. The training was provided by the publishing company Pearson Scott Foresman. Various aspects of the new curriculum were explained. The training also allowed teachers the opportunity to ask questions after reviewing the program's components, specifically benchmark assessments, pacing guides, textbooks, and teachers' editions. Teachers were instructed by district supervisors to begin implementing the program within the first 2 weeks of school. Local school reading coaches provided additional instruction and professional development opportunities as needed.

According to a Pearson Education Group press release (2008), *Reading Street* was launched in 2006 and was designed to integrate the following priority skills associated with reading success by the National Reading Panel in 2000: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. Press releases from Pearson in 2008 indicated that *Reading Street* is research based and is the first curriculum created to align with the No Child Left Behind Act and Reading First initiatives. Furthermore, Pearson reported in a press release dated March 18, 2009, that nationwide, many school

systems have documented improved reading comprehension skills in students receiving instruction via *Reading Street*.

Limited research regarding the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* Program has been completed. Benchmark item validation studies were completed in 2005 and 2006. It was funded by Pearson Scott Foresman and conducted by Gatti Evaluation, Inc. in collaboration with Research Associates from the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research (WCER). In 2007 and 2008, two additional studies were completed by Wilkerson, Shannon, and Herman of Magnolia Consulting to determine the effectiveness of the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program during the first and second years of implementation. However, independent studies completed by entities not associated with Pearson Scott Foresman have not been found in the literature at this point in time, and absolutely no research has been completed in this area regarding student performance in Title I schools following the initial implementation of this reading program.

The purpose of this study was to determine if third grade student performance as measured by the *SAT-10* reading percentile has improved as a result of the first year implementation of the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program. This study also attempted to identify predictors that may improve future student performance. Furthermore, this study obtained and analyzed information via survey regarding the perceptions and overall satisfaction of the certified instructional personnel in grades K-5 employed in Title I schools in the Mobile County Public School System during the 2009-2010 school year, the first school year following the initial full year of program implementation.

Since the MCPSS spent a significant amount of money to purchase this program, and considering the fact that No Child Left Behind requires the use of research-based

instructional methods and materials, this study has implications for policy. This study will hopefully provide evidence that the program is effective and that the expense was a wise decision. In addition, the information provided by this study may be used in determining whether or not to continue with the program or to spend additional funds on the purchase of supplemental *Reading Street* materials and supplies. Furthermore, since all of the participating schools are Title I schools that receive additional federal funding, the results of this study will likely justify the appropriate use of federal expenditures and may assist in acquiring future grants and monetary donations.

Hypotheses

The study contained the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no statistically significant difference between *Stanford Achievement Test-10 (SAT-10)* reading composite scores of third grade students enrolled in Title I elementary schools in south Mobile County before and after implementation of the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program.
2. There is no statistically significant relationship between the *SAT-10* reading percentile scores of third grade students enrolled in Title I elementary schools in south Mobile County before and after implementation of the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program and the variables of the *Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT)* scores, *Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT)* scores, *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* Oral Reading Fluency subtest scores,

socioeconomic status, attendance, gender, and *Reading Street* program participation.

3. There is no statistically significant relationship between the attitudes of teachers toward the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program by school, grade level taught, degree, or years of experience.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

Early Research

Many theorists have contributed to the understanding of learning. Edward Thorndike, Jean Piaget, John Watson, B. F. Skinner, Robert Gagné, and Howard Gardner have all made significant contributions in the area of education. Their research and ideas provide educators with a solid framework by which to design instruction.

Edward Thorndike was an early researcher who investigated the process of learning. One of Thorndike's major contributions was the Law of Exercise. He stated that the Law of Exercise as commonly recognized as a basic law of human nature (Thorndike, 1912). Thorndike's research indicated that "with all things being equal," repetitive actions would strengthen mental connections and, therefore, improve performance (Thorndike, 1912, p. 95). Most instructional materials provide repetitive practice for newly-introduced concepts or critically important skills.

In 1929, Jean Piaget published a book entitled *The Child's Conception of the World* in which he discussed his theory regarding the thought processes of children. Piaget (1929/1951) identified four stages of the cognitive development process. Piaget (1929/1951) identified the sensori-motor stage as the period from birth to 2 years of age. During this time, Piaget suggested that children develop an understanding of their environment as a result of actions. During the pre-operational stage (ages 2-7), the child begins using symbols to represent his or her environment. The concrete operations stage (ages 7-11) is characterized by the child's ability to mentally reverse actions that are in

his or her environment. Finally, Piaget (1929/1951) proposed the formal operations stage which ranged from age 11 to adulthood. Forman and Kushner (1983) described Piaget's formal operations stage as the stage where "children begin to think about thinking and perform operations on operations" (p. 92). Insight from Piaget's research suggested to educators that the scope and sequence of instruction should consider a child's cognitive ability during these stages in order to be effective. The work of Piaget emphasized the importance of introducing concepts and ideas that are developmentally appropriate.

John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner introduced the concept of *behavioralism* into the educational setting which suggested that learning occurred as a result of environmental interaction. According to Horowitz (1992), John B. Watson introduced a more objective approach to behavioral observation. Watson emphasized the importance of experience and environment in shaping an individual's behavior (Horowitz, 1992). In the 1903s, B. F. Skinner contributed to the growth of behavioralism by developing the theory of *operant conditioning* (Hawkes, 1992). The work of Watson and Skinner established the importance of having a structured environment in order to facilitate learning.

Robert Gagné developed the *Information-Processing Theory*. This theory indicated that the process of learning resembled a computer. Gagné (1974) suggested that learning consisted of a series of inputs and outputs that could be stored in either short-term memory or long-term memory. He also suggested that environmental factors, expectancies, and executive control also affected the learning process. In addition, Gagné defined learning as a change in behavior that endures over extended periods of time throughout an individual's life and also defined the roles as an effective educator as a

creator, administrator, and an evaluator of instruction (Gagné, 1974). The recognition that learning could be affected by so many external variables and the fact that Gagné's emphasis on instructional design has provided a systematic basis for program development. Many recently developed curriculums contain a spiraling curriculum in which specific skills are introduced, built upon, and revisited as the student progresses throughout school.

In 1983, Howard Gardner published *Frames of Mind* in which he suggested that individuals possessed *multiple intelligences* and discussed possible implications for the field of education regarding his theory. Ten years later in 1993, Gardner published a book which suggested that individuals learn in various ways; therefore, they should be provided with a variety of instructional styles in an effort to facilitate individual success (Gardner, 1983). Gardner stressed the importance of addressing each student's multiple intelligences by introducing and assessing educational concepts using a variety of learning style consideration.

In conclusion, today's instruction is characterized by curriculum that incorporates a variety of activities and instructional techniques in order to meet the individual needs of each learner. The concepts and ideas of these theorists have influenced the educational instruction of the new millennium.

History of Reading Instruction

The history of reading instruction in the United States can be traced back to England. As many European immigrants moved and settled into the early colonies, they carried with them not only their value of education, but also some of the instructional materials that were used in their homelands (Teale, 1995). Rasinski (2003) pointed out

that in early American homes, oral reading was used to facilitate communication. Typically only one member of the family could read, and because of the scarcity of printed reading material, most families listened as one individual read for entertainment as well as to share knowledge and news. Education mirrored these techniques in the home by focusing on oral reading for reading instruction (Rasinski, 2003).

According to Witty (1949), many colonists used the *New England Primer* for reading instruction. The *Primer* was published in 1687. It was extremely small in size and contained minimal information. The content included the alphabet, brief word lists ranging from two to six syllables, the Lord's Prayer, the Christian Creed, and popular two-lined poems. Most of the early instructional materials contained religious ideology intended to teach children a moral lesson. Examples include alphabet lessons for youth which included sentences containing advice based on Biblical principles relating to each letter of the alphabet (Witty, 1949). Further research indicated that a "hornbook" was used as a supplement to the *New England Primer* (Witty, 1949). The hornbook was not actually a book, but a paddle made of wood or cardboard that contained a string through the handle to enable children to attach it to their clothing or hang it around their neck. The hornbook also contained minimal instructional materials and its content consisted of a picture of a cross, the upper- and lower-case letters, vowel and consonant combinations, the Lord's Prayer, and Roman numerals (Witty, 1949).

According to Alexander (1988), basal readers began to be used in reading instruction during the 1700s. Basal readers were texts that were systematically arranged by progression of reading difficulty. Witty (1949) reported that Noah Webster published a group of readers under the title of *Grammatical Institute*, which was republished in 1790

as a three-book series entitled *The American Spelling Book*. Following that, John Pierpont published a four-book series of readers that were characterized by a moralistic tone and a “Nationalist spirit” (Witty, 1949, p. 2).

The *Alphabet Method* was the first documented instructional method used in the United States to teach reading (Witty, 1949). It consisted of children mastering the following skills in sequential order: memorizing upper- and lower-case letters; spelling and decoding syllables which progressed from two letters to monosyllabic words; and then spelling and decoding phrases, sentences, and stories. Additional components of the *Alphabet Method* included memorizing the *Ten Commandments* and other religious materials. The *Alphabet Method* consisted primarily of oral reading activities (Witty, 1949). Furthermore, Witty (1949) suggested that oral reading was emphasized in early American homes because educated family members read the Bible to other members and acquaintances. In addition, Rasinski (2003) proposed that prior to technological advances such as radio, television, and computers, oral reading was not only considered a family-oriented leisure activity, but it was a way for families and acquaintances to share valuable information as well. In conjunction with the *Alphabet Method*, educators began to emphasize articulation and elocution in reading instruction instead of comprehension; therefore, this instructional method began to be criticized (Rasinski, 2003).

Research regarding who established the next instructional technique in reading, the *Word Method*, revealed conflicting information. Witty (1949) suggested the *Word Method* was established in Europe by the European educator Comenius, but reported the method was introduced to American educators by Samuel Worcester in 1828. Yoakam (1955) reported that in 1828, Samuel Comenius introduced the *Word Method* of reading

instruction. According to Yoakam (1955), it was popularized by Horace Mann but was not widely accepted and used in the United States until the 1950s. Teale (1995) reported the *Word Method* was developed by Francis Parker, a colleague of John Dewey. Dewey was instrumental in initiating the *Progressive Education Movement*, and it took root within American schools in the mid-1800s (Teale, 1995). The *Word Method* did not teach letter names for at least 2 years and phonics was not a component of the approach. Children who were instructed in the *Word Method* memorized a list of approximately 200 sight words. Once the child demonstrated the mastery of these targeted words, they used the words they knew to read books and other printed material. This new instructional approach emphasized that reading material should be interesting to children (Teale, 1995). However, many parents became dissatisfied with the *Word Method* because their children were unable to decode new and unfamiliar words during reading. The result of parental dismay resulted in the development of a phonics approach by the end of the 19th century (Witty, 1949).

In the meantime, as the *Word Method* was becoming popular, the *McGuffey Readers* were being developed. The *McGuffey Readers* were published in 1836 and were systematically and sequentially designed. The texts consisted of one reader per grade (Witty, 1949). According to Teale (1995), the *McGuffey Readers* were the first set of graduated readers and, in his opinion, they have evolved into what is known as today's basal readers. These readers remained the primary material used in reading instruction for decades (Teale, 1995).

Yoakam (1955) pointed out that from 1880 to 1918, extensive phonics programs emerged. Moreover, the beginning of the 19th century resulted in a shift from oral reading

to silent reading with an emphasis on comprehension. Reading was no longer regarded as an educational activity but also a social activity. Educators began to advocate that reading in school should be associated with meaningful and practical life experiences (Yoakam, 1955).

According to Teale (1995), no specific instructional method in reading prevailed between 1924 and 1940. However, between 1940 and 1960 the influence of behavioral theorists began to slip into the education field (Teale, 1995). The research of 20th century psychologists such as John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner established the theory of behaviorism which considered learning to occur as a result of environmental influences. Behaviorism disallowed for consideration of internal mental processes such as cognition and affect in explaining behavior, since those processes were unable to be objectively measured (Horowitz, 1992; DeBell & Harless, 1992). Although no particular learning approaches were stressed at this time, the behaviorist ideologies indicated that learning was facilitated through the pairing of a printed word and its pronunciation (Teale, 1995). Today psychologists refer to this action as *associative learning* (Mitchell, DeHouwer, & Lovibond, 2009). Scott Foresman published the popular *Dick and Jane* reading series which implemented an associative learning style, or whole word approach (Reyhner, 2008). Some educators referred to this approach of emphasizing repetitive and highly predictable sight words as the *Look-Say* approach (Wren, n.d.). According to Reyhner (2008), as time progressed, an opponent of the *Look-Say* approach, Rudolph Flesch, published a controversial book in 1955 entitled *Why Johnny Can't Read* which supported using a phonics approach to reading instruction (Reyhner, 2008). A phonics approach was often referred to as a “bottom up” approach because it established teaching sound/letter

relationships before students advanced to reading words, sentences, and stories (Reyhner, 2008, p. 2).

During the 1960s and 1970s, there appeared to be two major approaches to reading instruction being used. A variety of phonics approaches continued to be used while the *Language Experience Approach (LEA)* was evolving. Basal reading series were reconstructed to include more phonics instruction. Popular basal reading programs included *Lippincott's Basic Reading* and *Open Court* (Teale, 1995). Components of phonics programs in the 1960s and 1970s included leveled texts with controlled vocabulary, ancillary materials such as manuals, charts, and workbooks, instructional grouping, and additional emphasis on increased skill mastery (Alexander, 1988). The *Language Experience Approach (LEA)* was developed based upon the work of individuals such as Dewey, Piaget, and Watson (Stauffer, 1980). This approach emphasized using a child's experience and linguistic skills to teach reading. This approach suggested that in order to teach reading, educators should create opportunities for children to explore their environment via their five basic senses, talk about their experiences, and act on them by creating products that exhibited their understanding of how those experiences were interrelated (Stauffer, 1980). The *LEA* was a holistic instructional method that incorporated the individualized interests of children (Teale, 1995). Instructional materials were not provided when the *LEA* was implemented. Instead, it emphasized encouraging children to express their personal experiences and thoughts through oral and written language. Communication skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing were all targeted during instruction. The assumption was that children would develop the ability to decode printed material more readily if the

material was created by them and based upon their personal experiences. Therefore, teaching materials were limited. Proponents of the *LEA* boasted that their techniques were effective, inexpensive, and built children's self-esteem by creating a feeling that their personal thoughts and ideas were acknowledged and validated (Alexander, 1988).

The *LEA* facilitated the development of what is known today as the *Whole Language* approach to reading instruction which took root in the early 1990s. *Whole Language* was referred to as a "top down" approach (Reyhner, 2008). It was a holistic instructional technique that integrated speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities. Teachers were expected to model reading and implement literature-based reading activities using meaningful texts and create a classroom environment that was conducive to holistic learning by utilizing materials such as writing journals and literacy centers (Stauffer, 1980).

Many seasoned educators have recognized that the pendulum of education swings from one extreme to another over time. Some have proposed the idea that if the current, most popular instructional approaches are not of particular interest or favor, then as the years progressed, a more favored approach would come into light again. Instead of the pendulum model, Teale (1995) suggested that instructional approaches never return in complete original form, but that educators re-evaluate instructional techniques and strategies from the past, identify the strengths of the prior approaches, and incorporate those strengths into a changed form. Currently, new educational philosophies and instructional approaches incorporate the strengths of a wide variety of approaches such as *Differentiated Instruction*, *Marzano's Research-Based Instructional Strategies*,

Professional Learning Communities, and the Three Tier Reading Intervention Model.

These have been the most popular among educators in the 21st century.

Carol Ann Tomlinson introduced the idea of *Differentiated Instruction* around the turn of the century (Rebora, 2008). In an interview with the editor of *Teacher Magazine* in 2008, Tomlinson defined *Differentiated Instruction* as meeting each individual student's needs according to his or her readiness, interest, and learning style (Rebora, 2008). Tomlinson suggested that all students should have equally challenging work. Furthermore, Tomlinson challenged teachers to diversity their instructional practices through the use of "flexible grouping" and "teaching up" (Rebora, 2008, p. 3). Teachers using the flexible grouping component of *Differentiated Instruction* move students between groups as the need arises, not just at the beginning of the year or at the end of a quarter. Tomlinson encouraged educators to resist compromising the rigor of the curriculum but suggested instead to provide instructional support through a scaffolding system designed to facilitate student achievement (Rebora, 2008).

The shift from focusing on the instructional approach to incorporating strategies that research has deemed most effective was popularized by Robert Marzano in the late 1990s. Through the use of meta-analyses of 35 years of research, Marzano identified nine instructional strategies that significantly affected academic achievement. Marzano reported that the use of these instructional strategies have accounted in percentile gains ranging from 22 to 45 percentile points. *Marzano's Instructional Strategies* included activities in the following categories: identifying similarities and differences; summarizing and note taking; reinforcing effort and providing recognition; homework and practice; nonlinguistic representations; cooperative learning; setting objectives and

providing feedback; generating and testing hypotheses; and using questions, cues, and advanced organizers (Marzano, 2003).

The concept of *Professional Learning Communities (PLC)* has also been introduced since the turn of the century. *Professional Learning Communities* challenged educators to work together as a team by collaborating often to ensure that students learn and positive results are obtained. *Professional Learning Communities* provide the platform for educators to brainstorm and share ideas and ways to improve every student's academic performance (DuFour, 2004). The intention of the *Professional Learning Community* is for professional educators to work together to identify struggling students and provide the support students need before academic failure occurs.

The *Three Tier Reading Model* is an intervention philosophy comprised of three levels of intervention: *Tier I*, *Tier II*, and *Tier III*. It emphasizes identifying struggling readers before failure in order to meet each student's needs. *Tier I* intervention is described as the implementation of the adopted reading program or curriculum (University of Texas at Austin, 2005). According to Allington (2006), *Tier I* instruction should be comprehensive and should include a superior, research-based curriculum. All students within the classroom are exposed to *Tier I* intervention regardless of reading deficits (University of Texas at Austin, 2005). *Tier II* intervention is provided to students who are unsuccessful with the instruction core reading program. These students receive small group intervention in addition to the *Tier I* instruction. *Tier III* intervention is presented to students who are not exhibiting success at the *Tier II* level. Typically, *Tier III* intervention is provided in an even smaller group setting and is more intensive (University of Texas at Austin, 2005). Allington (2006) stated that although the *Three*

Tier Reading Model is encouraged by many state and federal agencies, there is inadequate research to support the effectiveness of the model. Allington (2006) voiced concerns regarding the “fragmented” style of reading intervention typically characterized by different teachers using different intervention programs at each tier. He proposed that many struggling readers received three different types of instruction by three different teachers using three different reading programs daily. Allington (2006) encouraged educators to utilize cohesive reading programs which address reading intervention at a variety of levels in order to reduce confusion and frustration.

Alexander (1988) suggested that there was no single instructional approach that was superior, but he proposed educators use an approach that encompassed implementing the most effective strategies from a variety of approaches. As educators began to focus on literacy instead of the isolated skill of reading, *Balanced Literacy* became a widely known approach to reading instruction that continues to be practiced in classrooms across the United States today. *Balanced Literacy* challenged teachers to explore instructional practices that do not conform solely to the approaches of the past, but to use research to guide instructional decisions and adapt classroom instruction to meet the needs of individual learners (Wren, n.d.). *Balanced Literacy* is a multifaceted approach composed of blending the strengths of past instructional techniques with current *best practices*. The major components of *Balanced Literacy* consist of the following: read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, phonics instruction, write aloud, shared writing, guided writing, and independent writing (Teaching Matters, n.d.). Research has been completed on the effects of *Balanced Literacy* both in urban and rural school settings.

In 2008, McKenna investigated the implementation of a *Balanced Literacy* intervention program at an urban elementary school in New York. The *Balanced Literacy* intervention program was introduced as a result of standardized test scores that revealed that 55% of the students enrolled were scoring below the state's minimal proficiency standards. The study consisted of the analyses of 5 years of data. It also included interviews with students, teachers, and parents. Results of the study determined the *Balanced Literacy* intervention program improved student achievement in reading. In addition, the information gathered from the students, teachers, and parents indicated the program was well-liked and accepted among the various stakeholders of the school (McKenna, 2008).

Merriman (2008) completed a quasi-experimental study that determined the effectiveness of the *Voyager Passport Intervention* Program. The study participants consisted of third grade students enrolled in a rural Tennessee school district. Pretest and posttest data were collected on students determined at-risk on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) over a period of 12 weeks. The *Voyager Passport Intervention* program was used as a scripted program with the treatment groups. The control group received a "teacher directed intervention program" (Merriman, 2008, p. 76). Results of this study indicated that students who received intervention using the scripted *Voyager Passport Intervention* program and students who received more teacher directed intervention performed equally well on measures of reading achievement (Merriman, 2008). Furthermore, Merriman (2008) reported that the qualitative data from participant surveys gathered during the study confirmed the findings.

This portion of the review of the literature has focused on the major approaches to reading instruction throughout the history of education. With increased demands for accountability in education, it is becoming increasingly important for schools to utilize effective reading programs that incorporate numerous research-based strategies to meet the needs of each child. This cannot be accomplished through the use of one instructional approach. Many authors and curriculum publishers have recognized this fact and, in turn, have created programs and materials to meet the changing needs of both teachers and students.

Effective Reading Instruction

In 1986, William Bennett attempted to review the research and identify the most effective research-based instructional strategies. Bennett's intention was to summarize and distribute this information to the public in a practical format (U.S. Department of Education, 1986). The report, entitled *What Works: Research about Teaching and Learning*, provided information regarding effective strategies in the home, classroom, and school that could easily be implemented to improve student performance. The classroom section recommended such things as establishing and maintaining an orderly environment, providing strong instructional leadership, improving communication between the school and home, implementing professional collaboration, encouraging extracurricular activities, and strengthening students' knowledge of basic skills, science, math, history, and foreign language (U.S. Department of Education, 1986). According to Marzano (2003), this document, which examined over 40 research-based instructional techniques, was one of the first to attempt to examine and summarize the research.

The end of the 20th century marked exciting times for education. Using the vast array of scientific research and knowledge that was available, best practices in instructional techniques were identified. The following paragraphs summarize the findings of the most commonly known, widely respected, and most comprehensive information available today regarding reading acquisition and instruction that exists. The following studies, reports, and publications will be discussed: *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998); *Teaching Children to Read* (National Reading Panel, 2000); and *Put Reading First* (Partnership for Reading, 2003).

The history of reading instruction has been characterized for the past 25 years by contention regarding the best and most appropriate instructional techniques (Snow et al., 1998). Snow et al. (1998) suggested that most of the controversy surrounding reading has resulted from an oversimplification of the literacy learning process. Furthermore, it was suggested that society as a whole needed to understand and recognize that the process of learning to read is very difficult and complex. Its success is affected by an abundant range of experiences.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the educational focus shifted from an emphasis on theory to the identification of the specific needs of classroom teachers who instruct individuals and unique student learners on a daily basis (Snow et al., 1998, p. 3). A study funded by a grant from the National Academy of Sciences and the U.S. Department of Education was completed in 1998. The study, entitled *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, was written by a committee of individuals from a variety of scholarly backgrounds who worked to compile, examine, and synthesize the available

research in the field of reading (Snow et al., 1998). This committee was referred to the National Reading Council (NRC), and their purpose was to develop a comprehensive overview of reading development and instruction to professionals who have an interest in children's literacy. The results of the NCR's report focused on prevention and attempted to determine the conditions in which reading literacy is most likely to be successfully established. The report did not specifically identify the most effective instructional reading techniques (National Reading Panel, 2000). The NRC defined reading as "a process of getting meaning from print, using knowledge about the written alphabet and about the sound structure of oral language for purposes of achieving understanding" (Snow et al., 1998, p. 3). In addition, the NRC concurred that it was also imperative that an early literacy program included an emphasis on sound-symbol relationships as well as how reading is encompassed in social communication and personal beliefs (Snow et al., 1998, p. 3).

According to the NRC, early reading instruction should emphasize several key skills and, therefore, establish the ability to acquire understanding through reading. Children should be provided with unlimited opportunities to read and examine printed materials. Children should be exposed to spelling-sound relationships and acquire knowledge of the system of writing using the alphabet (Snow et al., 1998). The scope and sequence of further reading acquisition depends on a solid understanding of how sounds are symbolized by letters. In addition, children should be provided with enough oral reading practice so reading fluency improves with various types of texts. According to the NRC, the vocabulary development and experience for children to consider texts "meaningful and interesting" should also be established (Snow et al., 1998, p. 8).

Throughout this process, progress monitoring is necessary to identify and correct faulty understandings and patterns of student errors. Finally, perhaps one of the most critical components includes facilitating the development of children's interest and motivation to read (Snow et al., 1998).

In addition, the NRC's investigation identified three major barriers that adversely affect reading acquisition. First, some children may have a difficult time grasping and internalizing the knowledge of how written letter combinations "systematically represent spoken words" (Snow et al., 1998, p. 8). This concept is referred to as the "alphabetic principle" (Snow et al., 1998, p. 8). Failure to adequately understand and internalize the alphabetic principle is detrimental to reading acquisition. Secondly, children who have oral language deficits have a difficult time reading and acquiring new reading strategies during the reading acquisition process. Spoken language deficits are considered to be an obstacle in the reading acquisition process. Lastly, when children lose the motivation to read or do not learn to enjoy reading, their literacy development is in serious jeopardy (Snow et al., 1998). Unfortunately, one of the NRC's conclusions indicated that most of the literacy issues of adolescents and adults today could have been effectively addressed and resolved in childhood. Moreover, the NRC identified the economically disadvantaged children and children with parents who were considered struggling readers as subset groups of children recognized to be more susceptible to reading difficulties (Snow et al., 1998).

Snow et al. (1998) recommended educators in the first through third grades should focus on the alphabetic principle and teaching children to associate speech sounds to word components. It was also reported that teaching children to read sight words,

obtaining reading fluency, and improving comprehension should also be emphasized (Snow et al., 1998, p. 9). Information regarding curriculum components for the first through the third grade was also noted. Explicit instruction and practice is recommended for beginning readers. Children should be taught that spoken words are created by synthesizing smaller units consisting of individual sounds. Children should be taught to recognize letter and sound combinations that are often combined to create prevalent spelling patterns. Sight word recognition of high frequency words, independent silent reading, and reading aloud should also be taught and integrated into curricula (Snow et al., 1998).

According to Snow et al. (1998), children who have developed the ability to read independently should be urged to decode unfamiliar words in meaningful texts and be taught to read words essentially by recognizing their letter-sound relationships and the correspondence of specific patterns of letter and sound combinations. Progress in reading fluency and accuracy should be consistently monitored in order to identify, correct, and strengthen any difficulties in these areas. Direct instruction in linguistic concepts and comprehension strategies such as main idea, prediction, and inference should also be provided. Writing should be encouraged once children learn some letter sounds allowing for phonetic spellings as they develop, but establishing conventional spelling skills through explanation, practice, and feedback (Snow et al., 1998). According to the NRC, independent reading at or below the child's reading level as well as guided instruction using texts that are slightly more difficult should occur daily. In addition, home programs consisting of daily independent reading assignments, required summer reading lists, and

increased school/home/community interaction should also be established (Snow et al., 1998).

The NRC recommended continued professional development (Snow et al., 1998). Efforts to equip educators with the knowledge and skills to provide effective reading instruction should be at the center of any literacy program. Mentoring programs for novice teachers that utilize educators with a history of successful reading instruction should be developed and utilized. Reading coaches, smaller class sizes, well-developed curricula, quality libraries, and engaging environments were also reported to be beneficial in ensuring successful reading acquisition. In conclusion, the NRC identified the following to be critical in reading acquisition: alphabets, fluency, and comprehension (Snow et al., 1998). Although the information contained within the NRC's report was beneficial, controversy surrounding the most effective instructional techniques continued to persist.

The information contained in *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* contributed to the establishment of the National Reading Panel (NRP). The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the Secretary of Education established the NRP to review research-based knowledge and determine the most effective instructional techniques for reading acquisition. The results and recommendations of the NRP were submitted to Congress (National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000).

The NRP discovered that approximately 100,000 research studies had been published since 1966 (NRP, 2000). The overwhelming wealth of available research studies in reading directed the NRP to focus on the critical components of alphabets,

fluency, and comprehension identified by the 1998 Snow et al. report. In an effort to incorporate information from individuals who would actually utilize the research, the NRP held regional hearings to determine the additional topics that would be studied. The NRP identified the following topics to be the focus of its study: alphabetics (phonemic awareness instruction and phonics instruction), fluency, comprehension (vocabulary instruction, text comprehension instruction, teacher preparation as related to comprehension strategies instruction), teacher education associated with reading instruction, and computer technology as related to reading instruction (NRP, 2000). The NRP established a rigorous scientifically-based set of standards to screen the current research in each topic and only experimental or quasi-experimental research was subjected to a comprehensive analysis. The NRP addressed the effectiveness of each topic within subgroups and the results of their findings were compiled (NRP, 2000).

For purposes of the report, the NRP addressed alphabetics by evaluating the research in the areas of phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. The panel defined phonemic awareness as the ability to “focus on and manipulate the phonemes in spoken syllables and words” (NRP, 2000, p. 7). Phonics instruction was defined as the process of “teaching students how to use letter-sound relations to read or spell words” (NRP, 2000, p. 7). Results of the findings indicated that both phonemic awareness and explicit phonics instruction were essential components to improving reading skills when included as part of an integrated, comprehensive reading program (NRP, 2000).

Fluency in reading is characterized by “speed, accuracy, and expression” (NRP, 2000, p. 11). If a child cannot decode and recognize words quickly and accurately, then the decoding process interferes with the reader’s ability to recollect what has been read

and apply those ideas and concepts to their personal knowledge and experiences.

Conclusions of the NRP indicated that supervised and guided oral reading positively impacted reading abilities, specifically in the areas of word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. Research relating to independent silent reading was limited, but through the individual analysis of approximately 14 studies, the NRP found no evidence that significant amounts of independent reading resulted in increased reading achievement (NRP, 2000).

In order to analyze the research in the area of comprehension, the NRP identified three main areas of focus: vocabulary instruction, text comprehension instruction, and teacher preparation as related to comprehension strategies instruction (NRP, 2000). The NRP identified guided and/or repeated oral reading and independent silent reading as techniques that would improve reading. Vocabulary instruction consists of both oral and print vocabulary. In order to comprehend what is being read, a child must be able to decode words which are in his or her oral vocabularies (NRP, 2000). Therefore, the larger a person's oral vocabulary is, the more likely it is the reader can understand and comprehend the word. Instructional materials used to strengthen oral vocabulary must correspond to the age and ability of the child (NRP, 2000). Instruction focusing on the comprehension of text includes strategies that teach readers how to relate what they have read by creating mental representations. Most children acquire and develop this skill independently without formal instruction; however, the research indicated that at times explicit instruction in this area is necessary. Furthermore data suggest that implementing a variety of techniques designed to improve comprehension results in the greatest gains on comprehension components of standardized assessments (NRP, 2000).

Only four studies were found that met the NRP standards for review regarding Teacher Preparation and Comprehension Strategies Instruction (NRP, 2000). A detailed review of these studies revealed that it was necessary to provide teachers with wide-ranging systematic instruction in reading comprehension strategies in order for them to deliver the instruction effectively. In addition, research in the area of Teacher Education and Reading Instruction as well as the use of computer technology as an instructional strategy was limited, and the NRP had a difficult time finding studies that measured similar outcomes. A detailed review of the studies that were available indicated that efficient professional development resulted in significant gains in student achievement. However, the NRP stated that due to a lack of longitudinal research in this area, the long-term effects of the maintenance of these gains are unknown (NRP, 2000).

There were only a small number of studies found regarding computer technology and reading instruction. Since computer technology is not an actual instructional method and cannot be analyzed or reviewed without being affected by instructional content, the NRP was only capable of formulating some general conclusions regarding this topic (NRP, 2000). Since all of the studies reviewed indicated positive results regarding the use of computer technology, the NRP concluded that computer technology may be beneficial in reading instruction as well. Specific technological advancements may promise to be extremely useful to students. For example, hypertext that provides links to specific word definitions and/or related information may provide readers with access to quick additional information that can facilitate comprehension and establish knowledge. In addition, the NRP reported that since reading and writing instruction are interrelated, computer word

processing programs may also be used as a technique to facilitate literacy as well (NRP, 2000).

The NRC and NRP reports provided educators with reliable and valid research-based knowledge regarding the specific skills that are needed for individuals to become successful independent readers and identified the most effective instructional strategies that educators should use in achieving that goal. The results of the NRC committee and the NRP reports addressed a controversy regarding the most effective reading instruction that had spanned across 3 decades (Reyner, 2008).

The Partnership for Reading was a collaboration of the National Institute for Literacy, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The intention of the Partnership for Reading was to provide and distribute scientifically-based reading research to the public (Partnership, 2003). *Put Reading First* created a user-friendly resource that presented the findings of the NRP including the subgroup reports. It encouraged educators to use the results of research to create the most effective reading instruction available. *Put Reading First* provided an expansive analysis and discussion of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension (Partnership, 2003). Each discussion area provided a definition of the skill, a research-based review of the literature regarding that skill, practical suggestions for classroom instructional implementation, and examples of questions and answers that may be asked surrounding that skill (Partnership, 2003). Each topic section contained a summary page that briefly redefined the reading skill, provided information regarding why the skill is important, and stated how it could be developed (Partnership, 2003).

By the late 20th century, effective reading instruction became an area of concern for not only educators, but the public. Reading deficiencies became political issues as citizens demanded greater accountability.

Accountability in Education

Airasian (1987) referred to the school as an institution that is changed by the social institutions that surround it. A review of the educational changes that have taken place as a result of the hardships placed upon the educational system appear to support Airasian's impression. Throughout history, education has changed and evolved as a result of extraneous events.

The 1940s initiated what is known today as accountability in education. During World War II, literacy became of utmost importance. Many of the military's training programs were experiencing unacceptably high failure rates. Psychologists such as Robert Gagné began to assess the strengths and needs of the enlisted men in training. Tests were developed to screen candidates for potential training programs and direct them into the most appropriate program (Reiser, 2001). Thus, interest in instructional design and effective educational instruction was born. It was vital to train men appropriately and as quickly as possible.

Additional concerns regarding educational accountability escalated during the 1950s. The launch of the first orbiting space satellite, Sputnik, in 1957 created a renewed interest in the state of public education (Reiser, 2001). According to Marzano (2003), publications such as Admiral Hyman Rickover's *Education and Freedom* insinuated that the security of the nation hinged upon the quality of its citizens' education. Alarmed and insecure regarding the future security and safety of the United States, the federal

government poured millions of dollars into improving math and science programs in public schools (Reiser, 2001). Although significant amounts of money were used to develop new and improved instructional materials, it was later discovered that most of the new materials were developed by professionals with expertise in areas other than education, and the materials were not piloted to determine their effectiveness. Therefore, many of the new materials were determined to be ineffective (Reiser, 2001). In the 1960s, Michael Scriven proposed the idea of piloting new instructional materials and modifying them as necessary before creating and implementing the final product into public school systems (Reiser, 2001). According to Reiser (2001), Scriven also proposed the idea of evaluating instructional materials in their final form as well. As a result, Scriven created what educators refer to today as formative and summative evaluations (Reiser, 2001).

In the 1960s, educational reform evolved into even more of a national issue due to social and economic concerns (Airasian, 1987). The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 increased the federal government's role in education by guaranteeing educational rights to all, regardless of race or gender. President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society focused on the war on poverty and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed (Marzano, 2003). During this time, the Commissioner of Education was appointed to collect data regarding the availability of educational opportunities (Marzano, 2003). Data from achievement and aptitude tests were gathered on more than 640,000 students across the nation. Questionnaires regarding teacher efficacy were completed by 60,000 teachers in 4,000 schools. The data were analyzed by Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfield, and York and the results were published in 1966 under the title *Equality in Educational Opportunity*. This report has become known as the *Coleman*

Report and its conclusions implied that the quality of a child's education had a very small effect on student achievement (10%) and social, emotional, intellectual, and other environmental inequalities accounted for the majority (90%) of a student's success (Coleman et al., 1966). However, in 1975, Carver published an article indicating that due to the use of the variance statistic in the Coleman Report analyses, the results were misleading and a re-analysis of the data did, in fact, indicate that the differences between schools do impact the academic achievement of students (Carver, 1975).

The passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 increased federal spending even more and was designed to ensure that equal opportunities were available for all children to receive a high-quality education (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.f). Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 specifically increased federal funding to advance the academic achievement of the economically disadvantaged (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). These new federal initiatives required increased accountability.

The 1970s resulted in financial support for the education of handicapped students. The Education of the Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was passed and created to ensure the education of all handicapped students in the public school setting from ages 3-21. This sweeping legislative educational reform and public interest not only increased federal funding for public education, but also further increased compliance requirements and increased accountability (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, n.d.e).

Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004) noted that federal initiatives to increase spending to improve specific areas of public education continued until the 1980s when it was

reduced by the Reagan and Bush I administrations. In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. The document reported that the United States was being surpassed by other nations as a result of an educational system that was deteriorating as a result of mediocrity. The report associated the documented educational ills with the continued prosperity and security of the nation (National Commission on Excellence [NCE], 1983). As a result, Congress requested the establishment of the NRC and NRP to review the knowledge and effectiveness of the available research-based instructional reading techniques (Snow et al., 1998). The end of the 20th century introduced even greater educational challenges and accountability requirements in education. Education became one of the nation's top priorities as Goals 2000 legislation was passed in 1994 (Bush, 2001).

The 21st century commenced with the passage of George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind Act in 2001. The Executive Summary of NCLB disclosed the fact that the federal government was spending \$120 billion a year on programs that had not been documented by research to positively affect the individualized needs of the local school or produce positive results in student achievement (Bush, 2001, p. 1). The priorities of NCLB included increasing accountability, requiring the use of research-based programs and practices, increasing state and local flexibility in spending federal funds, and empowering parents through improved communication and transfer options from low- to high-performing schools (Bush, 2001, p. 2). NCLB became the first legislation to increase public school accountability by rewarding states that exhibit significant educational

progress and implementing sanctions such as withholding federal funding from states that fail to exhibit such progress (Bush, 2001, p. 26).

The most recent federal legislation was passed by Congress in 2009 under the direction of President Barack Obama and was entitled the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The ARRA was designed as a short-term investment to facilitate the struggling economy and advance education in order to establish long-term economic stability within the U.S. (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.b). The ARRA does not increase school accountability requirements. It does require that the additional funding be accounted for and expects these funds to be used to improve education. An overview of ARRA provided on the U.S. Department of Education website provides examples of ways this additional funding can be utilized. Uses may include, but are not limited to, purchasing and implementing an effective reading curriculum and providing the training teachers need to address academic deficits within the classroom (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.a). Although the benefits of the ARRA have not developed to fruition, additional federal funding earmarked to improve education should surely assist in addressing the needs of the national educational system.

Effects of Poverty and Title I Status on Student Performance

According to a press release dated August 26, 2008, there were approximately 37.3 million individuals who met the 2005 Department of Health and Human Services Federal Poverty Guidelines (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The effects of poverty have been examined over the years, and consequences resulting from living in poverty have been documented. Brooks-Gunn and Duncan (1997) investigated and summarized the consequences of poverty on the general well-being of children. Generally speaking, the

study revealed that poverty often affects the physical health, cognitive outcomes, academic achievement, mental health, and behavior of children. Evidence revealed that poor children are more likely to experience physical health issues such as an increase in injuries and hospitalizations, low birth weight, and lead poisoning. Poverty also increases the risk of cognitive effects such as developmental delays and learning disabilities. Regarding school achievement, Brooks-Gunn and Duncan (1997) reported that poor children are more susceptible to grade retention, suspension or expulsion, and school dropout. It was also reported that poor children experience increased mental and emotional concerns. Often poor children are contentious and exhibit an increase in externalizing behaviors such as aggression and acting out. On the other hand, poor children often internalize behavioral issues and, therefore, exhibit depression, anxiety, and withdrawal. Additionally, research has revealed an increase in out-of-wedlock pregnancies and births, unemployment in adult years, and hunger within the economically disadvantaged (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (2000) further examined the repercussions of childhood poverty. The investigation revealed that poor children are twice as likely to experience grade retention and drop out of school. In conclusion, research (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000) has indicated that although poverty has a detrimental effect on children, experiencing poverty during the early childhood years has an even more negative effect. The researchers proposed that programs designed to combat poverty would be a valuable investment in society as a whole (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000).

In 1965, Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title I of this act was created to provide additional funding to schools with a high

enrollment of low-income students in order to improve the performance of these economically disadvantaged students. Schools qualify for Title I status based upon the enrollment of students living in households with a low income (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.c). According to Borman and D'Agostino (1996), the primary goal of Title I was to “close the achievement gap between at-risk students and their more advantaged peers” (p. 324).

Research regarding the academic achievement of students enrolled in Title I schools has also been completed. According to Borman and D'Agostino (1996), a review of the research revealed a variety of information that was often dichotomous in nature. The researchers completed a meta-analysis of the research to uncover trends in the student achievement of students enrolled in Title I schools since the program's inception. Borman and D'Agostino (1996) reported that although the Title I program has not achieved its ultimate goal of eliminating the achievement gap between students of varying socioeconomic backgrounds, it has been successful in improving student performance. Furthermore, Borman and D'Agostino (1996) suggested that without the Title I program, economically disadvantaged students would have exhibited declines in academic achievement.

Alabama's Expert Review of Core Reading Programs

In 2007, the Alabama State Department of Education established a 24-member review panel to provide information regarding a variety of core reading programs to assist local school districts in determining the degree to which each reading program aligned with scientific research in reading. The review was conducted as a service to local school districts. The evaluation was completed by a 24-member panel consisting of regional

reading coaches, school reading coaches, classroom teachers, and a university professor (Alabama State Department of Education [ALSDE], 2007). The panel members were not associated with any publisher or reading program. As a matter of fact, each panelist had to sign a statement indicating that he or she had no bias toward any publisher or programs, did not have any attitudes or preconceived notions that would inhibit a fair and impartial evaluation, and was in no way receiving any monetary gain for participating. The panel was trained and supervised by the state staff of the Alabama Reading Initiative (ALSDE, 2007).

The evaluation consisted of four main procedures which included screening, a critical element analysis, compilation of an overall program score, and collection of comments and summary information (ALSDE, 2007). Although the evaluation report never clearly identified specific questions that were going to be addressed in the evaluation, it was clear that there were various key issues of interest. A thorough reading of the evaluation revealed these areas of interest as follows: identification of core reading programs available for curriculum adoption; identification of each program's strengths and needs; and objective measurement of alignment with effective, research-based instructional reading strategies as measured by the *Consumer's Guide to Analyzing a Core Reading Program Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis* which was written and published by Simmons and Kaméenui in 2006 (ALSDE, 2007).

Small grade-level groups screened the submitted curricula in May 2007. Eleven reading programs were submitted for screening (ALSDE, 2007). All but two of the programs were identified as core reading programs. Before the evaluation began, an external consultant trained the expert review panel and mock reviews were held. The

program evaluation was completed in June 2007. The following programs received a full review: Harcourt *Storytown*, Houghton Mifflin *Alabama Reading*, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill *Treasures*, Rigby *Literacy by Design*, Scott Foresman *Reading Street*, Sopris West *Read Well*, SRA/McGraw-Hill *Reading Mastery Signature Edition*, Voyager *Universal Literacy System*, and Zaner-Bloser *Voices Reading* (ALSDE, 2007). Questions were addressed at the beginning and end of each session. The consultant answered questions during the evaluation, contacted the publishers to answer any comments during daily debriefings, and documented notes daily regarding the activities, questions, and concerns from each day. Panel members evaluated the programs based upon criterion from Simmons and Kaméenui's 2006 *Consumer's Guide to Analyzing a Core Reading Program Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis*. Overall, the panel concluded that the most effective reading curricula were Scott Foresman *Reading Street*, MacMillan/McGraw-Hill *Treasurers*, and Harcourt *Storytown*. Scott Foresman *Reading Street* received the highest ratings during the review (ALSDE, 2007).

Scott Foresman Reading Street

In 2000, *Reading Street* began to take form when Pearson Scott Foresman created and published the *Reading* curriculum. Scott Foresman *Reading Street* is a comprehensive reading curriculum that was developed by 14 authors with a wide variety of knowledge and experience in education (Wilkerson et al., 2007). The *Reading Street* curriculum has been described by Wilkerson et al. (2007) as a "research-based basal program that provides comprehensive reading curriculum materials for pre-kindergarten through sixth-grade classrooms" (p. 18). The program is founded on the *Three Tier Reading Intervention Model*. Pearson Scott Foresman incorporated differentiated

instruction in the five areas of reading that was identified most effective by the research of Snow et al. (1998) and the National Reading Panel (2000): phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

The core program consists of teacher editions, an assessment handbook, student editions, assessments, *Big Books* (K-2), leveled readers, student practice books, decodable readers, and take-home readers. Supplemental materials include sound cards, graphic organizers, transparencies, a song and rhyme chart that corresponds to the phonics lessons, and a variety of CDs. Progress monitoring materials, baseline tests, selections tests, unit and end-of-year tests, and fresh reads are also included in the assessment component of the program. Additional supplemental materials available for purchase include English Language Learner (ELL) materials, a language arts component, and a technology component (Wilkerson et al., 2007). A separate reading intervention program, *My Sidewalks*, was developed and designed for students whose reading skills are well below grade level and cannot be adequately instructed using grade level materials alone (Wilkerson, 2008).

A thorough review of the literature revealed only a limited amount of research on *Reading Street*, with all of the research having been commissioned Pearson Scott Foresman. Several research studies have been commissioned to evaluate the *Reading Street* curriculum (Gatti, 2005, 2006; Wilkerson, Shannon, & Herman, 2006; Wilkerson et al., 2007). However, it should be reported that completely independent research studies were absent from the literature. Two studies have been commissioned by Pearson Scott Foresman to examine the alignment of the curriculum to state standards, and two studies have been commissioned to primarily determine the program's effectiveness.

Gatti Evaluation, in conjunction with the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research (WCER), completed two studies in which the assessment items in the unit benchmark and end-of-the-year tests in *Reading Street* were analyzed to determine whether a correlation to state reading standards existed. Pearson Scott Foresman recognized the importance of ensuring the concepts embedded and tested within the curriculum addressed the assessment items used by the states for accountability. The 2005 study examined the *Reading Street*'s alignment to a sampling of standards throughout 10 states. Gatti (2005) determined that 98% of the tests "aligned above the median for recently aligned state assessments" (p. 1). A similar study in 2006 compared the alignment of unit benchmark assessments and the end-of-the-year tests to the standards across 21 states. Gatti (2006) reported that over 90% of these assessments "were above the median for state assessments that had been recently aligned" by the WCER (p. 1). Both studies reported that approximately 97% of the assessment questions were considered free from quality concerns. The analyses determined that the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program was closely aligned to state standards across the nation and the evaluation firm recommended using *Reading Street* as a means of effectively implementing quality reading instruction (Gatti, 2005, 2006).

In two additional studies commissioned by Pearson Scott Foresman in 2006 and 2007, Magnolia Consulting, under the direction of Wilkerson, Shannon, and Herman, completed two separate year-long research investigations to determine the effectiveness of the *Reading Street* program. Although Pearson Scott Foresman commissioned the studies, the researchers described Magnolia Consulting as an "external, independent consulting firm specializing in educational evaluation" (Wilkerson et al., 2006, p. i). Both

studies utilized clustered, randomized trials in which teachers were assigned to either a treatment or control group of students within the same school. The researchers designed the studies to meet the requirements of the quality standards created by the U.S.

Department of Education's *What Works* Clearinghouse as well as the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation criterion. Wilkerson et al. (2006) also noted that the quality of the two studies was ensured by establishing and reporting the following:

“construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and statistical conclusion validity of the relevant study components” (p. 3). Pre- and post-test measurements were completed using the norm referenced *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Fourth Edition (GMRT-4)* and the progress monitoring results of the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* (Wilkerson et al., 2006, 2007).

Participation in the studies was solicited through the use of site recruitment by a private consulting firm, recruitment at a professional conference, and suggestions from a Pearson Scott Foresman representative (Wilkerson et al., 2006). Incentives for participation included a free comprehensive set of Scott Foresman *Reading Street* materials and components (valued at \$9,500) for each teacher, free participant training, stipends for participating schools to cover substitute teacher costs, and a \$300 personal stipend for each participating teacher to offset the added time and effort to complete and compile the additional paperwork required to conclude the studies (Wilkerson et al., 2006, 2007). Informed consent was obtained and all parties were strictly instructed to adhere to the research protocol which included control teachers being denied access to *Reading Street* materials throughout the duration of the studies. Both treatment and control teachers received these incentives; however, control teachers received their

curriculum and professional development after the studies were completed (Wilkerson et al., 2006, 2007).

Treatment groups received instruction using Scott Foresman *Reading Street*, and control groups received instruction using the school's adopted district approved curriculum (Wilkerson et al., 2006, 2007). Teachers implementing the *Reading Street* program received initial and follow-up professional development and training from the publishers. In addition, two Pearson representatives were appointed to provide the study sites with additional guidance and assistance as needed. In order to provide additional qualitative data, both studies incorporated fall and spring site visits, classroom observations, implementation logs, teacher interviews, surveys, and focus group meetings to address secondary research questions surrounding the quality and consistency of implementation as well as teachers' perceptions of the new program (Wilkerson et al., 2006, 2007).

The 2006 study examined the reading performance of 944 first, second, and third graders across five schools in school districts located in the northwest, northeast, and eastern parts of the United States (Wilkerson et al., 2006). Forty-eight teachers participated in what was considered a year-long study, despite the fact that some schools did not begin teacher training until school had already started. Treatment groups received instruction using Scott Foresman *Reading Street* while the control groups received instruction in various district-approved curricula including McMillan's *Spotlight on Literacy*, Scholastic's *Guided Reading*, Houghton Mifflin's *Nation's Choice*, Harcourt's *Collections*, and Harcourt's *Trophies*. In addition, several of the districts used supplemental reading programs as well. The past performance of the three school districts

in the study revealed average to below average performance, and two of the five schools were Title I schools (Wilkerson et al., 2006).

Schools in this study were referred to as School 1, School 2, School 3, School 4, and School 5 (Wilkerson et al., 2006). Specific characteristics of participating schools were included in the study. School 1 was a Title I school characterized by 97% African-American students, a teacher/student ratio of 1:25, 90% free and reduced lunch rate, 15% English Language Learners (ELL), and low parental involvement. School 2 was also a Title I school characterized by predominately Caucasian enrollment, a teacher/student ratio of 1:30, and low parental involvement. Free and reduced lunch percentage rate as well as percentages of ELL and minority students for School 2 were not reported (Wilkerson et al., 2006). School 3 did not qualify for Title I status. It was characterized by predominately Caucasian students, a minority population of less than 20%, a 1:24 teacher/student ratio, 2% English Language Learners (ELL), and no instructional support staff but increased parental support and in-class intervention. School 4 did not qualify for Title I status. It was characterized by an enrollment of predominately Caucasian students, a minority population of less than 20%, a 1:22 teacher/student ratio, 7% English Language Learners (ELL), a reading specialist, and ELL instructor. No free and reduced lunch information was provided. School 5 did not qualify for Title I status and was characterized by an enrollment of predominately Caucasian students also. School 5 exhibited a teacher/student ratio 1:18, free and reduced lunch percentage of 25%, a small percentage of English Language Learners (ELL), and instructional support (Wilkerson et al., 2006). Information regarding specific percentages of ELL and minority students was not reported. Informal analyses of these characteristics revealed a pattern of schools

represented primarily by Caucasian students and high teacher/student ratios. Gender differences and the enrollment at each grade level were equally distributed throughout the sampled population. In order to rule out differences related to teacher factors, statistical analyses were completed to determine the presence of any differences related to number of years experience, number of years experience at that specific grade level, number of years at the participating school, level of teacher education, and student/teacher ratios. No statistical differences were found (Wilkerson et al., 2006).

Conclusions of the 2006 Year One Report revealed that students who received instruction with *Reading Street* exhibited significant gains in reading achievement (Wilkerson et al., 2006). In addition, Magnolia Consulting reported that the documented improvements in student achievement using formative and summative assessments were apparent by the middle of the school year. Comparable student gains were documented regardless of individual student reading ability (above-, at-, or below-level reading performance). Furthermore, Magnolia Consulting reported that the performance of students instructed using *Reading Street* curriculum were similar to gains achieved by students instructed in other basal reading curriculum (Wilkerson et al., 2006).

The researchers also collected data regarding teachers' perceptions of *Reading Street* via weekly teacher logs, site visits, and end-of-year focus groups. Teachers' perceptions of the new curriculum were favorable (Wilkerson et al., 2006). Specifically, teachers noted the following as strengths of the program: comprehensive nature of the materials; theme incorporation; threaded target skills; differentiated materials and lessons; science, social studies, and technology connections; and increased student interest and interaction. According to feedback provided by the participating teachers, it

appeared to take approximately 3 months for teachers to adapt to and feel comfortable implementing the new reading series. At focus group meetings, teachers reported and agreed that implementing *Reading Street* with fidelity required additional work and time; however, the teachers agreed that the benefits greatly outweighed the added preparation (Wilkerson et al., 2006).

The 2007 study examined the reading performance of 1,207 first, second, and third graders across six schools in four school districts (Wilkerson et al., 2007). These school districts were located in the north Atlantic, northeast, and southeastern parts of the United States. Fifty-eight teachers participated in the study. Teacher training did not begin until August for one site and September for the other three sites. As in the 2006 study, treatment groups received instruction using Scott Foresman *Reading Street* while the control groups received instruction in various district approved curricula including McMillan's *Spotlight on Literacy*, Harcourt's *Signatures*, Harcourt's *Trophies*, Scott Foresman *Reading (2000)*, and Scott Foresman *Reading (2002)*. The past performance of the four school districts in the study revealed average to above average performance, and three of the six schools qualified for Title I status.

Specific characteristics of participating schools were included in the study (Wilkerson et al., 2007). Schools in this study were referred to as School A, School B, School C, School D, School E, and School F. School A was characterized by predominately Caucasian enrollment, a teacher/student ratio of 1:23, and a minority population of less than 8%. School B was also characterized by predominately Caucasian enrollment, a teacher/student ratio of 1:21, and a minority population of less than 31%. Free and reduced lunch percentage rates were not reported although it was noted that

Schools A and B did not qualify for Title I status (Wilkerson et al., 2007). The study reported that School C was not a Title I school, but indicated that 39% of students received free and reduced lunch. Interestingly, the study reported that School D was, in fact, a Title I school, but indicated that 14% of students received free and reduced lunch. It was unclear if School D qualified for Title I status based upon other criteria or if the percentages of free and reduced lunch were mistakenly switched in the report.

Nevertheless, it was reported that School C did not qualify for Title I status. School C was characterized by predominately Caucasian students, a minority population of less than 11%, and a teacher/student ratio of 1:10. The percentage of English Language Learners (ELL) was not disclosed in the report (Wilkerson et al., 2007). It was reported that School D qualified for Title I status; however, as mentioned above, the researchers reported a 14% free and reduced lunch rate. School D was characterized by an enrollment of predominately Caucasian students, a teacher/student ratio of 1:10, and a minority population of less than 11%. Again, the percentage of English Language Learners (ELL) was not disclosed. School E qualified for Title I status and was characterized by 97% Caucasian enrollment, a teacher/student ratio of 1:18, free and reduced lunch percentage of 40.4%, and 4.1% of English Language Learners (ELL). School F was characterized by Title I status, a majority of Caucasian students, a teacher/student ratio of 1:17, and 46% free and reduced lunch rate. The report did not indicate the percentage of ELL student enrollment (Wilkerson et al., 2007). Informal analyses of these characteristics revealed a pattern of schools represented primarily by Caucasian students and low teacher/student ratios. Gender and grade level enrollment figures were equally distributed throughout the sampled population. In order to rule out differences related to teacher factors, statistical

analyses were completed to determine the presence of any differences related to number of years experience, number of years experience at that specific grade level, number of years at the participating school, level of teacher education, and student/teacher ratios. No statistical differences were found (Wilkerson et al., 2007).

The 2007 Year Two Report revealed results that almost mirrored the 2006 study. Wilkerson et al. (2007) reported that students in the first, second, and third grades who received instruction with *Reading Street* exhibited significant mid-year and end-of-year gains in reading achievement. Progress across all reading abilities (above-, at-, or below-level) was noted and considered to be comparable. No significant differences between the treatment and control groups were reported, but it was concluded that *Reading Street* is an effective curriculum for first, second, and third grade students with varying levels of ability (Wilkerson et al., 2007). A comparison of the 2006 and 2007 data revealed gains in average percentile points across grade levels on both the *GMRT-4* and the *DIBELS* (Wilkerson et al., 2007). In addition, it should be reported that the Year Two Study utilized schools that were already using Scott Foresman curriculum materials.

Wilkerson et al. (2007) also collected data regarding teachers' perceptions of *Reading Street* via weekly teacher logs, site visits, and end-of-year focus groups. Teachers' perceptions of the new curriculum were favorable. Specifically, teachers noted the following as strengths of the program: comprehensive nature of the materials; structure; Teacher Edition organization; theme incorporation; differentiated lesson plans; leveled readers; center design; and connections to science and social studies instruction. Teachers reported feeling overwhelmed at the wealth of resources and reported the differentiated lessons appeared to facilitate academic growth and establish student self-

confidence. Generally speaking, teachers reported feeling the curriculum met the needs of above-level and on-level students more efficiently (Wilkerson et al., 2007). Furthermore, it was also reported that at times the intervention materials for below-level readers was too challenging for students demonstrating significant reading deficits. At focus group meetings, teachers in the 2007 Two Year Study also agreed that implementing *Reading Street* with fidelity required additional work and time; however, the teachers agreed that the benefits greatly outweighed any added preparation. In conclusion, the study indicated the need for additional research to investigate the effects of the *Reading Street* program following a full year of implementation (Wilkerson et al., 2007).

A thorough review of the literature revealed no published independent research studies designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the *Reading Street* program; however, a study completed in 2009 investigated the relationship between reading curricula, economic deprivation, and reading achievement in students enrolled in the first through the third grades (Crowe, Connor, & Petscher, 2009). The authors pointed out that there is a need for research that examines the effectiveness of various reading curricula on students of differing socioeconomic status in order to ensure an equitable education. The study was designed to examine the effects of six reading programs and determine whether any differences in oral reading fluency existed by grade level and economic status (Crowe et al., 2009). Researchers investigated the effects of the following curricula on oral reading fluency: Open Court, SRA *Reading Mastery*, Harcourt, Houghton Mifflin, Scott Foresman, and Success for All. The Oral Reading Fluency subtest of the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* was used as a comparative measure (Crowe et al., 2009). An oral reading fluency score as determined by the *DIBELS* is the

median score of correct words per minute (cwpm) on three one-minute trials of oral reading. Minimum achievement levels as determined by the authors of the *DIBELS* were used in the study. End-of-year oral reading fluency (words per minute) achievement benchmark for the first grade is 40 wpm. Second grade achievement benchmark is 90 wpm, and third grade achievement benchmark is 110 wpm (University of Oregon, 2008).

Participants in the study included 9,993 first grade students, 9,869 second grade students, and 10,141 third grade students enrolled in 38 Reading First Schools in Florida (Crowe et al., 2009). Monthly data were collected from September through April. Results of the study revealed that in first, second, and third grades, students living in lower socioeconomic environments scored consistently lower regardless of the curricula (Crowe et al., 2009). It was determined that students enrolled in first grade exhibited a larger discrepancy in oral reading fluency rates when compared on the basis of socioeconomic status, but this discrepancy decreased throughout the second grade, and by the end of the third grade, no notable discrepancies existed between the students, regardless of socioeconomic status and reading curricula. Interestingly, Crowe et al. (2009) reported that students in the third grade from lower socioeconomic status homes using the Scott Foresman curriculum slightly outperformed their higher-SES peers by achieving higher oral reading fluency scores. The researchers also indicated that students exposed to the Houghton Mifflin curriculum consistently received the lowest oral reading fluency scores followed by students exposed to the Harcourt curriculum (Crowe et al., 2009). It should be pointed out that the research of Crowe et al. (2009) examined only one measure of reading achievement, oral reading fluency. Additional studies examining the effect of reading curricula on the achievement of lower-SES students need to be completed.

Summary

A thorough review of the literature revealed the major themes of research. A theoretical basis of reading instruction, history of reading instruction, effective reading instructional techniques, accountability in education, effects of poverty and Title I status on academic achievement, Alabama's reading program review, and the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program have all been discussed. Although a few studies have been completed on the *Reading Street* program, research revealed that a study regarding the effects of this program in a rural community with high poverty levels has never been completed. It was the researcher's intent to identify whether the initial year of implementation of the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program has been effective with third grade Title I students in south Mobile County, identify predictors that may improve future reading performance, and obtain information regarding teacher perceptions of the new program.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purposes of this study were to determine if third grade reading performance in Title I schools in south Mobile County has improved as a result of the *Reading Street* program, attempt to identify predictors that may improve future student performance, and obtain and analyze information obtained from a questionnaire regarding the perceptions and overall satisfaction of the certified instructional personnel in grades K-5 employed in the Mobile County Public School System (MCPSS) during the 2009-2010 school year, the first school year following the initial full year of program implementation. This study was causal-comparative in nature as it attempted to examine the performance of pre-existing groups and how they differ regarding a variety of variables.

Design

This study utilized a mixed-methods research design. The researcher examined both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data included summative and formative assessments as well as attendance data on third grade students who were enrolled in Title I schools in south Mobile County during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years. Demographic information such as gender, school, and socioeconomic status was also included as categorical variables in the analyses. In addition, nominal data such as whether or not the student received instruction using the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program were collected. Qualitative data were limited but included information obtained from questionnaires regarding teacher perceptions and satisfaction levels regarding the *Reading Street* program following the first year of the program's implementation.

For the purposes of this study, third grade *Stanford Achievement Test-10th Edition (SAT-10)* reading percentile scores were considered the dependent variable. Independent variables included third grade performance on the following: *Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT)* scores (as measured by a score of Level I, II, III, or IV with Levels III and IV being considered proficient); *Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT)* scores (as measured by an interval score which is considered to be commensurate with cognitive ability); *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* Oral Reading Fluency subtest scores (as measured by an interval score on a scale of 0-100); socioeconomic status (categorical data as measured by qualification for free or reduced lunch); attendance (as measured by interval data representing the number of days absent for a particular school year); gender; and whether or not the student was instructed with and participated in the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years (dichotomous categorical data).

Statistical analyses included an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) and multiple linear regression analyses on these data. Teacher attitude was measured by mean scores obtained from a questionnaire designed by the researcher that utilized a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly agree* (1) to *strongly disagree* (5). Independent variables on this analysis consisted of the following categorical data: school; teaching degree; grade level taught during the 2009-2010 school year; and years of experience ranging from 0 to above 21 that were categorized by 5-year increments (0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 21 years and above). A multiple linear regression was performed on these data. Qualitative data were also obtained from the teacher questionnaire as teachers were given the opportunity to make comments regarding the new reading program at the

end of the questionnaire. Responses were analyzed to determine if specific patterns of likes and dislikes were reported.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in this study was one of participant observer. According to Kemp (2001), the role of the participant observer can be described as those individuals who mesh their professional work and research interest into the role of an experienced researcher. As a special educator employed in a Title I school in south Mobile County, the scope of professional roles and responsibilities of the researcher of this study has included the following opportunities: to deliver instruction using the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program; administer the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)*; monitor administration of the *SAT-10*, the *Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT)*, and the *Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT)*; participate in collaborative data meetings and grade level planning experiences; and analyze student performance data as a member of the local School Action for Excellence (SAE) committee. Kemp (2001) continued by stressing that even though the degree of participation may vary significantly by researcher, it is imperative that the researcher minimize any influence upon the outcome of the phenomena being studied.

Participants

School District

The Mobile County Public School System (MCPSS) is located in the state of Alabama in the county of Mobile. Mobile County is located in the southwest corner of Alabama. According to the Alabama State Department of Education System Profile Reports, the MCPSS is the largest system in the state. It consistently enrolls over 64,000

students. The MCPSS employs approximately 8,500 personnel, has over 100 buildings, and utilizes a budget of over \$770,000. According to the Alabama State Department of Education website, the MCPSS consistently educates a higher percentage of low-income students (as defined by qualifying for free or reduced lunch) than the state average (ALSDE, n.d.b,c,d). The Alabama State Department of Education website indicated that the MCPSS educated the following percentages of students who qualified for free and reduced lunch during the following school years: 67.6% in 2004-2005 (state average = 51.6%); 71.1% in 2005-2006 (state average = 51.9%); 64.9% in 2006-2007 (state average = 51.2%); and 65.5% in 2007-2008 (state average = 51.3%). The significant increase in free and reduced lunch students during the 2005-2006 school year was associated with the enrollment of Hurricane Katrina victims migrating from Mississippi and Louisiana due to the geographic location and the county's close proximity to these states.

Study Participants

The study participants included all third grade students enrolled in MCPSS Title I elementary schools located in south Mobile County during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years. The defined third grade population was roughly estimated to include approximately 300-500 students. However, data collection revealed the defined third grade population to be approximately 712 students. Title I elementary schools located in south Mobile County include the following: Anna Booth Elementary; Frank Breitling Elementary; Cora Castlen Elementary; Dauphin Island Elementary; Dixon Elementary; and Saint Elmo Elementary. Specific school demographic information is provided within Appendix A for quick reference and comparability. Due to the vast size of the MCPSS, it was decided for purposes of this research that the population should be limited to Title I

elementary schools in south Mobile County. All third grade students were included in this study regardless of gender, ethnicity, special education status, English Language Learner (ELL) status, transiency, truancy, cognitive status, or at-risk status.

Since the majority of schools in the MCPSS are Title I schools, the researcher assumed that this population was representative of the larger population of Title I elementary schools in the MCPSS. A Title I school is defined as a school with an enrollment of 40% or more students who qualify under the federal guidelines qualifications for free or reduced lunch (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.c).

For purposes of this study, south Mobile County elementary schools are defined as elementary schools with a feeder pattern in which most of their students enroll in Alma Bryant High School for their secondary education. Alma Bryant High School is the only high school geographically located in south Mobile County. It is one of the few high schools in the MCPSS that has an inclusive feeder pattern for student enrollment. Alma Bryant High School is also a Title I school in the MCPSS. General demographics regarding gender for the 2009-2010 school year included the following: 51% male and 49% female. Ethnic diversity is characterized by the following: 77% Caucasian; 14% African American; 8% Asian; 1% Hispanic; and <1% other. Total student enrollment is approximately 1,482 (M. Welch, personal communication, December 27, 2009).

Additional study participants included all certified teaching personnel in grades K-5 who were employed within MCPSS Title I elementary schools in south Mobile County during the 2009-2010 school year. Certified personnel who participated had some experience, acquired some knowledge, or received professional development training regarding the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program. For the purposes of this study, it

was decided to obtain data from certified personnel in grades K-5 in order to collect a more comprehensive impression of teachers' perceptions and their satisfaction levels regarding the 2008-2009 district-wide adoption of the *Reading Street* program.

Reading Instruction Before and After *Reading Street* Implementation

Before the system adopted and implemented the *Reading Street* program, the MCPSS had adopted and purchased Scholastic's *Literacy Place* curriculum for reading instruction. In the meantime, as a result of NCLB legislation, states began to develop and implement research-based instructional materials and scientifically-based pedagogical strategies for reading instruction in order to secure grants from the federal Reading First Initiative. According to the U.S. Department of Education website, Reading First is a state grant program designed to encourage the use of such strategies and materials. In response to additional federal accountability demands, Alabama established the *Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI)*. In addition to providing teachers with intensive, ongoing professional development in reading instruction, *ARI* provided reading coaches in local schools to support teachers with struggling readers. Regional and state personnel were also secured to further support the initiative.

Once the research began to reveal documented improvements in student achievement, a statewide emphasis on *ARI* developed (Spear, 2006). The reading instruction in *ARI* schools consisted of five basic components: phonemic awareness; phonics; fluency; comprehension; and vocabulary. These components are also referred to as Reading First principles and are expected to be explicitly and systematically addressed during reading instruction (Bell, 2003). It was a district and/or local school decision as to what specific research-based curriculum would be used to address these *ARI* components.

Although the *Literacy Place* curriculum was provided, local schools were allowed flexibility in supplementing and utilizing other instructional materials (such as *Open Court* phonics) during reading instruction. As the number of *ARI* schools increased, reading instructional strategies were becoming more unified, but the use of a variety of materials to address those *ARI* components continued to be utilized. Professional development focused on the five basic *ARI* components, and local reading coaches, regional coaches, and administrators implemented techniques such as collaboration and observation to ensure that the implementation of these *ARI* components were embedded within the curriculum.

The *Reading Street* curriculum has these five basic components of effective reading instruction embedded within the program; therefore, *ARI* components are not approached as a separate entity or component in the instruction. In addition, when compared to *Literacy Place*, *Reading Street* is a much more structured program. The system has mandated that *Reading Street* be implemented as developed and written. Therefore, reading coaches, regional coaches, and administrators have increased their presence within the classrooms by completing observations and walk-through visits several times a week to ensure the *Reading Street* curriculum is implemented with fidelity. Common assessments from the *Reading Street* program are administered weekly to document student progress. Local reading coaches assist in planning and scheduling collaborative meetings to discuss any needs or concerns that teachers may have or that may have been identified during weekly walk-through visits. In addition, reading coaches model *Reading Street* lessons, participate in side-by-side teaching to provide support to

the instructional reading personnel, and assist teachers in planning lessons and sharing ideas.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire was developed to determine the perceptions and satisfaction levels of certified instructional personnel regarding the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program. The questionnaire was initially designed using a focus group consisting of a reading coach, a teacher, and the researcher. An initial draft of the questionnaire was developed by the focus group that identified specific areas of interest and the specific variables to be measured. The initial questionnaire consisted of 35 items with responses being measured by a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly agree* (1) to *strongly disagree* (5). Each questionnaire was designed to reveal a mean overall score. Statistical analyses of the questionnaire were also designed to reveal mean scores in each major interest area. These areas were defined as Planning/Training and Support, Planning and Scheduling, Materials, Curriculum and Content, Differentiated Instruction, Connections, and Outcomes. The questionnaire was designed to collect demographic data about the survey participant. In addition, the questionnaire provided an opportunity for participants to provide a limited amount of qualitative data in the form of comments and/or concerns.

An expert panel consisting of the Mobile County school reading coaches, (approximately 55 individuals) was given the opportunity to review the questionnaire draft, ensure face validity and content validity, and participate in the piloting process. The initial questionnaire was sent to each participant via the school mailbag and the correspondence included a self-addressed return envelope to facilitate increased return rate. The initial draft of the questionnaire, the attached information letter, and the return

envelope were copied on brightly colored paper. The attached cover letter explained the study and the questionnaire piloting process (Appendix B). Twenty-four questionnaires were returned during pilot testing. Each reading coach who participated on the expert panel and returned the draft research questionnaire during the piloting process was entered in a drawing to win a \$50.00 Wal-Mart gift card for their time and effort. The questionnaire was refined based upon feedback from the expert panel. One typographic error was corrected and a question regarding whether or not the participant had obtained National Board Certification was added in the demographic section. Questionnaire responses were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

The researcher met with the statistician to complete Cronbach's alpha to determine internal consistency and reliability. The piloted questionnaire obtained an overall Cronbach's alpha of .926 indicating that the instrument was reliable. Face and content validity were informally assessed using feedback from the participating reading coaches.

The Alabama State Assessment Program requires annual assessments be administered to students. The assessment program includes tests that are both norm- and criterion-referenced. The *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)*, *Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT)*, *Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT)*, *Alabama Science Assessment*, *Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing (ADAW)*, and the *Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE)* are all assessments that are administered to specific groups of students at specified times of the year within the public school system (Alabama State Department of Education, n.d.a). For purposes of this

study, only the assessments that are administered to students in the third grade in Mobile County were explained and discussed.

Norm-referenced tests are designed to compare obtained test scores with a specific norm group, such as peers. The *OLSAT* and *SAT-10* are considered norm-referenced tests. They are accepted by educators nationally to be reliable and valid assessments. The Buros Institute's *Mental Measurements Yearbook—Seventeenth Edition (2007)* provides an overview, analysis, and critique of these assessments as well as many others.

The *OLSAT* is a group administered measure of cognitive functioning. The *OLSAT* provides a *School Ability Index (SAI)* (which is considered to be a total estimate of cognitive functioning) for students in kindergarten through the 12th grade. In addition to the total score, verbal and nonverbal component scores are provided. DeStefano (Buros Institute, 2007) reported the *OLSAT*'s standardization is extensive and the demographics of the standardization samples that were used are very similar to the enrollment of the U.S. The test authors report test reliability in the form of K-R 20 coefficients. Based upon these data, the majority of internal consistency coefficients ranged between .80 and .90. According to DeStefano (2007), no information regarding test-retest reliability or validity is provided in the technical manual of the seventh edition. Nevertheless, the *OLSAT* is a widely used and accepted group administered, norm-referenced estimate of cognitive functioning (Buros Institute, 2007).

The *SAT-10* is a group administered measure of reading, language, spelling, listening, mathematics, science, and social science achievement for students in kindergarten through the 12th grade. According to Carney and Morse (Buros Institute, 2007), the *SAT-10* exhibits high reliability as evidenced by K-R coefficients ranging

between .80 and .90. Referring to the test developers, the reviewers reported that “content validity has been built into the test through their well-defined blueprint and their careful development process” (Buros Institute, 2007, ¶15). The *SAT-10* is considered to be a well-known, widely-used group achievement test.

Criterion-referenced tests are designed to assess student performance based on a set of criteria or standards. According to the ALSDE (n.d.a), the *ARMT* is composed of specific items from the *SAT-10* reading and mathematics subtests which align with the Alabama Course of Study Standards. These subtests comprise the *ARMT Part 1*. The *ARMT Part 2* consists of a newly-developed writing portion. The *ARMT* is scored on a rubric with a student’s performance judged as Level I (does not meet standards), Level II (partially meets standards), Level III (meets standards), and Level IV (exceeds standards) (ALSDE, n.d.a).

In addition to the *ARMT*, the state requires administration of the *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency subtest to all third grade students three times a year. During testing, the students are presented with three reading passages. Each student is allowed one minute per passage, incorrect words are recorded, and correct words per minute (wpm) is calculated. The student’s oral reading fluency score is the median score of the three trials. Minimal performance is determined by a cut-off score. Criteria to be considered low risk in third grade are as follows: beginning of year 77 cwpm; middle of year 88 cwpm, and end of year 110 cwpm (University of Oregon Center on Teaching & Learning, 2008).

Procedures

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained (Appendix C). The superintendent, Dr. Roy Nichols, and a curriculum supervisor, Marilyn Howell, were

contacted to obtain written permission to distribute the questionnaire (Appendixes D and E). Principals at the participating schools were contacted via email to schedule a date for the distribution of the questionnaire. The study questionnaire (Appendix F) was sent via the school mailbag to five reading coaches and one special education teacher who had agreed to administer the questionnaire at their local school. A copy of oral directions which were to be read prior to the survey was also provided (Appendix G). A cover letter was copied on brightly colored paper and attached to each questionnaire. The cover letter explained the purposes of the study, indicated who should participate, explained voluntary participation, addressed informed consent, and provided contact information for potential questions or comments (Appendix H). A self-addressed return envelope was provided for convenience. Entry forms for the \$50.00 gift card were included, and the gift card was distributed to the winner of the drawing at the end of January. Questionnaires were administered in the fall to all participating K-5 certified teaching personnel in Title I schools in south Mobile County.

The 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 third grade test scores, performance levels, and demographic information was obtained with the assistance of Marilyn Howell (district reading curriculum supervisor), Jerry Long (district technology representative), and Sandra Morris (district statistician).

The researcher entered the data into SPSS. An Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was completed on the data to control for possible pre-existing differences between the students enrolled in third grade during 2007-2008 school year and the students enrolled in third grade during the 2008-2009 school year. The covariate in the ANCOVA was *OLSAT* scores to control for any cognitive differences between third grade

classes that may have existed. The data were analyzed to determine if differences indeed existed and whether they were statistically significant. In addition, a multiple regression analysis was completed on the data to determine if a relationship existed between the variables used in the study and to determine if specific predictors to improve student performance could be identified. The data from the teacher questionnaires were also analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The researcher discussed the results of the analyses with the statistician and determined whether or not the null hypotheses should be retained or rejected.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

All students enrolled in third grade at Anna Booth Elementary, Frank Breitling Elementary, Cora Castlen Elementary, Dauphin Island Elementary, Dixon Elementary, and Saint Elmo Elementary during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years were included in the study.

Sample size included 712 students which approximated an even split in the population based on gender and *Reading Street* participation. Socioeconomic status levels were determined using free/reduced/paid lunch status categories. The participating population included 59.4% free lunch status, 9.1% reduced lunch status, and 31.5% paid lunch status. These overall percentages did not reflect the SES of the specific schools within the sample population (Table 1). Frank Breitling, Cora Castlen, and Dauphin Island's school-wide free/reduced lunch status enrollment ranged between 51.8% and 56.9%. Likewise, Dixon, Saint Elmo, and Anna Booth's school-wide free/reduced lunch status enrollment soared between 75.5% and 88.9%.

Descriptive Data

Ethnicity was not included as a variable in the study since most of the targeted schools in south Mobile County have a high enrollment of Caucasian students. English Language Learner (ELL) status was also excluded from the study. However, it should be noted that Anna Booth, Dixon, and Saint Elmo all have a high percentage of students from Asian descent (Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian) with Cora Castlen, Frank Breitling, and Dauphin Island having considerably less. Student test data and

Table 1

Percentage of Students by School Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch During the 2007-2008 School Year

School	Percentage
Anna Booth Elementary	88.9%
Frank Breitling Elementary	51.8%
Cora Castlen Elementary	56.9%
Dauphin Island Elementary	51.9%
Dixon Elementary	75.5%
Saint Elmo Elementary	80.0%

questionnaire responses were collected and analyzed using SPSS. An ANCOVA and multiple regression analyses were completed.

Reading Street questionnaires were created and piloted within the county by local school literacy coaches. The only change made to the questionnaire was the addition of a National Board Certification question in the demographics section. Reliability of the questionnaire was calculated and revealed an overall Cronbach's alpha of .926 indicating the instrument was very reliable. However, it should be reported that although the Preparation/Training/Support, Materials, Curriculum, and Outcomes questionnaire subscales also exhibited good reliability ratings, Planning and Scheduling, Differentiated Instruction, and Connections exhibited lower Cronbach's alpha ratings of .636, .646, and .567, respectively.

Table 2 reveals the frequency and percentage of individual variables associated with school participation, grade level participation, highest academic degree, and years of experience. According to Table 2, Anna Booth Elementary, Cora Castlen Elementary, and Dixon Elementary exhibited the highest questionnaire return rates. Grade level participation appeared to be fairly evenly distributed across grade levels with second and fifth exhibiting somewhat less participation. Fifty-seven percent of the participating teachers had obtained a bachelor's degree, 40.9% possessed a master's degree, and 1.1% possessed a specialist's degree or higher. Years of experience was also evenly distributed with participants having 0-5 years of experience exhibiting the highest participation rate (25.8%), closely followed by participants having 11-15 years of experience exhibiting the least participation rate (20.4%). The results of teachers' perceptions regarding individual components of the program are contained in Table 3. Perceptions and satisfaction levels

on the questionnaire were measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). Teachers exhibited a positive perception and level of satisfaction regarding the *Reading Street* program with a mean of 3.59 and standard deviation of .65. Means and standard deviations for individual factors on the questionnaire are also displayed in Table 3. A positive attitude toward the program was reflected ($M = 3.59$). However, all standard deviations were considered to be lower than expected indicating less variability.

Of the surveys distributed to certified instructional personnel, 98 participants responded resulting in a return rate of 61%. Six of the completed surveys included qualitative comments. Due to the limited number of survey comments received, no theme emerged. Responses were categorized according to three categories: teacher suggestions, negative feedback, and positive feedback. All comments received are listed below:

1. additional phonics assessments
2. development of additional activities in the areas of main idea and conclusion
3. materials to be provided for concept board and center materials
4. tabs to be placed in teachers' editions for quick reference to "Amazing Words," reteach strategies, and differentiated instruction
5. group plans to be more specific.

Negative comments consisted of the following concerns:

1. curriculum has reduced teacher judgment
2. curriculum is too structured

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Variables of Questionnaire Response

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
School Participation		
Ann Booth Elementary	20	21.5%
Frank Breitling Elementary	10	10.8%
Cora Castlen Elementary	26	28.0%
Dauphin Island Elementary	5	5.4%
Dixon Elementary	22	23.7%
Saint Elmo Elementary	9	9.7%
Grade Level Participation		
Kindergarten	15	16.1%
First	17	18.3%
Second	8	8.6%
Third	13	14.0%
Fourth	12	12.9%
Fifth	9	9.7%
Other	10	10.8%
Highest Academic Degree		
Bachelor's	53	57.0%
Master's	38	40.9%
Specialist's or Higher	1	1.1%
Years of Experience		
0-5 Years	24	25.8%
6-10 Years	23	24.7%
11-15 Years	16	17.2%
20 or More Years	19	20.4%
National Board Certification		
Nationally Board Certified	2	2.2%
Non-Nationally Board Certified	77	82.8%

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Questionnaire Results</i>				
Sample Size (N = 92)				
(Likert Scale 1-5)				
1 = <i>Strongly Disagree</i> ; 5 = <i>Strongly Agree</i>				
Overall Satisfaction Level	2.17	4.94	3.59	.65
Preparation/Training Support	1.67	5.00	3.67	.85
Planning/Scheduling	1.33	5.00	3.88	.83
Materials	2.00	5.00	3.67	.67
Curriculum & Content	1.86	5.00	3.64	.72
Differentiated Instruction	1.40	5.00	3.40	.85
Connections	1.40	5.00	3.39	.77
Outcomes	1.00	5.00	3.55	.84
<i>Outcome Data</i>				
Sample Size (N = 712)				
SAT-10 Total Reading Percentile	2	99	58.32	25.75
ARMT Reading Performance Level	I	IV	—	—
OLSAT Total School Ability Index	51	150	100.12	.63
DIBELS ORF Beginning-of-the-Year	4	218	85.33	34.42
DIBELS ORF Middle-of-the-Year	6	224	101.97	30.70
DIBELS ORF End-of-the-Year	4	280	121.30	34.93
Total Annual Absences	0	47	8.6	6.85

SAT-10 = Stanford Achievement Test - 10th edition

ARMT = Alabama Reading & Mathematics Test

OLSAT = Otis-Lennon School Ability Test

DIBELS = Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills

ORF = Oral Reading Fluency Subtest

3. supplemental materials for above grade level students and special education students are limited
4. curriculum exhibits less rigor than prior program
5. some materials are impractical
6. pacing should be more progressive during fourth quarter
7. website planner is not user-friendly

Positive comments consisted of the following:

1. program exhibits appropriate pacing levels
2. program provides sufficient instruction of targeted skills which are threaded throughout the year
3. program's ELL resources and ideas are also useful for below grade level instruction

Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics characterized by the variables included in the study as well as the commonly associated acronyms. The dependent variable in the study included *SAT-10* Total Reading Percentile Rankings. *SAT-10* percentile ranks ranged from 2 to 99 with a mean of 58.32 and a standard deviation of 25.75. The mean *SAT-10* total reading percentile rank for non-participating *Reading Street* students was 57.96 with a standard deviation of .991 as compared to participating *Reading Street* students who exhibited a mean *SAT-10* total reading percentile rank of 58.649 with a standard deviation of .958. Although no significant differences in non-participating and participating students were revealed, a comparison of mean *SAT-10* total reading percentile ranks indicated a very slight increase in the scores of participating students. It should be reported that standard deviations both groups were considered to be extremely

low, roughly 1% of the mean, indicating there was extraordinarily low variance between the test scores. Independent variables included *ARMT* Performance Level, *OLSAT* School Ability Index (SAI), Beginning-, Mid-, and End-of-the-Year Oral Reading Fluency subtest scores from the *DIBELS*, and total absences. *ARMT* Performance Levels have a minimum of Level I (does not meet standards) and a maximum of Level IV (exceeds standards). Due to the categorical nature of this variable, a mean and standard deviation was not determined. The *OLSAT* SAI scores ranged from 51 to 150, with a mean of 100.12 and a standard deviation of 14.44. ORF subtest scores from the Beginning-, Middle-, and End-of-the-Year ranged from 4 to 280. The mean from the Beginning-of-the-Year ORF subtest of the *DIBELS* was 85.33 words per minute (wpm) with a standard deviation of 34.42. The mean from the Middle-of-the-Year ORF subtest of the *DIBELS* was 101.97 wpm with a standard deviation of 30.70, and the mean from the End-of-the-Year ORF subtest of the *DIBELS* was 121.30 wpm with a standard deviation of 34.93. If a normal standard deviation is considered to be approximately one-third to one-fourth of the mean, examination of the standard deviation values revealed normal standard deviations associated with Middle-of-the-Year and End-of-the-Year *DIBELS* ORF subtest scores. The *OLSAT* SAI exhibited a low standard deviation indicating the distribution may have been somewhat leptokurtic in nature with a more acute peak around the mean which is associated with less variability. Both the *SAT-10* Total Reading Percentile Rankings and Beginning-of-the-Year ORF *DIBELS* scores exhibited significantly larger standard deviations ranging from approximately 40% to 45% of the mean. The most significant characteristic of the range of standard deviations was associated with total annual absences. The standard deviation of total annual absences was approximately 80%

of the mean and, therefore, was considered well outside of normal limits for standard deviation figures. This phenomenon may have been associated with the presence of several extremely high outliers such as 47 total absences a year. These outliers were not excluded from the analyses in this study, but addressing them may have changed some of the results of this study when the yearly attendance variable was included in the analysis.

Statistical Results

Hypotheses

The study contained the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no statistically significant difference between *Stanford Achievement Test-10 (SAT-10)* reading percentile rank scores of third grade students enrolled in Title I elementary schools in south Mobile County before and after implementation of the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program.

Decision: Fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Statistical Findings: $F(1, 711) = .250, p = .617$

An ANCOVA was performed to determine whether a statistically significant difference between *SAT-10* scores of third grade students before and after the initial year of implementation existed while controlling for any effects from differences in variations of cognitive ability as measured by the *OLSAT*. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances revealed a significance level of .536 indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met. Therefore, it was not necessary to make any adjustments or corrections in an effort to control for any assumption violation. ANCOVA results revealed that when variations in cognitive abilities were controlled for, no

statistically significant difference in SAT-10 scores between students who received and did not receive instruction using Scott Foresman's *Reading Street* program existed.

2. There is no statistically significant relationship between the *SAT-10* reading percentile rank scores of third grade students enrolled in Title I elementary schools in south Mobile County before and after implementation of the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program and the variables of the *Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT)* Performance Level scores, *Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT)* scores, *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* oral reading fluency subtest scores, socioeconomic status, attendance, gender, and *Reading Street* program participation.

Decision: Reject the null hypothesis.

Statistical Findings: $F(8, 703) = 161.913, p = .000, R^2 = .648$

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether a statistically significant relationship existed between *SAT-10* results and the *ARMT* Reading Performance Level Scores, *OLSAT* scores, *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency subtest scores, socioeconomic status, attendance, gender, and *Reading Street* participation. Results of the multiple regression analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between the dependent and several independent variables (Table 4). According to the analysis, approximately 65% of the variability found in SAT-10 scores was related to the independent variables included in the study. No meaningful results were obtained regarding the identification of specific predictors that may improve future student performance. According to unstandardized coefficients obtained through the multiple

regression analysis, when the independent variables were compared for effects, free/reduced lunch status had the greatest effect on *SAT-10* scores, followed by gender. Standardized coefficients indicated that *OLSAT* scores had the greatest impact on *SAT-10* scores followed by Beginning-of-the-Year, Middle-of-the-Year, and End-of-the-Year *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency subtest scores, respectively. *Reading Street* participation appeared to be a very slight negative predictor (-.013) of *SAT-10* performance in reading; however, these findings are reported but considered to be minute and negligible.

3. There is no statistically significant relationship between the attitudes of teachers toward the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* program by school, grade level taught, degree, or years of experience.

Decision: Reject the null hypothesis.

Statistical Findings: $F(15, 77) = 2.890, p = .001, R^2 = .360$

The results of the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* questionnaire were subjected to a multiple regression analysis to determine whether or not a statistically significant relationship existed between the attitudes of teachers toward the *Reading Street* program by school, grade level taught, degree, or years of experience. Analysis of the overall (mean) scores on the *Reading Street* questionnaires revealed that statistical significance was exhibited in three of the six schools and at grade 5 (Table 5). It should be noted that although significance was observed in overall (mean) scores by schools and grade level, none of the scores revealed negative ratings. These findings appeared to indicate that three of the six schools as well as grades K-4 exhibited “higher” satisfaction levels when compared to their counterparts. When differences were considered by factor, several differences were observed. When the Preparation/Training/Support component was the

Table 4

Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	β	b	t	Sig.
Independent Variable				
OLSAT SAI	.854	.479	18.452	<.001*
DIBELS ORF (Beginning)	.173	.231	4.153	<.001*
DIBELS ORF (Middle)	.122	.146	2.007	.045
DIBELS ORF (End)	.054	.074	1.129	.259
Total Annual Absences	.133	.035	1.564	.118
Gender	-1.062	-.021	-.912	.362
Reading Street Participation	-.669	-.013	-.573	.567
Free/Reduced Lunch Status	3.306	.060	2.608	<.001*

*Indicates statistical significance at the .05 level

dependent variable, the following results were obtained: $F(15, 77) = 2.92, p = .001, R^2 = .363$. Significant differences were found by grade 5 teachers although their satisfaction ratings of the program continued to be positive. When the Planning/Training/Scheduling component was the dependent variable, the following results were obtained: $F(15, 77) = 2.63, p = .003, R^2 = .340$. Although satisfaction ratings of the instructional personnel were determined to be positive, significant differences were found by school with slightly lower satisfaction ratings regarding the Planning/Scheduling components of the program. When the Materials component was the dependent variable, the following results were obtained: $F(15, 77) = 1.988, p = .027, R^2 = .279$. Differences were found by school and grade with upper grade instructional personnel rating satisfaction lower regarding the Materials components of the program. When the Curriculum and Content component was the dependent variable, the following results were obtained: $F(15, 75) = 2.126, p = .017, R^2 = .298$. Again, differences were found by school with four of the six schools rating slightly lower satisfaction levels regarding the Curriculum and Content components of the program. When the Differentiated Instruction component was the dependent variable, the following results were obtained: $F(15, 76) = 3.796, p = .000, R^2 = .428$. Differences between three of the six participating schools and upper grade levels were identified as a result of slightly lower satisfaction ratings regarding the Differentiated Instruction components of the program. When the Connections component was the dependent variable, the following results were obtained: $F(15, 77) = 1.973, p = .028, R^2 = .278$. Differences by grade and years of experience were identified. Finally, when the Outcomes component was the dependent variable, the following results were obtained: $F(15, 77) = 2.035, p = .023, R^2 = .284$. Differences between schools were identified as a result of

slightly lower satisfaction ratings regarding the Outcomes components of the program. In summary, it should be emphasized that even though differences were found regarding satisfaction levels of the instructional personnel, all satisfaction ratings were well above the 2.5 average on the Likert scale. This indicated that teachers across schools, by grade level, and regardless of years of experience or highest level of education, had more positive ratings of the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* as compared to either neutral or negative ratings.

Table 5

Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis (Overall Questionnaire Results)

Model	β	b	t	Sig.
Independent Variable				
School 1	-.897	-.567	-1.415	.161
School 2	-1.704	-.812	-2.633	.010*
School 3	-1.200	-.828	-1.947	.055
School 4	-1.245	-.432	-1.848	.068
School 5	-1.242	-.812	-2.009	.048
School 6	-1.691	-.769	-2.569	.012*
Kindergarten	.253	.143	.954	.343
Grade 1	.219	.130	.852	.397
Grade 2	.295	.127	1.013	.314
Grade 3	.089	.048	.327	.745
Grade 4	-.271	-.140	-.995	.323
Grade 5	-.718	-.326	-2.537	.013*
Other	-.026	-.012	-.094	.926
Highest Academic Degree	.224	.171	1.613	.111
Years of Experience	-.284	-.191	-1.919	.059

*Indicates statistical significance at the .05 level

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Background Information

Summary

The purposes of this study were to determine if third grade reading performance in Title I schools in south Mobile County improved as a result of the *Reading Street* program. In addition, attempts were made to identify predictors that may improve future students' performance and obtain and analyze information obtained from a questionnaire regarding the perceptions and overall satisfaction levels of the certified instructional personnel in grades K-5 employed in the MCPSS during the 2009-2010 school year.

Research findings indicated no statistically significant differences between the performance of third grade participants before and after the implementation of the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* curriculum. Statistical analyses revealed no specific predictors within the data that may improve future student performance within the participating population. In addition, results of the questionnaire data indicated that certified instructional personnel's perceptions were positive and the personnel were very satisfied with the new program, although some differences were noted in slightly higher satisfaction ratings within the lower grades.

Conclusions and Discussion

Although the results of this study do not reveal any statistically significant differences in student performance before and after *Reading Street* implementation, it should not be assumed that the program is ineffective. A thorough review of the literature appeared to indicate these results are congruent with much of the literature regarding new

curriculum implementation and caution should be practiced when using summative test scores to document improvements which result from the adoption and application of new reading curriculum within the first several years of implementation (Hall & Hord, 1987; Reeves, 2006).

The end of the 20th century has been associated with the push for accountability and demand for change. In a 1997 article, Holmes identified a progression of reform research spanning from school effectiveness to school change and then to school improvement. Although he acknowledged assimilation between the terms, he specifically noted unique characteristics associated with each. In the 1960s and 1970s, school effectiveness focused on school goals and was fundamentally associated with identifying specific components that would increase instructional competence. School change emphasized the actual process used to facilitate and establish that change. Many of the techniques and methods that have been associated with school change have been short-lived. According to Holmes (1997), school improvement is more difficult to define and is often defined in terms of what others consider to be an improvement. School improvement appears to involve having both purpose (reason to be effective) and process (change used to achieve effectiveness) (Holmes, 1997). Nevertheless, reform demands are embedded into the educational system and public outcry for an improved educational system is at the forefront of everyone's minds. Specifically, there has been concern regarding the performance of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Interestingly, Rotberg (2006) reported that the existence of achievement gaps from students with different socioeconomic levels is not only a nationwide concern, but is a

universal phenomenon. Therefore, globally it could be assumed that educators around the world are concerned with narrowing that achievement gap through various reform plans.

In 2001, the Final Report on the Longitudinal Evaluation of School Change and Performance (LESCP) in Title I Schools was released by the U.S. Department of Education. According to the report, it was the first major research study completed to examine the effects of curriculum changes made as a result of the standards-based reform movement. The background information in the report reiterated that the purpose of the Title I program was not to dictate how to improve the achievement of high-poverty schools, but to provide the funding so that specific states and districts can decide how to initiate changes in curriculum and practice which most efficiently meet their unique educational standards and needs. It should also be noted that the report cautioned against expecting improved measurable effects from reform that had not been instituted for a minimum of several years (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). One of the key findings which relate to this study was the performance of students who were eligible for free/reduced lunch. These students would exhibit gains in achievement at an average pace as compared to their counterparts. The achievement gap never widened, but at the same time, it never narrowed either. Results from this study would indicate that improvements in student outcome data would approximate that of their higher socioeconomic peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

Fullan (2005) suggested that when striving for improved performance, superintendents as well as school districts need to possess a “dual commitment to short-term and long-term results” (p. 17). He noted that there was no excuse for neglecting to construct a plan designed to obtain positive short-term results, but he cautioned that an

emphasis solely on short-term results such as test scores can sacrifice the development of long-term goals which would strengthen the overall educational system (Fullan, 2005). Superintendents, school boards, and educators across the nation are challenged to balance both short-term and long-term goals and propagate them into successful fruition of improved academic performance.

One technique that districts have used to meet both short- and long-term goals was to implement what they considered to be the best research-based curriculum available. In *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action* (2003), Marzano identified and emphasized the need to utilize a “guaranteed and viable curriculum” to improve student achievement. Marzano (2003) differentiated between the “intended curriculum, implemented curriculum, and the attained curriculum” (p. 23). Intended curriculum is comprised of the federal, state, and local standards specific to each grade level. The implemented curriculum is comprised of the prevailing ideas and concepts that are conveyed by the educator, and the attained curriculum is comprised of the actual content the student has learned (Marzano, 2003). Many educational programs have exhibited a discrepancy between intended and implemented curriculum which have adversely affected the quality of the attained curriculum. Marzano (2003) emphasized the crucial need to align these curricula in an effort to improve student performance.

The Mobile County Public School System has acknowledged the importance of having a guaranteed and viable curriculum. In the past, a variety of high quality, research-based reading programs that have aligned with state standards and district pacing guides have been utilized within the county. In 2008, the county implemented a uniform reading curriculum in an effort to improve student achievement. According to Jerald (2003),

research has indicated that districts which have achieved the largest gains in student achievement have adopted and implemented “common, district-wide curriculums, instructional programs, or detailed achievement targets” (p. 14). Based upon that statement, the district’s decision to implement a common district-wide curriculum within Mobile County was a wise one.

Extensive research on curriculum implementation has been conducted.

Researchers have acknowledged that during new curriculum implementation, there are periods of adjustment experienced by the staff and identified patterns within the resulting outcome measurements of student achievement. Consistently, researchers have acknowledged the fact that the concerns of teachers in implementing the new curriculum need to be addressed (Fuller, 1969; Hall, Wallace, & Dossett, 1973; Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1977; Hall & Loucks, 1977). In addition, research has noted that it is not uncommon for student achievement scores to either remain the same or even decline during the initial year of implementation. Research has also indicated that noted student achievement gains of students experiencing new curriculum implementation are no greater than comparable control groups (Loucks, 1975; McHugh & Stringfield, 1999; MacIver, Stringfield, & McHugh, 2000; Philadelphia Education Fund, 2000; Useem, Neild, & Morrison, 2001; Supovitz, Taylor, & May, 2002; Wilkerson, Shannon, & Herman, 2006; Wilkerson et al., 2007; Berry, Byrd, & Collins, 2009). Several factors in the literature have been associated with this phenomenon.

Studies by Bernel (2008) and Hopkins (2003) provided insight into the evolution of the process of curriculum implementation. In the 1960s, Fuller hypothesized that there were concerns specifically related to educators. Fuller (1969) investigated the concerns of

teachers in an attempt to gestate a developmental framework of common concerns. Fuller (1969) proposed three phases of concern: a pre-teaching phase, an early teaching phase, and a late teaching phase. The pre-teaching phase was characterized by indifference and scant interest in instructional issues. The early teaching phase was characterized by both covert and overt concerns. Covert concerns focused on environmental support and establishing relationships which would result in acceptance. These concerns often remained confidential and were overshadowed by what appeared to be more professional concerns. Overt concerns focused on more professional concerns such as adequacy as an educator and classroom management. The late teaching phase was characterized by concerns regarding student achievement and introspection (Fuller, 1969). According to Hall et al. (1977), this model evolved and has also been referred to as concerns with self, task, and impact.

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) was developed as an extension of Fuller's work throughout the early 1970s and mid-1980s (Anderson, 1997). Background information regarding the development of the CBAM is extensive. During the early 1970s, researchers associated with the Inter-Institutional Program of the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education hypothesized that there were definitive categories of concern related to the adoption of innovation. In addition, it was speculated that these concerns progressed in a logical sequence as the users became more efficient in using the innovation (Hall et al., 1977). Three years of qualitative data were collected and analyzed by the staff members. Concern was defined as "the composite representation of the feelings, preoccupation, thought, and consideration given to a particular issue or task" (Hall et al., 1977, p. 14). Innovation was defined as "the generic name given to the issue,

object, problem, or challenge; the thing that is the focus of the concerns” (Hall et al., 1977, p. 14).

According to Anderson (1997), the CBAM has three diagnostic dimensions which were developed as the model unfolded and are used to conceptualize and measure change within individuals. These diagnostic dimensions consisted of the following: Stages of Concern, Levels of Use, and Innovation Configurations. The Stages of Concern (SoC) dimension was related to user attitudes toward the innovation, the Levels of Use (LoU) dimension was more concerned with the extent to which the innovation is actually being implemented, and the Innovation Configurations (IC) dimension attempted to describe how the innovation is being implemented by individual teachers and acknowledged the variation between users (Anderson, 1997). The development of these concepts evolved as a result of research which spanned over a decade (Anderson, 1997).

During the development of the CBAM concept, Hall and Hord (1987) identified seven crucial underlying assumptions associated with the CBAM concept. Initially, it should be understood that the perception of the participants involved in the change process is critical. Anderson (1997) pointed out that this assumption is of particular importance since the change is actually accomplished by those individuals. Additionally, Hall and Hord (1987) emphasized that change is a process and not an event, that it is possible to anticipate much of the change that will occur during implementation, and that there are an endless variety of innovations. Innovations may be of a product nature, such as curriculum or program materials, or they may be of a process nature, such as varied approaches to instruction or discipline (Hall & Hord, 1987). Furthermore, Hall and Hord (1987) suggested that there is a differentiation between innovation and implementation

with specific procedures for both. It was also reported that in order for change to take place, that change has to actually occur within the behaviors and mindsets of the individuals involved in the change. Finally, Hall and Hord (1987) suggested that facilitating change is a collaborative process that involves all stakeholders. Once these assumptions have been established, a comprehensive understanding of the CBAM can be established.

Hall et al. (1973) developed the “Stages of Concern about the Innovation” concept and identified the following seven stages of concern: awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration, and refocusing. The awareness stage was characterized by limited involvement or concern regarding the innovation. The informational stage was characterized by a general awareness and interest in the innovation but lack of concern regarding any personal involvement in the innovation. The personal stage was characterized by uncertainty regarding how the innovation will affect the individual in terms of demands, new/revised roles, and personal commitment. The management stage was characterized by concerns about efficiency, management, organization, scheduling, and time requirements. The consequence stage was characterized by concerns regarding the effect the innovation may have on students and student outcomes as well as the required changes that may need to be implemented to meet those new demands. The collaboration stage was characterized by a focus on mutual alliance and support between the involved individuals. Finally, the refocusing phase was characterized by the investigation of added benefits from the innovation as well as consideration of innovation changes or alternative substitutes (Hall et al., 1977). Hall et al. (1977) developed a questionnaire designed to assess these stages of concern through

open-ended concerns statements and structured interviews. Reason would dictate that user levels of concern would be the highest and performance would be the most uncomfortable and awkward at the initiation of the implementation which may have an adverse effect on the success of the innovation. A study by Bowen (2006) specifically indicated that teachers within the participating schools reported feeling overwhelmed during the initial implementation.

Hall and Loucks (1977) conducted extensive research on the implementation of new innovation and suggested that implementation is not a dichotomous phenomena consisting of use versus nonuse, but that implementation consisted of levels of use. Therefore, they developed and incorporated Levels of Use of the Innovation into the CBAM. Levels of Use (LoU) are determined through a focused interview procedure. LoU consisted of the following schema ranging from nonuse to full implementation: nonuse, orientation, preparation, mechanical use, routine, refinement, integration, and renewal. Each level contained a definition as well as a critical decision point in determining whether or not to advance to the next level. Nonuse was characterized by little or no knowledge or involvement with the innovation. Orientation consisted of the user acquiring information and exploring its value. Preparation consisted of the user adapting and planning for use. Mechanical use consisted of emphasis on daily use and mastery of the innovation which often unconsciously resulted in incohesive and cursory use until a routine was developed. Routine use was characterized by establishing more stable implementation with reduced stress and increased levels of comfort. Refinement was characterized by variations in use designed to increase the impact of both short- and long-term effects of the innovation. Integration was characterized by collaboration between

users in a concerted effort to impact and improve outcomes. Finally, renewal was characterized by the user reconsidering the quality of the innovation and exploring adaptations of the innovation (Hall & Loucks, 1977).

The final dimension of the CBAM was identified as the Innovation Configuration (IC). In 1987, Hall and Hord referred to the concept of “mutual adaptation” which evolved from the Rand Change Agent Study completed in 1975 (p. 117). Mutual adaptation referred to the possible discrepancy between how the innovation developers planned for the innovation to be implemented and how it was actually implemented by its users. Based upon this concept, they developed the IC component to the CBAM which is assessed using a checklist. The IC checklist is completed through observation, survey, and interview processes. A completed IC checklist identifies the behavioral components of the implementation as well as patterns of variations associated with the innovation (Anderson, 1997). Hall and Hord (1987) reiterated that the IC component emphasized pragmatic variations in the innovation, but that variations should always be built upon the developer’s original paradigm.

In the book entitled *Change in Schools: Facilitating the Process*, Hall and Hord (1987) cautioned against using student outcome data results from the first 3 years of implementation as a basis for policy decision-making practice. Instead, Hall and Hord (1987) encouraged the use of more formative assessments in documenting initial improvements in student performance and noted that users become more efficient and familiar with a new innovation over time. Past research (Fuller, 1969; Hall et al., 1973; Loucks, 1975; Hall & Loucks, 1977; Hall et al., 1977; Anderson, 1997) has articulated that implementation is not an event, but a process. Hall and Hord (1987) stated that the

implementation of a new innovation cannot be deemed successful until the first three Stages of Concern have been effectuated. Based upon this statement, it is the author's presumption that during the initial year of implementation, outcomes may not be an accurate portrayal of the authentic outcomes.

Referring back to the research which seemed to indicate that it is not uncommon for student achievement scores to either remain the same or even decline during the initial year of implementation or for student achievement gains to be no greater than comparable control groups in the area of reading (Loucks, 1975; McHugh & Stringfield, 1999; MacIver, Stringfield, & McHugh, 2000; Philadelphia Education Fund, 2000; Useem et al., 2001; Supovitz et al., 2002; Wilkerson et al., 2006, 2007; Berry et al., 2009), it is worthwhile to discuss specific examples found in the literature. However, it should be reported that according to the literature, it appeared that math gains were common during the initial year of implementation when both reading and math curricular were changed.

Two research studies were completed that investigated the initial and secondary years of implementation of the *Talent Development High School* (Philadelphia Education Fund, 2000; Useem et al., 2001). In this study, the established curriculum was replaced with an academic curriculum considered to have a common core or commonality. Student outcomes were measured using the *Stanford Achievement Test - Ninth Edition (SAT-9)*. First year results clearly indicated that no significant gains were identified in reading; however, there were significant gains identified in the areas of math (Philadelphia Education Fund, 2000). Second year results documented gains in both reading and math with low achieving students reflecting the largest gains (Useem et al., 2001).

In 2002, Supovitz et al. investigated the effects of implementing *America's Choice*, a standards-based curriculum, in Duval County, Florida. Outcomes in writing, reading, and math were measured using portions of the *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (F-CAT)* consisting of the criterion-referenced *Sunshine State Standards (SSS)* and the norm-referenced *SAT-9* from the spring 2000 and spring 2001 administrations. Third grade results from the 1999 administration of the *California Test of Basic Skills/TerraNova Test (CTBS/TNT)* were used only to control for prior achievement in the fourth grade population. The *SSS* scores were used to assess reading and writing in fourth grade and math in fifth grade. All other grade levels and subject areas were assessed using *SAT-9* results. Eighth grade outcomes were analyzed using all *SSS* results. Results indicated that *America's Choice* positively influenced student achievement with notable gains identified in the area of writing. However, no statistically significant effects were documented in the areas of reading or math (Supovitz et al., 2002). Additionally, Supovitz et al. (2002) reported inconsistent patterns of scores in the outcome data in the area of reading achievement.

A study conducted by Bowen (2006) investigated the effects of implementing *A Comprehensive Approach to Balanced Literacy (ACABL)*. The study examined the effects of the *ACABL* curriculum over a period of several years in one northeastern public school. Bowen (2006) reported consistent overall gains in student outcome measures beginning after 1999 and continuing until the study's completion in 2005. Specific patterns of student achievement were more readily observable with a more detailed analysis of performance by grade and achievement level. Third grade and fourth grade students scoring in Levels III and IV (proficient) consistently exhibited increased achievement

during the implementation of the *ACABL* curriculum. Performance of both third and fourth grade students scoring in Level I (below proficiency) exhibited improvements in year 1 implementation with declines during year 2 implementation, followed by consistent patterns of improvement during years 2002-2005 (Bowen, 2006). The greatest improvement in students scoring below proficiency in fourth grade occurred in year 4. The greatest improvement in fourth grade students scoring in Levels III and IV occurred during the initial year of implementation followed by a very slight decline in year 2 and then consistent improvement throughout the remainder of the study. Both third and fourth grades exhibited a decline in test scores (increase in Level I performance and decrease in Levels III and IV performance) during year 2 across all performance levels. Interestingly, third grade student outcomes indicated a contrasting pattern which was consistent with the literature. The most pronounced improvements in third grade student performance across all proficiency levels were not exhibited until year 6 of implementation (Bowen, 2006). This finding appeared to be consistent with the research indicating that the most pronounced effects of new program implementation may not be observed until the program has been in place for several years. In addition, this finding also supported that implementation timelines may vary according to individual student and school characteristics.

As noted in the previous review of the literature, two studies were completed by Magnolia Consulting to evaluate the success of the *Reading Street* program during year 1 and year 2 implementation (Wilkerson et al., 2006, 2007). Although year 1 results indicated that students who received instruction using *Reading Street* exhibited progress, the progress exhibited by the *Reading Street* participants was comparable to that of the

students who received instruction using other basal reading programs (Wilkerson et al., 2006). Year 2 results reflected essentially the same findings. *Reading Street* participants demonstrated progress, but the progress was again comparable to students who received alternative forms of reading instruction (Wilkerson et al., 2007).

Additional research concerning curriculum implementation revealed more recent research regarding the *Reading Street* program. Berry et al. (2009) conducted a commissioned study through Claremont Graduate University (CGU) designed to continue research on the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* curriculum by building upon the findings of the 2006 and 2007 Wilkerson et al. studies. The final report was dated September 4, 2009. The purpose of the study was to examine the effectiveness of *Reading Street* using a quasi-experimental matched pairs study during the 2008-2009 school year. Reading outcomes of second and fourth grade students were measured using normal curve equivalents (NCE) scores in the areas of reading comprehension, vocabulary, and total reading achievement from the *Group Reading and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE)* which was administered as a pre- and posttest assessment. Twenty-six schools were included in the study from various states and regions in the United States. According to Berry et al. (2009), the majority of participants were Caucasian, approximately half were male, and it was reported that 40% qualified for free/reduced lunch. It should be reported that at second grade, a higher percentage of students who received free/reduced lunch (42%) were represented in the control group as compared to the treatment group (29.7%). Students in the control groups received a variety of basal and non-basal research-based reading curricula. Berry et al. (2009) concluded that *Reading Street* significantly improved the reading achievement of students over the course of the year with second

grade students exhibiting an average of 20 NCE points and fourth grade students exhibiting an average of 22 NCE points. It was also reported that by the conclusion of the second grade, students' reading performance was approaching a fourth grade level with second grade students achieving (on average) a Grade Equivalent of 3.81. Moreover, Berry et al. (2009) reported that fourth grade students were approaching (on average) a seventh grade reading level as evidenced by a Grade Equivalent of 7.04. Results also indicated that *Reading Street* participants improved across variables of ethnicity, grade level, lunch status, and gender. The greatest gains in reading achievement were identified within the non-Caucasian, male, free/reduced lunch population. Berry et al. (2009) suggested that "*Reading Street* curriculum may be particularly advantageous for students who are male, from minority backgrounds, and who are economically underprivileged" (p. 4). The findings of Berry et al. (2009) were consistent with the initial findings of Wilkerson et al. (2006) which indicated that the performance gains of students who received *Reading Street* were comparable to the gains of students in the control groups. This specific finding appeared to be consistent with the second year findings of Wilkerson et al. (2007) as well. Additionally, the authors documented that the program was implemented with fidelity. It should be noted that the *Reading Street* program was in its second year of implementation within the participating schools (Berry et al., 2009).

Perhaps the most interesting finding in the literature was discovered in a book titled *Learning Leader* which was written by Douglas Reeves and published in 2006. Reeves stated that research on reading curriculum implementation has indicated that the relationship between program implementation and student outcomes can be described as a clear nonlinear relationship. A study by Loucks (1975) revealed that when the new

innovation was reading instruction, a curvilinear relationship was documented. The curvilinear relationship indicated a nonlinear correlation between patterns of improvement in student performance and higher LoU. Furthermore, Reeves (2006) explained that only when a new reading curriculum is thoroughly implemented will student outcome measures exhibit the most significant impact on student achievement. According to Reeves (2006), it is not until that point that the curve in student achievement will begin to rise. Therefore, it may be unreasonable to expect improvement in student outcome measures during the implementation phase of curriculum change. Based upon the extensive research in the literature (Fuller, 1969; Hall et al., 1973; Hall et al., 1977; Hall & Loucks, 1977; Bowen, 2006), curriculum change and implementation is a process which demands a variety of individualized time requirements.

Despite the fact that specific research in the reading achievement of Title I schools during the initial implementation year of a new reading curriculum has not been conducted, patterns of reading achievement have appeared in the literature. One pattern that has been identified indicated that improvements in math achievement following new curriculum implementation were noted much earlier than reading improvements. A common pattern appeared to be that generally speaking, reading achievement outcomes did not immediately increase following the first or second year of curriculum change and implementation. Supovitz et al. (2002) reported that it is documented in the literature that it is more difficult to master reading instruction; and, therefore, it takes longer for changes to be implemented. In addition, Supovitz et al. (2002) suggested that if it takes longer to master effective delivery of reading instruction, then it is rational to expect it to

take longer periods of time to accurately document the ultimate effects of new reading curriculum implementation accurately.

The results of this study are also congruent with the literature. It is suspected that perhaps the findings of this study may be characteristic of the curvilinear nature of reading curriculum implementation. Although Berry et al. (2009) reported a substantial improvement in student outcome measures in reading, similar results cannot be expected with the population examined within this study. Berry et al. (2009) utilized a population consisting of 40% free/reduced lunch. This study utilized six Title I schools in which 51% to 89% of the targeted school populations qualified for free/reduced lunch, perhaps explaining the lack of agreement between the studies.

Limitations of the Study

There were various limitations noted in this study. Limitations included population concerns, using data exclusively from the first year of implementation, limited use of formative assessments, failure to more formally evaluate the dimensions of the CBAM, and failure to formally document implementation fidelity.

This study has limited generalizability due to population concerns. Although this study exhibited adequate sample size ($N = 712$), all of the participating schools were located in rural areas within the county and free/reduced lunch status percentages ranged from 51.8% to 88.9%. In addition, the variable of ethnicity was excluded due to the high percentage of enrollment of Caucasian students. Comparisons between third grade classes using populations of different students versus a study designed to evaluate the progress of the same students across grade levels may have revealed different information. In addition, the variable of English Language Learners could have also been investigated

since several of the schools in the study have increased percentages of students of Asian descent.

Although data are not available from consecutive years of implementation, study limitations were created by solely investigating the initial year student outcome data. The literature clearly indicated that increased student achievement specifically on summative evaluations such as the SAT-9 rarely reveal statistically significant gains in student achievement in reading. No specific research regarding SAT-10 and the assessment of curriculum effectiveness was found. In addition, the DIBELS results were the only formative evaluation included in the study. System-wide criterion-referenced tests which are administered every 9 weeks may have provided additional information regarding student improvements.

Additionally, each school included in the study has a literacy coach on staff. These literacy coaches are trained, supervised, and supported by not only local and district school administrators, but regional literacy coaches from the Alabama State Department of Education. Local literacy coaches assist the instructional staff with reading instruction by assisting in planning, preparation, and delivery of *Reading Street* lessons. Literacy coaches also participate and often plan collaborative meetings, conduct walk-throughs to informally assess the implementation of the reading program, model service delivery, and provide additional forms of support such as providing professional development opportunities. Unfortunately, documentation from the reading coaches at the participating schools would have been beneficial and could have been collected and analyzed to document the level of fidelity to which the *Reading Street* program was being implemented within each classroom and school.

Finally, the SoC questionnaire and LoU checklists could have been completed as a more formal assessment of the implementation process. Instead, the questionnaire used in the study to determine teachers' perceptions and overall levels of satisfaction was created and pilot tested within the system by the county's literacy coaches. Reliability statistics revealed that overall the questionnaire was a reliable instrument with an obtained Cronbach's alpha of .926; however, reliability statistics on subscales of the questionnaire revealed low Cronbach's alpha values on Planning and Scheduling (.636), Differentiated Instruction (.646), and Connections (.567). These particular subscales need to be redesigned in order to improve their reliability. In addition, validity of the questionnaire was not formally addressed in this study.

Recommendations for Policy or Practice

This study should be used to provide data regarding year 1 implementation of the *Reading Street* program within Title I schools in south Mobile County. Limitations should be considered by researchers and administrative personnel while reviewing this study. Policy decisions should not be made based on this study alone, but additional research should be encouraged by the district in order to provide a more accurate portrayal of student achievement outcomes in reading throughout the implementation process. Although the instructional personnel in upper grades appeared to be satisfied with *Reading Street*, perhaps additional professional development and support should be provided for the upper grades given that overall levels of satisfaction were slightly lower in the upper grades. The district should take pride in considering that the overall level of satisfaction and the perceptions of the instructional personnel have been characterized by positive feedback across all schools participating in the study. Teachers' suggestions and

comments should be reviewed and suggestions forwarded to the publishers for consideration in future changes to the program. In addition, the results of this study should be shared with the system, specifically study participants, to provide professional development regarding the implementation process and expected outcomes. Finally, each individual school in the district should continue to work together collaboratively as change facilitators to establish full program implementation as encouraged by Hall and Hord (1987).

Recommendations for Future Research

Follow-up studies should be conducted to reveal specific improvements in student achievement in the area of reading. Both formative and summative assessment data should be analyzed for many more years to determine if any statistically significant difference is revealed. Both increased variety and amount of student outcome data will be available in the near future to not only system administrators, but to instructional personnel due to the district's implementation of the Data Warehouse program which contains all student assessment data in one easily accessible location. Follow-up studies should also be conducted using ethnicity and ELL status as independent variables. Multiple regression analyses should continue to be completed in order to determine the presence of any predictors which may improve student performance within Mobile County. In conclusion, future studies including both rural and urban students should be conducted to make the results more generalizable to a variety of populations.

APPENDIX A

SCHOOL/STATE DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

School	ADM	ADA	% Free/ Reduced Lunch	No. Certified Personnel	Teacher Qualifications		
					B.S.	M.S.	Ed.S/Doctorate
Booth	458.9	96.1%	88.9%	35	67.6%	29.7%	2.7%
Breitling	550.7	96.3%	51.8%	42	47.8%	50.0%	2.2%
Castlen	520.0	96.3%	56.9%	41	55.6%	42.2%	2.2%
Dauphin Island	77.5	96.7%	51.9%	9	41.7%	58.3%	0%
Dixon	424.8	96.8%	75.5%	35	39.5%	57.9%	0% 2.6%**
St. Elmo	483.6	96.4%	80.0%	37	57.5%	42.5%	0%
MCPSS Overall	64,340.5	95.3%	65.5%	4,471	42.1%	50.4%	4.0% 3.6%**

**Emergency Certification = Dixon = 2.6%; System = 3.6%

ADM = Average Daily Membership

ADA = Average Daily Attendance

B.S. = Bachelor's Degree

M.S. = Master's Degree

Ed.S. = Specialist's Degree

APPENDIX B

PILOT STUDY PARTICIPANT LETTER

August 4, 2009

Dear Reading Coach,

My name is Jamie Ladnier-Hicks, and I work at Castlen Elementary. I am currently finishing my doctorate at USM. My dissertation topic explores the effectiveness and teacher perceptions of the Scott Foresman Reading Street program. Teacher perception will be assessed using a questionnaire that has never been pilot tested for reliability and validity. In order for me to utilize a new questionnaire, it is necessary for me to pilot it before having the instructional personnel complete it. I would like to ask for your help in this endeavor. Your knowledge and experience as a reading coach is invaluable.

I am aware that you are extremely busy, especially at this time of the year. Your time is valuable and I would never expect you to participate without something in exchange for your valuable time. Therefore, each reading coach who participates will be entered into a drawing to win a \$50.00 gift card.

Please complete the attached survey and return it via the mailbag in the self-addressed envelope by August 19. I have tried to make completing this questionnaire as convenient as possible for you. Your participation is completely voluntary, but very much appreciated.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Castlen Elementary
jhicks@mcpss.com
251-454-1903

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



 THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

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

**HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
 NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26.111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

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

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 29072001

PROJECT TITLE: **Third Grade Reading Performance and Teacher Perceptions of the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program in Title I Schools in South Mobile County**

PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 08/02/09 to 08/01/10

PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation or Thesis**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **Jamie Ladnier-Hicks**

COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education & Psychology**

DEPARTMENT: **Educational Leadership & Research**

FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**

HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **07/23/09 to 07/22/10**

Lawrence A. Hosman

 Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
 HSPRC Chair

7-24-09

 Date

APPENDIX D

SUPERINTENDENT PERMISSION LETTER


**Mobile County
Public School System**

P.O. Box 180069 • Mobile, Alabama 36618 • (251) 221-4000

BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

 Ken Megginson, President - District 1
 William S. Meredith, V. President - District 5
 Judy P. Stout, Ph. D. - District 2
 Reginald A. Crenshaw, Ph.D. - District 3
 Rev. Levon C. Manzie - District 4

SUPERINTENDENT Roy D. Nichols, Jr., Ed.D.

October 26, 2009

 University of Southern Mississippi
 118 College Drive
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

To Whom It May Concern:

Jamie Ladnier Hicks has permission to conduct research at Title I Schools located in the southern part of Mobile County and access data, which will be used in her dissertation project. The title of her study is entitled "*Third Grade Reading Performance and Teacher Perceptions of the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program in Title I Schools in South Mobile County*". Ms. Jamie Ladnier Hicks has agreed to maintain the confidentiality of all students and staff members from the Mobile County Title I in South Mobile County Schools participating in the research and she will share all research results with the Mobile County Public School System.

Sincerely,

 Dr. Roy D. Nichols
 Superintendent

RDN/cp

APPENDIX E

CURRICULUM SUPERVISOR PERMISSION LETTER



DIVISION OF CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

July 10, 2009

Institutional Review Board
The University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

To Whom It May Concern:

Jamie Ladnier-Hicks has discussed and explained her research project entitled "Third Grade Reading Performance and Teacher Perceptions of the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program in Title I Schools in South Mobile County" in detail with me. I have given Mrs. Ladnier-Hicks permission to access all third grade data (specifically the scores on the SAT, ARMT, OLSAT, DIBELS, CRTs as well as gender, attendance, and SES status as measured by lunch status).

I understand that this research project is subject to approval by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Southern Mississippi.

I am supportive of her efforts and will work with her as needed.

Marilyn E. Howell
Printed Name

Elementary Curr. Supervisor
Title

Marilyn E. Howell
Signature

July 10, 2009
Date

Facility Name:
Mobile County Public School System
1 Magnum Pass
Mobile, AL 36618

Marilyn E. Howell Elementary Curriculum Supervisor
P.O. Box 180069 Mobile, AL 36618
251-221-4072 Facsimile: 251-221-4147 mehowell@mcps.com
Regina Green, Sec. 221-4075 rregreen2@mcps.com

APPENDIX F

SCOTT FORESMAN *READING STREET* QUESTIONNAIRE

1

Scott Foresman Reading Street Questionnaire

Please circle the response that reflects your perception of the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program. The following terms have been used: Strongly Agree (SA=5); Agree (A=4); Neither Agree nor Disagree (N=3); Disagree (D=2); Strongly Disagree (SD=1).

Preparation/Training & Support

1. I received sufficient training prior to implementing the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program.

<u>(Strongly Agree)</u>	5	4	3	2	1	<u>(Strongly Disagree)</u>
-------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------------
2. I received allotted materials for the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program in a timely manner.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---
3. I received sufficient support during the course of implementing the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program throughout the school year.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Planning & Scheduling

4. Lesson overviews provided in the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program are beneficial and helpful in planning.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---
5. Differentiated lessons provided in the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program are useful when planning small group lesson plans.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---
6. Scheduling ideas and suggestions provided in the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program are practical and easily implemented.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Materials

7. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program provided all necessary materials needed to implement lessons.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---
8. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program materials are well organized, clearly labeled, and easy to access.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---
9. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program provides ideas and suggestions for managing and organizing materials used in implementing lessons.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---
10. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program teacher's editions are well organized and easy to follow.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---
11. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program student's editions are visually appealing to students.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---
12. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program student's editions contain stories that are age/grade appropriate and capture the interests of my students.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---
13. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program provides ample supplemental reading materials for students on all levels.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---
14. Materials provided in the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program for center activities were suitable and easy implement.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Curriculum & Content

15. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program provides explicit instruction for teachers that are simple to follow.
- 5 4 3 2 1
16. I found the pacing of lessons in the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program appropriate for my grade level.
- 5 4 3 2 1
17. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program provides sufficient instruction of targeted skills threaded throughout the year.
- 5 4 3 2 1
18. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program provides vocabulary lessons that are age/grade appropriate.
- 5 4 3 2 1
19. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program provided integrated themes that were appropriate for my grade level and students' interests.
- 5 4 3 2 1
20. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program offers a selection of student texts that encompass a variety of modes.
- 5 4 3 2 1
21. I found the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program sufficiently correlated with the Alabama Course of Study.
- 5 4 3 2 1

Differentiated Instruction

22. The differentiated lessons provided in the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program are well organized and easy to follow.
- 5 4 3 2 1
23. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program provides appropriate instruction and pacing for students on grade level (yellow group).
- 5 4 3 2 1
24. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program provides appropriate instruction and pacing for students above grade level (blue group).
- 5 4 3 2 1
25. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program provides appropriate instruction and pacing for students below grade level (green group).
- 5 4 3 2 1
26. Suitable ideas and suggestions are provided in the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program for ESL/ELL students in my class.
- 5 4 3 2 1
27. The Scott Foresman Reading Street Program provided instruction and activities appropriate for students in my class with Individual Education Plans.
- 5 4 3 2 1

Connections

28. Integration of phonic skills and spelling lists were suitable for students.
- 5 4 3 2 1
29. Unit themes integrating social studies objectives found in the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program are appropriate and spur students' interests.
- 5 4 3 2 1
30. Unit themes integrating science objectives found in the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program are appropriate and spur students' interests.
- 5 4 3 2 1

31. Technology is appropriately integrated throughout the lessons found in the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program.

5 4 3 2 1

32. Unit themes found in the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program encourage additional research and investigations by students in these areas.

5 4 3 2 1

Outcomes

33. Overall, my students have shown improvement in the area of reading decoding/fluency since the implementation of the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program.

5 4 3 2 1

34. Overall, my students have shown improvement in the area of reading comprehension since the implementation of the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program.

5 4 3 2 1

35. Overall, my students have shown improvement in the area of reading vocabulary since the implementation of the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program.

5 4 3 2 1

*** Please add any additional comments you would like to share regarding Reading Street on the back of this questionnaire.**

The following demographic information will be coded and used for the purpose of statistical analyses only. Please check the appropriate response:

36. I work at:

1. Booth 2. Breitling 3. Castlen 4. Dauphin Island 5. Dixon 6. St. Elmo

37. I teach the following grade level:

1. Kindergarten 2. First 3. Second 4. Third 5. Fourth
6. Fifth 7. other

38. I have the following highest academic degree:

1. Bachelor's 2. Master's 3. Specialist's 4. Doctorate 5. other

Do you have National Board Certification? Yes No

39. I have the following years of experience:

1. 0-5 2. 6-10 3. 11-15 4. 16-20 5. 20 or more

Please note: By turning in a completed questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in a voluntary study designed to obtain information regarding teachers' perceptions of the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program. Your responses will be anonymous and completely confidential.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Jamie-Ladnier-Hicks at 251-454-1903.

APPENDIX G

QUESTIONNAIRE ORAL DIRECTIONS

**Oral Instructions for Research Study Participants
(to be read to certified instructional personnel by local reading coaches)**

Dear Participant,

My name is Jamie Ladnier-Hicks, and I am employed at Castlen Elementary in Grand Bay, Alabama. Under the supervision of Dr. Rose McNeese of the University of Southern Mississippi, I am completing a doctoral dissertation entitled *Third Grade Reading Performance and Teacher Perceptions of the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program in Title I Schools in South Mobile County*. This study is designed to determine if third grade reading performance in Title I schools in south Mobile County has improved as a result of the *Reading Street* Program, attempt to identify predictors that may improve future student performance, and obtain and analyze information obtained from a questionnaire regarding the perceptions and overall satisfaction of the certified instructional personnel in grades K-5.

Certified instructional personnel in south Mobile County Title I schools are being asked to complete a short questionnaire regarding the *Reading Street* Program. Participants should have had some experience, acquired some knowledge, or received professional development training regarding *Reading Street*. Your participation is strictly voluntary. You have the right to decline or discontinue participation at any point without penalty, prejudice, or consequence. Completion of the questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes. All of your individual responses will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous.

The analyzed data collected from the questionnaire will be shared with the participants and interested local and district administrators. The results of the data analyses may also potentially be shared with the Alabama State Department of Education officials as well as Pearson Education, publishers of *Reading Street*. In addition, the results of the study may be submitted for presentation at a conference and/or publication in a professional journal. By completing this questionnaire, you are giving consent as a participant for this information to be used for the purposes described above.

If you choose to participate, please place your completed questionnaire in the large envelope that your reading coach has placed by the door. Each participating teacher is eligible to enter their name in a drawing to win a \$50.00 Wal-Mart gift card as an incentive to participate and to thank them for their time and effort. Participants can enter the drawing by listing their name and contact information on the slip of paper attached to the end of the questionnaire and return it to their reading coach.

I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX H
LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

The University of Southern Mississippi

**Third Grade Reading Performance and Teacher Perceptions of the
Scott Foresman Reading Street Program in Title I Schools in South Mobile County**

Dear Participant,

Certified instructional personnel are being asked to complete the attached questionnaire regarding your perception of the *Reading Street* Program. Your participation is *strictly voluntary* and is in no way related to your employment status. You have the right to decline or discontinue participation at any point without penalty, prejudice, or consequence. Completion of the questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. All questionnaires will be shredded when the study is completed to ensure confidentiality.

By completing this questionnaire, you are giving consent as a participant for this information to be used for the purposed described above.

If you choose to participate, please place your completed questionnaire in the large envelope that your reading coach has placed by the door. In order to thank you for your time and effort, participants may enter a drawing for a \$50.00 Wal-Mart gift card. A registration slip is attached to the end of the questionnaire and may be completed and returned with your questionnaire to your reading coach.

Should you have any additional questions regarding this study, please contact me at jhicks@mcpss.com. I truly appreciate your support of my research efforts.

Sincerely,

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39406-001, (601) 266-6820.

REFERENCES

- Airasain, P. W. (1987). State mandated testing and educational reform: Context and consequences. *American Journal of Education*, 95, 393-412.
- Alabama State Department of Education. (n.d.a). Alabama student assessment program overview. Retrieved April 13, 2009, from <https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/91/Overview%20of%20Alabama%20Student%20Assessment%of20Program.pdf>
- Alabama State Department of Education. (n.d.b). State board of education school report card for 2005-2006: Mobile County. Retrieved April 13, 2009, from <https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/ReportCards/2005-2006/049/049.pdf>
- Alabama State Department of Education. (n.d.c). State board of education school report card 2006-2007: Mobile County. Retrieved April 13, 2009, from <https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/ReportCards/2006-2007/049/049.pdf>
- Alabama State Department of Education. (n.d.d). Alabama State Department of Education system profile report 20070-2008: Mobile County. Retrieved December 27, 2009, from <ftp://ftp.alsde.edu/documents/ReportCard/2007-2008.049.0000.Profile.pdf>
- Alabama State Department of Education. (2007). *Expert review of core reading programs*. Retrieved October 18, 2008, from http://www.alsde.edu/general/Expert_Review_of_Core_Reading_programs.pdf
- Alexander, J. E. (1988). *Teaching reading* (3rd ed.). Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman.
- Allington, R. L. (2006). Research and the three tier model. *Reading Today*, 23, 20.

- Allington, R. L., & McGill-Franzen, A. M. (2000). Looking back, looking forward: A conversation about teaching reading in the 21st century. *Reading Research Quarterly, 35*, 136-153.
- Anderson, S. E. (1997). Understanding teacher change: Revisiting the concerns based adoption model. *Curriculum Inquiry, 27*, 331-367.
- Bell, M. (2003). The International Reading Association's review of *Reading First* grant recipients. *The Reading Teacher, 56*, 670-674.
- Bermel, J. K. (2008). Implementing a curriculum innovation with sustainability: A case study from upstate New York. (Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 2008). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 69/04, 1263*.
- Berry, T., Byrd, K. K., & Collins, K. (2009, September 4). *The effects of Reading Street on reading achievement: A focus on second year curriculum users. Final report.* Retrieved December 28, 2009, from http://www.pearsoned.com/RESPRTS_FR_POSTING/READING_RESEARCH_STUDIES/ReadingStreetReportRevised_Final.pdf
- Bowen, J. E. (2006). The effects of the common curriculum: A comprehensive approach to balanced literacy on student achievement at an elementary public school in New York City. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (Publication No. AAT 3213862).
- Brooks-Gunn, J., & Duncan, G. J. (1997). The effects of poverty on children. *The Future of Children, 7*, 55-71.

- Borman, G. D., & D'Agostino, J. V. (1996). Title I and student achievement: A meta-analysis of federal evaluation results. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 18*, 309-326.
- Buros Institute. (2007). *Mental measurements yearbook* [Electronic Resource]. Ipswich, MA: EBSCO Publishing.
- Bush, G. W. (2000). *No Child Left Behind*. Retrieved May 25, 2009, from <http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/No%20Child%20Left%20Behind.pdf>.
- Carver, R. P. (1975). The Coleman report: Using inappropriately designed achievement tests. *American Educational Research Journal, 12*, 77-86.
- Coleman, J. S., Campbell, E. Q., Hobson, C. J., McPortland, J., Mood, A. M., Weinfield, F. D., & York, R. L. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Crowe, E. C., Connor, C. M., & Petscher, Y. (2009). Examining the core: Relations among reading curricula, poverty, and first through third grade reading achievement. *Journal of School Psychology, 47*, 187-214.
- DeBell, C. S., & Harless, D. K. (1992). B. F. Skinner: Myth and misperception [Electronoic Version]. *Teaching of Psychology, 19*, 68-73.
- Dewey, J. (1990). *The school and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
(Original work published 1956)
- DuFour, R. (2004). What is professional learning community? *Educational Leadership, 61*, 6-11.

- Duncan, G. J., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2000). Family poverty, welfare reform, and child development. *Child Development, 71*, 188-196.
- Forman, G. E., & Kushner, D. S. (1983). *The child's construction of knowledge*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Fullan, M. (2005). Resiliency and sustainability. *The School Administrator, 62*, 16-18.
- Fuller, F. F. (1969). Concerns of teachers: A developmental conceptualization. *American Educational Research, 6*, 207-226.
- Gagné, R. M. (1974). *Essentials of learning for instruction*. Hinsdale, IL: Dryden.
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gatti, G. G. (2005). *Scott Foresman Reading Street benchmark item validation study 2005*. Retrieved February 17, 2009, from http://pearsonschool.com/live/assets/200728/ReadingStreet_Research_656_1.pdf
- Gatti, G. G. (2006). *Scott Foresman Reading Street benchmark item validation study 2006*. Retrieved February 17, 2009, from http://www.personed.com/RESRPTS_FOR_POSTING/READING_RESEARCH_STUSTUD/SF%20Reading20Street%20Benchmark%20Item-Validation%20Study.pdf
- Hall, G. E., George, A. A., & Rutherford, W. L. (1977). *Measuring stages of concern about the innovation: A manual for use of the SoC Questionnaire*. Austin, TX: The Research and Development Center for Teacher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED147342)

- Hall, G. E., & Hord, S. (1987). *Change in schools: Facilitating the process*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Hall, G. E., & Loucks, S. F. (1977). A developmental model for determining whether the treatment is actually implemented. *American Educational Research Journal*, 14, 263-276.
- Hall, G. E., Wallace, R. C., & Dossett, W. A. (1973). *A developmental conceptualization of the adoption process within educational institution*. Austin, TX: The Research and Development Center for Teacher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED095126)
- Hawkes, M. (1992). Facilitating educational restructuring: Applying lessons learned from the past. *Education*, 113, 96-101.
- Holmes, M. (1997). Changing school programs. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 27, 259-266.
- Hopkins, L. C. (2003). *Perceptions of change between teachers in high and low performing urban schools*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (Publication No. AAT 3086435).
- Horowitz, F. D. (1992). John B. Watson's legacy: Learning and environment. *Developmental Psychology*, 3, 360-367.
- Jerald, C. (2003). Beyond the rock and the hard place. *Educational Leadership*, 61, 12-16.
- Kemp, E. (2001). Observing practice as participant observation—linking theory to practice. *Social Work Education*, 20, 527-538.

- Loucks, S. F. (1975). *A study of the relationship between teacher level of use of the innovation of individualized instruction and student achievement*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database. (Publication No. AAT 7608066).
- Lunenburg, F. C., & Ornstein, A. C. (2004). *Educational administration: Concepts and practices* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- MacIver, M. A., Stringfield, S., & McHugh, B. (2000, December). *Core knowledge curriculum: Five-year analysis of implementation and effects in five Maryland schools* [Electronic Version]. Retrieved December 27, 2009, from <http://CoreKnowledge.or/CK/about/research/Report50.pdf>
- Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- McHugh, B., & Stringfield, S. (1999, September). *Core knowledge curriculum three-year analysis of implementation and effects in five schools* (Report No. 40). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED435766)
- McKenna, J. E. (2008). *A case study of the development and implementation of a balanced literacy intervention program*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (Publication No. AAT 3307650).
- Merriman, R. (2008). *A study on the effects of a balanced literacy program featuring the Voyager Passport Intervention Program on third grade students in a rural school district located in middle Tennessee*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (Publication No. AAT 3320569).

- Mitchell, C. J., DeHouwer, J., & Lovibond, P. F. (2009). The propositional nature of human associative learning. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 32, 183-198.
- National Commission on Excellence. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- National Reading Panel. (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* [Electronic Version]. Retrieved May 25, 2009, from http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/upload/smallbook_pdf
- Partnership for Reading. (2003). *Put reading first: The research building blocks of reading instruction* (2nd ed.). Retrieved May 25, 2009, from <http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/PFRbooklet>
- Pearson Education Group. (2008, March 18). *U.S. Department of Defense Schools choose Pearson's reading programs for elementary students around the globe*. Retrieved February 17, 2009, from http://www.pearsoned.com/pr_2008/031808.htm
- Pearson Education Group. (2003). *Pearson education history*. Retrieved February 17, 2009, from <http://www.pearson.com/about/history.htm>
- Philadelphia Education Fund. (2000). *The Talent Development high school: First-year results of the ninth grade success academy in two Philadelphia schools 1999-2000* [Electronic Version]. Retrieved December 28, 2009, from http://www.philaedfund.org/pdfs/td_twoschools.pdf
- Piaget, J. (1951). *The child's conception of the world* (J. Tomlinson & A. Tomlinson, Trans.). New York: Humanities. (Original work published 1929)
- Rasinski, T. V. (2003). *The fluent reader*. New York: Scholastic Professional Books.

- Rebora, A. (2008). Making a difference [Electronic Version]. *Teacher Magazine*, 2(1), 26-31.
- Reeves, D. B. (2006). *The learning leader: How to focus school achievement for better results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Reiser, R. A. (2001). A history of instructional design and technology: Part II: A history of instructional design [Electronic Version]. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 49, 57-67.
- Reyhner, J. (2008). The reading wars: Phonics versus whole language [Electronic Version]. Retrieved June 4, 2009, from http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/Reading_Wars.html
- Rotberg, I. C. (2006). Assessment around the world. *Educational Leadership*, 64, 58-63.
- Snow, C. E., Burns, S., & Griffin, P. (1998). *Committee on the prevention of reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Spear, C. (2006). *The Alabama Reading Initiative: A celebration of where we've been and what we have accomplished*. Retrieved December 28, 2009, from <http://docs.alsde.edu/documents/50/Publications/the%20story%20of%20alabama%20reading/%20initiative.doc>
- Stauffer, R. (1980). *The Language Experience Approach to the teaching of reading*. New York: Harper & Row.

- Supovitz, J. A., Taylor, B. S., & May, H. (2002). *The impact of America's Choice on student performance in Duval County, FL*. Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Philadelphia, PA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED480406)
- Teaching Matters. (n.d.). *Balanced literacy: An overview*. Retrieved June 18, 2009, from http://www.teachingmatters.org/literacy/guide_overview.htm
- Teale, W. H. (1995). Young children and reading: Trends across the twentieth century. *Journal of Education, 177*, 95-127.
- Thorndike, E. (1912). *Education: A first book*. New York: Macmillan.
- University of Oregon Center on Teaching & Learning. (2008). *DIBELS benchmark goals: Four assessment periods per year*. Retrieved on May 27, 2009, from <http://dibels.uoregon.edu/docs/benchmarkgoals4x.pdf>
- University of Texas at Austin. (2005). *Introduction to the 3-tier reading model*. (3rd ed.). Austin, TX: Author.
- Useem, E., Neild, R. C., & Morrison, W. (2001). *Philadelphia's Talent Development high schools: Second-year results 2000-01* (Report No. 143). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED467132)
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2008, August 26). *Household income rises, poverty rate unchanged, number of uninsured down* [Electronic Version]. Retrieved June 20, 2009, from http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/income_wealth/012528.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2001). *The longitudinal evaluation of school change and performance (LESCP) in Title I schools final report* [Electronic Version].

Retrieved December 27, 2009, from

http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/esed/lescp_vol1.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.a). *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009: Title I, Part A funds for grants to local education agencies* [Electronic

Version]. Retrieved April 12, 2009, from

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/factsheet/title-i.html>

U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.b). *Education Department: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* [Electronic Version]. Retrieved April 12, 2009, from

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/index.html>

U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.c). *Fast facts* [Electronic Version]. Retrieved April 12, 2009, from <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=158>.

U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.d). *Four pillars of NCLB*. [Electronic Version].

Retrieved April 12, 2009, from

<http://www2.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/4pillars.html>

U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.e). *History: Twenty-five years of progress in educating children with disabilities through IDEA*. [Electronic Version].

Retrieved April 12, 2009, from

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/idea/history.pdf>

U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.f). *Title I - Improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged*. [Electronic Version]. Retrieved April 12, 2009, from

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg1.html>

- U.S. Department of Education. (1986). *What works: Research about teaching and learning*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Wilkerson, S. B. (2008). *A study of Pearson's My Sidewalks program: Final report*. Retrieved June 5, 2009, from http://pearsoned.com/new_research.htm
- Wilkerson, S. B., Shannon, L. C., & Herman, T. (2006). *The efficacy study on Scott Foresman's Reading Street program: Year one*. Retrieved June 5, 2009, from http://www.pearsoned.com/new_research.htm
- Wilkerson, S. B., Shannon, L. C., & Herman, T. (2007). *The efficacy study of Pearson Education's Reading Street program: Year two*. Retrieved June 5, 2009, from http://www.pearsoned.com/new_research.htm
- Witty, P. (1949). *Reading in modern education*. Boston: D. C. Heath.
- Wren, S. (n.d.). *What does a "balanced literacy approach" mean?* Retrieved June 4, 2009, from <http://www.sedl.org/readin/topics/balancedliteracy.pdf>
- Yoakam, G. A. (1955). *Basal reading instruction*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

